

MILITARY SPOUSE EDUCATORS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON TIED-
MIGRANT MILITARY SPOUSES

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members in the United States armed forces. The theoretical framework guiding this study was McClusky's margin theory which was used to describe the relationship of an individual's power to the load that they carried in living, resulting in the margin that was available to them. The central research question that guided this study was: What are the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses? The sub-research questions guiding this study were: What do the tied-migrant spouses describe as their power? What loads are tied-migrant spouses already carrying in living? What motivations influenced the tied-migrant spouses' career decisions? How does the tied-migrant military spouse educator define success? To describe the experiences of tied-migrant military spouse educators, a transcendental phenomenological approach was used so that the individual stories could be gathered, and the experiences could be understood. The experiences were revealed through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. Moustakas's seven steps for data analysis were used to analyze the experiences, to create themes, develop a structural and textural description of the phenomenon, and describe the overall essence of the experience. Overall, the participants voiced frustration with the military lifestyle in regard to their professional experiences. The participants stated that the demands of the military lifestyle often did not allow for sufficient margin to work and accomplish professional advancement.

Keywords: military spouse educators, tied-migrant spouse, permanent change of station (PCS), deployment

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my entire family. First and foremost, my husband, Paul. Without your support and encouragement, I would never have finished. So many times, I wanted to quit and give up. There were times when I thought that it just wasn't worth it. You kept me going. You motivated me and you gave me endless support. You were right. I will never regret doing this. Thank you for not letting me give up. Thank you for being my number one teammate, my best friend, my biggest cheerleader and my harshest critic. I loved our 'walkertations' which were invaluable to my defense. I love you.

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List of Abbreviations

Child Development Center (CDC)

Continental United States (CONUS)

Department of Defense (DoD)

Department of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA)

English Language Arts (ELA)

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Hiring Our Heroes (HOH)

Military Spouse Employment Act (MSEA)

Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts Program (MyCAA)

National Board Certification (NBC)

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

National Defense Reauthorization Act (NDRA)

Outside of the Continental United States (OCONUS)

Permanent Change of Station (PCS)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Special Education (SpEd)

Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO)

Temporary Additional Duty (TAD)

Temporary Duty (TDY)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

There are currently more than 600,000 military spouses living in the United States (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Over half of military spouses are 30 years old and younger (Rea, Behnke, Huff, & Allen, 2015). The majority of military spouses are in the age group that could be considered the prime of their working lives, yet 48% of spouses are unemployed (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). Of military spouses who are employed, 70% are underemployed (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). In addition to unemployment and underemployment, tied-migrant military spouses are paid significantly less and receive lower pensions than their civilian counterparts (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Meadows, Griffin, Karney, & Pollak, 2016; Shuls, 2017).

In this chapter, I provide a description of the background of the tied-migrant military spouse and describe my position and situation to the topic as the researcher. I identify the purpose of this research and the research problem. Furthermore, I discuss the significance of this research, the central question, and the sub-questions guiding this study.

Background

The role and expectations of the military spouse have changed with the times (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Spouses were once content to stay home and raise a family while relocating every two to three years (Burke & Miller, 2018). They were tied to the professional decisions of their spouses and the needs of the United States military. The demands on military spouses have evolved throughout the years, just as times have changed (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017).

Historical

Women's education and professional careers have changed since the 1950s and 1960s (Eich-Krohm, 2007). Before this time period, marriage typically meant the end of a professional career. If women worked, the income gained from employment was merely supplementary to that of their husbands, as the men were the primary wage earners (Eich-Krohm, 2007).

In migration, traditional and historical gender roles applied as women were normally the tied-migrant spouse in the marriage (Eich-Krohm, 2007). Tied-migrant females often embraced the burden of raising the children and helped to ease the transition of a move. The career of the tied-migrant spouse was often sacrificed as migration is associated with having long-lasting impacts on a woman's career (Hisanick & Little, 2015). The role of the tied-migrant spouse has historically been found in the military community where military spouses frequently moved with their husbands from duty station to duty station throughout the duration of the military service (Hisanick & Little, 2015)

The role of the military spouse has changed dramatically with the history of the United States. The original role of the United States military spouse was first forged by Martha Washington. During the Revolutionary War the military was strictly for men. Women were not just encouraged but required to remain home while the men fought; however, Martha Washington acted as the exception and accompanied her husband from camp to camp (Alt & Stone, 1991). Her intent was to bring some comfort and support to George Washington wherever he went. Throughout the Revolutionary War, women began to follow their soldiers despite the wishes and commands of the armed forces; this became known as campfollowing. Campfollowing was happening with such regularity that there was little that the government

could do to stop it. Military spouses became adept at sneaking into and out of camps and were able to navigate them with ease (Alt & Stone, 1991).

Historically, military spouses have left their jobs to follow their service members across state and even international boundaries (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). The military spouse was often expected to support the service member while also volunteering in order to help to support the military community (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). The role of the military spouse was often to provide stability and support as troops prepared for wartime (Alt & Stone, 1991).

As times have changed, the roles of the military spouse have too (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). Instead of living on base and volunteering to support the local military community, many military families are living off-base. Military spouses keep busy by volunteering outside of the military and building their own careers (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). Though more military spouses have entered the job market, there are substantial barriers to employment due to the nature of the life of the modern-day military spouse (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Shuls, 2017).

Social

Military spouses face challenges in employment as the military lifestyle is not often conducive to consistent and permanent work. The most significant challenges for military spouses are unemployment and underemployment (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). According to the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2017), over 90% of military spouses are women. Currently, this group has the highest rates of unemployment at 16%, which is four times the unemployment rate for all adult women. Of those military spouses that are employed, most do not believe that their education and experience is being fully utilized in their

jobs (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Those spouses who consider themselves underemployed are often those who have higher levels of education (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017).

Military spouses are resilient, mobile, independent, social, highly adaptable, and educated (Runge, Waller, MacKenzie, & McGuire, 2014; US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Over 85% of military spouses are either pursuing or have attained a college degree (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). Spouses who are more educated are often the ones who are most impacted by the military lifestyle (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Spouses with professions that require state licensure find the laws to be challenging, especially in fields that require higher education. Of those military spouses who hold professional licensure the majority are teachers or nurses (Kersey, 2013).

Military spouses who hold licensure often face difficulties in cross-state mobility. In 2012, issues with cross-state mobility for military spouses who held professional licensures came to the attention of former First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden. Both Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden petitioned states to change their legislation regarding the application process and procedures for military spouses holding professional licenses who cross state lines frequently. Although half of the states addressed the issue, the other half did not change their licensure process for military spouses (Kersey, 2013). In 2014, President Barack Obama again petitioned states to reevaluate their laws and licensure processes for military spouses, and as a result, many more states changed their laws regarding the process for licensure attainment for military spouses (S. Resolution 275, 2012). In 2017, most states in the US addressed licensure issues for military spouses (Maury & Stone, 2014). These changes included a shorter wait time for a new license in a receiving state, the issuance of temporary licenses while military spouses wait, and a

grace period of up to one year for completion of additional coursework or exams (H.R. 5683, 2016).

In addition to the Obama-backed state legislation, the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation established the program “Hiring Our Heroes” (HOH) (2017) to help veterans, active duty military members, and military spouses find and keep employment. Moreover, HOH provides support for military members and their spouses by offering help finding employment and understanding the laws regarding state legislation in professional careers. Though changes in state legislation help military spouses to obtain work more easily, the financial costs begin to add up as military spouses must pay licensure, application, and exam fees.

In order to recruit and retain a ready military, spouse satisfaction has become a concern for military leaders (Kersey, 2013; US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). As opposed to conscription, today’s force is an all-volunteer force (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). The military has become a profession rather than an occupation. Individuals who join hope to stay in long-term when they enter; however, with challenges in career progression for military spouses, many service members are fleeing to return to the civilian world (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). The Obama-backed state legislation and HOH both strive to keep an all-volunteer military force that is retained and ready.

Although legislation has been enacted to attempt to help the military spouse, there is no research demonstrating its efficacy. The employment rate in military spouses is still significantly lower than the national average for women (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). The voices of military spouses and their experiences with employment in careers that require licensure are largely unknown.

Theoretical

Howard McClusky's (1970) theory of margin was developed to describe the availability of margin that an individual has to be able to cope with change. The excess of margin can be dependent on the ability of the individual and the supports they have to work through it. In margin theory, an individual is believed to have an amount of power to deal with any situation. In order to overcome a transition, deal with a life change, or add another responsibility, a person will determine if he or she possess the supports, characteristics, and/or abilities to cope with the change, known as the load. If the individual's power is greater than then load, then the change can and will occur if the individual wishes (Hiemstra, 1981). If the load requires more power than the person has, that individual will have a more difficult time dealing with the situation and will likely be unable to overcome it (McClusky, 1970).

Military spouses have long been at the center of research due to the experiences they have faced. The knowledge gained from understanding the experiences of the military spouse and their ability to cope with transitions could contribute significantly to the current knowledge concerning transitions such as deployments, permanent change of stations, temporary active duty, or long work hours. There are insufficient studies on military spouses, and research could be beneficial as military spouses encounter significant and life-altering experiences that are not understood.

Situation to Self

My motivation for this study was to understand the experiences of the tied-migrant military spouse educator who continues to persist professionally. Additionally, I hoped to understand the experience of the tied-migrant military spouse educator who does not persist professionally. I hope that in sharing the experiences of my participants, I will contribute

knowledge to what is unknown about the military spouse.

I have been a tied-migrant Navy spouse for over 10 years. I hold a teaching license, have teaching experience, and have experience in moving cross-state. I have sought licensure in a receiving state and have experienced that process first-hand. Moreover, I have seen others make career decisions based on their experiences with the demands of the military lifestyle and the ability to easily gain cross-state teaching licensure. I have found it interesting to observe educators who continue to persist from the transition of moving during a permanent change of station, through the licensure process, to ultimately making career decisions multiple times. Additionally, I strive to describe the experiences of educators who seek an alternate professional path. An alternate path may be a transition to a new or different career. Furthermore, military spouse educators may choose to return to school and obtain additional education in their field, such as a master's degree or doctoral degree. I hope to learn what my participants experienced in their careers, the choices they have made, and what factors have influenced their personal decisions.

My personal experience as a military spouse educator has allowed me to understand fully the concept of cross-state military relocation. Early in my teaching career, I moved as a first-time spouse to a new state where obtaining licensure was relatively easy. I have also experienced moving to a receiving state where obtaining a teaching license was a difficult process. I also have experience in being moved for short training orders, and I did not have the ability to teach because we were not stationed in a state long enough. For me, the benefit of obtaining a teaching license did not outweigh the difficulties in acquiring it. Personally, military life has presented many obstacles in seeking employment. Several factors have been responsible for influencing my career and professional decisions. As a military spouse, constant moving every couple of

years for a permanent change of station (PCS), temporary active duty orders, deployments, and stigmas that are associated with military spouse life have personally been obstacles to my own career progression in the teaching field. Moreover, life circumstances have not always permitted me to continue in my teaching career. These life circumstances have included familial obligations, time constraints, my spouse's long working hours, constant moving, and temporary active duty orders.

My philosophical assumptions are ontological in that I believe that reality can be seen through many points of view (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, my assumptions are also axiological in that I believe that my values as a military spouse, educator, mother, and Christian will shape my analysis of the data collected in this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the researcher I will report the different perspectives that each individual brings from their experiences as themes in my findings.

The paradigm that guided the study was social constructivism. I believe that multiple realities are constructed through lived experiences and interactions with others (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I acknowledge that my understandings of the world are shaped by these shared assumptions of reality. Methodologically, social constructivism allowed me to use an inductive method such as one-on-one interviews and focus groups. From these interviews, I gained rich and thick descriptions of the phenomenon that my participants have experienced as tied-migrant military spouse educators (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Problem Statement

The average military family relocates approximately every two to three years throughout a typical military career (Burke & Miller, 2018). The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2017) reports that there are approximately 641,639 military spouses. Of those spouses, over

33% have careers that require licensure (Kersey, 2013). Teaching and nursing comprise the majority of those fields that require licensure. Teaching has been a viable option for military spouses as it has always been thought of as a mobile career (Goldhaber, Grout, & Holden, 2017). Though teaching can be a portable career, the transition to a new or similar position in a different state can mean obtaining a new state license, encountering different pay scales, and enrolling in different pension systems (Shuls, 2017). In 2014, President Obama requested that states enact legislation to help military spouses who hold certifications and licensure in hopes that this effort would make crossing state lines easier (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). The hope was that this state legislation would help military spouses find and maintain employment each time they PCS. In turn, the military spouses would be more content with their employment and new duty station. Ultimately, this helps the military as it is believed that recruiting and retaining troops would lead to a readier military as members are more willing to stay in the military when their spouses are content in their lifestyle (US Chamber of Commerce, 2018). At the present time, it is unclear whether or not this legislation has been beneficial for military spouses who hold jobs that require licensure. Though literature separately addresses cross-state teacher mobility, military spouse employment, and the military lifestyle, there is a paucity in the literature concerning military spouses who are educators and experience these events simultaneously. The problem is that tied-migrant military spouses who are educators desire to work but often cannot due to cross-state licensure constraints, and military spouse educators who do work are frequently underemployed due to military lifestyle constraints. The experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses of active duty members of the United States armed forces are not understood.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members in the United States armed forces. A tied-migrant military spouse was defined as an individual who relocates for a spouse's military career (Hisanick & Little, 2015).

The theory guiding this study was margin theory (McClusky, 1970). It was used to guide and help describe the outweighing of decisions tied-migrant military spouse educators encounter in determining whether obtaining licensure in a state that is not their state of home record and teaching in that state was worth the power it would take to obtain, depending on their situation and how it added to their current load. McClusky defined power as the individual's internal and external supports and life experiences that aided in dealing with a new situation, event, or transition. The load was defined as the amount that an individual carried in living. The load could change frequently and could be defined as the new situation, event, job, or duty. The individual must have had the power available to him or her to be able to carry the load (McClusky, 1970).

Significance of the Study

The results of this phenomenological study provide empirical, theoretical, and practical significance for educators, tied-migrant military spouses, administrators, and individuals in the support service for military spouses. Empirically, the findings aid researchers in better understanding the tied-migrant military spouse. The findings from this research contribute to the knowledge base of what is known and not known of tied-migrant military spouses. Moreover, findings from this study provide researchers with a unique perspective on cross-state mobility for tied-migrant military spouse educators.

Findings from this study provide theoretical significance that adds to the conceptualization of margin theory and the loads and powers that differ among individuals (Hiemstra, 1981; McClusky, 1970). I have attempted to provide an exclusive perspective of the weighing of decisions that occur in a unique population of military spouses as their experiences are very different from other spouses who do not face the same transitions and life events (Runge et al., 2014).

The results from this study provide practical significance for military spouses, law and policymakers, military support groups, and employers. For military spouses who are in licensed professions, this study allows for a platform for discussion based on their experiences regarding cross-state mobility, pay, pension, and military life events that may affect their professional decision making (Borah & Fina, 2017; Goldhaber et al., 2017; Shuls, 2017). Results from this study also help tied-migrant military spouses to gain additional information concerning relocation and supports for military spouses. For law and policymakers, information regarding state laws and their impacts based on the experiences of the participants of this study are presented as tied-migrant military spouses face many dilemmas in cross-state licensure (Kersey, 2013). Those who have had first-hand experience in crossing state lines voiced their concerns so that they can be heard by government officials and policymakers. It also provides a platform for discussion for policymakers who may wish to understand if their current policies are making a difference in the experience of military spouses who hold state licensure and routinely cross state lines. Additionally, the study discusses the deficits that exist within current states' legislations. As military readiness heavily relies on the recruitment and retention of good service members, the information and knowledge gained from this study will provide insight to military policymakers so that a readier armed force can be recruited and retained. Furthermore, for

military support groups who develop programs such as “Hiring Our Heroes” may benefit in understanding the impact of military life on spouses and their employment. The results from this study also provide information to potential employers concerning the benefits of hiring a military spouse.

Research Questions

Prior research has addressed the topic of military spouses and their employment due to cross-state migration. While evidence suggests that military spouses experience difficulties in obtaining and maintaining employment, there is little research to describe the experiences of military spouses who encounter teacher licensure differences when moving cross-state (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Meadows et al., 2016). The following central research question and sub-research questions were used in this phenomenological research.

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses?

The central research question was derived from literature concerning the tribulations of military life while encountering potential issues in cross-state teacher mobility. Current research explains the difficulties that educators who cross state borders encounter (Goldhaber et al., 2017). Moreover, the question sought to address the issues that military spouses encounter in general employment as tied-migrant spouses (Hisanick & Little, 2015). In addition to general issues in mobility and cross-state licensure, there are gaps between military and civilian spouses in concern to pay, pension, and other employment related issues (Meadows et al., 2016). This central research question sought to address each issue. Furthermore, as tied-migrant military spouses frequently experience new life events, this question was used to investigate the resources

that the tied-migrant military spouse holds in living in order to deal with a new life load (McClusky, 1970).

Sub-Research Question One

What does the tied-migrant military spouse describe as their power?

This sub-question was asked in order to determine how the tied-migrant military spouses identify the powers that they possess. McClusky (1970) defined power as internal and external resources that an individual possess that helps to deal and cope with new loads. Power can be defined as supports (family, friends, community, financial), life experiences, age, and stage of life. Asking this question helped to identify the elements that contribute to or hinder professional development.

Sub-Research Question Two

What are the loads that the tied-migrant military spouses are already carrying in living?

This question was asked to determine what load the tied-migrant military spouse already carries in living. The load can be defined as the demands of the tied-migrant military spouse's life (McClusky, 1970). In military spouses, the loads they carry could be defined as frequently moving, providing familial stability, deployments, and more. If the participant's power and ability to take on a new load is greater than the load required to progress in a career, then career progression would be successful (McClusky, 1970). Furthermore, this question was asked to allow the tied-migrant military spouses to identify factors that influenced personal and professional decisions such as available supports, life experiences that contribute to who they are, the situation they are in when making decisions, and strategies they use in everyday living and when making decisions (McClusky, 1970).

Sub-Research Question Three

What motivations influenced the tied-migrant military spouses' career decisions?

I asked this question in order to determine what other factors influenced the participants' career decisions. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can influence an individual's personal and professional career decisions. Research has shown that a variety of factors including an individual's situation, self, amount and types of support, and coping strategies can affect the decisions people make (McClusky, 1970).

Sub-Research Question Four

What do tied-migrant military spouse educators define as success?

I asked this question in order to determine the tied-migrant spouse educators' personal definitions of success. Individuals possess both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that influence their decisions. These internal and external motivations can shape their perceptions of success or being successful (McClusky, 1970). In identifying the definition of success, internal factors that influence the experience of the tied-migrant military spouses were expounded.

Definitions

1. *Campfollowing* – The historical practice of relocating with an active duty military spouse (Alt & Stone, 1991).
2. *Civilians* – Individuals who are not spouses of, or members of, the armed forces (Meadows et al., 2016).
3. *Cross state migration* – Moving or relocating from one state to another (Johnson & Kleiner, 2017)
4. *Cross-state mobility* – Relocation across state lines for an individual who is qualified in a profession and seeks employment in any state of choice (Goldhaber, Grout, Holden, & Brown, 2015).

5. *Employment gap* – Disadvantage relative to two sets of individuals regarding earnings and hours worked (Meadows et al., 2016).
6. *Military spouse* – Individuals who are married to members of active duty or reserve members of the armed forces (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017)
7. *Occupational licensure* – Government regulation in which a license is required in order to pursue a particular profession (Johnson & Kleiner, 2017).
8. *Permanent Change of Station (PCS)* – A job relocation for an active duty military member in which the military member and his/her entire family is moved from one duty station to another requiring official military orders (Burke & Miller, 2018).
9. *Temporary Additional Duty/Temporary Duty (TAD/TDY)* – Refers to a member of the US armed forces travel or other assignment in a location other than the permanent duty station (Kersey, 2013).
10. *Tied-migrant spouse* – Individual who is married to a person who relocates frequently, often for work (Hisanick & Little, 2015)

Summary

This study used qualitative research that was conducted through a transcendental phenomenological design. Though previous research has looked at the experience of military spouse employment, there has been little research on the experience of employment for those spouses who hold a teaching license. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members in the US armed forces.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter explains, identifies, and defines the tied-migrant military spouse, their roles, experiences in employment, access to work, and equity of pay and pension. It discusses the life occurrences that are unique to the military lifestyle. More specifically, it explains the impacts of deployment, permanent change of station, temporary active duty orders, and the emotional health and overall wellness of the military spouse. Moreover, the strengths and weakness of military life are discussed as they ultimately influence the life and the decisions of the spouse and their families. In addition to military lifestyle, literature concerning cross-state mobility and licensure is reviewed, defined, and synthesized in connection with the mobility of the active duty military family. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the current literature regarding this topic.

Theoretical Framework

When life changes occur, individuals use a variety of mechanisms for dealing with those changes (McClusky, 1970). It is often up to an individual to determine whether or not they have the capabilities to deal with new events or new responsibilities. The reaction to a new situation will determine the course of action they will take to remedy or deal with it. Ultimately, an individual's ability to cope with new situations depends on several life factors and characteristics that the individual possesses (McClusky, 1970).

In the 1970s, McClusky (1970) introduced his theory of margin. A professor of educational psychology and adult education from the University of Michigan, McClusky developed the theory of margin in order to explain the process of weighing options. McClusky (1970) described the process that individuals use as they make new decisions when encountering

new situations. Adults typically must weigh their current responsibilities (load) against the ability (power) to deal with them. McClusky stated that most adults are driven by the need for self-improvement and self-preservation (1970). Originally, theory of margin was used to help to explain the concept of adults entering higher education. McClusky (1970) theorized that adults would each enter the classroom with unique responsibilities and obligations. These loads would weigh on the individual. Taking on the new responsibility of entering the classroom would be determined by the individual's power and level of margin. The theory of margin was developed to aid adult educators in understanding the differences of the adult learner compared to the typical traditional student. Moreover, it assisted in understanding the decision-making process of the non-traditional adult student.

McClusky (1970) used his theory of margin to describe the relationship of power to load. He described an individual's load as the self and social demands that were required by an individual to maintain a minimal level of autonomy (Hiemstra, 1981; McClusky, 1970). McClusky (1970) defined the load as the multitude of demands that placed on an individual's life. He divided loads into the external and internal demands of the individual. External loads were caring for the family and self, having a career, and other tasks of life (McClusky, 1963). Internal loads were defined as an individual's personal goals and expectations and self-concept. McClusky defined power as the individual's resources, such as physical capabilities, mental capabilities, support, family, economic status, and skills. According to Hiemstra (1981), the power was also defined as the resources an individual has in the personal arsenal that includes but is not limited to abilities, possessions, and position. Furthermore, a person's allies could aid in coping with load. McClusky (1970) described that a person's overall power aided them in determining if they possessed the margin to take on and navigate new situations or events.

According to McClusky (1970), if an individual had the power to cope with a demand, they could do so effectively. Clapper (2010) described this as the process in which an individual determines whether or not they are at a point where the margin in their life is sufficient. If sufficient margin is not available, either the individual's load needs to be decreased or their power needs to be increased. The greater the power in the relationship, the greater the margin (Clapper, 2010). McClusky (1970) stated that this excess of power would provide the opportunity for an individual with the ability to deal with multiple loads at a given time. The formula used to describe margin theory is $M = L/P$, where margin equals load divided by the powers of the individual.

Although the theory of margin was traditionally used to describe the experiences and capabilities of adult learners, it can provide a lens through which to view other situations. A tied-migrant military spouse educator frequently makes personal and professional decisions based on the demands of military life. These demands are often unique to military spouses and as such, the typical civilian will not possess the same experiences. For example, in terms of the tied-migrant military spouse educator, loads can change frequently as the demands of military life are ever-changing. For tied-migrant military spouses, loads can appear much differently than a normal civilian adult. A tied-migrant military spouse's load can change when experiencing a permanent change of station, deployments, familial structure changes, or changes in the work or financial situation of the activity duty military member.

As the loads for tied-migrant military spouses differ in appearance from civilian spouses, the powers contained by the tied-migrant military spouse may differ as well. The powers of the tied-migrant military spouse are largely dependent on the internal characteristics and external resources of the individual. Some of these characteristics may be formed from the tied-migrant

spouse's experience. For example, a tied-migrant spouse may demonstrate characteristics of flexibility and adaptability gained through the experiences of PCS moves and deployments. The external support systems and capabilities that are available will also appear differently than those of the average civilian. This research hoped to identify the powers that tied-migrant military spouse educators hold and uncover how they perceive their ability to deal with the load of military life. Moreover, I hoped to understand the participants' available margin, how it differed when facing unique military life events, and how those changes influenced their professional decision making.

Related Literature

According to a study on military migration, the average military family relocates approximately every two to three years in a typical military career (Burke & Miller, 2018). This average did not include short periods of training which could range in time from a few weeks to months. For an educator who was a tied-migrant military spouse this could mean a minimum of seven moves within the spouse's military career (United States General Accounting Office, 2001).

Over 33% of military spouses have careers that require licensure (Kersey, 2013). Of those, teaching and nursing constitute the majority (Kersey, 2013). Teaching is thought to have been a viable option for military spouses as it has always seemed to be a career that could move with a person (Goldhaber et al., 2017). Though teaching can be a portable career, the transition to a new or similar position in a different state could present a difficult path with many obstacles.

When moving to a new state, educators are often faced with having to obtain a new state teaching license. To do this, many educators are required to take and pass the state's test for teaching certification. Even after educators receive licensure in a new state, they can experience

difficulties as they are the new teachers in the district and have likely lost all previous seniority and job security (Coggshall & Sexton, 2008). In addition to licensure and seniority concerns, teacher pay and pension issues are troubling for educators who wish to teach until retirement as many have concerns about their final pension due to varying state pension programs (Shuls, 2017).

Cross-state teacher mobility, or the ability for an educator to find work across state lines, is not well described in current research. It is often misunderstood, and there is a lack of data available to track educators and their professional decisions (Goldhaber et al., 2015). Difficulty with state-to-state mobility holds true for a unique set of educators who frequently relocate because their spouse is serving active duty in either the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard. For this research, in order to be considered a tied-migrant military spouse educator, a military spouse must be married to a member of the armed forces and hold one current teaching license in at least one state. In addition to cross-state mobility issues, tied-migrant military spouses encounter life-changing events frequently as the demands of the military require their spouses to be away from home, to relocate frequently, and to train away from their permanent duty station.

The Military Spouse

The role of the military spouse has changed significantly in the last few decades (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). In World War II military spouses were encouraged to maintain careers as homemakers (Shea, 1954). The priority for the military spouse was supporting her active duty husband and family (Shea, 1954). Following World War II, the mentality began to shift. Female military spouses were still expected to maintain their home and care for their families; however, spouses were encouraged to further their education as well

(Kersey, 2013). Many spouses began to work. Most sought careers in nursing and education as those were thought to be the most portable careers for women who were spouses of military members (Kersey, 2013).

Military spouses have been known for their resilience and adaptability as they have followed their active duty spouses from duty station to duty station while often raising a family (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). Often, the military spouse has sacrificed their career because relocation and other stresses of military life have made professional development difficult (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). Times have changed in the last 50-60 years and women are entering the workforce and holding professional careers now more than ever (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018).

The modern military spouse. Half of all United States active duty military members are married (Marnocha, 2012). The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2017) reported that there were approximately 641,639 military spouses in 2018. Of these spouses, 92% were female. Forty-three percent of military families stated that they had one or more children (Marnocha, 2012). The average military family identified as having two children (Marnocha, 2012). A demographic survey by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2018) found that over half of military spouses were under 30 years old. Spouses who reside in this age range are well within working age of the average adult human being. Of those spouses who were considered to be working age, only a reported 52% of military spouses were employed (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Many military spouses stated that although they had degrees and wished to advance their professional career, military life often made professional development difficult (Lim & Schulker, 2010). The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2017) described that more than half of all military spouses surveyed held some form of a college degree:

associate, bachelors, masters, or doctoral (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017).

Participants stated that due to the nature of the military lifestyle, military spouses have had to make sacrifices that are both personal and professional in order to support their active duty spouse (Burke & Miller, 2018). Though spouses have voiced hardships because of their roles as the tied-migrant spouses, military spouses have been known for their ability to be flexible, resilient, and adaptable (McBride & Cleymans, 2014; Runge et al., 2014).

Tied-migrant spouses. Female military spouses are frequently labeled as tied-migrant spouses because they move from duty station to duty station in support of their husbands' careers with the armed service (Hisanick & Little, 2015). In the civilian world, tied migration is a relatively rare occurrence (Cooke, 2013). In a study on tied-migration and gender, researchers stated that in order to determine the individual in the relationship who presumes the role of the tied migrant, the individual who would not have moved if they were single would have to be identified. The other individual in the relationship is the one who would have moved regardless of marital status. In a study on tied staying and tied migration, Cooke (2013) described migration by using the human capital model. Research suggests that individuals who were making decisions to move did so considering the largest human capital combined with the total cost of moving. Studies found that most often, the decision of moving, relocating, and becoming a tied-migrant spouse is influenced by the family's desire to remain and maintain life as a joint residential unit (Cooney, Segal, & DeAngelis, 2011).

Previously thought to be a female or gender issue in the general population, recent studies have demonstrated that tied migration occurs almost equally between men and women (Cooke, 2013). The military, however, is not the general population. Nine of ten military spouses are female and assume the role of the tied-migrant spouse (Lim & Schulker, 2010). In studies on the

roles of tied-migrant spouses, results demonstrated that tied-migrant females often experienced the burden of raising the children and easing the adaptation to a new environment when multiple moves are involved (Eich-Kroh, 2007). In a study on the roles assumed in tied-migrant relationships, tied-migrant spouses were frequently responsible for caring for the overall physical and mental well-being of the children when the other spouse returned to work (Eich-Kroh, 2007). Tied-migrant spouses reported having to deal with constant life changes that could disrupt day-to-day living (Borah & Fina, 2017).

Permanent change of station. A PCS refers to an active duty member receiving orders to move permanently to another military installation (Military Advantage, 2018). According to a briefing report, military members stated that they moved an average of every two years over a military career (Kersey, 2013). This average accounted for shorter PCS moves that were a year or under and longer PCS moves that were three years or more. The findings of this report showed that the length of a military tour corresponded to a military member's satisfaction and retention in the armed forces (Kersey, 2013). Members and their families who had a shorter amount of time between PCS moves were less satisfied and less likely to stay in the military. Kersey's (2013) findings suggested that members and their families who had longer tours in one location were more satisfied with the military.

Research has demonstrated that a PCS was often seen as having a negative effect on spouses' emotional wellbeing (Runge et al., 2014). More than 66% of military spouses have stated that they felt that being a military spouse has had a negative impact on them, and those who felt the most impacted were spouses of more senior or higher-level officers (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). According to one study, frequent moves severely hurt a military spouse's support network (Mailey, Mershon, Joyce, & Irwin, 2018).

Not only were military spouses emotionally and psychologically affected due to moving, PCS moves were also identified as negatively impacting a spouse's ability to obtain employment (McBride & Cleymans, 2014; Runge et al., 2014;). Over a third of military spouses perceived a negative effect on work opportunities due to moving (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008).

Military spouses and deployment. Through a typical military career, most military families have encountered a deployment at least once (Rea, Behnke, Huff, & Allen, 2015). A deployment is defined as the movement of armed forces to somewhere outside of the continental United States and its territories (National Center for PTSD, 2012). Deployments are not always combative in nature; many deployments serve as humanitarian aid, restoration of peace, or other reasons. The National Center for PTSD (2012) reported that most deployments lasted between 90 days and 15 months. Deployments have affected the military family as the active duty military spouse is absent from the day-to-day events of family life. Extended separations or multiple deployments were associated with distress, emotional health issues, and overall negative impacts on the military family (Rea et al., 2015). Additionally, individuals who have had to personally deal with a deployment described the feelings of grief, loss, loneliness, denial, depression, anger, anxiety, and bargaining (Warner, Appenceller, Warner, & Grieger, 2009).

In a study on the effect of deployments on military spouses, Marnocha (2012) discussed the experiences that military spouses encountered while a spouse was deployed. She stated that every spouse identified going through a three-phase deployment cycle, not simply the deployment itself (Marnocha, 2012). Spouses who were coping with the news of deployment described the three phases as the news of deployment phase, the deployment phase, and the post-deployment phase. In the news of deployment phase, military families stated that they felt a sense or awareness of the upcoming deployment, and within this phase they experienced the

need for planning for the absence of the active duty military member. Additionally, participants described the presence of anxiety and depression (Marnocha, 2012). During the actual deployment phase participants stated that this phase included the staying strong mentality, reaching out, and emotional and physical turmoil. In addition to turmoil, spouses stated that loneliness became present in the deployment phase (Marnocha, 2012). Finally, in the post deployment phase, Marnocha (2012) stated that individuals typically reestablished their roles in both their family life and their military life. Overwhelmingly, the military spouse participants stated that they felt forgotten during the deployment cycle (Marnocha, 2012).

In addition to the emotional, mental, and physical concerns that deployments create, spouses felt burdened with the sole responsibilities as the tied-migrant spouse who remains at home, oftentimes caring for children on their own (Trautmann, Alhusen, & Gross, 2015). With children involved, the spouse had to assume the role of the primary care giver to the children. The concern over the well-being of the children intensifies as a military family experiences deployment. Research has demonstrated that the emotional and mental well-being of the military child has been linked to the primary caregiver's overall mental health and well-being (McGuire, Kanesarajah, Runge, Ireland, & Waller, 2016). Trautmann et al. (2015) stated that mothers tend to enter into a survival mode during deployments. In order to maintain familial stability, the remaining family needed to feel as though they were still connected to the active duty military parent. Additionally, the impacts of deployment caused disruptions for adolescents and their caregivers (McGuire et al., 2016). The primary care giver was often most affected by the deployment of the active duty spouse as children experienced increased behavioral problems as a result of the absence of the active duty parent (McGuire et al., 2016).

According to Borah and Fina (2017), military spouses believed that deployments created poor outcomes. In one study, 64% of tied-migrant military spouses who have had a spouse deployed stated that their active duty spouse was injured either physically or mentally during a deployment (Borah & Fina, 2017). Spouses described deployments as being a single catalyst to a plethora of problems (marital, health, mental, emotional, and behavioral) with which they had to deal (Borah & Fina, 2017). In spouses who returned home from deployment with PTSD, the side effects of active duty members who are returning from wartime deployments are found to stretch to their marital partner. In fact, one study found that spouses of active duty members could also be affected by secondary traumatic stress symptoms, essentially describing tied-migrant spouses who experienced deployments as traumatic event victims (Bjornestad, Schweinle, & Elhai, 2014).

Many tied-migrant military spouses experienced disruptions in their personal and professional life because of multiple deployments (Lewis, Lamson & Leseuer, 2012; Runge et al., 2014; Van Winkle & Lipari, 2015). Stress levels of spouses that had never experienced a deployment were shown to be significantly lower than those who had experienced an initial deployment (Van Winkle & Lipari, 2015). The overall well-being of the military spouse was affected by deployments, especially those deployments that were extended or considered risky (Lewis et al., 2012). Many spouses were then left to renegotiate their roles or assumed dual roles in the absence of the active duty spouse (Runge et al., 2014). Multiple deployments were shown to not only increase stress levels and damage overall health and wellbeing of the military spouse, but also demonstrated a negative impact on overall military readiness and retention (Van Winkle & Lipari, 2015). In addition to the increase of stress caused by the feelings of “doing it alone,” results from one study suggested that both the active duty and civilian parents in a military

family needed to feel financial stability during a deployment to maintain familial well-being; however, participants from that study stated that familial financial stability can be difficult when only one parent is able to bring in an income (Trautmann et al., 2015). Though deployments negatively impacted the military family, research has demonstrated that many military spouses left deployments with higher levels of adaptability and resilience (McGuire et al., 2016). Tied-migrant military spouses were often realistic, flexible, and well-adjusted to military life (Runge et al., 2014). The military spouses collected experiences through deployments and relocating often, and studies have attributed spouses with these positive characteristics.

Health and well-being. Military spouses often exhibit elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression compared to their civilian counterparts (Mailey et al., 2018). According to Kees, Nerenberg, Bachrach, and Sommer (2015), rates of military spouses' mental health concerns are on the rise. Additionally, many spouses do not habitually participate in healthy behaviors that would assist in the management of stress (Mailey et al., 2018). In a study on the absence of health behaviors, military spouses identified a lack of time, missing social connections, inability to manage stress, and difficulty in maintaining a healthy diet or healthy eating as barriers to creating healthful behaviors (Mailey et al., 2018). The majority of participants stated that parental and familial responsibilities acted as the largest barrier to healthful living (Mailey et al., 2018). The most commonly named health and mental stressors of military life were identified as the transient military lifestyle, deployments, and the "do-it-all alone" mentality (Mailey et al., 2018). Mailey et al. discussed how many spouses stated that their own health and well-being were hard to prioritize as:

Several aspects of military life may further exacerbate these perceptions: a) military culture views spouses as dependents whose primary purpose is to serve their husbands in

support of the military mission, b) the active duty spouse is so frequently absent that his partner is left to shoulder all of the burdens alone, and c) military families frequently live far from family and friends with no support system in place. (2018, p. 8)

In addition to the lack of healthful behaviors and stressors that weigh on military spouses, many tied-migrant military spouses stated that they felt a loss of autonomy compared to civilian spouses because military life occurrences are out of their and their spouses' control (Kees & Rosenblaum, 2015). Kees and Rosenblaum (2015) stated that very few evidence-based, needs-meeting programs are available to military spouses. As such, many spouses do not feel as though they are physically, mentally, or emotionally supported. Up to 70% of military families do not live on base with direct access to other military families; therefore, they are not making the connections which are important in maintaining relationships and their mental health. Kees and Rosenblaum (2015) found that meeting the needs of military spouses can be successfully achieved through programs that provide supports to aid them in the development of healthy choices and behaviors. Due to the findings of their study, the researchers implemented HomeFront Strong, a program that was developed to address the feelings of not being supported and helplessness that are associated with increased rates of depression and stress. Following the integration of HomeFront Strong, participants reported less depression and greater life satisfaction (Kees & Rosenblaum, 2015).

Children. Forty-three percent of military families have children (Marnocha, 2012). As tied-migrant spouses whose husbands' career is the primary career in the marriage, the female tied-migrant military spouse often bears the brunt of childrearing responsibilities (Trautmann et al., 2015). Secondary to the child's wellbeing, many military families worry about the availability of childcare (Owen & Combs, 2017).

Often military service induces life-altering circumstances for children (Mailey et al., 2018, Marnocha, 2012). Children in military families where a parent has been deployed have shown issues with stress, anxiety, and poor sleep (Mustillo, MacDermid-Wadsworth, & Lester, 2016; Pexton, Farrants, & Yule, 2018; Trenton & Countryman, 2012). Military families with children frequently encounter maladaptive behaviors while a parent is deployed (Trenton & Countryman, 2012). Research has demonstrated that military children and the psychiatric effects of military life can vary significantly dependent on the situation. Trenton and Countryman (2012) found that a child's reaction to the effects of military life is often dependent on the age of the child. Chandra, Lara-Cinisomo, and Jaycox (2010) found that approximately 33% of school-aged children with a deployed parent were at a higher risk for psychosocial morbidity. Children five and under were shown to react differently to parental absence (Mustillo et al., 2016). Children in this age group displayed significantly higher internalizing and externalizing (Barker & Berry, 2009). The greater number of months a parent was deployed correlated to an increase in behavioral issues with the military child (Mustillo et al., 2016; Trenton & Countryman, 2012). Studies found that the longer a parent is deployed, the more stressors the child encountered (Chandra et al., 2010; Mustillo et al., 2016). Though behavioral problems increased with the absence of one parent, Trenton and Countryman (2012) noted that behavior rarely reached a pathological level, meaning medical intervention is seldom necessary; however, this did not negate the counselling role the parents performed for their children.

Military Spouse Employment

The nomadic life of military spouses has created issues in career progression as spouses are frequently unable to put down roots in one place long enough to progress in their careers (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Meadows et al., 2016). According to Castaneda and Harrell (2008),

moving from place to place did not allow for military spouses to fully integrate themselves into their field of work, make professional connections, progress in their career, and ultimately find job success. The military lifestyle has also been shown to threaten a military spouse's stable work history and hinder promotions (Marshall, 2014). The effects of the military lifestyle may not be short-lived as spouses progress from one duty station to the next. One study suggested that military spouses often carry the expectations of the lifestyle with them, "since almost all active duty personnel move on a regular basis, their civilian spouse may develop expectations about moving and its consequences that affect the employment situation of civilian spouses as much as the moves themselves" (Cooney et al., 2011, p. 3).

As of 2018, of the over 660,000 military spouses in the United States, 84% had some college experience with 35% holding a bachelor's degree or higher (Burke & Miller, 2018). This evidence is suggestive of the spouse's desire and willingness to work. Though military spouses are often employed, most military spouses feel as though their career takes a backseat to their spouse's career and many had negative feelings towards work (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). The reason for the negative outlook on work is multifactorial. Many spouses cited difficulties in finding, keeping, and advancing at work due to consistent change of station; a spouse's deployment; or simply encountering obstacles in state licensure requirements needed to obtain employment (Meadows et al., 2016). A study on the soldiers' perceptions of military spouses' career experiences suggests that military spouses are often at a disadvantage in the employment realm (Huffman, Dunbar, Billington, & Howes, 2019). The top two reasons that military spouses cited as factors hindering their professional careers are frequently absent spouses and moving a lot (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). Moreover, Huffman et al. found that although spouses are often at a disadvantage in their career, this was dependent on the spouses' flexibility of career (2019).

Spouses who held positions where they could telecommute were more likely to find and secure employment. Furthermore, spouses who were in careers where demand was high could also more easily find work.

In a study on military spouse employment, over 90% of respondents who were military spouses stated that they had a desire to work (Maury & Stone, 2014). Even though a substantial number of tied-migrant military spouses wanted to work, it became difficult to find jobs, especially during the year of a PCS move (Burke & Miller, 2018). Castaneda and Harrell (2008) described the importance for military spouses who wanted careers to find work and develop professionally as it potentially influenced their spouses' military career decisions. In a study on the effect of geographic relocation on military spouses, only 1.5% of military spouses were very satisfied with their employment opportunities while 24% stated that they were satisfied (Cooney et al., 2011). A much higher percentage of spouses stated that they were unsatisfied (28.5%) or very unsatisfied (27.2%) with their employment opportunities. This study also found that longer tour lengths in one geographic location decreased the amount of dissatisfaction with employment opportunities described by tied-migrant military spouses (Cooney et al., 2011). Though dissatisfaction was felt all around by spouses, it is important to note that levels of dissatisfaction in regard to employment opportunities, the likeliness to work or find employment, and the overall effect of PCS moves on the tied-migrant spouse are reportedly felt differently dependent on the individual's race, gender, and the active duty spouse's rank (Cooney et al., 2011). Researchers also found that higher levels of geographic mobility had a negative impact on the overall employment experience of the military spouse (Cooney et al., 2011).

Another factor that has been found to influence the employment of the tied-migrant military spouse is the size of the military family. When a military family has children the

likeliness to be employed is dependent on family size (Cooney et al., 2011). One study uncovered a 14.3% drop in the likelihood of employment for each child (Cooney et al., 2011). For families with young children (under school age) the likelihood of employment for the tied-migrant spouse drops an additional 53.7% (Cooney et al., 2011). The experience of African-American tied-migrant spouses is much less affected by the presence of children.

In addition to the difficulty of finding and keeping work with the obstacles of military life, as well as building a professional career, studies have demonstrated that, in general, military spouses had lower wages and are less likely to work compared to their civilian counterparts (Burke & Miller, 2018). Women who are tied-migrant military spouses earn on average 19% less than women who are married to civilian men; civilian male spouses of female active duty members do not have this loss (Cooney et al., 2011). In addition to earning less pay than civilians, Cooney et al. (2011) found that spouses lose an average of 2.4% of earning per move. Though most tied-migrant military spouses were educated and working, they “have been shown to exhibit the effects of an economic disadvantage compared to civilian spouses with respect to unemployment, income, and career advancement, while at the same time possessing, on average, more advanced education than their civilian counterparts” (Maury & Stone, 2014, p. 7). On average, military spouses experienced inequity in pay as “frequent moves also mean that military spouses earned less than their civilian counterparts” (Clever & Segal, 2013, p. 27). The Rand National Defense Research Institute has suggested that there has been a mismatch between spouses’ levels of education and their occupations which could suggest that wives are taking jobs for which they are over-qualified to make up for a lack of experience (Lim & Schulker, 2010).

Along with low employment rates in the military spouse community, many spouses can feel a sense of bias when seeking employment. Cooney et al. (2011) described the bias toward

the military spouse from the point of view of the employer who, “may be reluctant to hire civilian spouses of military personnel as they can expect to have to recruit and train a replacement in a relatively short period of time” (2011, p. 3). In an issue brief by the South Carolina Military Base Task Force (2018), researchers found that some employers were reluctant to hire a military spouse because they would have to dedicate time for training, only for the employee to leave within a few years.

A social cost analysis of the unemployment and underemployment of military spouses has suggested that the employment of military spouses matters, not just to the military family and the Department of Defense (DoD), but to the federal government and society as well. The Sorenson Impact Center and the University of Utah (2016) discussed how the unemployment of military spouses produces a cost to society on a yearly basis. Researchers stated that “there are many costs associated with unemployment; the most direct originates from unemployment benefits paid by the federal government” (p. 10). In the United States, 46 states allow for unemployment benefits to extend to military spouses. The study has demonstrated that many spouses faced unemployment each time they relocate for a PCS, thus collecting unemployment benefits. In addition to unemployment benefits, researchers identified a connection between the mental and physical health of the military spouse and employment changes (Sorenson Impact Center & The University of Utah, 2016). Altogether, the cost to society for unemployment benefits and health services is between \$710,000,000–\$1,087,000,000 per year (Sorenson Impact Center & The University of Utah, 2016). Non-financial benefits of spousal employment were identified as greater overall personal wellbeing and social connectedness (Huffman et al., 2019).

Regardless of the obstacles faced, military spouses are known for their resilience (Rea et al., 2015). Due to their frequent relocations, many military spouses stated that they had a broader

worldview and were more open to a variety of cultural perspectives (McBride & Cleymans, 2014). Military spouses are extremely adaptable and realistic (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Many of the challenges that are presented to them, such as relocation and deployments, were responsible for the positive characteristics and attributes that they have demonstrated (McBride & Cleymans, 2014). Though their lifestyles were often migrant, military spouses would be of value to a potential employer. Through their tribulations, military spouses obtained special skills that were collected through overcoming challenges. In describing the positive attributes of military spouses, researchers found that they possessed “adaptability, flexibility, project management, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, leadership, organization, coping skills, and initiative [as] just a few” (McBride & Cleymans, 2014, p. 93). Although tied-migrant military spouses agreed that the military lifestyle had made them more resilient, adaptable, and flexible, over 66% believed that the military lifestyle negatively impacted their own employment (Runge et al., 2014).

In order to help spouses to obtain employment, the United States DoD has previously stated that military spouses should follow portable career paths (Kersey, 2013). The DoD encouraged spouses to choose portable career paths by obtaining advanced, graduate-level degrees in healthcare, business, or education where employment could be secured regardless of location (Ott, Morgan, & Akroyd, 2018). Though the DoD suggestions are valid, prior studies have demonstrated that the greatest influence on a military spouse’s career choice was not in regards to job security, but genuine interest (Ott et al., 2018). The military lifestyle provided the least amount of influence on career choice (Ott et al., 2018)

The DoD has recognized what valuable resources military spouses have been both to the military and to employers. In order to promote retention and military spouse morale, the DoD

sought to increase employment opportunities for military spouses by improving access to childcare, increasing programs to help find jobs, and providing additional supports necessary to help spouses maintain work (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). The Military Spouse Employment Act (MSEA) of 2018 was developed to address these areas of concern. As the DoD has previously stated, the retention of active duty service members is reliant on the well-being and emotional state of the military spouse (Lim & Schulker, 2010). Moreover, Ott et al. (2018) have suggested addressing licensure and certification issues that are unique to military lifestyle in order to “support military spouses and their educational and career endeavors through the development of policy and programming at both governmental and institutional levels” (p. 53).

Military spouses with licensed professions. A study on tied-migrant military spouse licensure demonstrated that over one-third of military spouses have held careers that require professional licensure (Kersey, 2013). The majority of military spouses who held licensure were either educators or nurses. Past research has demonstrated the struggles of individuals in licensed professions who cross state lines including obtaining licensure in a receiving state, pay inequity, and pension inequity (Johnson & Kleiner, 2017; Shuls, 2017).

Cross-state relocation and occupational licensure. Cross-state relocation is defined as moving career positions across state borders from one state to another (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Johnson & Kleiner, 2017). Cross-state relocation has shown to be difficult for individuals whose careers require licensure as each state governs and regulates its own licensure requirements. According to Johnson and Kleiner (2017), “Occupational licensure has become one of the most significant labor market regulations in the United States that may also restrict the interstate movement of workers” (p.1). Their research demonstrated that people who hold a job that requires state licensure simply did not want to jump through the hoops necessary to obtain a new

license to work in a new state. Johnson and Kleiner (2017) described the lack of willingness to move across state lines to obtain work, as the rate of individuals who crossed state borders decreased in careers that require occupational licensure, stating that “individuals in licensed occupations with state-specific exam requirements move at a 31% lower rate between states than those with national exams” (p. 16).

In order to easily obtain work in a cross-state relocation, Johnson and Kleiner (2017) suggested obtaining a national license for those occupations that offer them. Individuals who hold national licenses could work more easily in whichever state they chose to do so with much less difficulty. Research shows that there was no evidence that they experienced interstate migration difficulties at all (Johnson & Kleiner, 2017). Although obtaining a national licensure can ease state-to-state career transitions, research demonstrated that it was not always available for all licensed careers and did not always offer complete and full reciprocity between states (Johnson & Kleiner, 2017).

In an attempt to ease state-to-state moves for educators, many sought National Board Certification (NBC). These educators were under the assumption that gaining NBC would allow them to teach in neighboring states without having to complete additional requirements. These assumptions were often incorrect. NBC does not automatically offer full reciprocity to individuals who are certified regardless of their state. NBC was a voluntary process in which educators acquired advanced teaching credentials (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2018). Many educators believed that the NBC process had positively affected their classroom practices, student achievement, and teacher morale (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2018; National Education Association, 2017). The benefits of becoming nationally board certified were appealing to educators who wish to better themselves and their

classrooms. However, educators who wanted to become nationally certified for mobility purposes were misunderstanding the purpose of NBC.

Military spouses who held some form of professional licensure often encountered difficulties each time they moved to a new state as they had to reapply for new licensure (Burke & Miller, 2018). In 2012, as an attempt to aid military spouses who hold a professional licensure, Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden campaigned for states to ease the burden on military spouses. They requested states to consider the issues that spouses were encountering each time they made a PCS move to a new state. Only some states considered the Obama/Biden initiative. Ironically, many who did not consider military spouse licensure issues were states that had a high military population (Kersey, 2013).

After examining the effects on military spouse licensing, former President Obama asked state governments and licensing boards to find more efficient ways for spouses to procure licenses. As of 2014, most states have responded by passing legislation that eased the ability to secure a license, allowed temporary or provisional licenses, and sped up the licensure process (Kersey, 2013). Though the licensure legislation has facilitated licensing in some way, according to Kersey (2013), “current licensure portability enactments pertaining to professionally licensed military spouses are inadequate” (p. 164).

Acquiring a professional license is costly with the fees that are associated with application process. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 included measures that would reimburse licensure fees for military spouses (Bushatz, 2017). It was developed in hopes that it would help ease the financial burden to military spouses who apply for new state licenses each time they experience PCS moves. The measures written into the National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 were created so that up to \$500 could be reimbursed for licensing

each time a military member and family permanently moved to a new state. The bill stated that there was no frequency limit on the benefit (Bushatz, 2017; Maucione, 2018). Unfortunately, as of 2019, the legislation that would allow for reimbursement to military spouses in the National Defense Authorization Act has not been passed (A. Bushatz, personal communication, February 12, 2019).

Educator licensure. In order to regulate and improve teacher quality in the United States, teachers must obtain teaching licenses that are granted through the state in which they teach. The common route to obtain licensure was to graduate from an accredited university with a college degree in education that includes completing student teaching experiences and taking the required state licensure exam. Though licensure requirements tended to be similar across the board, Goldhaber et al. (2017) stated that the details were what often presented difficulties for educators who wanted to obtain licensure in a new state, as each state had their own unique and complex licensure requirements. The details may have been different course work or differences in the type of state teaching exam required by the state. Obtaining licensure in a new state was such a daunting task that one study found that less than 0.91% of individuals who changed teaching careers do so in a new state (Goldhaber et al., 2015).

Within-state teacher moves occurred at much higher percentages. Though the numbers varied year-to-year, the fact remained that most educators simply did not want to have to go through an entirely new certification process when they had already completed one in their current state (Goldhaber et al., 2015). Educators who wished to change positions are more likely to move over 75 miles across the state than to accept a teaching position that could be closer but was located across the state border (Goldhaber et al., 2017). Goldhaber et al. (2017) suggested that “even the most seasoned teachers may need to take a basic skills test, pass a subject-matter

examination, or complete additional coursework, just to obtain the sort of initial license they held previously” (2017, p. 2). The thought of relocating to teach in a different state was overwhelming due to additional requirements that exist in obtaining teaching licensure in a new state; because of this, most educators did not cross state borders.

Educator reciprocity. Most states in the US have offered reciprocity for educators who cross state lines and possessed a teaching license from another state (Education Commission of the States, 2018). In terms of teacher certification and licensure, reciprocity has had very different definitions depending on the state where an educator was seeking licensure. Most states had requirements for educators who held a valid teaching license. These requirements may have been additional coursework, exams, or teaching experiences. Though the majority of receiving states offered reciprocity for educators who hold a valid license from their original state, a large number did not offer full reciprocity (Goldhaber et al., 2015). Full reciprocity occurs when states accept a valid teaching license from another state without additional requirements (Goldhaber et al., 2015). In 2018, there were six US states that offered full reciprocity to teachers: Arizona, Florida, Hawaii, Mississippi, Missouri, and Nevada (Education Commission of the States, 2018). Full reciprocity allowed for educators to cross state lines with ease. Offering full reciprocity to educators has been shown to attract high-performing teachers who may otherwise be swayed from seeking cross-state licensure (Ladner & Burke, 2010). In the case of Florida, where the state was determined to close the racial achievement gap, full reciprocity, along with other incentives, was being offered to entice quality educators to relocate. Since the adaptation of the teacher licensure process, Florida has increased the percentage of minority students taking AP exams and passing them (Ladner & Burke, 2010). Moreover, Florida had the fourth highest number of students taking AP exams in the nation. The state of Florida has credited this to

parental choice of schools, performance pay, alternative teacher certification, and the offering of full reciprocity to teachers holding licenses from other states (Ladner & Burke, 2010).

For military spouses who held licensure in education, some states have adapted their reciprocity requirements (Kersey, 2013). Legislation passed in most states requires the departments of education to speed up the licensure process for military spouse educators who hold a valid teaching license from another state. Additionally, many states offered a temporary license while the military spouse educator was completing the requirements mandated by the receiving state. Typically, states offered educators one year to complete additional certification and licensure requirements, allowing educators who are military spouses to teach while fulfilling the state-mandated requirements (Education Commission of the States, 2018).

Teacher salary. In addition to licensure variances in state-to-state relocations, many educators worried that they will not be awarded credit for previously accrued experience in a new state. Educators with previous teaching experience and education in a prior state experienced many challenges due to the varying state and district step and pay systems (Shuls, 2017).

According to Shuls (2017), teacher pay is normally based on a step and column increase system. An educator's salary begins on a certain step that aligns with experience and years teaching and the columns generally correlate with an educator's level of education: bachelor's degree, master's degree, and master's plus 30 credits. The salary and salary steps are determined by a municipality's level of wealth (Murray, 2016). Therefore, salary scales are not equal from district to district nor state to state. Data retrieved from a municipality's wealth is used for determining the ability to pay a fair salary. Due to differences in wealth from municipality to municipality, salary differences exist in school systems (Murray, 2016). It was expected that pay

gaps would exist in school districts that have differences in wealth; however, even in school districts that were of similar wealth, pay gaps were shown to be noticeable (Shuls, 2018). This is due to lack of a uniform salary scale.

Comparable peer school districts salary differences have existed throughout the country. In using current salary scales instead of an average derived from the lowest pay and a highest pay step on a salary scale, a measure of the differences was shown between communities that were otherwise comparable (Murray, 2016). In terms of cross-state mobility for educators, this data was predicative of what can be expected in teacher relocation. If pay gap differences existed in similar school districts in comparable communities, the differences in pay to non-comparable communities would be expected to exceed differences in pay in similar districts (Murray, 2016).

Retirement/pension. Many educators who relocated for employment in a new state found that they encounter differences in their pension and retirement plans. Inequity in pensions in cross-state relocation were often expected, however, inequities even existed between school districts within the same state (Shuls, 2017). These inequities existed in every element of the school system from school funding, teacher pay, and teacher pension. This was due to the way schools have traditionally been funded. According to Shuls (2017), property taxes have historically funded schools across the country. When a school was located in an area with a wealthier population with higher property taxes, schools received more funding which contributed to everything from the school building to teacher salaries.

The inequity on teacher pension benefits occurred when the state pension system used a defined benefit (DB) pension plan (Shuls, 2017). In order to determine a district's teacher pension benefits under a DB plan, many state retirement systems used a formula that considered the educators' three highest years salaries, normally an educator's last three years of teaching.

Since the years did not have to be consecutive, an educator who transferred schools, but remained in-state should have belonged to the same state pension system and received a pension based on their three highest salary years (Shuls, 2017).

For educators, it is important to know which type of pension one was expected to receive as there are some major differences between a DB plan and a defined contributions (DC) plan. Each has very different characteristics that affect pension benefits. As stated, most states and school systems use a DB pension plan that uses the formula of highest years of pay to determine pension (Shuls, 2017). The DB pensions require teachers to regularly contribute to their pension fund. If they move to another state, teachers typically cannot take the full amount with them. In other words, the DB pensions “incentivize people to stay in the profession and punish those who leave” (Shuls, 2017, p. 438). Teachers, like military spouse educators who are making cross-state moves for new teaching positions, are those penalized the most. Shuls (2017) suggested researching a DC plan if mobility is what an educator is seeking. For educators who plan to relocate often or several times throughout a teaching career a DC plan would be more beneficial because it offers more portability, as an educator takes all contributions with them each time they move.

Even though teaching was once thought to be a mobile career and it was assumed that an educator could easily move within and across state borders, studies have shown that “inequities exist in teacher compensation and these inequities grow with each year of teacher experience” (Shuls, 2017, p. 445). These differences affect teacher pensions so much that educators are better off making a move either in the first few years of a teaching career or in the last three (Shuls, 2017). Educators who relocate in the middle of their career or several times throughout a

teaching career cannot expect equity in pension compared to their non-mobile counterparts unless they contribute to a pension plan outside of what their school district offered.

Supports for the Military Spouse

Average military spouses encounter life events that may cause disturbances in their day-to-day living (Mailey et al., 2018; Marnocha, 2012). Research has demonstrated that deployments, PCS moves, issues with childcare, health deficiencies, and employment difficulties and inequities have negatively impacted the morale of the military spouse (Maury & Stone, 2014). Low spouse morale additionally affects the active duty member in service, willingness to re-enlist, and stay in the military (Maury & Stone, 2014). In order to combat morale-depleting events associated with depression and anxiety, a multitude of programs have been created to support the military spouse. Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO) is an organization that aids spouses through mentorship in order to find and obtain employment. Similar programs are available through Blues Star Families, Hiring Our Heroes, and Military Spouses Employment Partnership. The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation has conducted research regarding the life of the military spouse and created programs to aid military spouses in obtaining physical, mental, and emotional wellness as well as providing supports for military spouses who are looking for employment.

In order to address issues in employment and childcare, the MSEA of 2018 was developed to help ensure that military families were supported in their endeavors to find employment and attain childcare (S. Resolution 575, 2019). The MSEA addresses several components including employment opportunities, supports for spouse entrepreneurship, continuing education, and training. Moreover, legislation was introduced to help military spouses find and maintain employment, if employment is desired. Research has demonstrated that one of

the main causes of high military spouse unemployment is due to the lack of services to aid military spouses in finding and acquiring appropriate and affordable childcare (Meng, Gillibrand, & Cotton, 2017). Part of the MSEA was developed to address this issue that is regularly facing military families. The legislation requires the DoD to provide adequate access to childcare, making it easier for military families to find and afford care (S. Resolution 575, 2019).

The usefulness of these programs and organizations depends completely on the military spouse's awareness of them, willingness to utilize them, and ease of availability of the benefits. Several grants and a variety of financial aid supports are available to military spouses in order to continue or further their education and locate employment including the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts Program (MyCAA), SECO, and HOH. The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2019, sponsored by Representative Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) became public law on August 13, 2018. Amidst a plethora of military-related legislation, The 2019 NDAA contains legislation that seeks to help military spouses who are in careers that require licensure. Furthermore, Senate Resolution 575 specifically addresses the importance of determining and assessing the effects of permanent change of station moves on the employment of the military spouse. This legislation states that further assessment is required to determine how stability of employment is affected, how PCS moves attribute to unemployment and underemployment, and how that affects force readiness. Senate Resolution 575 includes mandates to describe the appropriate administrative or legislative actions that may be carried out to aid the United States in achieving force readiness and stabilization through the minimization of the impacts of frequent, permanent changes of station on the stability of employment among military spouses (2019).

Summary

Cross-state relocations due to PCSs, deployments, temporary active duty orders, and the strains of military life can be especially troubling for individuals who are tied-migrant spouses supporting the work of their significant other (Burke & Miller, 2018; Cooke, 2013; Hisanick & Little, 2015). Frequent-moving tied-migrant spouse educators who wish to work can expect challenges in obtaining a new job due to the variance in state-to-state requirements and licensure procedures. Pay and pension equity is also a concern for individuals who contribute financially to their family and look forward to retirement in the future (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Shuls, 2017). Tied-migrant military spouse educators often find themselves in a position where they are educated and wish to work, but cannot due to licensure constraints (Goldhaber et al., 2017). Moreover, life events of the tied-migrant military spouse educator may contribute to professional decisions. Life events such as deployments, temporary active duty orders, familial issues, family support, and other disruptions may impact the decisions of the military spouse regarding work. Furthermore, military spouse educators who eventually return to the classroom can expect inequity in pay and challenges in obtaining an equal pension compared to their civilian counterparts who never experience multiple relocations (Meadows et al., 2016; Murray, 2017; Shuls, 2018).

Due to the small population of military service member spouses within the general population, military spouses who are educators are not often understood. Developing a better understanding of the challenges and experiences faced by military spouse educators could aid state departments and policymakers in determining and governing the reciprocity of their licensure and certification. Additional policy change would be extremely beneficial, especially in those states and areas where there are high military populations. Further study and research on

the topic of military spouse career progression in fields that require state licensure or certification is warranted.

In addition to licensure and policy change mandated through the findings of peer-reviewed research and government legislation, programs that provide support to military spouses should be more accessible. Though there are many programs available to military spouses, many spouses are unaware that they exist. Moreover, the supports and benefits available to military spouses could aid in obtaining and maintaining employment. The benefits of gaining employment when desired may show positive effects on the morale of military spouses who are educators, thereby increasing the desire for the military family to remain in the armed services.

Current literature separately addresses obstacles for individuals with licensed professions. There are many studies that identify difficulties in cross-state relocation for educators. Others describe the issues in tied migration. Unemployment and underemployment in the military spouse population has also been described and identified. This dissertation specifically addressed the gaps in the literature by describing the experience of military spouse educators who encounter the aforementioned issues concurrently.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

Tied-migration is often associated with inequitable employment opportunities (Hisanick & Little, 2015). Professional development is hindered as the tied-migrant spouse assumes additional roles to ascertain the well-being of the family (Borah & Fina, 2017; Eich-Kroh, 2007). Active duty military families who frequently relocate for their spouses' service often sacrifice their own careers (Burke & Miller, 2018; Casteneda & Harrell, 2008; Hisanick & Little, 2015; Meadows et al., 2016). Tied-migrant spouses who do work encounter inequity in salary, pension, and career progression (Eich-Kohm, 2007; Hisanick & Little, 2015; Shuls, 2017).

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experience of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members of US armed forces. This chapter provides a description and explanation of the use of a transcendental phenomenological design and why it was appropriate for this study. An explanation of procedures, data collection, and data analysis is presented to illustrate the design and how it was used to answer my research questions. Moreover, I describe the steps that were taken to increase trustworthiness. Finally, I describe the ethical considerations of the research study.

Design

This study met the criteria of a qualitative study because I described the shared and lived experiences of military spouse educators (Moustakas, 1994). A qualitative approach was appropriate because research occurred in a natural setting and consisted of "interpretive, material practices that make the world visible" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 7). A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study as I described and represented the experiences of the participants using interviews, conversations, recordings, and memos (Creswell & Poth, 2018). From these

interviews, conversations, and memos, invariant constituents were used to create themes and aided in providing a structural and textural description of the shared, lived experience of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). A transcendental phenomenological design was used because the study included an emphasis on the phenomenon to be explored, and I bracketed out my views so that I described the true experience of my participants. According to Giorgi (1997), a phenomenology refers to the totality of the lived experience that belongs to an individual. The focus of this particular study was on the description of the experiences of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The phenomenological method encompasses three interlocking steps: phenomenological reduction, description, and the search for the essence (Giorgi, 1997). First, phenomenological reduction takes place. In this step, the researcher brackets out all her own personal views and biases in order to see the phenomenon as it is presented. Phenomenological reduction is practiced so that the phenomenon is being seen for the first time as itself.

In order to be fully present in the research, intentionality was practiced. Moustakas (1994) defined intentionality as being conscious of something. He suggested that the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are related, meaning that we cannot simply separate ourselves from the object nor the object from ourselves. Giorgi (1997) described intentionality as simply a feature of consciousness. He described intentionality as a practice that allows the researcher to be conscious in the present and to see the experience while recognizing any outside or prior influences. As the researcher and the key instrument in the study, I needed to practice both phenomenological reduction and intentionality (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Giorgi, 1997; Moustakas, 1994). In participating in these practices, I hoped to give military spouse educators a voice to share their experiences.

A transcendental phenomenological approach allowed me to conduct interviews with those who have shared experiences (Moustakas, 1994). In order to truly understand the phenomenon experiences by my participants, I used data collection methods that are congruent with transcendental phenomenological research. According to Moustakas (1994), interviews are the typical method used to gain data in transcendental phenomenological research. The transcendental phenomenological approach allowed me to use semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with individuals who had shared experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Moreover, I organized data by using inductive and deductive logic. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a researcher goes back and forth between themes until establishment of a complete set of themes. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that a qualitative approach is appropriate when there is “a need to study a group or population, identify variables that cannot be easily measured, or hear silenced voices” (p. 45).

Research Questions

The following central research question and sub-research questions were created for this phenomenological research. These questions helped to guide interview questions and focus group questions. Additionally, they served as a guide on which to focus the study.

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses?

Sub-Questions

1. What does the tied-migrant military spouse describe as their power?
2. What are the loads that the female tied-migrant military spouses are already carrying in living?

3. What motivations influenced the female tied-migrant military spouse's career decisions?
4. What do female tied-migrant military spouse educators define as success?

Setting

This study took place at several locations in the United States. Due to the nomadic lifestyle of the tied-migrant military spouse educator, the geographic location was not constant for all participants. However, the setting was similar in that all participants lived in a location with a military population associated with the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, or Coast Guard. Military bases are defined as facilities from which military operations are projected or supported (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018). The US military currently possesses over 800 bases in 135 countries and territories (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018). In the United States, there are almost 200 bases that belong to either the Navy, Army, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard. Military bases are located in the most rural of areas of the United States to the largest cities on the coast (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018). Tied-migrant spouses often relocate from base to base with their active duty spouses; therefore, many participants' locations did not remain the same throughout the duration of this study.

For participants who lived at a distance, interviews and other methods of data collection took place in the virtual workspace via Skype, FaceTime, or telephone call. When possible, face-to-face interviews were held at a mutually agreed upon location and time. Face-to-face interviews were held when the participants lived close enough to participate in person. Regardless of the type of interview conducted (e.g. face-to-face or virtual), most participants resided adjacent to or on military installations.

Participants

A combination of purposeful sampling, criterion sampling, and snowball sampling were used. Purposeful sampling is a strategy in which the researcher “intentionally sample[s] a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 148). I used purposeful sampling because I wanted to select individuals that were able to inform me of their experience as educators who are married to members of the US military. I wished to select individuals who would be capable of describing their experiences of being tied-migrant military spouses. Therefore, my purposeful sample contained individuals who were all tied-migrant spouses of military members. Criterion sampling involves selecting individuals to participate in the study who all meet predetermined criterion for participation (Patton, 2001). Criterion sampling was used to determine if the individuals met the criteria for participating in the study: a tied-migrant spouse who had experienced a PCS and held one valid teaching licensure from any US state (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Snowball sampling is when participants who are already involved in the study will be asked to invite other participants who would be willing to share their experiences. It was used to gain additional participants by word of mouth when additional participants were needed (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a phenomenological study could vary in size from 5 to 25 participants. For the purpose of this study, and in order to obtain a rich, thick description of the participants’ experiences, a sample size of 15 participants was used (Polkinghorne, 1989). This allowed me to gain a variety of experiences from participants without excessive redundancy. The researcher continued sampling until redundancy and saturation occurred (Moustakas, 1994). Table 1 provides a demographic description of the participants who elected to take part in this study. As shown in Table 1, all 15 participants were female. Six

participants were associated with the Navy, five with the Army, two with the Air Force, one with the Coast Guard, and one with the Marines (see Figure 1). Fourteen participants identified as Caucasian and one identified as Native American. The pseudonyms that were assigned to each participant were representative of each person's race, ethnicity, age, and gender.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Data Summary

Participant	Age	Race	Branch of Military Affiliation
Abby	33	C	Coast Guard
Catherine	29	C	Marines
Chelsea	47	NA	Air Force
Elle	40	C	Navy
Emma	34	C	Navy
Emily	30	C	Navy
Erin	38	C	Army
Grace	33	C	Navy
Jayde	28	C	Army
Jennifer	45	C	Army
Laura	41	C	Army
Lily	42	C	Navy
Margaret	43	C	Air Force
Morgan	36	C	Army
Rebecca	30	C	Navy

Note. C = Caucasian; NA = Native American. All participants were female.

Procedures

Prior to beginning this research study, I received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University (see Appendix A). I used a Facebook group for military spouse educators in order to elicit and invite spouses to participate in the study. Additionally, possible participants were asked to invite others who they felt were qualified for the study or could provide a detailed explanation of their experience as a tied-migrant military spouse educator.

Once granted IRB approval, I recruited potential participants by using social media (see Appendix B). A survey was used to elicit information to ascertain that those who were willing to participate in my research study did, in fact, meet all the criteria for participation (see Appendix C). If participants met criteria for participation in the study, I sent consent forms that described the study and their role as participant (see Appendix D). In addition to providing a consent form, I was also available to answer any questions that the participants may have had. Once I received consent from my participants, I sent questionnaires that were used to gain preliminary demographic data and allowed my participants to answer questions regarding military service (see Appendix E). Additionally, the questionnaire included one open-ended question that allowed participants time to prepare, reflect, and describe their experience as a military spouse educator. Once questionnaires were returned, I contacted participants to set up interviews on mutually agreed times and dates. I read the questionnaires before I interviewed each individual participant. For participants who were close enough to participate in face-to-face interviews, a mutually agreed upon time, place and date was established.

I then conducted one-on-one interviews with each participant either in person, via Skype, or via telephone call (see Appendix F). Interviews were recorded using an MP3/MP4 recorder

and a recording application on my cell phone. A separate recording device was used as backup in the event that one of the other devices malfunctioned. Interviews lasted between approximately 45–90 minutes. In addition to recorded data, I took notes in order to document appearance, gestures, and unspoken communication that could aid in understanding the meaning of the participants' responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Following interviews, audio recordings were sent to a professional transcriptionist. When transcribed interviews were returned to me, they were then sent to the participants for member-checking purposes where they were permitted to clarify responses, if necessary (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

After the completion of one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews were used to collect additional data (see Appendix G). If possible, focus group interviews were held in-person. If participants were unable to attend in-person focus groups, Skype, Facetime, or teleconferencing were used. Focus group interviews were then transcribed. After the transcription of both one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews, participants participated in member-checking to ascertain the accuracy of their responses. Throughout the duration of the data collection and analysis, all data collected was stored in a password protected computer and/or in a secure and locked file cabinet. Following member-checking, I analyzed the data by using Moustakas's (1994) steps for data analysis.

The Researcher's Role

In order to describe the lived experience of the military spouse educator, my role was the human instrument. A human instrument was needed for phenomenological research as many of the aspects require a human to do the work (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the human instrument, I completed everything from the in-depth personal interviews to the thematic coding. As a military spouse who is also an educator, I was the ideal human instrument for this topic of research as I

can relate to the participants. Though I was not currently employed as an educator at the time of this study, I have been in the past, and I also have had experience with relocating as a military spouse. I had experience with helping other military spouses locate and understand a receiving state's licensure and application process.

My experience as a military spouse and as an educator has allowed me to interact with other educators whose spouses are in other military branches. For the purpose of this research study, my participants were mostly individuals whom I have never met. When I conducted my interviews with other military spouse educators, I was able to provide these spouses with a platform where their stories could be told and their experiences could be heard. From this study, I hoped that others in policy and state education systems can learn of the experiences of this unique group of educators and possibly improve the current situation for tied-migrant educators.

As the human instrument, I created the questionnaire, conducted interviews and focus groups. Additionally, I collected, analyzed, and interpreted the data. I acknowledged that bias may exist in my study due to using a qualitative design where the human instrument collects and analyzes data and presents the meaning of the experience. It was extremely important that I described and acknowledged all biases. In order to help to reduce some of the bias I journaled to bracket out my own experiences.

Data Collection

In phenomenological research, the phenomenon is what the participants present through their dialogue, discussion, actions, and through the data (Moustakas, 1994). Data collection procedures that were used in this study were congruent with those of phenomenological research. The use of different data sources was utilized to gain the best possible understanding of the experience of the tied-migrant military spouse.

I used triangulation as a means of trustworthiness. Triangulation requires the use of multiple forms of data such as questionnaires, interviews, and focus interviews. Triangulation allowed me to check the integrity of the data collection methods that I utilized. This allowed me to gain data and understand the experience of a military spouse educator from a variety of vantage points (Schwandt, 2015).

Questionnaire

Prior to conducting semi-formal one-one-one interviews, each participant was sent a link to the Military Spouse Educator Questionnaire Survey which was offered through SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire gathered basic demographic information, teaching licenses held, military affiliation, and an open-ended essay question. It was also utilized to determine the participants' experience with military PCS moves and employment. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), questionnaires and survey instruments may be used as long as they are grounded in theory or literature. The questions were mainly used to gain background information of my participants. The basic information received from the completion of this questionnaire was useful as it provided information on the number of moves, deployments, or other major military life events that occurred in the life of the participants and affected their professional decisions (McClusky, 1970).

Interviews

Following the completion of the Military Spouse Educator Questionnaire, participants were contacted via email to set up a semi-structured one-on-one interview. Each of the 15 participants took part in the one-on-one interviews. Interviews lasted anywhere between 29 minutes and an hour and a half. Typically, the phone interviews lasted the least amount of time. In-person interviews were much longer. Most interviews occurred over the phone as most

participants did not live close enough to interview face-to-face. I used semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions in order to gain descriptive, content-rich details of the experiences of the military spouse educator (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Prior to the interview, I used epoche, the practice of eliminating preconceived notions and refraining from judgement (Moustakas, 1994). I remained engaged throughout. In order to receive the best information from the participants, interviews were informal and interactive (Moustakas, 1994). I attempted to create a trusting and relaxed atmosphere where the participants were comfortable in order to obtain the best possible responses. Before the interview begins, Moustakas (1994) suggests having the participants take a few minutes to focus on the experience. Interview questions were broad so that they could “facilitate the obtaining of rich, vital, substantive description of the co-researcher’s experience of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 116).

Interview questions were standardized open-ended questions that were predetermined before the interview. The use of a semi-structured interview allowed me to frame appropriate questions in order to obtain the information that I was seeking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each participant was asked the same questions, in the same order. I was the only person conducting interviews. Interviews took place at a convenient location for the participant, whether in-person or via Skype or other telephone application. Having a predetermined list of questions helped to keep me focused on the interviews and acted as a guide to keep the interviews on track (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I also took notes during the interviews so I could record body language, appearance, and setting. Taking notes allowed me to remain focused on the interview. I recorded the interviews with my phone’s recording application. I also used an electronic audio recorder. I used two recording devices in case one device failed.

After the interview, the audio file was uploaded to my password-protected computer and then sent to a professional transcriptionist. While waiting for the interviews to be transcribed, I relistened to each interview and made remarks in a notebook and in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. After receiving transcriptions from the professional transcriptionist, I emailed each participant a copy in order to member-check and ensure accuracy. Very few changes were made to the transcribed documents after the participants read them. Following the last interview, it was apparent that there were significant similarities in the experiences of the majority of the participants. Following are the standardized open-ended interview questions that I asked.

Opening Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me; describe yourself and your family.
2. How and when did you become affiliated with the military?
3. Why did you want to become an educator?
4. Please describe your experience in how you gained teacher licensure.

Questions Relating to the Loads and Powers of the Participants

5. How many times have you moved with the military?
6. Please describe your experiences in moving to a new duty station in a different state.
7. Has your spouse ever deployed? When and for how long? Did you teach while your spouse was deployed?
8. Did you return to teaching each time you've moved? Why or why not?
9. What influenced your decision to return to teaching?
10. If you didn't return to the classroom, what influenced your decision not to return?
11. Please describe your experience in finding a new teaching position after a PCS.
12. Please describe your supports in life.

13. How has being a military spouse ever affected your professional career or goals?
14. What were your experiences in gaining licensure following a PCS move?
15. What were your experiences regarding teacher pay or the step process when entering a new school?
16. Please describe your experience in teaching in your new position(s).
17. Please describe any concerns that you have had in regard to your professional career.

Questions Relating to Motivation and Success

18. What are your goals? Personal/professional?
19. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
20. Do you feel like you are successful? Why or why not?
21. What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experience as a military spouse educator?

Questions one through three were designed to build rapport between myself and the participant (Patton, 2001). The questions were asked in order to determine a general timeline of their process with teacher licensure and their general experience as tied-migrant military spouses. Question one was used mainly so the participant would begin to feel at ease in the interview, but also to determine how the participant identified—as a military spouse or as an educator. Question two was asked to determine the length of affiliation with the military as well as background information regarding whether they were educators before or during their affiliations with the military. Question three was asked to understand the motivations behind becoming an educator. Question four was used to gain information about the participants' initial licensure and experience in gaining it.

Questions five through seventeen were asked to determine the loads the participants carried in living and the powers that were available to them. Question five was asked to determine the amount of times the participants have moved with the military but also to attempt to determine the number of possible times the participants have moved across state lines and may have had to acquire licensure in a new state. Moreover, this question elicited responses regarding a timeline of when a tied-migrant spouse experienced deployment or other significant military life events. Question six was asked to obtain a definite number of times the military spouse has moved due to a PCS. Question seven addressed the experiences of the military spouse concerning moving, support, and emotional wellness. Research shows that moving, deployments, and other military experiences can affect the overall health and wellness of the military spouse (Runge et al., 2014). Furthermore, support and overall health and well-being could contribute to a tied-migrant spouse's level of margin that they have in living (McClusky, 1970). Questions eight through 10 were asked to determine how moving as a tied-migrant spouse influenced an educator's ability to find and secure employment. Previous research has demonstrated that employment for military spouses can be inequitable and difficult to obtain (Burke & Miller, 2018; Hisanick & Little, 2015). Military spouses often encounter difficulties in obtaining work as there are stigmas associated with military spouses (Burke & Miller, 2018). Questions nine and 10 specifically sought to answer what life experiences, loads in living, and powers have helped or hindered the professional teaching careers of tied-migrant military spouses (McClusky, 1970). Question 11 specifically dealt with the perceived support and power that a spouse could obtain and how it could have helped in the transition of moving through the licensure process to obtaining a professional career (McClusky, 1970). Questions 12 through 14 determined whether pay and pension inequities were experienced (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Shuls, 2017). Researchers

cite difficulties for educators who cross state lines in obtaining equitable pay (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Hisanick & Little, 2015). Research also describes pension inequities in educators who cross state lines multiple times (Shuls, 2017). Monetary capabilities may influence a tied-migrant spouse's decision in regard to the necessity of working (McClusky, 1970). Questions 15 through 17 were asked to determine whether educators experienced issues in seniority as educators who cross state lines frequently face issues with obtaining tenure or maintaining seniority (Coggshall & Sexton, 2008).

Questions 18 and 19 were asked to determine the participants' motivations. McClusky (1970) stated that most individuals desire a certain level of personal autonomy. Their decisions in regard to their profession may demonstrate the internal and external motivations behind their decisions making. Question 20 addressed the participants' ideas of success and whether or not they defined themselves as successful based on their lifestyle and career. Moreover, these questions elicited answers concerning the individuals' priorities in life, including which factors have contributed to having a successful teaching career and which parts of military life have hindered a teaching career. Finally, Question 21 was asked in order to give the participants an opportunity to add anything else that they felt was useful for the researcher to know.

Focus Groups

Following one-on-one interviews, I conducted three small focus groups that consisted of approximately three participants each. Focus group questions were developed following interviews as additional questions arose and clarification was needed. The focus groups lasted between 45 minutes and almost two hours. The focus group that occurred in person lasted the longest. Focus groups were used to gain additional knowledge and understanding of the participants' experiences. These interviews were valuable as they allowed me to interact with the

participants in a small group setting. I created focus groups by placing individuals who were similar in the same group (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The purpose of the focus groups was to extract any new information that would be pertinent to the experience of the participants. Through each focus group, I found that the interaction between the participants themselves provided new information that was not obtained by the use of questionnaires or one-on-one interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I believe that this was due to the ease of conversation between participants who could discuss similar life experiences. Following each focus group, the audio file was uploaded to my password-protected computer and then sent to a transcriptionist to be professionally transcribed. When transcribed documents were returned from the transcriptionist, they were emailed to participants in order to member check and verify the accuracy of the interviews. No changes were made to the focus group interviews. Following are the open-ended questions that I asked during the focus groups.

1. Please introduce yourselves to each other and identify the branch of the military with which you are associated.
2. What would you identify as the most positive aspect of military life?
3. What would you identify as the most difficult aspect of military life?
4. How has the military lifestyle affected you professionally?
5. Have you sought employment at each duty station? Why or why not?
6. When you think about your professional career, what comes to mind?
7. Have you had to give up your professional aspirations due to the nature of military lifestyle?
8. What have you gained professionally from your spouse's military service?
9. Has military life provided you with any advantages that otherwise would not have been

available to you?

The first focus group interview question was asked in order to allow participants to get to know one another and to build a rapport with myself and the rest of the participants. In order for participants to provide rich descriptions of their experience, it was necessary for them to feel comfortable with the other participants, the environment, and the researcher (Moustakas, 1994). The second question was asked in order to identify the aspects of military life that have provided positive opportunities for military spouses. Research demonstrates that military spouses are often resilient, adaptable, and flexible (Runge et al., 2014). These experiences gained in living the military lifestyle influenced the participants' overall experiences. Additionally, their positive experiences were responsible for the participants' views on the loads they are carrying, the powers that these experiences provide, and the margin they have in their life (McClusky, 1970). The third question assessed the aspects of military life that were difficult for the participant. Research demonstrates that deployments, multiple PCS moves, and other characteristics of military life can cause emotional, mental, and physical strain on the tied-migrant spouse (Borah & Fina, 2017). Moreover, these situations can add more to the load in living that the tied-migrant military spouse carries (McClusky, 1970). The fourth question was asked to determine the ways in which the military lifestyle and the participants' overall experiences have affected them professionally. Research indicates that tied-migrant spouses' as well as military spouses' employment suffers greatly due to the constraints of the military lifestyle (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Meadows et al., 2016). This question allowed participants to provide an overall view of the tied-migrant spouse educator experience and its influence on their educational careers.

Free Word Association Exercise

Following the question portion of the focus group, I asked the participants to participate

in a projective technique where indirect methods allowed participants to project the opinions, beliefs, and biases onto some task or situation (Ludueno, Behzad, & Gros, 2013). The projective technique that was used was a free word association. Free word association exercises are beneficial in obtaining truthful information and data as they do not grant excessive time for the participant to think of their responses. Additionally, free word association “is a task that can be used to expose the basic mechanisms by which humans connect memories” (Ludueno et al., 2013, p. 1). Stimulus words related to the research study were used and the respondents were asked to respond with the first word or phrase that came to mind. The following words were used as stimulus words in this exercise: military life, moving/PCS, support, deployment, career, and teaching. After the stimulus word was said aloud, each participant said a word or phrase that they immediately associated with the stimulus word. In this exercise, the participants were able to be more honest with their words as the exercise did not give them time to think about their responses. Additionally, this exercise facilitated further discussion as the participants often commented on each other’s word associations or phrases. This allowed for additional data to emerge as the participants began to feel more and more comfortable in discussing their true thoughts on the topics previously mentioned.

Data Analysis

Once I collected all of the data, and all one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews were transcribed, I organized all of the questionnaires, interviews, and focus group interviews in order to triangulate data. I used the Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) NVivo to organize and analyze my data. The use of NVivo allowed me to store and retrieve my data in and from one location. NVivo allowed me to upload data from any source, so I was able to upload my questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews and store the information

in one location. Once themes were prepared, identified, and organized, they were sent back to the participants to check for trustworthiness. Participants were able to check the accuracy of the documents and made any necessary corrections. Following member checking, Moustakas's (1994) seven steps to analyze data was used.

In transcendental phenomenological research, researchers need to filter the reality that is seen. All preconceptions, biases, notions, and experiences that cloud our vision must be removed so that the phenomenon can present itself. This practice of *epoche* allows researchers to see what it is rather than how we see it based on our internal ideas and biases (Moustakas, 1994).

According to Moustakas (1994), "*epoche* requires the elimination of suppositions and the raising of knowledge above every possible doubt" (p. 26). After the filter is removed of biases, the phenomenon can be seen for what it is. This process is naïve in nature as the researcher is seeing the phenomenon as it is, rather than asserting what is already understood of the experience (Christensen, Welch, & Barr, 2017).

Bracketing is the first step in phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). First and foremost, bracketing occurred in the data analysis so that I could set aside my own personal experiences and assumptions as a military spouse and educator. Moustakas (1994) recommends *epoche* in which the researcher "engages in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated" (p. 22). In order to achieve this, I began journaling so that I could write down my own personal assumptions (see Appendix H).

I am currently a military spouse. I can understand the experience of frequent moves and other aspects of being a military spouse that affect daily life. I also was an educator. I still hold a teaching license and would someday like to return to the classroom. I have moved and gained licensure in some receiving states. In others, I did not go through the licensure process. Many

elements factored into my decision of whether or not I was going to teach in a new state after a PCS. Circumstance and situation largely influenced my decisions. I can understand the frustrations that other military spouse educators encounter when they experience a PCS, as day-to-day life becomes affected when one is uprooted. I believe that this helped me to describe the experiences of other military spouses with a significant level of understanding.

In the next stage of Moustakas's process for data analysis, all expressions relevant to the experience were listed. Moustakas (1994) refers to this step as horizontalization. Moustakas (1994) states, "Each horizon as it comes into our conscious experience is the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinctive character" (p. 95). Moreover, each statement was given equal value to others (Moustakas, 1994).

In this step in the process, I began by having both the one-on-one interviews and the focus group interviews transcribed immediately upon completion. I then read through all of the transcripts and organized the data. Data was organized in two ways. Primarily, I created a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel where I could produce and enter data into themes (see Appendix I). Additionally, I used the NVivo software to store, organize, and retrieve data (see Appendix J). In addition to reading and re-reading interview transcripts, I also used memoing to help identify any themes as they appeared to emerge (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Following horizontalization, reduction and elimination took place. In the reduction and elimination step, each expression was tested to determine if the expression contained a moment of the experience that is necessary for understanding it or if the expression could be abstracted and labeled. Expressions that did not meet the previous requirements were eliminated. Moreover, any repetitive statements or vague expressions were purged (Moustakas, 1994). As I read over the transcriptions of the interviews in their entirety, I incorporated memoing to help immerse

myself in the details (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Memoing was used to write down short phrases or key concepts (see Appendix K).

Once key phrases and concepts were listed, they were clustered and grouped into themes. In clustering and thematizing, the constituents were clustered and labeled and became the core themes of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Codes were created to help to describe data and create themes. I used in-vivo codes which Creswell and Poth (2018) identify as codes and themes that are the exact words of the interviewee. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that in-vivo codes are generally “catchy and draw the attention of the reader” (p. 69).

The invariant constituents were checked against the record of the participant to make sure that they were either expressed explicitly in the transcriptions or that they were compatible. If they were neither, I eliminated them (Moustakas, 1994). I also used memoing throughout this stage as it assisted in classifying and organizing data into codes and themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

After data was organized into codes and then into themes, I was able to identify the individual structural and textural description of the phenomenon. In creating the individual textural description, each participant’s validated themes were described as an explanation of what was experienced during the phenomenon. I used memoing in this process as I was able to return to the transcripts and retrieve verbatim examples (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994).

In constructing the structural description, I combined the textural description with imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). Imaginative variations occurred when possible meanings are sought through the utilization of imagination. This process involved searching for possible interpretations by the use of imagining different perspectives (Moustakas, 1994).

Interpretations were used in this stage (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interpretive analysis involved both how the participant experienced the phenomenon and how the researcher attempted to understand it (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The final stage in phenomenological data analysis was the creation and description of the essence of the phenomenon. The description of the essence and meaning of the experience was the combination of the textural and structural descriptions. The description of the essence of the phenomenon represented the whole group (Moustakas, 1994).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness can be defined as the quality or goodness of an investigation based on four criteria (Schwandt, 2015). Therefore, it was the responsibility of the researcher to create an honest and trusting relationship with all of the participants. The four criteria of trustworthiness are credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each of the four criteria acted together to increase the trustworthiness in the study.

Credibility

Schwandt (2015) describes credibility as the fit in which the researcher describes and reports the views and experiences of the participants and the actuality of the participants' views and experiences. It was important to establish credibility so that the participants' experiences were described correctly. In order to establish credibility in my research, I used triangulation of the data from questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Triangulation is a procedure where multiple forms of data and information are used and constructed to test validity (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulating data helped to strengthen the research results (Patton, 2001).

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the process is logical and well documented (Schwandt, 2015). Establishing dependability was important because the process of the research must be specific in order to replicate the study. To ensure the dependability and fairness of the study, the interview questions, and focus group questions, the researcher sought out the help of another professional and peer checks were used (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition to peer checks, participant member checks occurred so that participants could add to or clarify responses.

In addition to peer and participant checks concerning the research questions and responses, I also used an audit trail (see Appendix L). An audit trail is when a third party reviews the procedures used to collect data and judges the dependability of the procedures (Schwandt, 2015). Using member checks helped to establish authenticity and is described as the most important step that a researcher can follow (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used member checks when I took data and interpretations back to my participants so that they could check the credibility of the information they provided to me (Schwandt, 2015). The process of member checking not only helped to establish credibility but allowed participants to react to the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Confirmability establishes trustworthiness as it was used to ensure that the results of the data were not from the researcher's imagination (Schwandt, 2015). Establishing credibility was important because a researcher should report the experiences as they come from the participants, not as the researcher imagined them. In this study, member checks were used to ensure that the researcher did not unintentionally change data or the perspective. A member check was done by completing an audit trail to "retrace the process by which the researcher arrived at their final findings" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 323). I used member checks when I took data and

interpretations back to my participants, so they could check the credibility of the information they provided to me (Schwandt, 2015).

Reflexivity was also used to ensure the confirmability of my study. Reflexivity allowed me to remain conscious of my own biases, values, and experiences that I brought to this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I made this explicit in my research by describing my own personal biases, assumptions, and experiences in detail.

Transferability

Transferability deals with the ability to generalize data (Schwandt, 2015). Transferability occurs when the researcher provides the reader with enough information about one case that the reader can then apply that data to another case (Schwandt, 2015). Primarily, in order to establish transferability, I used an audit trail in order to describe how data was collected and analyzed. Through the use of NVivo, I was able to produce codes and group each code into themes. This would aid a reader in examining the data and being able to transfer it to another case. Establishing transferability was important because the reader needs to be provided with sufficient information to establish similarity between the research and other findings (Schwandt, 2015). In order to support transferability, I provided rich, thick textural and structural descriptions. The thick descriptions came from the data itself. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), “Rich description also enables readers to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts” (p. 129).

Ethical Considerations

In order to address the ethical considerations in this study, I ensured that my participants were not exposed to any harm. Before beginning my research, I obtained IRB permission from Liberty University (Schwandt, 2015). I then obtained consent from all of my participants. When

I contacted participants, I informed them of the purpose of the study. Participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and that they could leave or be removed from the study at any time (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Consent forms were written at a sixth-grade reading level to make sure that all potential participants understood the purpose of the study and what was being asked of them. I protected my participants' identities by using pseudonyms. All files were protected in a locked storage file cabinet or password protected computer (Creswell & Poth, 2018). If a social media group was used for data collection, I protected the group by making sure it was a secret or closed group. When analyzing data, I reported all findings whether or not they were contradictory (Creswell & Poth, 2018). At the termination of the study, I debriefed participants.

Summary

This chapter described the design approach that I selected for this study. I used a transcendental phenomenological approach and have stated the reasons that this design was appropriate. The setting for this study varied and was dependent on the participants, their geographical location, and affiliation with a particular branch of the military. An ideal sample size was approximately 15 participants in order to obtain a rich, thick description of the experience or until saturation was met (Moustakas, 1994). Data was collected in the form of questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Each method of data collection was explained. Additionally, I described the steps of data analysis that were used. I also described how I attempted to increase the trustworthiness of the study. Ethical considerations were also discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members in the United States armed forces. Chapter four contains descriptions of each participant. In order to secure anonymity, each participant received a pseudonym. Pseudonyms align with the participant's gender, ethnicity, and age.

In chapter three the methods of data collection and analysis were discussed. Data collection and analysis took approximately nine months to complete. This chapter reports the findings of the data analysis. Additionally, themes are identified. Each theme answers guiding research questions.

Participants

Participants were recruited from private and secret social media Facebook groups. Two participants were recruited from snowball sampling. A total of 15 military spouse educators agreed to take part in this study. All 15 military spouses who participated were female. Ages ranged from 28 years old to 45 years old at the time of the study. Although each military branch was represented, the majority of participants were either Navy or Army spouses. All but one participant was an active duty spouse. The lone participant who was not an active duty spouse at the time of the interview was a reservist spouse. Her husband was prior active duty and she felt very confident in her ability to recall and speak of her experiences as an educator and military spouse. All 15 spouses participated in the online Military Spouse Questionnaire and the one-on-one interview. Eight spouses participated in the focus group interviews. Spouses who were geographically capable to meet for an in-person focus group interview met in a mutually agreed upon location, while other focus group interviews took place over the phone via conference call.

All quotes obtained from interviews and questionnaires are used verbatim as they were professionally transcribed.

All 15 participants were female. Six participants were associated with the Navy, five with the Army, two with the Air Force, one with the Coast Guard, and one with the Marines. Fourteen participants identified as Caucasian and one identified as Native American.

Abby

Abby is a 33-year-old white female. She is a Coast Guard spouse of eight years. Her husband is enlisted in the US Coast Guard and is an enlisted salary grade 5 or more commonly referred to as E-5. Abby wanted to become an educator because she realized that she had a passion for history while taking courses that were necessary to complete her original major in athletic training. She soon realized that athletic training was not for her. A counselor suggested to her to add on an education certification. She always liked the idea of becoming an educator and stated that it just made sense to her.

Abby and her spouse are stationed in New Jersey where she is currently teaching. She has 11 years of teaching experience. In addition to her undergraduate education degree in history education, Abby holds a master's degree in Counseling and Research Psychology. She is certified in Social Studies grades 6-12, English grades 6-12, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) grades K-12, Special Education (SpED) grades K-12, and also holds a certificate in Educational Leadership.

Abby and her husband met and married while she was in college completing her degree. Since marriage, Abby and her husband have experienced a total of three PCS moves. Her husband has deployed for very short deployments of three months or less and she has taught with each deployment. Originally her professional aspirations were to become an educational

administrator but has stated that the military lifestyle has “made me more complacent with my career aspirations. I am limited in what I can achieve so I have learned to accept our situation” (Abby, Interview, July 2019). She stated that she feels as though the military has hindered her professional aspirations and has closed many doors for her.

Catherine

Catherine is a 29-year-old, Caucasian female. She is a Marine spouse; her husband is an officer salary grade 3 commonly referred to as an O-3. She has been a military spouse for approximately three years. Catherine wanted to become a teacher because she witnessed how her brother, who has autism, benefitted from his Special Education services and teachers. She stated that it really propelled her into a career in Special Education. She obtained her licensure from California and completed a year-long teaching internship. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Communicative Disorders and a master’s degree in Special Education.

Catherine and her husband have experienced two PCS moves since being married. They are currently stationed in North Carolina. She is unemployed due to what she describes as a “decline of opportunity” (Catherine, Interview, June 2019). Since encountering a lack of opportunity at her current duty station, she is completing a management program to allow her to have more career options. She stated that the military lifestyle has afforded her the ability to see the differences in state educational systems and to work with different populations; however, it has not allowed her the opportunity for growth.

Chelsea

Chelsea is a 47-year-old female. She identifies as Native American. She is an Air Force spouse of 10 years. She has a 17-year-old stepson and a nine-year-old daughter. She and her

family are stationed in Utah. She currently works as a preschool aid.

Chelsea wanted to become an educator because it is something she always felt a calling to do. She chose Special Education during her master's internship program because she liked the strategies that were used to help students to learn. She completed a traditional route where she obtained her bachelor's degree in education. She has her master's degree in Special Education. Both of her degrees are from the state of California.

In the duration of her spouse's military career, she and her family have experienced three PCS moves. She did not work as an educator each time her family moved. She has experienced three month-long deployments. She did not work during these times. She states that being a military spouse has been a hinderance to her professional aspirations because she has not been able to teach every time she has moved to a new duty station due to licensure constraints.

Elle

Elle is a 40-year-old Caucasian Navy Spouse currently stationed in Texas. She has two elementary-aged children, one boy and one girl. Elle's husband is an officer in the Navy (O-5). She has been a military spouse for 13 years. She is currently teaching at this duty station. This is her 16th year of teaching.

Elle originally wanted to become an educator because she loved working with children, she finds it rewarding, and she loves to help to make a difference in a child's life. She gained her original licensure through Iowa State University in Elementary Education. She then obtained her master's degree in Education/Mathematics. She holds teaching licenses in Iowa, Nebraska, Mississippi, California, and Texas.

Elle and her family have experienced four PCS moves. For the most part, Elle has been able to find teaching positions each time her family has moved. In the instances that she has not, she was able to substitute teach. She states that she was unable to find work these times because the move fell in the middle of the academic year. Elle's husband has deployed four times and she was able to maintain her teaching career through each deployment. Elle attributes the military lifestyle with her becoming an adaptable individual who is not afraid of new places and new things. She states that it has been a hindrance in regard to her professional career in that she has not been able to meet her goal of becoming a math coach.

Emily

Emily is a 30-year-old Caucasian Navy Spouse. She has been a military spouse for seven years. Her husband is enlisted in the Navy as a corpsman (E-5). She and her husband are currently stationed in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. They do not have any children. She is currently teaching at this duty station.

Emily wanted to become an educator while she was in junior college. Initially she wanted to focus on educational policy but realized that she needed to experience teaching and become aware of educational issues. She stated that she worried that she would be responsible for making policy decisions without experience, so she decided to become a teacher. She has her bachelor's degree in education and her master's degree in Educational Administration. She aspires to be an educational administrator in the future.

Emily and her husband have experienced three PCS moves. She has taught at two of the three places that she lived. At her husband's first duty station, she was unable to teach because it was located in Rota, Spain and military spouses are not permitted to work in the economy. During this time, she worked at the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) as a

childcare teacher. Emily's husband has not deployed in the time period that they have been married but is preparing to deploy in the near future. She plans to remain in her current teaching position. Emily has stated that professionally, the military lifestyle has hindered her in achieving her goal of working in educational administration. She stated her biggest concern overall is her retirement.

There is the biggest issue of all, will I ever retire? I have paid three different retirement systems, all of which are not optional to pay into as it provides the funding for the system's retired educators. So, for now I wait and advocate for a system that better serves the educators and military families that serve our nation. (Emily, Questionnaire, August 2019)

Emma

Emma is a 34-year-old Caucasian female. She has been married for 13 years and a Navy spouse for nine of those years. Emma is the mother of three young children ages seven and below. Her husband is an officer (O-4) in the Navy. Emma and her family are stationed in Rhode Island.

Emma was the first in her family to attend college. She stated that she picked teaching because she was not aware of all of the other careers that were available to her. Though she picked education due to lack of awareness of other professions, she stated that she felt it was a great pick for her and she could not imagine doing anything else. Emma attended college in New England and followed a traditional pathway to licensure. She met her husband while in college and after discussing their options as a couple, they decided they would marry following graduation. Due to several deployments in a short period of time for her husband, Emma decided

to stay in New England while her husband reported to his first duty station in Virginia. This allowed her to obtain her initial licensure and teach for several years to gain experience.

Emma holds teaching licenses in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Virginia, and California. She has experienced three PCS moves. Her husband has deployed five times. She has maintained her teaching career during all five deployments. Emma states that she feels like she is “a better educator because I have taught in so many places and so many different things. I learn so much each place we go” (Emma, Interview, June 2019). She describes the military lifestyle as hindering her professional goals, stating that it is not conducive to her career. “Our life is prioritized by my husband’s job, my family needs, and anything left over is for my career” (Emma, Interview, June 2019).

Erin

Erin is a 38-year-old Caucasian female. She is an Army spouse of 11 years. She has a nine-year old son and a five-year-old daughter. She lives in Rhode Island with her family and is awaiting an upcoming PCS move. She is not sure whether or not she will work at her new home but is applying for licensure in that state and will be looking for teaching jobs. Erin wanted to become an educator because it was something she enjoyed and has always loved to do. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in education from the state of Washington in middle and high school mathematics. She has 15 graduate credits in education.

Erin and her family have moved a total of seven times due to a PCS. She has not been able to teach each time her family has moved. She taught at their first duty station but since their second move and beginning a family, Erin states that it has been hard to find and maintain childcare in order to return to teaching. Erin discusses that she has tutored while she stays home with her children at duty stations where she did not have childcare. She was able to return to

work when her immediate family moved close to her extended family as they helped her out with childcare. Her husband has deployed three times. Erin did not teach during her husband's deployments; however, she did tutor as it was more flexible. She states that she feels as though the military lifestyle has hindered her professional aspirations.

Grace

Grace is a 33-year old Caucasian female. She identifies as having Irish ethnicity. She has been a military spouse for a little over two years. Her husband is a lieutenant in the Navy. They do not have any children. They live in California but are awaiting new orders for an upcoming move. Grace is currently unemployed.

She became an educator because her mother is a teacher and she grew up helping her mother in her kindergarten classroom. She says that this really exposed her to education, and she knew that it was what she wanted to do. She began her teaching credentials at Cal State University but had issues with her student teaching experiences and ultimately had to withdraw from the program. She spent about three years substitute teaching in order to make enough money to continue in a different credentialing program. She then gained enough finances to return to school where she gained licensure in Family and Consumer Sciences in grades 7-12.

Grace and her husband have experienced two military PCS moves. She did not teach with each move. Her husband has not yet deployed but Grace stated that they expect him to deploy very soon. She is unsure if she will attempt to teach during that time period. She states that she is concerned because her licensure is an initial licensure and she only has so much time to obtain a job in order gain a permanent license. Overall, Grace feels as though her teaching career has been adversely affected by the military lifestyle.

Jayde

Jayde is a 28-year-old Caucasian Army Spouse. She has been a military spouse for four years. Her husband is an adjutant general officer (O-3). She and her husband do not have any children. She is currently living apart from her spouse as she is completing her PhD in History. She lives in Tampa, Florida while her husband is stationed in South Carolina. She is a graduate assistant at the university where she attends school.

She wanted to be an educator because she wanted to have a job in between undergraduate school and graduate school. She received her bachelor's in History with a minor in Spanish. Following college graduation, Jayde then took employment at a charter school. In holding that position, she obtained a temporary teaching position and was then able to transfer it to a permanent certification.

Her family has moved three times due to a permanent change of station; however, Jayde has traveled back and forth from her husband at his duty station to her university where she is finishing her doctorate. Her husband was deployed previously, but she maintained her career during that time. The military has influenced Jayde's career decisions as she and her husband decided that she should earn her masters full time since they were moving so much. She ultimately decided to obtain an advanced degree and accredits the military for this as "my husband's salary has afforded me the ability to pursue graduate degrees" (Jayde, Questionnaire, August 2019).

Laura

Laura is a 41-year-old Caucasian Army spouse. Her husband was active duty in the army for eight years. He is currently a reservist. Laura and her husband live in Colorado with her six-year-old daughter. Laura is a university professor.

Laura wanted to become an educator because she always felt a calling for it. She states that she had a bad experience with her second-grade teacher and thought she would do things so much differently if she were in that position. She said the desire to teach never changed throughout middle school and high school, so she decided to major in education in college and take a traditional pathway to gain a teaching licensure. Laura is licensed in Spanish grades K-12, Elementary Education, Middle/Secondary English Language Arts (ELA), and Middle/Secondary Social Studies. She also has an administration license. After gaining teaching experience with the DoDEA, she decided to pursue her doctoral degree.

Laura and her family have moved a total of three times for a PCS. She did not teach at each duty station due to timing of the moves and the birth of her daughter. When she was not teaching, she was subbing in a local school district. At this time, she did have her doctoral degree and was also working as an adjunct professor online. Her husband did not deploy during their marriage. She stated that the military lifestyle did not positively contribute to her ability to teach at the elementary, middle school, or high school level.

Lily

Lily is a 42-year-old Caucasian female. She has been a Navy Spouse for 13 years. Her husband is a Naval officer (O-5). She has one daughter who is seven years old. Lily and her family are currently stationed in Rhode Island where she is teaching at a local school.

Lily wanted to become an educator after obtaining a job teaching following a situation of extreme need for an educator. She reluctantly took the position after finding out that she would get benefits. At that school, she taught special education mathematics. She ended up loving teaching. She followed a non-traditional route to certification. She has a bachelor's degree in

biology, chemistry, and physical therapy and a master's degree in special education. She has certifications in science, mathematics, and special education.

Lily and her family have moved seven times due to a PCS. She has tried to work each time she has moved as she stated that she is a person who needs to work. The only time she did not teach is when her family was stationed in Portugal because she was not permitted to work on the economy. Lily's husband has been deployed three times, and she has maintained her teaching career each time. She stated that the military lifestyle has given her the "confidence to teach outside of certification areas" (Lily, Questionnaire, June 2019). She said that the military has been a hinderance as far as having gaps in her resume and a variety of different teaching positions every two to three years. She feels like she is easily spotted as a military spouse due to these discrepancies.

Jennifer

Jennifer is a 45-year-old, Caucasian Army spouse. She was right in the middle of a PCS move to Utah at the time of the interview and was kind enough to take the time to discuss her experiences as a military spouse and educator. She became affiliated with the military through marriage to her husband who is an officer in the Army. She has been a military spouse for approximately 13 years. She has three children—one child already in college and eight-year-old twins at home—and a dog.

Jennifer became an educator because one of her professors mentioned to her that it would be something at which she would excel. Originally, she wanted to be an actress but after discovering that she needed a more reliable way to make a living, she took her professor's advice and completed a traditional teacher certification program in the state of Maryland. Jennifer holds teaching licenses in Utah, Rhode Island, and Missouri. She is certified in English Education and

Drama. She holds a master's degree in Education and a doctoral degree in Education (Curriculum and Instruction).

Jennifer and her family have experienced six PCS moves, and she has not taught at each station due to family obligations. She has not experienced any deployments. Jennifer describes the military lifestyle as broadening her horizons and allowing her to see things she otherwise would not have seen. She stated that it has both helped and hindered her professional career.

As a professional it has made me a better educator because of my diversity of experience; however it has been a hinderance because I have to continually be relicensed in each state and my pay never exceeds the preestablished acceptance of years. (Jennifer, Questionnaire, June 2019)

Margaret

Margaret is a 43-year-old Caucasian female. She is an Air Force spouse of 14 years. Her husband is a Lieutenant Colonel (O-5). She has a 23-year-old stepdaughter who does not live at home. She and her husband are currently stationed in Oklahoma. She is currently unemployed.

She became an educator because she wanted to do more than be an administrative assistant. When she made the decision to obtain her master's degree, she was coaching sports for her church and liked working with the age group of kids she was coaching. Since Margaret received her bachelor's degree in family and consumer sciences and decided to get her master's degree in education, she was able to obtain her licensure in Family and Consumer Sciences for grades 7-12. At one time, Margaret held teaching licensure in six states. All but one of those licenses has since lapsed since she did not continue working in those states. She currently holds a teaching license in North Carolina.

Margaret and her husband have experienced a total of six PCS moves. She has been able to find a teaching position each time that she has moved with the exception of her husband's current duty station in Oklahoma. She states that the reason for this is due to the size of the town in which they live and the lack of teaching opportunities. Her husband has not deployed. Being a military spouse has affected her career as an educator because the lifestyle has not allowed her to grow or advance in the field of education because she is never in one place long enough.

Morgan

Morgan is a 36-year-old Caucasian female. She is a military spouse of 11 years. Her husband is a major in the Army (O-4). She has two children. Morgan's father was in the military as well, so she states that she has "done the military life her entire life" (Morgan, Questionnaire, June 2019). They currently are stationed in North Carolina. She is a special education teacher.

Morgan wanted to become an educator because she had a wonderful second grade teacher, and she felt that teaching would be fun. In high school, she volunteered with the Special Olympics and from that experience knew she wanted to work with children with special needs. She followed a traditional pathway to gain licensure. She participated in a five-year program where she obtained her bachelor's degree in education in the first four years and in the fifth year, she received her special education licensure as well as her master's degree in special education. She holds licensure in Georgia, North Carolina, and Hawaii.

Morgan and her family have experienced five PCS moves. Typically, Morgan has been able to find work with each move. She attributes that to her degree in special education and the nationwide shortage of special education teachers. Additionally, she works with children with severe disabilities and finds that she has been able to find work more easily than most. Although she has been able to work when she wanted to, she states that if she and her family are in one

place less than a year, she doesn't teach due to the amount of paperwork and licensure requirements that she would have to complete. Morgan's husband has deployed three times throughout his military career while they have been married. Morgan was able to maintain her teaching career each time he has deployed. Morgan states that the more time she spends as a military spouse and an educator the less she wants to bother with all the employment red tape for educators until she and her family are more stable.

Rebecca

Rebecca is a 30-year-old Caucasian female. She has been a military spouse for 5 years. Her husband is an officer in the Navy (O-4). She and her husband have two children, ages two-and-a-half and one. She and her family are currently stationed in Rhode Island. She has worked in education for over 10 years. She is not currently teaching but is working as an education consultant for a Japanese company.

Rebecca studied theology and catechism and obtained her undergraduate degree. All of her electives were in English because she knew she wanted to teach English and Theology. She then obtained her master's degree as well as licensure. Following her master's degree, she decided to pursue her doctoral degree in Education: Curriculum and Instruction because she wanted to have more flexible employment options as a mother and an educator. Rebecca has teaching licenses in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Mississippi.

She and her family have experienced four PCS moves. She has not been able to continue teaching at each military duty station. When stationed in Japan she was not able to work on the economy unless it was to teach English but was able to secure employment as an education consultant. She currently still maintains this employment as it is a remote position. Her husband has deployed twice, and she was able to maintain her employment in consulting. Rebecca stated

that the military lifestyle has impacted her career because she was aware of the constraints of the military lifestyle and because of that, she wanted to gain employment options that would allow her the options to work, advance professionally, and grow and raise her family.

Results

The results that follow below are a representation of the repeated phrases, significant statements, and common experiences that emerged from the questionnaire with an extensive essay question, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews. Before, during, and after data collection, I continued to journal in order to bracket out my own ideas, biases, and possible misconceptions. This allowed for me hear each participant's voice. Each data source was reviewed, read, and listened to multiple times before any coding occurred. During the initial review of the data, I began to notice emerging similarities in the experiences of the participants. Following the thorough initial review of data, I uploaded the questionnaires and transcriptions from both the one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews to NVivo where I re-reviewed each individual interview and essay and began coding. The codes and the themes that emerged are summarized below, and research questions are also addressed. Table 2 shows the codes that emerged during data analysis and the themes that were created.

Table 2

Codes and Themes of the Military Spouses' Educator Experience

Themes	Codes
Attributes	Resilience Adaptability Positivity Flexibility
Obligations	Military PCS Moves Deployments Children and Family Spousal Work Support Home
Supports	Family Financial Friends/Other Spouses Support Groups Experiences
Cross-State Teacher Mobility	Pay Pension State Licensure Variations Unemployment Underemployment
Advancement and Goals	Professional Advancement Professional Goals Personal Goals Time
Autonomy	Independence Own Sense of Identity

Theme Development

Data collection from the 15 military spouse educator participants consisted of these methods: questionnaire with essay, one-on-one interviews, and focus group interviews.

Following transcription of the interviews, I read each one making note of any significant statements and any additional information that stood out. The time period between the first interview and the last interview was five months. This was primarily due to the increase of military PCS moves in the months that the interviews were conducted. Due to the lapsed time period between interviews, I was able to step back from the data and think about the experiences that my participants were describing. The themes that emerged from the data sources were (a) attributes, (b) obligations, (c) supports, (d) cross-state teacher mobility, (e) advancement and goals, and (f) autonomy. Through these themes it became apparent that military spouse educators are constantly weighing their own professional decisions against the other demands of military life.

Attributes. All 15 participants stated that they possess positive attributes that have aided them in coping with the military lifestyle. Without further investigation, it is virtually impossible to tell whether these attributes came from the personalities that they were born with or if these personality traits came from the military lifestyle and their experience with it. Each participant demonstrated adaptability, resiliency, flexibility, and positivity in the statements and remarks that they made throughout their interviews. These became most apparent when it came to discussing the changes that go along with the military lifestyle. The participants stated that many of these positive characteristics were due to the military lifestyle itself. As they became more and more used to moving, dealing with deployments, and finding new work the participants realized that they had to be open to change and new possibilities.

Even when dealing with change and searching for a new teaching job following a PCS move or other military life event, the participants maintained a positive outlook. “I consider myself very fortunate. I don’t take that lightly; I just hope not to get stagnant in the process”

(Catherine, Interview, June 2019). Though all of the participants stated that finding a job in a new state was difficult, and at times frustrating, they still felt the calling to go back to the classroom because they hoped to make a difference. “I still teach because I went into that career field because I wanted to make a difference and I don’t think that has changed. I still want to make a difference. I still know that there are kids that need people” (Grace, Focus Group, October 2019). Though the military spouses voiced concerns about their professional career paths, they consider themselves lucky to be able to continue to teach, “I am just happy to get a job and happy to have a chance to teach and work with kids” (Erin, Interview, June 2019).

In addition to remaining positive about teaching, the participants shared a positive viewpoint of their collective teaching experiences. They felt that being military spouses provided them with so many diverse teaching experiences that they would be of value to any school district. Emily addressed this when she discussed her experiences in moving from school to school in different states.

Getting to experience all the different districts and all the different needs and methods that they might be trying, then take those things that work and leave behind the things that are terrible, and incorporate them into your new classroom, that makes a military spouse as a teacher a whole lot more of a hot commodity than people generally see, and to bring all of that to the table that others just don’t. (Focus Group, October 2019)

The participants did not view the military lifestyle as having a negative effect on their quality of teaching. Rather, they attribute it to making them more well-rounded educators.

I’ve been really lucky. I have worked for a lot of really good people and with a lot of really good people. The one benefit that I’ve had of moving a lot is realizing how

versatile I can be and how I can cross over my teaching skills to a lot of different content.

(Lily, Interview, June 2019)

Morgan recommended positivity because there really is no other alternative.

Be positive and just try to be as welcoming to the change because it's coming and it's going to come repeatedly. Every new school you're going to be at, there is going to be the little quirks that the principal has, and you have to learn those and that's okay to do that. You have to just kind of embrace the fact that things are going to be different and you go in with an open mind and an open heart and do the best you can and just stay positive. Truly, any place is what you make it both in home life, career, professional, and all of that. If you have a bad attitude, I feel like you're just going to have a bad experience. Just keep it as positive as one can. (Interview, June 2019)

Outside of the classroom, Rebecca described the need to remain positive about the military life.

Just getting the opportunity to see so many different places and the exposure of the cultures even within the States, just living in different areas and getting a chance to kind of grow as a person, but also grow as a couple, as we navigate those different challenges. I feel that is a positive, or a negative that has turned positive in the military life.

(Rebecca, Focus Group, September 2019)

All of the participants stated that the military and has made them more resilient and adaptable. They described things that would typically bother others but did not affect them. "I think being resilient is definitely key. I feel like certain things just don't bother me. Like, you know, other teachers I work with get upset about certain things and it's like, that's not really a big deal" (Emma, Focus Group, September 2019). In addition to the things that they do not let

bother them in the classroom, the participants stated that moving and frequently changing locations, while a pain, was just a part of life for them, “Yes. I mean, it wasn’t a big deal to me to move. The moving part personally wasn’t a big deal. It’s fun and I’m an adventurous person. I liked it and going to different places and seeing different things” (Laura, Interview, August 2019).

Even when out of their element, the participants showed that they were adaptable in almost any situation, even if it was teaching a new subject.

I have a ridiculously extensive resume that has, I don’t know, how I did at one point in time end up teaching high school English for three years in England. But, I did. I took the job because it was available, and they needed a teacher. I don’t know what they were thinking, but it was great; I did okay, and I learned that I can teach pretty much anything if I put my mind to it. (Lily, Focus Group Interview, September 2019)

The participants felt confident in being able to adapt to new areas. They knew what to do when moving to a new duty station as many of them have repeated it several times. “I think when we get somewhere new, we know what’s important to sort out and do, and figure out, especially with going from school to school. You know the questions to ask and the things to do” (Emma, Focus Group, September 2019). Erin shared that being flexible as a military spouse was necessary because in marrying their spouses, they choose their lifestyle and there is nothing that will ultimately change it.

You have to learn to be very, very flexible and to just focus on the winds and not let it all bog you down as far as the moves and the changing and the nope, not yet, not the right time, and just find ways to reach out in your community. (Interview, June 2019)

Obligations. All participants described an array of obligations that come from regular life and obligations that are specific to the military lifestyle. The obligations shared during the interviews and from the questionnaire were related to caring for their families, supporting their spouses, maintaining homes, military PCS moves, deployments, and financial responsibilities. Of the listed obligations, family, especially the children, were the most discussed. The spouses who have children stated that taking care of their children and finding childcare was their biggest focus. Without securing childcare, the thought of teaching would not be realistic.

I taught my first move, in Iowa, then I just had to basically tutor because I had my son and childcare was too difficult to come by, especially with deployments and things that were just too much. So, basically, I've stayed home and then tutored for home-schooling families or just other families in the area. (Erin, Interview, June 2019)

Erin also stated that there is a possibility of her not teaching after their next PCS move, commenting that...

I don't know how I can do three kids that are doing things and then work full-time. I just don't count my husband as...It's like, what can I do by myself and then be able to take care of myself too. (Focus Group Interview, September 2019)

When discussing what allows her to be able to work, Emma stated that work comes after her obligations to her children.

But, it's second to childcare. Once childcare is sorted out, then I can have that option. So, I'm only working this fall because my youngest finally started kindergarten and how we are getting to school and home from school, the kids are covered, so now I'm allowed to go to work. (Emma, Focus Group Interview, September 2019)

Even if they have childcare and wish to return to work, it is not always possible because the cost of childcare often outweighs the incoming pay. Laura explained, “I mean I would have ended up owing money because the pay wouldn’t have covered childcare and all that stuff anyway” (Interview, August 2019).

When asked if they would be able to work or pursue professional goals if they could not find reliable childcare, all of the participants with children answered “no.” In fact, Elle had to temporarily pause her master’s program when her husband deployed, saying, “I had to take a couple of semesters off for deployments and not having childcare” (Interview, August 2019). Most participants acknowledged that their spouse’s career is the priority, as is common in tied migration, and what is left over after they fulfill their obligations can be used for their own careers.

Financial obligations were a concern to many of the participants as well. Although they stated that their husbands made enough money that they would not have to work, they felt responsible to contribute financially to their families, especially when it came to their own college loans.

I mean, mainly, we could live off of my husband’s income. We’re not high-maintenance people but I do have to pay my college loans and we can’t pay my college loans and live off of his income solely. I have to work. (Abby, Interview, July 2019)

Jayde stated that although she does not need to work and she and her husband are able to live off of his income alone, “If I work, it’s because of my own personal need to work and pay down my student loans” (Jayde, Interview, August 2019).

Supporting the active duty spouse was also mentioned as an obligation felt by the participants. Many mentioned supporting their spouse’s career by being able to volunteer for his

command and being free to attend military events. Margaret discussed that as her husband has moved up in rank, both of their responsibilities to the military have increased. “This is his first squadron command and I didn’t realize that there were the expectations that there are from that, being a spouse. I didn’t realize that there are events to go to, a lot of events” (Interview, October 2019). Though only two of the participants had spouses who were enlisted, the shared sentiment between the officer spouses was that support for the husband’s command was expected. “I am an officer’s wife so there are leadership responsibilities on my side that happens with his career as well” (Morgan, Interview, June 2019).

Supports. All 15 military spouse educators discussed the supports in their life that allow them to make decisions and maintain some level of autonomy. The supports described by the participants were family, financial, friends, military, and experience. The participants described the different kinds of emotional, physical, and social support that they received from family, military spouse groups, and their own experiences. Of all the supports discussed, family was the most frequently mentioned support from all participants, specifically spousal support. Rebecca stated that her husband always supports her decisions.

I know I wrote this in my survey, but my husband is my number one encourager. He’s very supportive of me and my aspirations of what feels like a good balance for me or what’s enriching for me. He’s always been that for me. I have a very supportive family. (Interview, August 2019)

Many participants mentioned that their husbands recognize that their careers are being put above their wives’ teaching careers. Catherine explained, “My husband has been supportive, like he knows that his career is affecting mine and we are just trying to find the best thing for me to do, whatever that is. I am thankful for that” (Focus Group, September 2019). The participants’

husbands seemed to understand the difficulties in finding a new job each time they move, especially when crossing state lines.

Also, my husband. He's very supportive, and he kind of sees the challenges I have finding work, and he is supportive of me looking and trying to find the best thing I can for myself and what I still have to compromise on just because of where we are at. He understands the challenge, and in general, I know there are resources on base and I definitely want to take advantage of those supports. (Catherine, Interview, June 2019)

Extended families were also described as a support for the military spouse educators, specifically in times when the active duty members were away from the home, whether it be for work or deployments. Chelsea indicated, "Well, my family for one. My parents were there, for example, to help me during the first year of my daughter's life when my husband had to go away to Korea" (Interview, August 2019). Many of the participants discussed being able to return to the classroom when the extended families were close enough to help with childcare.

The only reason that things in Washington worked as well was because we went back home, and I had my parents and other family members that could help pick up the kids or do things to help with the process. (Erin, Interview, June 2019)

Though familial support was the number one discussed source of aid for military spouses, some participants felt as though the extended family's support could only reach so far when there was a lack of understanding of military life.

The other one would be your actual military family because, what I have found is, my personal family and his family are understanding up to a point but there are things that they just don't get because they've never lived this life so, if I don't have someone that has been in the same shoes I've been in. (Emily, Interview, July 2019)

Local military spouses and military spouse groups were also identified as a huge source of emotional and social support for most of the military spouse educators. “I love the Newport group. What a wonderful resource that was. The women on that were so kind. They were just stellar” (Grace, Interview, October 2019). Once spouse specified the importance of a military spouse group, especially during the rough times like deployments.

Also, as a military spouse there are different spouse groups that kind of connect the spouses to one another when their husband or the squadron is deployed. I guess that would be...those would probably be some of the things that kind of were...I find the most supportive and helped me to be independent. (Chelsea, Interview, August 2019)

Another spouse started a military spouse group when one did not exist at her duty station. “I created ‘battle buddies’ even if they don’t live currently at Ft. Bragg. I would say that kind of my support system now is my battle buddies that I’ve made throughout the different states” (Morgan, Interview, 2019). Morgan stated that she enjoys having military spouses as friends because, “My army wives are probably my biggest support as far as like venting and information and getting me through” (Interview, June 2019).

Many of the participants identified their personal experiences in dealing with military life as a big source of support. Once they became acclimated to the moving, deployments, and other military lifestyle idiosyncrasies they described a sense of feeling more prepared, knowing what to expect, and understanding that sometimes things were out of their control. “I can say my biggest gain would be the experiences that I’ve had because I’ve gotten put into these situations where I have to be really resourceful as far as what I’m going to do” (Jennifer, Focus Group, October 2019). They also feel more prepared to re-enter the job market.

Change makes you grow; difficulties make you grow. I also think I ace interviews. The interview process does not make me nervous at all. I go into an interview, I don't even get butterflies, and, half the time, I know what they're going to ask before they ask it because I've been through it so many times. (Morgan, Interview, June 2019)

Cross-state teacher mobility. All 15 participants spoke extensively about cross-state teacher mobility. All had experienced at least one PCS within the continental United States (CONUS) to a different state within the US. Several experienced PCS moves outside the continental United States (OCONUS). They described, in detail, the issues and concerns that came with these moves. Their top concerns were (a) pay, (b) pension, (c) state licensure variations, and (d) unemployment and underemployment.

Pay and years of service was discussed by all participants. Though not every participant felt compensated improperly, all did feel as though their years of service were rarely counted as they should be counted. Abby, who has over 10 years of experience in education, felt slighted when a school district that she applied to was unwilling to place her on the step that she felt was correct. "When they negotiated with me, which I think is crap, they didn't want to give me four of my years teaching so, this year, I should have been on a ten-year step and, instead, they gave me six years (Interview, July 2019). Elle experienced the same thing when she and her family had a PCS to a new area.

I was shorted years when I moved states, which led to a decrease in pay. Many times, we moved to a state with a lower pay scale to start with and then the district would give 10-12 years of service. (Interview, August 2019)

Emily stated that issues obtaining her teaching certificate led to her years of service and pay being inequitable.

I've experienced more challenges because this is the first time I've had to recertify which they took several months to complete, and when that happened, the school district said "Well, we don't have any number of years of experience on your service record from the state so we will pay you as zero years' experience." I was getting paid significantly less per month than what I had previously been given because they weren't counting my years of experience because the state had not processed my certificate yet. That was one of the big things that was an issue. Also, moving to a state that does not pay for master's pay. (Interview, August 2019)

Many participants voiced concerns and anxiety about what the future holds, particularly when they do not know where their next duty station will be. Emma elaborated, "As far as pay, like, I always wonder what's going to happen when like, for the next move, if they'll honor it" (Interview, June 2019). The participants stated that being compensated by being placed on the correct step is challenging enough but it adds injury to insult because they do not feel like the schools think they deserve it. Christine exclaimed, "Oh my gosh, first off the pay. I get paid frequently so much less than I'm worth" (Focus Group, September 2019). In Grace's experience, she has never been placed on the correct step. "It's always the first tier when they hire someone" (Interview, October 2019). Jennifer discussed the plethora of knowledge that military spouse educators bring with them to the classroom and feels the situation is inequitable compared to how civilian educators who do not cross state lines are treated.

Salary-wise, that's a concern because every time I have a dip in salary, that sucks. It seems incredibly unfair because, the reality is, I feel like teachers that have taught in multiple locations bring a much more diverse perspective and we have a far broader

range of pedagogy that we have accessed over those years that we can use to better inform our practically new location. (Interview, June 2019)

Jayde stated that even with a master's degree pay was lower than expected for the amount of time she was putting into her work.

I had my master's by this point. It was a good salary but not for the hours I worked. If I would have worked, you know, 9-5, it would've been great or just be a traditional aide or even nine hours a day but I was often getting there at 6:30 in the morning and I'd leave around 5:30. I'd be doing four or five hours every Sunday from home so, for 60-65 hours a week, it wasn't a fair compensation. (Interview, August 2019)

Catherine has reached the point where the constant moving, need to recertify, and low pay are making her question remaining in the profession.

That's how low the pay is here. I really have made teaching as a back-up plan for me right now, just because of the lack of opportunity and the lack of funding and the lack of salary and all those things. (Interview, June 2019)

Retirement concerns were mentioned by most participants, as they voiced worry over having money in pension systems in different states. Many participants were unsure whether they would return to those states and described being hesitant in withdrawing their money from the states' retirement systems. Abby stated that she has set up her own individual retirement account (IRA) but is unsure if that will actually provide enough financial security for her future.

I'm constantly collecting parts of investment plans and rolling it over into an IRA that I set up but I feel that, while it's better than having nothing, I just feel like, being a military spouse, I sometimes get shortchanged in retirement planning because, every time we move, my husband's retirement plan travels with him and mine doesn't. A lot of people

are like, well you can just plan on using your spouse's retirement but, I'm like, what is this, 1950? (Interview, July 2019)

Catherine also has her own separate retirement account but stated that she is unsure whether it will be enough. "It's hard because I'll have all these pockets of retirement but nothing long-term and I have a private retirement account just to have something. That's a long-term goal" (Interview, June 2019). Elle has money in retirement funds in each state that she has lived in. "Each school district had their own retirement system. Needless to say, I have money in four different states" (Interview, August 2019). Emily believes that retirement funding is one of the biggest problems that military spouses face.

That has been one of the biggest issues that I think military families face that are educators because I know that I've already paid in to three different retirements, none of which mesh together. They are all different chains and you didn't have options to not pay into them. (Emily, Interview, July 2019)

Other spouses stated that they just do not rely on a retirement plan because vesting in the states in which they were stationed did not allow contributions until an educator was there for a minimum number of years. Instead of dealing with a true retirement account, they placed money into a savings account that will one day fund their future retirement.

My retirement plan is the fact that we have not depended on my income for a long time and we save it. I have never vested in any state. I taught in Missouri, you had to stay for five years and I was there for three. I was in Nevada, you had to vest from five years, and we were there for two. In Washington, we finally were there for six years, you have to have 10 years. (Erin, Focus Group Interview, September 2019)

In addition to pay and pension complications, all participants described dismay over state-to-state licensure incongruities. All have crossed state lines at least once, most more than three times. In their questionnaires and interviews, all described the lengths that they have gone through to obtain teaching certifications in each place their family has been stationed. Every spouse has encountered licensure complications at least once. The military spouse educator participants stated that the extent of difficulty in obtaining a teaching certificate in a new state was largely dependent on the state and its specific licensure application requirements. Abby encountered difficulties applying for teaching license in New Jersey due to the fact that, at the time of her application, they did not have an online system where she could easily upload her application materials.

But with New Jersey, everything is old school snail mail. They want the original copy in a sealed envelope right to them and so, from every school you've ever worked at and I'm sitting there thinking "sweet Jesus." Okay, so I have to get snail mail from Orlando, from Miami, the two places I taught in Florida and the Keys was not a big deal because I'm here now but now I have to get two from two separate schools in Hawaii. I have to put these whole packages together with pre-addressed envelopes because they want snail mail from each school. (Abby, Interview, July 2019)

Laura had considered teaching while her husband was stationed in North Carolina, but she was unable to because of the time it takes to submit a teaching application, have it reviewed, and receive a license.

The licensure part in North Carolina... it wasn't horribly arduous, like I could have transferred my license, but it still just would've taken time and I wouldn't have had my

license in time to start a teaching job in the fall in the first year anyway. I just kept doing the adjunct thing. (Laura, Interview, August 2019)

Many of the participants shared that despite their level of education and number of certifications from other states, experience did not seem matter when it came time to apply for a license in a new state. Even with National Board Certification and a master's degree in education, Jennifer had a difficult time applying for a license in the state of Utah.

Going to Utah was a complete and utter nightmare because they told me I was not qualified to teach there despite having a Master's degree from Johns Hopkins and having taught for about 14-15 years at that time, probably about 15, and being nationally board certified and having licenses in Maryland, Texas, and Missouri, they told me I wasn't qualified. (Jennifer, Interview, June 2019)

Many of the participants find the process lengthy and discouraging. They feel as though their hard work and talents go unrecognized because of educational bureaucracy. A few of the participants mentioned that they were defeated, and they do not want to have to put up with the licensing process anymore. "Each time we move, the longer that happens, the less willing I want to continue doing that. That hurts the profession when teachers don't want to teach" (Morgan, Interview, June 2019).

Many of the spouses faced unemployment due to the timing of a move, licensure issues, or being stationed in an area where there was a lack of opportunity. Many stated that even when they were able to find work after a PCS move, the work was not commensurate to their experience or level of education, Lily found this to be true following two PCS moves, one OCONUS and the other CONUS.

When we were in Portugal I was not allowed to work on the economy, so I literally took a minimum wage job working for the MWR [Morale, Welfare, and Recreation]. Then, when we were in Seattle, I was working part-time because I had to take that desperate get-in-the-door job, and I was pregnant, and no one is going to hire an obviously pregnant military spouse. So, I was underemployed there. (Focus Group, September 2019)

Emma was unable to find a teaching job when she and her family were relocated for her husband's military career, so she tried to find similar work, even though she didn't feel it utilized her professional experience.

I even called them, and I told them I was a certified teacher and I have a master's degree, but they said "I'm sorry, we can't hire you. You need to take classes to work at a daycare." I was like, but... and they said, "No you have to go to this community college, and they'll tell you what courses you need because you need this certification to work in a daycare." (Emma, Interview, June 2019).

Emily took a position working at on-base Child Development Center (CDC) where she described feeling underemployed, because the lead teacher, who was her boss, did not have the experience that she had.

My lead was actually enrolled in the classes that I was teaching at Central Texas College campus, the campus on base. It is actually like I was teaching the courses for them to become certified or have some type of degree of course work in their career field, but they were my bosses. (Interview, July 2019)

Emily wasn't the only participant who worked at the CDC when she was unable to secure employment as an educator, Rebecca described her experience as follows.

I actually took a job at the CDC as like, a childcare worker. It hurt my pride and I was like, “Well, this is good for me because I shouldn’t be prideful but here I am working in the infant room” and I did this while I was in college. It was a very...moving to Japan and what that did for me professionally was very trying and humbling but I also, at the end of the day, thank God for the whole situation. (Interview, August 2019)

The feeling of being underemployed was echoed by all participants in this study. They felt as though they had been trained well as educators and were surprised that they were not considered to be qualified in other teaching positions just because they were in different locations.

I will say that there are times when I look at my experience and I think it is a shame that one can’t find a position that they have trained for and have experience in, to apply to a school district teaching position. (Chelsea, Interview, August 2019)

Advancement and goals. Professional and personal advancement and goals were also discussed in detail throughout the course of the study. All participants voiced that the military lifestyle has had a negative effect on their ability to advance professionally within a teaching position at the K-12 level. Many voiced that time was not on their side and one of the reasons for a lack of ability to advance was that their employers knew they would eventually leave.

In the Keys, I lost out on two advancement positions, and they would never say this to my face, one of the assistant principals who sat in on the conversation came up to me and said, “I don’t care, I’m going to tell you.” He was like, “It’s because you’re a military spouse.” (Abby, Interview, July 2019)

Catherine echoed those feelings and stated that a lack of time in one geographic region was a detriment to military spouses.

When we left, they had some openings come up that would have been a promotion or would have been a lateral move but a more administrative role that I wanted to look into.

I know I was in a position where I could have just easily stepped into that role as we were staying. I know with both of them, you have to network not only to get in but then network to even move up. That takes time and I just think time is kind of the biggest limited resource that we have as military families. (Interview, June 2019)

Often, military families are placed for approximately three years in one duty station, Emma stated that it is usually during that last year, where she finds an opportunity to take on more responsibility at work.

I always get offered that great promotional position year three, and I have to turn it down because we're leaving. Without fail. I feel like you do your time, you learn your value, you're offered that first position, then we're moving. (Focus Group, September 2019)

Margaret had similar sentiments concerning being in one place long enough for professional advancement.

Being a military spouse has affected my career as an educator by limiting my advancement/growth because I'm not in one place long enough. I'm not tagged for certain positions (like department head) because they know I won't be around for long. (Questionnaire, October 2019)

Though the majority of participants described negative professional outcomes due to the military, not all participants viewed those results as having negatively affected their lives. In fact, most spouses considered their comprehensive outcome in a positive light. Most participants stated that they like where they are in life and would not change their experiences. In some

situations, this is because the participants made career advancements outside of the realm of K-12 education.

I think that military service has been beneficial to me in terms of the fact that I would not have been able to afford professional development, for sure...a Doctoral degree, if it weren't for the fact that I got a military discount, a significant one, to attend the school that I chose to attend. (Jennifer, Focus Group, October 2019)

Elle also described the benefits that she has received as a military spouse that she may have not received otherwise. "It has helped me because through MyCAA I was able to receive financial assistance towards my masters" (Questionnaire, July 2019).

The participants described an understanding that the military lifestyle, and life in general, was a give and take. They stated that their lack in professional advancement oftentimes facilitated the achievement of the overall goals of their family. Rebecca described this balance as she and her husband are still looking to grow their family.

I've always wanted to do something to further my career to provide me with more flexible employment options because I knew, with having children, I probably wasn't going to want to work full time but I wanted to still keep my foot in the door professionally and we want more than two kids, so... (Interview, August 2019).

Autonomy. Although the military frequently decides where the participants are going and what jobs their spouses will be doing, all participants described the need for autonomy in their personal lives and careers. The reasons they gave varied and were unique to each participant. Some of the participants stated that they worked in order to get out of the house, feel independent, and have their own sense of identity.

A primary reason the spouses gave for continuing in the field of education was to preserve their own self-identity. Erin said that teaching was something she loved, and “to have a chance to do it is exciting and I’m me again for a little bit. Not just, ‘Oh, you’re so-and-so’s spouse’” (Interview, June 2019). Many of the participants felt like they needed to work for their own identity.

I have all these experiences, like I can do whatever you want I’m so flexible, but at the same time it’s like that gives me an identity that is just mine. You know what I mean? Like, other than I’m my husband’s wife and my kids’ mom, and I think that’s huge. (Emma, Focus Group, September 2019)

Lily agreed and described being unhappy when she was not in the classroom.

I mean, I took a break from work, where I was one day crying folding my husband’s underwear thinking, “I can’t believe I got a master’s degree for this” as I’m like slamming his underwear and uniform shirts into a pile. (Focus Group, September 2019)

Other participants, such as Rebecca, liked working to work because it utilizes their education and they want something for themselves.

I enjoy working. I like to use my brain. I find it interesting and valuable, and I want to keep up my skills because, you know, there will come a time when my children are not little, and they will be in school. (Focus Group, September 2019)

Another reason that the participants wanted to find meaningful employment as educators was for independence. Jayde mentioned that she works so that she can maintain a sense of freedom.

I’ve always worked for my own sense of independence. We’ve never had a financial need for me to work. There’ve been several periods where I haven’t worked and have taken

that time to do unpaid internships instead. If I work, it's because of my own personal need to work and pay down my student loans. (Interview, August 2019)

Chelsea works for independence and to help to bring in an income, "but for me it's just to feel independent. I do like to have my own money and be able to pay my own bills, which right now is the care of my car" (Interview, August 2019).

Research Question Responses

The central research question was, What are the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses? I posed this question because I wanted to understand the holistic experiences of military spouses who are faced with not only the obligations of everyday life, but the obligations that come with the military lifestyle. I sought to discover the weighing of options that military spouses who are educators perform each time they face a life disruption or new life event. My goal was to discover what motivated military spouses to continue to teach and what led to their decisions when they did not return to the classroom. After analyzing the data, six major themes emerged: (a) attributes, (b) obligations, (c) supports, (d) cross-state teacher mobility, (e) advancement and goals, and (f) autonomy. These themes emerged from each questionnaire, one-on-one interview, and focus group. It became apparent that military spouse educators frequently faced life-changing events and were forced to make both professional and personal decisions each time a new situation materialized. Interestingly, with each new situation, the participants conducted an evaluation of the obligations that they had in life, and would have in their new situation, and the supports that they had that would balance out their obligations. Something as simple as moving to a specific geographic location close to extended family could make or break the decision to return to teaching.

Each participant who took part in this study was unique and had a very individual path in regard to teaching, military moves, and goals for the future. The participants held licenses in a variety of certification areas in several different states. Their reasons for entering into the field of education were distinctive. Although each participant shared a story that was unique, each person described a frustration with the military lifestyle and its effects on their professional career. The participants told stories of defeat, feeling as though their education and knowledge were underappreciated and going to waste. The participants described a perceived lack of support, particularly lack of support from the very programs that are supposed to help military spouses. They discussed feelings of being undervalued and underpaid and shared their concerns about the future. They voiced concerns about retirement and a lack of pensions. They addressed concerns about never being able to advance professionally since they were rarely in one place long enough to network and be considered for promotion. They spoke about their concerns as military spouses and the sacrifices that came with this role. The participants described feelings of unfairness and felt that they were just as experienced, if not more, than their civilian counterparts, but would not reap the same benefits.

Each sub-research question below is represented by one or more of the themes that emerged during data collection. It is imperative to understand that not one specific theme answers just one specific question. Some of the emergent themes addressed multiple questions, as often occurs when discussing decision-making and change. Additionally, each perceived obligation or support was fluid, in that each could and did change over time, in each new situation, possibly for each participant.

Sub-research question one posited, What does the tied-migrant military spouse describe as their power? I asked this research question with the intent to discover what the participants

would describe as the things that aided them in life. I wanted to know what helped them to make decisions and what helped them remain positive. I also sought to learn what helped them to continue to teach, when they did.

Each participant seemed to possess the same attributes and characteristics that allowed them to remain positive and cope with the military lifestyle. In hearing their descriptions of their experiences, it became apparent that all participants were adaptable, resilient, flexible, and had an overall positive outlook. The participants were all extremely resourceful and learned from their experience as military spouses to be proactive in terms of dealing with a new situation. They stated that concentrating on the negative would just bring them down, so they did not let those things bother them.

All participants also described the supports that they have in life that allow them to remain autonomous. Most of the participants discussed the support of their spouses. The participants often stated that their husbands understood that his career came before theirs and supported them in finding a teaching position but were understanding if they were unable to find work.

Secondary to spousal support was other familial support, especially when extended family lived close enough to help out with childcare. Both Chelsea and Erin described occasions when they were moved closer to home and their parents were able to help them out by watching their children so that they were able to return to the classroom. Melanie echoed the same sentiments when she described moving closer to her parents, as they were able to help share the responsibility of watching her children so that she could work.

Experience both as educators and military spouses was also discussed by all participants in that it aided them in preparing for upcoming PCS moves. They all stated that because of their

experience, they knew what to do ahead of time to arrange a new teaching position in a new location. Abby discussed throughout the interview process that with each move one has a better knowledge base that helps in the moving and job searching process. “Other than that, I would say I kind of lean upon certain experiences that I’ve had professionally to boost my chances of getting a job” (Interview, July 2019).

Sub-research question two asked, What are the loads that the tied-migrant military spouses are already carrying in living? I proposed this question because I wanted to understand the things that are taking away from the military spouses. I wanted to know what took their time, their energy, and their ability to cope. I thought in understanding what was taking away from the military spouses, I would be able to understand their decision-making processes.

In order to address these questions, I asked the participants about their obligations. I sought to understand their obligations as humans, military spouses, and parents, if applicable. As I was interviewing, it became obvious that every participant had obligations in life. They had loads that they were carrying in their day-to-day living. They had bills to pay, children to care for, husbands to support, and homes to manage. All also had the added obligation of the military lifestyle. They described these obligations as PCS moves, deployments, military spousal expectations, and spousal employment support. When discussing their obligations, many of the participants mentioned that these responsibilities got in the way of being able to teach, especially when it came to caring for their children.

I get that if there are openings, but it’s so frustrating to think about that, if things didn’t line up, I would have had to turn down that job because there was no childcare on the island. Their waitlists are so, so long. (Emma, Interview, September 2019)

Erin, who is a mother of three, had issues finding childcare at her last duty station. “Childcare was a big factor and not having easy access to, like, for here the CDC is impossible to get into, so that was a factor” (Interview, June 2019).

Others stated that some obligations did not necessarily deter them from finding employment as educators; rather, the opposite occurred. Some of the participants mentioned that they had to pay their own loans and sought employment to bring in an income so that their husband would not have to pay their loans. Abby lamented, “Student loans are my ball and chain. They are the death of me. Honestly, it’s my main responsibility and that’s partly because we don’t have kids” (Interview, July 2019). Emily looked for full-time employment because the money she made in substitute teaching was not enough to cover her loans. “With me just graduating and having to keep on paying the student loans and then, at the time, he was only on E3 or E4. Financially, it was just not sustainable for me to just sub once a month” (Interview, July 2019).

Supporting the activity duty spouses’ careers was something that I heard frequently during the interview process from many of the participants, especially those spouses whose husbands were higher ranking officers. Many of the spouses described the volunteering opportunities in which they are encouraged to participate at their husbands’ command. They also chatted about the extracurricular events that they were encouraged to attend as a result of their husbands’ employment.

Sub-research question three asked, What motivations influenced the tied-migrant military spouses’ career decisions? I asked this question to discover what things in life influenced the military spouse to teach or not teach. As previously stated, the themes that emerged from data analysis do not answer only one specific question. In this instance, the themes that answered this

question had to do with the military spouses' obligations, supports, professional goals, ideas of success, and autonomy. All of these themes were apparent in each of the participant's interviews. All discussed the ebb and flow of the decision-making process every time a new and life-altering event occurred. Many times, participants stated that their motivations at one specific point influenced their decision to take a break from education.

I returned to teaching each time we moved with the exception of when we left Texas to go to Maryland. I still had a license there, but the twins had just been born so I took off those three years that we were in Maryland to be with them. I didn't return to teaching until we moved to Utah. (Jennifer, Interview, June 2019)

At this point in her life, Jennifer's motivation was to start a family and stay home to raise her children when they were babies. Of course, her obligations were to care for her family, but her motivation was to provide the best care she could for her young children, and she felt the best way to obtain that was to provide it herself.

When Rebecca and her spouse were stationed in Japan, she found that there was a significant lack of opportunity for her because of regulations applied to military spouses overseas. Nonetheless, Rebecca chose a slightly different career path from teaching and was eventually hired as an educational consultant for a Japanese company, a job which she still maintains. She explained that this career path, although not in a classroom, still keeps her working but allows her to be home with her children and grow her family.

I am not really in a place where I feel like I want to be working fulltime outside the home. So, I'm glad that...I'm more grateful for my consulting job than I was a month ago. I have realized that this is better for me right now. (Focus Group, October 2019)

Catherine, who does not yet have children, but foresees them in the future, has already debated teaching while her kids are young.

So, the answer to the childcare piece, we are considering family planning and I mean at that point for me, I am starting to consider having the setback because even if I do get childcare, like my income would be just for childcare and that's really where it's kind of the give-and-take. (Focus Group Interview, October 2019)

Other than family-raising goals, many of the participants stated that they simply return to teaching because they feel like they need their own identity apart from their military spouses'. They also find the work rewarding. Elle exclaimed, "My love for teaching! When I wasn't in the classroom I felt as though something was missing in my life" (Interview, August 2019). Other participants stated that they just did not know what to do if they were not working.

I like my job and I feel fulfilled by my job, but I think I like going somewhere and knowing I'm good at it. It's just nice, new, and different, and I like people's kids and I've had a job pretty much, with very few gaps, every day since I was 14. I mean, on the payroll. You know what I mean. But even before then, I don't know. I just feel like working is kind of...(Lily, Interview, June 2019)

Some spouses mentioned remaining in the classroom because it stimulates their brain, they meet new people, and learn new things from others. One participant stated that although her career comes after her husband's and caring for her children, she needs to work.

Professionally, I feel like that kind of goes second to my, well third because you have to count my husband's job which dictates our entire lives. It just means that I want that, but it needs to fit and I'm just kind of very open-minded and I like learning. Even though

maybe I'm not going back to school, I'm learning new things by working with new people in new positions, that type of thing. (Emma, Interview, June 2019)

Sub-research question four asked, What do tied-migrant military spouses define as success? During the coding process, while discovering themes, I found that the military spouses did not necessarily equate success with having a job. Many spouses related success to both their own personal and professional goals and the personal and professional goals of their family. Many military spouses viewed the collaborative familial effort to serve their country, raise a family, and to work and discover their own identity as being successful. Erin said success is "to feel like I'm doing something to contribute to my family and society and just be me. I love teaching and that is part of me and who I am" (Interview, June 2019).

Catherine and her husband do not yet have children or a stable home; however, she stated that she works not only for her own self-identity and but also to contribute to her family's future goals. "We're trying to save up for when we do start a family and trying to buy a house at some point, but it is my sense of self too" (Focus Group, September 2019).

Phenomenological Descriptions

The composite textural description of the military spouse educator experience, or the "what" of the phenomenon, was frustration. Military spouse educators felt as though the programs that were developed to aid them in finding and maintain employment were flawed. They felt frustrated because the programs failed them. Overall, the participants were frustrated with the military lifestyle and the supports that were supposed to help them.

The composite structural description described by each individual participant was summarized as "professional persistence." Though each participant had to cope with the difficulties of the military lifestyle, they each had their own way of dealing with the experience.

Each military spouse educator participant maintained some level of professional persistence. Some continued to teach. Others sought higher or advanced degrees. A few planned career changes. Though each participant experienced the same phenomenon, their responses can best be summarized as professional persistence. Though the route to professional persistence was varied, the common theme was that each participant wished to maintain autonomy through some sort of professional outlet.

The overall essence of the lived experience of the military spouse educator can be described frustration. Each participant relayed their frustration in the lack of functional supports that were supposed to aid them in more easily finding and maintaining employment. They stated that the policies enacted specifically for them, frequently weren't recognized at the state level and the district levels. Moreover, on a professional level spouses were frustrated in that they felt as though they had significant teaching experience that was often unrecognized and underutilized at the district level. They voiced particular frustration over issues of pay inequality, unrecognized years of service, and inability to grow their pensions due to cross-state relocation. Each military spouse educator participant dealt with the challenges of military life through their own decisions and abilities. Although frustration was mentioned extensively, each participant felt an appreciation for the benefits they received through their military affiliation. Moreover, each participant voiced that although the lifestyle can be difficult, they would not change their experiences, regardless of the effects on their professional life. All of the participants in this study were able to persevere and persist in the face of frustration.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members in the US armed forces. Chapter Four described the results of the data collection and analysis. It described the lived experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses of active duty military personnel. Across all data sources (questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups), the participants shared their experiences with both the military lifestyle, being an educator, and how one affects the other. All participants shared frustration with the military lifestyle and its effect on their teaching to some degree. Participants described their reasoning behind why they became educators and how the military affected their career and professional development and advancement. They recounted a variety of experiences that are unique to the military lifestyle: PCS moves, deployments, TAD/TDY orders, and lack of employment opportunities. In the end, six themes emerged as a result of data analysis: (a) attributes, (b) obligations, (c) supports, (d) cross-state teacher mobility, (e) advancement and goals, and (f) autonomy.

Following data analysis, the central research question and all four sub-research questions were answered with support and evidence from all three data sources. Overall, the participants described difficulties that accompanied the military lifestyle and stated that, dependent on the situation, level of supports, and obligations, they at times were unable to remain in the classroom. Even when participants could obtain teaching positions, all shared concerns regarding cross-state licensure reciprocity, pay, pension, and professional advancement.

Though the participants often painted a dire portrait of their professional careers, all participants remained positive about their overall experiences. Most participants stated that they would continue to try to teach for the remainder of their spouse's military career and beyond

because they felt that teaching was what they are meant to do, it made them happy, and they could not imagine anything else.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members in the US armed forces. Data was collected in the form of questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and focus group. The data collected was used in order to study the lived experiences of educators who are spouses of active duty military members. Using multiple data sources permitted a holistic view of the experiences lived by the participants as they moved from duty station to duty station and attempted to maintain employment as educators. Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings from all of the data sources, a discussion utilizing the literature review from Chapter Two, and the implications, delimitations and limitations of the study. The conclusion of the chapter includes recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant spouses of US armed forces members. To answer the research questions that guided this study, data was collected in the form of questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and focus group. In using interviews and questionnaires, I was able to gather a rich, thick description of the actual lived experiences of the participants. This permitted the voices of the study's participants to be heard.

What are the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses? The experiences of the tied-migrant military spouse were shared through the course of the study. Despite all of the difficulties that often went along with a state-to-state educator relocation due to PCS moves, all of the spouses described some level of appreciation with the military and what it

provided for their families. Most participants described the excitement of moving to a new place, seeing the world, and making friends from different places. Compellingly, all participants described frustration with the manner in which the military lifestyle made teaching more difficult. Though the participants shared a frustration that they were often unemployed, underemployed, and underpaid, they stated that they would not change their situations. The frustration that they felt was often associated with gaining licensure, finding a job in a new place, and receiving pay that was commensurate with their experience. This was essential to the overall ability to understand the experience of educators who are military spouses.

What does the tied-migrant military spouse define as their power? Despite the challenges associated with being a military spouse educator, the tied-migrant military spouse educators described significant supports that they utilized and defined as their power. The support from family, friends, experiences, and finances ultimately allowed the participants the opportunity to make their own decisions. All 15 spouses stated that their families, particularly their husbands, were a large source of support for them. They found that the spousal support they received from their husbands allowed them to make the professional decisions that were best for themselves and their families. In addition to spousal support, the participants stated that financially, they often did not have to work due to their husbands' incomes from their military service. This relieved the pressure of finding a job out of need so that the participants could find employment that they found satisfying. The support of having previous experience as a military spouse was often detrimental in the process of gaining licensure and finding employment. The majority of the participants described the steps they conducted once they found out that there would be a change in their life, which was normally a PCS move. Once participants were made aware that they would receive PCS orders to a new location, they immediately began searching for daycare

centers, if applicable, and school districts. Most importantly they researched the requirements to obtain new licensure from the receiving state. The participants often attributed their success in finding teaching positions to this proactive approach. All participants agreed that they were often able to overcome the difficulties of military spouse life because they were adaptable, flexible, resilient, and positive. Most participants learned those behaviors because they had no other choice. After consistent life changes and being thrown into new situations in new locations, the participants developed these characteristics in order to not just deal with but thrive in the military lifestyle.

What are the loads that the tied-migrant military spouses are already carrying in living? In living, the military spouse educators identified several loads, or obligations, that they carried in their day-to-day life. Loads, or obligations, were defined as things that took away from the military spouse. Loads were things that took their time, energy, or ability to make their own decisions. An overwhelming amount of the participants stated that family was one of their biggest obligations. Many spouses described that they were unable to work because they had to care for their children and could not find daycare. Even when care was found, some spouses voiced their need to be the stable parent because they could not rely on their active duty spouse to be there to help get their kids off the bus or be home in the evening when they could possibly have teaching duties. Secondary to the obligation of having and caring for children, the military lifestyle in and of itself was listed as an obligation. Other spouses described the need to support their husband by volunteering at his command or taking on leadership responsibilities. This often came as the active duty military member achieved a higher-ranking position. The obligations of the tied-migrant military spouse could and did seem to change dependent on the situation and stage in life. The participants described being at the mercy of the military when it came to

deployments, PCS moves, and temporary orders. They felt little to no control over these large decisions that ultimately affected their entire lives.

What motivations influenced the tied-migrant military spouse's career decisions?

Although the military spouse educator frequently made professional choices based off of the military's decisions, the tied-migrant military spouse was largely driven by the need for autonomy. Autonomy was overwhelmingly mentioned in the military spouse educators' experiences. The participants voiced a need for independence and their own identity apart from their husbands. These needs were reflected in the priorities created by the participants and their decisions regarding their professional careers. Other motivations that influenced the tied-migrant military spouses' career decisions were often financial. Though most participants stated that they did not need to work for financial reasons, they felt a strong need to contribute to their family. This was most mentioned when the tied-migrant military spouse had student loan payments, car payments, or if the family was contributing to joint savings. The participants who were motivated to return to the classroom were able to continue teaching when they had the support required to work outside of the home. This support came in the form of family living close by, military support groups, and previous experience. When family was close, they would often help with childcare. This allowed the military spouse educators to concentrate on work since childcare was taken care of by their family. Support from other local spouses was also valuable in finding a teaching job as many spouses stated that when they found out they were moving to a new area, they would connect with military spouse educators in that location to find out information on licensing, school districts, and open teaching positions. Personal prior experiences in moving were also named as a support by the participants. They described the proactive approach that they followed immediately hearing news of a possible life change. This included everything from

calling the receiving state's department of education to inquire about the application process to searching for a job near their new duty station. Finally, advancement and goals played a significant role in the motivations of the military spouse. The participants described that their goals often changed due to their situation and position in life. For example, some of the participants mentioned having and caring for their children as their primary goal during one specific stage in their lives. At this stage, the participants took a break from teaching to raise their families. Other participants were able to maintain employment but in different vicinities. Three of the spouses who desired career advancement decided to obtain advanced degrees in order to make them more knowledgeable and marketable in the field of education.

What do tied-migrant military spouses define as success? The perception of autonomy was not reliant on professional success alone. Furthermore, the definition of success varied for each participant. All of the military spouses who felt a sense of independence, identity, and capability to make their own decisions felt a very strong sense of autonomy. Those participants stated that they felt as though they were successful. The participants described instances when they were not working because they were raising a family, times where they went back to school for an advanced degree, and occasions where they took leadership positions to volunteer at their spouses' command. Regardless of the fact that they were not in the classroom, they still said they were successful. On the other hand, spouses who wanted to work, go back to school, or do something else, but could not, did not feel as though they were successful.

Discussion

In this section, I discuss the results of this study in relationship to the existing theoretical and empirical literature that was discussed in Chapter Two. The findings from this study aligned with current research concerning military spouse employment, tied-migration, and cross-state

educator mobility. Findings contribute to the current research and extend knowledge on the topic of military spouses who frequently cross state lines and work in fields that require licensure.

Theoretical Literature

In using McClusky's (1970) theory of margin to view the weighing of decisions of the military spouse educator, I saw how and why military spouses made the professional decisions that they made. The theory of margin describes the balance and the weighing of powers in relation to loads. For the purpose of this study, I equated the word "power" with supports and positive attributes that were possessed by the participants. The positive attributes such as positivity, resiliency, adaptability, and flexibility are a power for the military spouse as these characteristics aid them in maintaining a positive outlook. The loads are defined as obligations in life, things that require the participants' time and energy (McClusky, 1970). Examples of obligations are taking care of family, financial obligations, and taking care of the home. In order to possess margin, an individual must have more than enough supports to cope with their obligations (McClusky, 1970). If an individual is overwhelmed and unable to take on more responsibilities, they have too many obligations in life. They will not have enough room for margin.

The participants in this study all faced disruptions in their load-to-power balances at least once. Most participants faced disturbances multiple times. Most spouses indicated that they had obligations in life that typically did not change. These were normal life obligations such as family, taking care of the home, and paying bills. Things that added to their loads were military PCS moves, deployments, TAD/TDY orders, and increased obligations in supporting their spouses' careers.

Interestingly, the majority of participants described that their typical life disruption and imbalance of power to load occurred with each PCS move. These disruptions were significant and were due to several reasons. Primarily, licensure requirements varied state to state, and obtaining licensure following each move was shown to be difficult (Goldhaber et al., 2015). With each move, the participants described having to navigate a new educational system to obtain licensure. Research has demonstrated that cross-state moves often create significant barriers to employment, especially in careers that require licensure (Goldhaber et al., 2017). Moving also caused the military spouse educators to feel uncertainty in the supports and resources that were available to them at the next duty station. They were uncertain of the responsibilities, if any, that they would have concerning their husbands' service. Additionally, the participants were unsure if the supports that they had at their last duty station would be available to them at their new duty station. For the participants with children, there was significant concern about finding childcare in a new location. Participants stated if childcare was not available, they would not have the luxury of working, as they would not have the margin.

McClusky (1970) described the powers that individuals possess that can aid them in making decisions and increase the availability of margin available to them. The participants described their powers as the supports that they have in life. Family was the most mentioned support from all participants. Other supports included experiences, friends, and finances. A majority of the participants discussed the importance of these supports. They discussed that without at least some supports they were unable to cope with the new situations that arose. As McClusky described, a lack of support would leave little room for margin. Most of the participants stated that there were certain responsibilities that came before their own career. They described their husbands' active duty service and responsibilities that accompanied it, and they

discussed the importance of taking care of their families and homes. Most participants ranked these as obligations that came before their own career.

For the participants to be able to continue in their teaching career they needed margin (McClusky, 1970). First and foremost, the participants expressed the need to make sure that their families were taken care of, especially when children were involved. They also discussed the amount of margin they deemed necessary to gain licensure in a new receiving state. For the most part, if the licensure process was laborious, they stated that they typically would not seek licensure at this duty station, particularly if the pay was low or if they were only in that place for a short period of time. Some participants reported that they were growing tired of seeking recertification after every move and stated they might wait until their husband retires to resume their career. Not only did the participants need margin to return to teaching, they had to have the desire to allocate their margin to teaching rather than to something else.

Empirical Literature

The role of the military spouse has changed significantly from what it once was (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). Over a century ago, in the times of campfollowing, military spouses received no entitlements from the government on the premise of being a military spouse. Homemaking was acknowledged as the acceptable career for military spouses, whose lone responsibility was to care for and support their husbands (Shea, 1954). As the government began to realize the contributions of the military spouse, women were encouraged to further their education and seek employment outside of the home. After hearing the stories and experiences of the participants in the study, I realized that the role and priorities of the spouse remain unchanged. All of the participants echoed the same sentiment in their interviews. They listed their priorities as family, children, and taking care of their home. They also listed other

responsibilities that were associated with their husbands' careers like moving, deployments, and their own leadership or volunteering responsibilities. Most of the participants stated that they required all of their responsibilities and obligations to be met before they could seek out employment as educators. Although the majority of spouses stated that they wanted to maintain employment outside of the home, they discovered that a teaching career is not quite as portable as first thought.

Today, military spouses are considered to be well-educated. Over one-third hold jobs that require some sort of licensure (Kersey, 2013). In tied-migration military spouses, cross-state mobility has been in issue. The barriers that exist make it difficult to gain licensure in each state (Goldhaber et al., 2017). Most participants described their frustration with the licensure process, even when reciprocity agreements were in place. Elle summed this up nicely.

Each state brought its new challenges when becoming certified. It always involved paying the state to analyze my transcripts to see what I am qualified to teach. Then paying for the tests that I had to take to become certified in the state. (Elle, Interview, August 2019)

The modern-day military spouse has been described as flexible, resilient, and adaptable (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). All the participants in the study told stories of their experiences that demonstrated their flexibility, resiliency, adaptability, and positive outlook. All 15 of the spouses self-identified as adaptable and resilient. They discussed the need to remain flexible and maintain a positive outlook because ultimately, they understood that their situation would not change. They understood that when they married their spouse, they married into the military lifestyle. All of the participants recounted stories of finding out that they were moving to a new duty station. Rather than being bogged down with negativity or sadness concerning their

upcoming move, they chronicled the steps that they took in order to prepare themselves and their families. They recommended taking a proactive approach to gaining licensure and employment in a new state. Then they detailed their experiences in finding childcare in a new duty station. Finally, they described their decisions as to whether they were able to return to the classroom or not return to the classroom.

Much has happened since the time of the early military spouses; however, the role has seemed to remain unchanged. The participants shared that their role was ultimately to support their husband and his duty in service to his country. They described doing this by moving state to state each time he received PCS orders, deployment orders, or more obligations with work. The participants depicted the need to care for their family and to be the stable parent because their husband's job could change at any moment. They recognized that the military lifestyle was ultimately something that they signed up for when they got married, and their experience was going to be what they chose to make of it.

Career progression for military spouses is often hindered due to the inability to put down roots in one place long enough to take a teaching position, network, and advance their careers (Casteneda & Harrell, 2008). Most participants found difficulties in obtaining employment. Overwhelmingly, the participants stated that even when they held a teaching position, they were not able to take on more responsibility in an advanced position because time was not on their side. The participants recounted the times that they were almost offered promotions but could not accept them because their supervisors or administrators knew they would be leaving. Over half of the participants even detailed occurrences when they took themselves out of the running for a position because they could not see it through since they would soon be moving to a new duty station for an upcoming PCS move.

The literature has detailed the difficulty in finding jobs especially during the first year of a PCS move (Burke & Miller, 2018). My participants described the same sentiments due to the obligations in setting up new homes, finding new teaching positions, and taking care of their families. In addition to the difficulty of finding and keeping work, military spouses typically face obstacles in being awarded the proper years of service for teaching (Burke & Miller, 2018). Most spouses voiced that they have never received the correct number of years of service that they deserved. Ultimately this had a negative effect on their income. Previous research indicates that there is often a gap in income for military spouses and civilian spouses (Meadows et al., 2016). The participants described their inequity of income as compared to their civilian counterparts. Although they felt that they had the same, if not more experience, they voiced that they did not feel similarly compensated.

The Rand National Defense Research Institute suggested that there is a mismatch between educator spouses' level of education and their occupations (Lim & Schulker, 2010). My participants described the same mismatch in their experiences. This was due to several reasons. At times, the participants felt that they were not given positions for which they were qualified because their administrators knew that they were leaving eventually. Other times the participants stated that they were unable to work as educators because they were stationed in a foreign country and were not permitted to work on the economy. In these instances, the spouses told stories of working in childcare positions, retail, tutoring, and other positions where their levels of education and experience were not fully utilized. Time after time the participants depicted situations in which they were underpaid, underemployed, and underappreciated. Although they described an inequity compared to the civilian counterparts, some of the participants stated that they worked because they did not want to have gaps in their resume. Others described not

wanting to become idle as educators. The majority of participants stated that they worked because they like the independence and identity that came with having something of their own to do. They voiced that they were tired of being so-and-so's wife or so-and-so's mother. The participants described their need for autonomy when the majority of their other obligations were for or to other people.

Most military spouses encounter life disturbances in their day-to-day living (Marnocha, 2012). Deployments, PCS moves, childcare issues, and inequitable employment have negatively impacted the morale of the military spouse (Baker & Berry, 2009; James & Countrymann, 2012; Marnocha, 2012; Mustillo et al., 2016). This, in turn, negatively impacts the active duty member. In order to combat these adversities, programs were created to help to support the military spouse. The participants in the study have acknowledged that the programs have been somewhat beneficial to their overall professional advancement. Many spouses discussed using MyCAA to obtain a master's degree or some other sort of certification. The financial benefits of these types of programs have reduced the financial burden of the military spouse in maintaining educational certification.

Other programs that have been developed to support the military spouse have fallen short. As part of the MSEA, military spouses should be provided with access to childcare so that they can leave the home for work if so desired (Meng et al., 2017; S. Resolution 575, 2019). The participants from this study described repeated frustration with these programs. Most spouses who tried to obtain childcare at the local CDC were unable to obtain a position. There simply were never vacancies. Most of the participants who struggled with this stated that open and available spots were often given to civilians who did not move and remained in the same geographical location. This was extremely frustrating for the military spouses because the very

services they felt they deserved were being taken away from them by their civilian counterparts.

Participants also mentioned that they did not have success in the licensure process when they moved state to state. Legislation mandates that, in most US states, the applications for military spouses who are trying to obtain a licensure in a new state should be expedited (Education Commission of the States, 2018). Additionally, they should be given extra time to complete the requirements for certification. My participants did not have a positive experience in this arena. Moreover, spouses who have moved from state to state to obtain a new teaching career are supposed to be reimbursed for their licensure fees. Although this is a new law, the participants said they were aware of it; however, they stated that they were unaware of how to obtain that reimbursement.

Implications

The purpose of this section is to address the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. This study's significance and implications go farther than the participants themselves. The results of this phenomenological study provide empirical, theoretical, and practical implications for educators, tied-migrant military spouses, those in support services for military spouses, administrators, and law and policymakers. The findings provide significance for researchers via a better understanding about military spouses, military spouse employment, and tied migration. The findings from this research contribute to the knowledge of what is known and not known of tied-migrant military spouses. Furthermore, the results from the study give researchers a unique perspective on cross-state teacher mobility, teacher license reciprocity, and the effects of the military lifestyle on military dependents.

Theoretical

The findings from the study provide theoretical significance in adding to the conceptualization of margin theory (McClusky, 1970). The results provide theoretical implications for policymakers, administrators, military support service developers, and researchers of margin theory. Using margin theory to view the experience, this study provided a detailed description of the experience of military spouses as tied-migrant educators. Overall, this study demonstrated that tied-migrant military spouses frequently reevaluate their margin each and every time a new life event occurs. Due to the uniqueness of the military lifestyle, military spouses often do this more frequently than their civilian counterparts. The results provide a unique perspective on the military spouse population as they are much different from civilians who do not face the same life events. The military spouse educator has different obligations than the civilian educator who has not faced moving to a new duty station, deployments, or long separations due to their spouse's employment (Burke & Miller, 2018; Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). This study found that military spouse educators also made professional decisions when forced to deal with underemployment, pay, and pension discrepancies that their matched civilian counterparts do not deal with as frequently (Burke & Miller, 2018; Cooney et al., 2011; Hisanick & Little, 2015; Lim & Schulker, 2010; Meadows et al., 2016). Often, the addition of a new load or obligation such as an upcoming move, deployment, or TAD/TDY orders increased stress and added to what the tied-migrant military spouse educator was already carrying in living (Cooney et al., 2011; Huffman et al., 2019; Marnocha, 2012; Meadows et al., 2016; Ott et al., 2018). The increase of a new load weighed against the available power to deal with that load was used to determine the availability of margin to the tied-migrant military spouse (McClusky, 1970).

The military spouse also has a variety of unique powers or supports that are available to

help navigate the military lifestyle. The supports are useful in finding and obtaining employment, maintaining relationships, and coping with the day-to-day stressors of the military life. These supports were familial, financial, and experiential. Additionally, research has shown that the military spouse also possesses unique attributes to aid in negotiating a variety of situations. These attributes allow them to maintain a positive outlook concerning their situation (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018). This study found that to be true, as the participants were adaptable, resilient, positive, and flexible. My findings allow for an updated outlook on the decision-making process of populations that are frequently required to weigh the powers and loads of their lifestyle.

Empirical

Recently, there has been significant research concerning the wellbeing of the military spouse. Over 80% of active duty families have discussed leaving the military (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Though the reason for this is multifold, the military spouse's outlook can directly influence the active duty member, which was identified as a significant factor in the decision-making process (Huffman et al., 2019). It is suggested that the retention of servicemembers contributes to a ready military (Runge et al., 2014).

Due to the overall effect of military spousal wellbeing, the results of this study have empirical implications for military spouses, military spouses in careers that require licensure, policymakers, and military support service developers. It provides empirical significance relating to the importance of the supports for military spouses, the nature of the military lifestyle, and the obstacles to employment (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008).

For military spouses, the results of this study demonstrated the importance in maintaining a supportive atmosphere. As the loads of military spouse life often come unexpectedly and

frequently, having a good support system will help in the maintenance of autonomy (McClusky 1970). This could potentially allow each military spouse the freedom to make professional decisions regardless of the obligations that are associated with the military lifestyle. Moreover, maintaining a positive attitude and being adaptable, flexible, and resilient will help them navigate through the tough times as a military spouse (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018).

For policymakers and military support service developers, the findings from this study justify the need for continued support services and policies to help military spouses, particularly in the realm of employment. The services created for military spouses are flawed at times. With each move, military spouses who hold licensure careers often have to relicense (Kersey, 2013). Each participant voiced significant frustration that they did not receive an expedited license or they were not granted extra time to meet additional licensure requirements. Moreover, they shared that the idea of reciprocity is not truly reciprocal when it requires additional requisites. The results of this study demonstrate that the policies in place to help military spouses to gain licensure must be revisited. Those in positions within the states' Departments of Education must be held accountable in knowing and following the laws regarding military spouses and their benefits. Previous research and the findings of this study also suggest that military spouses are often unemployed, underemployed, and underpaid (Meadows et al., 2016; US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). They also do not receive equality in their benefits as compared to their civilian counterparts (Hisanick & Little, 2015). States should take a proactive approach in the recognition of, and the protection of, the entitlements of military spouses who are educators.

Practical

The nature of military life often affects the decision making of military spouses (McClusky, 1970). The results of this study provide practical implications to a variety of stakeholders as understanding the military spouse and their lives provides a unique perspective into the dynamic of the military family (Huffman et al., 2019). The results from this study provide practical implications for military spouses in licensed professions, law and policymakers, military support groups, and employers.

For military spouses in licensed professions, the implications suggest that there should be further discussion concerning cross-state mobility, pay, pension, and unemployment and underemployment (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Hisanick & Little, 2015; US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). Specifically, as the participants voiced frustration in the inequity of these issues, the results will provide implications for tied-migrant educator spouses who cross state lines. Moreover, the results and suggestions given by the participants of this study could aid other military spouses in creating a proactive approach to securing employment.

For law and policymakers and military support groups who are responsible for the creation and execution of supports, implications suggest that they should aid in military spouse employment. Military readiness heavily relies on the retention of good servicepeople (Huffman et al., 2019). The results from this study provide an insight to military policymakers so that the very supports that were developed for military spouses benefit those for whom they were created. Moreover, the policies that are enacted should actually meet their designed intent.

For employers, the results from this study suggest that there exists a qualified pool of well-educated and experienced educators who remain unemployed and underemployed only because of their nomadic lifestyle (Burke & Miller, 2018; Castaneda & Harrell, 2008; Hisanick

& Little, 2015; Meadows et al., 2016). The participants from this study were highly educated, experienced, and well-rounded educators. Furthermore, inherent to these migrant educators is a diverse background with extensive knowledge of not only their own certification areas, but a distinctive understanding of a variety of educational and methodological practices. Moreover, they have an acute understanding of working with and in diverse populations in a variety of geographic regions. Special consideration should be given to this unique population of educators due to their particular circumstances.

Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations of this study were established by the researcher in order to provide the most accurate description of the experience of the phenomenon. Therefore, only individuals who were spouses of active duty military service members were invited to participate. Another important delimitation of this study was that participants must have met the requirements of experiencing at least one PCS across state lines. Furthermore, the participants were required to hold a valid teaching license. Additionally, they had to have experience in seeking licensure in a receiving state following a PCS.

There were several limitations to this study. Ideally, 15-20 participants would have been secured (Polkinghorne, 1989). There was a total of 15 participants who took part in this study; however, I would have liked to have more so that I could have a larger representation of each military branch. The majority of the participants were either Navy or Army spouses. I attribute this to the location in which the study took place and the social media groups from where the participants were recruited. Furthermore, the majority of the participants identified as officer spouses. There was only a small representation of spouses of enlisted servicemen.

Another limitation was the lack of demographic diversity of the participants. All of the participants who took part in this study were female. Additionally, my participants are not necessarily an accurate representation of the licensed educator. The results of this study may not be transferable to a general population as the participants only represent a very small subset of both military spouses and educators. Moreover, there was a gross lack of racial and ethnic diversity as 14 out of 15 of the participants identified as Caucasian.

Recommendations for Future Research

This dissertation examined the experiences of military spouses who are educators. All participants felt frustrated with the effects of the military lifestyle on their professional careers. Most of the participants felt there was an unfair and inequitable deficit between themselves and their civilian educator counterparts. They attributed this to the intricacies of the military lifestyle, particularly the constant and frequent moving. The majority of the participants shared sentiments of wanting to advance professionally but being unable.

While conducting this research, I began to notice a lack of other related research to the study's topic. Several areas of research could and should be further investigated. During data analysis, I noticed that the majority of the participants were able to teach if they were determined to do so. Moreover, they all had an overall positive, though frustrating, experience as military spouse educators. I believe that this was due to the manner of recruitment that was used and the specific research question I aimed to answer. This led me to question, what about the spouses who did not stay in the military because of lack of employment opportunity or progression? What was the experience of others who decided to change careers, leave the military due to lack of employment opportunity, or quit teaching all together? Furthermore, I believe that additional research is required to understand why the programs and policies that are created for the benefit

of the military spouse educator are frequently underutilized and/or underrecognized. I believe that the study would be very interesting if replicated from a quantitative perspective, on a much larger scale. I believe that a quantitative approach would allow for a significant increase in participants from a variety of demographic backgrounds. It would be interesting to replicate the study using a different theoretical framework or lens. The other theories considered for this study were grit theory, identity theory, and transition theory.

The results of this study suggest the need for future research in the areas of military spouse employment, cross-state teacher mobility, and support programs for military spouses. It would be interesting to examine if other military spouses in careers with licensure requirements have had similar professional experiences. It would be enlightening to research the availability and usage of the programs that were created for the military spouses.

Furthermore, using a different perspective from which to observe the phenomenon could provide unique results. Most of the programs for military spouses were developed so that those spouses felt support. The hope was that an increase in support would provide an increase in morale. The old phrase that comes to mind is “happy wife, happy life.” The servicepeople whose spouses are happy and content with the military lifestyle might remain in their position serving the US armed forces. A study could be conducted from the viewpoint of the spouse who is the active duty member and that person’s experience observing a spouse struggling with employment as well as those effects on the active duty member’s own career.

According to the results of my study, discrepancies exist in the supports for military spouses and whether they benefit from them. Many participants expressed that they would not have gone into teaching if they knew it would be so difficult to obtain and keep licensure, find

employment, and progress professionally. What can be done to help military spouses not only survive the military lifestyle but thrive, both personally and professionally?

Summary

My results have demonstrated the importance of studying military spouse educators. The themes that were identified through data analysis were (a) attributes, (b) obligations, (c) supports, (d) cross-state teacher mobility, (e) advancement and goals, and (f) autonomy. These educators are often unemployed, underemployed, underpaid, and/or do not receive equitable benefits in comparison to their civilian educator counterparts. Almost every person in United States will be in a classroom at some point in their life. They will encounter educators with various backgrounds and experiences. Each child deserves to have the best teacher. The participants in the study were some of the most well-rounded and experienced educators I have ever met. They were open to change, positive, and extremely adaptable. They had a plethora of knowledge in their certification areas, the educational systems of many different states, and methodological teaching styles. Moreover, they were extremely educated, some with advanced degrees. Yet, they struggled to obtain work.

The participants who experienced most military moves were the ones who felt the most defeated and unsure of their future in the field of education. What does that say when quality educators are losing the desire to teach? Their lack of desire had nothing to do with the students, parents, or administrators, but with the difficulty of simply getting into the classroom. Although they expressed concerns with remaining in the teaching profession, most participants stated that they would teach as long as they were able. In sharing their experiences, the overall essence of the lived experience was that the tied-migrant military spouse educators were persevering individuals who could overcome each obstacle they met. This was demonstrated as they

described teaching for the fulfillment that it brought to their lives and the fact that it was what they were meant to do. Many could not imagine doing anything else. The military lifestyle just made teaching, as a career choice, significantly more difficult.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 11, 2019

Marlynn Goodrich
IRB Approval 3832.061119: Military Spouse Educators: A Phenomenological Study on Tied-Migrant Military Spouses

Dear Marlynn Goodrich,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Military Spouse Educators:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to describe the experiences of educators who are military spouses of active duty members of the United States armed forces, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are 18 years of age or older, are a female active duty military spouse, hold a teaching license/certificate from at least one state in the US, have experienced one permanent change of station (PCS), and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, participate in a one-on-one interview either in person or via FaceTime/Skype, participate in a focus group interview either in person or via FaceTime/Skype, and review transcripts of your interview to check for clarity. It should take approximately three hours for you to complete the procedures listed. Your name and/or other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, click on the link provided for the screening survey. If you meet participation criteria, a consent form will be sent via email to complete and return to the researcher. Once the consent form is signed and returned, you will be contacted to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,

Marlynn Goodrich
Navy Spouse, Educator, and Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX C: SCREENING SURVEY

Screening Survey through Survey Monkey to accompany recruitment post on Social Media

1. Are you over the age of 18?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Are you an active duty military spouse?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Are you female?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Do you hold a valid teaching license/certification from at least one state in the United States?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Have you experienced at least one Permanent Change of Station (PCS)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Would you be interested in participating in a study on the experiences female military spouses who are educators?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. If you are interested in participating in a study on the experiences of female military spouses who are educators, please provide your information below
 - a. Name
 - b. State
 - c. Email address
 - d. Phone number

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

“Military Spouse Educators: A Phenomenological Study on Female Tied-Migrant Military Spouses”

Marlynn C. Goodrich
Liberty University
School of Graduate Education

You are invited to participate in a research study of female military spouses who are educators. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a female military spouse who holds a valid teaching license from at least one state and has experienced at least one permanent change of station (PCS). I ask that you read this form in its entirety and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to this study.

Marlynn Goodrich, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University is conducting this study.

Background information: The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences of female educators who are tied-migrant spouses of active duty members in the United States armed forces. **The research question I am hoping to answer is:**

- What are the experiences of educators who are tied-migrant military spouses?

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Meet with the researcher for a one-hour interview. This interview may take place in person or via FaceTime, Skype, or other video conferencing application. During this interview, notes will be taken, and the interview will be audio recorded for the researcher to review at a later time. All information will remain confidential throughout the entire process and will later be destroyed.
2. Participate in a focus group interview lasting approximately one hour and consisting of 3-5 other participants. This interview may take place in person or via a video conferencing application. During this interview, notes will be taken, and the interview will be audio recorded for the researcher to review at a later time. All information will remain confidential throughout the entire process and will later be destroyed.
3. Review the interview transcript for accuracy and to determine if you would like to add, delete, or clarify any information.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, no more than you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits of Participation: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society may include increasing the awareness of military spouse employment, specifically in the field of education where cross-state licensure is required each time a tied-migrant military spouse educator crosses state lines.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to them. In any report I may publish, I will not include any information that may identify the participants of this study.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. In person and video interviews will be conducted in locations where the conversation will not be overheard.
- Paper data will be secured in locked storage areas. Electronic data will be stored in a password protected computer. Per federal regulations, data will be retained for three years following the completion of the study. After three years, all data will be destroyed by either the shredding of paper documents or the deletion of electronic files.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Audio recordings of the interviews will only be made available to the researcher and the paid professional transcriptionist, who will sign a confidentiality agreement. The recordings and transcripts will be secured in locked storage. The recordings and interview transcriptions will assist the researcher in reviewing the material discussed. At the termination of the research, all recordings and transcriptions will be stored on a password protected computer for three years and then permanently deleted.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

How to withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number in the following paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in the study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Marlynn Goodrich. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's dissertation chair, Dr. James Eller at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher or chair, please contact the Institutional Review Board, 1917 Liberty University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please let the researcher know if you would like a copy of this information for your personal records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in this study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me ask part of my participation in this study.

(signature of participant)

(date)

(signature of investigator)

(date)

APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to examine how female tied-migrant military spouses who are educators describe their experiences as professionals. This questionnaire will be utilized to obtain demographic information, verify military connectedness, and record your perceptions and experiences as military spouse educators.

1. Name: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Ethnicity: _____
4. Branch of military affiliation: _____
5. Rank of military spouse: _____
6. Age range as a military spouse: _____
7. Highest degree earned: _____
8. Current profession: _____
9. In how many states do you hold a teaching license? Please list which state(s)?

10. As a military spouse, approximately how many times have you permanently changed stations (PCS'd)? To where? Please list the years and locations (i.e. 2012-2014 Pensacola, FL).

Years	Duty Station
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

11. Has your spouse been deployed? If so, how many times and for how long? Did you maintain your teaching career while your spouse was absent?

12. Reflect on your experience as a military spouse and as an educator. Please attach a written or typed response.

- a. Describe how your experience as a military spouse has influenced you as an individual, as a parent (if applicable), and as an educator/professional.
- b. Has being a military spouse helped or hindered your professional aspirations? Please describe.
- c. What supports (familial, financial, experience) have aided you in maintaining a career as an educator (if applicable)?
- d. What has hindered your professional career as an educator?

APPENDIX F: STANDARDIZED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

Questions

Opening Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, describe yourself and your family.
2. How and when did you become affiliated with the military?
3. Why did you want to become an educator?
4. Please describe your experience in how you gained teacher licensure.

Questions relating to the loads and powers of the participants

5. How many times have you moved with the military?
6. Please describe your experiences in moving to a new duty station in a different state.
7. Has your spouse ever deployed? When and for how long? Did you teach while your spouse was deployed?
8. Did you return to teaching each time you've moved? Why or Why not?
9. What influenced your decision to return to teaching?
10. If you didn't return to the classroom, what influenced your decision not to return?
11. Please describe your experience in finding a new teaching position after a PCS.
12. Please describe your supports in life.
13. How has being a military spouse ever effected your professional career or goals?
14. What were your experiences in gaining licensure following a PCS move?
15. What were your experiences regarding teacher pay or the step process when entering a new school?

16. Please describe your experience in teaching in your new position(s).

17. Please describe any concerns that you have had in regard to your professional career.

Questions relating to motivation and success

18. What are your goals? Personal/professional?

19. Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?

20. Do you feel like you are successful? Why or why not?

21. What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experience as a military spouse educator?

APPENDIX G: STANDARDIZED FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Open-Ended Focus Group Questions

Questions

1. Please introduce yourselves to each other and identify the branch of the military with which you are associated.
2. What would you identify as the most positive aspect of military life?
3. What would you identify as the most difficult aspect of military life?
4. How has the military lifestyle affected you professionally?
5. Have you sought employment at each duty station? Why or why not?
6. When you think about your professional career, what comes to mind?
7. Have you had to give up your professional aspirations due to the nature of military lifestyle?
8. What have you gained professionally from your spouse's military service?
9. Has military life provided you with any advantages that otherwise would not have been available to you?

APPENDIX H: JOURNAL

June 11, 2019

I received permission from Liberty University's IRB to continue with my study. I am excited to begin to recruit participants via social media. I know one thing that I need to do is to remove myself as much as possible and try to go into each meeting with each participant with an open mind. I plan to make my first post later today and guide my future participants to fill out the consent forms and take the online questionnaire.

June 13, 2019

After posting my original post on social media, I was shocked by how many people I had that showed interest in participation. I sent out consent forms to all of the military spouses who responded. Some have already returned the consent forms and taken the online questionnaire. Others haven't returned their forms yet. I am pretty excited to schedule more interviews. The first two people that I spoke with were hesitant to do a facetime video chat, stating that they preferred to have a regular phone call. I have two interviews scheduled right now and am hoping to have more soon.

June 14, 2019

It seems to be taking a fairly long time for people to get back their consent forms. Right now, I am emailing them and having each person return via pdf with their signatures. Next time I do any sort of study in the future, I will definitely use a program that is more user friendly for sending, completing, and returning consent forms. I am going to complete my first interview today. I am nervous. Luckily, the person I am interviewing first is also a doctoral candidate who is a little farther ahead in her study, so I am sure she will understand if I mess up at all. I need to remember that I am an interviewer seeking to answer a question, not a friend commiserating with another friend over a shared experience. I need to keep my opinions out of this as much as possible.

June 14, 2019

My first interview went really well. The participant was very knowledgeable and had a lot to say about her experiences. Several times, I found myself wanting to agree with her and what she was saying and even to add in my own experiences, but I didn't. I didn't want my words or opinions or emotions to sway her beliefs or her perception of her experience. This participant was so nice, and I found it easy to talk and interview her.

June 27, 2019

Today was my first in-person interview. It went incredibly well. I can't believe what a difference being in person makes. It is so much easier to get a read on the participant. My last interview, that was over the phone lasted only 45 minutes. This in-person interview lasted two hours! I feel like I got so much more data from this participant. Asking questions was easier and I could get a

better read on how to ask my follow-up questions. I am finding that these participants are so similar to myself and their experiences, so far, have been very similar.

APPENDIX J: EXAMPLE OF NVIVO DATA ANALYSIS

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface with the following components:

- Top Menu Bar:** Home, Create, Data, Analyze, Query, Explore, Layout, View.
- Left Sidebar:**
 - DATA:** Files, File Classifications, Externals.
 - CODES:** Nodes.
 - CASES:** Cases, Case Classifications.
 - NOTES:** Memos, Annotations, Memo Links.
 - SEARCH:**
 - MAPS:**
- Central Panel:**
 - Name:** State Licensure Variations.
 - Summary:** 4 references coded, 4.76% coverage.
 - Reference 1:** 0.93% coverage. Text: "So that kind of information for each state, you have to figure that out kind of like on your own and it could be kind of complicated because I don't think every region understands that it's different to people who are from that area".
 - Reference 2:** 0.40% coverage. Text: "It cost me close to \$500.00 when all was said and done, especially with all the things on my license."
 - Reference 3:** 2.18% coverage. Text: "But with New Jersey, everything is old school snail mail. They want the original copy in a sealed envelope right to them and so, from every school you've ever worked at and I'm sitting there thinking 'sweet Jesus.' Okay, so I have to get snail mail from Orlando, from Miami, the two places I taught in Florida and the Keys was not a big deal because I'm here now but now I have to get two from two separate schools in Hawaii. I have to put these whole packages together with pre-addressed envelopes because they want snail mail from each school".
 - Reference 4:** 1.24% coverage. Text: "When you get orders, official or unofficial, start the licensing process immediately and do not drag. That's like the first thing I do. I'm like, we're going to New Jersey? I look up the Department of Education and how to get a license. Start this immediately. The last thing you want to do is to put that off."
- Bottom Panel:** CODES > Nodes > State Licensure Variations.

APPENDIX K: MEMOING

MEMOS...

Interview w/ Emma

→ June 27, 2019

During the interview:

- moving, pcs moves
- not enough time in one place
- can't move up
- How am I going to find a job?
- Licensure, no reciprocity
- she's very positive, resilient
- Children, childcare could be an issue
- going at it alone. husband supports but the home + kids fall to her
- PAY + Pension concerns

TRANSCRIPTS

- relicensing gets tiring
- pay not always great
- pension / retirement on her own + will use husband's.
- FRUSTRATED
- will I work if I can't find childcare
- States she needs to work for own independence. Not a SATM type.
- one day when husband retires, she will build her career. husband's is the focus now.

APPENDIX L: AUDIT TRAIL

Date	Task	Notes
June 14, 2019	Began interviews	Each of the following interviews were held either in person or over the phone. In person interviews produced significant data.
JUNE 14, 2010	Uploaded data into Excel for initial codes	Began uploading questionnaires and interviews into excel as I read through/relisted to each of them. Jotted down what became codes.
JUNE 18, 2019	Moved into NVivo	After reviewing data, all was uploaded into Nvivo. Each interview was relistened to. Codes presented themselves into themes.
SEPTEMBER 27, 2019	Held Focus group 1	Held in person, three participants showed. I would like another focus group
OCTOBER 8, 2019	Held Focus Group 2	Held via teleconference. Of the 4 participants who agreed to participate, only two joined. Another focus group will be needed.
OCTOBER 29, 2019	Held Focus Group 3	Held via teleconference. Three participants joined in. In hearing from 8/14 participants, I feel as though saturation was met.
JANUARY 2, 2020	Completed data analysis	Identified many codes that were constructed into 6 themes
JANUARY 3, 2020	Began Writing Chapter 4 and 5	Submitted to Committee for review
JANUARY 21, 2020	Revised chapters 1-3	Submitted to committee for review
JANUARY 21, 2020	Requested formal review	Submitted to committee for review
February 23, 2020	Revised and Edited Chapters 1-5 using Chair's suggestions	Incorporated and expanded upon committee's suggestions.