

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS' EXPLANATIONS OF THE IMPACTS
OF MILITARY STRESS ON MILITARY DEPENDENT STUDENTS' DEVELOPMENT

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 explanatory case study is to understand how the military culture and inherent stress affect the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. For this research, military stressors were identified as combat deployments, permanent change of stations, and living within a military household. The conceptual framework that influenced this research was the social cognitive theory as developed by Albert Bandura and Ronald Akers' social learning theory, both of which explain how children learn from observing individuals and their environments. This study sought to answer the central research question: How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today's military culture? These individuals were either high school teachers, instructors, and administrators who teach/administrate high school students who are military dependent. The perceptions of these professionals were attained from individual interviews, a focus group interview, and participant letters to hypothetical incoming military dependent students. Data were collected from the interviews with the high school professionals, memoing, and the participants' letters. The analysis of data began with transcribing, categorizing, coding, and identifying themes. The results of this study suggest that the stress of living within the military culture on military dependent high school students, as perceived by high school education professionals, can be culturally, socially, and academically beneficial to their development.

Keywords: permanent change of station (PCS), combat deployment, social cognitive theory, social learning theory

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Dedication

Dedicated to my family, your sacrifices are made without a sound, but they produce the most deafening effects. I love and adore you all, and without each of you I would be nothing.

Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank Drs. Swezey, Fyock, and Todd for your guidance, mentorship, and expertise that you selflessly provided me throughout this journey. I could not have achieved this educational milestone without each of you.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Copyright Page.....	4
Dedication	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
List of Tables	11
List of Abbreviations	12
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	13
Overview.....	13
Background	14
Historical.....	14
Social.....	16
Theoretical	18
Situation to Self.....	20
Problem Statement	22
Purpose Statement.....	24
Significance of the Study	24
Research Questions.....	25
Central Question	26
Sub-question 1	26
Sub-question 2	27
Sub-question 3	28
Definitions.....	29

Summary	30
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	32
Overview	32
Theoretical Framework	33
Related Literature	41
Summary	60
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	62
Overview	62
Design	64
Research Questions	67
Setting	68
Participants	69
Procedures	73
The Researcher's Role	76
Data Collection	77
Interviews	80
Participant Letters	87
Focus Group Interviews	89
Data Analysis	90
Trustworthiness	94
Credibility	95
Dependability and Confirmability	95
Transferability	96

Ethical Considerations	96
Summary	97
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	98
Overview.....	98
Participants.....	98
Mr. Cee	99
Mrs. Antietam	100
Mrs. Lucy	100
Mrs. Kay	101
Mr. Pei.....	102
Mrs. Book	102
Mrs. Bastogne	102
Mr. Esse	103
Mr. Lowe.....	103
Mr. Atche	104
Case Description	104
Results.....	105
Major Theme 1: Familial Support.....	110
Major Theme 2: Military Dependent Student Resiliency	115
Major Theme 3: Effects of Military Stress on Student Development	120
Major Theme 4: Professional Support	125
Research Question Responses: Central Research Question.....	131
Research Question Responses: SQ1	133

Research Question Responses: SQ2	135
Research Question Responses: SQ3	136
Summary	138
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	140
Overview	140
Summary of Findings.....	140
Discussion	146
Empirical Discussion	146
Theoretical Discussion.....	151
Implications.....	153
Empirical Implications.....	153
Theoretical Implications	156
Practical Implications.....	158
Delimitations and Limitations.....	162
Recommendations for Future Research	163
Summary	164
REFERENCES	166
APPENDICES	187
Appendix A: Interview Questions	187
Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Questions.....	189
Appendix C: Recruitment Email.....	191
Appendix D: Consent Form	192
Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter	194

List of Tables

Table 1. Family Demographics of Military Members	42
Table 2. Sample School System Changes Resulting from Family Military Moves	60
Table 3. Participant Demographics.....	99
Table 4. Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 1	111
Table 5. Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 2.....	115
Table 6. Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 3.....	120
Table 7. Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 4.....	126

List of Abbreviations

American Institute of Stress (AIS)

Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Course (AJROTC)

Combat Operational Stress (COS)

Department of Defense (DoD)

Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)

Junior Reserve Officer Training Course (JROTC)

Family Readiness Group (FRG)

Mid-Western High School (MWHS)

Permanent Change of Station (PCS)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Military dependent children endure a variety of stressors which are unique to living within a military family and culture. These stressors include parental combat deployments, military moves, and stress associated with living in a military home. High school professionals have observed these stressors in students from military families through certain behaviors that includes social skills, academic achievement, and temperament, as well as uncooperative conduct or sometimes even violence (Wadsworth, 2016). Many school administrators, civilian high school professionals, and parents do not fully understand how these stressors impact children, and as a result, are not fully aware of their developmental implications (Rossiter, Dumas, Wilmoth, & Patrician, 2016).

This case study emanates primarily from concern that the impacts of military stressors on military dependent high school children's development is not thoroughly understood, as Russo and Fallon (2015) explained:

There is little research studying the impact of the military lifestyle (e.g., relocation and deployment of their military parent, changes among friends and schools, living outside of the native country) on the approximately 1.1 million children living in military families.

(p. 409)

The body of research that is required to understand military children's development in high school is infinitesimal. These developmental implications must be understood so that social and academic support can be conceptualized, developed, and implemented to assist military high school students, which will ultimately reduce some of the anxiety and the psychological barriers that they encounter.

High school military dependent student development has largely been overlooked by researchers and academics; the research is typically focused on military dependent children ages 5–12, in Grades K–8. Continued research was necessary to understand military dependent students' development under military cultural conditions throughout adolescence. The research for this case study was conducted in the midwestern United States.

Chapter One is an introduction to the research topic and depicts the implementation of the conceptual framework. The subsections examine the historical and social background of the stressors on military high school students and provide the theories that impact the conceptual framework guiding this research. The “Situation to Self” section highlights my motivation and determination to understand this research problem and is followed by the problem statement, purpose statement, and the significance of the study. Finally, the central research question and subsequent sub-questions, which were so influential to this study, are addressed with definitions rounding out the chapter.

Background

This section presents a history of stressors for military members and their families and incorporates an explanation of the social paradigm of growing up as a military child. The culminating theoretical frameworks which impacted my research are outlined.

Historical

Limited research exists that correlates the development of military dependent children with the long-lasting impacts of military life and military culture. Soldiers who have served in combat deployments, experienced multiple PCS moves, and lived within the military culture have unintentionally subjected their dependent children to a variety of stressors, which is rarely

addressed by research. As a result, this enormous gap in research and literature forms the underlying basis for this research study.

In the United States, historical evidence of military stress can be traced as far back as the 1850s, when it was often misdiagnosed by doctors and labeled as "Irritable Heart Syndrome" (Fanu, 2003). Doctors at the beginning of the 19th century lacked the experience and medical expertise that exists today, and subsequently frequent misdiagnoses of patient ailments and remedies from serving in combat occurred. The emergence of World War I (WWI) created advanced technologies in artillery as well as the infamous infantry fighting techniques known as trench warfare (Watson, 2009). These new artillery technologies, mixed with the newly developed trench warfare fighting, forced soldiers into smaller constricted areas which produced a phenomenon dubbed "shell shock" (Fanu, 2003).

Shell shock was codified for the condition that was previously identified as the common ailment from the Civil War, labeled as irritable heart syndrome. During and after WWI, an unprecedented number of soldiers began reporting very similar psychological conditions to those in the Civil War. However, reliable numbers could not be accurately confirmed because soldiers who were not near explosions also reported symptoms of agitation, stress, and panic. The new term for this diagnosis was called "war neurosis" because the ailment could not be linked to direct combat (Fanu, 2003). This was also the first time that military stress was frowned upon, as soldiers who reported this phenomenon were looked upon as poor performers, often missing duty or hospitalized, yet appeared physically fine (Gilbert, 1994).

Research studies were conducted after WWI, in the late 1920s, that focused on French, British, and American cases of soldiers who reported emotional or psychological impacts of war. The evidence demonstrated that these ailments generated soldiers who were unable to return to

battle because of their degraded emotional state (Berg, 2011). Research also indicated that soldiers who did not receive treatment had difficult and longer periods of readjustment to their home life (Weed, 1923). In World War II, the phenomenon of soldiers reporting psychological impacts from war again became evident, and a new term called "battle fatigue" was assigned to an old ailment. Battle fatigue is a term that is still utilized today, despite its expanded meaning and enhanced implications. Many soldiers diagnosed with this ailment today experience further evaluation and treatment, and psychiatrists' current diagnoses is called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; Chermol, 1985). In addition, current circumstances and military research have exposed these factors as affecting home life readjustment issues for military families, even though specific research studies were not completed on the issue until decades later.

The military conflicts and wars of the past 50 years have impacted soldiers in such a way that symptoms of anxiety, stress, isolation, panic, and irritability have become quite common. The present-day wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria have produced more than 940,000 instances of some form of mental health concern (Shane, 2017). Research exists that identifies military deployments with the correlation between military parents and their dependent children, indicating a relationship between the stressors of war and a child's early development (Laser & Stephens, 2011).

Social

The military dependent children's world is shaped and impacted by the environment, background, and situations formed by military culture. Living within the norms of a military culture, including the stressors of military life, impacts the dependent children's development. "Each culture is said to constitute a total social world that reproduces itself through enculturation, the process by which values, emotional dispositions, and embodied behaviors are

transmitted from one generation to the next” (Brown, 2008, p. 364). The military culture is one of unique behaviors, beliefs, standards, and warrior ethos, which are instilled in its members and families by some form of acculturation process (Wilson, 2008). Military children are surrounded by two variations of stress: Combat Operational Stress (COS) and family stress (“Combat Operational Stress,” n.d.). For example, military dependent children have less time to build social relationships and must spend more time in maintaining the ones they have. Substantiating research demonstrates emotionally supportive environments such as the community, or military installations, aid in their development (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013). However, research involving the supportive nature between civilian school systems and its support to military children is less obvious (De Pedro et al., 2011).

The symptoms of deployments may ultimately impact and escalate other facets of military life, such as marriage, decreased intimacy levels between the deployed member and the family, or in extreme conditions, domestic violence. Evidence suggests that a positive home life extends “opportunities for personal autonomy and encourage the early adolescent’s role in family decision making are associated with positive outcomes, such as self-esteem, self-reliance, satisfaction with school and student-teacher relations, positive school adjustment, and advanced moral reasoning” (Eccles, 1999, p. 40). However, a home-life which is not authoritarian in nature and is the antithesis of a positive environment produces degraded self-esteem and a heightened self-consciousness in children (Eccles, 1999).

PCS (or moving frequently) can be associated with persistent social regression that ultimately reduces military dependents’ interpersonal skills compared to their civilian peers. Evidence demonstrates that before children graduate high school, their social and cognitive attributes for adult life are established (Eccles, 1999). This pattern of social mobility requires

children to frequently form new friendships and adapt to different school environments. Furthermore, there is commonly a disruption to domestic routines. Evidence suggests that multiple school transitions due to PCS moves also negatively impact students' academic development (Drummet, Coleman, & Cable, 2003). These years are critical to a child's development. Eccles (1999) suggested that "because the experiences both boys and girls have in school and other activities will shape their development through this pivotal age period, efforts should be made to optimize these experiences" (p. 31).

To understand the impacts of military culture on military dependent high school students, it is important that educational professionals evaluate their academic aptitudes, values, convictions, and constitutions within the context of their unique environment. Children between the ages 6 to 10 have the "opportunity to develop competencies and interests in a wide array of domains" (Eccles, 1999, p. 32). Educational professionals may use this rationale to better recognize and comprehend the relationship between the military dependent children and their exposure to the stress of a military lifestyle and culture.

Theoretical

The absence of an explanation for how military stress impacts military children's development requires a framework that amply illustrates the progression of this phenomenon. McFarland (2005) noted that cultural background is used as a primary method for "self-definition, expression, and relationships within groups and communities" (p. 41). As a result, the convoluted aspects of military culture and the impacts it has on military dependent children's development used social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2001), and social learning theory (SLT; Akers, 1973, 2017) to explore this problem. Other theories fell short in providing an in-depth understanding for explaining how military stress impacted children's development.

The evolution of SLT (Akers, 1973, 2017) began in the 1960s; however, the frameworks were used separately by both Bandura and Akers. Bandura's learning theory is rooted in psychology and suggested that individuals can learn how to do something purely from observing an individual performing a task. Bandura illustrated his theory as depicted in his Bobo doll experiments in which children modeled their behaviors from observing adults dramatizing violence on dolls. Bandura (1977) stated that "most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (p. 22).

Akers' SLT is similar to Bandura's observational research; however, he proposed his learning theory as it pertains to crime (Akers, 1973). Contrary to Bandura's psychological approach, Akers' SLT used sociology to conceptualize the idea that deviant behavior is learned from observing the social factors by which individuals are surrounded. His research indicates that individuals are driven to commit crimes from the criminal relationships they have formed (Akers, 1973). The sociological approach was integral to understanding the environment in which military children lived, and how the aspects of that setting impacted their development. The groups with which one is in differential association provide the major social contexts in which all of the mechanisms of social learning operate. Akers (2017) concluded that social groups "not only expose one to definitions, but they also present one with models to imitate and differential reinforcement (source, schedule, value, and amount) for criminal or conforming behavior" (p. 86). This theory partially impacted this case study's research because it is unclear how military culture impacts a military dependent child's advancement.

Decades later, Bandura's SLT would morph into his expansive social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1986). Derived from his own learning theory, SCT reveals that people's

behavior is impacted from an individual's learned experiences (Bandura, 1986). Bandura's SCT is much more extensive than his SLT as he intersects self-efficacy with the individual's environment, personal issues, and behavior through triangulation (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (2001) believed that "people's belief in their efficacy to exercise control over their own motivation, thought patterns and actions also plays an important role in the exercise of human agency" (p. 69). He credits children's moral development with factors that include the social and intellectual aspects of their lives (Bandura, 2001).

This study's purpose was to understand how the military culture and its inherent stress affect the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. Akers' social learning theories as well as Bandura's social cognitive theory contributed to the formation of an investigation of how military stress affects high school military dependent students' development from both a psychological and sociological perspective. Both schools of thought augment research conducted about the impacts of stress and the development of elementary school-aged military. Both of these schools of thought have utility in understanding how the stress of living within a military culture can affect the development of military children in high school.

Situation to Self

The inspiration for investigating the impact of military cultural stress on the development of high school students is threefold: (a) first, I am a military officer and I have four children, two of whom have lived within a military culture for more than 17 years; (b) secondly, it seemed to me that research existed on the impact of military cultural stress on younger children; however, I could not determine the developmental impact on children who are grown and have theoretically

matured into high school; and (c) finally, my experiences and observations as a military father and husband motivated my investigation into this phenomenon.

I witnessed a variety of familial struggles which were rooted in living within the military culture such as continuously moving throughout the world, parents deploying to combat zones, and observing families with internal struggles from the aforementioned changes. These factors have immeasurable impacts on younger children; however, as the military child matures, it is less demonstrable.

I knew many military parents whose children and families suffered because of military stress that includes a deployed parent, the necessity of constantly moving to different locations throughout the world, or the never-ending concerns of switching to a new social environment because of relocation. These children often developed feelings of anger, resentment, tension, and defiance because of the multiple moves that are inherent in the military lifestyle (Ruff & Keim, 2014).

I had an epistemological assumption that military dependent children's development is shaped by the military culture in which they are exposed, one that is much different than their civilian peers. Epistemological assumptions relate to the genesis of one's knowledge. Maykut (1994) conveyed epistemology as being concerned with the connections between "knower and the known" and how values are used in understanding (p. 17). This assumption is a vital element in my case study research because it impacts the conceptual framework and drives my research (Yin, 2018).

My epistemological assumption for this study was in part from an investigation about its existence in nature, a nature that only military children would have knowledge of or understand (Crotty, 2003). My paradigm was infused with a combination of biblical and constructivist

worldviews. The constructivist paradigm was one that explained how children learn from their social experiences. I believe that human beings learn how to behave because of the actions they have encountered (Peterson, 2013). Akers (2017) explained children's behavior as a result of differential reinforcement in which "the behavior of others and its consequences are observed and modeled" (p. 52). Bandura (2001) argued, "Children repeatedly observe the standards and behavior patterns not only of parents, but also of siblings, peers, and other adults" (p. 57).

My faith and biblical worldview are at the forefront of everything that I ever embraced, thus my research would not be without the essence of God. The Bible is replete with stories and lessons learned through social experiences. Jesus answered the questioning Jews, testifying, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me" (John 7:16 NIV), endorsing his Word as God's Truth. Proverbs 1:8 says, "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching" (NIV), which points toward the importance of father and mother's teaching. Likewise, James 1:25 states, "But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they were blessed in what they do" (NIV). Finally, Proverbs 1:8 asserts, "She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue" (NIV), signifying a virtuous woman guides her family with God's wisdom. I believe the social context of a family impacts a child's growth, knowledge, and development within that context, as illustrated and confirmed by the narratives found in the Bible.

Problem Statement

The problem is a lack of understanding which exists to explain the developmental impact on military dependent students who live within a military culture during high school years, from Grades 9–12. Although developmental research for younger military dependents exists, the

greatest absence of research in understanding this phenomenon is found at the high school level. The preponderance of past research involves adolescents from ages 6–14 years but leaves the long-term impacts of military life on children unknown (Chandra et al., 2011). The explanations of public high school professionals on the impacts of military culture on high school military dependent students' development could provide the foundation of better understanding the impact of various stressors of living in a military family and within that unique military culture.

The research on the explanations of educational professionals who have observed military dependent students' development could prove beneficial in developing future educational doctrine. This is an area of interest for educational professionals and administrators to consider when they create policy that better assists military dependent students' development (Astor, Benbenishty, & Estrada, 2009). Without an absolute understanding of the military dependent child's development, an aggregate effort from educational professionals and parents to assist military children in school will never be developed. Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) suggested, "More research is needed to determine whether adolescents are more vulnerable to risk and stress during certain developmental milestones" (p. 270).

Military dependent high school students are more susceptible to emotional, behavioral, and relationship issues because of the stressors that are born from within the military culture (Brendel, Maynard, Albright, & Bellomo, 2013). Military dependent students in school experienced academic regression when their parents or caregivers are deployed. Middle school aged children and toddlers were at an increased risk for social and developmental challenges that may perpetuate into their advanced school years (Laser & Stephens, 2011). As children age and advance in school, they become more reliable and dependent on their peer social relationships.

Stress from military moving damages these relationships and may potentially affect their performance in school (Alfano, Lau, Balderas, Bunnell, & Beidel, 2016).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory case study is to understand how the military culture and inherent stress affect the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. Stressors are defined as combat deployments, military moves, and social stress associated with living within the military family and its culture (Hix, Hanley, & Kaplan, 1998; Lester et al., 2010; Langston, Gould, & Greenberg, 2007; Ridings, Moreland, & Petty, 2019). The conceptual framework that impacted this case study was Aker's (1973, 2017) social learning theory and Bandura's (1977, 1986, 2001) social cognitive theory, with both providing theoretical explanations of how children learn from observing their environments.

Significance of the Study

The case study advances the awareness of the cultural impacts on military children's development in their teenage years and presents a theory on the child's evolution. The study is important because the research, evidence, and subsequent doctrine in the development of the military dependent student is inadequate. This theoretical research was designed to understand the aggregate impacts on children's development as they live within a military culture. The urgency for further research into the military's cultural impacts on children's development has been a consistent outcry from researchers (Chandra et al., 2011; Crow & Seybold, 2013; De Pedro et al., 2011; Ohye et al., 2016; Sullivan, Barr, Kintzle, Gilreath, & Castro, 2016; Wadsworth, 2016). Some researchers have stated very bluntly, "To date, studies have focused largely on the psychological, emotional, and social outcomes of military children and adolescents and have ignored factors within school environments that promote the outcomes of military

students” (De Pedro et al., 2014). This case study provides a deeper understanding of how the military dependent student has developed, as uniquely depicted from the explanations of professional educators and administrators at the school. As described by Milburn and Lightfoot (2013), the impacts of stress on the development of children who live within a military culture are largely unknown to the teachers that teach, coach, and mentor them. The case study’s outcomes may be used by education professionals, military families, and researchers to tailor the student’s development to the impressing demands of the military culture. The Department of Defense (DoD), the military, military families, and education professionals alike would benefit from this theory as it articulates the military child’s development into their high school years.

Research Questions

One fundamental question greatly impacted this case study: How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today’s military culture? This is the central question; it seeks to understand the impacts on military dependent student’s development that researchers such as Chandra et al. (2011), Crow and Seybold (2013), De Pedro et al. (2011), Ohye et al. (2016), Sullivan et al. (2016), and Wadsworth (2016) have described as missing. Three sub-questions assisted with understanding how high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today’s military culture. The results of the study were derived purely from the information that is provided by the participants (Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013). The research questions sought to understand the impacts on military dependent student’s development from their parents deploying in support of combat

deployments, multiple PCS moves, the impacts of, and living within a military culture, through the explanations of education professionals.

Central Question

How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today's military culture? The military's cultural impact on children's development was of particular interest because it produced an environment that was predicated upon the high-tempo of operational missions, periods of absence on the part of the caregiver, and combat deployments (Fischer et al., 2015). Milburn and Lightfoot (2013) admonished:

Adolescents in these wartime US military families are a unique group of young people who are simultaneously coping with the developmental milestones of adolescence, such as establishing identity and autonomy, while they are adjusting to the challenges of wartime military life that can impact development including multiple moves, relocation, and the deployment of a service member parent to a combat setting. (p. 266)

The central question sought to understand how stress brought upon from PCSs, having loved ones deployed, and adapting to a new environment impacted the development of high school students. This question sought to understand the intersectionality between military stress and military dependent student development.

Sub-question 1

How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of combat deployment of military parents on military dependent high school students?

The impacts of soldiers returning from war on members of the military family were indiscriminate and varied by documentation. Military dependent students in school experienced

academic regression when their parents or caregivers were deployed (Crow & Seybold, 2013). This was in large part because the child's only other caregiver, typically their mother, experienced their own bouts of depression and anxiety due to the deployment of their spouse (Hoge, Castro, & Eaton, 2006). Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory suggests that social impacts in certain environments can encourage a child's values and interests long after the physical events have taken place. The military spouse, deployed family member, and dependent children can be subjected to long-lasting emotions. Wadsworth (2016) noted that "military personnel and at-home partners can experience heightened levels of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and dyadic distress during the 6 months following homecoming" (p. 38). Older children who endure stress from parental deployment create barriers in their social, emotional, and mental development in school (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010). Similar stress during and after combat also leads to child maltreatment, an elevated risk for anti-social behaviors, and a decline in school performance (Ternus, 2010). This sub-question seeks to understand the dynamics between military deployments and military dependent student development.

Sub-question 2

How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of numerous and continual military Permanent Change of Station moves on military dependent high school students?

Children of all ages are susceptible to stress when they are confronted with the challenges of moving to a new location. According to Ruff and Keim (2014), children are "vulnerable to the stress related to frequent transitions, as they must simultaneously cope with normal developmental stressors such as establishing peer relationships, conflict in parent/child

relationships, and increased academic demands” (p. 104). Evidence also suggests that correlations exist between moving and student performance in school. Ruff and Keim (2014) indicated that military dependent children who move every two or three years perform academically lower than that their civilian counterparts. Mancini, Bowen, O’Neal, and Arnold (2015) pointed out that depressive symptoms increase with a higher frequency of relocations. This sub-question seeks to understand the underlying impact between the stress of PCSs and military dependent student development.

Sub-question 3

How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of military culture and life on military dependent high school students?

The likelihood that the impacts of living within a military culture impacts children’s social development at school is a reasonable assumption to consider. Many of these conditions materialize because relationships with teachers, administrators, high school counselors, and friends are lost from the constant military moves. Wong, Parent, and Konishi (2019) suggested that students who have positive relationships with their teachers demonstrate greater academic progress and classroom engagement than those who did not. Military stressors like multiple family moves or combat deployments intensify emotions in dependent adolescents (Ternus, 2010). One of the default emotions that emerged from the aforementioned stressors was that of anger. Unfortunately, sometimes anger was regarded as an emotion that was typically displayed as a teenager (Crow & Seybold, 2013). This sub-question sought to understand the connection and impact of the unique military lifestyle and culture and military dependent student development.

Definitions

The following terms are used within this case study:

1. *Academic Development* – academic development is measured progress of individual performance throughout a specified amount of time (Musser, 2016).
2. *Anxiety* – emotional state consisting of feeling tension, apprehension, and its effects on the nervous system (Vitasari, Wahab, Othman, Herawan, & Sinnadrai, 2010).
3. *Combat Deployment*– A separation in time and space from a family that places a service member of the American military in imminent threat from a hostile force (Lester et al., 2010).
4. *Combat Operational Stress (COS)*– The American Institute of Stress (AIS) defined COS as the aggregate amount of physical and emotional stressors that a soldier has experienced in battle or hostile operations, and the impacts of these stressors on the individual (“Combat Operational Stress,” n.d.).
5. *Family Stress* – a change in the steady family state resulting from external sources such as war or moving homes, and internal factors such as irritation, arguing, death, injury, and uncertainty (Michalos, 2014).
6. *Military Stressors* – The stress associated with familial relocation to include international moves; the separation of family members and service members because of deployments and/ or training events; and the reorganization of the roles of family members during deployments and reunions (Drummet et al., 2003). As such, this makes them an at-risk group who is vulnerable to suffering from psychological distress and mental health problems, including depression, family violence, substance abuse, and post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD), all of which are problems for the military services and a threat to occupational functionality (Langston et al., 2007).

7. *Permanent Change of Station (PCS)* – A PCS move takes place when military soldiers enter or leave the Army, or when they are reassigned from one station to another location of a different military unit which requires individual and family relocation (Hix et al., 1998).
8. *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)* – This is a complex condition prompted or caused by an extreme stressor, comprising of a constellation of intrusion, avoidance, and arousal symptoms in one's life (Creamer, Wade, Fletcher, & Forbes, 2011).
9. *Social Learning Theory (SLT)* – From a sociological perspective, the theory that the same learning process in a social structure, interaction, and situation produces deviant or conforming behaviors, with the difference being the balance of impact on the behavior (Akers & Jennings, 2015).
10. *Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)* – From a psychological approach, this theory began as a social learning theory focusing on learning through observations; however, under Bandura (2001) it evolved with the addition of four requirements including intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness.

Summary

Few studies provide an introspective understanding into high school professionals' explanations of military dependent children's development as they live and grow in a military family within its unique culture. Military culture includes variables that create a number of family stressors, including military deployments, constant moving to new locations, and the distinctive military way of life. These may never cease to exist for those who choose to serve in

the military. Surprisingly, in the 244 years of the US Army's existence, it appears there is a dearth of comprehensive research into the impacts of military stress on military dependent children's development in all grades (Chandra et al., 2011; Crow & Seybold, 2013; De Pedro et al., 2011; Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013; Ohye et al., 2016; Sullivan et al., 2016; Wadsworth, 2016). Due to this scarcity of comprehensive research, the explanations of education professionals on the development of military dependent students in high school was examined through the conceptual framework of SCT (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2001) and SLT (Akers, 1973, 2017). These theories facilitated exploring and explaining how military stress affects the development of military dependent children in high school.

The purpose of this explanatory case study was to understand how the military culture and inherent stress affect the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. The results of the study serve as a foundation for future research on the development of military dependent children in Grades K–12. Understanding the cumulative impacts of military stressors on the development of military dependent high school children will aid educational stakeholders in mitigating these stressors and advocating for and supporting military dependents.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review presents an analysis of the relevant literature and the conceptual groundwork for this case study. The purpose of this study was to understand how the military culture and inherent stress affect the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. As Yin (2018) noted, “A literature review is, therefore, a means to an end and not—as many people have been taught to think—an end in itself” (p. 57). The emergent themes from the literature review identify the stressful conditions that military dependent children are exposed to from living within a military culture. The following research provided the conceptual framework for this study, with the integration of the SCT (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2001), and the SLT (Akers, 1973, 2017). The related literature section expands upon the need for additional research and why it is important for military children’s development. This chapter concludes with a recapitulation of how additional research could assist with understanding the impact that military stress has on children in high school and pave the way for comprehensive research into the development of military children.

The review of literature was a fundamental technique incorporated into a sound research methodology: “a conventional starting place would be to review the literature and define your case study’s research questions” (Yin, 2018, p. 42). Creswell (2015) believed that an in-depth analysis of literature regarding a specific topic must serve as points of comparison to the topic of interest with other conclusions in literature, identify comparable study’s results, and develop a structure for correlating the findings of the study with similar studies.

The military child’s development cannot be understood without understanding the variables that shape these children’s lives. Specific areas have been identified that directly

impacts students' development, and their emotional state when their parents are deployed, which has lasting impacts. These areas should not be considered only for military children, since it remains unclear if the research can be applied to civilian children who endure similar stressors. The factors that have a direct correlation to a child's "being" are military deployments, persistent PCSs, the military culture, and the home dynamic.

Theoretical Framework

This section explains the specific cognitive and social theories which demonstrate how stress may impact the child's mentality and articulates how stressful environments contribute to a child's development. While the varying stressors that military families endure on a day-to-day basis are well-documented, what remains to be clarified is the question of how the stressors of living within a military culture affect the child's development into the high school years. As a result, this research analyzed the education professional's explanations of military students' development in high school, with intentions of assisting the stakeholders in identifying any developmental tendencies.

A variety of psychological theories seek to explain development behavior from childhood to adulthood. Ultimately the social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura was one of the most appropriate theories that explained how the impacts of military stress can affect military children's development (Bandura, 2001). The social cognitive theory was different from other learning theories because it took into account cognition, or how children mentally learned a behavior. Bandura believed that attention, retention, reproduction, and motivational processes contributed to the learning from models and subsequently impacted the child's own behavior (Decker, 1982). The theory assisted with the understanding of how a child's behavior changed from within their psyche, as they were exposed to a military culture, and how they absorbed the

stress of the military environment (Morris & Age, 2009). Bandura's theory stressed the various ways in which an individual's actions, behaviors, and environments impacted each other (Brown & Lent, 2005). His research and experiments demonstrated that children can imitate their caregiver's behavior (Bandura, 2001).

A military child's home life includes social communications they observe from the emotions, interactions, and behaviors of their parents and siblings. Bandura (2001) noted that "children repeatedly observe the standards and behavior patterns not only of parents, but also of siblings, peers, and other adults" (p. 57). His theory explained that when children observe their family members, they begin to model their personalities, interaction techniques, communication techniques, or conflict that alters their individual characteristics. The utility of this theory was meaningful to this study for establishing the cause of behavior in high school students. When children were introduced into a hostile environment, there was a possibility they would become conditioned to react with aggressive behavior. Bandura was widely regarded for his early experimental modeling study called the Bobo Doll experiments, which depicted how varying social settings affected aggression (Drewes, 2008). As Wadsworth (2016) noted, "In addition, PTSD symptoms, combat exposure, and aggressive behaviors were associated with child hostility and aggression" (p. 114). Any time a child reacted aggressively, the spouse at home felt guilty the child's family dynamic was disturbed, which resulted in the child receiving a reward (Miller, 2009).

Bandura tested his learning theory when he studied observational learning in 1961 (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). He experimented with modeling, by placing a child in front of a mannequin that was outwardly expressing physical and verbal aggression toward an inflatable Bobo Doll. After a specified amount of time, the child was placed in a room with appealing

looking toys. The child was forced to stop playing with the toys after two minutes which caused a negligible amount of irritability in the child, and the child was then taken to a third room with less attractive toys (Bandura et al., 1961). His learning theory matured to what he called the social cognitive theory in 1986, as it explained the development of a wide range of behaviors to include how children feel and think (Bandura, 1986).

Bandura's theories are relevant to military children's development because they are immersed in culture that, "through indoctrination, overlays and often replaced previous cultural beliefs while reducing many disparities that exist in civilian culture" (Meyer, 2015, p. 3). As a result, children are immersed in an environment that has unique stressors which foster aggressive behavior. An example of a military stressor is to the envelopment of a military culture that embraces war, not only through their peer relationships but parental and group support systems (Riggs & Riggs, 2011). "People who believe they can exercise control over potential threats do not conjure up apprehensive cognitions and, therefore, are not perturbed by them" (Bandura, 1986, p. 1177). Simply put, when children who live within a military culture observed aggressive behaviors, they too adopted those behaviors. Bandura et al. (1961) noted that "mere observation of aggression, regardless of the quality of the model-subject relationship, was a sufficient condition for producing imitative aggression in children" (p. 582).

Bandura's experiments demonstrated that children displayed aggressive tendencies upon observing them (Bandura et al., 1961). His SCT also took into consideration the imbuelement of the experience, not only from the model (parent figure), but also the environment (military culture; Bandura, 1986). Dayton, Walsh, Muzik, Erwin, and Rosenblum (2014) stated that "men's dual-role experienced as service members and fathers impact their contribution to the parent and child regulatory processes that are critical in early child development" (p. 512).

Bandura's (1986) SCT theorized that children observed aggressive behaviors and then encoded them into their psyche and could exhibit these behaviors at a later time. His SCT encompasses the belief that a child is more likely to model behavior when the model is similar to himself.

The SCT also accounted for the child's self-efficacy, continuing to imitate behaviors as they received what they perceived as rewards or punishments. Kurtines and Gewirtz (2014) stated that "the stronger the explained self-efficacy, the more perseverant people are in their self-controlling efforts and the greater their success was in resisting social pressured to behave in ways that violate their standards" (p. 69). This theory presents opportunities for social support through instilling expectations, self-efficacy, and using observational learning and other reinforcements to achieve behavior change (Bandura, 1986). Bandura expanded upon child learning from rewards and punishments, as he suggested that children learn from observing how their siblings' actions are rewarded (Kurtines & Gewirtz, 2014). Children observed behavior and then mimicked that behavior, which then altered their characteristics when they sought feedback to improve their development (Milner, 2002). As the experiments concluded, Bandura was able to demonstrate that individuals can learn behaviors by watching them (Bandura et al., 1961).

Bandura continued his theory into the mid-1970s, combining all of his research, documentation, and experiments. Bandura unveiled the social learning theory (SLT) in 1977 at Stanford, California, and it was the most contemporary learning theory of that time. His SLT held that aggression and violent actions were morally required because of emerging threats (Bandura, 1977). Most importantly, Bandura (1977) stated that "most human behavior was learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information served as a guide for action" (p. 22).

After approximately 10 years of continuous refinement and further testing, Bandura relabeled the SLT as the social cognitive theory (SCT) in 1986. SCT has four distinct processes that are responsible for learning through one's observation; they are attentional, retention, motor reproduction, and motivational (Fryling, Johnston, & Hayes, 2011). As the theory was refined and through a variety of experiments, SCT could define personality traits and behavior change in a controlled setting (Bandura, 1986). When an individual models another person's behavior, they utilize the attentional process. The doll from the BoBo experiment was an example of visually accounting for information and then observing it (Bandura et al., 1961). As in the Bobo doll experiment, military children closely watch the behaviors and interactions of their family members and then model them (Sheppard, Malatras, & Israel, 2010).

The attentional process was comprised of observations that were made and retained from the cognitive framework and subsequently leads to their motor function (Bandura, 1986). The military child's attentional processes are impacted by deployments; constantly switching schools; and finally, the repeated adjustments that they make in the home environment (Bandura, 1977). Researchers highlighted that "deployment was associated with modest adverse effects across academic subjects with the greatest effects observed in relation to longer parental deployments" (Alfano et al., 2016, p. 22). The motivation for their actions from family members was what subsequently influenced the child to repeat the phenomenon (Janelle, Champenoy, Coombes, & Mousseau, 2003). "Although the theory of effecting motivation lacks verifiable particulars, considerable research disputed its two basic premises: that people are inherently driven to exercise control over their environment and that the achievement of control was inherently self-satisfying" (Bandura, 1986, p. 15).

The SLT as defined by Ronald Akers is a learning theory that explains how juveniles learn behaviors from their social environment and take that knowledge to commit delinquent acts (Akers, 1973, 2017; Akers & Jennings, 2015; Akers & Lee, 1999; Burgess & Akers, 1966). The use of this theory is not meant to juxtapose military children who learn from their environment and commit delinquent acts; however, this theory is an excellent tool to detail how children learn through observing their environment. Akers' research is used in this study because it is compatible for understanding how military children learn and develop. As Nelson and Fivush (2004) stated, "The memory of self in the past is embedded within a social-cultural milieu in which particular forms and contents of experience are valued and shared" (p. 489).

Akers developed his SLT from a sociological perspective and expanded upon a differential association theory from the 1940s to explain how children learn from observing their environment (Burgess & Akers, 1966). Sutherland's differential association theory broadly theorized that as community types varied, so too will the fluctuation of crime rates (Hoffmann, 2003). Within the last 40 years, after having his theory tested from myriad points of view, Akers amplified the original framework to a doctrine that was heavily relied upon for explaining social learning (Miller, 2014). Akers' learning theory has been one of the most widely regarded and tested ideas in the criminal justice community to explain both deviant and non-deviant behaviors (Cochran, Maskaly, Jones, & Sellers, 2016). Akers' SLT is comprised of four social learning variables: differential association, reinforcement, definitions, and imitation; these four theoretical elements are used as predictors of human behavior (Akers, 2017). Akers' SLT model is useful in military children's development because it assists in explaining how children are at risk for social and developmental challenges that could perpetuate into their advanced school years (Lester et al., 2016).

Differential association, as explained by Akers, is personal action an individual has learned from within his or her group, which can be direct or indirect such as the neighborhood, church, authority figures, or social media. The individuals with whom the child was in contact, in addition to the duration in length, provides the foundation for which an individual develops and matures (Akers & Jennings, 2015). Unfortunately, child maltreatment often rises when a parent was deployed, with Tinney and West (2011) noting that “the rate of substantiated child maltreatment among married Army personnel was 42% greater during deployments” (p. 2). Taking differential association into account for a child’s development, the treatment that a child receives during deployments affects his or her growth. Additionally, individuals’ characteristics, such as race, age, heritage, financial and social status, demands varying reactions from those whom they are around, even if their behaviors remain unchanged. “Research has also found that personal characteristics and social support can serve as protective factors influencing military adolescents’ behavior” (Crow & Seybold, 2013, p. 2).

Reinforcement as defined by Akers is the means by which people encounter and predict the repercussions of behaviors. Akers and Sellers (2004) detail in their research that “whether individuals will refrain from or commit a crime at any given time depends on the past, present, and anticipated future rewards and punishments for their actions” (p. 87). Gewirtz and Davis (2014) determined that

Constructs of emotion regulation and socialization within the family context are particularly relevant for military families, because the stressors associated with deployment to a war zone (i.e., exposure to potentially traumatic events) may affect emotion regulation capacities, reinforcing the development of a coping approach that emphasized emotional suppression, or experiential avoidance. (p. 116)

Akers and Lee (1999) used the coercion theory to demonstrate “how internal family interaction can produce deviant behavior, by incorporating the learning concepts of parental modeling, positive and negative reinforcement, and punishment of children’s conforming and deviant behavior” (p. 22). Therefore, military children’s development can be impacted by the amount of reinforcement that they receive.

Lee, Akers, and Borg (2004) discovered that “kids in single-parent households are at higher risk of differential exposure to pro-deviant associations, reinforcements, role models, and definitions” (p. 21). Definitions, as defined by Sellers and Winfree (2010), are “attitudes formulated by the individual following exposure to the definitions of others,” and identified them as positive if the behavior was approved, and negative if they were disapproved” (p. 8).

Deployments that demanded family members leave the home for an indefinite amount of time were problematic in developing an adolescent’s definitions because with less parental supervision, he or she absorbed attitudes from other people. “Problem behaviors often decrease between the age of 2 and 12 years, but increase during adolescence, reflecting the self-exploration that often occurs in older youth and the comparatively decreased adult supervision” (Ternus, 2010, p. 203). For example, “it was the case that growth in antisocial behavior at home predicted growth at school” (Patterson, 2005, p. 28). Lee et al. (2004) also determined through their research that “children in families in which both mother and father are present, are less likely to engage in deviant and delinquent behavior than children reared in single-parent homes” (p. 21). This research supports Akers’ belief that an individual’s attitudes are impacted by people in their environments.

Imitation was the last of the four components and refers to an individual’s actions which are the result of observed behaviors of others with the consequences that follow those behaviors

(Lee et al., 2004). Akers determined that imitation has discriminators associated with the extent to which one will mimic; these include factors such as “characteristics of the model themselves, the actual behavior itself being modeled, and any directly observed consequences for the model” (Akers & Jennings, 2015, p. 234). Soldiers report that they observed their children mimicking their own behaviors in words upon returning from war (Sherman, Smith, Straits-Troster, Larsen, & Gewirtz, 2016). Sherman et al. (2016) further noted that the “modeling process may contribute to the impact PTSD has on family members, possibly including the intergenerational transmission of PTSD, and the perpetuation of interpersonal violence” (p. 408).

Related Literature

The United States military is an all-volunteer force that serves to protect America’s security and way of life, and its members are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, and friends and neighbors of our nation (U.S. Department of Defense, n.d.). The US Army exists for one reason: “To deploy, fight and win our nation’s wars by providing ready, prompt and sustained land dominance by Army forces across the full spectrum of conflict as part of the joint force” (U.S. Army, n.d., para. 3). As service members volunteer and are indoctrinated into a new life, so too are their families (Faris, 1981). The Department of Defense (DoD) calculated in 2017 that there were less DoD active duty members (1,294,520) than their primary family members (1,623,305; U.S. Department of Defense, 2017).

Table 1

Family Demographics of Military Members

Demographics	Active Duty	Reserve and Guard
Number of family members	1,623,305	1,054,783
Number of spouses	612,127	369,653
Percentage with children	38.3%	41.5%
Average age at birth of first child	25.9	28.2
Percentage of children age 0 to 5	42.2%	31.3%
Number of adult dependents	8,988	1,605
Percentage of single parents	4.0%	9.1%

Note. Adapted from *2017 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community* by U.S. Department of Defense, 2017, p. vii, <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2017-demographics-report.pdf>. In the public domain.

The military culture perpetuated psychological disturbances in the military home with the root cause being military combat deployments. Since 2001, with the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and additional deployments throughout the world in support of the fights on terrorism, the military force had an estimated 2.7 million veterans (Gewirtz, Degarmo, & Zamir, 2017). By 2014, it was estimated that more than two million children experienced combat deployments of their loved ones (Wadsworth & Riggs, 2016). During that time, there were approximately 5.5 million individual deployments, and more than 3.1 million deployed hours, with 58% of the deployments assumed by the Army (McCarthy, 2018).

As the concern for soldiers' mental health rose, so too did that of their families. Evidence demonstrated the deployments of a child's parents had negative impacts on children's mental and social state (Hoge et al., 2006). During the Operation Enduring and Iraqi Freedom's peak in 2006–2007, more than 700,000 children in the US had a parent who was deployed, and in a few

instanced both parents were sent to combat (Lemmon, 2014). Having a military family member deployed to a war zone for an undetermined amount of time was a stressful and traumatic experience for a child and required an even more cumbersome role for the home-bound spouse (Morris & Age, 2009). As Mancini et al. (2015) noted,

Lengthy and multiple wartime deployments for service members, in combination with deployments related to national and international relief missions, have placed enormous stress on America's military and created long periods of parental absence from the home for service members with children, with many two-parent families essentially functioning as one-parent households. (p. 17)

In a three years' time, evidence showed that military children's academic performance diminished when they had one of their family members deployed to a hostile area for at least 19 months (Clever & Segal, 2013). Edwards (2012) noted,

The length of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars, the all-volunteer army, the young ages of the service members, the experienced of multiple deployments, the growing numbers of woman in the military and the prevalence of PTSD & TBI, all call for the need to think systemically about the impact of these factors not only on veterans, but the whole family system, including the children. (p. 9)

Deployments have depicted a transformation of the soldier's personality into one that became malevolent, angry, irritable, and may damage relationships with family, friends, and co-workers (Maguen et al., 2010). Soldiers had feelings of moral, spiritual, and religiosity loss, which resulted in a contradiction of their psychosocial functioning. Unfortunately, as soldiers came home from combat with a transformed being, children were susceptible to having their

psyche altered because of the home environment observations and interactions they had with their loved ones (Lester & Flake, 2013).

Deployments produced a variety of stressors that could impact children, and little was known about how these factors shaped their personalities. Sherman et al. (2016) discovered that “parents with PTSD report more parenting and child behavior problems, lower parenting satisfaction, more family violence, and poorer parent–child relationships than parents without PTSD” (p. 402). Even though it is the leader’s responsibility to ensure that his/her soldiers receive psychological support, it can be challenging because soldiers do not want to accept or ask for help (NATO, 2007). “This disruption of social attachments had the potential to amplify the effects of a parent deploying” (McFarlane, 2009, p. 370). According to Bandura (2001), “There are fighting cultures that breed aggression by modeling it pervasively, attaching prestige to it and according it functional value for gaining social status, material benefits, and social control” (p. 21). This was behavior learned from training, fighting in wars, and experience (Kurtines & Gewirtz, 2014). Soldiers in the military are trained in a way to accept killing combatants. The killings are justified by the DoD Law of War Manual, which states,

Military necessity did not permit the killing of innocent inhabitants for purposes of revenge or the satisfaction of a lust to kill. . . . It did not admit the wanton devastation of a district or the willful infliction of suffering upon its inhabitants for the sake of suffering alone. (U.S. Department of Defense, 2015, p. 59)

Military members morally justify their killing because they have been trained to feel little guilt and instead have pride in themselves and the organization (Maguen et al., 2010). A child is motivated to be aggressive by poor parenting, harassment, or any other negative impact that acts

as stimuli during a deployment. The aggressive reaction is a justification to counter the negative stimuli (Black, Dubowitz, & Starr, 1999).

The repercussions of adult behavior impact a child's behavior. A child who behaves aggressively can sometimes be explained as behavior that he or she learned from others (Bandura, 1977). Children tend to mimic and model behavior from individuals that they respect, they view signs of pleasure from, or are in an environment that reinforces the model's behavior (Akers, 2017). The child learns the behavior from peers in school or observes parental behavior, then models that behavior (Bandura, 1977). In SCT, the factors to be considered for correlation are behavior by peers and adults and what the reaction of adults to certain behaviors is (Miller, 2009). Miller (2009) also noted that further research must be committed to determine any possibility of aggression in the parents or the child. He believed that there needed to be research aimed at tracing either any chance of aggression in parents or of the child (Miller, 2009).

Unique stressors accompany deployments, such as the length of separation, the repeated or back-to-back deployments, the impact on parenting of remaining spouse, and the risk of potential injury or death of the deployed parent (Wadsworth & Riggs, 2016). Service members returning from deployments report that they do not feel as needed or as important as they had before leaving and were unsure of their role in the household. Soldiers drank excessively to eradicate the pain of losing a friend, the never-ending memories of negative experiences during deployment, as well as the accepted guilt and shame for being an absentee father or spouse (Eisen et al., 2012). The returning veteran attempts to medicate the pain of negative experiences by drinking as much alcohol as possible, as quick as physically able (Vest, Heavey, Homish, & Homish, 2017). These deep-seated feelings have second- and third-order impacts that include

symptoms of irritation, depression, distress, anger, and emotional detachment from their spouse, making the term *wounded warrior* all the more applicable (Weber & Weber, 2005).

Children of deployed military parents who have deployed multiple times are often associated with decreased social interactions with their friends and a decline in academic performance (Lincoln, Swift, & Shorteno-Fraser, 2008). Female dependent children from age 11 to 14 appear to be impacted the most, and as a result, demonstrate some of the worst impacts, mostly because their household roles increased (Chandra et al., 2011). Developmental issues in military dependent children include a drop in academic performance, an increase in anxiety and stress, and sleeping issues due to the “unique stressors accompanying deployment events, such as the length of separation, repeated deployments, the impact on the parenting provided by military couples, and the risk of parental injury or death” (Wadsworth & Riggs, 2016, p. 89).

A correlation exists between the deployments of soldiers and the impacts those deployments have on their children’s grades. Some research depicts negative academic impacts for children of military members who are deployed, consistently displaying lower academic grades during the five phases of deployment (Engel, Gallagher, & Lyle, 2010). Grade school military dependent children whose parents deployed to a combat zone for more than 19 months in a 3-year period academically performed worse than military children whose parents either did not deploy or deployed less than 19 months in that same 3-year time frame (Clever & Segal, 2013). Their second- and third-order impacts included symptoms of depression, distress, anger, irritation, and emotional detachment from their loved ones (Laser & Stephens, 2011). Engel et al. (2010) recommended school professionals such as administrators and their educational institutions create programs to accommodate children whose parents deployed with academic and emotional support to mitigate these military stressors.

Relationships are vital to children for their development, and different relationships provide varying functions or provisions in their lives. Parental absence also suggests that people need particular provisions from relationships and that “having more of one relationship provision does not compensate for experiencing a deficit in some other provision” (Mancini et al., 2015, p. 18). Petty fights between spouses have the potential to escalate into substantial issues such as decreased intimacy levels between the deployed member and the family, marriage issues, and in extreme circumstances, domestic violence (Wadsworth, 2016). Weber and Weber (2005) suggested that deployment increases the likelihood that stress from deployed parents can impact relationships between children and parents, sometimes to the detriment to the child's development. Middle school aged children and younger are at an increased risk for social and developmental challenges that may perpetuate into their advanced school years (Lester et al., 2016).

According to Pincus, House, Christensen, and Adler (2001), a military deployment is divided into five phases, and intercommunication of the deployment information throughout the military community is a key variable in subduing family apprehension. These different stages are pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment, redeployment, and post-deployment (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011). The exchange of information through clear communication provides expectation management to assist families with identifying solutions to problems. If families navigate the deployment phase appropriately, they are better able to cope accordingly and ultimately reduce mental stress. For example, a minimum 6-month deployment consists of five stages, each with specific tasks to complete within a certain time frame and in turn each phase presenting unique emotional challenges for families and service members to overcome (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011).

The five phases of deployment include pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment (during deployment), redeployment, and post-deployment (Lester & Flake, 2013). Military dependent children's mentalities are impacted by the parents' handling and behavior toward the corresponding phases of the upcoming deployment (Pincus et al., 2001). "Each of these stages was characterized by a different set of challenges to the individual and family system, such as the need for emotional detachment, changes in family roles and routines, emotional destabilization, and reintegration of returning parent" (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011, p. 74).

The pre-deployment phase is the official notification to service members and their families of an imminent deployment. Before this phase, families only heard of a possible deployment through rumors and back-channels. This phase, as with every other phase, consists of an ambiguous timeline that is volatile and causes emotional detachments, family stress, marital disagreements, and anxiety in children (Trautmann, Alhusen, & Gross, 2015). "This environment also created multiple risks that could impact the mental health of parents who remained at home (usually mothers), which, in turn, was critical to their children's adjustment" (McFarlane, 2009, p. 370). Emotions that family members encounter during this period include the foreboding notification as well as the initial denial that a loved one must leave. Innocent questions may arise from individuals who cannot comprehend the alert, such as a child or spouse repeatedly asking, "You don't really have to go, do you?" (Pincus et al., 2001, p. 16). Likewise, the pre-deployment phase causes marital disagreements, emotional detachments, family stress, and possibly protests and anger in children. Pre-deployment research suggested that "military deployments might be associated with increased rates of domestic violence and child maltreatment both during the deployment and upon the return of the service member, compared to the pre-deployment period" (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011, p. 76).

It is not uncommon during the pre-deployment phase for spouses and children to begin mentally deploying the service member and wishing that they were "gone already" (Pincus et al., 2001, p. 19). Arguments that emerge from this phase are connected to the family's perfect expectations of private events such as one last birthday, Christmas, or vacation. As these events occur, family members are unable to withstand the predetermined expectations, leading to weakened relationships with resentment replacing hope. Feelings of hope and idealism are soon replaced with mental and physical remoteness (Pincus et al., 2001).

Anxiety materializes in both newly minted military families and families who have endured past deployments. The family's understanding that their loved one may return injured, emotionally transformed, or even killed produces impassioned feelings of distress (Trautmann et al., 2015). Children communicate anxieties in this phase by displaying tantrums, crying, or not eating and regressing in their environments (Pincus et al., 2001). Simple routine tasks become arduous for everyone because the mental capacity for concentration is replaced with endless "honey-do lists" and a litany of spontaneous training events, meetings, and appointments that must be completed. Communicating specific tasks and methods to accomplish them and resolving past disagreements become paramount in ensuring a smooth transition to deployment status (Pincus et al., 2001).

The deployment phase typically lasts approximately one month and occurs at the beginning of the deployment (Pincus et al., 2001). This phase produces an emotional onslaught of confusion, disorientation, and a sense of being overwhelmed for spouses and children (Pincus et al., 2001). A plethora of emotions saturates family members when previously identified tasks are not completed. Fear replaces anxiety as family members are unable to communicate with their loved ones in battle (Trautmann et al., 2015). The deployment phase may cause children to

experience loneliness, anxiety, sadness, sleep deprivation, and fear for their parents. These emotions have been shown to destabilize their mental psyche, leading to disorganization and anger that negatively affect their lives (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011). "Recent studies found increased mental health or behavioral disorders among children experiencing the most months of parent deployment provide evidence that children's mental health was vulnerable to periods of parental deployment" (Wadsworth, 2016, p. 89).

The sustainment phase also includes the initial month through the fifth month (using a 6-month deployment example). This is a significant time for spouses because they begin to rely on themselves and emotionally detach themselves from the deployed loved one (Pincus et al., 2001). Children are less certain in their deployed loved one's "ability to provide reassurance, care, and safety, particularly when the parent was facing the dangers of war" (Lester & Flake, 2013, p. 127).

Before a unit departs, a command-sponsored organization called a Family Readiness Group (FRG) is established "as appropriate to the needs of their units" (U.S. Department of the Army, 2014, p. 49). This organization, or FRG, welcomes any family members to participate in activities that were developed to instill self-reliance and confidence in each other. In addition to these resources, the FRG also receives direct guidance and correspondence from the unit's commander. The information that a commander provides is useful for the FRG and families as a conduit for receiving updates about their loved ones and to dispel rumors (Parcell & Maguire, 2014). This phase culminates with family members believing in themselves, using their support channels, developing a sense of control, becoming self-reliant, and gaining an emerging sense of confidence from the various support groups' activities and communication (Pincus et al., 2001).

The reunion of family members in the redeployment phase is usually accompanied by some apprehension because the roles family members have become familiar with during the deployment will probably change again. Wadsworth (2016) suggested that “reunion and reintegration are often stressful for a variety of reasons. Throughout post-deployment, 22% of spouses of soldiers who have returned from Iraq or Afghanistan report that reunion was ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’” (p. 80). Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, and Blum (2010) noted that many of the stressors during deployments occur because of tensions at home and the changing roles and relationships at home. However, most military wives acknowledge their husbands during the reunion phase are hurting inside and they desire to help him. Wives do not want to quit, they do not want a divorce, and they do not want to be a failure (Vest et al., 2017).

With the positive success adults experience in coping with deployments, children, unfortunately, are less responsive. Multiple variables determine the degrees to which children are mentally strained during this phase; however, a measure of predictability may be associated with a child's age. Children who range from 1–12 years of age generally are sad and can be agitated easily. Tantrums, refusing to eat, and excrement accidents are common within this age group, whereas teenagers become despondent, nihilistic, and begin to experiment with chemical substances to grapple with their anger and detachment (Pincus et al., 2001). A colossal upsurge of attention and comfort is now provided by both parents to combat the child's feelings, whereas the self-reliant parent from their deployed spouse used to be the sole provider of this affection (Morris & Age, 2009).

The re-deployment phase also ushers in an innate sense of anticipation that is punctuated by apprehension and excitement. The time associated with this period ranges from the soldier's last month of deployment to four or five months after returning home. With emotions similar to

that of the second phase, the re-deployment of loved ones involves a wide array of emotions, most of which are conflicted (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011). A spouse could be enthusiastic and enthralled with the soldier's arrival home but also disconcerted because they do not want to lose their newly found independence (Pincus et al., 2001). Children are overcome by emotion with the returning parent but also may not want to readjust to their life prior to the departure. Soldiers have a difficult time immersing themselves in an environment where they might experience a diminished role, as opposed to the more relevant head of household position previously held before deployment (Pincus et al., 2001).

Finally, the post-deployment phase occurs, which some refer to as the honeymoon phase because it begins with the soldier's homecoming and customarily lasts from three to six months (Pincus et al., 2001). The soldier's reintegration into the family environment is a difficult undertaking despite all positive feelings of being home. "During this stage, families often face the tasks of renegotiating roles and areas of responsibility and establishing new routines" (Sheppard et al., 2010, p. 604). This phase typically encompasses feelings of lost independence by the spouse, extended feelings of angst because a once familiar familial structure is again changing, and, in worse case scenarios, children witnessing domestic violence between arguing parents (Lemmon, 2014). Soldiers desire to reestablish and assert their prior roles, which has over time become less familiar to spouses and children. The soldiers' reestablished role may lead to feelings of contempt by the spouse, confusion with the children, and deep-seated feelings of resentment and tension (Knapp & Newman, 1993). With the many positive assumptions that are affiliated with post-deployment reintegration, there are also a variety of challenges that lay ahead for that military family (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011). This phase confirms its importance

for the family because internal relationships are relied upon for a successful reintegration into the family after a military deployment (Pincus et al., 2001).

Military dependent high school students are a part of and immersed in a military culture that necessitates the military member's change of assignments, causing families to move an average of nine times over a 20-year career. These PCSs require continuous moving to meet the career obligation of winning America's wars. The result is prolonged parental separations which introduce parental stress on dependent children. Children who are between the ages of 6–12 have the most difficulty adjusting to a new setting (Ohye et al., 2016). Clever and Segal (2013) noted that military families are often referred to as "tied migrants" and "tied stayers" because of the number of moves they must endure (p. 26). Tied migrants are families of military members, spouses and children, who make the necessary sacrifices to uproot themselves from jobs, schools, and support systems to support their family member in the military (Clever & Segal, 2013). "Informal networks involve interpersonal associations and relationships. These networks provide the impetus for the social capital that builds community capacity, which, in turn, enhances individual outcomes" (Mancini et al., 2015, p. 18). After moving to a new PCS location, the family is then termed tied stayers, as they now live there for the duration of the family member's assignment, regardless of availability of jobs or educational opportunities (Clever & Segal, 2013).

Dependent military children are required to move 10% more on average in a year than civilian children (Dickler, 2012). Military children succumb to stress as they experience growing levels of anxiety associated with transitioning to new schools or environments (Ruff & Keim, 2014). Military children's social support systems vary by geographical locations but largely include members of the community, educators, counselors, military leaders, and their

parents (Wong et al., 2019). These individuals make the social structure to provide children consistent, meaningful, and fluid communication in fully supporting these children (Sumner, Boisvert, & Andersen, 2015). When the individuals within this social structure are successful in both communicating to military dependent children about meeting needs and offering solutions for various issues, their experiences at school improve. Conversely, if communication breaks down between these stakeholders and military dependent children, it actually inflates student stress, especially in instances where the family member is deployed to a combat zone (Garner, Arnold & Nunnery, 2014).

Military moves are a significant interruption in the development of children, both in school and at home. Many military family's children have a difficult time adjusting to a new school because they lose friends and familiarity with their surroundings (Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1996). On average, military children move and switch schools from six to nine times between kindergarten and graduation from high school (Ruff & Keim, 2014). As children become older and advance to higher grade levels in school, their peer social relationships become more reliable and dependent. Stress from moving to new schools damages these relationships and affects their performance in school (Alfano et al., 2016). Research demonstrates that most of the stressors in a military home are the results of tension caused by relocating, new environments at school, and the unknown about building new relationships with teachers and their peers (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Relocation stressors in conjunction with multiple school transitions negatively affect military dependent children's adaptation to new school environments. Children who frequently move are more susceptible to mental and academic issues than if they only had one parent who deployed more frequently but for shorter durations (Clever & Segal, 2013). Signs of depression,

regression in class standings, and reduced social skills are associated with moving multiple times (Lemmon, 2014). “In addition to normative developmental stressors and frequent relocations, military children’s parents are often deployed, which can exacerbate stress in the children and may result in more barriers and maladjustment” (Ruff & Keim, 2014, p. 102).

Public school administrators, teachers, and high school counselors should expect military students to transition in and out of their school populations (Rossen & Carter, 2011). “Public school faculty and staff need to understand the challenges that multiple school transitions impose on military children to effectively meet the needs of this student population” (Ruff & Keim, 2014, p. 103). According to Ruff and Keim (2014), “The role of administrators and school counselors within the school environment places them in a unique position to serve and advocate for enrolling military students and consequently transform school transition into a positive experience” (p. 108).

School administrators must be prepared to provide the psychological and sociological support needed by military students. A study completed in 2011 found that individuals across the entire spectrum of the school experience ranked a family move as one of the most stressful experiences in life (Aronson, Caldwell, Perkins, & Pasch, 2011). Taking into consideration that military children move on average six to nine times in a child’s academic journey, it is necessary to have additional support in schools (Aronson et al., 2011). Combatting military stress that children innocently and involuntarily endure from family moves, deployments, and the constant changing of their social support network is one of the largest concerns of parents and school administrators (De Pedro et al., 2014). Taking this into consideration, children who attempt to maintain or expand past school performance find the stressor difficulties to be overwhelming.

The largest obstacle school administrators face in providing additional support to military students is that it demands additional duties for teachers, administrators, and high school counselors. “Civilian schools often lack systematic procedures to identify military students, facilitate school transitions, and link military students with local community resources, which may contribute to negative schooling experienced for military students attending civilian schools” (De Pedro et al., 2014, p. 19). Deployment occurs within a wider context for military children, particularly as the average military family moves every two to three years. This pattern of social mobility requires children to frequently form new friendships and adapt to different school environments (McFarlane, 2009).

With more than 40% of military members having school-aged children, an estimated 1.2 million of those children have at least one parent in military service, either in the Marines, Air Force, Navy, or Army (Hoge et al., 2006). Most military dependent children have an arduous time adjusting to new schools because familiarity with their previous surroundings is lost. A typical 18-year-old military dependent child has moved anywhere between six to nine times, changing schools each time, ultimately understanding that moving every two years is the norm and not something unfamiliar (Rossiter et al., 2016). Thus, military dependent children are more susceptible to emotional, behavioral, and relationship issues because of the unavoidable stress and anxiety from military PCS (Brendel et al., 2013). These stressors induce temperament changes in children that begin small but can lead to larger events (Trautmann et al., 2015). During stressful events, such as relocating or deployments, the family unit must adjust to the deployed soldier’s behaviors, actions, and altered family dynamics. If there are traces of aggression in parents, then dependent children often behave by imitating adults in the family. If

a reaction is not harsh toward the behavior, then children might develop negative behavior due to lack of punishment from the adults for tantrum-like behavior (Trautmann et al., 2015).

These behaviors can also be explained by using proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). “How relationships function was a core element for understanding significant outcomes for youth” (Mancini et al., 2015, p. 2). The child's aggressive behavior develops slowly, with the support of the parents, guardians, and older people. The child behaves aggressively in small bits and does not receive any warnings or punishments for the same. This child slowly embraces the behavior to a point that it becomes extreme. Kurtines and Gewirtz (2014) noted that parental perceptions in military families, especially during post-deployment, are critical for determining future familial challenges.

Military children endure hardships from geographical moves and deal with stressors like parental deployment and absence, which has psychological and social impacts on the children. Military personnel are expected to move their families as assignments change. Weiss (1998) analyzed the specific role that relationships play in adulthood, especially among those who experience major disruptions in their lives (e.g., divorce or the death of a spouse). This frequent tempo of migration has the potential to significantly impact the academic progress of military students, as they need to adjust to a new curriculum, new teachers, and new peers with each relocation (Ridings et al., 2019). Occasionally, these moves are hastened because of the military member's promotion, positions that open at a new location or because of a request by name to fill a high-profile position. There are risks affecting all military families from relocating, deploying, and post-deployment reunions and are potential factors that can impact child psychosocial and academic issues (Weber & Weber, 2005).

As of 2014, the US Army population included over 1.2 million dependent children, and the DoD provided these children the opportunity to register on or off base for school support (Ruff & Keim, 2014). It is not uncommon for military families to enroll their children in public schools located off-base because either base schools are at capacity or the base did not have or provide educational support to dependent students. New school environments, making friends, limited access to extracurricular activities, and a lack of understanding by public school teachers and staff to the circumstances of military children who live in a unique military culture are all attributed to heightened anxiety and stress of military dependent children (Ruff & Keim, 2014). Both parental absences and household relocations have detrimental impacts on test scores of children with single parents, children with mothers in the Army, children with unsophisticated parents, or younger children. To illustrate the school base support that children typically receive, of more than 1.2 million military children, over one million of them attend off-base public schools which results in a lack of continuity when children are moved to a base with inadequate DoDEA (Department of Defense Education Activity) support (Ruff & Keim, 2014).

The aforementioned stressors produce symptoms in dependent children that include irritability, anger, depression, confusion, or frustrations that negatively impact their social and familial relationships (Laser & Stephens, 2011). High school counselors are integrated into public schools with the capability of assisting school administrators and teachers to create a positive school environment. Administrators and high school counselors often support a military dependent child's school transition by assisting with record transfers, counseling of the student's everyday issues, and facilitating staff programs to support the children's well-being. "Particularly counselors can impact curriculum decisions and course planning. They can enhance the academic mission of the school and improve overall student performance by

teaming with faculty to set high curriculum standards for all students” (Fitch & Marshall, 2004, p. 173). A school counselor is an immeasurable enabler who shapes the environment of the school to decrease student stress. With the addition of the counselor, school staff synchronize efforts to assist students, including military dependent children and their families, resulting in a less complicated transition and indoctrination into the school (Ruff & Kiem, 2014).

Military dependent children are susceptible to variations of anxiety that derive from the uncertainty of their parent’s safety as a result of war or a change in family dynamics because of deployments and anticipation of an upcoming PCS. Much of the stress is due to the alteration or change in the child’s role in the home. Children who have solid and personable relationships at school and home often have better performance in school (Hoge et al., 2006). As previously stated, the average soldier moves approximately nine times over a 20-year career (Berg, 2008). However, if military families were informed of the stressors that they could encounter in the future, perhaps they might be better prepared to counter future issues (Laser & Stephens, 2011). Children whose parents served in the military for no less than five years almost guaranteed that the family moved at least once and served on some type of military exercise or deployment.

Military dependent students' self-efficacy decreases as a military member is deployed or when the family relocates and the move coincides with the deployment. These students experience the low self-worth (Mancini et al., 2015). "Interpersonal relationships are closely connected with supporting important individual qualities that youth possess, and in turn, those qualities of youth, in this case, self-efficacy, have profound implications for core youth outcomes" (Mancini et al., 2015, p. 17).

Table 2

Sample School System Changes Resulting from Family Military Moves

Grade of Military Child	Duty Location	School System Attended
K–2	Germany	DoDDS
3–5	Georgia	DoDDS
6–8	Hawaii	HI Dept. of Education
9	Northern Virginia	Fairfax County School District
10	Kentucky	DoDDS
11–12	Korea	DoDDS

Summary

The United States military culture is composed of a volunteer fighting force that is disciplined and trained to endure a stressful fighting environment, with the service to the nation foremost in every military member's mind. This military culture also includes a service member's spouse and dependent children. This culture demands sacrifice resulting in abnormal stress, not only from every member who serves but also from the family of each service member. This stress interrupts typical family life, particularly affecting military dependent children. Examples of these stressors include the military member deploying to fight the nation's wars, frequent PCS moves that remove children from familial and social environments, as well as the family's subjugation to the cultural stress of frequent moving. Unfortunately, there is little empirical evidence that depicts the cumulative impacts of these stressors on military dependent children's development in high school.

The purpose of this explanatory case study was to understand how the military culture and inherent stress affect the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. These stressors affecting military children's development include parental combat deployments, frequent geographical moves, and familial stress and anxiety associated with the stressors. Research demonstrates that military dependent

children's development may be negatively impacted when a family member is deployed to a combat zone (Lester et al., 2016; Sherman et al., 2016; Wadsworth, 2016). The number of times a military dependent child geographically moves to a new location also impacts development (Laser & Stevens, 2011; Ridings et al., 2019; Ruff & Kiem, 2014). When military dependent children experience and endure these stressors to their social structure, both within their home and their school, they do not develop at the same level as their civilian peers (De Pedro et al., 2011; Laser & Stephens, 2011; Ruff & Keim, 2014).

A conceptual framework from Bandura and Akers is used for this study. This framework assimilates multiple facets of Bandura's SCT (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2001) and Akers's SLT (Akers, 1973, 2017). These theories set the foundation to demonstrate that children learn through observations. Key to this study was the explanations of school professionals who observe military dependent high school students and how living within this military culture affects their development. The SCT describes learning from a psychological perspective, or how children's behavior is learned from cognition through the combination of observing individuals, retaining the information that they have learned, and duplicating the behavior on behalf of their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 2001). SLT describes learning from a sociological perspective and how individuals learn behavior from observing their surroundings and the individuals within their surroundings (Akers, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This explanatory case study was a unique attempt to achieve an understanding of military dependent students' development, in a public high school setting, from the viewpoint of the individuals who are responsible for teaching, instructing, and mentoring them. The objective of Chapter Three was to illustrate the research method used to identify the explanations of education professionals on military children's development. A narrative approach accentuated the stories told by the education professionals who interact with the students and promote the theoretical evolution that I used to ascertain their developmental progress. The research plan is described in this chapter and includes methods, setting, participants, procedures, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Although Creswell's case study research was significant, I decided to use Yin's framework to govern this literature review because it is the most conscientious (Yin, 2018). I have determined by a career of lived experiences and insufficient research that there is a void of understanding military dependent student development. Comparable research has been identified from parental, psychiatric, and governmental perspectives but not from a professional educator's point of view. It is not obvious that there is a published account of how military dependent students' teachers explain their military dependent students' development when entrenched in the stressful lifestyle of the military.

I utilized an explanatory case study so that I could ascertain an understanding of military dependent children's development from the explanations of professional educators, counselors and administrators, and Junior Reserve Officer Training Course (JROTC) instructors. "The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent"

(Merriam, 1988, p. 29). The theory that I offered for the impacts of stress on a military dependent student's psyche is the empirical evidence that was developed from Bandura's social cognitive theory research and experiments. Teachers' explanations of military stress provided vital information regarding the child's development in schools because teachers and students spend approximately one third of their day at the institution (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008).

I instilled a narrative approach because of the significance of incorporating individual and face-to-face interviews with professionals to gain an appreciation of their explanations of military dependent children's development. Narrative research is a design of inquiry from the humanities that studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives. Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that "this information is then often told or retold into a narrative" (p. 42). The first-hand accounts of military dependent student's development from education professionals was a unique technique for them to share insightful stories of military children. The following was an example of an educational professional's experiences, and how they impacted the curriculum:

My attitudes toward schooling and literacy were shaped by the experiences of family members. . . . As a Chinese American with an interest in my cultural heritage, I have explored avenues of bringing students to high levels of literacy through forms of classroom instruction respectful of their cultures. (as cited in Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson, & Barr, 2001, p. 6)

Yin (2009) defined a case study as empirical research that seeks to determine a current phenomenon in a real-life setting. I utilized this type of research because it is not obvious to me where or if the reality and phenomenon are separate. I chose this type of qualitative study

because I would like to hear the teachers tell me any stories, observations, perspectives, and opinions as I carefully document our conversations. The case study design allowed me the opportunity to shape the questions and revisit their explanations as often as I wished (Creswell, 2015).

Design

This research was administered using a qualitative method. A researcher uses qualitative research to collect open-ended data that are contemporary by nature to develop themes (Campbell, 2014). The intent of this qualitative research was not to instill a strict set of guidelines for researchers to create additional studies but rather to suggest options for future research ideas (Creswell, 2015). Qualitative research allows the investigator to rely on the participants' comprehensive explanation of a phenomenon by asking them open-ended extensive questions (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). The qualitative method is the contrasting investigative method to quantitative scientific research, which consists of objectively developed research methods that regulate and exploit an intriguing area of interest (Crowe & Seybold, 2013). Yin (2018) explained, "As analogous examples, some experiments (such as studies of perceptions) and some survey questions (such as those seeking categorical rather than numerical responses) rely on qualitative and not quantitative evidence" (p. 60).

The qualitative research method investigated the intersection of children living within a military culture and their development through high school. A benefit of using case studies when researching behavioral or educational fields of interest is that the information gathered, particularly the explanations of individuals or asking categorical questions, relies on qualitative research (Yin, 2018). This explanatory case study permitted me to investigate these explanations without clear benchmarks being established (Yin, 2002). This type of research provided an

understanding of a central issue, by developing data and making distinctions, to the interested community; essentially, it is the “how to do things” to achieve an “outcome” (Aspers & Cortes, 2019, p. 155).

This case study design was a suitable research design because it allowed me to build out my theory (Yin, 2002) and is an effective tool to gather data, particularly regarding people’s behavior (Yin, 2018). The selection of a specific type of case study design was impacted by the overall study purpose of asking myself, “Am I looking to describe a case, explore a case, or compare between cases?” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 2). The case study technique fostered an investigative construct through interviews, and although Creswell recommends an explanatory study for one to two people, the subjects that participated in this study were interviewed individually, as well as collectively (Creswell, 2015). Researchers that successfully incorporated case studies in their research “maximize four conditions related to design quality: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability” (Yin, 2002, p. 19).

There are a variety of case study types as defined by both Yin and Stake. Stake has a malleable perspective of case study design which allows the researcher to adjust the research, whereas Yin’s version is much more systematic and rigid. A case study defined by Yin (2018) is an “investigation of a contemporary phenomenon (‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident” (p. 60). Stake believed that case studies are categorized into three distinctive classifications: instrumental, intrinsic, and collective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The instrumental design affords researchers the advantage of having a first-hand account of an issue (Laframboise & Shea, 2009). Intrinsic case studies should be used when the researcher has a particular interest of the topic (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The collective case study design involves the selection of several case

studies in an effort to increase the confidence of the reader in the researcher (Bergen & While, 2000).

The three Yinian case study designs that a researcher could utilize for gathering evidence are explanatory, descriptive, or exploratory (Yin, 2002). An exploratory case study is used by a researcher who determines that sufficient research has not been conducted to solve a problem and establish a fortified research design (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). Explanatory research is also causal research, a type of case study that investigates a phenomenon within real-life situations (Brians, 2016). Descriptive case studies aim to discover a phenomenon by describing a culture or subculture that has been rarely, if ever, studied (Dulock, 1993).

The type of case study that I used as the guiding mechanism for my research was the explanatory case study as described by Yin (2003, 2009, 2018). I chose this adaption because I wanted to determine if specific phenomena impact the military dependent students' development as conveyed by the explanations of the professionals. A researcher should utilize an explanatory case study design when they have "how or why" questions that need to be answered (Yin, 2018, p. 41). This case study design was adopted because it sought to understand casual relationships and is effective for testing theories (Baškarada, 2014). The research is designed to generate data from various investigative techniques, which foster the exploration of a phenomenon in its ingenious environment as a consequence of multiple perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008). According to Yin (2018), case study research is compartmentalized and used to either describe, explore, or explain something. I used the single case study design with embedded units, as opposed to the holistic research method, because the professionals are sub-units of the study. However, I was careful not to overanalyze the individual sub-unit to an extent to which I lost sight of the overarching phenomenon (Yin, 2002). Yin (2018) noted that an embedded case

design is a Level 2 single case study, and this rationale is appropriate in an extreme case or an unusual case which “deviates from theoretical norms or even everyday occurrences” (p. 116).

This research evolved in a manner that enabled stakeholders to better understand how the military culture impacts children’s development: “A research design links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of study” (Yin, 2018, p. 73). How and why questions are explanatory “and likely to lead to the use of a case study, history, or experiment as the preferred research method” (Yin, 2018, p. 53). The following research questions were used to gain an appreciation for this understanding. These questions served to navigate the exploration of this investigation, bolstered its theoretical framework, and championed the design.

Research Questions

Central Question: How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today’s military culture?

SQ1: How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of combat deployment of military parents on military dependent high school students?

SQ2: How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of numerous and continual military Permanent Change of Station moves on military dependent high school students?

SQ3: How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of military culture and life on military dependent high school students?

Setting

The settings in which the interviews were conducted consisted of the participants' classrooms or offices in which they interacted with the students. The school's name in this study is a pseudonym: Midwestern High School (MWHS). Researching MWHS was vital to asking the participants questions, to understand the setting of the participants and their students, and for receiving their explanations of the development in military dependent children (Creswell, 2015). I asked questions in the professional educator's classroom or office because it provided a unique opportunity to receive not only their verbal responses, but also the opportunity to visualize subjective factors such as gestures, facial expressions, and their tone of voice (Merriam, 2002). During the school year of 2019–2020, MWHS was responsible for educating more than 1,300 students from 9th–12th grade in midwestern America. The student population was an approximate reflection of the Army with regards to diversity. According to the school information found on Niche.com, the 2019 demographics for the school were as follows: approximately 62% of the student population was White, 17% Black, 9% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% Native American, and 9% identified themselves as two or more races. This particular high school was the only high school that served the entire population of high school students at Ft. North Western (pseudonym), according to the 2019 school support services data provided by the base.

The school district was responsible for eight schools of varying grade levels throughout the city of North-Western (pseudonym). There was only one high school for the entire city, and this high school also has the responsibility for the military base's high school student population. As stated in the school district's vision, "[NW Public Schools] is a community dedicated to partnerships in support of student well-being and success." In 2019, the four elementary

schools taught more than 1,700 students, the middle school had approximately 690, and the high school had an enrollment of more than 1,300 students. The student to teacher ratio at MWHS was 18:1, with 76 full-time teachers. According to *US News* rankings, in 2019 the NWHS scored a 35 out of 100 and was deficient in student graduation rate of 90%, with only 24% of students meeting or exceeding mathematics proficiency, while just 30% of students met or exceeded reading comprehension proficiency.

Participants

Participants were questioned during the interview portion of this study. The participant group was divided into three distinct groups which consisted of a JROTC subgroup, an administrator subgroup, and a professional educator subgroup. The age of the participants and race are non-factors; however, their experience in the education profession was. Each participant must have had at least three years of teaching experience in their role. I made this confirmation upon scheduling an interview with the participants. This experience was necessary to ensure that the professionals had the experience needed to properly identify, or have had experience of being involved with military dependent children and the stressors that challenge them. Interpersonal relationships were closely connected with supporting important individual qualities that youth possess, and in turn, those qualities of youth (in this case, self-efficacy) have profound implications for core youth outcomes. "Few school systems are prepared to handle the challenges or the obstacles that military children face when they move and are not properly staffed to make the moving transition easier on the children" (Mancini et al., 2015, p. 18).

The Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Course (AJROTC) instructors at NWHS offered a unique perspective of the military dependent students' development because all of the instructors have served in the Army. According to Army Regulation 145-2 Junior Reserve

Officers' Training Corps Program, AJROTC employment was limited to "retired Armed Forces personnel from the United States Army, (and) their service was a prerequisite to their employment" (U.S. Army Cadet Command, 2012, p. 28). All of the AJROTC instructors at MWHS had past military experience, PCS familiarity, and had deployed. These instructors had A-type personalities and used a direct approach with their communication style; however, they may have been desensitized as a result from combat, which could have affected their explanations of the students (Beks, 2016). As a result, these instructors' perspectives of military dependent students' development were unique because they were keenly aware of the stressors and culture of living within a military environment. They not only taught the children in military science, but they also coached them in various clubs. Additionally, evidence existed that students who had a strong relationship with their instructors tended to seek and graduate from institutions of higher education (Wong et al., 2019).

The administrators and high school counselors provided a unique perspective with military dependent students because they have the most impact with systems, as opposed to individuals (Fitch & Marshall, 2004). For example, if the administrator determined that there was an issue with children settling into the school environment because of school transition, the counselor may recommend, design, and implement a program or system that accommodated children who had recently transferred to the school. Administrators also supported the academic goals of the institution by assisting student transitions through their student advising programs and their communication and interaction with parents and teachers (Pelsma, 2000). Additionally, there was less pressure on administrators than that of teachers because they did not endure classroom stress, compensation, and interactions with school administrators (Pelsma, 2000). As a result, administrators not only can help students in stressful situations but teachers as well.

"Counselors can use solution-oriented consultation to help teachers not only function better but also to improve attitude and reduce stress" (Fitch & Marshall, 2004, p. 173).

The teachers who were selected shared an intimacy level with the students that was not as readily available in AJROTC instructors or with the administrator. Students who volunteered for the AJROTC program are from both civilian and military backgrounds, and included approximately 340 students from the entire school population, making the program somewhat exclusive (Meier, 2015). In contrast to AJROTC instructors, teachers interacted with more students throughout the year as they often taught more than one class. Teacher access to the abundant student population yielded results suggesting that "students are more likely to hold high educational expectations when they have positive relationships with their teachers and when they feel that they belong at school" (Wong et al., 2019, p. 5). Teachers also played a critical role in helping students feel connected to their school experience, and "students who explain their teachers and school administrators as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear and fair are more likely to be connected to school" (Berg, 2008, p. 46).

I adopted a cultural relativist paradigm because I intended to "capture the distinctive perspectives of the case study participants" (Yin, 2018, p. 203). Although Yin (2009) noted that sample sizes are irrelevant and should not be the focus, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) stated that 12 subjects were a reasonable number when "the aim was to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals" (p. 76). Given the number of personnel at the high school, the sample size that I solicited in conducting my research was 10–18 participants, to include high school teachers, instructors, school counselors, and administrators who taught/administrated high school students who were military

dependents. This provided an adequate sample to collect information during interviews and was also small enough so as not to be hindered by scheduling conflicts and confusion (Yin, 2018).

A non-probability sampling method was used to select participants so that the data were fully developed. This type of sampling ensured depth of knowledge and established an understanding of the development of high school military dependent children (Sargeant, 2012). I employed multiple sampling techniques such as convenience, purposive, and snowball sampling to select participants from the three sub-groups prior to data collection (Merriam, 2002). The non-probability sampling ensured that I had access to the participants and permitted purposeful sampling methods (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013).

Prior to the selection of participants, I utilized quota sampling to ensure that the population of education professionals was stratified into three sub-groups that are required for this research (Acharya et al., 2013). Stratifying the sample was administratively simplistic and ensured that the appropriate characteristics are represented within each sub-group (Creswell, 2015). As Guest et al. (2006) noted, "If one wishes to determine how two or more groups differ along a given dimension, then you would likely use a stratified sample of some sort" (p. 76). Quota sampling does not produce randomness, which some would argue could develop a biased population (Moser, 1952). I then used convenience sampling because it was cost-effective, did not require a list of possible subjects, and was convenient for me to conduct. This type of sampling allowed me to quickly identify at least one member in each of the three sub-groups (Creswell, 2015). This technique was the most common form of non-probability sampling in which the subjects met the criteria (Acharya et al., 2013).

Following the quota and convenience sampling procedures, I identified the additional participants from each group via a snowball sampling technique. I asked the initial professional

from each sub-group who they believed had much of the same experiences and knowledge of military high school dependent children's development as they had (Kuper, Lingard, & Levinson, 2008). As I am someone who was closely affiliated with the high school because of my volunteer efforts, I was familiar with the school's administrators. In using the snowball method to find the first participants in each sub-group, the principal and vice principal had agreed to walk me around and introduce me to some of the education professionals from each area. I was careful not to make all of the individuals whom I am introduced to participants, as this would have caused concern for bias (Etikan, 2016). I then used Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) on the subsequent participants to obtain future contacts or "the next wave of sample members" (Goel & Salganik, 2010, p. 6743) who had the same shared experiences and knowledge.

Procedures

Approval to conduct this study was requested from the Liberty University IRB. Before this approval was granted, I informally contacted an AJROTC instructor at the school who was also an instructor for two of my children in high school. I asked if he could put me in contact with the NWHS principal so that I could gain some general information regarding the policies of the district, which he did. I was subsequently contacted by the NWHS school board Assistant Director of Teaching and Learning with non-specific questions about my study. In response to the assistant, I provided information about the significance of the research, and I then began correspondence with a school board member for further school district procedures. The administrator informally spoke to me on the telephone to gain an appreciation for the research. At a later date, and upon receiving IRB approval, I communicated directly with the school board regarding how to proceed with the educational professionals' contact information. I immediately

began memoing my research, my communications with administrators, and the experiences from the interview process in the early stages of the research study. Memos assisted me by clarifying thoughts on the study and interviews, allowing for a technique to interpret assumptions and any personal feelings about the process, as well as facilitating the development of the study design (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008).

Upon gaining approval from the IRB, I then sought formal approval from the school board district, and thoroughly discuss the study with the high school principal. Once the coordination has been made with all of the stakeholders, I emailed the teachers, instructors, and administrators, and high school counselors who have been identified by the principal to begin the study (Appendix C).

I distributed a consent form that acknowledged their role in the study, in which participants had to sign to participate in the study (Appendix D). The consent form served to inform the participant of the procedures used to collect the data, the benefits of the study, discussion of the safeguards which were in place such as pseudonyms for the participant's name, as well as the institution, and finally assuring them of their privacy. Upon receiving the consent from the interested interviewees, we coordinated a schedule that was convenient to them and the interviews were completed in each of the participants' settings where they interact with students the most. A few participants elected to participate in the interview over Zoom because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Multiple sources were vital to conduct an in-depth study of a phenomenon in the real world (Yin, 2018). I established boundaries so that I could clearly articulate the phenomenon that I was studying and its context. Merriam (1988) suggested that a case study needs to focus on the end state and quickly assess what the boundaries are. "A qualitative case study was an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance,

phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1988, p. 21). The boundaries for my research consisted of the interviews, time and space, the geographical location, the nine months of the school year, and the interviews of the professionals (Yin, 2018). The establishment of boundaries prevented my research from becoming too broad and over-generalized.

Yin (2018) noted that, "to interview key persons, you must cater to the interviewees' schedules and availability, not yours" (p. 183). When participants are afforded the opportunity to choose the time and place, it improves their comfort level. Record-keeping is critical to preserving information so that it may be helpful with other case studies (Yin, 2018). Each interview was electronically recorded over an iPhone 6S and transcribed by myself to preserve publishable copies of the correspondence. Additionally, I had a note pad and pen and transcribed observations that I made, such as physical or emotional changes when participants provided their responses. Finally, I shared the transcribed conversation with each participant, which allowed each individual to review or remove any portion that they deemed inappropriate. Baxter and Jack (2008) noted:

As data are collected and analyzed, researchers may also wish to integrate a process of member checking, where the researchers' interpretations of the data are shared with the participants, and the participants have the opportunity to discuss and clarify the interpretation, and contribute new or additional perspectives on the issue under study. (p. 552)

Any potential bias was reduced by utilizing reflexivity and memoing. Reflexivity allowed me to pause and think about how their own experiences, values, culture, and family could shape the interpretations of the data that were received. Yin (2018) stated that "your perspective unknowingly impacts the interviewee's responses, but those responses also

unknowingly impact your line of inquiry” (p. 217). Without reflexivity, the result could have potentially led to undesirable bias in the interview material. During the entire interview process, I was aware that time-intensive interviews potentially form an unintentional relationship between myself and the interviewee (Yin, 2018). As a result, I ensured that the interviews did not exceed one hour in length.

The Researcher’s Role

As the researcher, I was the “primary data collection instrument” and had the responsibility to develop the design and gather and interpret the data which were collected. In doing so, I had the ability to forecast ethical issues in accordance with my qualitative research method (Creswell, 2015, p. 256). The open-ended questions that I developed were specific in nature so as to produce thought-out, resourceful conversations, which ultimately lead to pertinent information through data analysis. Analyzing the data was a continuous process that began with working the data from the ground up. As I conducted the interviews, I documented the explanations of the participants, laboriously transcribed notes, and “played with the data” to discover themes and patterns (Yin, 2018, p. 279). This was an ongoing process that developed rich, abundant, and relevant data that were completed when I believed saturation had occurred (Guest et al., 2006).

I needed to be reflexive in nature as I transcribed the interview; documented their explanations; and journaled personal thoughts; so as not to allow my personal values, beliefs, and perspectives to impact the data as I played with it (Creswell, 2015). Yin (2018) suggested for an interviewer to be effective, they must have five attributes, they consisted of “asking good questions; being a good listener; staying adaptive; having a firm grasp of the issues being studied; and conducting research ethically” (Yin, 2018 p. 159). In performing this role, I was

well versed on taking notes, interviewing habits, annotating participant explanations, adjusting my verbal communication style to match my audience, interpreting my audience's subjectivity, and impartially administrating and analyzing the data flawlessly. Reflexivity reinforced ethical standards in my research, secured participants confidentiality, and prevented biases when playing with the data (Kuper et al., 2008). All of these attributes, the research process, and the researcher were steeped in honesty & integrity, which fostered reliable, ethical research.

During the period of this research, I was an active duty service member and had served in the military for 18 years. I was married to my one true love from high school, and together we had four children who are aged 17, 16, 7, and 5. I volunteered at the high school for various events, however I had no personal relationships with any of the education professionals who I interview. I deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan six times, and to a number of countries throughout Africa. During this time, my two oldest children transferred into nine schools, and throughout seven different geographical locations in the world. In an effort to mitigate any biasness, reflectivity constituted an honest and open narrative that was resounded with readers (Creswell, 2015). I strived for the highest ethical standards by not falsifying or plagiarizing my research and, as Yin (2018) described, “maintaining a strong professional competence that includes keeping up with related research, ensuring accuracy, striving for credibility, and understanding and divulging the needed methodological qualifiers and limitations to your work” (p. 166). The finalized results were honest and accurate to ensure that the study can be replicated and lead to further research.

Data Collection

The preparation of collecting my data was the foundation to my case study research. Yin (2018) stressed the importance for the researcher to have a protocol established that contains

specific procedures and processes that are ready to be instituted before the start of data collection. Although there was not a formal protocol established for this case study's data collection, important details emerged that I could not have predicted, and I repeatedly questioned how these spontaneous details lent relevancy to the study (Yin, 2018). Yin's (2018) meticulous research protocol established a systematic process for researchers to follow when conducting their research in a single case study. There were five components to the protocol that could inhibit proper data collection including gaining access to the individuals and the institutions; acquiring administrative instruments ahead of time; procedures for requesting help from colleagues; creating a schedule that was static and not fluid; and anticipating changes in the interviewee's schedule, temperament, mood, or location (Yin, 2018). Before beginning my formal data collection procedures, I ensured that I applied these criteria so that I could ensure future study replication. Additionally, Yin organized his protocol into the following four sections: Section A was case study overview; Section B was the data collection procedures; Section C was the interview questions; and Section D was tentative outline for the report (Yin, 2018).

Collecting my data did not depend on a constrained timeline but rather the results of my preparatory procedures and my refined case study skills (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) clearly and explicitly detailed not only the case study protocol, but the training that a researcher must have to prepare himself for the collection of data. Yin (2018) believed that six sources of evidence must be discovered when researching one's case study: "interviewing; documentation; archival records; direct observations; participant observation; and physical artifacts" (p. 207). I attempted to discover evidence of teachers' explanations from interviewing the educational professionals, incorporating my direct observations in this real-world setting, and thoroughly documenting the

details of every event via note-taking and using an audio recorder (Yin, 2018). Three data collection techniques were used in this case study to include individually interviewing the educational professionals, a focus group interview, and asking the participants to write a hypothetical letter to prospective military dependent children in an effort to manage their expectations upon entering NWHS.

Through Yin's written guidance, I exercised prudence while interviewing so I did not become overwhelmed with too much information. "Even more experienced researchers may find that they have either (a) collected too much data that was not later used in any analysis, or (b) collected too little data that prevented the proper use of a desired analytic technique" (Yin, 2018, p. 91). All of the questions that I asked of the subjects are listed in Appendix D, and these inquiries seek to capture the explanations of the high school teachers, instructors, school counselors and administrators who teach/administrate high school students who are military dependents. These interviews attempted to correlate the professionals' explanations through the lens of Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory.

I amassed multiple data points from these three distinct sub-groups of education professionals, explanations from the interviewees, documenting my field notes, and the participant letters to prospective students (Yin, 2018). By collecting a variety of data, I triangulated the evidence which suggested a phenomenon. Yin (2018) noted,

Even though your data collection may have to rely heavily on information from individual interviewees, your conclusions cannot be based entirely on the interviews as a source of information, (because) your case study would have transformed into an open-ended survey, not a case study. (p. 189)

As a result, I began the memo process immediately upon gathering the data, and this ensued throughout the interview process until completion of the interviews.

Scrutinizing audio recordings, field notes, and the participant letters were vital for documenting themes and messages. Additionally, I did not wait until the entire interview process was complete to develop emerging themes for this study. Yin (2018) noted that “the needed strategy should follow some cycle (or repeated cycles) involving your original research questions, the data, your defensible handling and interpretation of the data, and your ability to state some findings and draw some conclusions” (p. 284). Once I completed the summary, the log for the field notes was constructed. This log included a detailed analysis of each interview and any themes or messages that emerge from the interviews. Comprehensive field note-taking supplemented the recorded interviews and helped to capture the explanations of the participant. These three methods of collecting data triangulated an emerging theme, and “the desired triangulation follows from the principle in navigation, whereby the intersection of lines from different reference points was used to calculate the precise location of an object” (Yin, 2018, p. 230).

Interviews

The first data collection technique was from interviewing MWHS education professionals. Interviewing was one of three sources used to gather evidence from within this case study design (Yin, 2002). Interviewing was a beneficial technique for gathering my evidence because it lent a first-hand account of a personal experience that can explain a phenomenon (Yin, 2018). This was because the data received from conducting interviews, especially open-ended interviews, offered rich, in-depth information that other scientific interviews could not (Bickman & Rog, 2009). I avoided yes or no questions in an effort for the

subject to open up and provide a personal recollection of their thoughts on the development of military children in a non-judgmental way.

Because epistemological assumptions are subjective, I substantiated the education professionals' explanations with face-to-face interviews to shorten the distance of objectivity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The epistemological philosophy related to how the participants gained their knowledge; the focus groups and individual interviews were utilized to get close to the participants in the study (Yin, 2018). I specifically guided my research from traditional epistemology because I separated each teacher, both by time and distance, so that I could gain an appreciation for their explanations of the development of military children without being concerned that the explanations were being impacted from others (Goldman, 1999). A distinct advantage of this case study methodology was from conducting interviews with educational professionals in the environments in which they interacted with their students. The interviews were conducted in the professionals' classrooms or offices because the familiar environment increased the likelihood that the dialogue would be enhanced, with the end result of having achieved reliable data collection (Yin, 2002).

I conducted short case study interviews because each teacher's schedule was limited by time and, as a result, each interview lasted no longer than one hour. The framework was established utilizing a teacher's perspective to gain an insider's view of military dependent children's development in school, so that future doctrine can be established to assist in their development (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). I was cognizant of reflexivity when the participant and I exchanged personal experiences, participant explanations, and other identity markers so as to not have my research blemished (Alvermann, 2001). Creswell (2015) remarked that reflexivity occurred when "the inquirer reflects about how their role in the study and their background,

culture, and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data” (p. 235).

Three categories of professional expertise from the participants provided explanations which were derived from different backgrounds and interactions of military dependent students whom these professionals encountered (Yin, 2018). Understanding the literature and analyzing the explanations of civilian education professionals further explained the developmental impacts on these students. One technique for avoiding conflicted information from the participants was to search for other sources of evidence that corroborated or rejected the participant's account. “The more that interviewee assists in this manner, the more that the role may be considered an informant, rather than a participant” (Yin, p. 215, 2018). My structured protocol and detailed questions (Appendix A) were designed to overcome this time-constrained environment. Yin (2018) noted that “interviews may remain open-ended and assume a conversational manner, but you are likely to be following your case study protocol (or a portion of it) more closely” (p. 216).

The questions that I developed were the impetus for my data collection. Rubin and Rubin (2005) confirmed that a “responsive interviewing model . . . builds on an interpretive approach and frames the way we design research, collect data, and analyze our findings” (p. 20). Selected teaching professionals and instructors, predominately in the AJROTC department, were asked to volunteer for the study with permission from the principal. The social cognitive research of this narrative case study rested on the civilian educational professionals’ explanations, which were documented via face-to-face interviews and from questions designed to ascertain the development of military dependent students.

Initially, I needed to coordinate with the principal to receive permission to interview the teachers. I requested to meet the teachers to discuss the purpose of my study and request

volunteers (Yin, 2018). Upon meeting with the teachers, I annotated their point of contact information and managed their expectations for their future interviews. Logistically speaking, the requirements to carry out the interviews were minimal. Resources needed to complete the study included writing pads, writing instruments, a voice recording device, a classroom or similar setting, transportation, and most importantly, time. The time blocks scheduled to conduct the interviews were implemented in accordance with the subject's convenience (Yin, 2018).

The questions were arranged deliberately according to Yin's (2018) five levels:

Level 1: questions verbalized to specific interviewees;

Level 2: questions about each case, which represent your line of inquiry, as just discussed;

Level 3: questions asked of the pattern of findings across multiple cases;

Level 4: questions asked of an entire study—calling on information beyond the case study evidence and including other literature or published data that may have been studied;

and Level 5: normative questions about policy recommendations and conclusions, going beyond the narrow scope of the study. (p. 186)

The aggregate of the questions were arranged with Level 1 being asked of the subjects (Yin, 2018). These questions were intended to build rapport to elicit a truthful response and to determine any preconceived notions (Wachi & Lamb, 2018). The questions were adjusted as necessary for each participant, based on the data included on each timeline.

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

Ice breaker: Good morning/ afternoon Mr./Mrs./Ms.... Please tell me about yourself as an education professional at MWHS.

1. How have military students who have moved via a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to the MWHS community impacted your classroom?
2. How have you tailored your approach to a PCSed military dependent student once you are notified that they will soon be under your care?
3. In your experience, how do you explain the stress from PCSing impacted the student's ability to adapt to a new environment?
4. Can you explain how the student's familial support system impacted the student as they adapted to a new environment?
5. Can you explain how the military culture impacts the military dependent student's development, both socially and academically?
6. How do you explain the impacts of stress on military children adapting to a new environment?
7. How can you explain the impact on military children's academic development as they adapt to a new environment?
8. Can you explain how a military dependent student's social development is impacted as they adapt to a new environment?
9. How do you explain that military children excel as opposed to degenerate under the conditions from the previous question?
10. Can you explain how students are impacted when they have a loved one who was continuously away in support of training exercises?
11. Can you explain how the stress of deployments impacts a military dependent student's development?

12. How have some of your more memorable experiences with military students impacted you as a teacher and person and your teaching style?
13. How have the interactions that you had with your military students been different from their civilian peers?
14. How receptive are military parents when you communicate concerns and explanations of their children's development to them?
15. How many opportunities have you been presented with to attend professional training that was designed for the developmental needs of the military student?
16. Military students have likely witnessed their loved one's return from war. Stressors that are commonly associated with deployments can include verbal fights, physical altercations, and issues with alcohol. How has the school prepared you to accommodate military students who are suffering under these aforementioned stresses?
17. How familiar are you with the military dependent student's background prior to receiving them under your specific area of expertise?
18. How does the school prepare you for receiving a military dependent student who has recently PCSed and will now be in your classroom?
19. What else am I missing that you think would be important for me to know about your teaching experiences with military dependent children?

Question 1 set the tone for the entire interviewing process. I utilized in-depth interview questions to "elicit a full picture of the participant's perspective on the research focus" (Mann, 2016, p. 100). It was essential that I welcomed the individual to the interview, and "put the participant at ease and to create a good working relationship with him or her" (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015, p. 59). It was then my job to inform the interviewee about the rules regarding

their privacy; I then presented them with the consent form and ask them to read and sign it. I also informed the interviewee that I was taking notes throughout the interview period.

Questions 2–11 are explanatory questions that were designed to understand the intersection of the military dependent student’s development with PCSs, deployments, and the child’s ability to adapt within a new environment. Creswell (2015) impressed upon me that “the focus of qualitative research was on participants’ explanations and experiences, and the way they make sense of their lives” (p. 255). In many cases, teachers were ignorant of which students were military dependent children, as opposed to civilian children. This could have led to a lack of understanding for appropriate measures that would have benefitted the student, to include specialized programs that could have assisted them in coping with stress (Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2010).

Questions 12–14 were designed to highlight the professional's experiences and ascertain how the experience impacted the student's future development. According to Rockoff (2004), a teacher’s experiences were generally learned within the first few years of teaching. For example, a predominately younger inexperienced staff could potentially have had little to no impact to identify, build processes, and assist military children with their coping process. The numerous moves often make parents physically and emotionally exhausted and less emotionally able to help their children cope with stress related to relocation (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Several studies reported that parental stress directly impacted the child's ability to cope during stressful situations (Ruff & Keim, 2014). Melnick and Meister's (2008) research demonstrated that experienced teachers were less likely to incorporate student's parents when there were developmental issues, as opposed to new teachers.

Questions 15–19 were designed to determine if any processes or procedures have been developed at the school and in the classroom that could have helped military children advance in their development. Procedures and techniques were founding principles which were derived from the learning theory that enhanced their coping skills (Friedberg & Brelsford, 2011). Proper procedures enable children to develop six modalities/channels that perpetuate resiliency: social functioning, affect, beliefs, imagination, and cognition (Berger & Lahad, 2010). Unique elements such a social support group, or in this research, NWHS, assisted military dependent students to cope with situations that brought stressors into their life and also decreased the likelihood of future exposure to traumatic events (Drummet et al., 2003).

Participant Letters

This investigation hinged upon receiving information from the participants in their professional settings (Yin, 2018). As a result, I created a unique opportunity for the participants to write letters to incoming military dependent children of what students should expect upon transitioning to their new school. This letter was derived from the participants' past experiences and their observations of the development of military dependent children when they moved to the school from another location. I guided the participants' letters with prompts that were aligned with my research questions. The first prompt that I provided to the participants was, "In this letter, please write a word of encouragement as to how military dependent children can deal with the stress of a parent's combat deployment." This prompt was aligned with my first sub-question, "How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of combat deployment of military parents on military dependent high school students?" The next prompt that I provided to the participants was, "In this letter, please write a word of encouragement as to how military dependent children can deal with the stress of a new PCS." This prompt was

aligned with my second sub-question: “How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of numerous and continual military Permanent Change of Station moves on military dependent high school students?” The final prompt that I provided to the participants was, “In this letter, please write a word of encouragement as to how military dependent children can deal with the stress of living within a military culture.” The final prompt addressed my third sub-question: “How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of military culture and life on military dependent high school students?”

The intent of the letter was to allow the participant the opportunity to explain how military stress has impacted military dependent students. Once I received the letter, I identified the emergence of themes and/or patterns. Patterns and themes that emerged explained how military stress from PCSs, deployments, and from living within the military culture impacted the development of military dependent students. It also permitted time for the participants to reflect on these experiences and provide information without being prompted by interview questions. Yin (2018) noted that participant observation was “insightful to interpersonal behavior” (p. 208), and this type of data collection would be another insightful technique for the participants to explain the student’s development.

Once the participants’ names were identified and I had received their point of contact information, I emailed and asked them to write or type the letter. I made this coordination so I could receive their letter upon interviewing the participant. Direct observations are general in nature, made in a real-world setting, and are less formal than participant observations (Yin, 2018). These letters were intended to communicate to me their own form of descriptive notes, explained by Creswell (2015) as “a reconstruction of dialogue, a description of the physical setting, and accounts of particular events” (p. 244). My request of the participants to write this

letter was informal so that the participants would feel encouraged to communicate their opinions (Creswell, 2015).

Focus Group Interviews

A focus group interview was conducted to holistically receive input from the previously identified participants. The focus group interview was conducted at the MWHS campus. I moderated a discussion that was derived from a minimal set of unstructured, open-ended questions (Appendix B) regarding the development of military students (Creswell, 2015). Conducting a focus group interview fostered discussion and permitted the participants to elaborate on each other's explanations. Yin (2018) noted that the researcher moderating the focus group will "deliberately try to surface the views of each person in the group" (p. 216). The discussion was in a pre-arranged setting within the school to reduce the burden of travel on all participants. Creswell (2015) recommended at least six members to participate in the group interview. With 18 participants solicited, finding 10 to participate was an issue due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I conducted the focus group interview to collect any explanations from teachers that I failed to collect from the individual interviews as well as their individual letters to prospective students. As Baker, Edwards, and Doidge (2012) noted, focus groups lend less in a "person's thoughts and history in as much depth, but are balanced by the ability to get subjects to tackle problematic or difficult issues with each other, raising opposing viewpoints and resolving conflicting perceptions" (p. 9). The group interview produced a unique opportunity for the participants to build upon the thoughts of others. I invited the participants to a 60-minute group interview during lunch time and also provided a small meal of pizza which created a relaxed atmosphere. As with the individual interviews, I also recorded this discussion.

Data Analysis

The best preparation for conducting case study analysis was to have an analytic strategy, and I found the Yinian approach was the most appropriate for my case study. It has been shown in the past that case study researchers are often impeded during the analysis of data because they lacked an analytical strategy (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) noted that "the tools are important and can be useful, but they are usually most helpful if you know what to look for or have an overall analytic strategy" (p. 280). Contrary to statistical analysis, guides or procedures are absent for conducting qualitative data analysis, and instead, depend on a researcher's style of rigorous empirical thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations (Yin, 2018, p. 279). Researchers should choose a case study that is related to their propositions or theory; as such, my analytical strategy relied on my theoretical proposals and pattern-matching logic (Yin, 2018).

The conceptual framework that impacted this explanatory case study was a proposition that was examined by applying two theories upon various facets of the investigation. The proposition that I conceptualized was that a military dependent child's development was impacted by the following three criteria from within a military culture: combat deployments; consistent military mandated Permanent Change of Stations (PCS); and the family's military home life or environment. Yin (2003) theorized that revisiting propositions upon which the conceptual framework was developed guarantees the data analysis is within the framework and instills the required structure for research completion. This analytic strategy linked my case research to decisive conceptualizations, which subsequently enabled these ideas to drive my data analysis (Yin, 2018).

As I began analyzing the data, I returned to my proposition to ensure the information collected was within the boundaries of my research (Yin, 2018). This also provided an opportunity to consider additional propositions and subsequently counter propositions of the likes that I had not previously envisioned. This consideration of newly minted propositions and counter propositions added legitimacy to the study, which instilled credibility to the research (Yin, 2002). Yin (2018) noted that “each proposition directs attention to something that should be examined within the scope of study” (p. 81). If my proposition was validated, this case study could foster additional research for developing suitable coping strategies that can be incorporated into high school settings (Friedberg & Brelsford, 2011).

My case study analysis was dependent upon multiple sources of information so that the credibility of data would not result in research that would come into question (Yin, 2018). My boundaries ensured that the proper data were analyzed and I would not become tempted to scrutinize redundant data. I began with a minor question and then cataloged evidence that focused on my question. I did not analyze the fruits of this case study by individual merit, rather I scrutinized the multiple data sources. These pieces of data did not stand alone, but instead, I analyzed them in concert which produced a theoretical summation (Yin, 2002). Analyzing individual aspects of the data, such as information received by an individual or group, impacted the results and altered the case study design (Yin, 2002). The aggregate of my data analysis illustrated the teacher’s explanations of their military dependent student’s development.

I pursued a combination of procedures, such as categorizing, examining, testing, tabulating, or recombining narrative and numeric evidence (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) encouraged the researcher to “play” with their data to discover patterns, ideas, or trends, which would enable the establishment of my analysis priorities. There were times in which emerging themes would

begin to present themselves and continue to shape in the collection and analyzation of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). I played with my evidence by arranging my data into different arrays, tabulated event occurrences, and wrote notes to myself about what emerged in my data analysis (Yin, 2018). Additional techniques for arranging my data included arraying information in differing manners, categorizing themes and subthemes that begin to emerge, developing a matrix of differing theories and embedding graphics to scrutinize the information, and developing a timeline or frequency of different events (Yin, 2018). As I arrayed my data, I began to draw inaugural conclusions from the substance of my evidence and consider how I could depict my research that allows researchers to check my assessment (Yin, 2018).

Becoming disenchanted with data analysis was a very real possibility, even for an experienced researcher. Yin (2018) insisted that if this confusion sets in, the researcher should begin to array the case study research into “chapters or sections,” which would ensure there was no work loss and I remained productive, and provided me an opportunity to reflect on my research (p. 295). Another way of traversing through the challenges of data analysis was to write memos or notes to myself in all stages of my research, to include conducting fieldwork and in the collection of data (Yin, 2018).

The entire case study relied on the documentation of the evidence. "Case studies use prose and literary techniques to describe, elicit images, and analyze situations. . . . They present documentation of events, quotes, samples and artifacts" (Merriam, 2002, p. 30). Memoing was a tool that I used to immerse myself “in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conduct of research” (Birks et al., 2008, p. 69). Memoing began immediately upon data collection and I used this data collection technique to guide the research and identified any patterns and themes which emerged. Chamberlain, Camic

and Yardley (2004) stated that “memoing throughout the analysis process forces your reflections to become both more abstract and more inter-related as you progress to an overall theory” (p. 79).

Memoing was extremely influential in my data collection, with Creswell (2015) describing this method as “writing memos that may ultimately be included as a narrative in the final report and organizing the structure of the final report” (p. 245). I memoed to keep a record of my thoughts, emerging concepts, and ideas that were conceptualized throughout the entire investigation process. Memoing consisted of notes that I took during individual interviews, the focus group interview, and as I scrutinized the participants’ letters (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) noted that “our record-keeping society means that documentary information (whether paper or electronic) was likely to be relevant to every case study topic” (p. 207).

Analytic techniques described by Yin (2018) were not simple to use, but were fruitful as a process to scrutinize my evidence. Yin (2018) listed five different analytic techniques to process data: pattern matching logic; explanation building; time series analysis; logic models; and cross-case synthesis. Pattern matching analysis was utilized to determine if multiple pieces of information from the same case study aligned with my theory. Pattern matching was a process that compared a pattern from within my research to a predicted one before the start of collecting my evidence (Yin, 2018). If my evidence and the anticipated patterns were similar, then the results would bolster the construct validity. Other processes included explanation building, a tactic used in explanatory case studies; time series analysis which requires a rigid timeline of events; logic models; and cross-case synthesis. Only the cross-case synthesis process was designed specifically for multiple case studies (Yin, 2018).

I considered the use of the coding software called Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS), however, QDAS was a software program that I was unfamiliar with and a primary concern that I had with using this tool was the amount of time that it would take for me to become comfortable with it. I understood that this software ensured efficiency in data analysis through the structure that it provided from coding tools. It elevates rigor in the case study and quickly depicts themes in the research which will increase the validity (Bazeley, 2017). John and Johnson (2000) noted that researchers should be wary of using QDAS because the program tends to

focus on quantity instead of meaning, homogenization of qualitative data analysis approaches, a privileging of coding and retrieval methods, distancing the researcher from the data, inappropriate use of technology, time consumed in learning to use computer packages, pressures or expectations that all qualitative researchers will use them, and increased commercialism. (p. 395)

I weighed the pros and cons based off of my comfortability with the program and with my technical experience in using computers and ultimately decided against using the software program.

Trustworthiness

Trust was an ongoing process, from the beginning of the proposal until the release of the results. Merriam (2002) wrote, “Both the readers of case studies and the authors themselves need to be aware of biases that can affect the final product” (p. 42). I demonstrated to the participants that I was trustworthy by providing them some of my own experiences as a military member; teacher; and parent of four children, all of whom attended school locally. I was in the military and have children that have been exposed to the military culture. We had seven PCS

moves and I deployed to combat six times. In relating to the participants with my own experiences, I built trustworthiness with each interviewee, which is the lynchpin to credibility (Yin, 2018). Trustworthiness addresses credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. The teachers who were selected were those who had an extensive teaching background of at least three years of teaching experience in their role. I made this confirmation upon scheduling an interview with the participants. This highlighted the authenticity of the research because experience in the military was critical in identifying the stressor identified in this study (Yin, 2018).

Credibility

The establishment of themes was crucial toward lending credibility to this research and the validity of this case study. Triangulation was a technique that was used to highlight converging ideas from the education professionals. Researchers Creswell and Creswell (2018) noted that the most frequently used strategy to ensure validity was to “triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes” (p. 200). Triangulation ensured an appropriate balance of rigor, governance, and analysis for this case study (Yin, 2018). Merriam (2002) noted that “this lack of rigor was linked to the problem of bias, introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher and others involved in the case” (p. 43).

Dependability and Confirmability

I consistently performed reliability checks during memoing as if an auditor would perform a reliability check to determine if creating the same study would produce the same results (Yin, 2018). The audit was important because it ensured that the findings were accurate. It was possible that I could become emotionally involved in the study and having “peer feedback

in the research ensures he remains arbitrary” (Yin, 2018). The peer review of the data allowed someone who was arbitrary, but who also knew about the study, to analyze the data and ensure its accuracy. In addition to the peer review, I sent a draft manuscript to the participants for any helpful feedback as key informants bring internal validity (Yin, 2018).

Dependability enabled an honest approach between myself and the interviewees to permit the documentation of unbiased results. Confirmability was achieved by thoroughly documenting my notes from the interviews and the participants’ letters, so that the research could be referenced in the future. A data audit was also conducted to ensure that my research was unbiased (Yin, 2018).

Transferability

This case study had low potential for transferability because the interviews and letters were thoroughly documented and reviewed by a peer to lend internal validity (Yin, 2018). However, future studies will need to be performed to determine if the case studies are generalized enough to be appropriately transferred (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Transferability was another aspect of qualitative research that should be considered; it referred to the possibility that what was found in one context applied to another context.

Ethical Considerations

As this was a narrative case study, much of the research relied on face-to-face conversations with educational professionals. As a result, confidentiality was the largest concern for the school, the researcher, and the participants. I ensured that all participants’ identities remained confidential. Only I had direct knowledge and knew the names of the participants; their identities were at no time revealed during the research or the dissertation (Yin, 2018).

Summary

This case study research identified a variety of techniques through which this research experiment was conducted. This case study's research has solidified my theory and promulgated this explanatory case study design choice. The development of military dependent children was a phenomenon that needed to be researched from the perspectives of the educational professionals involved, specifically in understanding the unique professionals' explanations, which may establish the framework in identifying their development. This framework provided me the opportunity to interview these professionals in their environment, and get a sense of military dependent student development from sources and perspectives that interacted with them daily. This research was conducted to include a mixture of qualitative research methods which provide an educator's perspective of how military stressors impact military dependent students' development. Understanding the long-term impacts could result in the effective establishment of prolific solutions to help children cope with the military stressors. These solutions would assist students with coping mechanisms in dealing with these military stressors and provide an academic performance baseline that is not erratic.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Chapter Four incorporated an introduction of evidence from the research in this qualitative case study. The purpose of this explanatory case study was to understand how the military culture and inherent stress affect the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. This chapter contains narrative perceptions of the case study participants. The case study's results are organized in this chapter in accordance with the subject matter discovered, with a subsequent description of the methods of data collection and an explanation of the emergence of themes which answer the study's research questions.

Participants

Participants for this case study were selected by using a non-probability sampling method that ensured a depth of knowledge, which fostered an understanding of the development of high school military dependent children (Sargeant, 2012). The non-probability sampling method enabled access to a variety of participants to include teachers, JROTC instructors, and administrators (Acharya et al., 2013). I utilized multiple sampling techniques such as purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling to select participants who were sought after in three different sub-groups (Merriam, 2002). The criterion that was selected for identifying the most appropriate participants for the study was simply that each professional had a minimum of three years teaching experience at the high school level. The study consisted of four instructors, two administrators, and four teachers (see Table 3).

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Name	Years of Experience	Group	Interview	Focus Group	Letter
Mrs. Lucy	8	Teacher	X	X	X
Mrs. Kay	4	Teacher	X	X	X
Mr. Pei	8	Teacher	X		
Mrs. Antietam	8	Teacher	X		X
Mrs. Book	20	Administrator	X	X	X
Mrs. Bastogne	17	Administrator	X	X	
Mr. Cee	16	Instructor	X		
Mr. Esse	3	Instructor	X		
Mr. Atche	3	Instructor	X		
Mr. Lowe	14	Instructor	X	X	

Mr. Cee

At the time of the study, Mr. Cee served as a JROTC instructor in the high school for 16 years. He had been retired from the Army for 17 years, after serving his country with over 20 years of active duty military service. It has been under his leadership and guidance that the JROTC program consistently performed as one of the top programs in the nation. Mr. Cee was pertinent to this study because of his military experience and his abundant years of being a high school professional educator. He instructed more than 300 military and civilian students in the past school year in military classroom curriculum. Additionally, he worked closely with parents, other education professionals and administrators, and students in JROTC competition events. He traveled throughout the country with these individuals and has an intimate working knowledge of the student's

development from both objective tests and through his own observations. Mr. Cee has also donated multiple hours of his free time to student-centered activities that are in support of the student, but also outside of his JROTC purview. Some of these activities included student fundraising and sporting events. Administrators and teachers alike routinely sought him out for his advice in mentoring military dependent students.

Mrs. Antietam

At the time of the study, Mrs. Antietam had completed eight years as a teacher at MWHS, worked as the lead for various student clubs, and was the school interface for the state department leadership education. She taught and mentored both civilian and military dependent children in Grades 9–12. The classes that she taught included career and finance classes, business law, accounting, entrepreneurship, and communications. She also led the high school’s marketing pathway effort; it was a niche student club that focused on the marketing aspect of business. Mrs. Antietam was also the sponsor of three school-based enterprises that students managed that included a store shop, apparel shop, and coffee shop. She volunteered to be a member of the high school’s business leadership team, and was the lead teacher for the reading team efforts for the last two years. These programs that she manages are designed to develop entrepreneurs and marketing and business skills for students. Finally, Mrs. Antietam was selected to represent the high school on the [State] Department Leadership Education Team for online and transitional school programs, which assisted students with career readiness skills. She believes that military dependent students at the high school “seem to perform well in academics, they want to do well, they see their parents how hard they work and are striving, they have a good work ethic.”

Mrs. Lucy

At the time of the study, Mrs. Lucy had taught for MWHS for eight years, plus completing one year of student teaching. She taught sophomore honors English, and she also volunteered her

time with the JROTC program. As the JROTC administrator, Mrs. Lucy coordinated the various JROTC events throughout the year and she assisted with coaching and mentoring the students. She was selected as the teacher of the year for MWHS and consistently sought out contemporary professional training to introduce new teaching experiences to her classroom. She served in the Army National Guard for six years as a military police officer, and served one tour in Iraq. She viewed military dependent students impacting her classrooms in a positive way as she explained, “I think that they [military students] have been a huge positive impact on my classroom because they have traveled the world many of them, they’ve been in many different schools, and they have a lot of diversity experiences with different cultures.”

Mrs. Kay

At the time of the study, Mrs. Kay had completed her fourth year of teaching at MWHS. At MWHS she taught general studies and also educated civilian and military students who had learning disabilities. A portion of her responsibilities as a special education teacher was to develop and maintain Individual Education Plans (IEP) for her students who had emotional and/or behavioral issues. The IEP development required coordination with every student, as well as their parent, and consistent communication between all of them. Mrs. Kay also assisted with students in other teachers’ classrooms who needed social or academic support as they learned in a regular classroom setting. She was a military spouse and mom for 23 years when her husband retired; as a result they lived in various locations throughout the world. In those 23 years, Mrs. Kay taught multiple subjects, at various grade levels, to both military and civilian students. She noted that “kids who have a strong support system at home, who have parents that make the effort to get them involved in different activities to go in and meet their teachers, who value education, and place a lot of emphasis on that in the home, they tend to do a little bit better with the transitions than the

families that don't," and that "military parents for the most part tend to be a little bit more involved."

Mr. Pei

At the time of the study, Mr. Pei was a music teacher and taught at MWHS for eight years. He educated both civilian and military dependent students in music appreciation, percussion ensemble, band, and jazz band. He was also responsible for planning and synchronizing seasonal concerts that highlighted achievements by his students, and directed the musical graduation program. He facilitated student band trips across the country and led volunteer activities for the high school such as BBQs, car washes, award shows, and fundraisers. His teaching specialties and selfless service afforded a close bond and relationship between him and his students. He had a very high regard for the military dependent student's work ethic, he told me they were unique because "they don't take shortcuts, they understand the importance of the guidelines. They understand how to carry themselves."

Mrs. Book

At the time of the study, Mrs. Book served as an administrator at MWHS for 14 years. She was primarily responsible for coordinating with incoming and outgoing parents and students regarding their administrative accounts, settling unpaid debts, and preparing documents for student transfers. She was also a military spouse; she and her family retired from the service after more than 20 years and multiple moves themselves. During that time, she spent multiple years in various institutions as an educator and an administrator.

Mrs. Bastogne

At the time of the study, Mrs. Bastogne was the primary administrator who was responsible for the curricular and professional administration of MWHS. She offered a unique perspective into the training of the education professionals at the high school, detailed how the curriculum was

developed, and described many of her relationships with her staff as well as parents and students. She was also a former educator at MWHS prior to her assuming the role as an administrator for the high school. She was a military spouse who spent more than 20 years in the military culture as a parent of military dependent students and also an educator in various DoD school systems.

Mr. Esse

At the time of the study, Mr. Esse completed his third year as the administrator and senior instructor for the JROTC department at MWHS. He retired after completing a 20-year career as an active duty officer with several deployments overseas. He was responsible for developing the JROTC curriculum, interfacing with other high school administrators, coordinating trips, and synchronizing JROTC competition events. Mr. Esse also led various JROTC groups and clubs such as the Cavalry Angels, Drum & Bugle Corps, Junior Guard, and the Academic Team. He highlighted that JROTC “motivates students to be better people, we do that in the framework of leadership and we try to develop their leadership skills. If you’re a leader, here you can be a leader of life.” As the head of the JROTC department, he was unique to this study because he brought a perspective on the military student’s development not only as an administrator but also as a teacher. He felt as though the military experience that JROTC instructors had allowed them to know each student so if something happens with a kid, it was very easy step in and give him a little bit more guidance and mentorship, try to help him through whatever that problem was, this doesn't come from the school but comes from I think more of our military background.

These duties required him to consistently communicate with other MWHS administrators, the students, and their parents.

Mr. Lowe

At the time of the study, Mr. Lowe retired from the military after having served 21 years in the military as an infantryman. He completed his 16th year of teaching at the MWHS JROTC

department where he taught both military dependent students and civilians. In addition to teaching military science for Grades 9–12, he developed the club for the color guard, cadet choir, and robotics clubs. Similar to the other instructors, he taught both civilian and military dependent children, traveled with the competition teams, and volunteered in other activities for the school such as sporting events. He was the most tenured instructor in JROTC and had the most years of experience out of all the individuals who were interviewed.

Mr. Atche

At the time of the study, Mr. Atche was in his third year as a JROTC instructor for MWHS. He retired from the Army after serving over 20 years as a sergeant first class. He deployed multiple times to Iraq as a military police officer. He taught military science to Grades 9–12, as well as developing the instruction for JROTC competition drill and canon teams. He worked closely with the teachers, counselors, and administrators from within the school by providing advice and guidance for military dependent student children. Mr. Atche believed that military dependent students are “more focused, a lot of them have their goals already set in high school as freshman, they know they're going to take AP classes, and they're going to do this sport or that sport.”

Case Description

The description for this study includes the site where the study was conducted in the midwestern region of the United States. The Mid-Western High School (pseudonym) was selected for this study because minimal research existed which explained how the stress from the armed forces impacted military dependent high school students. The interviews were conducted in some of the professionals' classrooms and via the Zoom meeting phone application. A total of 10 one-on-one interviews, a focus group interview, and theoretical welcome letters that the interviewees typed to prospective military dependent students were utilized to understand how

civilian high school education professionals perceived the effects of stress on military dependent students. Non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling were utilized to select participants who had at least three years of educational experience at the high school level (Merriam, 2002). The non-probability sampling methods enabled access to a variety of participants to include teachers, JROTC instructors, and administrators (Acharya et al., 2013).

Results

The researcher utilized a qualitative single case study design. A single case study design was appropriate to evaluate each of the school's education professionals' perceptions of military dependent student development. The qualitative method of research was selected to more thoroughly understand these perceptions, allow the researcher to survey the participants in their own surroundings, and understand their viewpoints from their professional environments. The case study's participants were bounded by a 3-year minimum tenure of teaching at the high school level, currently serving as an education professional at the selected high school located in the midwestern region of the country. The data sources which were scrutinized during this study were individual participant interviews, focus group interviews, and participant letters that welcomed military dependent students into the MWHS community.

The collection of data consisted of individual participant interviews, a focus group interview, and participant letters to hypothetical incoming military dependent high school students. All of the individual interviews as well as the focus group interview were recorded via a recording device and subsequently transcribed to Word documents. The results of the data analysis process delivered a rich description of the phenomenon that included 10 participant interviews that each lasted 40–60 minutes, a focus group interview that lasted almost an hour,

and participant letters typed to hypothetical students. Through coding by hand, more than 140 codes were developed and then concentrated down to 33. According to Yin (2018), “Such data, when taking the form of narrative text, may have been collected from open-ended interviews or from large volumes of written materials, such as documents and news articles” (p. 281).

Upon collecting all of the data, and after all of the interviews were transcribed, the process of coding began. Coding is at the center of qualitative research and the collection of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Deciphering the code or codes is the initial step in the identification of themes in the research by uncovering the primary concepts and the tertiary subgroups (Creswell, 2013). In accordance with Creswell’s (2013, 2015) coding framework, I coded each conversation, every letter, line by line, into the primary concepts and subgroups, with subsequent clustering, descriptions, and the structure of the phenomenon.

Using the collected data, the 33 codes were organized into major themes and segregated into four categories (barriers) identified in this case study. All four categories of themes were identified from a coding technique called “by hand” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 43). Coding by hand relied mostly upon scouring and playing with the data repeatedly until ideas emerged, and these ideas began to develop the theoretical framework for the themes. I then began the process of horizontalization, dissecting the lines of text by hand, and underscored repeated words, ideas, and statements (Creswell, 2013). Horizontalization added some level of worth to the words, ideas, and statements, assigning meaning to each (Merriam, 2002). These words, ideas, and statements lent an understanding of how the participants perceived the students’ development.

Following horizontalization, I clustered the data into themes and subgroups. As I clustered the data, the significance of what the participants perceived became obvious. Creswell

(2013) called this identification process textual description. The textual description was fortified by repeating the aforementioned process with each interview, focus group interview, and letter. The interviews were the fundamental core of the evidence gathered, with subsequent data collected via participant letters.

Triangulation was implemented to investigate the primary data collection points, which later yielded three major themes (Yin, 2018). The data were cross-referenced and triangulated, exposing and verifying the perceptions of the participants, therefore producing themes (Merriam, 2002). The following four themes emerged after coding the data by hand: (a) Familial Support, (b) Military Dependent Student Resiliency, (c) Effects of Military Stress on Student Development, and (d) Lack of Professional Support. These themes, in addition to the subcategories, were depicted in tables. The research design also paralleled with the central question of this case study, understanding high school education professionals' explanations of the impacts of military stress on military dependent students' development. I used the Yinian approach of "playing with my data" and "working the data from the ground up" (Yin, 2018, p. 286) to analyze my data. This inductive analytical strategy felt the most comfortable because of its simplicity; additionally, I was not familiar with the software programs that were readily available to conduct the analysis. My analytical strategy relied on my theoretical proposals and pattern logic (Yin, 2018). Pattern matching analysis was utilized to determine if multiple pieces of information from the same case study aligned with my theory. Pattern matching was a process that compared a pattern from within my research to a predicted one before the start of collecting my evidence (Yin, 2018). The evidence and the anticipated patterns were similar, which bolstered the construct validity. Yin (2018) suggested the researchers pour through their data to discover patterns and useful concepts. As I poured through my data, I noticed common

themes and descriptive terms that were repeatedly described by the participants. These data were extrapolated from the individual interviews, the focus group interview, and the letter to prospective students.

The conceptual framework that impacted this explanatory case study was a proposition that was examined by applying two theories upon various facets of the investigation. The proposition that I submitted was that a military dependent child's development was impacted by the following three criteria from within a military culture: combat deployments, consistent military mandated Permanent Change of Stations (PCS), and the family's military home life or environment. Pattern matching was used to analyze the results from the case study by comparing the proposition to the patterns that emerged from the "how's and why's" (Yin, 2018, p. 296). Essentially, the questions of this case study asked how and why the military culture affects military dependent student development, and how and why the stress of the military culture has influenced their development. Yin (2003) theorized that revisiting propositions upon which the conceptual framework was developed guaranteed the data analysis would be within the framework and instilled the required structure for research completion.

Prior to analyzing the data for the first time and spontaneously throughout data analysis, I returned to my proposition to ensure the information collected was within the boundaries of my research (Yin, 2018). In doing so, it allowed me to consider additional propositions and, subsequently, counter propositions of the likes that I had not previously envisioned. The primary counter proposition that evolved was that military stress does influence military dependent student development, and it influenced their evolvment into adulthood in a positive manner. This consideration of newly minted propositions and counter propositions added legitimacy to the study, which instilled credibility to the research (Yin, 2002).

My case study analysis was dependent upon multiple sources of information so that the credibility of data would not result in research that came into question (Yin, 2018). My boundaries ensured that the proper data were analyzed and unnecessary data were theoretically discarded. I began with my proposition and then catalogued the evidence that focused on my question. I did not analyze the evidence by individual merit; rather, I scrutinized the totality of the results. These pieces of data were not meant to stand alone; instead, they were analyzed in concert which evolved into the theoretical summation (Yin, 2002). My holistic data analysis illustrated the teachers' explanations of military dependent students' development.

In analyzing the data, I used a combination of procedures such as categorizing, examining, and tabulating evidence (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) encouraged researchers to “play” with their data to discover patterns, ideas, or trends, which will enable the establishment of their analysis priorities. I played with the evidence by arranging it into different arrays, tabulating event occurrences, and writing notes to myself about what emerged in my data analysis (Yin, 2018). Additional techniques for arranging my data included arraying information in differing manners, categorizing themes and subthemes that emerged, and developing a matrix and embedding graphics to scrutinize the information (Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) insisted that if this confusion sets in, the researcher should begin to array the case study research into “chapters or sections” (p. 295), which ensured there was no work loss and I remain productive, providing me an opportunity to reflect on my research. I arranged the evidence not into chapters, but instead into themes and subthemes. In addition to creating the themes, I wrote notes to myself in all stages of my research, to include conducting fieldwork and the collection of data (Yin, 2018). Taking notes and memoing allowed me to become immersed “in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conduct of research”

(Birks et al., 2008, p. 69). I frequently took notes to keep a record of my thoughts, emerging concepts, and ideas that were conceptualized throughout the entire investigation process.

Memoing consisted of notes that I took during individual interviews, the focus group interview, and as I scrutinized the participants' letters (Yin, 2018).

The following data points emerged from the results of this qualitative case study, with one central research question and three sub-questions guiding this investigation. Triangulation was performed from the data that were collected via a focus group interview, 10 individual interviews, and participant letters typed to hypothetical incoming military dependent students. A deliberate analysis technique was performed that identified the case and subsequent subunits once patterns emerged. The disciplined qualitative single-case design insured a structure that birthed major themes that were researched and produced the case analysis. The perceptions of high school education professionals in the midwest region of the U.S. were investigated. Chapter Four was thus organized from the themes that were discovered via the research questions of the study.

Major Theme 1: Familial Support

The most obvious theme that emerged from this investigation was the abundant amount of familial support that military dependent students received in their family. All of the participants consistently annotated the plethora of support that parents provide to not only their children but also the education professionals (see Table 4). Two of the subthemes which were highlighted were communication and involvement.

Table 4

Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 1

Major Theme 1: Familial Support	
Subtheme	Code
Communication	email (22), receptive (13), information (11), communicate (10), contact (9)
Involvement	involved (16), support (15), welcome (12), involvement (8)

The amount of familial support that military dependent students received was explained in every participant interview. Military dependent students have tremendous support from their parents and family. Many of the participants credited the familial support with the increased success of military dependent students in high school. According to Mr. Cee,

Ninety percent of students that have military parents are better off, you can see the structure and you can see you know it doesn't matter from a general down to a sergeant that has dependents that they're in their [military dependent student] lives and are very tough on them. I think because they are all for military too, [they] know what it's to be like in the military. And they know how we push them, how the military you know, sort of you know treated us, and given us a step-up in life, and we are carrying it on with our kids.

Mrs. Lucy remarked that she has observed a disparaging difference between civilian and military parental involvement. According to Mrs. Lucy,

I feel that the [military] parents are very engaged at this school, they are the ones who attend the games, the fund-raising events, attending practices, attend back to school nights. I feel that the parent engagement is much higher [than civilian] because they want

to support their child in being successful in this new place. I think for us exceeds the community's parental involvement from what I've witnessed.

Mrs. Kay noted that the most successful student is one who has parents that “value education and place a lot of emphasis on that in the home, they tend to do a little bit better with the transitions than the families that don't.” Although she believed that parental support is pretty common in both the military kids and the civilian kids, she also observed that “military parents for the most part, tend to be a little bit more involved.”

Communication. The first subtheme that emerged from Major Theme 1 was the regular communication that occurred between military parents, the students, and the education professionals themselves. According to most of the participants, military parents communicated early and often regarding their child's education. Communication between the education professional and the military parent often occurred prior to arriving to MWHS, during the military dependent student's MWHS experience, and in some instances, after the student had PCSed to another location. Mr. Pei noted that typically military dependent parents were “very receptive” when he needed to communicate student concerns to military parents.

Mrs. Kay remarked that not only were military parents receptive regarding issues with their child, but immediately after the encounter the issue was resolved. She divulged that, “usually the problem was corrected almost immediately, whether it's missing homework assignments, or a behavior issue, normally when I have to call it gets fixed right away.”

Mrs. Antietam provided an example of communication between herself, the student, and the military parents that thoroughly impressed her. According to Mrs. Antietam,

An example was of a student that I had who just graduated college. He wrote to me the grandest letter just a couple of months ago. I think that I was one of the only teachers that

gave him a B in class. He said that he knew he earned it and deserved it, but his parents had a hard time believing it. You know, he finally came to truth with it and finally said, yeah, I harassed students in class; I was not always the best student in class; and you know I think that looking back on that example, the parents just had a hard time believing it. But when it came to graduation time for the student, they totally gave me the level of comfort that they did, they were receiving it well and they understood that it was not that I was just giving grades, but it was that their son earned the grade.

In her interview, Mrs. Antietam also mentioned that she believed, “The military kids are better balanced and want to achieve more, and perform well. And I think that has to go back to again, most of them have parental support.”

Separately, Mr. Lowe remembered a specific instance in which he communicated a concern to a civilian parent, but did not receive the type of feedback that he typically received from military parents. He began his example by stating that he never had “problems with military, it’s the civilian side.” In his focus group interview, he told me of such an instance when he was pushing a civilian student to complete a two-mile run:

She goes home upset and tells her mom that I was hard on her, and her mom calls me mad and yelled at me for belittling her daughter. But I'm going to be very aggressive because she couldn't run two miles, and now she's running three or four. I'm saying “congratulations you finally did it,” but we're going to keep pushing her. Now if I did that to a military mom or dad [their response], it's totally different.

Involvement. Another subtheme that emerged from Major Theme 1 was the degree in which military family members were involved in their military dependent child’s life. Mr. Atche

typically observed that a military family's involvement, once they arrived [to the school] helps [military dependent students] exceed in his program. In his interview, he noted,

Before and after school, they're involved and they get the info. They're supportive, they drop them off at 5:30 in the morning, and that's a commitment that they're willing to make for their child to be on something [an extracurricular activity]. As opposed to some [civilian] parents that can't or they tend to not be as involved in the program, just the bell rings bell rings and that's their extent of involvement.

Comments involving the positive aspects of parental involvement came from instructors, administrators, and teachers alike. Mrs. Book exclaimed, "It would be that if they have at least one of their parental units that cared, was supportive, and active in their education, this simply is proven to be the single most important aspect of a child success academically." Mrs. Lucy believed that, "parental involvement was more important, than anything else in a child's successes." Mr. Esse stated in his focus group interview that parental involvement was paramount:

A lot of times when I'm sitting down trying to give advice to a [military] student it's easier if they're military because the same advice I've given them, you can tell was inadvertently echoed into their ears by their own parents.

He also believes that military dependent parents

are going to have a little bit higher level of education, so it let's say in some more complex science or math type problem they're [military parent] more likely to help tutor them, so it's going to be a little easier to work with the military dependent.

Major Theme 2: Military Dependent Student Resiliency

The second theme that emerged out of this investigation was the increased level of resiliency that military dependent students have in high school. Instructors, administrators, and teachers alike referenced the military dependent student's innate ability to overcome challenges that had been presented to them via the stress from living within the military culture. Three subthemes that emerged from the resiliency theme were military moves, obstacles, and performance (see Table 5).

Table 5

Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 2

Major Theme 2: Military Dependent Student Resiliency	
Subtheme	Code
Permanent Change of Station (PCS)	moved (28), traveled (18), worried (9), stressful (8)
Challenges	moving (25), make friends (12), leave (16)
Performance	better (23), professional (22), higher (20), challenge (11), poorly (1)

Permanent Change of Station (PCS). The first subtheme that surfaced from Major Theme 2 was that PCS moves contributed to the resiliency of military dependent students. Mr. Pei highlighted in our interview that “typically our military students are going to be what we want more students to be like. Higher levels of resilience, handle their business well, communicate well, well organized, and real nice people to be around.” He also noted “that’s a big stressor for a family, I feel that just from the kids saying meeting new people and having to pack up your whole life and relocate.”

Mr. Esse mentioned that military dependent students learn resiliency from observing their parents overcoming challenges that they are presented from the military: “The military member was probably used to having to move and be resilient, and they passed those experiences on to their kids.” In his interview he went on to explain,

The spouse [civilian] who might not be in the military has not learned to be resilient; always having to pack up the house and move, and make new friends, find a new job. It [PCS] teaches you how to be successful when you're the new person, how to be successful in constantly moving and restarting over. So, I think the kids, they learn some of that [resiliency] from their parents.

The administrators, instructors, and teachers viewed PCSing challenging, but also allowed the military dependent student a unique opportunity to grow into an adult. Mrs. Antietam believed that moving enhanced their maturity and work ethic:

Typically, they [military dependent students] come to us more prepared and more willing to work. And maybe they have been in a school in another country and they know how much harder they have to work, and the rules and the strictness [that was required to successfully move].

She also pointed out that “some of them may [actually] have to find teachers who will push them a little bit harder because that was what they want.”

Mrs. Book communicated that she believed military dependent student’s development was not negatively impacted from PCS moves, and that the contrary actually occurred. She stated, “The trend was that military kids are more attuned, they’re more focused, they’re more courteous. The better the structure, they’re more resilient.” In her letter to incoming prospective students she informed the family:

[Mid-Western High School] offered a diverse curriculum of academic options, with more than 100 different course offerings, including 15 Advanced Placement courses, and National Champion Junior ROTC programs. MWHS offered 20 different team sports and more than 50 clubs and organizations, we truly have something for everyone.

Challenges. The second subtheme that emerged was the effect of challenges on military dependent students' resiliency and development. Challenges from PCSs repeatedly emerged as a benefit that assisted in their development. Mr. Esse stated that one of the challenges that PCSs illustrated was that the curriculum varied per grade within the American education system. In his interview, he described the American curriculum in Italy as an example:

Schools in Italy, even though they [a military dependent student] did well there, they were very behind when compared to the standards and that they're teaching here. That stuff was hard for a kid to get somewhere and they're already behind. In contrast, I've seen kids that come into the school [MWHS] that are from somewhere else that has an extremely high level of education. They kind of have a tough time, we do a lot of stuff that they've already learned and are a little bored and not challenged, and kind of start losing respect for the school system, like "I've already learned this there, so in their head they're bored."

Some education professionals noted that the challenges have increased their development. Mrs. Antietam commented that she "loves having them in class, because I believe they help elevate the class to a higher academia level." During her interview, she went on to say that she "could tell the classrooms where I don't have military students, or I don't have the strength of some of the stronger military students, I can definitely tell because the level of academia was much lower." She further specified, "I enjoy having them in class because they bring the level of

academia higher. Because once students begin rising and thinking ‘oh I can achieve this,’ you challenge them more, and provide more opportunities for them to learn.” During the focus group interview, Mrs. Lucy stated,

Probably the biggest thing, one of the biggest challenges I think that face dependents [military students] was finding how they belong in a new school, and especially here at MWHS, they are usually only here for a year. So just finding where they fit in and then knowing that they're only going to be here for a year [is a challenge], really kind of accepting [the reality] and then emerging themselves even with that in mind.

She also mentioned in her letter to incoming military students that the school offered a mentor program for new students. In her letter, she explained that a new student will always be assigned a peer mentor when she explained, “They have been selected by the school as outstanding students and have been trained to be phenomenal leaders.”

Mrs. Kay believed that the challenges from moving and the effects on military student development were unpredictable and depended on the individual. She stated that she thought, “It [PCSing] degraded their performance and for other kids I think it challenges them.” She conveyed, “I've had kids on both sides of the fence, where some are just like ‘why even bother anymore’ and then some go above and beyond what they need to do.”

Performance. Another subtheme that was prevalent under Major Theme 2 was the impact that stress had on student performance and development. No indication was provided from conducting interviews with any of the participants which illustrated students performing poorly or regressing because of military stress. Time and again, the education professionals clarified that military dependent students were high achievers, both socially and academically.

Mrs. Antietam could only think of one instance in eight years of teaching in which she was able to recall a military dependent student performing poorly:

In my experience in the last eight years, most of them have excelled. But I will say that I had a student who really struggled and really had a hard time academically. And I was able to identify some particular situations with this student and the family felt like maybe it was because of the move, maybe it was because of a couple of other things, and we were able to determine that the learning barrier with this student. And so, it didn't really have anything to do with where he had come from, it was because he had this learning disability, and we were able to identify it and really help him. I am sure that it was stressful for him to be this military kid, when all these other military kids come in and rise to the occasion, and they [military dependent students] are many times our top learners, and this student wasn't.

Mr. Cee also agreed that the preponderance of military dependent students performed very well, both socially and academically when he stated in his interview, "I think that they excel."

However, he also noted the following:

Some kids, it doesn't matter what we say, what we do, they're going to take this road, and we [try to] barricade this road. It was failure road, and this was successful road, we're [education professionals] trying to push on this road, but some kids just don't get it.

Finally, Mrs. Kay described military dependent social development as high performing because stress from moving has made them resilient:

They [military dependent students] have a different personality compared to civilian students because they [civilian students] have never left MWHS and always have grown up in this town. They [military dependent students] tend to be a little bit worldlier, and

they tend to handle things, I think a little bit better for the most part than the other students who've always been here and have never had to move here or leave.

Major Theme 3: Effects of Military Stress on Student Development

The third major theme that emerged via data analysis was the preponderance of evidence which suggested that the effects of military stress was more beneficial to the military dependent student's development than it was harmful. Some of the subthemes that emerged out of Major Theme 3 suggested that military stressors are more beneficial than detrimental on military dependent student social and academic development (see Table 6).

Table 6

Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 3

Major Theme 3: Effects of Military Stress on Student Development	
Subtheme	Code
Social Development	culture (29), positive (11), assimilate (8)
Academic Development	successful (20), perform (19), achieve (9), exceed (9), higher level (6)

Social development. The first subtheme that materialized from Major Theme 3 demonstrated that the military student's social development benefits from military stress. Mrs. Antietam noted,

The social aspect was really where they are worried, so once I can alleviate that with the team building and getting to know their classmates and kind of working that in. They usually realize that a lot of their classmates are also military kids, which helps tremendously.

Mrs. Kay perceived the effects on military dependent social development differently. Mrs. Kay stated that she has observed negative effects on the student's psyche when she stated "their behavior completely changes, sometimes they act out a lot more than when both parents are home." As a result, she believed that students "sometimes they get very withdrawn during deployment." Mrs. Antietam also noted that stress from deployments was responsible for negatively affecting their development:

The couple of students that I am talking about started to try marijuana, or they started to try drinking, they were testing all of the waters, and boundaries on all of these things, and maybe they would have done this if their dad was home, but I think the discipline would have been firmer and stronger and you know, where this mom does not want to be this bad guy all of the time. And so, it's hard, and I have had some of those conversations like that with the mothers. I don't know if the other kids would have acted like that with their dad gone.

Mr. Cee expressed a similar observation in which he relayed the negative effects of deployment stress on military dependents' social development. He believed that he could perceive correctly when the stress has become overwhelming to the student. He explained, "Kids will break down." He also stated that "we know when something was not right, I do, because that kid's just not acting right." During his interview he provided one example that involved a deployed parent:

When the father was deploying, you can tell, you can see sense it in the classroom. And I always pull them in, and I say what's the matter. "Mr. Cee, my dad's going to Cuba for a year," and you can see the difference in their look. So, when they tell me I call their house, I said, "Look, your son just told your husband's deploying to Cuba, if you ever

need anything, we have your back.” And we tell the husband, “If you ever need anything, we're here.”

This study also suggested that training exercises can be problematic for student's development, but because their loved one's absence was much less in terms of days away from the family, the impact was also diminished. Mr. Lowe recalled the following student:

I'm thinking about this kiddo [military dependent student] who said his dad has training stuff and he's here a month, and gone a month. Anytime something came up with that kiddo we said, “Where are we in this cycle of dad traveling.” It was good to get him to recognize that he wasn't a problem, but the way he was dealing with his stress was.

Mrs. Kay stated that fighting during deployment potentially poses detrimental effects on student's development:

If Mom and Dad are fighting all the time because they're trying to figure out the military family [reintegration phase- new family roles] after a year-long deployment, the kids are going to pick up on that and it's going to affect them in school. But if the teachers aren't aware of that then they're not going to make the accommodations that the student might need.

Mr. Pei perceived their development as the standard for others to emulate when he said in the focus group interview, “Typically, our military students are going to be what we want more students to be like. Higher levels of resilience, handle their business well, communicate well, well organized, and real nice people to be around.” He also noted,

Military students communicate better with adults, they ask better questions; they notify you in advance or in a very timely manner about absences for things; they ask you questions like, “If I miss something how do I make this up?” Other students will just

kind of hope for the best and if they miss something, they will just kind of beg us for something later. There's organization there, their communication skills are sharper.

Mr. Atche believes that PCS moves had a positive effect on the military dependent's social development because the student learns to adjust and make friends. He went on to explain in his interview that based on his observations, "Military dependents assimilate well in a new environment." He went on to comment,

They'll talk to you at school [when they are new], they'll talk to everybody. They're also more accepting of the new kids because everybody's [military dependents] done it [PCSed]. Military dependents come here [MWHS] able to assimilate, like they're social. But the majority of them have to be social in order to assimilate, you got to find your people. They're [also] more accepting of other people I think the value values of the army teaches leadership values. This [leadership] was you know standard, do the right thing. They tend to be less troublemakers in our school.

Mr. Lowe also believed that military dependents are socially stronger than their civilian peers when he explained in the focus group interview, "They're still often more respectable, understanding, trying to figure out the system, trying to figure out the school. That social interaction piece, I believe our non-military turn it down a little bit more." Mrs. Lucy tailored her classroom to do frequent social interaction and team building, especially in the beginning, but then dispersed through the year. She believed that "this really helps them feel like they have a community through the classroom because the military was really about community and building teams."

Academic development. Another subtheme that emerged from Major Theme 3 appeared to indicate that the majority of military students' academic development benefits from military

stress. When Mrs. Lucy was asked how she perceived the effects of military stress on academic development, she responded, “They often are very nervous so they aren’t so worried about the academic side, most of them have good academic foundations.” Mrs. Antietam noted that she didn’t believe stress negatively affected their development: “I do not see that stress adds any, or plays a part in any social, emotional, or in their academic development.”

During the focus group interview, Mrs. Book agreed that military dependent students excelled in their academics and military stress did not negatively affect their grades. She stated, “I think in the military it’s a really big thing to exceed the standard, and so I see students trying to exceed the standard in the classroom academically, I see them trying to exceed the standard in there.” Mrs. Kay perceived that the stress from moving often frustrated military dependent students academically because different states placed importance on different subjects. She shared that sentiment in her interview:

Academically it’s frustrating, I think for them because they might move into a state like Texas, where you have to have Texas history in order to graduate. And maybe they didn’t have it along the way because it’s their first time living in the state.

Mr. Pei made mention that military dependent students seem to understand the value of working hard on academics. He believed that “for the most part we have students [military] that understand the value of hard work.” He described their work ethic throughout the interview in more detail:

They don’t take shortcuts; they understand the importance of the guidelines. They understand how to carry themselves. In schooling the way that it was structured; those things can get you so far. We have very bright students [civilian] that won’t achieve more as a student [military] that will try hard.

Mr. Lowe also believed that for the most part, military dependent students' academic development was very positive:

Their academics are fairly positive, so when I tell you when something happens with a student, most of the time it's going to be some type of emotional reaction with something. Other times it was a grade slipping and you ask them about it and they say "Well, dad's deployed," and there's four kids at home cleaning and doing dishes. Most of the time it's going to come out as some emotional thing, someone says something and they're going to react in a way that was not typically how they would respond.

Mr. Atche believed that military dependent children are "academically higher than our population of students that we have, and definitely more cultured. I guess you could say because they're coming from different areas possibly in the world, like Germany." Mrs. Kay also stated that military dependent students were typically more academically advanced. She reasoned this because

they're going to school every day, their standards are in the military, with military parents who tend to pass down to their kids that "you're going to be there on time, you're not going to miss a day unless you absolutely have to, do what you got to do, what you got to accomplish."

Major Theme 4: Professional Support

The final theme that emerged from this investigation was the lack of professional support that was provided to education professionals to support the military dependent students' development when it was waning because of military stressors. A few of the subthemes that emerged from the lack of professional support are the education professionals' lack of training and resources and the notification system for incoming students (see Table 7).

Table 7

Subthemes and Codes Related to Major Theme 4

Major Theme 4: Professional Support	
Subtheme	Code
Lack of training	training (22), specialized (4)
Resources	counselors (21), social worker (3)
Incoming military student notification and preparation	communication (9), incoming (14)

Lack of training. The education professional's lack of training was one subtheme that was identified. Many of the professionals, most of whom were teachers, consistently noted that they were not provided any professional training to assist the military dependent student. When asked to describe training that was provided by the district to assist with the unique stressors that effect the development of the military student, Mrs. Book commented that "I personally have never been involved in any specific training for military students." She did not believe that administrators were aware when large groups of military dependent students would be attending the school. In her interview she commented:

I do know when our admin meets and they discuss things, there are special notations made about military [dependent students] because it's like, we need to consider the military. The military has a big impact on our enrollment and things like that. We know we pay attention to what's going [happening] on post with schools [for military members] coming through because it does affect the school so a lot from an administrative level, as far as like how this will affect testing, how this will affect these different things, so they are the always thought of in that way.

Mrs. Kaye did not remember the school ever providing specific training to assist with military dependent children; she stated, “I’ve never, we just we have the normal training on how to recognize signs of abuse and things like that. Once in a great while we’ll have someone [from post] come in and give us a presentation.” Mr. Atche noted that “although better than 70% of the student population came from some type of a military background, we have no training, all we do are diversity classes that hits all the ranges.” When asked how the school was prepared to assist with stressors that the military dependent student had been exposed to, he elaborated:

I think the military has more prepared me for that, but there's nothing other than guidance counselors. We also have our own psychologist at the school, so in general if you notice anything wrong with a child you can refer them, or they can refer themselves. Anybody that comes in here not acting normal, we’re going to sit down and talk to him just like the military [trained us to do with our soldiers].

Mr. Cee commented on the lack of training for military dependent students when he stated in his interview, “I think if you had more people who understood the different circumstances that a military kid goes through, that they could aid those students in a better way.” In her interview, Mrs. Bastone also communicated, “In other places the school prepared you [educators] to accommodate military students who are suffering under deployments stresses like you said earlier, seeing their parents argue; fight; or domestic violence; alcoholism, etc.”

Mrs. Antietam mentioned that because the school has such a close proximity to the base, and much of the school’s population has a military background, the school has received some grants to pursue what she referenced as “a couple of different teaching strategies.” She noted that administrators have never approached her and said, “Hey, since you are going to have some military kids in your class, here was some training.” She later stated in her interview,

The school has never done specific training for us. We have done a lot of suicidal training and specialized emotional training, but nothing specific for military children who have parents coming back from deployment. But I do feel very trained and very well educated in helping students with their situation, and helping them identify resources.”

Resources. A second subtheme that was brought to light was that the primary resource the school provided to accommodate military dependent students was the school counseling team. It became apparent that administrators believed there was a common understanding between all of the professionals as to what assistance the school provided, a belief that was not obvious amongst teachers and instructors. This became clear when Mrs. Bastone discussed the counseling team in her interview:

We have a clinical licensed school social worker at the high school who has extensive training and we have a mental health doctor that also has extensive training as well. They kind of have what I call the balcony view or the bird's eye view so when a teacher was talking about their concerns with his [student's] family they pick up on things because they're not necessarily as intricately involved in that [student's] day to day experience. From a teacher's perspective, however, the counseling resource at the school appeared to be more ambiguous. This was highlighted when Mr. Atche articulated his feelings about the counseling team: “I think [school counselors] get some training in that somewhat, and we also have I think a military counselor for military students who have permission [from military dependent students' parents] to speak with them, she's in our school and they can go speak with her.” He later elaborated,

I think the military has more prepared me [than the school] for that, but there's nothing other than guidance counselors and we have our own call we have a psychologist here

now here at the school it in general if you notice anything wrong with a child you can refer them.

Mr. Cee offered a different perspective and sounded more knowledgeable regarding the availability of counselors and the type of support they offer. He discussed his understanding of the counseling team during his interview:

All of the counselors, like if there's a problem with the students, are going to email us, so I'm glad they keep us in the loop. Because usually they know, you know there's four counselors, so they know pretty much what's going on with the students. The one thing I see is they believe in us. You know, a lot of people would just blow us off, they wouldn't ask us this, but they really do. All the counselors.

A possible unintended resource that administrators and teachers utilized to aide in the development of military dependent students at the school were the JROTC instructors, mostly because they had military experience and all had their own children. During his interview, Mr. Cee explained the special support role that the instructors in JROTC informally assumed:

They [administrators and teachers] will say, "1SG, can you come up and talk," we say, "absolutely." At the end of the year, you know we do an AAR (After Action Review) after every year and exercise to help us understand how we can we make it better? Same thing with students, the administrators and counselors will ask us to come up and we will do an end of the year, semester, whatever. But they believe in us. They use us.

Other than counselors and JROTC instructors, the school does not have additional resources or training that aided in the development of the military dependent student. Mrs. Kaye pointed this out when she stated,

I think if you had more people [education professionals] who understood the issues and the different circumstances that a military kid it goes through, that they could assist those students in a better way and just be a better in a role model for those kids.

Incoming military student notification and preparation. The final subtheme that emerged from Major Theme 4 was how ill-prepared education professionals were to receive a new military dependent student under their care. Different perceptions emerged regarding how, and to what extent, education professionals were prepared for receiving military dependent students. Some of the education professionals reported that they were not notified prior to the military dependent students arriving to their classroom. Mrs. Kaye remarked, “Mostly we receive notification from the military dependent student’s parents” prior to their actual move. She later stated in her interview,

They (the parents) want to know exactly what courses their child may need to take to make sure they're prepared to enter the highest tier of classes here in MWHS. So as far as that background the parents communicate that to us, we have a pretty advanced knowledge of what they need. This included very specialized education support, a lot of times those families will send us copies of IEPs and ask us about certain programs.

She also noted that the average military students seldomly communicated with her prior to their arrival when she stated, “We don't get a lot of notice in my opinion [for the] average middle of the road kid who comes to school.” Mr. Cee also noted that most of the notifications he received for his new military dependent students were primarily from the parents: “If their parents email me or call me, I don't wait, I call him back immediately and call him back up.”

The initial communication appeared to be inconsistent as to who communicated with the new student first: the administrators, the teachers, or the instructors. Mrs. Antietam noted that

“within the first week if they are going to be new to my classroom” she was notified by the school. In Mrs. Schwartz’s letter to an incoming military dependent student, she encouraged the new family to attend the school’s new orientation; she wrote, “We offer a new student orientation day the day before school begins. You will have an opportunity to meet all of the other students who are new to the school as well.”

Research Question Responses: Central Research Question

Evidence retrieved from the data analysis that was used in this case study was utilized to explain the central research question and the three sub-questions. The research question and all of the sub-questions are significant in understanding how to appropriately address military dependent student development. The primary research question of this study asked, How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today’s military culture? Evidence collection via a focus group interview, participant letters to hypothetical incoming military dependent students, and individual interviews were used to understand participant perceptions of the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students. The 10 individuals who participated in this study were extremely gracious with their time, motivated to participate in the investigation, and demonstrated enthusiasm in all activities in which they partook.

Within the focus group interview, participant letters to hypothetical incoming military dependent students, and individual interviews, the participants consistently made mention of the positive familial support that military dependent students and education professionals were accustomed to receiving (Major Theme 1). Most of the participants indicated throughout the interviews the overwhelming support that military parents provided, as the primary advantages

dependent students had in overcoming stressors associated from living within the military culture (Major Theme 1). Mr. Cee stated,

Ninety percent of students that have military parents are better off, you can see the structure and you can see you know it doesn't matter from a general down to a sergeant that has dependents that they're in their [military dependent student] lives.

Mrs. Lucy shared the same sentiment when she said, "I feel that the [military] parents are very engaged at this school, they are the ones who attend the games, the fund-raising events, attending practices, attend back to school nights." Mrs. Kay explained in her interview, "Military parents for the most part, tend to be a little bit more involved."

The education professionals' perceptions of military parental support did not waiver from within the participants. Administrators, teachers, and instructors alike believed military dependent students' support at home positively impacted their performance at school. Mrs. Kay demonstrated this belief when she remarked, "The most successful student was one who has parents that value education and place a lot of emphasis on that in the home." Mrs. Book believed the military parent's professionalism facilitated the student's academic progress. She stated in the focus group interview,

You know, you can deal with him [military parent] a little bit more on a professional level, because they're professional people, and you seem to get a little bit more back from them. You feel like they're going to hold their kids accountable for the things that you need them to, and sometimes on the civilian side you know you're not going to get that.

As many of the professionals' perceptions focused on familial support, the military student's resiliency emerged as a positive in the child's educational journey (Major Theme 2). Most of the professionals highlighted the military dependent students' unique ability to adapt to a

new environment, and their resiliency in building upon their academics and social skills. Mrs. Lucy mentioned in her interview that she had not “seen much of their struggle for a friend, [for a military dependent] I haven't seen a struggle or stress that's overwhelming.” Mr. Cee noted in his interview that “military dependents adapt, it’s a big difference. I can see a BIG difference.” Mr. Esse also stated in his interview, “The military member was used to having to move and be resilient.” He further explained in the focus group interview:

They passed those resilient experiences onto their kids; the spouse, who might not be in the military, also has learned to be resilient by always having to pack up the house, and move, and make new friends, find a new job. I think the kids they say learn some of that from their parents.

Research Question Responses: SQ1

SQ1 was designed to investigate how education professionals explained the impact of stress on military dependent high school students from their parents’ deploying for combat. Military dependent students who experienced their loved ones deploy to a combat zone experience anxiety because of constant worry of danger that their loved ones are exposed to, as well as the changing of household roles. Mrs. Kay highlighted this when she explained in her interview:

I think that [deployments] causes a lot of stress for the kids the training exercises not as much as a deployment because there's a lesser level of danger involved. But I've had students over the years where I can tell when mom or dad was out in the field and when they're not because their behavior completely changes. Sometimes they act out a lot more then when both parents are home sometimes, they get very withdrawn.

Mr. Cee also explained during his interview the effects of deployment stress on military dependent students:

I think that that's [deployment] very difficult for the kids. They pick up on a lot more than we give them credit for, they're not dumb, and they see the stresses that the parents are going through. So like redeployment [for example], if Mom and Dad are fighting all the time because they're trying to figure out the military family after a year-long deployment, the kids are going to pick up on that and it's going to affect them in school. You can see it [when their dad was back], they are back to normal. And they're always telling us, they'll be like "Mr. Cee, my dad's coming back from Cuba in two weeks" and you know they will have a little celebration or whatever for their dad. I mean sometimes it's not a big thing and sometimes we don't know if parents are deployed tell us until we find out you know at Walmart. And then we all come back to school and we ask, "How come you didn't tell us your dad was in Iraq right now?"

In her personal interview, Mrs. Bastogne explained her unique perspective from situations that she experienced in the past:

Both parents are committed to raising their children and what happens was when the soldier returns home, you have that shifting in that relearning of roles, and that relearning of who's responsible for what. Many times, as they go through normal conflict and normal identifying and reestablishing those roles, there was real fighting, or it's conflict. They think, "Is it something I should be scared about or not?" and so at a high school level most times they withdraw and kind of internalized that instead of openly sharing it.

When Mr. Pei was asked how he perceived the effects of military stress from combat deployments he responded, “I don’t hear much from students as much as deployments or month-long training missions.” He later stated in his interview:

I know that the students that have been through those things are asked to pick up some slack at home. Most of the time, those students handle those stresses well or they hide them well. I don’t know if that's being used to it or training, they’ve received at home. Until it gets big, we don’t know about it, we may hear about it and the student may tell us about it but, but it doesn’t show.

Research Question Responses: SQ2

SQ2 was developed to investigate how high school educational professionals explained the impact of numerous and continuous military PCS moves on military dependent high school students. Military dependent students who move to different geographical locations endured the stress of contrasting curriculums, making new friends, and future uncertainty. Education professionals in this study explained military dependent student development as above average, even as they dealt with the stress. Mrs. Book stated, “Most students, the PCS part of it I think they [military students] tend to learn how to adapt that way; by moving around like they do. So most of my kids, kids are very easy-going kids, they had no problem moving and adapting.” In his interview, Mr. Band noted,

That’s [moving] a big stressor for a family, I feel that just from the kids saying meeting new people and having to pack up your whole life and relocate. We know that when you are young and changing friends and moving to a new city can feel just as big as life can be. I feel that our high school does a pretty good job of welcoming new students and

connecting them with some people immediately that can help them or have been in similar situations.

Mr. Lowe offered a different perspective when he describes military dependent student's stress from moving:

Nobody knows your name, or knows your accomplishments. So, they [military student] have to earn everything back, you [the student] know who you are, and what you got to do, and what you learned at the school where you left. It's often like they got to start from the bottom again and "work my way back up" to get some accomplishment.

Research Question Responses: SQ3

SQ3 was used to investigate how high school educational professionals explained the impact of military culture on military dependent high school students. The effects of living within a military culture on military dependent student development was a theme that related to this sub-question (Major Themes One through Three). The preponderance of the education professionals' perceptions of military dependent students' development was overwhelmingly positive. Mrs. Lucie perceived that the stress of living within a military culture appeared to be beneficial to military dependent students. In her focus group interview, she made her feelings very clear:

I think . . . just the structure of it, there are some things you can really depend on in the military and then other things are kind of chaotic, as far as like are they moving or deploying. I think [the students] being able to adapt to different situations and environments has really helped the kids to adapt in their own lives. They see "okay I know I will have a roof over my head, I will have food to eat, and I will have medical care."

Mrs. Antietam also explained the military culture as a benefit to the military dependent student:

I think that socially and emotionally their development was so strong, because these kids come in not knowing anybody. But they have been in the situation before. So coming in their maturity level, and their confidence in being able to talk to people and introduce themselves, and their willingness to be in another diverse location are high.

She later elaborated,

They just know that they are going to learn something different every place they go because they already had experiences that have been different. And so they know that this is different, and I think the kids are very intuitive about that. You know it might be that “oh I’m going to high school, it’s all the same,” but these kids don’t think that. These kids come in thinking that, “oh I am going to a new high school, or I wonder what friends and opportunities I will make here.”

Many of the professionals believed that the familial support system could be attributed to the military dependent student’s development. Mrs. Kaye believed that military parents were extremely supportive with helping their children transition to a new location. She stated in her personal interview,

In my experience, the kids who have a strong support system at home, and who have both parents, they make the effort to get them involved in different activities, to go in and meet their teachers. They value education and place a lot of emphasis on that in the home, they tend to do a little bit better with the transitions than the families that don’t.

Mr. Cee believed that it was a strong familial support system that benefitted the students’ social development. In his interview he stated,

You know, it's their values, the seven Army values. You know, they live by those every day, they're pushing them, and I see that the military kids, the same thing, those parents really care about the kids and they want them to be successful.

Mr. Esse had a similar view on the impacts of stress on military dependent's development. He explained in his interview,

I think whenever the parents are not there, they did not have that parental support. It's tough to be a supportive parent when you were away at work somewhere else, so it makes it a little bit tougher it's going to add some stress. Who knows what the house dynamics are like, who does what in the household? If that parent was a key factor in what happens to the household, now the kids are having to pick up that slack. That's going to have some of the stress.

Summary

Chapter Four encompassed an explanation of high school professionals' perceptions of the development of military dependent students. This case study consisted of 10 participants who were education professionals for the high school, all of whom were individually interviewed. These professionals also participated in a focus group interview and were asked to write a hypothetical letter which managed the expectations of incoming military dependent students. The data were analyzed into four different themes, and in correlation to the individual and focus group research questions of this case study. The major themes and their subsequent subthemes emerged during the analysis of the data, all of which were supported from information retrieved during this investigation.

After conducting individual interviews, the focus group interview and receiving the participant hypothetical letters, four major themes emerged: (a) familial support, (b) student

resiliency, (c) military stress effecting student development, and (d) professional training. Major Theme 1 (strong military familial support) was consistently discovered to be bountiful and effective in the advancement of the military dependent students' social and academic development. Subthemes which were associated with familial support included communication and parent involvement. Major Theme 2: (the education professionals' perception of military dependent student resiliency was high) was explained further in the student's high levels of academic and social development. The subthemes included military moves, obstacles, and student performance. Major Theme 3 (the education professionals' perception of the effects of military stress on student development) explained how the students' maturation process evolved from living within the military culture. The subthemes described the students' social and academic development, and how the negative effects of parental deployment affected their growth. Finally, Major Theme 4 (the education professionals' professional support system in dealing with military dependent student development) was discovered to be minimal. The subthemes included the professionals' lack of training and the availability of training resources.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

This holistic single-case study's purpose was intended to understand high school education professionals' explanations of the impacts of military stress on military dependent student's development. In addition to the summary of findings, this chapter includes a detailed description of how the central research question and its related sub-questions were explained. The foundations of the theoretical and empirical literature are then divulged. This chapter also identifies practical, empirical, and theoretical implications. Lastly, the limitations and recommendations for future research are detailed. A summary of the important deductions which are drawn from this study concludes this chapter.

Summary of Findings

This case study methodology consisted of three different techniques to collect data: individual interviews, a focus group interview, and hypothetical letters from the participants to incoming military dependent students. The collection of data created a holistic impression of high school education professionals' perceptions of military dependent students. The primary evidence gathering tool used for this case study materialized from the individual participant interviews, which were recorded, transcribed, coded, and finally analyzed. A focus group interview and participant letters added secondary information and provided an enhanced depth of knowledge to the issue. Upon completion of data analysis, four leading themes and 10 subthemes emerged from the central research question and sub-questions. The following discussion reiterates the central research question with ensuing sub-questions and summarizes the findings for each question.

The central research question asked, How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today's military culture? Three of the four major themes that emerged in Chapter Four were related to the central question: familial support, military dependent student resiliency, and military stress on student development. Evidence was retrieved from conducting personal interviews, a focus group interview, and hypothetical letters from the participants to incoming military dependent students. Throughout all of the evidence collected, many of the participants reported on the abundance of support that military parents provided to not only the students themselves but also to the participating educators. Parental support was what many of the participants credit with helping military dependent children deal with their stress. Mrs. Kaye stated, "I feel like most of the military kids here that I've seen get a lot of family support in helping them adapt, and of course the schools was always here to help." According to Mr. Cee,

The military parents are always emailing us first, something like "Mr. Cee, I need help with my son my daughter"; and we are going to motivate them [the students]. And it's worth it, parents will say, "you do what you got to do," and I love that."

Mr. Atche also made mention of familial support:

The military parents will ask the questions the kids are too shy to ask, and the parents want to know so they can help support their kid. They ask questions like, How much was it going to cost? When are the dates? Or they need practice times, etc. The parents that aren't involved, you find they don't fit in right away because they don't ask the right questions.

The education professionals' explanations of military parental support were consistent for all of the interviewed participants. Administrators, teachers, and counselors alike believed that the success of military dependent students correlated to the support that they receive at home. Mrs. Lucy noted that she believed the military parental support exceeded the support from their civilian counterparts:

I feel that the military parents are very engaged at this school, they are the ones who attend the games, the fundraising events, attending practices, attending back to school nights. I feel that the parent engagement was much higher because they want to support their child in being successful in this new place.

Mrs. Book provided some examples of military parental involvement that she experienced which highlighted the abundance of support military dependent students receive at home. She said, “

[Military] parents are going to be part of your classroom, they're going to be asking you about what you're teaching, and how you're teaching it. They will question you if they don't feel like it [subject taught], so you just have to be prepared as a professional to answer those questions.

Mrs. Kaye echoed Mrs. Books sentiment regarding familial support and added, “Support from the military side of the house I think was really important in creating a culture where the teachers could call the military members and say ‘hey and this was going on with your kid.’”

Mrs. Antietam was the only participant who, when reflecting upon her past experiences, had anything negative to relay about military parental support. She recalled one instance when the parents did not support the grades that she assessed to their child: “I think that some military parent was like ‘Oh no, my kid will get an A,’ because they want their kids to do well, and

because they said that they have structure at their house.” She continued, “I needed to show papers and projects, and they were much more receptive when I gave them examples.”

However, she did concede that, “while some of them [military students] have parents that are traveling away, the kids still seem pretty connected to their families and I think overall it makes a huge impact in their success at the high school.”

SQ1 was designed to understand how high school educational professionals explain the impact of a military parent’s combat deployment on military dependent high school students. The effects of military stress (Major Theme 3) were a theme that correlated to this sub-question. Participants in this case study described a noticeable difference in the students in both their social and academic performances. Mr. Cee believed that the physical appearances of military dependent students changed during deployments and provided an example: “

When father or mother was deploying, you can tell, you can see sense it in the classroom. I always pull them in, and I say what’s the matter. “1SG, my dad's going to Cuba for a year,” and you can see the difference in their look. So, when they tell me, I call their house, I said, “Look, your son just told your husband's deploying to Cuba, if you ever need anything, we have your back.” And we tell the husband, “If you ever need anything, we're here.”

Similarly, Mrs. Kaye described the stress of deployments on military dependent students:

Deployments I think, that causes a lot of stress for the kids. The training exercises not as much as a deployment because there's a lesser level of danger involved. But I've had students over the years where I can tell when mom or dad was out in the field because their behavior completely changes sometimes. They act out a lot more than when both parents are home. Sometimes they get very withdrawn during deployments.

However, Mr. Band did not view the stress of deployments in the same way:

I don't hear much from students as much as deployments, or month-long training missions. I know that the students that have been through those things are asked to pick up some slack at home. Most of the time, those students handle those stresses well or they hide them well.

Mrs. Antietam noted a change she witnessed in one of her students as well:

You can tell by the sensitivity of when we do the flag salute, or when we do the pledge of allegiance. So, you know you find that those kids who have their parents deployed are more sensitive to the kids that are rude and disrespectful to that.

Mrs. Bastogne believed that just as having their parent deployed or away for training exercises brought stressors to the student's life, so too did a parent who was gone for long periods of time but are now home without leaving. She stated,

On the other end, students who have had multiple deployments or multiple field exercises and all of a sudden the family unit was together for an extended amount of time without the in and out of the field, that causes its own additional stressors.

SQ2 was used to understand how high PCS moves on military dependent high school students. Major Theme 1 and 3 correlated to this sub-question. Again, parental support was viewed as an element that assisted in the relief of stressful moves. Mrs. Book believed that the individual student's personality determined how he/she would react to stress:

I think the personal personality was probably affected by the different moves that they made. Maybe they didn't have such a great move one time, so the next time they're going to be a little leery about what they did that last time. You know move didn't work out so

well or something but they would want to do things differently, they tend to learn how to adapt that way by moving around like they do.

Mrs. Kaye also believed that familial support eases the student's transition: "They [military dependent students] have a lot of parental support and family support, and I think the families are used to moving around and they help the kids adapt." She went on to say that parents are "trying to help their kids adapt you know, learn about where they're going. We get so many families who call ahead to learn about our school, and even tour it."

SQ3 was created to understand how high school educational professionals explain the impact of military culture and life on military dependent high school students. Student resiliency and the effects of military stress were major themes that related to this sub-question. The participants explained that the military culture, although stressful at times, benefited the student's development. As Mrs. Antietam stated,

I think they are a benefit to the community. So, I think that diversity in educational settings and in my experience, helped the community work well together. I think that the same was for the school population, they add diversity and I think the diversity was very healthy and helpful for the school community.

Mr. Atche had a sense that students who were exposed to the military culture benefited from the experience:

I have a more professional interaction when it comes to the majority of my military dependent students, they're still often more respectable. They try to figure out the system, try to figure out the school, that social interaction piece. I believe our non-military [students] turn down what are we're trying to teach them [such as] military

values. They [military students] understand what we're trying to teach them because they're getting it at home.

Discussion

Much of the peer reviewed research of childhood military dependent students depicted the child's development as being diminished or impeded by stressors inherent in the military culture (Alfano et al., 2016; Bradshaw et al., 2010; Chandra et al., 2011; Dayton et al., 2014; De Pedro et al., 2011; Engel et al., 2010; Fischer et al., 2015; Gewirtz et al., 2017; Hoge et al., 2006). Conversely, the individual participants in this study described adolescent military dependent students as highly intelligent, resilient, cultured, and outgoing.

Personal issues and suffering can occur throughout an individual's life; many would argue that overcoming these challenges is what builds character and enables personal growth (Peterson, 2018). Military children are no different; throughout their childhood adolescence they are subjected to a variety of stressors and stressful experiences that are unique to the military culture.

Empirical Discussion

Empirical research has solidified a concern for military dependent stakeholders regarding the development of military dependent students. Historical data demonstrated that military culture stress negatively impacted adolescent military dependent students (Aronson et al., 2011; Nicosia, Wong, Shier, Massachi, & Datar, 2016; Sumner et al., 2015; Trautmann et al., 2015; Weber & Weber, 2005; Wilson, 2008). Past historical data were both confirmed and rejected by evidence from this study that suggested stressors from living within the military, such as PCSs and having their parents deployed, had profound negative impacts on military dependent student development (Hix et al., 1998; Laser & Stephens, 2011; Ohye et al., 2016). Historical evidence

suggested that military dependent student development was negatively impacted from having a parent deployed to war, enduring multiple geographical PCS moves, and living within the military culture. Researchers found that military dependent children who live within the military culture are susceptible to developmental challenges (Eccles, 1999; Brendel et al., 2013; Chandra et al., 2011). This case study's participants corroborated similar social and academic development issues that past data depicted in military dependent students. However, the newly discovered data from this study also revealed significant benefits the culture contributed to military dependents, such as their advanced social skills.

Evidence cited in Chapter Two demonstrated that military dependent children experienced social and academic regression before, during, and after their parent's deployment. Lincoln et al. (2008) noted that children of deployed military parents who have deployed multiple times are often associated with decreased social interactions with their friends and a decline in academic performance. All of the perceptions from the participants of this study that taught military dependent high school students who had a loved one deployed, corroborated that evidence. Mrs. Kaye discussed the mental health preparedness of the school when she said, "Their [military students'] parents argue, or fight, or suffer from alcoholism, so I'm looking for warning signs and making relationships because they are the foundation of how we can pick up on those things."

Past research also suggested that female military dependent children socially regressed more than male students when they had loved ones that were deployed. Female dependent children from age 11–14 appear to be impacted the most and as a result, demonstrate some of the worst impacts, mostly because their household roles increased (Chandra et al., 2011). This was confirmed from various participants who discussed dependent student developmental challenges

when a loved one was deployed. More analysis is recommended regarding the long-term effect of the mental health in the household with regards to not just the children but also the deployed caregiver with regards to the reintegration phase of the deployed family member.

The constant and unpredictable PCS moves provide an instability that most individuals could never relate to, the environment that they are raised in is turbulent and militaristic, and their familial structure is interrupted with parental deployments and training exercises. Much research has demonstrated that these factors degrade a military child's development; however, this study illustrated that military dependent high school students' development is affected by the aforementioned stressors, and in many instances, positively enhanced because of these factors.

Research consistently highlighted that children who endured the deployments of military parental figures were in despair and inclined to some type of hindered development. The first sub-question was created to achieve an understanding of high school professionals' perceptions of the impact that deployments have on high school dependent students. Researchers Nicosia et al. (2016) discovered through their research that adolescents were especially susceptible to poor development due to combat deployments because these children were also experiencing puberty, independence, and cognitive as well as physical changes. The investigators determined that their deployment produced a variety of negative social and behavioral challenges to include dietary issues in children under 12. Researchers have also noted that developmental issues in military dependent children include a drop in academic performance, an increase in anxiety and stress, and sleeping issues due to the "unique stressors accompanying deployment events, such as the length of separation, repeated deployments, the impact on the parenting provided by military couples, and the risk of parental injury or death" (Wadsworth & Riggs, 2016, p. 89).

The developmental evidence produced from this study was consistent with those findings. It had been Mr. Cee's perception that deployments negatively affected military dependent students' social development when he explained, "I think that (deployments) affects some kids [military dependent students] because now without two parents in the home, you're not with one parent, and I think we know, I know when a student was not right." He also stated, "I know when something was not right, they're not performing to their standard that we know that they can do." Mrs. Book added her perception of the student's degraded social abilities during a parent's deployment when she commented in her personal interview that she believed student academic performances were degraded upon the first and last stages of deployment because roles and responsibilities were either added or taken away from the student, which caused a tremendous amount of stress and anxiety.

Research suggested that constant PCS moves impeded a military dependent child's development. This study's second sub-question honed in on the impacts of perpetual PCS moves. Gabrielle Canon (2011) described military teenagers as being rebellious, prone to illegal drug activity, and experimenting with sexual behavior at an early age. However, the evidence that this case study produced depicted military dependent high school students as being cultured, respectful, and helpful. Through his research, Lemmon (2014) believed military children degenerated when exposed to the stresses of moving. Although a few participants made note that they observed minor instances of negative developmental changes in the military dependent students due to relocation, the overwhelming participants' responses were positive in nature. This positivity was demonstrated in the study from the responses of several interviewees. Mrs. Antietam noted, "I enjoy having them in class because they bring the level of academia higher. Because once students begin rising and thinking 'Oh I can achieve this,' you challenge them

more, and provide more opportunities for them to learn.” Multiple participants expressed that they were pleased with military dependent students’ progress in high school, which was contrary to the emotional challenges that students exhibited when they had to continuously move, as demonstrated in Chapter Two (Brendel et al., 2013).

Another stressor that researchers ambiguously believed to have a negative impact on military children’s development was from experiences that these students encountered from living within the culture. The final sub-question, “How do high school educational professionals explain the impact of military culture and life on military dependent high school students,” was important to determine the overall effects the military culture has on the students. Sharon Stone (2017) determined through her research that much like the results of this study, military dependent students were more disciplined, resilient, and academically as well as socially broadened.

Although some participants alluded to varying military dependent student performances, the overarching explanation from the participants was that military children’s development was as advanced, if not more so, than their civilian peers. Mrs. Lucie described in the focus group interview seeing military dependent developmental progress firsthand, she was widely impressed with military dependent children’s work ethic. She believed that parental work ethic also perpetuated to their children’s work ethic:

That's one of the biggest things I noticed about parents that are military, they tend to do more, so I think the kids are watching that, and being modeled over and over and over they tend to do it as well.

Theoretical Discussion

The concepts for the theoretical foundation of this case study were Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT), and Akers' (1973) social learning theory (SLT). Bandura's SCT was the first theory linked to this case study because Bandura (1977) demonstrated through his research that "most human behavior was learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information served as a guide for action" (p. 22). This theory confirmed the primary purpose of this case study, which was to gain an understanding of military high school dependents' development in high school. Every one of the case study participants noted that they observed some type of developmental change in high school military dependent students as their home structure was altered. These changes included parental deployments, geographical relocations, and the disciplined militaristic lifestyle within which the students live.

Many of the professionals noted both social and academic developmental changes when the student was involved with a PCS, had a parent deployed to a combat zone, and lived within the military culture. However, the evidence of this study did not necessarily indicate that the military dependent student's development in high school was hindered because of the stress; in some instances, participants remarked that the stress had assisted in their social and academic development. A leading theory of Bandura's (2001) research was that social cognition could define personality traits and behavior change in a controlled setting. Most of the high school professionals' perceptions and explanations from this research seemed to align with Bandura's SCT, identifying heightened levels of maturity, responsibility, and work ethic in high school military dependent students.

Another key aspect of Bandura's SCT research and experiments demonstrated that children can imitate their caregiver's behavior, and most of the data in this case study substantiated these ideas. This implication was confirmed as many of the professionals in this study explained increased character traits of leadership, pride, and respect, while simultaneously linking these increased performances to having military parents. The majority of participants provided opinions which indicated a benefit of living within a military culture for military dependent students. Not one of the participants suggested that the military culture was hurtful to military dependent students' development. However, many of the participants remarked that elements of the military culture, such as deployments, were hurtful to the dependents' psyche. During the interviews, many of the professionals' perceptions were that some military dependent students socially and academically regressed due to the constant worrying and anxiety of having their parent deployed to a combat zone for an unspecified amount of time. This strengthens Bandura's theory that children learn behaviors from adults and parents in their environments.

Participants consistently commented that they believed military dependent students were more culturally advanced, and their attendance in the classrooms benefited not only the high school, but also the community. Education professionals expressed more advantageous experiences for the students of the school and the participants themselves. Some teachers remarked that they learned and developed their teaching philosophies through the experiences that they shared with military dependent students. The preponderance of these experiences heightened the participants' sense of knowledge in high school students' academic and social development. With the participants' increased knowledge, they are able to identify student anxiety and stressors and therefore adopt coping mechanisms to assist students through these trying times.

Implications

The purpose of this holistic case study was to understand the high school education professionals' explanations of the impacts of military stress on military dependent students' development. The researcher was able to illustrate the perceived implications on the stress of the military culture in high school military dependent students through the observations of 10 high school professional participants. The results of this case study indicate a variety of implications and recommendations for future research that would influence theory and practice.

Empirical Implications

The empirical implications of this study confirm the empirical data that was used for this research as it pertains to the developmental challenges military dependent students encounter when the child's loved one is deployed or they are required to PCS multiple times (Aronson et al., 2011; Nicosia et al., 2016; Sumner et al., 2015; Trautmann et al., 2015; Weber & Weber, 2005; Wilson, 2008). The data from this case study confirms the findings from empirical research which indicated military students tend to regress in their grades, as well as their behavior, when they have a loved one deployed (Engel et al., 2010; Friedberg & Brelsford, 2011; Lemmon, 2014). These researchers contributed to the wealth of knowledge and extensively depicted the implications of military dependent children who have military parents deployed. This case study's data confirmed the research from these authors and demonstrated that high school military dependent students also exhibited similar behavioral issues to the ones described by these researchers. However, I found new trends that emerged which demonstrated that military dependent high school students were more perceptive as well as highly advanced both socially and academically. The review of literature in Chapter Two of this case study dissected these three issues facing high school military dependent students.

It cannot be overstated enough that this study demonstrates that, although the challenges encountered by military dependent children are tremendously difficult, they are not necessarily impeding to their development. In fact, the environment that the military culture inflicted upon military dependent high school children has actually benefit the child in many ways. Whereas programs were focused in the past to assist military dependent children who were struggling, future educational stakeholders may have the intuition to build systems that advance student development that is blossoming above expectations.

In past studies, researchers documented military dependent student social developmental issues were correlated to exposure from the military culture (Chandra et al., 2010; De Pedro et al., 2014; Ternus, 2010; Wadsworth, 2016). This evidence depicted military dependent students who had severe emotional, academic, and obedience problems which stemmed from exposure to the military culture. Conversely, the results of this study indicated that military dependent high school students were very much advanced, both socially and academically, and their advancement was related to living within a military culture. Mrs. Kay believed that because military members cultivated their leadership skills in the service, and as a result of living within a military community, their children also absorbed those skills. She said she believed that military dependent students “

tend to be leader types, and of course you get that in the culture of the military. I mean their parents are probably leaders because that's what the military builds was leaders, so their children are seeing that and I think the parents are fostering that in them.

A similar impression was explained by Mr. Band, although regarding their academics: “For the most part we have students that understand the value of hard work, they don’t take shortcuts, and they understand the importance of the guidelines. They understand how to carry themselves.”

Mr. Cee offered his explanation of how the military culture shapes the student's development by saying, "Military parents do not baby these kids, it was not about participation for them, this about being the best. That's why I am glad military [families] sees it differently than our civilian counterparts, it's totally different."

Participants did note that they observed and interacted with a few of their students who were experiencing social and academic developmental impediments from living within a military culture. Historical research in this case study suggested that a large amount of children who are military dependent students are developmentally challenged because they are raised within a military culture (Alfano et al., 2016; Lester et al., 2016; Mancini et al., 2015; Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013; Morris & Age, 2009). However, the participants of this study repeatedly remarked that the military students in their classes were often the exemplary and were amongst the top achievers in their classrooms. Participant participation, whether it was communicated in person or via Zoom, was instrumental in determining the stark differences between adolescent and childhood development.

In addition to researchers highlighting that stressors associated with the military culture and deployment negatively affected military dependent students' development, research studies also suggested that multiple PCS moves also degrade their evolution. However, I found from analyzing the data in this case study that high school military dependent students excelled from being exposed to the different cultures in the multiple geographic locations that they lived in. Mrs. Book substantiated what many other participants perceived when she described her 20 years of observations of military dependent student development: "Most of them [military dependent students] have been through at least four if not eight different duty stations, each duty station's hometown has a different culture, and their dads have deployed probably at least once." She

believed that “they have learned to still be their individual, still be themselves, but also assimilate to the culture of the community, and the schools, and the neighborhoods.” She later stated that through these interactions, they mastered their social skills, “many of them have the social skills to become connected, and [they] build those, they make surface level friendships quite easily.”

The evidence born of this study was taken from a small sample. It is recommended that much more extensive research is conducted amongst stakeholders that would illustrate high school military dependents’ development. This research must be completed at the high school level as much more evidence is needed to substantiate my findings. Although research appeared to highlight only military children with little discussion of the high school level, it was assumed that all students are affected from the military culture and future research should be conducted for all age groups.

Theoretical Implications

One of this case study’s propositions was that military dependent students model and learn their behavior from their peers and family members within the military culture. Bandura et al.’s (1961) SCT was one of two learning theories that influenced that proposition, the other theory being Akers’ (1973) SLT. Akers’ theory related to this case study because it explained how juveniles, or in this case military dependent high school students, learn behaviors from their social environment. A key aspect to his theory was differential association, which described that the personal action of an individual was learned from within their group, which can be direct or indirect, such as their neighborhood, church, authority figures, or social media (Akers, 2017). In this case study, participants indicated military dependent students were more culturally developed in high school because they lived within a military environment.

Another theoretical implication was rooted in Aker's theory that stated imitation has discriminators associated with the extent to which one will mimic. These include factors such as "characteristics of the model themselves, the actual behavior itself being modeled, and any directly observed consequences for the model" (Akers & Jennings, 2015, p. 234). Akers and Jennings' (2015) explanation of imitation and modeling correlated to the participants' perceptions that the military parents and the stressors associated from living within a military culture influence military dependent students' academic and social development. Many education professionals who participated in this study professed that they viewed the military culture as a benefit, not a detriment to the student's development. Akers' (2017) research reinforces the participants' intuitive presumption that the students' experiences of living within the military culture were advantageous to their social and academic development.

Bandura's SLT profoundly influenced this study because his research detailed how a children's behavior evolves from within their psyche, as they were exposed to a particular culture, and how they absorbed the stress of living within their environment (Morris & Age, 2009). The participant responses from this study confirmed his theory, as multiple participants discussed military students as being disciplined, obedient, and hard working. In theory, it seems as though this is due to the behaviors the students mimic from their models, usually their parents.

Bandura's theory also depicted the various ways in which an individual's actions, behaviors, and environments impacted each other (Brown & Lent, 2005). The participants believed that this idea was proven as many of the education professionals noted how resilient military dependent students were, in spite of the challenges they encountered from moving or having their loved ones deployed. Bandura's (2001) research and experiments demonstrated that children do imitate their caregiver's behavior. For example, Mrs. Book stated in the focus group

interview, “The trend is that military kids are more attuned; they are more focused; their more courteous; mostly because I think their structure is better, they’re more resilient.” Mr. Atche recounted a similar experience when he noted,

In my opinion, the nature of the military student is that they assimilate well in school and often take on leadership roles because that's kind of the environment in which they were raised. It is not always the case, but the majority of the ones that we have especially in our program are the leaders of our program, because of the way that they were raised.

There is a plethora of learning models and theories that attempt to discern why individuals evolve and develop into adulthood. A theoretical recommendation is that other learning theories such as Pavlov’s classical conditioning theory (Clark, 2004) or B. F. Skinner’s (1984) reinforcement theory could be used to analyze military dependent students’ behavior.

Practical Implications

Many ideas from this study may communicate future policy, procedures, and training concepts for high school military dependent students’ development. The intent of these practical implications should be for education professionals to maximize their teaching strategies to properly align with and appropriately challenge the military student’s future development. Students and military children absolutely encounter challenges due to living within a military culture; this should not be minimalized. The central research question to this study, “How do high school educational professionals explain the impacts of stressors on the development of military dependent students whose lives are immersed and enmeshed in today’s military culture,” was designed to understand these stressors and their significance to students' development.

The most extraordinary of practical implications from this study was that comprehending the whole military dependent student concept was fundamental to improving the education

professional's curricula and approach for challenging the child. As a result, educators and education institutions must have the complete picture of the military dependent student for whom they assume professional responsibility, and be able to adjust their teaching strategy accordingly.

Military dependent students have been exposed to multiple social cultures, a complex set of adversities, and sophisticated home-life experiences. The evidence of this study suggested that military dependent students can actually benefit from the stress that they are exposed to from the military culture. According to a variety of participant responses, PCS moves strengthen the student's social skills; they also learn culture from the variety of places they have lived and possess strong discipline and leadership traits. The practical implications from this case study demonstrated that more often than not, military dependent students were more cultural, professional, respectful, and mature. However, the evidence from this case study does not signify that all military dependent students academically and socially benefit from living within the military culture.

Another practical implication that was identified from this investigation was that teachers recognized military dependent students were as socially and academically advanced as their civilian counterparts, and in some professionals' explanations, military dependents were progressively more developed. That outcome was in contrast to much of the empirical research that was documented throughout this case study. Participant perceptions of advanced military dependent student development became a theme throughout the research gathering process, as the predominance of education professionals stated that the military students were as advanced, if not more so, than that of their civilian peers. Understanding the total military dependent student concept would empower professionals with the tools needed to advance an already higher achieving student's performance. Likewise, if a student is falling behind because the

child has a parent deployed, these issues could be communicated and properly addressed with the help of being provided an understanding of the military culture and the pupil.

Although the majority of participants had military backgrounds prior to teaching, either as a spouse or military member, a few of the participants lacked exposure and experience with teaching military dependent students. Many of the participants' observations were because they were familiar with the stressors the military culture inflicts, and therefore the professionals were able to identify issues with the student early on. For example, Mrs. Kaye recounted, "I had a male student and a particular situation when the student acted out. But you can identify it pretty quickly, and when you contact the parent, the times I have experienced it, they [parent] acted on that." She noted that the school district and school itself did offer student orientation and specialized training for suicide prevention. However, according to the participants, specialized training did not exist that would have offered insight into the background of the military dependent student. Past research has shown that the majority of special attention has been given to military dependent students for poor development, not advanced (Engel et al., 2010; Lester et al., 2010; Lester & Flake, 2013). Such training could have managed their understanding of the military child's capabilities, stressors that they experience, and assisted in managing the education professional's expectations.

The primary recommendation for these practical implications is that stakeholders address the level of special attention required for military children. The goal should be for professionals to understand and adjust techniques which would adequately address the student's developmental progress. Measures should be taken by parents and professionals alike to ensure their development is properly assessed, and techniques are developed to properly advance it. Parents and education professionals have to look for the warning signs in children in home and in

school in order to guarantee that military dependent students' mental and physical health are in good standing, but also to perpetuate their abilities, wherever they may be. Many of the participants remarked that they believed research of this nature was crucial to the development of military dependent students, as little exists.

The military student indoctrination training program for educational professionals could benefit the military dependent student by providing teachers an accurate holistic student concept through a general understanding of the military culture, coupled with a more precise interpretation of the student. A proposed concept could resemble a day of training geared toward training the education professional on the unique stressors that military dependent students are exposed to from the culture, followed by an intensive based solely on the incoming student. This would require an investigation of the student's records and possibly a select number of teachers and administrators from the school that the student has departed. The result should be a more defined picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the military dependent student, which would enhance the child's education experience.

An example may look like this: a military dependent, parents, and school have been notified of the student's imminent departure, simultaneously the new school is alerted of their upcoming arrival. The administrators at the new school notify the teacher of the student's arrival and provide the professional with specific, not general, highlights regarding the child's development. Additionally, the professional is provided with points of contact for educational professionals from the previous school. These steps would be in conjunction with yearly military dependent and military cultural education. This would only come to fruition with a robust military dependent student familiarization program that not only addresses the student's mental strengths but also his or her experiences.

Delimitations and Limitations

One of the most significant delimitations of this investigation was that it did not represent multiple high schools of equal or larger size from geographic regions that encompassed very large military populations. Additionally, this study's findings were born of only 10 participants who taught in the only civilian high school that was aligned to a military base. As evidence gathering took place after the school year, many professionals were unavailable to be interviewed. Participation was limited to the professionals who lived within the area, were currently working at the school, or agreed to participate in the research portion despite pandemic conditions. Furthermore, because the school year was over, all of the counselors were on summer vacation and none replied to requests for participation. It is reasonable to assume they either did not have access to, or were not monitoring, their school district email.

Limitations were present in this study, and although minimal, they were significant. The nation was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that gripped the entire planet. As such, the government placed social restrictions on most public institutions, and in many instances, meetings were held over the Zoom application. These restrictions produced sampling challenges, limited face-to-face meetings with almost half of the participants, and resulted in a smaller pool of participants. The branch of service that was studied was the Army; other branches such as the Marines were not examined and are important because Army deployments are considerably longer as they typically deploy in 12-month increments as opposed to 6 months for the Marines. The most significant delimitation in this study was the participants' willingness to communicate electronically during the COVID pandemic. The strict guidelines and general level of fear caused a few of the participants to initially decline their individual interview because it was in person. However, a solution was quickly developed in which interviews would

be conducted over the Zoom website. This allowed an opportunity to conduct an interview over video, which proved to be an appropriate alternative to conducting the interview in person.

Recommendations for Future Research

This holistic single case study was designed to receive different perspectives from all of the participants and attain a straightforward explanation of high school education professionals' explanations of the impacts of military stress on military dependent students' development. Upon analyzing the evidence from this case study, and considering all delimitations and limitations to the external environment, the following are my recommendations for future research: First and foremost, much more qualitative research should be conducted that would include more geographical regions of the country and possibly throughout the world. This study was limited in scope, in that the participant pool was very small. School counselors were unavailable for interviewing; however, many of the participants stated that these medical professionals were an integral part in accommodating military dependent students. Additionally, education counselors were also unavailable for participation in this study; these professionals are responsible for mentoring all of the students in their future choices. Additional research should be conducted that focuses on much larger military communities such as Fayetteville NC (Fort Bragg), or Killeen TX (Fort Hood). According to 2020 estimates, these civilian communities service military populations of 40–50,000 service members and their families, whereas the MWHS serves the military base with a population of 3,700. Additionally, these posts and civilian communities endure the highest amounts of military deployments; as a result, the education professionals would also have fruitful insights into military dependent students.

In conjunction with additional qualitative research, quantitative research could be conducted to understand the objective evidence in terms of their academic performance, and in

relation to parental deployments, and recent/future PCSs. The present study only included an examination of the experiences and challenges faced by students who took dual enrollment courses. This study revealed that the majority of education professional participants perceived that military dependent students were academically advanced; however, quantitative evidence was not considered, requested, or provided. That data would permit researchers to understand if the aforementioned military stressors result in higher academic student performance.

Another area of interest that could be researched is the military dependent student's personality in relation to the military stressors as he or she experiences them. This quantitative study could possibly include personality examinations as the military dependent student endures these stressors. Additionally, these tests could be administered to the same student over a period of time which would completely encompass that particular stressor. For example, as military members and their families endure the deployment process, a military dependent student could participate in all five phases of the deployment process. This research could provide a more definitive picture into how the military dependent student endures and overcomes deployment adversity.

Summary

The purpose of this case study was to understand high school education professionals' explanations of the impacts of military stress on military dependent students' development. There were multiple significant findings and connotations identified during the entirety of data collection and analysis. One of the primary discoveries of this study was that high school military dependent students' development benefitted from being exposed to military culture stress. Education professionals who were interviewed for this investigation highlighted that the military not only exposed children to a variety of cultures, it also developed a robust work ethic

among students, defined their leadership traits, and raised the intellectual level of the class which ultimately benefited civilian students. A secondary conclusion that this case study produced was that the military lifestyle inherently produces its own set of challenges and stressors that were impressed specifically upon military dependent students. However, the participants identified their own techniques for assisting military dependent students with social and academic challenges. Finally, this study demonstrated that with the support of their families and assistance from education professionals, military dependent students adapt and overcome the stressful experiences which they confront. Not only do they adapt and overcome significant challenges they encounter, most are beacons which all students should emulate.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Ice breaker: Good morning/ afternoon Mr./Mrs./Ms.... Please tell me about yourself as an education professional at MWHS.

1. How have military students who have moved via a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) to the MWHS community impacted your classroom?
2. How have you tailored your approach to a PCSed military dependent student once you are notified that they will soon be under your care?
3. In your experience, how do you explain the stress from PCSing impacted the student's ability to adapt to a new environment?
4. Can you explain how the student's familial support system impacted the student as they adapted to a new environment?
5. Can you explain how the military culture impacts the military dependent student's development, both socially and academically?
6. How do you explain the impacts of stress on military children adapting to a new environment?
7. How can you explain the impact on military children's academic development as they adapt to a new environment?
8. Can you explain how a military dependent student's social development is impacted as they adapt to a new environment?
9. How do you explain that military children excel as opposed to degenerate under the conditions from the previous question?

10. Can you explain how students are impacted when they have a loved one who was continuously away in support of training exercises?
11. Can you explain how the stress of deployments impacts a military dependent student's development?
12. How have some of your more memorable experiences with military students impacted you as a teacher and person and your teaching style?
13. How have the interactions that you had with your military students been different from their civilian peers?
14. How receptive are military parents when you communicate concerns and explanations of their children's development to them?
15. How many opportunities have you been presented with to attend professional training that was designed for the developmental needs of the military student?
16. Military students have likely witnessed their loved one's return from war. Stressors that are commonly associated with deployments can include verbal fights, physical altercations, and issues with alcohol. How has the school prepared you to accommodate military students who are suffering under these aforementioned stresses?
17. How familiar are you with the military dependent student's background prior to receiving them under your specific area of expertise?
18. How does the school prepare you for receiving a military dependent student who has recently PCSed and will now be in your classroom?
19. What else am I missing that you think would be important for me to know about your teaching experiences with military dependent children?

Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Questions

Ice breaker: Good morning/ afternoon Mr./Mrs./Ms.... Please tell me about yourself as an education professional at MWHS.

1. What words or phrases come to mind when you think of the military dependent students?
2. When and where have you observed that these students either excel or have had the most difficulty in their development?
3. What characteristics do you like best about military dependent children?
4. What are your problems or concerns about military dependent children's development?
5. What trends in their development do you see happening?
6. In what aspects do military dependent children succeed where their civilian competitors fail, and vice versa?
7. What are military children's key strengths/weaknesses?
8. How would you describe military dependent students to other people?
9. What words or feelings come to mind when you think about our company?
10. If you could wave a magic wand and make one influential change regarding their development, what would it be?
11. What was the biggest challenge you face as a teacher when it comes to military students' development?
12. What's one strategy or tactic you think was underrated in teaching military students?
13. What words come to mind when you think of military student development?
14. Overall how satisfied are you with military students' development?
15. Would anyone else like to build off of an opinion that has already been stated by another group member?

16. What other topic or issue about military students' development has not been addressed?

Appendix C: Recruitment Email

15 June 2020

Dear Participant:

As a post-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 better understand how inherent stress of the military culture affects the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals. I am emailing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

You may be eligible to participate if you are 18 years of age or older, are either a high school administrator, counselor, teacher, or instructor who has at least three years of teaching or counseling experience with military dependents. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in one face-to-face interview at the school. If the government and district have not lifted precautionary measures due to CV-19, preparations will be made to have all interviews and the focus group conducted via Zoom. At the time of the meeting you will potentially be asked to participate in a 4-5 person focus group. Once I have selected 4-5 participants, the focus group may be held either in person or on Zoom, depending on the current social distancing measures in place. The interview and focus group will take no more than one hour each to complete and will be audio-recorded. The time, date, and location are to be determined. Participants will have an opportunity to review their interview transcripts provided to them either in person or via email, and provide feedback for a period that will not exceed five days from the time that they are supplied with the document. Transcript review time will vary by participant. Finally, I will ask you to write or type a brief letter to prospective incoming military dependent children on what students should expect upon transitioning to their new school. The letter does not need to exceed one page and can be prepared and either given to me in person or via email. Your name and other identifying information will be collected as part of your participation, but this information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at wbuchleitner@liberty.edu to schedule your interview.

A consent document is attached to this email for you to review and contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview either in person or via email.

Sincerely,

William J Buchleitner IV
wbuchleitner@liberty.edu

Appendix D: Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: High school education professionals' explanations of the impacts of military stress on the military dependent students' development

Principal Investigator: William J Buchleitner IV, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in research for a dissertation entitled: High school education professional's explanations of the impacts of military stress on military dependent student's development. No personally identifying information, including your name, will be associated with any of the data. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and there are no consequences for your refusal to participate, or your choice to withdraw from the study at any time. To participate in the study, you have at least three years of teaching experience and be either an administrator, instructor, teacher, or counselor at the school. I will make this confirmation upon scheduling an interview with the participants.

If the government and district have not lifted precautionary measures due to CV-19, preparations will be made to have all interviews conducted via zoom.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of my research is to better understand how the military culture and inherent stress affects the development of military dependent high school children as explained by high school professionals.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Participate in one face-to-face interview at the school that will take no more than one hour. Participants will have an opportunity for five days to review their interview transcripts and provide feedback.
2. At the time of the meeting you may be potentially asked to participate in one focus group interview on a date, and at a location to be determined. The meeting will take no more than one hour.
3. You will be asked to write or type a brief letter to an incoming military dependent child regarding what students should expect upon transitioning to their new school. The letter should not exceed one page be of sufficient length that the student would feel less anxiety upon their first day of school. Time for completion may vary.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

There are no risks to your physical or mental well-being.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared. Throughout the study only I, William J Buchleitner IV, will have access to any personally identifying information. The utmost care will be taken to protect your identity through the use of numerical coding for all reported data. However, the protection of your identity cannot be guaranteed if you choose to communicate with me through electronic formats such as email. Your agreement to participate in this study will help to advance the field of education, further ensuring the best educational outcomes for students.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the high school. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact me at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is William J Buchleitner IV. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at wbuchleitner@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. James Swezey EdD, at jaswezey@liberty.edu

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter

From: irb@liberty.edu <irb@liberty.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 4:21 PM
To: Swezey, James A. (Education Specialist) <jaswezey@liberty.edu>; Buchleitner, William John <wbuchleitner@liberty.edu>
Subject: IRB-FY19-20-158 - Initial: Initial - Exempt

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 2, 2020

William Buchleitner
 James Swezey

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-158 HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL'S EXPLANATIONS OF THE IMPACTS OF MILITARY STRESS ON MILITARY DEPENDENT STUDENT'S DEVELOPMENT

Dear William Buchleitner, James Swezey:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

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