A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS TRANSITIONING FROM MILITARY CONNECTED SCHOOLS TO NON-MILITARY CONNECTED SCHOOLS

by

Dale John Wertman, Jr.

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

[Doctor of Education]

Liberty University

2024

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS TRANSITIONING FROM MILITARY CONNECTED SCHOOLS TO NON-MILITARY CONNECTED SCHOOLS

by Dale John Wertman, Jr.

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

[Doctor of Education]

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2024

APPROVED BY:

James Eller, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Megan L. Cordes, Ed.D., Committee Member

Abstract

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the needs of military-connected (MC) students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. The research helped to understand the transition of former MC students from MC to non-MC schools. The theory guiding this study was Schlossberg's transition theory, which is modeled from analyzing human adaptation to transition. The central research question guiding this study was, "What are the shared lived experiences of MC students who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools?" The design of this research was a transcendental phenomenological approach to gain a textual description of the essences of the shared experiences of the participants. The setting for the location of this study was online former MC-dependent social media networks. Data for this research was collected utilizing interviews, focus groups, and reflexive journal prompts to triangulate the data. The data analysis identified the common themes from individual interviews and focus groups, as well as quotes from participant journal prompts. The results of the data analysis enabled examination of data through the theoretical framework and answered the research questions. Data analysis revealed four primary themes:(a) instruction issues, (b) interpersonal issues, (c) intrapersonal issues, and (d) transition supports. The primary themes contained sub-themes of curriculum, classes, training, bullying, cultural barriers, peers, orientation, resilience, mental health, professional, family, friends, and spiritual, which functioned to advise the purpose of this study and theoretical framework.

Keywords: military-connected, student, education, transition, schools

Copyright Page

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and my Savior!

I dedicate this to my wife, Melissa Wertman, who has always inspired me to be a better husband, father, and man of God.

To my son, Malik Wertman, a Chaplin's Assistant/Spiritual Advisor in the U.S. Army Reserves and 2022 college graduate (BA in Psychology), thank you for being a better man of God than I could ever dream to be. You are my son, friend, brother, and inspiration.

To my daughter, Nevaeh Wertman, a 2024 college graduate (BA in Psychology), thank you for demonstrating the power of morals, values, dignity, determination, and personal convictions. You are my daughter, friend, and motivator.

To my grandfather, Ralph Dunn, who taught me more in a single day than I could ever learn in a lifetime of classrooms, through living the daily life example of what it means to be a student, man, husband, father, employee, teacher, counselor, and Christian. Although, you went home to be with God years ago, you are with me, and I feel your presence daily.

To my mother, Diana Wertman, who has fought Multiple Sclerosis for 30 years and went home to her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ September 27, 2023. Thank you for teaching me unwavering love, strength, and ability to face adversity with joy and grace.

To my father, Dale John Wertman, Sr., Retired Senior Master Sergeant of the U.S. Air Force, who joined my mother with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ January 11, 2024, you not only gave me your name, but you demonstrated what sacrifice is and taught me to make the best of our time on earth. I pray that I have and will.

Acknowledgments

This research is the collective work of so many people who sacrificed time and shared their wisdom, for whom I am grateful. I am thankful for the 13 participants who shared their life experiences, which provided the data for this research. I appreciate the site administrators who permitted me to utilize their sites for recruiting participants. I am ever grateful for the learning platform Liberty University offers for the spiritual and educational development of their students.

Word cannot properly express my gratuity for committee chair, Dr. James Eller. Your guidance, wisdom, experience, strength, hope, contribution, and encouragement has been incalculable. Thank you to Dr. Megan Cordes for serving on my committee and your insights, belief in me, and your support of this research.

Thank you to my wife, Melissa Wertman, who sacrificed countless hours and days of her life listening to me brainstorm the concepts of this research, proofreading countless versions and revisions, and managing everything I could not while I spent countless hours in my office researching and studying. Thank you to my children, Malik and Nevaeh Wertman, who inspired me to return to college and reminded me of our lifetimes are learning.

Finally, I wanted to acknowledge the two most influential educators in my life, one formal and the other informal. Thank you, Coach Hammond, for believing in me when others did not and demonstrating the value of helping others learn their value. Thank Ralph Dunn (pap) for teaching me how to learn, establishing a model for teaching, and constantly reminding me, the smartest person in the room is the person who knows they are not.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Community Assessment of Military Perceived Support (CAMPS)

Department of Defense (DoD)

Focus OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS)

Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs)

Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC)

Military and Government Counseling Association (MGSA)

Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)

Military Connected (MC)

National Military Family Association (NMFA)

Transition Assistance Program (TAP)

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

Veteran Affairs (VA)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Educational, emotional, and psychological support necessary to aid military-connected (MC) secondary education students transitioning from primarily MC schools to non-MC schools are not consistently offered to students experiencing this shared phenomenon (Brown et al., 2022; Kelly & Paul, 2018; Sikes et al., 2020; K. Sullivan et al., 2022; Van Slyke & Armstrong, 2020). This chapter will contain a brief background regarding how this problem has evolved historically, the social effects on the education system, and the theoretical concepts for this research. The identified problem the research will address and the purpose of this proposed research will be outlined within this chapter. The reader will gain an understanding of the empirical, theoretical, and practical significance of this study. The central research question and sub-research questions are outlined. Definitions critical in understanding this problem and research will be offered for the reader. The research will identify educational issues former MC students experienced transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. The results of this study identified educational supports valuable for MC students when transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools.

Background

Approximately 200,000 military service members separate from service and transition to civilian communities annually (US Department of Veteran Affairs, 2020). The Department of Defense (DoD) integrates educational programs, such as the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), to aid active duty personnel and their families with transitions (US Department of Veteran Affairs, 2020). These services do not aid the children transitioning to the civilian community. Although there are special education and support programs available at civilian

schools for students with psychological, emotional, and behavioral issues or needs, these educational and support programs often serve to manage the symptoms of maladjustment, rather than prepare the students to reduce or prevent such issues. MC students or the dependents of military personnel often attend DoD elementary and secondary schools or civilian schools located close to military bases with high populations of MC students. When a MC student's military family separates from military service, they often transition to civilian communities which do not comprehend their needs (Van Slyke & Armstrong, 2020). This research identified the shared lived experiences of adults who were MC students who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools.

Hanna (2020) identified that MC children have a strong sense of confidence and optimism highlighted by self-assured fearlessness, indicating MC children generally lack fear of the future or concern regarding how they will handle the future. G. Thomas (2018) explained how we need to understand that the transition from military to civilian life can be too much for some MC families. Burgin and Ray (2020) indicated that reliance among MC children is a dynamic process, and each experience is lessened or aggravated by each person's ability to cope and the access they have to resources. Two programs currently offered by the DoD to aid active-duty military families during military transitions are the *Families OverComing Under Stress Project* (FOCUS Project, 2021) and the *Military and Family Life Counseling Program* (Military One Source, 2021).

The emphasis of the FOCUS Project (FOCUS Project, 2021) is to teach practical skills to military families regarding the most common challenges of military life. The FOCUS Project (2021) helps military families build upon their strengths and teaches them new strategies essential for the transitions associated with military living. The FOCUS Project (2021) is a multi-

session resilience training program available to active-duty military families, including children, to aid them with such issues as moving, enhancing connections with their parents, secondary traumatization, and peer communication skills. The MFLC Program (Military One Source, 2021) also offers non-medical counseling support for military service personnel and their families. MFLC counselors are trained to collaborate with military personnel and offer face-to-face counseling for the military service personnel and their families (Military One Source, 2021). Many existing support programs serve active-duty military personnel and their families; however, many lack or have limited follow-through to the community.

Historical Context

Albano (1994) outlined issues regarding the military's recognition of family concerns from the Revolutionary War to 1993. During the Revolutionary War, Army regulations avoided referencing families, and a soldier's family was not provided for in life or death. Albano (1994) explained during the pre-Civil War era, it was assumed the enlisted did not marry, although there was an implied obligation for the Army to provide food and shelter for military families. Albano (1994) explained that until 1942, the Army prohibited the peacetime enlistment or reenlistment of soldiers with families, and prior to World War II, military family emergencies were addressed through informal funds or charitable civilian organizations. Albano (1994) described how all the military branches eventually began to sponsor military family conferences focused on identifying, discussing, and recommending solutions to military family problems. Albano (1994) explained military budget cuts in the early 1990s foreshadowed a need for military family centers to aid military families transitioning to civilian communities.

Reger et al. (2008) explained that the Army is a cultural group with a language, norms, and beliefs which are unique to that cultural group. Reger et al. (2008) highlighted the need for

cultural competence for this unique group. Booth et al.'s (2009) final report from the summit on military families included access to services and consistency of support as critical issues affecting military families. Booth et al. (2009) explained that the participants in the study noted barriers such as geographical dispersion and isolated locations. Booth et al. (2009) indicated the participants believed they should know what levels and types of support are available when they transition from one location to another. Booth et al. (2009) indicated parents at the summit specifically noted behavior and adjustment problems among their children, related to transitioning to a new environment.

Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) indicated that research regarding the outcomes of military community support and programs to enhance resiliency in children and their families had not yet been conducted. Although Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) explained that their own research identified an abundance of military programs to support MC children and their families, research regarding the specific programs was lacking, there needed to be a way to implement the programs more effectively, and coordination between the programs was needed. G. Thomas (2018) explained that MC families face unique issues and obstacles compared with civilians, and Cramm et al. (2018) suggested little was known regarding military families who have done well facing adversity. Conover (2020) reviewed the *Tell Me A Story* (TMAS) program and found it was inconsistent in increasing resiliency for male versus female students. Burgin and Ray (2020) highlighted that military community values and their programs serve to build resilience; and, only recently, the Military and Government Counseling Association (MGSA) established a task force focused on providing professional guidelines for counseling services for military members, veterans, and their families.

Social Context

Hanna (2020) indicated that MC children perceive themselves to be more mature and adaptable or resilient than their peers as a result of the military culture in which they have been reared. Efforts have been made to create intervention strategies and to assess the effectiveness of programs focused on enhancing resiliency for the elementary MC children of active-duty parents. A study conducted by Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) explained that community support was a protective factor against childhood psychological problems and that these lower levels of psychological problems were further correlated with lower levels of drug use and behavior problems. A specific intervention, the FOCUS Project (FOCUS Project, 2021), offered consultation to community providers and parents, resilience training or skill building groups, and educational workshops focused on issues such as reaction to parental deployment. However, while the FOCUS Project (FOCUS Project, 2021) is available to active-duty military personnel, their families, and community providers working with them, this program is not extended to military personnel who have separated from active duty or the community providers in the civilian communities they move to.

Another intervention, the MFLC Program (Military One Source, 2021), offered counseling, briefings, and presentations to the military community and those in the surrounding military community who support active-duty military personnel and their families (Military One Source, 2021). G. Thomas (2018) explained that, for cases where mental healthcare was accessible, clinicians tended to focus more on individual needs, as opposed to family interventions. Therefore, for cases of MC families, the focus of interventions could remain on the former military service member. However, Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) suggested an apparent lack of coordination between community service agencies and the DoD.

Theoretical Context

Kleykamp et al. (2021) emphasized that, in some capacity, virtually all theories and models regarding military transition are drawn from Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory, which recognizes four major sets of factors as influencing a person's ability cope with transition. These factors are known as the four S's: *situation, self, support,* and *strategies*. One example of this was G. Thomas's (2018) literature review of stress effects of military families' transition to civilian life which specifically cited Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory. G. Thomas (2018) indicated that further research was needed regarding the effects of family transition from the military to the civilian community. G. Thomas (2018) identified Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory as a process where the person adjusts and adapts via preparation and planning for all real and unrealized anticipated hurdles. Other examples include Zimmerman's (2013) study and Cramm, et al.'s (2018) narrative review, each of which focused on MC students' transition from MC schools. While each project cited Rutter's (1987) challenge model of resiliency, even identifying it as a strength-based approach for the research and practice of adolescent health, was the four S's of Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory are applicable for conceptualizing Rutter's (1987) challenge model of resiliency as a factor which may counter the risk involved with the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school.

Much of the research which more directly utilized Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory focused on veterans' transition to colleges or careers rather than the transitions of their children. For example, Hornor and Brooks (2023) utilized Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory as their theoretical framework for researching veterans' sense of belonging and the strategies higher education could utilize to improve this factor. The Ilagan et al. (2022) mixed-methods exploratory study utilized Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory 4S Model to provide a

framework for analyzing student veterans social support, happiness, and stress at college. Shue et al.'s (2021) mixed methods review utilized Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory 4S model in examining career transitions of veterans. Such use of Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory 4S model in previous research provides the theoretical framework for the use of transition theory in this present study, examining the transition of MC students from MC schools to non-MC schools.

This research could be utilized by current and former military personnel and their spouses to better prepare their children for and support them during the transition from DoD schools to civilian schools. This research will serve to aid education professionals, such as teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and other educational support staff to (1) better understand the issues MC students may experience during their transition to a non-MC school and (2) what types of supports and strategies are most effective in aiding these MC students during their transition to civilian schools. This research helps address the gaps found in literature by documenting strengths, problems, and supports identified by adults who previously experienced the phenomenon of being a MC student who transitioned from a MC to a non-MC school.

Problem Statement

The problem to be addressed is the **inconsistent** educational, emotional, and psychological support necessary to aid secondary education students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools (Castillo et al., 2017; Frain, S. C., & Frain, B., 2020; Kaeppler & Lucier-Greer, 2020; K. Sullivan et al., 2022; Van Slyke & Armstrong, 2020). The inconsistent support spans both MC and non-MC schools and educational professionals aiding in numerous transitional issues. The MC student has been identified as one of the most marginalized populations in public schools (Hanna, 2020). G. Thomas (2018) indicated that further research is

needed regarding the effects of family transition from the military to the civilian community. The problem is further underscored as veterans often transition to communities which do not comprehend them or their MC students' specific educational needs (Van Slyke & Armstrong, 2020). Some MC students attend DoD-funded schools where they benefit from support provided by peers and educational professionals (Alfano et al., 2016). Although programs such as the FOCUS Project (FOCUS Project, 2021) and MFLC (Military One Source, 2021) offer educational and counseling support for active-duty military service members and their families, and they focus on the current transitions, none mention educating and preparing the military personnel and their families for the inevitable transition to civilian living, including students' move to non-MC schools.

As previously noted, Hanna (2020) indicated that one of the most marginalized populations in public schools are MC students. Specifically, Williamson et al. (2018) found that, when the cases of the MC children were older and the parent was deployed, the MC child was found to be at greater risk of substance abuse and externalizing behavior. Additionally, Reinhardt et al.'s (2019) research regarding the frequency of MC children fights on school property noted that the civilian high schools may not have been knowledgeable of MC student needs. Other research like that conducted by Fear et al. (2018) found that MC children's emotional and behavioral wellbeing was more associated with the military parents' probable post-traumatic stress disorder, rather than the military parents' deployment status. There are educational programs available for students with psychological, emotional, and behavioral needs. For MC students, though, these educational programs serve to manage the symptoms of maladjustment, rather than prepare the students to reduce or prevent such issues.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the shared experiences of adults who had previously transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Transitioning was defined as a change from one place to another, specifically from MC schools to non-MC schools. The theory guiding this study was Schlossberg's transition theory, which is modeled from analyzing human adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory was essential to the focus of this research, as the theory attempted to define the capacity of humans to cope with change. Schlossberg (1981) identified transition as a process which people react and adapt to differently during separate times of their lives. Schlossberg (1981) explained the transition theory model did not highlight the transition as primarily important, rather how it fit with the stage of the individual. Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory aided in understanding how MC students reacted and adapted differently to transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools, as well as how such transitions fit within the stage of their lives.

Significance of the Study

Alfano et al. (2016) explained that, when an active-duty service member is stationed close to the base, their child and family benefit from the support provided by other families and the base. However, most MC children do not attend DoD-funded schools or even schools that serve large military populations. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE; 2011) indicated that the educators (teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, principals, and others) of MC students may not be aware of MC students' specific social, emotional, and learning challenges. Furthermore, AACTE (2011) indicated P-12 schools may not even be aware

of MC students or how to address their needs in general. This transcendental phenomenological study examined the empirical, theoretical, and practical significance of this phenomenon.

Empirical Significance

The empirical significance of this transcendental phenomenological study was that it added to the literature by assisting educators to understand the strengths, problems, and supports the participants identified regarding their transition from MC schools to non-MC schools. Fear et al. (2018) found increases in prosocial difficulties, hyperactivity, and conduct problems for MC children whose military parent had been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Earlier, N. King and Smith (2016) found that secondary traumatization (i.e., the transfer of traumatic symptoms) was a prevalent theme in how the children of military service members diagnosed with PTSD were affected by their parent's PTSD experience. Later, Cramm et al. (2019) conducted a scoping review of studies more generally investigating the mental health of MC children and found the majority indicated significant negative mental health effects related to the military parent's separation and deployment. Gilreath et al. (2016) suggested that factors such as MC children's mental health diagnosis, substance abuse, and other high-risk behaviors could even contribute to higher rates of suicidality.

Theoretical Significance

The theoretical significance of this transcendental phenomenological study was that it will serve to add support for transition theory (Schlossberg, 1981) by identifying the factors of situation, self, support, and strategies which influence a MC student's transition from primarily MC schools to non-MC schools. The McGuire and Steele (2016) review of social networking sites indicated future research should examine what mechanisms enhance and obstruct resilience for MC families. This study identified what mechanisms the persons who experienced the

phenomenon perceived as having enhanced and obstructed their resilience during the period the phenomenon was experienced. Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) indicated that more research is needed regarding the outcomes of community services, the factors of community programs associated with positive community outcomes, and the resources most beneficial for MC families and children. This study identified what resources the persons who experienced the phenomenon perceived as most beneficial during the period the phenomenon was experienced. Cramm et al. (2018) explained the need to better understand the risks and resources associated with military services personnel and their families. This study identified what problems people who experienced the phenomenon had and what resources were available during the time the phenomenon was experienced. K. Sullivan et al. (2022) suggested that research be conducted to discover what responsibilities schools and education professionals should have in supporting veteran-connected students. This study identified what responsibilities the persons who experienced the phenomenon perceived that schools and educational professionals should have had during the time the phenomenon was experienced.

Practical Significance

The practical significance of this research was that the information was gleaned from former MC students who had transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school and are now adults. This research provided an outline of shared experiences, strengths, problems, and identified common themes of resources and services these former MC students identified as valuable for transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. The information gleaned from this research can be utilized to improve the educational support and services for MC students who are making similar transitions. Van Slyke and Armstrong (2020) highlighted the need for appropriate needs assessments for military children to help them with transition and mental

health services. This research will help educational professionals in non-MC schools better understand the needs of MC students who are transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. The strengths, problems, and supports identified by this study as essential for MC students transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school can be utilized to enhance essential strengths, circumvent potential problems, and provide appropriate supports for future students who will undergo similar transitions.

Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the shared experiences of adults who had previously transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The theory guiding this study was Schlossberg's transition theory, which is modeled from analyzing human adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981). The research questions were structured utilizing Schlossberg's (1981) four S's of transition theory: situation, self, support, and strategies.

Central Research Question

What are the shared lived experiences of MC students who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question One

What are the common situations experienced by MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question Two

What are the shared concepts of self (strengths and weaknesses) MC students have had regarding their experience transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question Three

What are the common supports MC students have had transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question Four

What are the common strategies utilized by MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Definitions

1. *Department of Defense (DoD) School* – 160 federally (United States of America) operated/accredited elementary and secondary school systems across 29 different school configurations within 11 countries, 7 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico, which include the Department of Defense Education Activity Virtual School (DoDEA, 2023).
2. *Military Connected School* – The 214 public school districts located within the United States of America which serve at least 400 MC students, or at least 10% of the school district's total student enrollment are MC students (De Pedro et al., 2018).
3. *Military Connected (MC) Student* - Children in P-6 schools, adolescents in middle and high school, and students who are adolescents or young adults in trade schools or Institutions of Higher Education (2- or 4-year schools) that are official dependents of a military service member. A military-connected student has one degree of separation from their military sponsor; the connection may be biological, because of an adoption, through foster parenting, or with *in loco parentis authorization* (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2011).
4. *Non-Military Connected School* - The remaining public school districts located within the United States of America which do not serve at least 400 MC students, or at least 10% of

the school district's total student enrollment are MC students, as defined by De Pedro et al. (2018).

5. *Transition* - An event or non-event resulting in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships (Schlossberg, 1981).

Summary

The problem to be addressed is that the unique issues to be understood and the support needed to aid MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools are inconsistent. Although there are programs such as TAP and various support services which are growing for military service personnel separating from service (US Department of Veteran Affairs, 2020), identifying, and offering specific educational support services for MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC is inconsistent. Programs such as FOCUS Project (FOCUS Project, 2021) and MFLC (Military One Source, 2021) offer educational and counseling support for MC students when their military parent or guardian transitions from one active-duty assignment to another; however, they do not extend such programs and services to the transition from MC schools to non-MC schools.

Although there is a support network in place among military service personnel for the families of military service persons, when the military service person separates from service and transitions to the civilian community and educational systems, many of these systems are unfamiliar with their specific support needs (AACTE, 2011 and Van Slyke & Armstrong, 2020). The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the shared experiences of adults who had previously transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Literature supports the

role of secondary educational institutions to address the emotional, psychological, developmental, and behavioral needs of all secondary students.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A systematic review of the literature was conducted to explore the educational needs of MC children whose military parent is separating from service. When a MC student transfers from a MC school to a civilian secondary school, this presents the opportunity for their specific needs and educational support to be misidentified or completely missed by the non-MC school. This chapter will present a review of the current literature related to the topic of study. In the first section, the theoretical framework of transition theory will be discussed, followed by a synthesis of recent literature regarding the phenomenon of MC membership on child psychology, MC student needs, and the risk status of MC students in secondary schools. Lastly, literature regarding how potential educational programs and resiliency will be reviewed to identify potential programs to address the educational needs of MC children whose military parent is separating from service. In the end, a gap in the literature will be identified, presenting a viable need for the current study.

Theoretical Framework

The theory which will shape this study is Schlossberg's transition theory, which is modeled from analyzing human adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Schlossberg (1981) explained how people continually experience transitions throughout life. Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory explained that persons' abilities to adapt to transitions are different and that similar transitions may present as either an opportunity or a loss, depending on the individual and the circumstances. Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory focused on internal and external influences for a person's response to transition. Schlossberg (1981) explained that transition

theory places the person's stage, situation, and style at the time of the transition as the primary factors of that transition, rather than the specific transition itself.

Schlossberg (1981) defined transition as an event or non-event, which results in changes in assumptions about self and the world and requires a change in the person's behavior and relationships. For this research, the focus will be on the event which resulted in a change for MC children. Schlossberg (1981) explained that a transition is not necessarily the change itself, rather it is the person's perception of the change. Schlossberg (1981) defined adaptation as the process from being preoccupied with to integrating the transition into their life. Although MC children may have previously experienced moving from one DoD school to another, Schlossberg (1981) offered an explanation of why an individual may react differently to the same type of transition. Schlossberg (1981) indicated resource-deficits balances can change, making adaptation more difficult when resource deficits outweigh the resources themselves. Schlossberg (1981) explained that a way to assess transition is to measure the degree of difference between pretransition and post-transition environments. Although transitions from DoD to DoD schools can be perceived as a low degree of difference by the student, the transition from a DoD to a civilian school can be perceived as a higher degree of difference.

Schlossberg (1981) described variables such as role change, affect, timing, onset, duration, and degree of stress as factors affecting adaptation. Schlossberg (1981) highlighted that, regardless of the individual's perceived role gain or loss, stress accompanies a role change. Furthermore, Schlossberg (1981) explained most transitions have elements of positive and negative affect. The variables identified by Schlossberg (1981) can all be affected by the individual's perception. Was the transition from a DoD school to a civilian school perceived by the student as off-time, sudden, or permanent? A MC student familiar with relocation may

perceive prior moves among DoD schools as temporary; however, the transfer to a civilian school may be perceived as permanent.

Kleykamp et al. (2021) claimed that Schlossberg's model of adult transitions is foundational to virtually all theories and models of military transition. Schlossberg (1981) identified interpersonal support systems, institutional support systems, and physical setting as factors which affect adaptation to an environment. Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory model postulated that interpersonal support systems include intimate relationships, the family unit, and the network of friends. Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory will be utilized to structure the research questions, integrating its four S's: situation, self, support, and strategies (Goodman et al., 2006). The four S's of transition theory (Goodman et al., 2006) will be utilized as a framework for potential themes. The results of this study will be articulated utilizing this framework of Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory to aid in understanding the adaptation of MC students transitioning from DoD secondary schools to civilian schools. This study will add to Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory by documenting the stages of transition of adult MC students who had previously transitioned from DoD secondary schools to civilian schools as adolescents.

Related Literature

Although there are educational programs available for students with psychological, emotional, and behavioral needs, these programs can often serve to manage symptoms, rather than the underlying issue for the MC student. R. M. Sullivan et al. (2019) indicated that the current school programs for MC students address bullying, classroom dynamics, or individual concerns for students. Research has revealed a deficit in specific educational programs for MC students whose parents are separating from service (Castillo et al., 2017). However, research has

also highlighted MC students' needs and skills or strengths which could be utilized to create a functional educational program for those whose parent is separating from service.

Educational Programs for Military-Connected Students

Efforts have been made to create intervention strategies and assess the effectiveness of the programs for elementary MC children of active-duty parents. Conover's (2020) research detailed one commonly utilized military program, which served to further highlight the need for more effective educational and intervention programs available to MC students whose parent is separating from military service. Bloir (2020) reviewed the Clearinghouse, a website designed to help service professionals who work with military families select and evaluate various programs, including those addressing mental health issues. Moore et al. (2017) found that most of the MC behavioral health interventions studied suggested a limited generalizability to a broader MC youth population. Participants/educators in Hill et al.'s (2022) qualitative research regarding how educators perceive and support Canadian MC students recommended a liaison work as an intermediary between the military and civilian schools.

Conforte, DeLeon et al.'s (2017) article reviewed literature on community support for military children and provided an overview of available resources. One such resource was Military Kids Connect (2021), which provides online support for military children, with videos about moving, relationships, feelings, and a blog. According to Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017), the preliminary studies suggested that online support has positive outcomes, and websites such as Military OneSource and Operation Homefront may be helpful for military families. Veri et al. (2021) noted that children of deployed military reserve parents had higher levels of anxiety than children of deployed active-duty parents and that 38% of children of deployed National Guard parents reported increased problem behaviors at school. Silliman et al.'s (2021) review of the

Project Youth Extension Service (YES) indicated positive perceived learning outcomes by the children and the interns. Silliman et al. (2021) explained Project YES offered an educational intervention and social support for children of parents serving in a military reserve capacity and promoted resiliency and STEM concepts.

Sussman (2000) explored the experience of *sojourners* and described how their cultural identity changes as a result of changes in their behavior and social thought. Sussman (2000) suggested the adapted behavior and thought helps the sojourner engage with and adapt within the new environment. Military families could be classified as a manner of sojourners as they often travel from state to state and nation to nation, potentially resulting in their cultural adaptation. The skills these families have utilized to adapt to those new social environments could be utilized to help them learn to adapt to civilian life and their new civilian community. Arnold et al. (2017) indicated that family structure and family processes are correlated to academic performance. Arnold et al. (2017) found adolescent initiatives significantly mediated family processes effects on academic performance, suggesting educational programs focusing on increasing MC student initiative may improve outcomes.

The Military Child Education Coalition (2021) website offers professional virtual learning for community leaders and educational professionals and serves to train such professionals on the unique challenges MC children face. This website seems to hinge on the educational professional's ability to identify a MC student and their knowledge that MC students have specific needs. The National Military Family Association (NMFA) (2021) website is an online resource which helps explain services such as those provided by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. This compact is designed to remove some of the roadblocks associated with MC students moving to new schools. NMFA (2021) indicated this

compact helped with enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility, and graduation for MC students grades K through 12. Such services are available for the children of active duty and activated Guard or Reserve members and for the children of fallen service members and retired or discharged military personnel, for one year following the death, retirement, or discharge. NMFA (2021) explained that, although the compact is recognized by all 50 states and the District of Columbia, parents of MC students may find teachers and administrators are not familiar with the law or its requirements.

NMFA (2021) offered resources for parents to help with the transition to educate themselves and their children's schools. Although the systems and laws are in place to assist with the academic resources necessary to aid in the transition from DoD to civilian schools for 1 year following the transition, the onus is placed primarily on the students' families. Although this program establishes a means for which academic needs are communicated from school district to school district and aid with the communication of established Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), this program does not serve to identify potential transition issues MC children commonly face when transitioning from DoD secondary schools to civilian secondary schools. Moses and McCrary (2021) explained how, the closer MC families lived to military bases, the more resources and support were available to them; however, this support decreased the further they were from the military base. Moses and McCrary (2021) explained that the School Liaison Program was created as a bridge between the military bases to the community schools. There was already an existing system in place to extend this bridge to MC students transitioning from DoD-connected schools to civilian schools when their MC family member separates from service.

School Intervention

Saltzman (2016) found the FOCUS Family Resilience Program had been implemented across multiple civilian community mental health programs and school districts. Saltzman (2016) explained this program was designed to reduce problematic outcomes for members of the family whose risk level is elevated due to stress, trauma, or loss. Although Saltzman (2016) indicated the FOCUS Program was effective in improving family resilience to trauma and stress, it was also noted this program was most effective when integrated into another program which focuses on the family and the community. Ohye et al.'s (2020) research highlighted the school-based intervention program Staying Strong With Schools (SSWS), which formalized relationships between educational professionals (e.g., school administrators, teachers, and counselors) and the parents of MC children to support the children's psychosocial functioning. Ohye et al. (2020) found that in schools that utilized SSWS, the parents reported less MC child internalizing behaviors, and the MC children reported an increased perception of social support over a school year. Although Ohye et al.'s (2020) research involved elementary children of active-duty military parents, this research presents direction regarding the development of an educational program which works with the MC parents who are separating from service and MC students transitioning to a new civilian school. The SWSS program highlighted by Ohye et al. (2020) explained that, when education professionals demonstrated an understanding of military family challenges, this conveyed acceptance, interest, and support to the MC child and parents.

Hathaway et al. (2018) cited prior studies that have shown lengthy military parental deployments may be a contributing factor to impaired school functioning for children in civilian and DoD schools. Wooten et al. (2019) explained how children and adolescents spend a significant amount of time in school settings; as such, school staff can play a critical role in

identifying and addressing behavioral health concerns for MC students. Faran et al. (2020) cited research suggesting that children benefit from access to behavioral healthcare in schools, and such behavioral healthcare can be coordinated by educational personnel to improve the effects on children socially, emotionally, behaviorally, and academically. Gatlin-Nash et al. (2021) found that teachers' expectations of students' academic competence were influenced by the students' behaviors and social skills. Specifically, teachers' ratings of students' academic competence were inversely correlated with the students' problem behaviors; teacher ratings of student competence were also lower for students perceived as having fewer social skills.

Bagnall et al. (2021) asserted that children with social, emotional, and mental health difficulties or students with special education needs transitioning from primary school to secondary school need a sense of safety and belonging, which had implication for emotional well-being. Although the Bagnall et al. (2021) research focused on the student transition from primary to secondary schools, this research serves to highlight the need for communication between schools to ensure appropriate educational supports are offered. St. John and Fenning (2020) added that educational professionals are positioned to offer appropriate behavioral and mental health supports for MC students. Research conducted by Gilreath et al. (2016) and MacDermid Wadsworth et al. (2017) can serve to guide teachers in civilian schools to better comprehend the issues and subsequent needs and supports required by a MC student transitioning to a civilian school. Sikes et al. (2020) suggested educating professionals regarding military cultural awareness and MC student challenges should take place regularly with ongoing training and educational opportunities. However, Yarwood et al. (2021) found MC students kept their feelings regarding parental deployment to themselves to fit in or to be brave, thus creating a conundrum for education professionals in identifying these students.

Civilian Community Preparedness

Van Slyke and Armstrong (2020) indicated that, when separating from military service, many veterans transition into communities which do not understand them. According to research on Project YES conducted by Silliman et al. (2021), children of military reserve parents expressed concerns that their circumstances and emotions were not understood by their communities, resulting in neglect. This would imply that education professionals who are deficient in their understanding of the educational needs of MC students may not provide equitable or impartial educational services for students. Debnam et al. (2021) investigated the congruence between teacher and student perceptions of school equity and found that the school staff perceptions of equity were higher than the students', highlighting that this incongruence may have negative impacts on the students' connectedness. Debnam et al. (2021) added that this perceieved connectedness was less for high school students versus middle school students. Kranke (2019) reported that most of the four million MC students enrolled in K–12 attend civilian public schools, and less than ten percent of teachers report being trained to work with MC students. Further, Capp, Astor et al. (2017) found 35 to 45% of staff did not know about the educational needs, financial difficulties, and additional emotional and psychological needs of MC students, while 35 to 48% reported only some MC students have such needs and difficulties.

Parrott et al. (2022) found that, from 2010 through 2020, the term "hardship" was the most prominent frame utilized by news publications when highlighting military families. A few years prior, though, Capp, Astor et al. (2017) found that 20 percent of the sample teachers did not even know if there were MC students in their schools. In Hill et al.'s (2022) qualitative research regarding how educators perceive and support Canadian MC students, one participant indicated they did not know who the MC students were until the students told them. Castillo et

al. (2017) explained how most public-school staff were unaware of the MC student population in their school. Classen et al.'s (2019) research revealed that educators did not think their school districts offered appropriate routine military-related professional development. Hill et al. (2022) found none of the participants/educators had an awareness of professional development opportunities focused on MC students and families.

Hill et al. (2022) also found many of the participant-educators were unaware if the military had contacted their schools to collaboratively support MC students. Capp, Astor et al. (2017) found 25 to 50% of school staff did not know how their school responded to MC student needs, and 50% reported their school never or rarely educated staff about military family life. It is important for educational professionals to comprehend the range of potential preconceived attitudes toward MC children and their families. For example, Parkhouse (2020) investigated the effects of teaching critical patriotism in secondary history education classrooms, noting the importance for educators being aware that their audience may include MC students in their classroom and the impact that classroom exercises can have on all students present. MC parent involvement in Gibbs' (2020) research served to highlight how some educational professionals' perception of military community patriotism can complicate the teaching of a more critical form of patriotism, suggesting that patriotism should be earned.

Castillo et al. (2017) utilized a series of free resource guides from the Building Capacity consortium which contained best practices for working with MC students. Information addressed topics such as understanding military culture, challenges faced by MC students, and best practices to aid MC students in dealing with transition. Castillo et al.'s (2017) research documented educational professionals' opinion that the guides provided new information compared to the administrator guides. Conforte, Bakalar et al. (2017) identified promising

research regarding the protective effects of community support in civilian populations for MC families. Since there were no validated measures designed to assess the community support in MC families, the work aimed to develop and examine a measure called the Community Assessment of Military Perceived Support (CAMPS). Conforte, Bakalar et al. (2017) found that CAMPS could potentially be utilized for program evaluation. Nichols et al. (2022) found research-based theatre (merging research with theatre for an intended audience) aides in knowledge translation and intervention for mental health topics. Nichols et al. (2022) explained research-based theatre has been utilized in other mental health formats to communicate knowledge and reduce stigma. Nichols et al.'s (2022) data suggested research-based theatre improved both military and civilian audiences' knowledge of the veteran experience transitioning to the civilian community.

Capp, Benbenishty et al. (2017) reviewed the Partners at Learning (PAL) tutor and mentor program and found the tutors' and mentors' participation in the PAL program helped them gain perspective regarding the issues MC students face; however, the PAL program would require support from the schools and teachers to be effectively implemented. Capp Benbenishty et al. (2017) added that universities can contribute to bringing an awareness to the needs of MC students by offering training modules focused on MC students' needs. Spencer et al. (2020) found most parents of MC students thought it was important that mentors understand military culture and military family life, but they did not view mentoring favorably and so were not likely to reach out to a military-focused mentoring program. N. King and Smith's (2016) research suggested secondary traumatization effects on MC children would indicate that MC children could experience the same community misunderstanding and subsequent educational needs.

Ridings et al. (2019) explained that trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT) has been effective for MC and civilian children. Ridings et al. (2019) underscored that traumatic grief can diminish a child's interest in school or other extracurricular activities. Van Slyke and Armstrong (2020) noted that a gap in literature regarding mental illnesses of military children and family services impeded Veterans Affairs (VA) and community organizations from providing effective services. Ridings et al. (2019) explained that most of the efforts within VA medical centers are not child-friendly, as they include spouses and partners, but few offer child-inclusive programs. Van Slyke and Armstrong's (2020) article highlighted the need for appropriate needs assessments for military children to help them with transition and mental health services.

St. John and Fenning (2020) explained that many MC families have established strategies and strengths to help mediate transitions, and that school personnel need to be trained to provide the appropriate support for these families. Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) suggested a link between child and parent psychosocial functioning, the provision of community support more important. Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) found an increased perception of military community support was related to better MC child psychosocial functioning. Although, it would be beneficial for the VA to include child service, it is important for educators to comprehend the trauma experienced by many MC children negatively impacts education, thus making it a need which educational professionals need to be inclusive in addressing.

Military Transitions

The US Department of Veteran Affairs (2020) indicated approximately 200,000 military service members transition to civilian living annually. Regarding mobility of students, Pogodzinski et al. (2022) found school climate was not a principal factor for parents when they

are selecting which school their child would attend. Rather, research indicated that parents had limited knowledge about their child's school or what factors they should consider. Van Slyke and Armstrong (2020) found that veterans often feel socially and culturally isolated in the civilian community. To help address such issues, the US Department of Veterans Affairs (2020) detailed the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) that is made available up to two years in advance for the service members and their spouses to begin to prepare for their transition to the civilian community. Six themes emerged because of the Elliott (2020) data: adding stress to an already stressful situation; managing a new set of worries and fears surrounded by the unknown; reestablishing an everyday life from chaos; battling social, personal, and physical isolation; reinventing oneself to move beyond simply functioning to control; and pondering about life, returning, and repatriation.

De Pedro, et al. (2017) explained how MC students had to move, on average, six to nine times, which is three times greater than civilian students. Hinojosa et al. (2022) found that children of non-military families experienced 12% greater odds of mental health conditions for each move. Comparatively, children of military families experienced 17% greater odds of mental health conditions for each move. Thus, the percentage of mental health conditions for MC students is significantly higher, when you consider the greater odds of mental health conditions for these students outlined by Hinojosa et al. (2022) and their rates of relocation. Although the De Pedro et al., (2017) research established that MC students are three times more likely to relocate than their civilian counterparts, and Hinojosa et al.'s (2022) research noted the deleterious effects this relocation has on their mental health, Degroote et al. (2020) found lower behavioral engagement levels for the non-mobile students where schools have large inflows of students. Therefore, it is important for education professionals to recognize mobile students, such

as MC students, can also impact the potential education outcomes of the non-mobile or civilian students, making the need for educational supports integral for all students, regardless of MC status.

De Pedro et al. (2017) highlighted how these transitions can adversely affect the MC students' ability to form relationships with other students and their teachers. G. Thomas (2018) indicated that families of military personnel often develop enhanced coping strategies, flexibility, social skills, range of interest, and cultural awareness; however, they also experience numerous obstacles which are different from their civilian peers. G. Thomas (2018) explained that, although the military-style self-contained communities offer support via schools, healthcare, and other activities, such isolation can make transitioning to the civilian community stressful. G. Thomas (2018) highlighted that the transition from military to civilian living can create culture shock, anxiety, and stress for the whole family. G. Thomas (2018) countered the argument that military families are prepared for transitioning to civilian living due to being accustomed to frequent relocation and explained that this transition to the civilian community can invoke greater levels of stress for the family. G. Thomas (2018) emphasized how the military family tends to compare one transition to another, which can cause adaptation issues by grasping to the past. The aforementioned TAP program offers workshops for the separating military person and their spouse, focusing on financial planning and employment (US Department of Veteran Affairs, 2020); however, the children of these separating soldiers also need prepared for this transition.

Military-Connected Student Risk Status

A review of the literature suggests that various factors could contribute to higher rates of suicidality among MC children (Castillo et al., 2017; Clements-Nolle et al., 2021; Gilreath et al.,

2016; MacDermid Wadsworth et al., 2017). They have higher rates of mental health diagnoses (Castillo et al., 2017; Gilreath et al., 2016; Wretman & Bowen, 2019), substance abuse (Castillo et al., 2017; Gilreath et al., 2016; MacDermid Wadsworth et al., 2017), behavioral problems (Wretman & Bowen, 2019), and other high risk behaviors such as carrying weapons (Castillo et al., 2017; MacDermid Wadsworth et al., 2017) or associating with gangs (Estrada et al., 2017; Gilreath et al., 2016). They also have more decreases in academic performance (Wretman & Bowen, 2019). Knobloch et al.'s (2017) research highlighted the potential considerations of parental post-deployment reintegration from MC children, suggesting other unique needs and considerations for MC children/students. Vannest et al. (2021) found there were no differences in gender pertaining to military status and no significant difference at grade school; however, high school MC students were found to report higher levels of elevated and extremely elevated social, emotional, and behavioral risks. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (2011) indicated that MC students presented specific academic and social challenges, such as difficulties qualifying for or receiving special needs services, trouble understanding new school regulations and policies, experiencing elevated stress, higher risk for depression and anxiety due to relocation, and difficulty adjusting to new curriculum and instruction as well as a new school climate or culture.

Social Risk

Although it is the person joining the military who takes the oath to serve their country, when the military service member is married and has children, many comprehend the whole family serves. This all-common sentiment was echoed at the onset of Alfano et al.'s (2016) research, indicating that childhood and adolescence incorporate a vast number of physical, mental, and social stages and that some MC students attend DoD-funded schools and benefit

from the support they receive from peers and educational professionals. However, Alfano et al. (2016) explained that most MC children do not attend DoD-funded schools or even schools that serve large military populations. Alfano et al. (2016) further explained that, when the active-duty service member is stationed close to the base, the child and family benefit from the support of other families and the base. Although this support for active-duty service members and their families pointed to the active service members family, it also pointed to the potential lack of social supports for the MC child when the service member separated from the service and moved to a civilian community. Ormeno et al. (2020) presented evidence that frequent and multiple relocations contributed to MC children experiencing social disconnection, frustration with their academic environment, and resentment toward their parents. Ormeno et al. (2020) literature also suggested that children raised in a military family were themselves more likely to enlist in the military than children not raised in a military family, given their familiarity with this culture but potentially perpetuating difficulties with related adjustments.

Kranke and Dobalian (2018) explained that MC students can often find themselves to be targets of discrimination, a target of anti-war sentiment, or just for being “the new kid”, due to relocations. Kranke and Dobalian (2018) cited that MC students were 1.7 times more likely to be bullied than non-MC students. Further, Moore et al. (2017) cited that MC students’ relocation to new school districts disrupted their social connections and friendships. In the Hill et al. (2022) qualitative research regarding how educators perceive and support Canadian MC students, one participant indicated that MC students were hesitant to develop new friends. Estrada et al. (2017) suggested that beginning a military pride club for MC students could create a supportive climate and help MC students feel less marginalized. De Pedro et al.’s (2017) data indicated that the

school's bullying rates among MC and non-MC students decreased when they implemented the anti-bullying program, Because Nice Matters.

Behavioral Risk

For MC children of active-duty military members, many have the support of their peers and other military family community members to help guide them through changes and adjustments. Although these community members change from service station to service station, the commonly held experiences of these community members often remain stable. De Pedro et al. (2017) documented how school transitions can lead to social alienation, placing the MC student at risk of school victimization. Castillo et al. (2017) supported this assertion and added that MC children were at a higher risk of possessing a weapon on school grounds and exerting violent behavior. This was further supported by Reinhardt et al. (2019) who also suggested a connection between MC children and increased violent behavior, such as fighting. Although Estrada et al.'s (2017) research did not find military connectedness as a significant factor for predicting gang membership, it did find that some of the very experiences associated with being a member of a military family increased the odds of gang membership.

Wretman and Bowen (2019) found that students with any type of military connection had a 3.9% to 9.1% decrease in trouble avoidance. Reinhardt et al.'s (2019) research documented MC students' report that they were involved in fights on school property more frequently than other students and that these were most frequent among high school first-year students. However, a major limitation to this study was that it focused on students at a civilian high school which may not have been knowledgeable of MC student needs. Although Estrada et al. (2017) research did not find military connectedness as an isolated significant factor for predicting gang

membership, the research did find some of the very experiences associated with being a member of a military family increased the odds of gang membership.

Substance Abuse Risk

Williamson et al.'s (2018) research examined the phenomenon of military family membership on externalizing behaviors and substance abuse of MC children versus civilians. Despite the supports many MC children had during the time the military parent was serving, Williamson et al. (2018) research found that, when the cases of the MC children were older and the parent was deployed, the MC child was found to be at greater risk of substance abuse and externalizing behavior. Castillo et al. (2017) had also found that MC children were at high risk for alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and prescription drug use. Lipari et al. (2017) noted that veteran fathers were less likely to have talked with their children regarding the hazards of substance abuse than nonveteran fathers and found higher rates of tobacco use and nonmedical psychotherapeutic drug use among MC children. Lipari et al. (2017) explained further, even if a MC parent identified their child as having a substance abuse issue and wanted to intervene, there were few services available for this unique population.

Educational Risk

Moore et al. (2017) noted that MC students' relocation to new school districts impacted their academic performance and achievement. Wretman and Bowen (2019) found that MC students with any type of military connection had a 2.3% to 7.6% decrease in academic achievement. Cozza et al. (2018) found children of a deployed member of the service were at higher risk of educational neglect when compared with the children of a service member who had never been deployed. De Pedro et al. (2017) explained the varying state academic standards often created gaps in learning and other barriers for MC students. St. John and Fenning (2020)

suggested educational professionals should become more familiar with the Military Interstate Compact Commission, which addresses the challenges that MC students transitioning to new schools often face with enrollment requirements, attendance policies, school records, and individual education plans. However, Cabrera et al. (2018) found that, compared with their civilian peers, MC students in the twelfth grade had higher rates of attaining appropriate milestones toward college.

Military-Connected Child Psychology

Clearly outlining the fact that children of military persons have unique needs, in comparison with their civilian peers will enable education professionals working on military bases to prepare the students for integration into a civilian community. O'Neal and Mancini (2021) found the stressful reintegration for the active-duty parent within the family was associated with adolescent anxiety and depressive symptoms. Zalta et al. (2018) found the rate of veteran children screening positive for overall psychopathology was nearly double the national sample. Wooten et al. (2019) explained how MC children were at higher risk of psychological and behavioral problems such as anxiety, mood, and substance abuse disorders, which can endure across the developmental stages and result in the need for behavioral health services. In a review of self-care among MC youth, Lucier-Greer et al. (2020) found self-care is related to anxiety. Meers et al. (2018) had found that MC children with a parent deployed reported higher rates of anxiety, suggesting the deleterious effects of parental military service on the mental health of these children. Ormeno et al. (2020) underscored how military families exhibit above-average mental health issues, including an increase in mental health diagnoses or hospitalizations and worse academic achievement in their children. However, some data suggest that military families are less likely than nonmilitary families to report their child’s mental health concerns,

such as anxiety, attention deficient/hyperactivity, depressive, or other behavioral disorders (Hinojosa et al., 2022). All of this would suggest that the civilian communities which the MC child is moving to may not readily recognize the MC child's unique needs.

Cunitz et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis investigated and found that having at least one parent deployed for military service had a negative impact on the MC child's mental health. Identifying the mental health and behavioral issues that children of deployed military service persons are more prone to display will provide a starting point for what is needed for these children when their parent separates from military service. In their research regarding the mental health outcomes among MC children, the K. S. Sullivan et al. (2021) research found 18% of the service members children studied had a mental health diagnosis within one year of the survey. De Pedro et al.'s (2018) research of MC adolescents noted higher rates of depression. Simoni and Bauldry (2020) found even higher risk of depressive symptoms for adolescents who had moved and had lower levels of social support from parents, other adults, friends, and teachers, a phenomenon common to MC children. Kaeppler and Lucier-Greer (2020) discussed how cumulative risk was positively associated with depressive symptomology among MC youth, specifically older youth ages 15 to 18 years. Unfortunately, having the family as a coping source did not moderate this link. Further, Zalta et al. (2018) examined parental sense of competence as a mediator between veteran and child psychopathology and found that veteran depression had significant indirect effects on the outcomes of child psychopathology.

Williamson et al. (2018) examined the phenomenon of the military family membership on children's externalizing behaviors, substance abuse, and mental health problems and found there to be little difference between MC children and their civilian peers. Fear et al. (2018) found MC children's' emotional and behavioral wellbeing was more associated with the military

parent's probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than the military parent's deployment status. N. King and Smith (2016) reviewed the experiences of children of military service members diagnosed with PTSD and suggested that secondary traumatization or the transfer of traumatic symptoms was a prevalent theme for how these children were affected by their parent's diagnosis. Cramm et al. (2019) conducted a scoping review of studies investigating the mental health of MC children and found the majority indicated significant negative effects of military parent separation or deployment on the MC child's mental health. Castillo et al. (2017) and Wretman and Bowen (2019) each also noted the negative implications of mental health outcomes for children of parents who have served in the military.

Military Parent Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Ohye et al. (2017, p. 151) discussed the "invisible wounds of war" such as the service-connected mental health issues of veteran parents that may persistent or even be untreated. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a widely recognized issue that many military personnel experience secondary to their service. Although there are military services in place to help identify PTSD in service members and subsequent referral resources and agencies for the service members during and after separating from service; the effects on their children often go undiagnosed and treated. As PTSD is a more commonly identified issue for separating military persons, MC children can experience secondary traumatization or vicarious traumatization from the military parent's PTSD. Fear et al. (2018) specifically found increases in prosocial difficulties, hyperactivity, and conduct problems for children whose military parent had been assessed with full PTSD.

N. King and Smith (2016) and Fear et al. (2018) each indicated the detrimental effects of a parent's PTSD diagnosis on the MC child, and Estrada et al. (2017) specifically cited the

challenges of secondary traumatization from parental deployments and relocating experienced by MC children. J. S. Thomas and Baumann (2020) highlighted that, although suicide is already prevalent in the general population in the United States, it is even more prevalent among military veterans and personnel, contributing further to the traumatization experienced by MC children. Identifying the symptoms and supports for secondary traumatization could be a point of intervention for MC children whose parents are separating from service. Clements-Nolle et al. (2021) supported this idea, citing the need for trauma informed approaches for MC families.

Vicarious Traumatization

Howard (2021) explained vicarious trauma as trauma experienced by one person due to an empathetic response to the trauma experienced by another person. Vicarious trauma can be a person's response to another's reliving or discussing a traumatic event or memory, and Howard (2021) found that exposure to vicarious trauma was a predicating factor for trauma symptoms in children. Kelly and Paul (2018) described children of military combat veterans as veterans-by-proxy and explained how a MC child is a proxy witness traumatized from observing how combat traumatized their military connected parent. Howard (2021) found exposure to vicarious trauma was a predicating factor for trauma symptoms in children.

In a scoping review of military parents' PTSD and children's mental health, Collins (2018) explained that the feelings of uncertainty and anxiety experienced by the children of a deployed parent can create feelings of ambiguous loss which can continue upon the parent's return home when that parent is experiencing PTSD. Stein et al.'s (2018) research regarding the personality traits of the offspring of combat veterans and prisoners of war suggested a transmission of post traumatic psychopathologies from the veteran to their children. Collins (2018) found many of the articles reviewed indicated children of military parents with PTSD

experienced more behavioral and emotional problems. Stein et al. (2018) explained that the children of combat veterans and/or prisoners of war had high levels of neuroticism or feelings of anxiety, fear, moodiness, worry, and frustration. Stein et al. (2018) added such neurotic personality traits increased a child's risk factors for secondary traumatization. Brown et al. (2022) explained the necessity for teachers and teachers-in-training to be trauma-informed and identified these individuals as critical stakeholders.

Kelly and Paul (2018) indicated veteran-by-proxy children are attending schools where many of the teachers have minimal preparation and support for these students, indicating the need for adding in-school support services. K. Sullivan et al. (2022) found an association between military veteran depressive symptoms and their child's perception that their school climate was less safe. Furthermore, K. Sullivan et al. (2022) indicated that a student's perception of a safe school climate was considered a protective factor against the deleterious effects of the vicarious trauma experienced by MC students whose MC parent experienced depressive symptoms. Smith et al. (2017) indicated that MC students were more likely to have experienced trauma than civilian students which could impact the MC student's sense of fitting in. Although Collins (2018) noted minimal research regarding the efficacy of programs for children of a military parent with PTSD, the review pointed to the need for education and treatment programs for this population. Brown et al. (2022) recommended training and workshops for teachers to prepare them for their classrooms, specifically trauma-informed training or workshops that could help teachers look at student behavior through a trauma-informed lens and potentially reduce re-traumatization.

Suicidality Among Military-Connected Adolescents

Often associated with mental health issues is suicidality. Gilreath et al. (2016) found higher rates of suicidal ideation, plans, attempts, and attempts requiring medical care among MC children in California schools. Gilreath et al. (2016) and Castillo et al. (2017) suggested higher rates of suicidality among MC children could be associated with parental deployment during wartime. Gilreath et al. (2016) also suggested other factors could contribute to higher rates of suicidality among MC children, such as MC children's higher rates of mental health diagnosis, substance abuse, and other high-risk behaviors. MacDermid Wadsworth et al. (2017) also found higher rates of suicidality among MC children. Frain and Frain (2020) indicated that, compared with older children, younger children do not show sadness, depression, and anxiety the same way.

It is important to comprehend the impacts of suicidality on the educational needs and supports for MC children in schools. Frain and Frain (2020) described MC children's daily exposure to the military lifestyle as slow violence and explained how this slow violence was a contributing factor to the elevated rates of suicidal ideation among MC children. Frain and Frain (2020) concluded that the military presenting MC children and their parents as heroes created barriers to expressing emotion, which caused them to devalue their experiences and feelings. Clements-Nolle et al.'s (2021) research found that, compared with non-MC peers, MC students had higher rates of attempting suicide in the past 12 months. De Pedro et al. (2018) found school climate factors such as school connectedness, meaningful participation, and feeling safe were linked to reducing MC student depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation.

Resiliency

Similar to their non-MC peers, MC students experience life changes such as moving, making new friends, and parental separation. L. King et al. (2021) suggested people respond to

stress and traumatic events in a variety of ways and indicated that some people are prone to maladaptive outcomes while others adapt in healthy ways. Research has indicated that such early life changes can create resiliency (Renbarger et al., 2020). Renbarger et al. (2020) indicated that shifts in psychosocial processes can reconstruct an adolescent's self-position, affiliations, and the priority of relational bonds, which can further shape the resilience resources available and/or utilized by that adolescent in adverse situations, such as transition. Hanna (2020) identified that MC children have a strong sense of confidence and optimism highlighted by self-assured fearlessness, indicating that these children generally lack fear for the future or concern regarding how they will handle the future. Hanna (2020) also found that MC children perceive themselves as experiencing heightened levels of empathy as expressed through humility, consideration, and self-sacrifice.

Hanna (2020) indicated that MC children perceive the military culture in which they have been reared as having made them more mature and adaptable than their peers. It is one thing to identify the educational needs of MC children; however, it is another to craft a curriculum or establish supports essential in helping them appropriately transition to a new school. Mancini et al. (2020) added that MC families experienced some challenges not common among their civilian peers, thus they may need alternative resilience-enhancing skills. Hanna (2020) documented that education professionals can utilize the many perceived strengths of MC students to assist them in the transition to a new school. According to Kranke and Dobalian (2018), studying the factors which promote resilience and empowerment among MC students could help develop interventions for those MC students having trouble.

In measuring resilience in children, L. King et al. (2021) indicated development is marked by periods of heightened neural plasticity, where the region of the brain which regulates

emotion and stress are affected by early life adversity (ELA). An overarching strength trait of MC children that was identified by Hanna (2020) and Conover (2020) was resiliency. Renbarger et al.'s (2020) research indicated that further study is needed to improve the understanding and measuring of resilience. Furthermore, research on resilience is difficult to compare across setting, between age-groups, sexes, and from ages nine to 22 (Renbarger et al., 2020). L. King et al. (2021) explained attempts have been made to measure resilience; however, most of the available research relies on self-report or perceptual parental report. In a systematic search from January 2004 through October 2018, Gartland et al. (2019) found evidence that school factors were associated with resilient outcomes for children, adding that positive student-teacher relationships and a safe orderly environment were factors for resilient students. Zimmerman (2013) explained research which applied a resilience framework was able to be replicated and aided researchers in understanding how youth overcame adversity.

Conover (2020) indicated resiliency is an active process. Furthermore, Conover (2020) indicated that MC children's resiliency is a concern to educators, adding that schools play a role in developing resiliency. O'Neal, Lucier-Greer et al. (2018) indicated that parental involvement (i.e., communication with the deployed parent and consistency of the civilian parent) was a major factor in enhancing adolescent resilience. O'Neal and Mancini (2021) further added to the research by discussing the reintegration of the formerly deployed service member with the MC family as yet another factor with which MC students must contend. Conover (2020) and O'Neal, Mallette et al. (2018) indicated that the promotion of resiliency in MC students can be a collaborative effort between educational professionals and the MC students' parent(s). Conforte, DeLeon et al. (2017) indicated that the DoD offers several programs to improve resiliency among MC children, and these programs link families with support networks for child

psychosocial problems. Wretman and Bowen (2019) concluded that future studies should link the findings of their research regarding military connectedness to the role of schools in promoting resilience among MC children.

Military-Connected Student Needs

Kranke et al. (2019) explained how MC adolescents have a shared lived experience, which is different from their non-MC peers. This idea was supported by earlier work conducted by Atuel and Castro (2018) who explained that military culture includes concepts such as chain of command, as well as the military norms and identity. As school curricula can differ from state to state, and base reassignments can happen at any time of the year, MC children are often subject to missing building blocks in their curriculum, differences in grading systems, learning another state's specified curriculum (e.g., each state's history), and even repeating curriculum. Classen et al. (2019) added that all MC families may need educators to demonstrate empathy regarding their relocation. Sherman and Larsen (2018) emphasized that military families struggling with issues such as combat exposure and family separation and reintegration also experience issues outside the confines of the military experience. Their military-related issues follow them to the civilian community where they also experience other social and interpersonal life changes. For example, Hanna (2020) indicated that, since MC children move regularly and generally do not form close bonds with their peers, they often fall behind their peers in forming an identity. Additionally, Perreault et al. (2020) found that MC children's relocation recency, as opposed to relocation frequency, was a better predictor of adolescent adjustment. This all indicates the importance of early intervention within the first of relocation.

Atuel and Castro (2018) explained that cognitive competence, as it pertains to military culture, is a provider's knowledge base about military culture, including organizational structure,

norms, and social identities. Although Tam-Seto et al.'s (2020) research focused on importance of cultural competency in healthcare, specifically cultural sensitivity with military culture, it also served to highlight the overarching need for other civilian service providers to develop cultural competencies. For example, Keegan et al. (2004) found that military members expected civilian education professionals to maintain a positive view of the military, practice sensitivity regarding MC students' circumstances, and practice appropriate communication skills. Rylander (2020) researched the social, emotional, and academic needs of MC children and identified implications for policies and practice for public school teachers of MC students. Cramm et al. (2019) had previously found that MC children operate with a higher awareness of the possibility of relocation with little to no notice, family separation due to deployments, and the high risk that their family could potentially be impacted by physical and/or psychological injury and death. Farnsworth and O'Neal (2021) later found that MC adolescents with higher parental deployment reported lower self-efficacy. According to O'Neal, Mallette et al. (2018), military lifestyle, including factors like parental rank, can influence individual wellbeing. This was evident from higher rates of favorable parenting and healthier family function with higher parental military rank.

Van Slyke and Armstrong (2020) highlighted barriers such as the lack of communication from veteran service organizations and educational resources, and they highlighted the lack of literature concerning the needs of MC children. Hanna (2020) indicated that schools make essential contributions to inclusion and promoting diversity, butone of the most marginalized populations in public schools is the MC student. Hanna (2020) indicated that MC children move, on average, every three years and must learn to blend and make friends quickly but still resist the urge to get too close to anyone due to their expectation of another inevitable move. Hanna (2020)

explained this as a double-edged sword, as these students blend in very quickly and are not readily identified, and they experience academic problems because of the transient military parent lifestyle. Yarwood et al. (2021) learned that MC students in local state schools often had to face competing, challenging, and sometimes nonempathic oppositional comments regarding the military actions which affected them directly, which can only serve to further complicate an already challenging adjustment.

Zurlinden et al.'s (2021) research interviewed adult former MC students at a university and identified themes of respect, military pride, a shared community commonality, military terminology, adaptability, childhood instability, and the need for family as a constant. Participants in this study described their overall MC experience as positive, highlighting the unique shared lived experience of MC students. Although MC children have many similar childhood experiences, many seek out and continue this familiar lifestyle as adults, potentially engraining this cycle generationally. Koehlmoos et al. (2020) found MC children have a greater propensity to later serve in the military as an adult compared to the national average. Gosnell et al. (2020) highlighted the term "military brat" and defined it as a child of an active-duty service person. While studying at West Point, non-military brat cadets, Gosnell et al. (2020) found non-military brat cadets at West Point rated themselves higher in terms of their perceived self-control, specifically regarding industry/perseverance, self-regulation, social intelligence, and prudence. Although the Koehlmoos et al.'s (2020) research found no major difference between the prevalence of obesity among MC and civilian children, it was noted that, since MC children later join the military as adults at higher rates than their civilian counterparts, interventions were needed to improve nutrition, fitness, and behavioral health.

Summary

Much research exists regarding psychological issues (Cunitz et al., 2019) such as military service-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Fear et al., 2018) and suicidality (Gilreath et al., 2016). Research also indicates that MC children can experience secondary traumatization (N. King & Smith, 2016). Although there are programs and support services which are growing for military veterans separating from service (Ohye et al., 2020), identifying the specific educational support needs of MC children/students whose military parent is separating or has separated from service is lacking. For many military persons and their spouses, separating from military service means returning to the civilian world; however, MC children who were born and raised on military bases find themselves entering a civilian world with which they are unfamiliar. Researchers have begun to identify the MC student's needs (Rylander, 2020) regarding their transition to civilian living (Elliott, 2020; G. Thomas, 2018) and the civilian communities' preparedness for providing appropriate social and educational services for said students (Van Slyke & Armstrong, 2020). Some research exists regarding the resiliency of MC students (Hanna, 2020). Although there are many educational programs available to address the symptomatic needs of this group, a gap exists in the literature pertaining to educational program or services which address the foundational issues experienced by these students whose military parent is separating or has separated from service.

The needs of military service members separating from service, as well as the needs of their MC spouses and children have been studied. Studies have indicated many MC secondary students demonstrate social, psychological, emotional, developmental, and behavioral issues because of the military parents' service (Williamson et al., 2018). Although there is a support network in place among military service personnel for the families of military service persons,

when the military service person separates from service and transitions to the civilian community and educational systems, many of these systems are unfamiliar with their specific support needs (N. King & Smith, 2016; Van Slyke & Armstrong, 2020). Through investigating the specific educational needs of MC students whose military service parent is separating or has separated from service, a theme of increased levels of resiliency (Conover, 2020) of MC children presented as a potential strength for educational programs or services to build from to help these students transition to non-MC educational systems. McGuire and Steele's (2016) review of social networking sites indicated that future research should examine what mechanisms enhance and obstruct resilience for MC families. K. Sullivan et al. (2022) suggested future research to discover what responsibilities schools and education professionals should have in supporting veteran-connected students. The theoretical value of this present research is that it will address the gaps found in literature by documenting some of the strengths, problems, and supports identified by adults who experienced this phenomenon themselves as MC children. The practical value of this research is that educators can utilize this information to recognize needs, formalize supports, and provide appropriate interventions for MC students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the research methodology for this qualitative phenomenological study regarding understanding the needs of adolescent MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. This approach allowed for a more complete understanding of the needs of these students. The applicability of phenomenology and the social constructionist for this study are discussed in-depth later in this chapter. The design, setting, participants, procedures, researcher role, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are outlined in this chapter which concludes with a chapter summary.

Research Design

A qualitative study is appropriate when the purpose of the research is to attempt to make sense of or interpret a phenomenon and the meanings the people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) explained how qualitative research promotes a deep understanding of research participants' social setting or activity; and the approach emphasizes exploration, discovery, and description. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that quantitative research begins with assumptions and utilizes interpretative/theoretical frameworks. Albers (2017) explained that a quantitative study is completed to collect data and draw a numerical-based conclusion about said data. Therefore, the research dictated this study was best accomplished via qualitative methods, as the purpose of the research was to promote a better understanding of the research participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008) and their shared phenomenon.

The defining features of phenomenology are (1) an emphasis on a particular phenomenon to be explored as it has been experienced by a heterogeneous group of individuals, and (2) the essence of the shared experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) revealed defined a case study as an intense description and analysis of a phenomenon, social unit, or system, which is bounded by time or place. Ethnography researches a cultural or social group in its natural setting with the purpose of describing and interpreting cultural patterns (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Grounded theory research, as depicted by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), is an attempt to generate or discover a theory of a process, action, or interaction, which is grounded upon the research participants' views. Narrative inquiry/biography research, as described by Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), is studying the lives of one or more individuals through the telling of stories. Hermeneutics is research which interpretates texts and utilizes them for textual analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The purpose of phenomenological research was to investigate the meaning of the lived experience of people and to identify the essence of the research participants' shared human experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Moran (2012) indicated that Husserl insisted phenomenology is possible only as transcendental philosophy. Transcendental phenomenology is a textural description of the essences of a phenomenon, and transcendental phenomenological reduction considers the phenomenon in a new way (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental phenomenology is the collection of data from several persons who have experienced a phenomenon, analysis of the data by reducing it to statements of quotes, and then a combining of these into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher then develops textural and structural descriptions to outline what and how the participants in the research experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The design of this present research will follow Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological

approach to gain a textual description of the essences of the shared experiences of former MC students who transferred from MC schools to non-MC schools. Edmund Husserl was the pioneer in transcendental phenomenology and was concerned with the discovery of meanings and essences within knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) explained any phenomenon is suitable for investigation, describing Husserl's concept of intentionality as bound in transcendental phenomenology. It is important to epoche or set aside prejudgment to begin the research unbiased (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The theory guiding this study was Schlossberg's transition theory, which is a model from analyzing human adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Utilizing Schlossberg's (1981) four S's of transition theory - situation, self, support, and strategies - the research questions were structured.

Central Research Question

What are the shared lived experiences of MC students who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question One

What are the common situations experienced by MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question Two

What are the shared concepts of self (strengths and weaknesses) MC students have had regarding their experience transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question Three

What are the common supports MC students have had transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Sub-Question Four

What are the common strategies utilized by MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools?

Setting and Participants

The following section outlines the purpose of the site selected for the study and provides description profiles of the study participants. The section will also inform the reader of the criteria utilized for the selection of the study participants.

Site

MC social media sites were utilized as the recruitment platform of participants for the collection of data for this study. The MC social media sites were utilized due to the identified network for the target population for this research. Furthermore, the MC social media sites were utilized due to the sites' established administrator procedures for overseeing and vetting site members as former MC children. The following Facebook groups were utilized to recruit research participants: *Military Brats Global*, *Military Brats Exchange*, *Military Brats Business Network, Growing Up As A Military Brat*, *If You Grew Up A Military Brat You Might Remember…*, *You're Probably A Military Brat If…*, *Military Brats Online*, *Brats: Our Journey Home*, and *Military Brats*. The purpose for selecting these social media sites was due to the large and diverse population of adult former MC students from across the world. The social media sites indicated a total potential recruitement pool of 79,177 adult former MC students, with membership as follows: *Military Brats Global* 3.6K members, *Military Brats Exchange* 1.1K

members, *Military Brats Business Network* 277 members, *Growing Up As A Military Brat* 8.6K members, *If You Grew Up A Military Brat You Might Remember…* 11.5K members, *You're Probably A Military Brat If…* 25.7K members, *Military Brats Online* 3.1K members, *Brats: Our Journey Home* 22.7K members, and *Military Brats* 1.6K members. The social media sites potentially consisted of adult former MC students from all 50 states, as well as countries around the world. The large population enabled the researcher the ability to obtain a sample with the best representation of former MC students who experienced transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. This vast population allowed for the potential equal representation of gender and military branches of former MC students who experienced transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools.

Participants

The participants of this study were adults (18 years of age or older). All participants experienced transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school. Participants of this study represented male and female participants. The participants were former military dependents, whose parent(s) or guardian(s) served in the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Age	Gender	Service-Connected Branch	Ethnicity/Nationality
Alberta	48	Female	Air Force	Caucasian
Diana	44	Female	Air Force	Caucasian
Irma	75	Female	Army	Caucasian
Isaiah	44	Male	Air Force	Caucasian
James	45	Male	Army	Asian

Lula	60	Female	Army	Caucasian
Mechelle	60	Female	Army	Caucasian
Melissa	63	Female	Air Force	Caucasian
Ralph	75	Male	Army	Caucasian
Reign	68	Female	Air Force	Caucasian
Renee	76	Female	Air Force	Caucasian
Richard	62	Male	Army	Caucasian
Theresa	23	Female	Navy	Caucasian

* Names listed are pseudonyms.

Researcher Positionality

My motivation for conducting this study was that I was a MC student who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school as an adolescent. My experience transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school lacked support. I later became aware of the consistent lack of support for this transition through conversations with other adults who experienced a similar phenomenon. I was motivated to learn more regarding the support networks for transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools over time, if perceptions of this support have improved or otherwise changed, and if adults who have experienced this phenomenon were aware of their unique needs or the need for support in general. The following section will review my interpretive and philosophical assumptions regarding this study.

Interpretive Framework

Moustakas (1994) indicated that intentionality requires researchers to recognize that self and world are inseparable. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) explained how social constructionism research is the researcher's attempt to understand social phenomena from a research participant's

perspective. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), the central assumption of social constructionism is that reality is socially constructed and that the research participants have developed subjective meanings of personal experiences, which presents multiple perceptions and meanings. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) explained that the researcher's role in social constructionism is to better understand the perceived realities from the multiple perspectives of research participants. Thus, my interpretative framework regarding understanding the needs of MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools was through social constructionism, as this study sought to understand the phenomenon from each participant's perspective and to investigate the subjective meanings of the participants' experiences.

Philosophical Assumptions

Moustakas (1994) explained that phenomenology attempts to eliminate prejudgments, sets aside presumptions, and is open to the knowledge of everyday experience. This section seeks to help the reader understand my worldview and identify my philosophical assumptions; specifically, ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions.

Ontological Assumption

Moustakas (1994) explained Husserl's intersubjectivity as the connection with self-insights and subjective perceptions of reality. As a Christian researcher, God's reality is the one true reality. I also comprehend that each person's perception of reality can be drastically different based on their collective life experiences. Despite true reality, each person has their own perceived reality based on their interpretation of their experiences. Furthermore, each person's perception of an experience can be fluid and change over time, based on reflection and attainment of more information. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that the researcher's ontological assumptions address reality as seen through multiple views. Each of the participants

involved in this study will have their own individual experiences, thus the nature of their perceived reality may be different. The study sought to understand the multiple views of adults who were MC students who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The study allowed the researcher an opportunity to glean from the different developed perspectives of each of the participants and to identify the themes prevalent in their reporting.

Epistemological Assumption

Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that, when conducting a qualitative study, the researcher's epistemological assumption attempts to get as close as possible and get to know the participants and minimize their objective separateness. Moustakas (1994) explained that, from the perspective of transcendental philosophy, knowledge must conform to experience. Moustakas (1994) further explained transcendental phenomenology is considered transcendental as it utilizes conscious data and adheres to what is discovered through reflection on subjective acts. Each of the participants in this study brought subjective information relative to the research. All participants were adults who had previously experienced the transition from a MC school to non-MC school. The participants had the ability to reflect upon their initially perceived perspective and draw upon the knowledge they have gained since the experience influenced their perspective. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that the researcher's epistemological assumptions seek to obtain subjective evidence from the participants. The individual interviews in this study were subjective for each of the participants. Thus, the study relied on quotes from the participants from a subjective experience as evidence.

Axiological Assumption

Moustakas (1994) explained how phenomenological studies abstain from making suppositions and focus on the topic of research naively. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that

the researcher's axiological assumptions acknowledge that their research is value-laden and that biases are present. Given my own experience with this phenomenon, I recognize I brought preconceived notions of what I consider to be appropriate support systems and the unique needs of this population. Moustakas (1994) indicated that phenomenological studies construct a question or problem to guide the study, and findings are derived which can guide future research. The individual interview questions and focus group questions were framed in a generalized manner to present the participants with the opportunity to report subjectively regarding their experience with this phenomenon. The findings of this study can be utilized to guide future research regarding which supports best address the needs of MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools.

Researcher's Role

The researcher has a common shared experience with the participants in this study. Both the researcher and the participants experienced transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledges a bias based on individual experience transitioning from a MC school to non-MC schools as an adolescent. The researcher does recognize that, based on personal experience transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school as an adolescent and knowledge of research regarding MC students, the researcher has assumptions regarding individualized needs of adolescents transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. Moustakas (1994) defined the epoche process as the researcher setting aside prejudgments regarding an investigated phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) explained that, when utilized properly, the epoche process can enable the study to go beyond the researcher's prior experiences, professional research, preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon, so that the researcher can be open and receptive to the information provided by the participants.

Utilizing transcendental phenomenology, as outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018), the researcher utilized direct statements or quotes from the participants to identify themes prevalent in the phenomenon.

The role of the researcher was the interviewer and focus group mediator. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that, as the human instrument, the researcher will need to utilize epoche as Moustakas (1994) suggested to separate the researcher's prejudgments and biases. At the time of this study, this researcher was an online doctoral student at Liberty University. This researcher shared the lived experience of being an adult who transitioned from a MC school to non-MC school during adolescence. The researcher will epoched prejudgments and biases formulated from personal experience of this phenomenon.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) described an interview as structured and purposeful, with careful questioning and listening. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) explained how an interviewer asks about and listens to the interviewees' dreams, fears, hopes, views, and opinions of their lived world. Furthermore, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) explained that an interview is a professional conversation where knowledge is constructed from the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) highlighted that qualitative interviews have been a research method utilized within education for decades. Regarding ethical interview issues, they indicated that the knowledge produced from the research depends upon the social relationship between the interviewer and interviewee or the interviewer's ability to create an atmosphere where the interviewee feels free and safe to talk about private events for public use. Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) outlined the following stages of research interviewing: thematizing an interview project, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. For the present study, the researcher held no authority over the participants. Participation in this

study was voluntary, and the participants' decision whether or not to participate will not affect their current or future relations with the recruitment site or with this researcher. If a participant decided to participate, they were free to not answer any question or to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Procedures

The following section will outline the necessary permission for this study, including Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, as well as site and participant approval. This section will outline the recruitment process and rationale utilized to recruit the study participants. This section will provide the reader with an outline of the data collection methods used for this study and the rationale for the selection of these methods. Furthermore, this section will explain how the data collection and analysis plan was utilized to triangulate the data obtained for this study.

Permissions

Permission to conduct this study was sought through the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process (Appendix A). Permission to utilize social media sites selected for recruiting participants for the study was sought (Appendix B). A survey (Appendix C) was sent to potential participants to establish a representative voluntary research participant group for this study.

Recruitment Plan

The researcher obtained permission from MC social media site administrators to post recruitment advertisements via their respective MC social media network sites. With permission from MC social media site administrators, participants were recruited through the respective MC social media networks for a maximum variation sample. Higginbottom (2004) explained the phenomenological approach is associated with small sample sizes, due to the need for in-depth

interviewing; but with maximum phenomenon variation, more participants may need to be sought as the research progresses. Patton (2015) indicated that maximum variation is utilized for a wide range of cases to generate variation on dimensions of the research interests. As the threshold of 12 participants was not met via the sample from MC social media sites, snowball sampling was utilized to recruit additional participants. Snowball, or chain sampling, utilizes people familiar with other cases or people to identify more cases which will be a source of rich information (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

After gaining the approval from MC social media site administrators, a survey (Appendix C) was sent to the prospective participants for the purposes of advertising recruitment for the study and so the researcher could be contacted by prospective participants,. Guest et al. (2006) found that saturation was established within the first 12 interviews and that the basic elements of meta themes were evident after six themes occurred within the first twelve interviews. Andrade (2021) defined a purposive sample as a sample whose characteristics are defined for a purpose which is relevant for the study. The researcher generated a list of participants for the research based on age, gender, and parental or guardian US military branch affiliation. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that a heterogeneous group for a phenomenological study ranges from three to 15 participants. The researcher selected 11 adult participants (Guest et al., 2006) who experienced transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school. When the threshold of 12 participants was not met via the sample social media networking site, snowball sampling was utilized to recruit additional participants. The snowball sampling resulted in two additional participants who met the recruitment criterion, for a total sample of 13 participants.

Data Collection Plan

Data for this research was collected utilizing interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Roberts, 2020), focus groups (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kitzinger, 1995), and journal prompts (Filep et al., 2018) to triangulate the data.

Individual Interviews

Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended in-depth and multiple interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being studied when conducting phenomenological research. An informed consent (Appendix F) form was required for each participant prior to participating. Participants were interviewed (Appendix G) via Microsoft Teams and Zoom. The interviews were recorded electronically using a conference recording service or audio video recorder.

Table 2

Individual Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, with your name and age, and a little bit about yourself. (SQ1)
2. Please describe your situation or how you became a dependent with a parent or guardian in the military. (SQ4)
3. Please walk me through your experience being the child of a military-connected parent or guardian. Please include what grade you were in when your parent or guardian separated from military service. (CRQ)
4. What were the similarities and differences between military-connected (MC) and non-MC schools? (SQ2)

5. What were your situations or experiences (positive or negative) regarding transitioning from different MC schools? (CRQ)
6. What services or supports were available for you as a student when you transitioned from MC school to MC school? (SQ2)
7. What were your situations or experiences (positive or negative) regarding transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school? (SQ4)
8. What services or supports were available for you as a student when you transitioned from MC school to a non-MC school? (SQ2)
9. What do you believe are the most beneficial services or supports for a student transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school? (SQ3)
10. What personal strengths or assets do you believe aided you in your transition from a MC school to a non-MC school? (SQ3)
11. What problems or difficulties (educational, social, psychological, etc.) did you experience when you transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school? (SQ1 and SQ2)
12. What did you learn regarding your experience transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school during this interview? Is there anything else you would like to add, or do you have any concerns regarding anything you discussed during this interview? (SQ1)

Roberts (2020) indicated that, by asking qualitative interview questions, the interviewer should begin with orienting questions to help introduce the interviewee and help the interviewer understand their point of view. Questions one through three were designed to introduce the interviewee and help the interviewer understand their point of view within the constructs of the research. Roberts (2020) indicated that the main questions should introduce the theme or focus of the study. Questions four through eight were designed to guide the interviewee on the focus of

the study. Roberts (2020) indicated the interview questions should start broad and then become more focused and that the questions should be broad enough to not limit or bias the participant's response. As suggested by Roberts (2020), questions four through eight were designed in a manner which was free from assumptions, allowed for complex answers, and conveyed that the researcher was open to all aspects (positive and negative) of their experience.

Roberts (2020) indicated that follow-up questions should be utilized in qualitative research to ensure various dimensions of the phenomenon are explored. Questions nine through eleven were designed to allow interviewees to further explore other dimensions of the phenomenon being studied. Roberts (2020) suggested pilot testing to make changes or revisions based on feedback and to allow the researcher a chance to practice interviewing. Pilot testing was completed to revise questions as needed and to practice interviewing skills, such as verbal and non-verbal cues. Roberts (2020) also suggested debriefing participants to allow them the opportunity to discuss new insights which occurred because of the interview. Question twelve was designed to allow the interviewees the opportunity to debrief and add any other relevant information for the research. Finally, Roberts (2020) suggested that the interviewer take time for their own reflection, to note body language, noteworthy interactions or moments, ideas, themes, connections, potential biases, first impressions, and other relevant contextual information.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

As this study is a transcendental phenomenological study, Moustakas (1994) indicated the researcher must determine if the phenomenon contains a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it and whether it is possible to abstract and label it. Moustakas (1994) provided an outline for analyzing data collected from a phenomenological designed study and suggested epoche, phenomenological reduction,

imaginative variation, and textural/structural descriptions were appropriate methods for data analysis in phenomenology. The data analysis plan as outlined by Moustakas (1994) begins with the epoche, or setting aside prejudgments and biases. To set my personal experiences aside, to the best of my ability, I wrote down my own experiences regarding the phenomenon (Ahern, 1999).

Moustakas (1994) suggested the following steps for a phenomenological analysis: bracketing, horizontalization, delimiting horizons, clustering themes, and utilizing the identified themes to construct textural-structural descriptions or narrative descriptions of the participants' perceptions of the meanings and essences. Following the textural-structural descriptions, imaginative variation or analyses for varying meaning, perspectives, and structural themes were completed (Moustakas, 1994). The data analysis included the utilization of the transcripts and notes from individual interviews to identify themes. The identified structural themes were utilized to create the composite description (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, as Moustakas (1994) concluded, the composite descriptions were synthesized for composite textural and structural descriptions for the meanings and essence of MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school.

Journal Prompts

In a systematic review of research utilizing solicited diaries/journals as a method of data collection, Filep et al. (2018) explained how diaries/journals are a qualitative method of research within the social sciences, which better enables researchers to understand shared life experiences. Filep et al. (2018) explained that solicited diaries or journals can elicit more detailed comprehensive reflections of the research participants' understandings, opinions, and circumstances of a particular life experience. Reflexive journaling or diaries allow the

participants time to elaborate regarding their understanding of their emotions and the events of the life experience being researched (Filep et al., 2018). Participants were asked to provide responses to reflexive journal prompts (Appendix H) outlining their experience transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. Participants were asked to include a detailed explanation of what they experienced, what issues they faced because of this transition, what supports were offered or available, what supports they needed, what personal strengths assisted them during this transition, and any insight they have since gained through this life experience.

Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan

Moustakas (1994) outlined the methods to analyze data and highlighted the importance of developing individual textural and structural essences of an experience. Filep et al. (2018) explained how solicitated diaries or journals are typically combined with interviews as a data collection method for engagement and for the participant to revisit or elaborate upon topics discussed during the interviews. The entries from journal prompts for each of the participants created a textural record of the data from each participant in a manner which helped to capture the essence of their individual experience. The journal prompts allowed for the organization and bracketing of data so the data could be synthesized efficiently.

Focus Groups

Morgan (1997) stated that focus groups are group interviews with a reliance on interaction amongst the group via topics presented by the group moderator, and they allow the researcher to collect data through that group interaction. The group discussions provide the opportunity for direct evidence of participants' similarities and differences of opinions and/or experiences. Kitzinger (1995) indicated that focus groups really capitalize on participation to generate data, as participants are encouraged to talk to each other, ask questions, and comment

on each other's points of view. These groups even help participants explore and clarify their own views. Similarly Patton (2015) explained that focus groups bring people of similar backgrounds together in a group interview, affording the opportunity for interaction between the interviewer and respondent, as well as, amongst respondents. They tend to be enjoyable for participants and beneficial for identifying major themes, and they can be utilized to clarify and validate individual interviews.

Morgan (1997) suggested that the amount of information each focus group participant must contribute during the one-hour session is a major factor the researcher must consider when determining group size. For the present study, participants engaged in focus groups via Microsoft Teams (Appendix I). An informed consent form (Appendix F) was required for each participant prior to participating in their group. Focus group questions were established based upon information gleaned from participant individual interview responses and reflexive journaling responses. The focus group questions reflected themes and patterns revealed from the analysis of the participants' interviews and reflexive journaling responses to form more appropriate follow-up and cross-checking questions. The focus groups were recorded electronically using a conference recording service and audio video recorder.

Table 3

Focus Group Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to the group, with your name and age, and a little bit about yourself. (SQ1)
2. Describe and discuss the differences/situations in education, such as the curriculum or classes, which you experienced when transitioning from a military-connected (MC) school to a non-MC school. (SQ1)

3. Specifically, regarding the curriculum or classes, describe and discuss the supports the non-military connected schools offered to support you during the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ3)
4. Specifically, regarding the curriculum or classes, describe and discuss what supports you believe would be helpful for non-MC schools to offer to support MC students when transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ4)
5. Describe and discuss the interpersonal (self) demographic and psychosocial, or the social, cultural, and environmental influences which you experienced when transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ1)
6. Specifically, regarding the interpersonal psychosocial influences, describe and discuss the supports the non-MC schools offered to support you during the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ3)
7. Specifically, regarding the interpersonal psychosocial influences, describe and discuss what supports you believe would be helpful for non-MC schools to offer to support MC students when transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ4)
8. Describe and discuss the intrapersonal (self) psychological or behavioral experiences which you experienced when transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ1)
9. Specifically, regarding the intrapersonal (self) psychological or behavioral experiences, describe and discuss the supports the non-MC schools offered to support you during the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ3)
10. Specifically, regarding the intrapersonal (self) psychological or behavioral experiences, describe and discuss what supports you believe would be helpful for non-MC schools to

offer to support MC students when transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ4)

11. Discuss or describe anything the MC schools offered to support you when you were going to transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. (CRQ)
12. Discuss or describe what services and supports the military/Department of Defense could offer which you believe would be helpful to support MC students when MC students transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ2)
13. Describe or discuss what information would be essential for the training for non-MC education professionals to better help MC students when MC students transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ2)
14. Describe or discuss what information would be essential for MC students to know prior to transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. (SQ2)

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan

Braun and Clarke (2006) indicated that thematic analysis can be a constructionist's method of examining how events, realities, meaning, and experiences effect discourses which operate in a society. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained that a theme captures something important about data obtained from the research question and represents a pattern or meaning from the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested six phases of thematic analysis ,which include: familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated that the researcher should develop a list of significant statements from the interviews or other data sources. The data analysis then included the utilization of the transcripts and notes from focus groups to develop a list of significant statements made by the participants. Braun and

Clarke (2006) outlined the advantages of thematic analysis, one of which was to allow for social and psychological interpretations of data and to highlight similarities across data. This data analysis aided in identifying, defining, and naming themes to help in the social and psychological interpretations of the data obtained from the focus group.

Data Synthesis

Following the collection of data, the analysis of data was done via Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological model. Moustakas (1994) explained that the first step in the process is to epoche, or set aside prejudgments and biases. Following this epoche, the researcher completed a phenomenological reduction through horizontalizing, delimiting or defining horizons or meaning, and clustering themes into individual and composite textural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). Following this textual description, the researcher conducts an imaginative variation to analyze the possible meanings, perspectives, and free fantasy variations, or the structural qualities which bring about the textural descriptions of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) explained the task in a phenomenological reduction is to describe the textural language just as the researcher observes, both externally and internally or consciousness. Moustakas (1994) stressed the necessity for the researcher to look and describe textural qualities, intensities, and special qualities repeatedly. For the present study, Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological data synthesis process was the synthesis of composite textural and structural descriptions of former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school. These textural and structural descriptions formulated the meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1994) of the former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school. The themes generated from this data were utilized to answer the research questions in this study.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined that trustworthiness addresses credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. This section defines the steps taken throughout this transcendental phenomenological qualitative study to ensure quality.

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that, when the results of the study provide an accurate description of the multiple realities of the phenomenon shared by the participants, the findings can be considered credible. Patton (2015) explained how triangulation of data is utilized to increase the accuracy and credibility of the researcher's findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) added that, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation improve the probability the results of the research are credible. This study achieved credibility through the triangulation of the data obtained by the researcher via individual interviews, reflexive journal prompts, and focus groups.

Triangulation

Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that triangulation utilizes corroborating data from multiple sources to reveal presenting themes within the phenomenon. Denzin (2017) explained how triangulation makes an attempt to collect data from various methods of observation of time, social situations, and persons. Furthermore, Denzin (2017) added that empirical events must be studied utilizing as many methods availed to the researcher as possible. This research included the triangulation of data acquired by the researcher from the individual interviews, reflexive journal prompts, and focus groups. The participant interviews and focus groups were recorded by the researcher. The interviews and focus groups were transcribed utilizing the transcription services included within Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms. The same participants

participated in the interview, journal prompts, and focus groups, enabling the researcher to triangulate the data collected from the participants in each format.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined transferability as the study findings apply in other contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) the research findings must utilize thick descriptions for someone to determine if the transfer is a possibility. Participants in the present study were male and female adults, ages 23 to 76 years and former dependents from various branches of the US military (Army, Navy, and Air Force). The descriptions of this research offered a robust account of the perceptions of the essence of the shared participant life experiences of these former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school. Although a single institution may not offer complete transferability of findings, this study provides an outline for future research at other institutions and/or facilities, such as secondary schools, colleges, universities, military academies, veteran centers, counseling agencies, mental health facilities, or correctional facilities.

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized there can be no credibility without dependability, and they defined dependability as demonstrating the study findings are consistent and repeatable. Descriptions of data collection, analysis, and synthesis plan have already been documented. Furthermore, descriptions of the bracketing, horizontalization, delimiting horizons, clustering themes, and the utilization of identified themes to construct textural-structural descriptions of the meanings and essences followed throughout the data collection process will be documented. The descriptions of the methods this research utilized have been comprehensive enough to be replicated within various agencies or clusters of populations that have experienced the

phenomenon of being a former MC secondary student who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school. A committee and board reviewed these procedures and determined the method was appropriate for the purpose for which this study was designed.

Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that confirmability examines the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations, rather than the researcher's biases or self-motivating factors. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that confirmability and dependability can be performed through one appropriately conducted audit. Lincoln and Guba (1985) added that confirmability can be accomplished through triangulation and a reflexive journal. Lincoln and Guba (1982) recommended dependability audits to assist the process of inquiry for reliability, and confirmability audits to check the research for the absence of bias. Lincoln and Guba (1982) explained that the auditor must ensure good professional practice and that it should be substantiated. Lincoln and Guba (1982) explained that the purpose of the audit trail is to create a data bank for future research. This present research study provided detailed audit trails throughout the planning and collection, analysis, and final reports regarding the data collected. Lincoln and Guba (1982) emphasized the importance of triangulation, explaining the researcher's need to utilize multiple data sources, methods, and perspectives. The present research involved the triangulation of data collected from individual interviews, reflexive journal prompts, and focus groups. Lincoln and Guba (1982) highlighted the use of journaling for researchers to check biases. For this study, journaling provided an audit trail of what the researcher did and felt throughout the study.

Ethical Considerations

This transcendental phenomenological study began with securing Institutional Review Board approval (Appendix A) from Liberty University and recruitment permission from MC social media site administrators before any data were collected. All physical data to include audio/visual recordings related to the research were stored in a locked filing cabinet, and electronic devices containing data and/or audio/visual recordings were password protected. Informed consent forms were required for each participant prior to participating in interviews and focus groups (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research utilized pseudonyms for all participants. All electronic/digital data, such as transcriptions, emails, data, notes, and other electronic data were password-protected on the researcher's computer.

Summary

As a result of this qualitative phenomenological study, this research sought to help educators better understand the shared experiences and needs of former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school. It also sought to help educators be more aware of the frequent problems or issues experienced by these students. As a result of this qualitative phenomenological study, it is expected that educators will better understand the shared lived situations of former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school, their shared concepts of self (strengths and weaknesses) regarding their transition experience, and the common supports available to them and strategies they utilized during these transitions.

A qualitative study was determined appropriate for this research, and this study attempted to make sense of and interpret the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) of the shared experiences and needs of former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to non-MC

school. The purpose of phenomenological research is to investigate the meaning of the lived experience of people and to identify the essence of the research participants' shared human experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This present research investigated the meaning of the lived experience of former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to non-MC school. Data for this research was collected via individual interviews, reflexive journaling, and focus groups.

The data analysis included the utilization of the transcripts and notes from individual interviews, reflexive journaling responses, and focus groups, to develop a list of significant statements made by the participants. The researcher grouped the statements into more broad units of information to begin to identify themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher then created textural and structural descriptions of the participants in the study experience with the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher wrote a composite description of the phenomenon, which incorporated both the textural and structural descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This data analysis explained the essence of the shared lived situations of former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the needs of military-connected (MC) students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. This chapter includes an examination of the purpose of this study, as well as the central research question this study endeavored to answer. Furthermore, this chapter introduces the participants who opted to contribute to this research. The participants were former MC students who had transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The results of the data analysis are represented as themes and responses of participants to this study's research questions. This chapter concludes with a summarization of the findings of the study, composite textural and structural descriptions of the lived experiences of adult former MC students who had transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools, as well as the essence of their experience.

Participants

This study was facilitated via the collaboration of 13 participants who experienced the phenomenon of being former MC students who had transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Table 1 contains detailed demographics of the research participants. Although 13 participants began the study, completing individual interviews, only 11 of the 13 participated in the reflexive journaling assignment, and 10 of those remaining 11 participants engaged in the focus groups. All participants experienced being former MC students who had transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Participant identity was protected by use of pseudonyms. Participant quotes will be utilized in this chapter to accurately represent the participants' experiences with this phenomenon.

Alberta

Alberta was a 48-year-old Caucasian female born while both her mother and father were serving in the U.S. Air Force. Alberta reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned multiple times from DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. Her military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Alberta completed all three data collection tools.

Diana

Diana was a 44-year-old Caucasian female whose mother served as an enlisted Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the U.S. Air Force. Diana reported that she was born while her mother was serving in the Air Force and that her mother was a single parent. Diana reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. Her military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Diana completed all three data collection tools.

Irma

Irma was a 75-year-old Caucasian female whose father served as Lieutenant Colonel, Chaplain in the U.S. Army and joined when Irma was in junior high school. Irma reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from junior high through high school. Her military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Irma completed all three data collection tools.

Isaiah

Isaiah was a 44-year-old Caucasian male whose father served as a pilot in the U.S. Air Force. Isaiah reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. Isaiah’s military experience included

MC schools outside the United States. Isaiah completed the interview and journaling data collection tools; however, he missed the first and then second/final focus groups after responding with intention to participate.

James

James was a 45-year-old Asian male whose father served as a Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCIC) in the U.S. Army when James was born. James reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. His military experience included MC schools outside the United States. James completed all three data collection tools.

Lula

Lula was a 60-year-old Caucasian female whose father served as a career U.S. Army Officer when Lula was born. Lula reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. Her military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Lula completed all three data collection tools.

Mechelle

Mechelle was a 60-year-old Caucasian female who was born while her father served in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam era. Mechelle reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. Her military experience included MC and non-MC within the continental United States. Mechelle completed all three data collection tools.

Melissa

Melissa was a 63-year-old Caucasian female whose father served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army. Melissa reported she was born while her father was serving in the Army. She reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. Her military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Melissa completed all three data collection tools.

Ralph

Ralph was a 75-year-old Caucasian male whose father served as Sergeant in the motor pool in the U.S. Army when Ralph was born in 1948. Ralph reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. His military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Ralph completed all three data collection tools.

Reign

Reign was a 68-year-old Caucasian female whose father served as both a NCO and commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force. Reign reported having attended DoD schools and transitioned from multiple MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. Her military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Reign only completed the interview from the data collection tools. She did not respond to the reflexive journaling prompts or subsequent follow-up email messages following the interview.

Renee

Renee was a 76-year-old Caucasian female whose father served as a NCO in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. Renee reported having attended several DoD schools and transitioned from multiple MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school.

Her military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Renee only completed the interview from the data collection tools. She did not respond to the reflexive journaling prompts or subsequent follow-up email messages following the interview.

Richard

Richard was a 62-year-old Caucasian male whose father served during the Vietnam era and was enlisted as a NCO in the U.S. Army when Richard was born. Richard reported having attended several DoD schools and transitioned from multiple DoD and MC schools to non-MC schools from elementary through high school. His military experience included MC schools outside the United States. Richard completed all three data collection tools.

Theresa

Theresa was a 23-year-old Caucasian female whose father joined the U.S. Navy after she was born. Theresa reported having attending one DoD school and transitioned from a MC school to non-MC schools in elementary school. Her military experience included a MC school in a U.S. territory. Theresa completed all three data collection tools.

Table 4

Military Connected Participants

MC Participant	Age	Gender	Service-Connected Branch
Alberta	48	Female	Air Force
Diana	44	Female	Air Force
Irma	75	Female	Army
Isaiah	44	Male	Air Force
James	45	Male	Army
Lula	60	Female	Army
Mechelle	60	Female	Army

Melissa	63	Female	Air Force
Ralph	75	Male	Army
Reign	68	Female	Air Force
Renee	76	Female	Air Force
Richard	62	Male	Army
Theresa	23	Female	Navy

Results

This study's purpose and the theoretical framework functioned to guide the formulation of the research questions. Data analysis was completed utilizing these same contexts and this for the examination of the results through the from the positionality of the theoretical framework, as well as answers to the research questions. Four primary themes were revealed through the data analysis, including: (a) instruction issues, (b) interpersonal issues, (c) intrapersonal issues, and (d) transition supports. The primary themes contained sub-themes, which functioned to advise the purpose of this study and theoretical framework.

Table 5

Themes & Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme	Subtheme	Subtheme	Subtheme
Instruction	Curriculum	Classes	Training	
Interpersonal	Bullying	Cultural Barriers	Peers	
Intrapersonal	Orientation	Resilience	Mental Health	
Supports	Professional	Family	Friends	Spiritual

Instruction

Participants identified themes regarding education during their transitions from MC

schools to non-MC schools. Many of the participants reported perceptions of instructional inconsistencies and disregard when they transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The participants reported these inconsistencies ranged from differences in or repeated curriculum, annotating the sequencing of classes, and the training or level of education their respective teachers presented. Many participants indicated these differences in instruction often caused them to feel disengaged, disconnected, or bored, and that these feelings often resulted in changes to the measurable educational outcomes. Richard reflected: "The last move caused me to "injure" myself to the point that the 4.0 GPA I carried soon became a 2.5 at the conclusion" (Journal). Irma perceived: "I was ahead of most of the kids in a lot of different areas" (Journal), indicating the non-MC schools were offering instruction which was repetitious for her while potentially new for the other students. Other participants explained the differences in perceived societal normative behaviors between MC and non-MC school that often contributed to feelings of embarrassment or confusion. Theresa explained: "I also had difficulties adjusting to a non-military school because of the different rules and regulations. For example, we were not forced to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance or The National Anthem" (Journal). Examples of perceived educational issues experienced by former MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools included curriculum and class differences.

Curriculum

Many of the participants revealed subthemes associated with school curriculum, the plan for instruction, or the sequencing of educational experiences. Regarding his perceived similarities and differences in curriculum between MC and non-MC schools, Ralph stated: "As I have looked back and done some research on it, the Taipei American schools had a pretty high level of expectation in terms of education" (Interview). Alberta reported: "People thought that I

failed Drivers ****ing Ed because I was taking it as a junior. Not knowing that first-year students take it stateside… and I had to keep explaining to the dumb***** that you can't take it in overseas because you can't even drive there till you're 18" (Interview). James revealed experiencing a perceived reduction in educational support services when he transitioned from a MC school to non-MC school when he reported: "When I was in the military, I was in TAG or talented and gifted education, and I would have thought that I'd been transferred into GATE education out in the U.S., but I guess the counselor didn't even think about that" (Interview).

Richard shared the perception of non-MC schools being behind MC schools academically and reported: "It was easier to come out the military schools and go into the civilian schools… it was easier because I was already ahead of the game. In fact, in some ways, I was bored" (Interview). Lula identified educational lessons included at MC schools not experienced at non-MC and reported: "Each school is so different; the military schools we had to we had a lot of things that activities and things that were prescribed by the military. I remember in first grade sitting through a video, or I guess it was a movie, about not picking up unexploded ordinance around the base; and, you know, not wandering around like that" (Interview). Reign outlined how transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools impacted her educational journey and explained: "There were almost no similarities. I went to freshman and sophomore years at a military-run school; it was on base in Britain. Coming back stateside, just those two years overseas in Britain, I had more credits than I needed" (Interview). Reign added: "My senior year, I actually like didn't do much of anything because I already had the credits; but they wouldn't let me graduate early either" (Interview). However, Melissa shared: "For some reason when I went to civilian schools, I seemed to get way ahead in Math and went to go back to the base school, they seem to be behind where I had been" (Focus Group).

Classes

Many of the participants identified differences in the sequence of classes when they transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Alberta reported: “They had other courses in the civilian school; they didn't have certain electives that I could take. That was a, that was a bit of a difference because I really wanted to take, like electronics, but they didn't have that one. Umm, so I just freaking did a TA for wood shop again” (Interview). Lula identified different curriculum standards from MC school to non-MC school and reported: “But sometimes, you know, credits wouldn't transfer on silly things like, I remember I couldn't graduate from high school until I passed a swimming test” (Interview). Diana reported: “When I went to school in North Carolina in a non-military school, we had to learn some things that were never nothing that we ever had to deal with before, like tornado warnings and we had to go practice what it was like” (Interview). Regarding historical events she experienced as a MC student, Diana reported: “Nuggets of history that will be instilled in us and everybody will remember it, but we actually got to experience it” (Interview).

Many of the participants reported being ahead or behind in classes and feeling bored or stressed, respectively, when they transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools and, in some cases, transitioning back to MC schools from non-MC schools. Richard reported: “I mean, I was really up to the levels and, and I think maybe that was the regret. There was, like literally, just twiddled my thumbs the whole time and I was bored. I got away with A’s. Then I went up to a new school in the Panhandle and got slugged with reality again and in the reality. I got away with it for a year, doing nothing and I tried to do it again. Doing nothing and I struggled and actually failed” (Interview). Melissa explained: “I always either felt way ahead or way behind: and some subjects, particularly in Math, and I think Math because I had some teachers who were,

who learned Math from from, they were, they were not Americans, so they taught it in a different way… Teachers would not understand how I was trying to solve the problem, the Math problem... they weren't interested in finding out how I knew, that it had to be their way. Whereas if I was on the military school they would say, oh, well, come up to the chalkboard and how show you show us how you learned that you know; and if it worked, they'd let me continue to solve the problems that way" (Interview).

Training

Perceptions regarding the educators training at MC schools versus non-MC schools varied amongst participants. Ralph reported: "As I look back, I feel that teaching was good and teachers generally paid attention to the needs of their students" (Journal). Alberta reported perceiving: "The teachers seemed overwhelmed and unwelcoming" (Journal). James explained the discrepancies from MC school to non-MC school: "We felt I felt like we had a whole lot more personal time with our teacher when I was in the military side because on the civilian side there were clearly a whole lot more students to deal with" (Interview). However, Alberta reported a perceived discrepancy regarding MC teachers' training: "The teachers were absolutely outstanding. A lot of them, I believe, had higher degrees, much higher degrees than the ones in civilian" (Interview). Lula shared: "But then when I came back to the States, and my dad left the military, then I was very much in the civilian world and they definitely didn't know what to do with military kids" (Focus Group).

Interpersonal

Participants identified themes of interpersonal issues, such as relationships with peers or communication. Many of the participants offered insight regarding bullying they experienced, the cultural barriers they had to overcome, and the reactions or interactions with peers when they

transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Individuals often experience interpersonal relationships as how an individual interacts with others. Lula explained: “Your just suddenly cut off from everything that you ever knew and where you belonged” (Interview). Furthermore, interpersonal skills often involve reading others’ signals and the interpretations from those interacting. Isaiah reflected: “So, making friends was always done with a guarded mentality to not allow others to get too close otherwise that separation would be painful” (Journal). Many participants reported demonstrating guarded interpersonal interactions when transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools as a means of perceived mental and emotional self-defense from their peers. Examples of perceived interpersonal issues experienced by former MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools included bullying, cultural barriers, and friendships.

Bullying

Many of the participants identified feeling they belonged, welcomed, or understood at MC schools but reported feelings of isolation or exclusion at non-MC schools. Regarding his perceived similarities and differences between MC and non-MC schools, Ralph stated: “The differences in the public schools for many of us in the family were that they experienced bullying” (Interview). Regarding positive or negative experiences transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school, Alberta reported: “It sucked. Umm, there was, most of the kids were much, they were less friendly, much less inviting. Umm, so I didn't really get that sense of belonging, which sucked. Umm, it was truly like a Darwinism, every man for himself kind of world when you got to civilian school versus everybody being of the same collective in a military environment” (Interview). Irma reported: “The things that were the negative I would say would be the people who were in cliques that did not want you to be a part of their group”

(Interview). Renee explained: “I had a tendency to become a loner because there was just so much I didn't understand about how these non-military teenagers acted the way they did towards me. I just couldn't understand it that they're very judgmental” (Interview). Theresa explained after moving from Guam to Oklahoma when her father retired: “I would ask my mom to buy me like, raw fish… Can I have sushi? Can I take this to lunch? And I would take these things to lunch, and these kids would, they were ruthless, they were like, ‘What is that? That's gross, you're gross, you're wearing a uniform, and now you're eating raw fish like you're weird’” (Focus Group).

Cultural Barriers

Many of the participants outlined the differences between military and civilian culture, highlighting that the differences in cultural values and norms from MC schools to non-MC schools often created cultural barriers. Regarding differences between MC and non-MC schools, Ralph reported: “I would say cultural differences that military brats experience when they go to a civilian school is that those kids all know exactly where they're from, and it's like down the street, you know, that kind of thing… You can't really connect with them on that kind of level” (Interview). Alberta reported about non-MC schools: “If people didn't want to be your friend, sometimes they were ballsy enough to say, ‘No offense, I just really don't care for you’” (Interview). Alberta also reported: “I didn't even know what pot was until I got into a civilian school” (Interview). James reported: “From the military to non-military, I would say a negative, a really big one was the culture shock” (Interview). Diana reported: “the big difference that has always stood out is military kids or on-base school kids are more welcoming then non-military school kids” (Interview). Diana also reported: “I don't remember anything extra or special that helped us in from being in a foreign country, you know, and United States to, to deal with the

American way at school" (Interview). Richard reported: "The bad part was usually when you were going to the civilian schools, the culture was the military culture part of your life. You had to sort of learn how to divorce yourself from it" (Interview). Lula reported: "The civilian schools weren't as used to military stuff. Yeah, more focused on the community itself" (Interview). Regarding being a third culture kid, Lula reported: "I didn't realize then like one of the things that I know now about like adult third culture kids, I I didn't realize I was a third culture kid and I just felt really weird. And it I, I feel like if someone would have normalized that experience for me and helped me to understand what what's happening then that would have made it a lot easier" (Interview).

Mechelle added: "Well, everybody needs a tribe, and it's hard to find one when you're moving every 18 months to three years" (Interview). Renee detailed when she attempted to share her MC experiences with non-MC students: "I cannot count how many times in my school life by civilian kids that I've been called 'liar', and the social transitioning from military kids to civilian kids is quite a jump because they do not comprehend military at all" (Interview). Isaiah explained: "I think the biggest thing was losing that sense of identity when, when you go to a military, a base school, you immediately know everybody's in the same position as you are" (Interview). Reign discussed her experiences learning in MC school and trying to relate to non-MC peers,: "I leaned against Stonehenge, when I was 13 years old. What do you mean I'm lying about this?" She added: "These civilian kids all grew up in the same place. They never left the city limits. That always that always shocked me. It's like, what do you mean, you've known each other since kindergarten?" (Interview).

Peers

Many of the participants reported subthemes of emotional loss leaving MC friends and

the stress of attempting to assimilate at non-MC schools with long-established peer groups. Diana reported: “I was a junior in high school, and that that took a bit of an emotional toll because I was leaving all these friends that I had created a bond with for four years that I was expecting to graduate with, and I had to go start over and that I think I wouldn't use the word cause depression, but it definitely made me sad” (Interview). Richard reported: “So psychologically, you're always having a multiple layer of issues, like, OK, who's gonna be my friends?” (Interview). Lula spoke about social status at MC schools: “So my status at school was reflected like my dad's rank helped my helped to my experience at school” (Interview). Regarding social interactions in non-MC schools, Lula reported: “I could make friends very easily, but going to civilian schools could sometimes be harder to fit in and make friends… And it was really hard to relate” (Interview). Melissa explained: “I think you, you just learn to, to not, uh, show your true colors. You sit back and read the room really well. You learn how to read the room and, and figure out how you're going to fit in” (Interview). Mechelle added: “The last school that I went to after my father retired was a school that most of the kids have been going to school from first grade on. It was very hard to get in there socially, you know” (Interview).

Intrapersonal

Participants identified themes of intrapersonal issues, or issues occurring within themselves. Many of the participants identified themes which revealed their perceived inner abilities which helped them manage their emotions, cope with the challenges, and learn new skills or adapt when transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. The participants revealed subthemes associated with intrapersonal issues that involved internal conflicts of emotion and/or emotional stress and intrapersonal skill development, revealing skills which were strengthened to overcome the divergence associated with transitioning from MC school to non-

MC school. When recalling the differences between MC and non-MC schools, Isaiah revealed an internal conflict causing him to develop new coping skills when he added: “And you know, I didn't have that same sense of security” (Interview). Examples of intrapersonal issues experienced by former MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools included orientation stressors and depression, as well as gained strengths such as resilience.

Orientation

Many of the participants identified subthemes regarding orientation, or how they relate to others, adapt to others or their surroundings, and the awareness of other people and their surroundings. Ralph reported: “I mean, just kind of learning to navigate the new school, you know, was the thing wherever the school was, you know, where, where do I where do I find the restroom? Knowing where all that stuff, so you had to orient yourself every, every year or so” (Interview). Irma reported: “I learned that I had to speak up. I learned that I needed to ask questions. I learned that it was my position to smile first and talk to them because they're gonna ignore me if I don't. So, I, I have to be the somewhat aggressive individual first and put my hand out for friendship before they do because they don't normally do that” (Interview). Diana shared: “Having a person show you around, and I notice like when I transitioned in my junior year of high school to Turkey, they buddied me up with somebody to show me where things were, where the classes are, but I've never once had that in a civilian school” (Focus Group). Theresa explained: “Well, we had to wear uniforms, so moving into the civilian school like everybody would just dress how they wanted. And I feel like I don't know, I didn't know how to dress and my mom, like, wasn't really there to help me dress very, very well” (Focus Group).

Resilience

Each of the participants reported a subtheme of resilience, often directly citing the term

"resilience" and offering examples of their resilience or indirectly offering examples of how they overcame or endured transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. Regarding identifying personal strengths or assets which aided in transition from a MC school to a non-MC school, Alberta reported: "Just being military brat tough… just, you know, being resilient. Just you, you learn, you learn as your military kid to **** around and find out… You, you just learned how to get **** done" (Interview). James reported: "I did come from a strong sense of, a village raises a child; and having that as a background, going from high concentration to low concentration of military, I think there were a number of attributes that I kept, despite the fact that the village disappeared" (Interview). Diana reported: "I can shift when things shift, and I'm pretty quick on it so that you know if there's a change I can deviate, think that flexibility has helped from both directions from a military school to a non-military school and vice versa" (Interview). Richard reported: "I think resiliency was the biggest key" (Interview). Lula reported: "I learned resilience as a military child" (Journal). Mechelle explained: "My experience as a military brat is that you're more open to everyone and flexible" (Interview). Alberta reflected on her gained strengths which aided in transition from MC schools to non-MC schools, reporting an "Ambivalent attachment style; Resilience due to going through enough **** that made me resilient" (Journal). Reign stated she learned, "How to be a chameleon? How to adjust myself, so that I fit a little bit better" (Interview). Mechelle recommended student self-advocacy: "Maybe there's some way to educate students to advocate for themselves, too" (Focus Group).

Mental Health

Many of the participants reported subthemes regarding how the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school impacted their psychological and/or emotional wellbeing. Regarding trauma and mental health care, Ralph elaborated: "And what, what people don't realize is those

kids who go through the traumas, and I think some of our fellow Army or military brats do experience trauma with all of the change and that sort of thing, and what a lot of people don't understand is that kind of trauma physically scars the brain; and it creates issues with how that person responds to things and can tend to respond inappropriately because of that scarring" (Focus Group). Regarding the trauma of a phone conversation with his father while his father was serving during Vietnam, Richard stated that he heard a bombing during the call and shared: "He says you gotta go and all you hear is nothing. You don't know if he got hit. You don't, you don't know nothing for, well, we didn't know nothing for almost a month" (Focus Group). Melissa reflected: "My father was in Vietnam for a year, so we had to live off base. I felt isolated because the Vietnam War was going on. I did not talk about it at school but remember that I spent time at school worrying that my dad would be shot down (He flew F-4s.) and that I would have to drop out of school and support my family." She also noted: "I did have trouble in junior high emotionally but I couldn't tell you why. I just felt a sense of not belonging and remember engaging in behaviors like cutting myself" (Journal).

Alberta reported: "Psychologically, I felt like an outcast… Yeah, I absolutely just felt like I was on an island" (Interview). Diana reported: "I was a junior in high school and that, that took a bit of an emotional toll because I was leaving all these friends that I had created a bond with for four years that I was expecting to graduate with, and I had to go start over and that I think I wouldn't use the word cause depression, but it definitely made me sad" (Interview). Richard reported: "I mean, the smaller school was pretty tough, so when I went to Germany, went to the Department of Defense Schools, it took me approximately 7 months plus a lot of overcoming, a lot of bitter feelings about moving again in high school" (Journal). Theresa offered: "Everything happened so quickly I didn't have much time to process what was happening" (Journal).

Mechelle elaborated: “I think I had a stress reaction honestly, and blew my face up and that really made my transition even harder” (Journal).

Supports

Participants clearly indicated there were minimal or no supports offered by educational professionals when they transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Educational supports operate as advocates for students and often include, yet are not limited to, educational professionals from teachers to administrators, education support networks from clubs or activities, parents or guardians, and guidance counseling or counseling/social services with direct vested interests. Regarding educational support available, Ralph revealed limited autonomy when he transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school: “It was just OK. These are the schools where we live. This is where you're going” (Focus Group). Alberta revealed her perception that the non-MC school teachers had minimal vestment in her situation of transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school, reporting: “I felt like the teachers didn't really give a damn that much” (Interview). Despite the lack of official support, participants did highlight the unofficial or circumstantial support they found to be helpful during these transitions. Participants cited their involvement in sports, other clubs such as drama, and other extra-curricular activities such as band, as major supports during their transition. However, participants also cited how this involvement sometimes created other struggles when transitioning to another team or attempting to join a similar activity in the non-MC schools. Participants identified various supports offered and not offered by education professionals, peers, and family to aid in their transition to schools.

Professional

Many of the participants reported no known-to-extremely limited support when they

transitioned from MC to non-MC schools. Regarding services or supports that were available when you transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school, James reported: “Not really my, my high school counselor didn't seem to know exactly how to place me” (Interview). Irma reported perceiving: “I was the only one there that had a military background and they had absolutely no idea, what I was coming from” (Journal). Diana reported: “You're just another kid in the, you know, maze of people… They gave you a schedule and said figure it out” (Interview). Renee added: “No, you just winged it. Here's your school. Here's your classroom. There's your teacher” (Interview). Regarding supports or services that were offered when transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools, Lula reported: “No, no, they just kind of stuck you wherever” (Interview). Lula further explained: “You didn't have a history with people who are already prepping you for things; you had to force your way in, especially in the civilian school” (Interview). Regarding his perceptions of the supports available when transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school, Isaiah added: “I had a counselor as well in the mainstream school, but they definitely would not have had the experience from unless they have dealt with it themselves” (Interview). Reign stated: “There was nothing. There were no, there were no seminars, there were no outlines, there was there was nothing” (Interview).

Family

Participants described the difficulties and stressors of transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools were often moderated more by their family. Ralph stated: “Mom and Dad always arranged for us to move during the Summer, so we always started in the new school wherever it was at the very beginning of the school year... You're not the only new kid. And so that, I think that really made it a lot easier for us” (Interview). Furthermore, Ralph added: “Having several siblings in the same, and nearby schools may also have made this transition

easier for me, as all of my siblings and myself have always been very close" (Journal). Irma reported: "But the reason there weren't as many negatives is because I had the coolest mother in the world. Well, she was mother of six children, who moved every 18 months, who made every move something better than the last, and something very exciting and made it, umm very, it made it so that you look forward to it" (Interview). When asked about support offered by the non-MC schools when she transitioned from a MC school, Mechelle stated: "Just my family. No, there was nothing" (Interview). Diana added: "My mom instilled in us independence and that we don't need depend on anyone" (Journal).

Friends

Participants reported that the transition from MC schools to non-MC schools was often mitigated unofficially by their peers. Regarding three friends he met at one non-MC school, Ralph reported: "One or two or all of them were in some class that I had, you know, going through the day. And so, they all volunteered to help get me there. And so that made that part really easy. I had not experienced that before and in a different school, you know, typically I just had to find out where the next class" (Interview).

Spiritual

Several of the participants shared how their church involvement, church official, and/or church groups offered unofficial supports and guidance when they transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. Diana reported: "I actually had tried to talk to some church friends to see if I could stay with them instead of moving" (Interview). Lula added: "I also found a new Christian faith, as many of the friendly kids turned out to be Christian. This new faith was helpful to me, too!" (Journal). Irma had reported that her father was a Chaplain in the military and further reflected: "We had the Minister at the church where we went to was my dad's best friend"

(Journal).

Outlier Data and Findings

Although all the participants were adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools, many of the participants identified themselves as current or past educators or social work professionals and added that their experience as MC students had/has benefited them professionally.

Educational Professionals

Regarding the benefits gained from transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools, Ralph reported: “I would say if you move into my career, which was as an educator for 37 years, it really helped me work with kids who were struggling; and I think I really do look back on that, and I think that was a big help for me as a school principal to be able just to identify those kids who are having problems and struggling” (Focus Group). Regarding new students, Mechelle added: “Some of the schools that I volunteer in, schools a lot, some of them do that now when there's a new student, they will assign them a crew member” (Interview). James reported: “There are certain resources that we're now, now that I'm an educator, that I understand if you are a gifted student, you are also a special needs student in that you learn differently from other people” (Interview). James explained: “For better success of kids coming out of military situations going into the civilian world, they need just as much support as the troop” (Focus Group). Diana reported: “I work in a hospital, teaching; and I just continuously educate myself so I can educate others; and I think switching between those types of learning environments has helped push that into me to make that a strong skill set” (Interview).

Suggestions

Alberta reflected and suggested: “The military has ‘out processing’ education for reentry back into civvy life, but there isn’t anyone like that at any school for the brat kids” (Focus Group). Lula added: “Like a little bit of like a debrief. You know, you give the military guys a debrief. I think maybe when you leave military, but military kids don't get a debrief at the end, you're just done. Like you know, you can't go back to your hometown anymore” (Focus Group). Melissa recommended: “I think if there had been a club or something discreet that the military kids could have belonged to, that would have been great. You could have talked about things that you couldn’t share with civilian kids” (Journal).

James expounded, stating: “I believe that each school stateside could benefit from counselors who would be trained in helping transitioning families–at least, stateside schools which are near a military installation. Those counselors would know that there’s bound to be learning deficits/gaps that need to be filled, social constructs that exist in one lifestyle or the other which are missing in their post-transition counterparts (military to civilian and vice versa)” (Journal). Ralph also suggested the need for counselors to aid in this transition, stating: “If there's anything they're concerned about, nervous about, that sort of thing, and just let them know and have a counselor there, of course, and just let them know that if they have any problems or concerns that they can see the counselor and talk it over with them and that kind of, I think that would be very helpful to have that” (Focus Group). Adding to the common discussion thread of a need for counselor education, Theresa, the youngest participant added: “Educating, like the school counselors, would be like the most beneficial thing for kids that are transitioning” (Focus Group). Isaiah suggested the following for non-MC educational professionals: “First off, just make sure they're acclimating okay. They know the resources there, but you still get that one-on-one, so you can identify if they're hiding something that they're not telling you” (Interview).

James suggested social media could now be utilized to aid in the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school, stating: “Having social media, I think, has been is, is definitely one of those things that can be worked with in this respect.” He also stated: “But I think it'd be really cool if, you know, the DoD did come up with an app or something that would be military-specific” (Focus Group). Alberta added: “The social media is gonna be a really, a really beneficial thing, I think in that regard. Otherwise, I don't recommend it for kids under a certain age. Umm, if kids are transitioning that are under 12, I don't think social media is gonna be the greatest” (Focus Group).

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The theory guiding this study was Schlossberg’s transition theory, which is a model for analyzing human adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Utilizing Schlossberg’s (1981) four S’s of transition theory - situation, self, support, and strategies - the research questions were structured. This section offers short and direct narrative answers to each of the research questions utilizing the themes developed in the previous section. Participant quotes were used to support the responses to the research questions when appropriate.

Central Research Question

What are the shared lived experiences of MC students who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools? The participants’ perspective was that transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools offered challenges regarding curriculum, classes, interpersonal relationships, and intrapersonal development; and minimal education supports were offered to aid them during this transition. Richard pondered, asking: “I wonder in my mind how many others sabotaged

themselves as I did?" (Journal); and Alberta reported: "Nobody understood me" (Interview). The findings of this research indicated that the essence of the shared phenomenon of adults ages 23 through 76 who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools as juveniles was characterized by similar situations, developed concepts of self, limited supports, and strategies utilized to adapt and persevere through the transition. The participants each reported experiencing similar issues transitioning to non-MC schools, developing similar skills which enhanced their resilience, and a similar lack of formal support mechanisms offered by non-MC schools during this phenomenon. The participants all suggested the need for more training for non-MC teachers and offer appropriate transition support during this transition phenomenon. The participants suggested common strategies be developed and facilitated by MC schools prior to the transition and transferred to the non-MC school during and after the transition.

Sub-Question One

What are the common situations experienced by MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools? Common situations experienced by MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools included a perceived lack of interest by teachers in the students' educational needs, bullying by their peers, difficulty reorienting, and depression. James reported: "I felt like certain things about my education in Germany were overlooked in favor of being placed in classes for ease (on the counselor's part) without real consideration of my abilities as a student" (Journal). Ralph stated: "The differences in the public schools, for many of us in the family, were that they experienced bullying" (Interview). James reported: "Because, when I moved from 8th grade to 9th grade, I knew nobody. There was no one that I could connect with" (Interview). Lula explained: "I didn't realize I was grieving because I'd moved so much" (Interview).

Sub-Question Two

What are the shared concepts of self (strengths and weaknesses) MC students have regarding their experience transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools? Participants spanning over five decades of transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools identified resilience as a strength which helped them during this transition, and all reported limited-to-no educational support. Richard reported: "I think resiliency was the biggest key" (Interview). Irma reported perceiving herself as "the only one there that had a military background and they had absolutely no idea, what I was coming from" (Journal).

Sub-Question Three

What are the common supports MC students had transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools? Although participants reported minimal to no educational support was directly offered during transitions from MC schools to non-MC schools, they identified their reliance on their family, friends, and spiritual support networks as common supports among the group. Ralph reported: "Mom and Dad always arranged for us to move during the summer, so we always started in the new school wherever it was at the very beginning of the school year... You're not the only new kid. And so that, I think that really made it a lot easier for us" (Interview). Lula added: "I also found a new Christian faith, as many of the friendly kids turned out to be Christian. This new faith was helpful to me, too!" (Journal).

Sub-Question Four

What are the common strategies utilized by MC students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools? Participants reported developing strategies, in the absence of official support, to help them navigate transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools. Participants identified their participation in sports, other clubs such as drama, and other extra-curricular

activities such as band, as major supports during their transition. Irma reported: “We just learned that we had to assimilate into any situation we were in” (Interview). Theresa shared: “So I just remember I acted out a lot after I moved, and I started like kind of wanting attention” (Focus Group).

Summary

The common themes identified by participants who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools were consistent, and the similar experiences spanned over five decades among the participants. Although the specific stories of their shared life experience of transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school included such critical timeframes as Korea, World War II, Vietnam War, Cold War, and Persian Gulf War eras, the participants all reported similar themes of limited supports offered during their transition but the same interpersonal and intrapersonal strengths and struggles. The common themes experienced by the participants in this research included a lack of educational support, experiencing being bullied, and limited orientation resources. Participants reported an awareness that counseling services were available at their schools; however, other participants perceived school counselors as having lacked a comprehension of how these transitions and losses impacted them personally and educationally. Although the official educational support was limited, the participants indicated that these transitions created an increased level of resilience which guided them during these transitions and have served as a gained lifetime strength.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools. The theory guiding this study was Schlossberg's transition theory, which is modeled from analyzing human adaptation to transition (Schlossberg, 1981). Utilizing Schlossberg's (1981) four S's of transition theory - situation, self, support, and strategies - the research questions were structured. This chapter incorporates a critical discussion, the implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, the limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The results of this research presented in Chapter 4 were obtained utilizing the transcendental phenomenological research method as outlined by Moustakas (1994). These research results were represented as themes and presented answers to the stated research questions with comprehensive phenomenological descriptions. The four primary themes delineated from data collected from adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools included: (a) instruction; (b) interpersonal; (c) intrapersonal; and (d) supports.

The common theme of differences in curriculum and classroom structure from MC to non-MC schools was reported consistently among participants. A theme of a lack of concern for a consistent educational experience during their transition from MC school to non-MC school was also reported. Additionally, participants identified themes of feeling ahead of their peers in school subject areas when they transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school. The majority indicated that most of the non-MC schools did not capitalize on their preparedness, and they

were often placed in less advanced classes perceived as convenient for the inclusion, rather than accurately assessing and assigning them to classes based on their strengths and/or needs. Participants reported they perceived their non-MC teachers as less educated, less concerned, less cultured, and/or ill-prepared for responding to the unique needs of MC students at non-MC schools. Furthermore, participants often indicated the class sizes and structures differed from MC schools to non-MC schools. Participants communicated that many of the non-MC schools had lower teacher-student ratios, creating a perception of less individualized education and less safety, security, and accountability at the non-MC schools.

The interpersonal sub-themes included bullying, cultural barriers, and friends. Participants who communicated their experiences transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools reported that the transition included issues with being bullied at the non-MC school by non-MC peers; cultural barriers between non-MC students and educational faculty, or loss of common cultural connection with MC peers; and leaving MC school peers and/or making new non-MC friends at the non-MC school.

The intrapersonal sub-themes included orientation stressors, resilience, and mental health issues. Participants who communicated their experiences transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools reported that the transition included issues with orientation stressors at the non-MC school, reorienting to school building or established perceived peer hierarchy at the non-MC school, and the effects of the transition on their mental health, specifically depression. The participants collectively communicated themes of the perceived developmental strength of resilience because of their MC and non-MC school experiences.

Although the research participants reported limited official non-MC school support was made directly available, they were aware the non-MC schools offered guidance

counseling/counselor services at their school. Despite this awareness, participants reported a perception that the non-MC school administration and faculty were unaware of the specific strengths and needs of MC students. Research participants reported themes of reliance on their own resilience to learn the new non-MC school systems or reliance on the support from the siblings, finding helpful peers at the non-MC school, or leaning on established spiritual support networks.

Implications for Policy or Practice

As a result of this research, recommendations are offered for federal policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and parents of former MC students.

Implications for Policy

It may be appropriate for the DoD to create and adopt policies which create an age-appropriate out-processing, or debriefing, for MC students prior to the students' transition to non-MC schools. It may also be appropriate for non-MC schools to adopt policies which enhance education and training for school guidance counselors regarding the potential unique needs of MC students transitioning to their schools. It may be appropriate for schools to adopt policies which incorporate education and training for all other teachers and education support personnel regarding how they can support students transitioning from MC schools to non-MC schools.

Implications for Practice

It may be appropriate for school administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors to utilize the aforementioned training and resources to collaborate with the parents or guardians of former MC students to bring awareness to the resources available for their former MC students, create a more supportive network, and aid in the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. It may also be appropriate for schools to create clubs which offer a peer support group

for MC students and recruit peer volunteers willing to help orient former MC students to the new school. It should be noted that such peer orientation volunteers could help with most populations of new students.

Empirical and Theoretical Implications

The findings of this transcendental phenomenological study revealed discoveries that have empirical and theoretical implications for future MC students, parents, and educational professionals/supports. This section discusses the implications of these discoveries and offers recommendations for the stakeholders.

Empirical Implications

This research corroborated previous research, as it revealed that adults who were former MC students who had transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school perceived a lack of support by the non-MC school and faculty. The research corroborated previous research which indicated MC students experience cultural, interpersonal, orientation, and intrapersonal issues when transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. The research corroborated previous research, as it revealed that adults who were former MC students who transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school perceived their resilience as a main strength and support for this transition. Furthermore, results revealed that participants relied on their family/siblings during this transition. Although not highlighted in previous lines of research, participants in this study identified a reliance on spiritual support networks as having aided with the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school, as well as the entire transition from MC culture to non-MC culture.

The research results also have implications for support services MC schools and non-MC schools could offer MC students who are transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school. The research emphasized the perceived need for training of education professionals, education

support professionals such as counselors or guidance counselors, and parents or guardians. Furthermore, the research identified the perceived need for out-processing offered by MC schools or DoD for the MC dependents to better prepare MC students for the transition from a MC school to a non-MC school. Participants suggested that school guidance counselors should be trained further to aid in this transition. It was suggested that schools could expand clubs to include support groups for former MC students and for development of an appropriately moderated and supervised online support network to aid MC student or for MC students interact with their community of MC peers, much like the youth recreation centers at many of the established military bases.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this research consistently demonstrated that over a 50-year span, adults who were former MC students who had transferred from a MC school to a non-MC school experienced a transition (Schlossberg, 1981). The research data demonstrated four themes and 15 sub-themes which provided insight regarding Schlossberg's (1981) stages of transition and the research guidelines of situation, self, supports, and strategies which helped to moderate the transition experience of MC students moving from a MC school to a non-MC school.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study of adult MC students who had previously transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools had researcher-imposed boundaries or delimitations; and throughout the study, this researcher identified participant-imposed limitations.

Limitations

Patton (2002) identified limitations to qualitative research to include the situations or cases sampled, constraints from the time period selected, and the selectivity of the sample of

participants. Peoples (2021) clarified that limitations represent inherent weakness within the selected method and include influences outside the control of the researcher. Many of the participants who volunteered for this research were former educators, social workers, trainers, clergy, nurses, military personnel, volunteers, and/or coaches for schools. As such, most of the participants had a personal stake in this research beyond being former MC students. As noted in the literature review chapter, MC dependents have an identified history of cognitive and behavior issues as juveniles. This presents the possibility of a population of adult former MC students who are managing mental health concerns and/or are incarcerated. The representative participants were former MC students from the Army, Navy, and Air Force; however, there were no representatives from the Marine Corp, Coast Guard, or Space Force. It was noteworthy that, while the age range of all participants was 23 to 76 years, only one of the 10 participants who completed the study in its entirety was 23 years old, while the other nine participants were in the 44 to 76 year range. Furthermore, of the ten participants who completed this study in its entirety, seven were female and three were male.

Delimitations

Peoples (2021) explained that choices made by the researcher create delimitations that set boundaries on the research. To define the boundaries of this study, this researcher utilized a qualitative transcendental phenomenological research method; however, this research method could create a barrier for potential participants who are not as confident expressing themselves in this format. The researcher delimited this research to adult males and females over age 18 years. Although the participants of this research included males and females, with ages ranging from 23 to 76 years old, the reports of this research did not include participants under age 18 who may currently be experiencing the phenomenon. Although it is valuable to gain the perspective from

adult males and females who have experienced the entire phenomena, it would be equally valuable to learn from the insights of those currently experiencing this phenomenon.

Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the research findings, limitations, and the delimitations placed on the study, recommendations or directions for future research were indicated. Future qualitative transcendental phenomenological research should focus on current MC students transitioning from an MC school to a non-MC school, as it would be valuable to learn from the insights of those currently experiencing this phenomenon. Further qualitative transcendental phenomenological research should focus on the inclusion of populations from correctional and mental health facilities. Future qualitative transcendental phenomenological research should further focus on non-MC students transitioning from non-MC schools to MC schools to better understand how this phenomenon is experienced. Further descriptive quantitative research or a qualitative ethnographic psychological study could focus more on specific branches of the military to outline potential concerns for these subgroups. Additionally, there would be value in descriptive quantitative gender-specific research to further delineate specific needs.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this transcendental phenomenological study, which focused on understanding the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools, revealed two primary takeaways. The primary takeaway from this research was that, regardless of which historical era the participant experienced the phenomenon, they reported little-to-no structured educational supports were availed to them from the non-MC schools when they transitioned from a MC school. Furthermore, participants reported similar interpersonal and intrapersonal sub-themes focused on culture, orientation, and mental health.

Although the research participants consistently reported themes indicating a lack of educational supports when they transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school, research participants also delineated themes consistent with Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory and the four S's of situation, self, support, and strategies. The concluding research indicated that participants clearly identified situations, such as timing of the school transitions, which helped them transition from MC schools to non-MC schools. Participants resoundingly concluded that they developed inner strength, referred to as resilience, as a manner of self for the transition. Participants concluded the primary supports utilized during the transition were their family or siblings, peers, and spiritual support groups. Participants further concluded that there is a distinct need for non-MC education professionals to be trained to identify needs and support for MC students experiencing this phenomenon. Lastly, participants outlined strategies they deemed helpful and strategies they believe could be further developed by educators and education support professions to aid MC students transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school.

References

Ahern, K. J. (1999). Ten tips for reflexive bracketing. *Qualitative Health Research, 9*(3), 407-411. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973239900900309

Albano, S. (1994). Military recognition of family concerns: Revolutionary war to 1993. *Armed Forces and Society, 20*(2), 283-302. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X9402000207

Albers, M. J. (2017). *Introduction to quantitative data analysis in the behavioral and social sciences.* Wiley.

Alfano, C. A., Lau, S., Balderas, J., Bunnell, B. E., & Beidel, D. C. (2016). The impact of military deployment on children: Placing developmental risk in context. *Clinical Psychology Review, 43,* 17-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2015.11.003

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). (2011, November 29). *Overview of military-connected students.* Retrieved July 11, 2021, from https://secure.aacte.org/apps/rl/resource.php

Andrade, C. (2021). The inconvenient truth about convenience and purposive samples. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine, 43*(1), 86-88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0253717620977000

Arnold, A. L., Lucier-Greer, M., Mancini, J. A., Ford, J. L., & Wickrama, K. A. S. (2017). How family structures and processes interrelate: The case of adolescent mental health and academic success in military families. *Journal of Family Issues, 38*(6), 858-879. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X15616849

Atuel, H. R., & Castro, C. A. (2018). Military cultural competence. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 46*(2), 74-82. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-018-0651-z

Bagnall, C. L., Fox, C. L., & Skipper, Y. (2021). What emotional-centred challenges do children attending special schools face over primary–secondary school transition? *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 21*(2), 156-167. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12507

Bloir, K. (2020). Resource review: Clearinghouse for military family readiness. *Journal of Youth Development (Online), 15*(5), 220-230. https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2020.918

Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2008). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A roadmap from beginning to end.* Sage.

Booth, B., Wechsler Segal, M., & Place, N. (2009). *National leadership summit on military families: Final report.* Retrieved from https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/Final%20Report%20with%20Appendices.pdf

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brown, E. C., Freedle, A., Hurless, N. L., Miller, R. D., Martin, C., & Paul, Z. A. (2022). Preparing teacher candidates for trauma-informed practices. *Urban Education (Beverly Hills, Calif.), 57*(4), 662-685. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085920974084

Burgin, E. E., & Ray, D. C. (2020). Military-connected children: Applying the competencies for counseling military populations. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling, 6*(2), 124-136. https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2020.1729011

Cabrera, A. F., Peralta, A. M., & Kurban, E. R. (2018). The invisible 1%: A comparison of attaining stepping stones toward college between military and civilian children. *The*

Journal of Higher Education (Columbus), 89(2), 208-235. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2017.1368816

Capp, G., Astor, R. A., Benbenishty, R., Weiss, E., & Pineda, D. (2017). School staff perceptions of military-connected students in civilian public schools: Implications for teachers, counselors, and school staff. *Military Behavioral Health, 5*(2), 147-156. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2016.1272016

Capp, G., Benbenishty, R., Moore, H., Pineda, D., Astor, R. A., Castillo, B., & De Pedro, K. T. (2017). Partners at learning: A service-learning approach to serving public school students from military families. *Military Behavioral Health, 5*(3), 226-235. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2017.1295002

Castillo, B., Capp, G., Moore, H., De Pedro, K., Pineda, D., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2017). An evaluation of the use of educational resource guides for military students in public schools. *Military Behavioral Health, 5*(2), 172-177. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2016.1272020

Classen, A. I., Horn, E., & Palmer, S. (2019). Needs of military families: Family and educator perspective. *Journal of Early Intervention, 41*(3), 233-255. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053815119847235

Clements-Nolle, K., Lensch, T., Yang, Y., Martin, H., Peek, J., & Yang, W. (2021). Attempted suicide among adolescents in military families: The mediating role of adverse childhood experiences. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36*(23-24), 11743-11754. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519900976

Collins, T. (2018). Military Parent's PTSD and Children's mental health: A scoping review. *Qualitative Report, 23*(5), 1237-1255. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3225

Conforte, A. M., Bakalar, J. L., Shank, L. M., Quinlan, J., Stephens, M. B., Sbrocco, T., & Tanofsky-Kraff, M. (2017). Assessing military community support: Relations among perceived military community support, child psychosocial adjustment, and parent psychosocial adjustment. *Military Medicine, 182*(9), e1871-e1878. https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED-D-17-00016

Conforte, A. M., DeLeon, P. H., Engel, C. C., Ling, C., Bakalar, J. L., & Tanofsky-Kraff, M. (2017). Identifying Policy Implications and Future Research Directions Regarding Military Community Support and Child Psychosocial Adjustment. *Military Medicine, 182*(5), 1572-1580. https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED-D-17-00002

Conover, K. M. (2020). Tell me A story: Promoting resiliency in military children with a bibliotherapy intervention. *Nursing Forum (Hillsdale), 55*(3), 439-446. https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12449

Cozza, S. J., Whaley, G. L., Fisher, J. E., Zhou, J., Ortiz, C. D., McCarroll, J. E., Fullerton, C. S., & Ursano, R. J. (2018). Deployment status and child neglect types in the U.S. army. *Child Maltreatment, 23*(1), 25-33. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559517717638

Cramm, H., McColl, M. A., Aiken, A. B., & Williams, A. (2019). The mental health of military-connected children: A scoping review. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 28*(7), 1725-1735. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01402-y

Cramm, H., Norris, D., Venedam, S., & Tam-Seto, L. (2018). Toward a model of military family resiliency: A narrative review: Military family resiliency. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 10*(3), 620-640. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12284

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed). SAGE Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Cunitz, K., Dölitzsch, C., Kösters, M., Willmund, G., Zimmermann, P., Bühler, A. H., Fegert, J. M., Ziegenhain, U., & Kölch, M. (2019). Parental military deployment as risk factor for children's mental health: A meta-analytical review. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 13*(1), 26-26. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-019-0287-y

Debnam, K. J., Milam, A. J., Bottiani, J. H., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2021). Teacher-Student incongruence in perceptions of school equity: Associations with student connectedness in middle and high schools. *The Journal of School Health, 91*(9), 706-713. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13062

Degroote, E., Demanet, J., & Van Houtte, M. (2020). The influence of school mobility and dropout rates on non-mobile students' school engagement: A chicken-and-egg situation? *Research Papers in Education, 35*(4), 443-466. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2019.1601755

Denzin, N. K. (2017). *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook.* United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Sage.

Department of Defense Education Activity. (2023). *Fact Sheet.* Retrieved from https://www.dodea.edu/index.cfm

De Pedro, K. T., Astor, R. A., Gilreath, T. D., Benbenishty, R., & Berkowitz, R. (2018). School climate, deployment, and mental health among students in military-connected schools. *Youth & Society, 50*(1), 93-115. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X15592296

De Pedro, K. T., Pineda, D., Capp, G., Moore, H., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2017). Implementation of a school districtwide grassroots antibullying initiative: A school staff and Parent–Focused evaluation of because nice matters. *Children & Schools, 39*(3), 137-145. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdx008

Elliott, B. (2020). US military spouses' experiences transitioning abroad: A narrative analysis. *Nursing Forum (Hillsdale), 55*(4), 703-710. https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12487

Estrada, J. N., Gilreath, T. D., Sanchez, C. Y., & Astor, R. A. (2017). Associations between school violence, military connection, and gang membership in California secondary schools. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 87*(4), 443-451. https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000181

Faran, M. E., Johnson, P. L., Ban, P. K., Sarver, J. C., Brown, L. J., Orman, D. T., Brusher, E. A., Sarmiento, D. M., Ivany, C. G., & Weist, M. D. (2020). Child, family, and school behavioral health care in the military health system. *Military Behavioral Health, 8*(3), 315-326. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2020.1750511

Farnsworth, M. L., & O'Neal, C. W. (2021). Military stressors, parent-adolescent relationship quality, and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 30*(11), 2718-2731. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-021-02106-y

Fear, N. T., Reed, R. V., Rowe, S., Burdett, H., Pernet, D., Mahar, A., Iversen, A. C., Ramchandani, P., Stein, A., & Wessely, S. (2018). Impact of paternal deployment to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and paternal post-traumatic stress disorder on the

children of military fathers. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 212*(6), 347-355. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.2017.16

Filep, C. V., Turner, S., Eidse, N., Thompson-Fawcett, M., & Fitzsimons, S. (2018). Advancing rigour in solicited diary research. Qualitative Research : QR, 18(4), 451-470. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117728411

FOCUS Project. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.focusproject.org

Frain, S. C., & Frain, B. (2020). "We serve too!": Everyday militarism of children of US service members. *Childhood (Copenhagen, Denmark), 27*(3), 310-324. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568220914709

Gartland, D., Riggs, E., Muyeen, S., Giallo, R., Afifi, T. O., MacMillan, H., Herrman, H., Bulford, E., & Brown, S. J. (2019). What factors are associated with resilient outcomes in children exposed to social adversity? A systematic review. *BMJ Open, 9*(4), e024870-e024870. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-024870

Gatlin-Nash, B., Hwang, J. K., Tani, N. E., Zargar, E., Wood, T. S., Yang, D., Powell, K. B., & Connor, C. M. (2021). Using assessment to improve the accuracy of teachers' perceptions of students' academic competence. *The Elementary School Journal, 121*(4), 609-634. https://doi.org/10.1086/714083

Gibbs, B. (2020). The foot and the flag: Patriotism, place, and the teaching of war in a military town. *Democracy & Education, 28*(1)

Gilreath, T. D., Wrabel, S. L., Sullivan, K. S., Capp, G. P., Roziner, I., Benbenishty, R., & Astor, R. A. (2016). Suicidality among military-connected adolescents in California schools. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 25*(1), 61-66. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-015-0696-2

Goodman, J., Schlossberg, N. K., & Anderson, M. L. (2006). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory* (3rd ed.). Springer Pub. Co.

Gosnell, C. L., Kelly, D. R., Ender, M. G., & Matthews, M. D. (2020). Character strengths and performance outcomes among military brat and non-brat cadets. *Military Psychology, 32*(2), 186-197. https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2019.1703434

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59–82. https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903

Hanna, J. L. (2020). Removing the camouflage: A deeper look at military-connected adolescent perception of identity in secondary schools. *The Clearing House, 93*(4), 184-194. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2020.1758014

Hathaway, A., Russotti, J., Metzger, J., & Cerulli, C. (2018). Meeting military children's biopsychosocial needs: Exploring evidence-based interventions. *Best Practices in Mental Health, 14*(1), 54-77.

Higginbottom, G. M. A. (2004). Sampling issues in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher, 12*(1), 7-19.

Hill, S., Lee, E. A., & Cramm, H. (2022). “If you don’t know who they are, you don’t know how to support them”: A qualitative study exploring how educators perceive and support Canadian military-connected students. *Canadian Journal of Education, 45*(3), 646-669. https://doi.org/10.53967/cje-rce.v45i3.4575

Hinojosa, M. S., Hinojosa, R., Condon, J., & Fernandez-Reiss, J. (2022). Child mental health outcomes in military families. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 32*(5), 591-602. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2021.1937436

Hornor, T., & Brooks, J. H. (2023). Strengthening esprit de corps: Enhancing student veterans' sense of belonging in colleges and universities. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2022.2145553

Howard, S. (2021). A causal model of children's vicarious traumatization. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma, 14*(4), 443-454. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-020-00331-z

Ilagan, G., Ilagan, J., Jocius, R., Hornor, T., Shealy, T., Simpson, A., Cavaliere, G., Polen, B., & Brooks, J. (2022). Backpacking veterans: Exploring sense of belonging, happiness, and stress-coping. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership, 14*(4), 36-54. https://doi.org/10.18666/JOREL-2022-11600

Kaeppler, C., & Lucier-Greer, M. (2020). Examining impacts of cumulative risk on military-connected youth and the role of family in coping. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 49*(4), 581-602. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-020-09544-7

Keegan, D., Hyle, A. E., & Sanders, V. (2004). Cultural competence, educators, and military families: Understanding the military in a department of defense dependent's school. *Journal of School Leadership, 14*(6), 600-620. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460401400601

Kelly, D., & Paul, M. (2018). Veterans-by-proxy: A conceptual framework of ambiguous loss among children of combat veterans. *Journal of Family Social Work, 21*(4-5), 255-270. https://doi.org/10.1080/10522158.2017.1321605

King, L., Jolicoeur-Martineau, A., Laplante, D. P., Szekely, E., Levitan, R., & Wazana, A. (2021). Measuring resilience in children: A review of recent literature and

recommendations for future research. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 34*(1), 10-21. https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000663

King, N., & Smith, A. (2016). Exploring the impact of parental post-traumatic stress disorder on military family children: A review of the literature. *Nurse Education Today, 47*, 29-36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2016.04.018

Kitzinger, J. (1995). Qualitative research: Introducing focus groups. *British Medical Journal, 311*(7000), 299-302. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.311.7000.299

Kleykamp, M., Montgomery, S., Pang, A., & Schrader, K. (2021). Military identity and planning for the transition out of the military. *Military Psychology, 33*(6), 372-391. https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2021.1962176

Knobloch, L. K., Knobloch-Fedders, L. M., Yorgason, J. B., Ebata, A. T., & McGlaughlin, P. C. (2017). Military children's difficulty with reintegration after deployment: A relational turbulence model perspective. *Journal of Family Psychology, 31*(5), 542-552. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000299

Koehlmoos, T. P., Banaag, A., Madsen, C. K., & Adirim, T. (2020). Child health as a national security issue: Obesity and behavioral health conditions among military children. *Health Affairs (Millwood, Va.), 39*(10), 1719-1727E. https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00712

Kranke, D. (2019). Teachers' perspectives on educating military-connected students: The forgotten group. *Children & Schools, 41*(3), 189-190. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdz014

Kranke, D., Barmak, S., Weiss, E., & Dobalian, A. (2019). The application of a self-labeling approach among military-connected adolescents in a public school setting. *Health & Social Work, 44*(3), 193-201. https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/hlz007

Kranke, D., & Dobalian, A. (2018). Application of an empowerment perspective among military-connected adolescents in public school settings. *Social Work in Mental Health, 16*(5), 590-600. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332985.2018.1460007

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (Third ed.). Sage Publications.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1982). Establishing dependability and confirmability in naturalistic inquiry through an audit.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Sage Publications.

Lipari, R., Palen, L., Ashley, O. S., Penne, M., Kan, M., & Pemberton, M. (2017). Examination of veteran fathers' parenting and their adolescent children's substance use in the United States. *Substance Use & Misuse, 52*(6), 698-708. https://doi.org/10.1080/10826084.2016.1253748

Lucier-Greer, M., McCoy, M., Gale, J., Goetz, J. W., & Mancini, J. A. (2020). Exploring the context of self-care for youth in military families. *Children and Youth Services Review, 108*, 104599. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.104599

MacDermid Wadsworth, S., Bailey, K. M., & Coppola, E. C. (2017). U.S. military children and the wartime deployments of family members. *Child Development Perspectives, 11*(1), 23-28. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12210

Mancini, J. A., O'Neal, C. W., & Lucier-Greer, M. (2020). Toward a framework for military family life education: Culture, context, content, and practice. *Family Relations, 69*(3), 644-661. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12426

McGuire, A. B., & Steele, R. G. (2016). Impact of social networking sites on children in military families. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 19*(3), 259-269. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-016-0206-1

Meers, J. M., Bower, J. L., & Alfano, C. A. (2018). Objective sleep and child resiliency in deployed compared to non-deployed military families. *Sleep (New York, N.Y.), 41*(suppl_1), A310-A310. https://doi.org/10.1093/sleep/zsy061.835

Military Child Education Coalition. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.militarychild.org/

Military Kids Connect. (2021). Retrieved from https://militarykidsconnect.health.mil/

Military One Source. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-and-family-life-counseling/

Moore, K. D., Fairchild, A. J., Wooten, N. R., & Ng, Z. J. (2017). Evaluating behavioral health interventions for military-connected youth: A systematic review. *Military Medicine, 182*(11), e1836-e1845. https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED-D-17-00060

Moran, D. (2012). *Husserl's crisis of the European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139025935

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (Second ed.). Sage Publications.

Moses, T., & McCrary, D. (2021). The perceptions of army school liaisons concerning school issues of military-connected students. *Education (Chula Vista), 142*(2), 91.

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Sage.

National Military Family Association. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.militaryfamily.org/info-resources/education/

Nichols, J., Cox, S. M., Cook, C., Lea, G. W., & Belliveau, G. (2022). Research-based theatre about veterans transitioning home: A mixed-methods evaluation of audience impacts. *Social Science & Medicine (1982)*, 292, 114578-114578. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114578

Ohye, B. Y., Jakubovic, R. J., Zakarian, R., & Bui, E. (2020). Staying strong with schools: Testing an elementary school-based intervention for military-connected children. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 49*(5), 595-602. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2018.1547971

Ohye, B. Y., Roizner, M., Laifer, L. M., Chen, Y., & Bui, E. (2017). Training clinicians to provide culturally competent treatment to military-connected children: A collaborative model between the Massachusetts society for the prevention of cruelty to children and the red sox foundation and Massachusetts general hospital home base program. *Professional Psychology, Research and Practice, 48*(3), 149-155. https://doi.org/10.1037/pro0000143

O'Neal, C. W., Lucier-Greer, M., Duncan, J. M., Mallette, J. K., Arnold, A. L., & Mancini, J. A. (2018). Vulnerability and resilience within military families: Deployment experiences, reintegration, and family functioning. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 27*(10), 3250-3261. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1149-6

O'Neal, C. W., Mallette, J. K., & Mancini, J. A. (2018). The importance of parents' community connections for adolescent Well-being: An examination of military families. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 61*(1-2), 204-217. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12222

O'Neal, C. W., & Mancini, J. A. (2021). Military families' stressful reintegration, family climate, and their adolescents' psychosocial health. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 83*(2), 375-393. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12711

Ormeno, M. D., Roh, Y., Heller, M., & Shields, E., Flores-Carrera, A., Greve, M., Hagan, J., Kostrubala, A., & Onasanya, N. (2020). Special concerns in military families. *Current Psychiatry Reports, 22*(82) https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-020-01207-7

Parkhouse, H. (2020). Patriotism as critique: Youth responses to teaching about injustice. *Citizenship Teaching and Learning, 15*(3), 297-322. https://doi.org/10.1386/ctl_00036_1

Parrott, S., Eckhart, N., Laha-Walsh, K., & Albright, D. L. (2022). Hardships at home: The portrayal of military families in traditional, military community, and military-focused news publications. *Armed Forces and Society,* https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X221122702

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (Third ed.). Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (Fourth ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Peoples, K. (2021). *How to write a phenomenological dissertation: A step-by-step guide.* SAGE.

Perreault, K., McDuff, P., & Dion, J. (2020). Impact of relocations on mental health and school functioning of adolescents from Canadian military families. *Military Behavioral Health, 8*(3), 333-344. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2020.1751350

Pogodzinski, B., Cook, W., Lenhoff, S. W., & Singer, J. (2022). School climate and student mobility. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 21*(4), 984-1004. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2021.1901121

Reger, M. A., Etherage, J. R., Reger, G. M., & Gahm, G. A. (2008). Civilian psychologists in an army culture: The ethical challenge of cultural competence. *Military Psychology, 20*(1), 21-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/08995600701753144

Reinhardt, J., Clements-Nolle, K., & Yang, W. (2019). Physical fighting among male and female adolescents of military families: Results from a representative sample of high school students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 34*(1), 115-134. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516640546

Renbarger, R. L., Padgett, R. N., Cowden, R. G., Govender, K., Yilmaz, M. Z., Scott, L. M., Makhnach, A. V., Novotny, J. S., Nugent, G., Rosenbaum, L., & Křeménková, L. (2020). Culturally relevant resilience: A psychometric Meta-Analysis of the child and youth resilience measure (CYRM). *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 30*(4), 896-912. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12569

Ridings, L. E., Moreland, A. D., & Petty, K. H. (2019). Implementing trauma-focused CBT for children of veterans in the VA: Providing comprehensive services to veterans and their families. *Psychological Services, 16*(1), 75-84. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000278

Roberts, R. E. (2020). Qualitative interview questions: Guidance for novice researchers. *Qualitative Report, 25*(9), 3185-3203.

Rutter, M. (1987). psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 57*(3), 316-331. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.1987.tb03541.x

Rylander, N. J. (2020). A qualitative narrative exploration of the social, emotional, and academic needs of military-connected students (Order No. 28093293). *Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*. (2451377965). http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fdocview%2F2451377965%3Faccountid%3D12085

Saltzman, W. R. (2016). The FOCUS family resilience program: An innovative family intervention for trauma and loss. *Family Process, 55*(4), 647-659. https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12250

Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *The Counseling Psychologist, 9*(2), 2.

Sherman, M. D., & Larsen, J. L. (2018). Family-focused interventions and resources for veterans and their families. *Psychological Services, 15*(2), 146-153. https://doi.org/10.1037/ser0000174

Shue, S., Matthias, M. S., Watson, D. P., Miller, K. K., & Munk, N. (2021). The career transition experiences of military veterans: *A qualitative study. Military Psychology, 33*(6), 359-371. https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2021.1962175

Sikes, D. L., Duran, M. G., & Armstrong, M. L. (2020). Shared lessons from serving military-connected students. *The College Student Affairs Journal, 38*(2), 186-197.

Silliman, B., Edwards, H. C., & Johnson, J. C. (2021). Supporting reserve component youth during deployments: The project youth extension service model. *Marriage & Family Review, 57*(2), 165-187. https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2020.1842286

Simoni, Z. R., & Bauldry, S. (2020). Moving during adolescence and depressive symptoms: The role of social support. *Youth & Society, 52*(4), 639-660. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X18757149

Smith, J. G., Vilhauer, R. P., & Chafos, V. (2017). Do military veteran and civilian students function differently in college? *Journal of American College Health, 65*(1), 76-79. https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2016.1245193

Spencer, R., Gowdy, G., Herrera, C., Heubach, J., Slep, A. S., & Cavell, T. A. (2020). Web-based training for school-based mentors of military-connected youth: A multi-phase development study. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 41*(6), 567-583. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-020-00616-x

Stein, J. Y., Levin, Y., Zerach, G., & Solomon, Z. (2018). Veterans' offspring's personality traits and the intergenerational transmission of posttraumatic stress symptoms. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 27*(4), 1162-1174. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-017-0951-x

St. John, L. V., & Fenning, P. (2020). Supporting the behavioral and mental health needs of military children. *Preventing School Failure, 64*(2), 99-105. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2019.1680945

Sullivan, K., Dodge, J., Williamson, V., Alves-Costa, F., Barr, N., Kintzle, S., Fear, N. T., & Castro, C. (2022). Preliminary exploration of the relationship between veteran family membership, school climate, and adverse outcomes among school-aged youth. *Education and Urban Society, 54*(5), 605-628. https://doi.org/10.1177/00131245211027363

Sullivan, K. S., Hawkins, S. A., Gilreath, T. D., & Castro, C. A. (2021). Mental health outcomes associated with risk and resilience among military-connected youth. *Family Process, 60*(2), 507-522. https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12596

Sullivan, R. M., Cozza, S. J., & Dougherty, J. G. (2019). Children of military families. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 28*(3), 337-348. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2019.02.004

Sussman, N. M. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions: Why home is not so sweet. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 4*(4), 355-373. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0404_5

Tam-Seto, L., Krupa, T., Stuart, H., Lingley-Pottie, P., Aiken, A., & Cramm, H. (2020). The validation of the military and veteran family cultural competency model (MVF-CCM). *Military Behavioral Health, 8*(1), 96-108. https://doi.org/10.1080/21635781.2019.1689875

Thomas, G. (2018). The stress effects of military families' transition to civilian life. *Mental Health Practice, 21*(9), 25-29. https://doi.org/10.7748/mhp.2018.e1311

Thomas, J. S., & Baumann, S. L. (2020). The loss of a parent to suicide in military families. *Nursing Science Quarterly, 33*(4), 339-345. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894318420943142

US Department of Veteran Affairs. (2020). *Your va transition assistance program (tap).* Retrieved April 1, 2021, from https://www.benefits.va.gov/transition/tap.asp

Vannest, K. J., Carrero, K. M., Patience, B., Price, G., Altmann, R., Haas, A., & Smith, S. (2021). Military-connected adolescents' emotional and behavioral risk status: Comparisons of universal screening data and national norms. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 30*(1), 134. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-020-01887-y

Van Slyke, R. D., & Armstrong, N. J. (2020). Communities serve: A systematic review of need assessments on U.S. veteran and military-connected populations. *Armed Forces and Society, 46*(4), 564-594. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X19845030

Veri, S., Muthoni, C., Boyd, A. S., & Wilmoth, M. (2021). A scoping review of the effects of military deployment on reserve component children. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 50*(4), 743-777. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-020-09590-1

Williamson, V., Stevelink, S. A. M., Da Silva, E., & Fear, N. T. (2018). A systematic review of wellbeing in children: A comparison of military and civilian families. *Child and*

Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 12(1), 46-46. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-018-0252-1

Wooten, N. R., Brittingham, J. A., Sumi, N. S., Pitner, R. O., & Moore, K. D. (2019). Behavioral health service use by military children during Afghanistan and Iraq wars. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research, 46*(4), 549-569. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11414-018-09646-0

Wretman, C. J., & Bowen, G. L. (2019). Analyzing military connectedness and children's individual adaptation with multinomial propensity score matching. *Youth & Society, 51*(8), 1031-1053. https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X17721272

Yarwood, R., Tyrrell, N., & Kelly, C. (2021). Children, military families and soldier citizenship. *Geoforum*, 126, 253-262. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.07.009

Zalta, A. K., Bui, E., Karnik, N. S., Held, P., Laifer, L. M., Sager, J. C., Zou, D., Rauch, P. K., Simon, N. M., Pollack, M. H., & Ohye, B. (2018). Examining the relationship between parent and child psychopathology in treatment-seeking veterans. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development, 49*(2), 209-216. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-017-0743-y

Zimmerman, M. A. (2013). Resiliency theory: A strengths-based approach to research and practice for adolescent health. *Health Education & Behavior, 40*(4), 381-383. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198113493782

Zurlinden, T. E., Firmin, M. W., Shell, A. L., & Grammer, H. W. (2021). The lasting effects of growing up in a military-connected home: A qualitative study of college-aged American military kids. *Journal of Family Studies, 27*(4), 523-539. https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2019.1650800

Appendix A

Approval from the Institutional Review Board

Date: 3-3-2024

IRB #: IRB-FY23-24-3
Title: A Phenomenological Study of the Educational Needs of Military-Connected Students Transitioning From Military Connected Schools to Non-Military Connected Schools
Creation Date: 7-2-2023
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Dale Wertman
Review Board: Research Ethics Office
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type Initial	Review Type Exempt	Decision Exempt
Submission Type Modification	Review Type Exempt	Decision Exempt

Key Study Contacts

Member Dale Wertman	Role Principal Investigator	Contact [redacted]
Member Dale Wertman	Role Primary Contact	Contact
Member James Eller	Role Co-Principal Investigator	Contact

Appendix B

Social Media Site Facilitator Permission Request

July 2, 2023

Site Administrator,

My name is Dale Wertman. I am a member of this group, and I am finishing my doctorate at Liberty University. The subject of my research for my dissertation is a topic which is very close to my own lived life experience. My research is the Educational Needs of Military-Connected (MC) Students Transitioning from Military Connected Schools to Non-Military Connected Schools. Essentially, what are the educational needs/supports MC students need when their MC parent or guardian separates from Military Service? As such I need to recruit 12 adults ages 18 or older who lived this shared life experience to learn from their experience and potentially utilize this information to create, organize, and/or identify appropriate non-MC school supports for future MC students transitioning to a non-MC school. I am requesting to post the following on this group site to find participants:

Attention potential research participant:
As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from military connected (MC) schools to non-MC schools, and I am inviting eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be age 18 to 28 and a former military-connected student who transitioned from a military-connected school to a non-military-connected school as a child. Participants, if

willing, will be asked to participate in an approximately one-hour individual one-on-one interview, complete a journal assignment which should take approximately 45-90 minutes, and participate in an approximately one-hour focus group. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at @liberty.edu

I thank you in advance for your time. There is significant research which supports the need for this research and identifies the significant issues many of our peers experienced and the strength/resilience our peers utilized during such a transition. I believe this research will go a long way to help others learn from this resilience and strength, as well as help civilian educators recognize the specific educational needs of MC students. I am looking forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Dale John Wertman, Jr.

Doctoral Student at Liberty University

Appendix C

Survey

Please respond to the questionnaire if you are a child of a parent or guardian who served in the active-duty United States military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, and Coast Guard).

1. Are you a child of a parent or guardian who served in the active-duty United States military?

Yes No

2. What is your gender?

Male Female

3. Are you 18 or older?

Yes No

4. What branch of active US military did your parent/guardian serve? (Check all which apply)

Army Navy Air Force Marine Coast Guard

5. Did you attend a Department of Defense (school on base) or military-connected (off base school) school?

Yes No

6. Did your military-connected parent or guardian retire or separate from the military while they were attending a military-connected school?

Yes No

7. Did you transition from a military-connected secondary school?

Yes No

Please forward this email and survey to any family or friends who you believe meet this description and may be interested in participating. Upon the completion of this survey please return to @liberty.edu.

Appendix D

Recruitment Email

July 15, 2023

Attention potential research participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from military connected (MC) schools to non-MC schools, and I am inviting eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be age 18 or older and a former military-connected student who transitioned from a military-connected school to a non-military-connected school as a child. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an approximately one-hour individual one-on-one interview, complete a journal assignment which should take approximately 45-90 minutes, and participate in an approximately one-hour focus group. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at @liberty.edu.

You will then be sent a brief survey, to determine if you meet the criteria for this research.

Sincerely,

Dale John Wertman, Jr. Doctoral Student at Liberty University

@liberty.edu

Appendix E

Social Media Recruitment

July 2, 2023

To former Military-Connected Students:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is the purpose of my research is to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from MC schools to non-MC schools as a child, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be age 18 to 28 and a former military-connected student who transitioned from a military-connected school to a non-military-connected school as a child. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an approximately one-hour individual one-on-one interview, complete a journal assignment, and participate in an approximately one-hour focus group. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please complete the attached survey and return it by contacting me at **@liberty.edu**.

The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the initial interview.

Sincerely,

Dale John Wertman, Jr.
Doctoral Student at Liberty University
- - / @liberty.edu

Appendix F

Consent

Title of the Project: Educational Needs of Military-Connected Students Transitioning from a military connected school to a non-military-connected school
Principal Investigator: Dale John Wertman, Jr., Doctorate of Education Student at Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must age 18 to 28 and a former military-connected student who transitioned from a military-connected school to a non-military-connected school. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of the study is to understand the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from a military-connected school to a non-military connected school.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. Participants will take part in a journaling assignment.
2. Participants will take part in an approximately one-hour individual one-on-one interview via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or in person when possible. For instances where the interview will be via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or in person the participant will be video, and audio recorded. The interviews will be recorded electronically using a conference recording service or audio video recorder.
3. Participants will participate in an approximately one hour, focus group via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or in person when possible. For instances where the interview will be via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or in person the participant will be video, and audio recorded. The interviews will be recorded electronically using a conference recording service or audio video recorder.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

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

Benefits to society include understanding the shared experiences of adults who transitioned from a military-connected to non-military-connected school, as well as, understanding the needs and potential support services for military-connected students transitioning from a military-connected schools to non-military-connected school.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms/codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. Although discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. 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 the researcher at the email address/phone number 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 Dale John Wertman, Jr. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at - - or @liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Eller, at @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 **@liberty.edu**.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

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/video-record/photograph me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

Appendix G

Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to me, with your name and age, and a little bit about yourself.
2. Please describe your situation or how you became a dependent with a parent or guardian in the military.
3. Please walk me through your experience being child of a military-connected parent or guardian. Please include what grade you were in when your parent or guardian separated from military service.
4. What were the similarities and differences between military connected (MC) and non-MC schools?
5. What were your situations or experiences (positive or negative) regarding transitioning from different MC schools?
6. What services or supports were available for you as a student when you transitioned from MC schools to MC schools?
7. What were your situations or experiences (positive or negative) regarding transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school?
8. What services or supports were available for you as a student when you transitioned from MC school to a non-MC school?
9. What do you believe are the most beneficial services or supports for a student transitioning from a MC school to a non-MC school?
10. What personal strengths or assets to be believe aided you in your transition from a MC school to a non-MC school?
11. What problems or difficulties (educational, social, psychological, etc.) did you experience when you transitioned from a MC school to a non-MC school?

12. What did you learn regarding your experience transitioning from a MC school to non-MC school during this interview, is there anything else you would like to add, or do you have any concerns regarding anything you discussed during this interview?

Appendix H

Reflexive Journaling Prompts

Please respond to the following journal prompts regarding your experience transitioning from a military-connected school to a non-military-connected school. Please provide journal responses within two weeks from date journal prompts were sent.

Please include the following information:

1. A detailed explanation of experiences during and after this transition.
2. What issues you faced because of this transition.
3. What supports were offered or available during and/or after this transition.
4. What supports did you need during and/or after this transition.
5. What personal strengths assisted you during this transition.
6. Offer your adolescent self any insight you have since gained through life experience.

Appendix I

Focus Group Questions

1. Please introduce yourself to the group, with your name and age, and a little bit about yourself.
2. Describe and discuss the differences/situations in education, such as the curriculum or classes, which you experienced when transitioning from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
3. Specifically, regarding the curriculum or classes, describe and discuss the supports the non-military connected schools offered to support you during the transition from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
4. Specifically, regarding the curriculum or classes, describe and discuss what supports you believe would be helpful for non-military connected schools to offer to support military connected students when transitioning from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
5. Describe and discuss the interpersonal (self) demographic and psychosocial or the social, cultural, and environmental influences on your mind and behavior which you experienced when transitioning from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
6. Specifically, regarding the interpersonal psychosocial influences, describe and discuss the supports the non-military connected schools offered to support you during the transition from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
7. Specifically, regarding the interpersonal psychosocial influences, describe and discuss what supports you believe would be helpful for non-military connected schools to offer to

support military connected students when transitioning from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.

8. Describe and discuss the intrapersonal (self) psychological or behavioral experiences which you experienced when transitioning from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
9. Specifically, regarding the intrapersonal (self) psychological or behavioral experiences, describe and discuss the supports the non-military connected schools offered to support you during the transition from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
10. Specifically, regarding the intrapersonal (self) psychological or behavioral experiences, describe and discuss what supports you believe would be helpful for non-military connected schools to offer to support military connected students when transitioning from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
11. Discuss or describe anything you the military connected schools offered to support you when you were going to transition from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
12. Discuss or describe what services and supports the Military/Department of Defense could offer which you believe would be helpful to support military connected students when military connected students transition from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.
13. Describe or discuss what information would be essential for the training for non-military connected education professionals to better help military connected students when

military connected students transition from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.

14. Describe or discuss what information would be essential for military connected students to know prior to transitioning from a Military Connected school to a non-military connected school.

Appendix J

Audit Trail

Date	Task	Notes
June 27, 2023	Researcher successful defended proposal with Committee Chair and Committee.	Researcher began the IRB application process with Liberty University.
June 28. 2023	Researcher began the journaling process to bracket subjective experiences and biases.	Epoche process.
August 2, 2023	Received IRB approval from Liberty University.	Received helpful direction regarding recruitment process. Initial approval for potential participants ages 18-28.
August 13, 2023	Began contacting social media site administrators to gain approval to recruit via social media sites.	Completed as a requirement as an accountable researcher operating as institutional research agent.
August 16, 2023	Began receiving approval from social media site administrators to recruit via social media site.	Completed as a requirement as an accountable researcher operating as institutional research agent.
August 16, 2023	Began recruiting via approved social media sites for research participants.	Utilized Social Media Recruitment (Appendix D).
August 17, 2023	Began sending email invitations, surveys, and consents for potential participants.	Responded to social media comments, messenger comments, and emails of potential participants.
August 17, 2023 – August 27, 2023	Began receiving initial responses to recruitment of participants.	Did not receive enough responses from initial potential participants (ages 18-28); however, received a greater response from potential participants (ages 28-older) expressing interest in participation.
August 27, 2023 – September 5, 2023	Began discussing the benefits of submitting an IRB modification to modify potential research participants with Committee Chair.	Researched benefits of a more robust participant range.

September 6, 2023 – September 14, 2023	IRB modification request submitted to modify potential research participants age range to 18 and older.	Received helpful direction regarding recruitment process. Modification approval for potential participants ages 18 and above.
September 17, 2023	Began contacting social media site administrators to gain approval to modify recruitment via social media sites.	Required assignment of responsible investigator to function as agent of institution.
September 17, 2023	Began receiving approval from social media site administrators to modify recruitment via social media site.	Required assignment of Responsible Investigator to function as agent of institution.
September 17, 2023	Began modified recruiting via approved social media sites for research participants.	Utilized Social Media Recruitment.
September 20, 2023	Began receiving completed survey and consent forms.	Potential participants were sent recruitment response email, survey, and consent.
November 1, 2023	Researcher piloted interview questions.	Researcher gained experience by receiving helpful insight regarding the rate, tone, and pace of effective research interviewing.
November 1, 2023	Began conducting interviews.	Interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams and Zoom. The completed interviews were transcribed utilizing program transcription services.
November 1, 2023	Began forwarding reflexive journal assignments forwarded to research participants upon the completion of interviews.	Continued to organize the data obtained by participant reflexive journaling.
November 2, 2023	Started data analysis and began coding.	Organized the data obtained from participant interviews via the identification of horizons or significant participants statements.
January 16, 2024	Finalized/organized focus group questioned based upon	Focus group questions were revised considering interview and journaling responses.

	data received from interviews and reflexive journaling.	
January 27, 2024	First focus group completed.	Conducted online via Microsoft Teams.
February 24, 2024	Second focus group completed.	Conducted online via Microsoft Teams.
August 3, 2023 – March 10, 2024	Revised chapters 1-3.	Updated to represent the research procedures and literature review.
February 5, 2024 – March 3, 2024	Began drafting chapters 4-5.	Submitted Manuscript for Committee Chairs initial review.
March 4, 2024 – March 10, 2024	Editing of chapters 1-5	Revised manuscript as recommended by Committee Chair and Committee.

Appendix K

Reflexive Journal

August 2, 2023

Limited responses received from target population of adults ages 18 to 28. Messages received from participants beyond the target population age range, expressing interest in participating research.

August 16, 2023

One social media site administrator advised that while the site does a substantial approved membership of the target population, the site administrator advised this target population did not tend to participate as actively as older members.

August 27, 2023

After receiving comments via social media sites and private messages from potential research participants regarding initial research target population limiting the research to adults ages 18 to 28, research began to consider and research the potential of modifying participant age range to adults aged 18 and above. After discussion with Committee Chair, research indicated the expanding the participant target population would increase potential participants and provide for a robust sample group, researcher submitted a modification request to IRB.

September 18, 2023

Began receiving more responses, completed surveys and consents. The expansion of the target population to adults ages 18 and above created an overwhelming response which highlighted the researchers need to organize and track responses/follow-ups more efficiently.

October 2023

Received negative comments via a social media recruitment site regarding the potential participants views of Liberty University. This posting included misperceptions and misrepresentations of the scientific research process and perceived discrimination. While the researcher attempted to respond to the comment in a positive/encouraging manner, the conversation changed the focus of recruitment for research to a discussion regarding perceptions of discrimination in research and self-exclusionary comments due to perceptions of potential exclusion. There were limited evidence potential research participants responded to participation from this site, following this negative commentary.

November 1, 2023

The first interview was conducted with Ralph. In preparation for this interview, this researcher reviewed the interview question and attempted to prepare cognitively and emotionally for the prospective responses to interview questions. As this was the first interview, the researcher allowed Ralph to expand upon his responses. While the interview was initially anticipated to last less than 1 hour, this interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. Ralph expounded a bit more beyond the interview questions and offered potential insight for a potential snowball sampling participant (sibling) and offered additional insight as a participant who had experienced the phenomenon and a former high school and college educator. Learned how tone, pace, rate, and rephrasing question aided participants in answering interview questions more directly.

November 4, 2023

Researcher conducted second interview. Began to understand and feel more comfortable with the flow of research questions. Attempted to focus/clarify participant responses and encouraging participants to be as reflective and honest regarding the phenomenon.

November 8, 2023 – December 26, 2023

Conducted interviews three through 13 focusing more on rate, tone, interviewing skills and reflection of participant data, including potential themes and subthemes.

November 3, 2023 – February 3, 2024

Reviewed participant responses to reflexive journaling prompts. Researcher organized and planned for focus groups utilizing data from individuals and reflexive journaling responses. Continued to identify potential themes and subthemes. Main themes began to stand out.

January 27, 2024

Completed first focus group. The research participants expounded upon the questions in detail. The focus group lasted the entire 90 minutes. Research learned the importance of more precise limited participant introductions, as the introduction time took approximately 15 minutes and did not add to the data collection. Learned the importance of attempting to encourage the participation of all group members and to not allow one member to control the focus group tone.

February 4, 2024
Researcher completed second/final focus group and began to organize themes and subthemes.