

ABSTRACT

The Impact of Military Lifestyle on the Careers of Military Spouse Educators: A Phenomenological Case Study

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The military lifestyle can negatively impact military spouse employment, career progression, financial earnings, retirement eligibility, community connectedness, and self-esteem. Military spouses, on average, are overeducated and underemployed. This phenomenon is linked to unique military lifestyle factors, such as frequent relocation, and conceivably compounded by career-specific barriers, such as those often found in career fields like education. While substantial research exists on military spouse unemployment very little of it focuses on the impacts of the military lifestyle on spouses who work in education or seeks to highlight and describe the participants' lived experience. The scholarship documents this concern but rarely gives military spouses a voice.

To better understand the cumulative impact of these factors on military spouses, this phenomenological case study explores and describes the impact of military lifestyle on the careers of military spouse educators. This study employed a demographic questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended questions to capture the lived experiences of military spouse educators. The researcher utilized criteria-based and

snowball sampling methods. The researcher described the results through the lens of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a theoretical framework used to interpret motivation and the pursuit of goals on well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Moreover, the researcher leveraged thematic analysis to highlight common topics amongst the interview transcripts. This case study informs potential and current military spouses, military leadership, policymakers, teacher preparation programs, boards of education, communities, and support agencies of the adverse conditions that may impact military spouse educators and offers insights into ways to offer support.

The demographic findings closely imitate that of military spouses in general. Military lifestyle factors, especially frequent transitions, adversely impact Military Spouse Educator's (MSE) well-being. Participants shared how the uncertainty of the military lifestyle led to unfavorable challenges, requisite sacrifices, and the internalization of guilt regarding their careers. MSE's well-being would be fostered by a concerted effort to implement military policies that support the basic psychological needs (control, competence, connectedness) of the family unit. Military and educational policymakers can assist by auditing and mitigating arbitrary barriers to MSE employment and career progression.

Keywords: autonomy; career; competence; connectedness; deployment; education; employment; lifestyle; military; motivation; opportunities; phenomenological case study; relocation; spouse; transitions; well-being

The Impact of Military Lifestyle on the Careers of Military Spouse Educators:
A Phenomenological Case Study

by

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFAP: Army Family Action Plan

CIS: Curriculum Instructional Specialist

DoD: Department of Defense

DoDEA: Department of Defense Education Activity

EAP: Employment Assistance Programs

ELAR: English Language Arts and Reading

IEP: Individualized Education Program

ISD: Independent School District

LMA: Labor Market Area

MSE: Military Spouse Educator

NASDTEC: National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification

NCES: National Center for Education Statistics

OCNUS: Outside of the continental United States

PCS: Permanent Change of Station

SDT: Self-Determination Theory

TDY: Temporary Duty Assignment

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DEDICATION

To my wife
Michelle Johnson
Thank you for your candor, counsel, and compassion

To my son
Arjen Raine Johnson
You are and will always be my proudest achievement

To my mother
Carol Johnson
Thank you for teaching me grace and humility

To my father
Jerry Johnson
Thank you for not naming me Sue and for illuminating the power of education

To my many family, friends, teachers, and colleagues
Thank you for your patience, support, and motivation

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Problem of Practice

Sacrifice – an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy.

—Sacrifice, 2019

Introduction

For the sake of our country's sovereignty, to defend our citizens and our allies, to free others from tyranny, to provide humanitarian relief when and where necessary, and to serve as ambassadors of the United States both home and abroad, our service members and their families understand and exemplify the term "sacrifice." For example, in support of the service members' duty, military families frequently relocate, leave their social and kin networks, manage time away from the service member during deployments and temporary duty assignments, navigate their children's new school systems, and endure financial stressors. These factors separately, or collectively, may play a role in military spouses enduring yet another sacrifice—their career.

Research indicates that several unique military-connected factors negatively impact spousal employment, such as military-connected moves, deployments, installation location, employer stigma, and professional licensure and certification requirements (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). These factors cause military spouses to experience unwanted unemployment or underemployment. Beyond the concept of employment is the idea behind establishing and progressing within ones' career. For military spouses with a

graduate degree, research suggests the most common occupation is school teacher (Harrell, Lim, Castaneda, & Golinelli, 2004).

This study investigates both what and how military lifestyle factors and career-specific barriers impact the employment of military spouse educators. This study captures the first-hand perspectives of military spouse educators and their experiences with obstacles to work-related motivation, social-connectedness, and autonomy. For this study, a military spouse educator may identify as a school teacher, administrator, guidance counselor, or academic support staff, such as a librarian.

Statement of the Problem

Significant scholarship exists indicating the challenges associated with military spouse employment. The most recent Blue Star Families report (2018) noted that 56% of active-duty military spouses surveyed reported being unemployed. Moreover, active-duty spouses reported that their number one stressor was financial issues, followed by deployments, relocation stress, and isolation from family and friends. Military spouses also reported having the lowest sense of belonging in community connectedness (Blue Star Families, 2018). While it is difficult to say empirically that financial concerns, unemployment, and a sense of communal belonging are all connected, it certainly merits closer examination.

Military spouse employment and unique military factors that impact it are well researched. Grossman (1981) noted in the early 1970s wives of service members were less likely to contribute to the labor force, that is, they are either looking for work or already have a job, than their civilian counterparts. However, as the decade progressed, and the cultural norms shifted, more military wives began seeking employment. Despite

more military wives seeking employment, military wives were more likely to be unemployed than their civilian counterparts. Subsequent research indicates that this concern is still relevant (Payne, Warner, & Little, 1992; Hosek, Asch, Fair, Martin, & Mattock, 2002; Harrell et al., 2004; Maury & Stone, 2014).

Many studies have offered reasons as to why military spouse unemployment is higher than that of civilian spouses, many of them unique to the military lifestyle. Barriers to employment include frequency of moves, spousal deployments, local labor markets, employer stigma, proximity to social and kin networks, access and affordability of childcare, and portability of professional licensure (Harrell et al., 2004). Research also highlights that historically, spouses of Army officers reported feeling obligated to conform to a traditional support role whereby attending military-related events and ceremonies for fear that if they did not, it could negatively impact their service member's career (Durand, 1995; Harrell, 2001; Ott, Morgan, & Akroyd, 2018). These barriers, coupled with a sense of obligation to perform social and ceremonial duties, may indicate why military spouse employment remains lower than their civilian counterparts.

Several studies have shown that for those military spouses who find employment, they typically earn and work less than their civilian equivalents (Payne et al., 1992; Harrell et al., 2004). Those with college degrees often have the most difficulty finding work within their selected career field and note that military lifestyle factors disturb their career progression, impact their retirement, and often nullify their acquired seniority (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008).

For this study, the term “military spouse educators” refers to those whose chosen career is in public, private, or higher education and may include administrative personnel,

teachers, academic support positions, or guidance counselors. While education is a growing career field across the United States, some parameters may adversely affect employment opportunities for military spouses. Some of these parameters may include geographic proximity of employers to the spouse's assigned installation, salary and benefit differences amongst school districts, specific job availability, licensure and certification requirements, retirement accumulation, and potential employer stigma. Typical research (Payne et al., 1992; Harrell et al., 2004) has focused on military spouse employment; however, most do not highlight personal issues and concerns specific to the spouses' whose preferred career field is education.

While substantial research on military spouse unemployment exists, very little of it focuses on the impacts of the military lifestyle on spouses who work in education or seek to highlight and describe the participants' lived experience. The problem is that military spouses face unique military-connected challenges that often leave them professionally overqualified and underemployed. There is scholarship documenting this concern (Blue Star Families, 2018; Maury & Stone, 2014; Lin & Schulker, 2010) but rarely gives military spouses a voice. Additionally, there is a lack of research regarding how career-specific barriers in the field of education are exacerbated by the impact of the military lifestyle. By capturing the lived experiences of military spouse educators, firsthand, it is possible to elucidate specific barriers to career progression, self-efficacy, and well-being. This study, therefore, complements previous studies on the impact of the military lifestyle and extends scholarship on how those impacts affect the careers of military spouse educators.

Purpose of the Study

To date, there is no existing research on this subgroup of military spouses. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study is to describe how the military lifestyle impacts the careers of military spouse educators and highlight career-specific challenges that military spouse educators face. This study utilizes a qualitative design to capture the lived experiences of military spouse educators in rich detail and to allow their perceptions of challenges and insights concerning their employment to resonate fully.

The primary research questions for this study are:

1. What are the characteristics and demographic data that describe military spouses who pursue careers in education?
2. How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers?
3. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers?

Guided by the theoretical framework of the Self-Determination Theory, the secondary research questions are:

1. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy?
2. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy?
3. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness?
4. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being?

By capturing the perceived military lifestyle factors and career-specific challenges that impact military spouse educators, it is possible to delineate opportunities to

stakeholders that will mitigate or remove barriers for this important subset of military spouses. Additionally, it provides military spouse educators an opportunity to articulate how career challenges and barriers impact their sense of well-being. This study informs policymakers, military leadership, state boards of education, potential employers, professional education association, supportive nonprofits, educational preparation programs, and current or future military spouse educators about the employment challenges associated with the military lifestyle.

Research Design

The research design utilizes a phenomenological case study with a transcendental approach, wherein the researcher applies purposive case sampling to gather descriptive data through interviews and questionnaires focusing on how and what the participants experienced regarding the impact of the military lifestyle on their careers as military spouse educators. The researcher used pattern matching, constant comparative, and cross-case data analysis protocols to combine significance statements and quotes into themes that allowed for the creation of structural and textural descriptions of the experiences that provide a more in-depth understanding and articulation of the essence of the shared experiences of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, this research focused on what career-specific barriers are experienced by military spouse educators and how they, in isolation or collectively, impact the career, or perceived career progression, of military spouse educators. This qualitative approach allows the researcher to focus on the first-hand descriptions and “arrive at a textural-structural synthesis of meanings and essences of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 36).

Philosophical Assumptions

This research utilizes the lens of the Self-Determination Theory to help contextualize and explain how well-being is dynamically influenced by three psychological needs: competence (self-efficacy), relatedness (relationships with others), and autonomy (control over one's life; see Deci & Ryan, 2000). These needs, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), are innate not learned, and all three must be satisfied. Findings have suggested that environments and factors that satisfy these “needs” help predict well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

In the context of a military spouse educator, their competence need is their mastery and utilization of skills, as well as their confidence in their ability within their operational environment. Their relatedness need is their sense of belonging and a secure social connection with others. Lastly, their autonomy need is their sense of control, self-regulation, and selection of personal goals.

The Self-Determination Theory offers a framework in which to view how military lifestyle factors may impact a military spouse educators' sense of well-being. Specifically, frequent relocations could disrupt employment, which in turn may adversely impact a military spouse educator from utilizing their professional skills (competence), maintaining social connections and status (relatedness), and progressing their career (autonomy). Similarly, military spouse educators may experience career-specific barriers, such as state-specific licensure and certification requirements that, conceivably, could have the same, or similar, impact.

Definitions of Terms

COVID: short for COVID-19. A coronavirus disease strain (World Health Organization, 2021).

CONUS: Short for the “Continental United States.”

Deployment: The movement of military personnel (service members) and/or equipment to a place or position for military action.

Dual-military Spouses: Families where both spouses are service members (Military OneSource, 2019).

Military Lifestyle: A broad term used to designate the unique aspects of being in, or associated with, the military (e.g., deployments, frequent relocations, etc.).

Military Spouse: Typically refers to the civilian spouse of a service member. For families where both spouses are service members, see *Dual-military spouses*.

OCONUS: Short for “Outside the Continental United States.”

Permanent Change of Station (PCS): Official relocation of an active-duty military service member, including family, to a different duty location; also see travel orders (Moore & Philpott, 2016; Military OneSource, 2019).

Conclusion

Characteristically, educators are concerned for the well-being of their students, just as military spouses are concerned for the well-being of their spouse and families. As research is deficient regarding this critical subgroup, by investigating how military lifestyle factors and career-specific barriers impact military spouse educators, this Problem of Practice highlights a concern for their well-being. For this study, the Self-Determination Theory provides a framework for understanding how challenges impact

the motivation, goals, self-efficacy, competence, and autonomy of military spouse educators' careers as well as their perception of well-being.

In review, this chapter highlighted the rationale for the research and introduced the research design and methodology utilized in this study. To demonstrate the gap in the literature that this study fills, Chapter Two thoroughly examines the literature available on the impact of the military lifestyle on the careers of military spouses. Chapter Three details the research methodology selected for this study and highlights the protocol used for sampling, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, bracketing, other ethical considerations, and research limitations. Chapter Four specifies the findings and results of the research study. Finally, Chapter Five discusses and summarizes the potential implications of the findings, as well as considerations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter synthesizes relevant literature for this research study. The ensuing literature review on military spouse employment unfolds in four steps. First, this chapter reviews the current demographics of active-duty military spouses in the United States. Second, this chapter surveys the chronological scholarship of the impacts, and the mitigation efforts, of the military lifestyle on military spouses. Third, this chapter brings these findings into conversation with military spouse educators. Finally, this chapter concludes by drawing out implications of the military lifestyle, and career-specific barriers, on military spouse educators. For clarity, this study prefers to utilize the term “military spouses” as most of the research conducted to date has focused on military wives, because they are, by far, the majority.

Demographics of Active-Duty Military Spouses

Annually, the Department of Defense (DoD) publishes a demographic profile of the military community. Their most recent profile (2017) reported that 52% of the almost 1.3 million active-duty service members are married, totaling 612,127 active-duty spouses (Department of Defense). By military branch, the Army has the most active-duty spouses (245,503, 40%), followed by the Air Force (151,536, 25%), Navy (145,771, 24%) and the Marines (69,317, 11%).

The Department of Defense (2017) specified that of all active-duty spouses, over 75% are married to enlisted service members, nearly 92% are female, and over 70% are 35 years of age or younger. Not including dual-military spouses, 47% of active-duty spouses are employed in the civilian labor force, 14% are unemployed but seeking work, and 39% are unemployed and not seeking work. Active-duty spouses of enlisted service members are more likely (63%) to be employed or seeking work than spouses of Active-duty officers (57%). Looking across military service branches, the Navy has the highest percentage of active-duty military spouses employed in the civilian labor force (52%), followed by the Marine Corps and Air Force (both 47%) and then Army (43%). Curiously, the Army had the highest percentage of active-duty military spouses that identified as unemployed but seeking work (17%; see Department of Defense, 2017).

The DoD profile (2017) reported that there are just over one million children of active-duty service members, with over 42% (425,086) being Army affiliated. Of all active-duty children, 42% (422,556) are under six years of age. The average number of children per service member across all branches of active-duty service is 0.8 (Department of Defense, 2017).

In a report published by Maury and Stone (2014), most active-duty military spouses are Caucasian (80%) followed by Hispanic (8%) and African American (5.5%). Military spouses are more likely to have a college degree (40%) or some college (34%) than their civilian counterparts (30% and 26%, respectively; see Council of Economic Advisors, 2018). Almost 80% of military spouses have relocated across state lines at least once in the last five years, and 50% have relocated more than twice in that same timeframe (Maury & Stone, 2014).

While this study focuses on active-duty spouses, it is essential to recognize the military guard and reserve components. Active-duty military personnel are in the military full-time, whereas the Reserve or National Guard are not full-time active-duty personnel but rather fill gaps in service positions, support deployments, and assist in national emergencies. These service members and spouses may experience similar military lifestyle issues but may also experience unique barriers and frustrations.

Every year, the nonprofit agency, Blue Star Families, publishes a report on their Military Family Lifestyle Survey findings, detailing current challenges and experiences of military families. Blue Star Families most recent report (2018) underscored that over 10,000 respondents participated and that it is the “largest and most comprehensive survey of active-duty service members, veterans, and their families” (p. 8). Relevant findings include that 30% of military spouses indicated they were unemployed but had sought work in the last four weeks. Of those that were employed 56% reported they were underemployed, “meaning they may be overqualified, underpaid, or underutilized in their current position” (Blue Star Families, 2018, p. 18). The study also highlighted that the likelihood of reporting underemployment increases with the number of military relocations.

In conclusion, active-duty military spouses are most likely female, white, Army affiliated, and 35 or younger. Additionally, they are also likely to have at least some college, a child under six years of age, and have moved across state lines more than twice in the last five years. Perhaps most crucially, a significant percentage of military spouses indicate that they are unemployed or underemployed.

The impact of the military lifestyle on military spouse employment is not new. Moreover, while scholarship (Blue Star Families, 2018; Maury & Stone, 2014; Lin & Schulker, 2010) has stressed this concern and several efforts to mitigate it, the problem still exists. The following literature represents a chronological review of keystone findings and significant research on military spouse employment.

Chronological Review of Scholarship

This section showcases the empirical research on the challenges to military spouse employment. However, very few of these studies utilize a qualitative approach to understanding the challenges to military spouse employment or considers how career-specific barriers, such as those experienced by educators, may further compound the phenomenon. This research study fills that gap by qualitatively investigating how military lifestyle factors and career-specific barriers impact the careers of military spouse educators.

In the late 1960s, while the United States was embroiled in (what is often considered) America's longest war, Finlayson (1969) researched how the military environment may impact Army officer wives' participation in education, career preparation, employment, and volunteerism. In providing context for the study and factors that may influence employment participation, Finlayson (1969) highlights specific characteristics that are commonly associated with the military lifestyle, such as mobility, deployments, geographical separation from extended family as well as customs and traditions. Finlayson (1969) sent 1062 four-part questionnaires to Army officer wives inquiring as to their general background, academic history, current volunteer activities (and training and skills required), and employment (along with required utilization of

skills and training); 753 responded. The highest level of educational attainment for respondents was cited as 15.5% graduated high school, 41.7% had some college, 31% graduated college, and 8.8% completed at least one year of graduate work (Finlayson, 1969). Finlayson (1969) cited the top two major fields of study for college participants as business (including clerical) and education. Interestingly, when Finlayson (1969) asked what specific occupation preparation, including at the high school level, did they have, the two most frequently listed responses, in order, were secondary education teacher and elementary education teacher.

As Finlayson (1969) researched how the military environment may influence Army officer wives' education and career preparation, spouses provided insight into their post-marriage educational pursuits. Responses varied but indicated that many had taken or were enrolled in formal high school or college credit courses, occupational and professional training, or recreational courses after getting married. Additionally, 64 spouses indicated they earned at least one-degree post-marriage (Finlayson, 1969). When asked whether they had a desire to continue their formal education, 29% of spouses indicated that their formal education was complete, while 53.7% indicated that their formal education was not complete, and the remainder were either undecided or selected not to answer (Finlayson, 1969). Of those signifying a desire for additional education, the top three reasons offered were self-enrichment and personal growth, to complete a degree requirement or earn an additional degree, or to update or refresh their skills. In an attempt to ascertain why those interested in additional education were not presently enrolled, the three main reasons offered, in order, were pregnancy or young children, family and home

responsibilities, and reasons related to Army life (e.g., husband deployed; see Finlayson, 1969).

Finlayson (1969) elucidated that spouses used volunteerism as a means in which to build or use their skills in preparation for a career. Just as military factors may impair spousal employment, it may also impede volunteer participation. Of the respondents, 54% specified participating in no volunteer activities, and 46% indicated they volunteered in one or more activities within the last year. The majority specified they volunteered on a military post (61%) and for social, cultural, or recreational organizations (48%).

Investigating the involvement of Army officer wives in the labor force, Finlayson (1969) found 34% of respondents had not been employed since marrying their husband; conversely, 9% reported being employed most or all since getting married. An astonishing 80% of Army officer wives reported that they were not currently employed, and, of those that reported being employed, less than half were employed full-time (Finlayson, 1969). Notably, the likelihood of being employed increased with both educational level and degree attainment. The most common occupation for those employed was, in rank order, educational services, medical services, government, retail and wholesale trade, and others (which included self-employed; see Finlayson, 1969). Of note, time in residence, that is, the longer the wife of an Army officer lived in one place, the more likely they were employed. Finlayson (1969) found that 16% of wives who moved over the summer were employed, 22% who had three months to a year in residence were employed, and 26% of those who lived in residence for a year or more were employed (Finlayson, 1969). Also, the likelihood of employment was significantly

higher for wives with no dependents (35%) versus that of wives with preschoolers (10%; see Finlayson, 1969).

In conclusion, Finlayson's (1969) foundational research emphasized that a significant percentage of military spouses were interested in seeking meaningful employment or additional educational opportunities that would encourage personal growth, enhance their skill sets, and perhaps catalyze financial compensation. This research also provided a genesis for the understanding of how military lifestyle factors, such as deployments and frequent relocations, influenced the probability of employment (Finlayson, 1969). Additionally, while having children is not uniquely military, the likelihood of being isolated from the potential support that could be provided by established social and family networks may well add complexity to those seeking employment.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a cultural shift regarding the acceptance of women, wives, and mothers working outside of the home, led by landmark legislation (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1972 Title IX of the Education Amendments) and economic inflation. As such, many women began seeking employment and additional educational opportunities. By 1979, this shift, along with a desire to better utilize their skills and abilities and earn financial recompense, led to a significant uptick in labor force participation of military wives (Grossman, 1981). In researching the Bureau of Labors Statistics Current Population Survey, Grossman (1981) found that the unemployment rate for military wives was significantly higher (12%) than for civilian wives (5%). Just as Finlayson (1969) found that the top two fields of study were business (including clerical) and education for military wives, Grossman (1981) found that clerical and professional-

technical (while not specified, ostensibly this category included educators) were the most common occupations. Also, like Finlayson (1969), Grossman (1981) noted several military lifestyle factors that negatively impact spousal labor force participation, such as frequent relocations, deployments, and geographical separation from the service member while caring for young children. Median earnings, in 1978, for military families with children where both parents were employed was \$16,200, whereas the median earnings for civilian families with both parents employed were \$23,200. It is worth noting that Grossman (1981) accentuated that the retention of married service members, around the time the United States military adopted an all-volunteer force, appeared to have an inverse relationship to the proportion of military wives seeking work. Grossman inaugurated a research trajectory followed by subsequent scholars who explored the theme of mitigating barriers to military spouses' career, educational and financial opportunities, and its influence on service member retention.

Following up on Grossman's (1981) study, Hayghe (1986), also utilizing the Bureau of Labors Statistics Current Population Survey data, noted that military wives, when compared to their civilian counterparts, were considerably less likely to participate in the labor market. Estimating the ages of military wives based on their husband's age, Hayghe (1986) postulated military wives are demonstrably younger than their civilian counterparts, and when comparing the labor force participation rate for both groups, the military wives were 15% lower than civilian wives. Additionally, having preschool-aged children further impaired the likelihood of labor force participation for military wives (35%) when compared to civilian wives (54%; see Hayghe, 1986). Hayghe (1986) noted that when comparing the labor force participation rates of both military and civilian

wives from 1970 and 1986, both have increased significantly (over 20%), but the difference between them has remained nearly the same (15%) with military wives trailing their counterparts when it comes to working or looking for work. Unlike Grossman (1981), Hayghe (1986) did not offer information regarding earnings. However, similar to Grossman (1981), Hayghe (1986) shared that military wives' participation in the labor force and the ability to support their family economically can be a vital component to service member retention and mission readiness.

In 1983, the Army Chief of Staff, General John Wickham, Jr. authored a white paper, simply titled, "White Paper 1983: The Army Family." This report recognized the essential roles military families play in soldier retainment and mission readiness. As the service member has an "unlimited liability contract" to their nation, the Army recognizes it has a "moral obligation" to support soldiers' families (Wickham, 1983). This white paper specifically highlighted that Army wives had an increasing interest in working outside of the home and developing their careers. Moreover, Wickham (1983) notes the economic benefits of Army wives working outside of the home are substantial; for those military spouses who are employed, they contribute 33% of their family's income, compared to just 19% for their civilian counterparts (Wickham, 1983). Of interest, Wickham acknowledges the impact of the military lifestyle on military spouses' careers by stating:

Increasingly, the career development of spouses has forced military families to choose between one career or the other...Employment of the spouse in a military marriage is often on a temporary basis and at lower pay, due to frequent and unpredictable military moves. (1983, p. 9)

This acknowledgment of how the military lifestyle impacts the careers of military spouses as well as accentuating the pivotal role military families have on soldier and

mission readiness was essential in the development of the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP). AFAP is a program that provides service members and their families, as well as veterans and DoD civilians, an avenue in which to voice their concerns regarding quality-of-life issues to military leadership. Wickham's (1983) report, and subsequently the AFAP process, has been and continues to be a catalyst for numerous legislative and policy changes as well as a vast number of improvements to military programs and services (e.g., extended educational benefits for spouses).

Utilizing data from the 1985 Department of Defense Member and Spouse Survey, Schwartz, Wood, and Griffith (1991) examined unique military lifestyle factors that impact spousal employment. Moreover, they sought to examine how soldier retention and performance are tied to spousal employment. The data collected from 5,484 questionnaires included information from both Army officers and enlisted, male and female, spouses. Results indicated that the typical Army spouse was approximately 31 years old, female, Caucasian, had not relocated in 23 months, lived inside the continental United States, and has a child under 18 years of age and is in the labor force (Schwartz et al., 1991). Of those in the labor force, 77% were employed, 67% indicating they were working full-time, and 55% stated they were using their skills, a factor that may correlate with underemployment (Schwartz et al., 1991). The research also revealed that the employment level typically increased with the level of education, and those Army spouses with children under five years of age had the lowest rates in labor force participation (41%) and employment (70%). Other findings of interest included that: officers' spouses were more likely to report being employed than spouses of enlisted service members, black spouses and those with increased education were more likely to

be employed full-time, those with increased education and work experience were less likely to be underemployed as they were utilizing their skills, and those who relocate less frequently and more likely to employed full-time (Schwartz et al., 1991). The research findings led the authors to offer several suggestions for policy change, including increasing access to high-quality childcare, offering programs that support the education and skill attainment for spouses, and reducing the frequency of relocations. Schwartz et al. (1991) hypothesized that by improving the likelihood of military wives finding employment, soldier commitment and retention would improve. It is worth noting that while this study did not compare military spouses to their civilian counterparts or examine spousal earnings, it did, however, provide results that were consistent with previous studies regarding the impacts of the military lifestyle and their effect on labor force participation and employment of military wives.

Relocation to different installations is often a necessary obligation of employment to meet the needs of the military as well as progress the career of a service member. These military moves are officially referred to as Permanent Change of Station (PCS) and often require relocation across state lines, or outside of the continental United States (OCONUS). While the military does not obligate the family to move with the service member, the concept and cost associated with voluntary geographical separation from their service member are typically seen as less favorable than frequent relocations. Harrell summed it this way, “Geographic mobility is an occupational demand for the soldier, it is an inflexible familial demand for the civilian spouse if the family is to be maintained as a joint residential unit” (2001, p. 362). Despite the personal or professional

sacrifices required to keep the family together and support the service member's career, spouses feel obligated to relocate.

Typically, military families have very little say, or advance notice, in where they are relocated (stationed). The "tied migration" theoretical framework developed by Mincer (1978) looked at the phenomenon, albeit of civilian families, and noted that decisions regarding family migration are based on maximizing the benefits of the transition for the whole family, which is not the same as maximizing the benefit for each family member. In applying the concept of tied-migration to military families, the service member is required to move as a condition of their employment, and the relocation may be advantageous for the family, but this may require the spouse (a tied mover, also referred to as a trailing spouse) to resign their position or postpone their career goals, which is individually disadvantageous.

Payne, Warner, and Little (1992), using tied migration as their framework, postulated that due to frequent migration, both employers and employees (in this case, military spouses) are disincentivized. The authors speculate that the employer, knowing the frequency of migration of military spouses, are hesitant to invest the time and resources into training and skill development (human capital). Similarly, the military spouse (employee), knowing the likelihood that relocation is forthcoming and presumably constrained by geographical location (near the military installation), will likely have to accept lower wages (Payne et al., 1992). Therefore, the probability of low wages and low human capital investment by their employer, coupled with the frequency of migration and the prospect of starting-over, may help explain the lack of labor force participation by military spouses (Payne et al., 1992). Using data from the 1985 Current

Population Survey and the Couple File of the 1985 Department of Defense Personnel Survey, Payne et al. (1992) found that labor market participation of civilian wives (70.1%) was significantly higher than military wives (49%). Other findings included that military wives were more likely to be younger, have more education, be more diverse (nonwhite), more likely to have children, and more than twice as likely to work for the federal government than civilian wives.

Payne et al. (1992) estimate and compare earnings between military and civilian wives. Interestingly, civilian spouses seemed to financially benefit more from increased educational attainment than military spouses, with military spouses typically earning five to eight percent less, per week, than civilian spouses when controlling for education level. The gap in annual earnings, when controlling for educational level, was even greater, leading Payne et al. (1992) to suggest that military lifestyle factors adversely impact the number of hours military wives worked, especially for those with increased educational attainment. Resultantly, Payne et al. (1992) suggested that a military rotation policy of every three-years, as opposed to their suggested every six-year cycle, reduces military wives' earnings by 40%. Furthermore, Payne et al. (1992) suggested that by implementing military programs and policies that diminish the effect of relocation and other military lifestyle factors on military spouse employment, it may serve to assist the military in its recruiting and retention efforts.

The research offered up to this point has noted several military lifestyle factors, such as frequent relocation and spousal deployment as well as spousal demographic features, such as age and children, that potentially impact military spouse labor force participation and employment. The literature emphasized an earnings gap between

military and civilian spouses. Booth et al. (2000) addressed a gap in the research by investigating the influence of local labor market areas (LMAs), essentially the geographical locations of most major, non-Naval, military installations—rural America—when researching the earnings differential. By comparing earnings of women in LMAs with a significant military presence (set at 5% or higher) with LMAs with a low military presence, Booth et al. (2000) argued that women, not just military wives, experience higher levels of unemployment and lower earnings. Building from Booth et al. (2000), Booth (2003), utilizing 1990 Census data, noted that women’s earnings differences at LMAs with a significant military presence were substantially lower than at LMAs without a significant military presence. Additionally, women with increased education were estimated to have higher annual earnings, when holding constant for other demographic factors. Surprisingly, Booth (2003) noted that women with children under six years of age were more likely to be employed. The explanation for this anomaly was that either those who were employed could afford daycare or those individuals were not in the labor force and, therefore, not represented in the results. In summary, Booth (2003) posited that military wives are subject to a “confluence of factors that include not only their status as tied migrants but also the effect of structural features with the labor market” (p. 45). In other words, the impact on military wives’ employment and earnings is tied to more than just frequent relocation, there are other factors to consider, such as the number of major employers and available occupational sectors, in the local labor market (Booth, 2003).

In 2000, Wardynski noted a significant amount of research on military spouse earnings was attributed to tied migration. In addition to reducing the frequency of

relocations, Wardynski entertains the possibility of eliminating the number of relocation sites, especially those OCONUS, to improve spousal earnings. However, in doing so, he highlighted that by reducing the number of relocation sites, the military, by design, would have to increase the number of deployments to regions in which the installations were shuttered; this would, more than likely, adversely impact all military families, including those with spouses not seeking employment.

Similar to Booth (2000), Wardynski (2000) noted that local labor market areas, coupled with the frequencies of transitions, harm military spouse earnings. In reviewing data from the 1992 DoD Survey, Wardynski (2000) compared military spouse earnings across military branches and at different installation locations to determine how locality impacts earnings. Noting that in San Diego, California, military and civilian spouses reported similar earnings and that San Diego represented comparably moderate wage rates, it was selected as the comparison location. It is worth mentioning that San Diego is home to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, and Naval Amphibious Base Coronado. When comparing military service branches, the findings suggested that Army and Air Force spouses incur the most considerable wage penalties, 17.4%, and 13.6%, respectively, based on local labor markets. Specifically, Wardynski (2000) highlighted that when comparing military spouse labor earnings to those in San Diego, spouses of service members located at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, incurred a 78% wage penalty. Wardynski's (2000) findings reaffirmed that while the frequency of migration adversely impacts spousal earnings, depressed local labor markets near many military installations underpin the wage penalty. To combat the problem of local labor markets impacting spousal earnings, Wardynski (2000) suggested, among

other things, creating or augmenting policies that would support the hiring of military spouses through civil service positions at or near the installation they reside, provide contractors incentives to hire and retain military spouses, and, to whatever degree feasible, mitigate stationing service members in remote areas.

Similar to previous studies (Grossman, 1981; Payne et al., 1992; Wardynski, 2000), Hosek et al. (2002), using data from the 1988–2000 Current Population Survey, investigated military spouse participation and earnings in the labor force and compared the data to that of civilian spouses. Not surprisingly, Hosek et al. found similar results where working military spouses earn less, work less, and were less likely to work in full-time positions than their civilian counterparts. Additionally, having young children, five years of age and younger, adversely impacted labor force participation of military wives more than their civilian equivalents. In contrast to previous studies, Hosek et al. (2002) did not find that employers were less likely to invest human capital in military spouses or that military spouses tend to live in predominantly rural areas. However, as a concession, Hosek et al. (2002) did acknowledge that additional data regarding “local labor markets” could have helped provide more definitive findings.

Hosek et al. (2002) suggested several military lifestyle factors may inhibit or reduce military spouse labor force participation, such as frequent migration adversely impacts military spouses’ accumulation of education, experience, and earnings. Also, the frequent relocations and limited employment opportunities near installation locations are likely to discourage spouses from engaging in the job search process. Besides, military spouses, unlike civilian spouses, are tied migrants and are less likely to be able to relocate to a location that will enhance their career opportunities. Finally, and interestingly, Hosek

et al. (2002) suggest that military spouses may prefer the opportunities associated with the military lifestyle to that of employment. In other words, spouses may “have different tastes for work” (Hosek et al., 2002, p. 3), or they may see military family-related policies as an incentive to have children.

Until now, most information regarding how the military lifestyle impacts military spouse employment has been quantitative; that is, they used data from reports or censuses to infer findings. Qualitative research often seeks to look beyond the numbers and pre-determined responses commonly found in surveys and capture “deeper layers of meaning” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96) regarding the experience. Often, researchers utilize a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to promote parity with the data.

Harrell, Lim, Castaneda, and Golinelli (2004) utilized both quantitative data sets (1990 Census Data, 1999 DoD military spouse survey, 2000 March CPS) and qualitative data from over 1,100 military spouse interviews. Many of their findings mirror those that came previously, military wives tend to be younger, more ethnically diverse, more educated, have young children, move more frequently, work and earn less than their civilian counterparts (Harrell et al., 2004). Similar to Hosek et al. (2002), but in contrast to Booth (2000), Harrell et al. (2004) found that most military wives live in metropolitan areas. Other notable findings from their research included that nearly 66% of all respondents cited financial purposes as their most significant reason for working, while 40% of spouses with graduate degrees indicated the most important reason for working was personal fulfillment (Harrell et al., 2004). Additionally, and relative to the purposes of this Problem of Practice, Harrell et al. (2004) found that the most common occupation

for military spouses with a graduate degree was teaching. Interestingly, during interviews, Harrell et al. (2004) asked participants about their experience and usage of their respective military service branch's employment assistance programs (EAPs). These programs were established to, among other things, assist in writing resumes, provide career counseling, and assist in job placement. Most spouses who had sought employment indicated they were aware of but had not used the program. Also highlighted during the interviews, some spouses stated that professional certification and licensure issues were negatively impacting their work opportunities. Harrell et al. (2004) commented that the infrequency in which this concern was noted might reflect more on the occupations of interview participants than the actual significance and applicability of the issue.

Previous research into how tied migration impacts the employment of military spouses, such as Payne et al. (1992), exclusively utilized data representing military wives (wives of military men). Most research up until this point studied military wives, as they constitute the overwhelming majority of military spouses. However, Cooke and Speirs (2005), utilizing data from the Public Use Microdata Sample of the 1990 U.S. Census, were interested in researching if tied migration impacted the employment opportunities for military wives similarly to that of military husbands. The results suggested that regardless of gender, tied migration (relocation) adversely impacted the likelihood of employment and the number of hours worked for both male and female military spouses.

Little and Hisnanick (2007), by means of the 2000 U.S. Census data, researched the earnings of military husbands and compared them to both military wives and to civilian husbands. Comparable to prior research on military wives (Payne et al., 1992),

Little and Hisnanick (2007) found that military husbands are also more likely to be younger, ethnically diverse, move more frequently, earn less, and be employed by the federal government than civilian husbands. Irrespective of gender, Little and Hisnanick (2007) found both military wives and military husbands incur a significant earnings penalty due to tied migration, 52%, and 29% respectively when compared to their civilian counterparts.

Up to this point, the majority of the literature has shared insights into (mostly female) military spouse employment as well as earnings and the military lifestyle factors that impact them. A concept that thus far has not been fully vetted in the research, however, is that of underemployment. Underemployment is generally defined as someone who is “overqualified, underpaid, or underutilized in their current position” (Blue Star Families, 2018, p. 18) but could also simply suggest they are “less-than-adequately full-time employed” (Lim & Schulker, 2010, p. 17).

Lim and Schulker (2010) measured underemployment among military wives and found that for military wives seeking employment, 60% were full-time employees, but 38% of those spouses reported as being “underemployed by educational mismatch” (p. 20). In comparison, only 6% of civilian wives were classified as being underemployed by educational mismatch (Lim & Schulker, 2010). Also, military wives with higher levels of education within their occupation were more likely to experience educational mismatch (Lim & Schulker, 2010).

In their research, Lim and Schulker (2010), noted that several studies found associations between underemployment and well-being. Employing data from the 2006 Current Population Survey to determine if such a correlation exists among military

spouses, Lim and Schulker (2010) failed to find that underemployment among military spouses was significantly related to their dissatisfaction of being a military spouse, or as the author's suggested perhaps, they elected not to share their dissatisfaction on the survey. Additionally, with the data utilized, Lim and Schulker (2010) stated they could not definitively conclude that military spouse underemployment is caused by military lifestyle factors.

Recognizing that previous research elucidated that relocation impacts employment, Cooney, De Angelis, and Segal (2011) sought to distill the consequences of tied migration when factoring for race, class, and gender differences among military spouses. Employing data from the 1992 DoD Surveys of Officers and Enlisted Personnel and their Spouses, Cooney et al. (2011) reviewed responses from 14,874 surveys (83% from military wives and 17% from military husbands). In response to satisfaction regarding job opportunities, results concluded only 1.5% of all military spouses indicated they were very satisfied with their job opportunities, whereas 17.2% indicated being very dissatisfied (Cooney et al., 2011). The likelihood of reporting being dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied, decreased by 5.6% for every additional year, the spouse remained at their current location. A summary of satisfaction when controlling for gender, race, and class were as follows: military husbands, black spouses, spouses of enlisted personnel were all more likely to report being dissatisfied with job opportunities. Due to the heterogeneity of data for Hispanic people and small sample sizes for races such as American Indian, the only races included for analysis within their research were white, black, and Asian (Cooney et al., 2011).

Cooney et al. (2011) also investigated gender, race, and class differences in military spouse employment. Even though they were more likely to be dissatisfied with their job opportunities, military husbands, black spouses, and spouses of enlisted personnel were more likely to be employed. Geographic stability indicated an increased probability that spouses would be employed, with minority spouses benefitting the most. Having children at home did not impact the employment status for military husbands, but for military wives, each additional child at home lowers their likelihood of employment by 12.2%. For black spouses, the number of children at home did not significantly impact the likelihood of employment, but fascinatingly, for Asian spouses, each additional child correlated to a 32% increase in the likelihood of employment (Cooney et al., 2011).

Lastly, Cooney et al. (2011) looked at military spouse earnings and the impact of geographic mobility (relocations) on military spouses. Notable results include, “women earn less than men, black spouses earn more than white spouses, spouses of senior officers earn more than those associated to other pay grades,” and with each relocation, there is an earnings penalty (except for Asians which experience an earnings premium; see Cooney et al., 2011, p. 37). Similar to previous studies reviewed, geographic stability is generally associated with increased levels of employment and earnings for military spouses.

In 2014, Maury and Stone published the Military Spouse Employment Report to determine what challenges and barriers military spouses face when seeking employment. The report was based on the Military Spouse Employment Survey, of which there were 2,644 military and veteran spouse participants, but only results from the 2,059 active-duty female spouses were reported. The results were then compared to the American

Community Survey, which compares military spouses' earnings and demographics to civilian spouses. Parallel to previous studies, Maury and Stone (2014) found that military spouses are younger, with an average age of 33, more diverse ethnically, more likely to have children under 18 years of age at home, more likely to be unemployed and earn less than their civilian counterparts. Tellingly, Maury and Stone (2014) found that when totaling for both education and experience, or just one or the other, 90% of female military spouses reported being underemployed. Maury and Stone (2014) succinctly concluded their executive summary this way:

Overall, military spouses have been shown to exhibit the effects of an economic disadvantage compared to civilian spouses with respect to unemployment, income and career advancement while at the same time possessing, on average, more advanced education than their civilian counterparts. (p. 7)

Other perceived challenges gleaned from Maury and Stone's (2014) Military Spouse Employment Survey included employment stigma, professional certification, and licensing issues, as well as awareness and satisfaction with Military sponsored Employment Assistance Programs. Employment stigma for military spouses could stem from the employer's angst over costs associated with training and the high likelihood that military spouse employees will relocate within a few years (Maury & Stone, 2014). Whether employment stigma plays a role in hiring military spouses is unsupported by literature, the perception of it is; Maury and Stone (2014) reported over 58% of respondents indicated they would not share that they are a military spouse for fear they would not be hired. As many professions, including education, require state-recognized professional licenses, and in some cases, specific content certifications, military spouses may endure hardships due to factors like geographic mobility. Maury and Stone (2014) shared that a majority of survey respondents specified their chosen profession requires

licensing or certification and that they have to be “renewed or reissued” (p. 72) after a military relocation (Maury & Stone, 2014). Lastly, both DoD and military service-specific Employment Assistance Programs have been established to support military spouse employment. However, Maury and Stone (2014) found that a large percentage of respondents found that they did not qualify, were not aware of, or did not secure employment through these services.

At this juncture, a review of the predominant information found in the literature regarding military spouses, their motivation for—and the likelihood of—employment, and the factors that are perceived to influence them negatively are warranted. Military spouses tend to be female, under 35, have a child under 6 (DoD, 2017), have some college (Council of Economic Advisors, 2018), and are likely to have relocated at least twice in the last five years (Maury & Stone, 2014). They are also likely to be unemployed (or underemployed) compared to their civilian counterparts (Blue Star Families, 2018). Relocation to an installation that is OCONUS is likely to compound unemployment (Wardynski, 2000). Additionally, due to factors such as PCS moves, military spouses who are employed typically incur an earnings penalty (Little & Hisnanick, 2007). Moreover, for those employed, most military spouses reported being underemployed based on their education, experience, or a combination of both (Maury & Stone, 2014).

Rationale and motivation for employment among military spouses vary, but the research annotates several reasons. These included personal growth (Finlayson, 1969), utilization of skills, and compensation (Grossman, 1981), as well as personal fulfillment (Harrell et al., 2004). Spouses aligned with a specific occupation are also typically motivated and influenced by career progression (Maury & Stone, 2014).

So what military lifestyle factors are likely to impact military spouse employment adversely? The literature commonly indicates relocation, deployments (Finlayson, 1969; Grossman, 1981; Schwartz et al., 1991; Wardynski, 2000), separation from extended family and social networks (Blue Star Families, 2018), employer stigma (Harrell et al., 2004; Castaneda & Harrell, 2008; Maury & Stone, 2014), the labor market surrounding the installation (Wardynski, 2000; Booth, 2003), and varying state professional certification and licensure requirements (Harrell et al., 2004). Insightfully, Booth (2003) offered a “confluence of factors” (p. 45) likely diminish military spouse employment.

The scholarship (Booth, 2003; Blue Star Families, 2018; Harrell et al., 2004; Schwartz et al., 1991) elucidates that certain factors improve the likelihood of employment for military spouses. Sensibly, a reduction in the number of transitions, which is more time between moves, improves the likelihood of employment (Finlayson, 1969; Payne et al., 1992). Moreover, perceived satisfaction with job opportunities also increases with geographical stability (Cooney et al., 2011). Additionally, as research indicates, many military spouses have young kids, improvement in access to and potential subsidization of childcare could help improve employment rates (Schwartz et al., 1991). Increased diffusion of information regarding the purpose and advantages of installation level Employment Assistance Programs is merited (Harrell et al., 2004).

Selective Trends in Education

While the vast majority of research examines military spouse employment, relatively few studies specifically focus on military spouse educators. Curiously, as seen in previous research, the field of education is a highly preferred occupation for military spouses (Harrell et al., 2004). Indeed, in 2012, the United States Department of Treasury

and US Department of Defense report found that the most common occupations amongst military spouses in the labor force were teachers (pre-kindergarten–12th grade, 5.2%).

As minimal scholarship on military spouse educators exists, available research on teachers, in general, is necessary. Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Riser-Kositsky (2019) states there are 3.7 million public and private school teachers in the United States or about three percent of the total workforce in America. Approximately 77% of those teachers are female, and over 80% are white.

Effective teachers are critical to student achievement (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016). However, teacher efficacy is diminished by challenges such as class size, inadequate professional development, and scarce instructional feedback (Darling-Hammond, 2015). Research suggests teacher efficacy is influenced by job satisfaction. A 2012 survey of over 1,000 U.S. public school teachers found only 44% of respondents indicated they were very satisfied with their job, a decrease of 15% since 2009 (Metlife, Inc, 2012). From the same survey, 29% of participants indicated they were somewhat or very likely to leave the profession within the next five years, and 35% reported their salary as fair (Metlife, Inc, 2012). According to Allegretto and Mishel (2016), in 2015, public school teachers in America received approximately 17% lower weekly wages than similar professionals. These findings may be related to other trends in education, such as a growing shortage of teachers, an increase in teacher attrition, and reduced interest by college students in entering the profession (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016).

Teacher effectiveness may also be related to perceived professional autonomy (Sparks & Malkus, 2015) and self-efficacy (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). A National Center for Education Statistics report (2019) on teacher autonomy, which surveyed over

37,000 public school teachers during the 2011–2012 school year, indicated that when asked “How much actual control do you have in your classroom?,” 26% of participants responded, “low” (p. 5). As a way of comparison, respondents to the same question for the 2003–2004 survey found that only 18% indicated a perceived low level of autonomy (Sparks & Malkus, 2015). In reviewing relevant literature regarding the importance of teacher self-efficacy, Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) identified that problem-solving and adaptability are fundamental factors in being an effective teacher. Moreover, research indicates teachers with high self-efficacy produce high-achieving students (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003).

In sum, teachers make up a significant amount of the American workforce. Similar to military spouses, they are most likely to be white women. Like military spouses, scholarship (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016) indicates they are underpaid compared to their counterparts. Perhaps most critically, research for both military spouses and educators indicates there may be a perceived lack of autonomy concerning their employment. These overlaps signal and validate a need for additional comparison.

Conclusion: Implications for Further Research

Using the research available on military spouses and educators, it is possible to consider the generalizability and potential implications of their intersectionality. While there are many intersections between military spouse employment trends and educators’ trends, six such intersections prove relevant for this study. First, their intersectionality in regard to demographics. Second, their perceived job satisfaction. Third, the likelihood of a military spouse being an educator. Fourth, a noticeable earnings penalty when compared to their counterparts. Fifth, state-specific professional certification and

licensure requirements. Sixth, and lastly, comparisons among the key facets of the Self-Determination Theory.

The first point of intersectionality is highlighted by recent demographics research, which shows both groups tend to be comprised mostly of white females (Riser-Kositsky, 2019; Maury & Stone, 2014). The second point of intersectionality is both groups appear to share a level of dissatisfaction with available job opportunities (military spouse, Cooney et al., 2011) or their jobs specifically (educators, Metlife, Inc, 2012). The third point of intersectionality is research indicates but fails to definitively explain why both groups are seemingly predisposed to an earnings penalty (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016; Cooney et al., 2011; Little & Hisnanick, 2007) when compared to their counterparts. Fourth, but perhaps the most obvious connection, is that research has chronically found that teaching, or the field of education, is one of the most popular professions amongst military spouses (Finlayson, 1969; Harrell et al., 2004; United States Department of Treasury, 2012).

The fifth point of intersectionality is the impact of professional licensure and certification requirements. According to Maury and Stone (2014), nearly 50% of working military spouses have a career in which they must maintain a license or certification. While most, if not all, states require a state-recognized teaching license or certification. Even though states have recently entered into the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Interstate Agreement regarding teacher certification reciprocity, specifically to assist teachers as they move to different states, it does not guarantee that all certificates held will be reciprocally recognized or that the gaining state will not impose additional requirements (such as extra assessments).

The final point of intersectionality of military spouses and educators is framed by the tenets of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT specifies that well-being is dynamically influenced by three psychological needs: competence (self-efficacy), relatedness (relationships with others), and autonomy (control over one's life; see Deci & Ryan, 2000). The scholarship shares that a large percentage of educators report a "low" sense of autonomy in their profession (Sparks & Malkus, 2015). Over 60% of military spouses believe military lifestyle factors damage their job opportunities (Harrell et al., 2004); in broadening the aperture on military lifestyle factors, one could hypothesize that frequent relocation, deployments, and even installation location are generally outside of the control, or autonomy, of the military spouse. In regards to social-connectedness, military spouses report one of their greatest hardships is isolation from family and friends (Blue Star Families, 2018). Similarly, educators often seek relatedness through lesson plan collaboration or professional development opportunities. Lastly, literature alluded to the need for self-efficacy amongst both groups. Bray-Clark and Bates (2003) stressed the importance of self-efficacy amongst high achieving teachers, and authors such as Grossman (1981) noted the desire for military spouses to be able to utilize their skills, while Harrell et al. (2004) emphasize that military spouses often work for personal fulfillment.

In conclusion, given the intersectionality of these groups, the gap in the literature, and applicability of the SDT framework, this study seeks to add to the existing scholarship for both military spouses and educators. The following chapter details the selected methodology for this study, as well as the researcher's philosophy. The

subsequent chapters, four and five, discuss the data analysis and research findings, respectively.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction and Research Questions

Findings from previous literature indicate there are several points of intersectionality between military spouses and educators, including potential earnings penalties. This research focuses on how military spouse educators perceive the impacts of the military lifestyle on their careers and well-being. The literature demonstrates unemployment (and underemployment), financial anxieties, and community connectedness are all known stressors to military spouses (Blue Star Families, 2018). Moreover, existing scholarship (Harrel et al., 2004; Castaneda & Harrell, 2008) highlights several factors that impair the participation and motivation of military spouses in the labor force. However, the literature to date neglects to explore how these barriers impact military spouses who work in education. By excluding the point-of-view and distinct experiences of this unique population from the literature, military leadership, state education agencies, and military spouse educators do not have an unequivocal understanding of how military lifestyle factors impact military spouse educators.

This study, as informed through the researcher's inquiry and guided by the Self-Determination Theory, has three primary research questions:

- 1: What are the characteristics and demographic data that describe military spouses who pursue careers in education?
- 2: How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers?

3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers?

In addition to three primary research questions, this study seeks to answer the following four secondary research questions:

1: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy?

2: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy?

3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness?

4: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being?

The remainder of Chapter Three explains the selected research methodology.

Moreover, it details the researcher's perspective, the chosen theoretical framework, and the rationale for research design and protocol. Finally, it describes the site selection and participant sampling, data collection and analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and research limitations.

Researcher Perspective

Since August of 2003, I have considered myself a military spouse educator. That is, I am married to an Active-Duty Military Soldier, and my chosen profession is supporting public education. In that time, I experienced and witnessed military lifestyle factors, such as multiple relocations and career-specific barriers (e.g., a lack of state-supported licensure reciprocity), impact military spouse educators in profound ways. The building of professional equity, career advancement, retirement systems, and varying professional requirements inhibit career growth, impair self-efficacy, and diminish motivation.

For almost 20 years, I looked to establish a career in public education. Still, I often found myself constrained in advancement because of military lifestyle factors impeding my ability to control my career's progression and direction. I often found myself, primarily because of the military transitions associated with my wife's career, having to pivot into a position or role that was convenient due to geographical market conditions, state licensure requirements, or a lack of seniority or longitudinal experience. Despite having earned a Master's degree in Education and an Education Specialist degree in Leadership, I found completing my doctoral degree challenging due to either military required moves or the fear of military required moves, hampering my completion.

I am also a White male. Male military spouses constitute roughly 10% of all military spouses. Males also account for about a quarter of all teaching and administrative staff positions in public education.

Given my experiences and education, my positionality on military lifestyle factors and career-specific barriers is that of disdain. My familiarity in being an insider with a close "relationship to the research" exists on at least three fronts: I am a military spouse, educator, and military spouse educator. This positionality, admittedly, lends itself to the potential for researcher bias but also affords me preexisting insights and nuanced understandings of the phenomena. It is also worth noting that while I have connections to and can claim to be part of all three of the aforementioned groups, my affiliation to any participants, by design, is coincidental.

My education and experiences have provided me with unique insights into the military lifestyle. As such, my worldview is heavily influenced by how knowledge is socially constructed and how meaning is derived relative to one's reality. Therefore, my

researcher perspective and positionality are grounded in a naturalistic and interpretivist philosophy. My focus is on understanding meaning and allowing the participants' experiences to be shared in their own words. In other words, I value stories and perspectives other than my own.

Phenomenological inquiry allows me to capture the lived experiences and vivid descriptions offered by this critical subgroup. The selected evidence-based theoretical framework provides a lens to view how military lifestyle factors inhibit or encourage motivation, affect, esteem, and behaviors. By design, the research questions provide congruence with the purpose and the premise of the Self-Determination Theory and the concept that basic psychological needs must be met for psychological growth, internalization of satisfaction, and a sense of well-being to occur (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Given my familiarity with the subject matter and my past experiences and values and worldviews, I must be cognizant of, and where possible, overtly identify my potential preconceptions and prejudices. Husserl (1931) referred to this disconnection to presupposition as *Epoche* or bracketing one's belief. This concept is at the heart of the researcher's perspective and intentionality towards objectivity within this problem of practice. My goal for this study is to clearly understand the role the military lifestyle plays on military spouse educators' careers and welfare.

Theoretical Framework

Unique military lifestyle factors, career-specific barriers, and the "trailing spouse" effect all have the potential to impact the psychological needs and influence decision making. To help contextualize these needs and better understand the key concepts and basis for this research, a theoretical framework is necessary. The Self-Determination

Theory (SDT) proffers that humans have a natural inclination towards psychological growth and that growth is influenced by social structures and their environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The researcher selected the SDT theoretical framework to directly address the social conditions that either enhance or diminish motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Within this problem of practice, the SDT conveys the values and epistemological dispositions of the researcher and provides the framework for the research protocol and the interpretation of collected data. Basic psychological, or innate, needs influence motivation and the degree to which these needs ultimately influence behavior, psychological growth, and well-being. The environment in which people live also influences motivation. The hierarchical, depersonalized, prescriptive, and often indeterminate nature of the military lifestyle influences spouses' social norms, discretion, and potentiality. This theoretical framework has been applied in a multitude of settings to include military personnel and their families (Hodge et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2013), academic motivation (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006), employee well-being (Deci et al., 2001) and with employment among United Kingdom military spouses (Gribble et al., 2019). To date, the SDT has not been applied to the perceived impacts of the military lifestyle on military spouse educators.

The SDT also informs the collection and analysis of data for this research. In qualitative research, the premise of phenomenological inquiry is that researchers derive meaning from participants' lived experiences. The SDT offers insights into the relationship between motivational factors, interpretation and internalization of experiences, and the ascribed meanings of the phenomenon. Utilizing the SDT as the basis of an analytical framework for summarizing data provides a direct link and

structure for answering the proposed research questions. An analytical framework allows for selecting predetermined themes and codes based on the specifics of the SDT (and by design, the research questions). Still, it provides the flexibility to generate broader data through a more discovery-oriented, inductive process (open-coding). The incorporation and inclusion of a theoretical and analytical framework are congruent with qualitative research, phenomenological inquiry, and the analysis of semi-structured interviews.

As mentioned previously, the SDT aligns with the researcher's paradigm and the selected research design. In the following section, the researcher outlines the methodological implications and justifications for selecting the theoretical and analytical framework.

Research Design

An interpretivist paradigm influenced this particular research design. As such, the researcher's philosophy comprises specific ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. Specifically, the researcher adheres to the philosophy that there are multiple realities and perceptions of phenomena and subsequent values (e.g., opinions and judgments) assigned to these realities and perceptions (Ritchie et al., 2003).

All qualitative research, including this phenomenological case study, share basic characteristics essential to the methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). While there are several common characteristics for this Problem of Practice, the researcher has elected to highlight three: the researcher's role as a primary instrument, a focus on meaning, and researcher reflexivity. The most important of these three characteristics is that of the researcher's role as a primary instrument. The qualitative researcher is concurrently gathering,

analyzing, and interpreting emergent data and, where necessary, adapting to explore atypical or unexpected findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Another fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is how people ascribe meaning and understanding of events or issues rather than approach research with a predisposition or hypotheses. Lastly, the researcher shares their specific positionality to the phenomena, the participants, and their experiences and understanding that may influence their interpretation of information (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

A case study is simply a descriptive analysis that is typically bounded by some factor. For example, within this research, the population of participants is bound to that of military spouse educators. While these individuals are not limited (or bound) to a specific geographic region or specific branch of military service, they are limited to those that have elected to join either the Military Spouse Educators or MilSpouse Network for Teaching Professionals Facebook groups or affiliate themselves with members of one or both of these groups (snowball sampling).

The design selected for this research is not that of a descriptive case study but rather a phenomenological case study. The term phenomenology is present in philosophical writings as far back as 1765 (Kockelmans, 1967). Hegel, a German philosopher, articulated that phenomenology meant “knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, sense and knows in one’s immediate awareness and experience” (1770–1831, as cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). However, the term as used in qualitative research most often refers to the focus of lived experiences by an individual, or a group, as shared through the individual’s description. For example, frequent relocation is a common phenomenon associated with the military

lifestyle and may be perceived, described, and internalized in a near-infinite number of ways. This phenomenon aligns with the selected methodological design as phenomenological inquiry seeks to gain insight into how the participants ascribe meaning and interpret their experiences with the military lifestyle. Moreover, the researcher selected a qualitative phenomenological case study to showcase the lived experiences of military spouse educators in rich detail and to allow their perceptions of challenges and insights concerning their circumstances to be captured through their viewpoint.

Site Selection and Participant Sampling

For this study, the researcher selected military spouses who have experienced the phenomenon of military lifestyle factors on their careers as educators. This research utilized purposive sampling to recruit and engage members of the private Facebook groups “Military Spouse Educators” and “MILSpouse Network for Teaching Professionals.” The researcher requested access to each Facebook group and began building rapport through the chatting and posting functions. The researcher then created and posted to each Facebook group an infographic (see Appendix A) and a summary describing this research. Each group was encouraged to participate in the voluntary and confidential questionnaire regarding their experiences with military lifestyle factors (Ritchie et al., 2003). The infographic contained hyperlinks that allowed interested participants to review and, if they so choose, sign the informed consent and begin the 51-question questionnaire (see Appendix B).

The researcher selected participants based on a shared experience, not based on a geographical location. The researcher collected questionnaire data and consent approvals, utilizing the online platform SurveyMonkey. Once the participants’ consent to participate

was received, the researcher coordinated, via Doodle, a convenient date and time to schedule the interview and subsequently emailed each participant a unique, password-encrypted, Zoom invitation. Participant interviews were coordinated, recorded, and initially transcribed through Zoom, a virtual meeting platform. This method of conducting interviews was preferable given society's preference for "social distancing" due to the COVID pandemic. The researcher also transcribed interviews utilizing Otter.ai to enhance transcription accuracy.

The target population for this research are military spouse educators who have experienced the phenomenon of the military lifestyle on their careers. Criteria for participating in the questionnaire are as follows:

1. Are or have been a military spouse educator for at least a year.
2. Current members of either the Military Spouse Educators or MILSpouse Network for Teaching Professionals Facebook groups or affiliate themselves with members of one or both of these groups (snowball sampling).
3. The researcher selected five participants who best represent diverse approaches, experiences, or influencing factors that impacted their internalizing and responding to the military spouse educator lifestyle challenges from the individuals who met these criteria.

Sampling was purposive and consisted of virtual snowball methods (also see networking; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While purposive snowball methods have limitations (e.g., sampling bias and representativeness), they provide an inexpensive, immediate, and accessible group of participants. Purposive snowball sampling also allows for information-rich cases as key participants can refer others who may otherwise be hesitant to participate in a research study due to concerns regarding trust and discretion of information (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015; Ritchie et al., 2003)

Data Collection

The approach to data collection within qualitative research is unique in that the researcher's primary role is that of the data collection instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For sampling purposes, and to address Primary Research Question 1, "What are the characteristics and demographic data that describe military spouses who pursue careers in education?" this Problem of Practice utilized a questionnaire to capture a breadth of affiliations and experiences. Additionally, the questionnaire sample was not limited to a geographical region. For the convenience and safety of both the participants and the researcher and the utilization of the built-in recording and transcription features, Zoom was the most appropriate platform to conduct interviews. The researcher vetted the questionnaire through a small, diverse committee of (consisting of ten) educators, researchers, and military spouses to enhance the readability and clarity of the questions. The committee members also tested and provided feedback to ensure the functionality of the questionnaire platform, the informed consent, and the operability of links for implementation. All questionnaires were completed between December 2020 and January 30, 2021.

This study employed semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions to capture the lived experiences of military spouse educators. The interviews sought to elicit varying responses and themes to support data saturation and the ability to answer the desired research questions until unique experiences and themes ceased. To address Primary Research Question 2, "How do military spouse educators describe the impact of the military lifestyle on their careers," the interview questions focused on the descriptions and contexts interviewees associated with how the phenomena influenced their career. To

better understand which phenomena were most interconnected to the perceived impact on their career, participants were asked Primary Research Question 3, “What are the perceived (military lifestyle) factors that have affected your career?” The interviewees answered Secondary Research Questions to conceptualize the impact of the phenomena. In so doing, participants described the meaning of their experiences, reflected on their descriptions, and portrayed their environments’ role on their sense of well-being and motivation. The Secondary Research Questions delved into how interviewees perceived factors that contributed to or hindered their career competence, autonomy, sense of social connectedness, motivation, and well-being. The researcher’s Secondary Research Questions directly aligned to the selected theoretical framework, the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and how sub-optimal environments and employment experiences may adversely impact career motivation and influence well-being. Interviews transpired utilizing a web-conferencing application called Zoom©. All interviews occurred in January 2021.

To develop interview and questionnaire questions, the researcher employed a committee consisting of ten educators, researchers, and military spouses to provide feedback and offer ideas for improving question clarity, enhancing objectivity, and mitigating redundancy. The committee suggested sensitivity, especially in word selection, when phrasing questions regarding gender, race, and origin. The researcher consulted and utilized committee suggestions on inclusive language (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2011; Office of Regulatory Affairs Research and Compliance, 2020).

The committee also suggested the inclusion of an “other, please specify” response for several questions. For interview questions, the committee recommended that the researcher introduce himself and his positionality to reinforce that participants should feel as though they are in a safe space, free of stigma. The pilot testing process allowed the researcher to identify leading questions, assess interview structure and content, and evaluate software efficacy.

The researcher utilized the online scheduling tool, Doodle, to allow interviewees to select a quick and convenient meeting time. The interviewer offered a variety of options for interviewees to select various 30-minute meeting times. During the interviews, the researcher took detailed field notes during interviews and recorded the interviews with a separate digital recording service called Otter© to transcribe and document the interviews. Transcription of all interviews occurred within two days and stored on an encrypted, password-protected, cloud-based server as well as within Nvivo, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). The researcher employed a coding system during the transcription process and removed participants’ Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Each participant was assigned an alias corresponding to the name of a European city. Additionally, the researcher augmented interview data by capturing field notes, expressions and body language, reflections, ideas, and potential follow-up questions.

To facilitate the consistency and replicability of each interview stage, this study employed an interview protocol. An outline of the interview protocol is illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Interview Protocol Outline

Step	Process	Guiding Literature
1	Gain access to Military Spouse Educators and MILSpouse Network for Teaching Professionals Facebook groups	Ritchie et al., 2003; Creswell & Poth, 2018
2	Engage group members regarding research purpose and post infographic and questionnaire link on the groups' Facebook pages.	Creswell & Poth, 2018
3	Seek samples (interviewees) from the questionnaires.	Ritchie et al., 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2017
4	Send a request for participation, research purpose, and intended data use to the selected sample.	Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Moustakas, 1994
5	Coordinate scheduling through Doodle and send Zoom interview invites to participants.	James & Busher, 2009
6	Ensure the Zoom environment is distraction-free and welcoming.	James & Busher, 2009
7	Begin each interview with an introduction and the intent/purpose, a review of informed consent and the participant's ability to stop the interview at any time, and a brief explanation of the researcher's positionality.	Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018
8	Engage preliminary analysis stage and interviews, starting with primary research questions and then secondary research questions.	Merriam & Tisdell, 2016
9	Refrain from adding any info, making gestures, or leading the participants.	Creswell & Poth, 2018
10	Direct participant's attention to themes surrounding the self-determination theory before asking secondary research questions.	Ritchie et al., 2003; Gale et al., 2013
11	Collect, store, and organize data within Nvivo, a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS).	Ritchie et al., 2003
12	Ask clarifying questions and perform member checks (throughout the interview and, if necessary, after the interview).	Lincoln & Guba, 1985
13	Consider optional contingent follow-up interviews.	Moustakas, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985

The protocol began with the researcher requesting to be a member of the “Military Spouse Educator” and “MILSpouse Network for Teaching Professionals” Facebook group. Once admitted, the researcher introduced himself and the goals and tenets of the research and posted an infographic regarding the research and a link to the questionnaire. To complete the questionnaire, participants were required first to indicate they completed the embedded informed consent form. From the submitted questionnaires, the researcher sent direct correspondence to those participants having provided an email address when completing the questionnaire and indirectly to all members of both Military Spouse Educator Facebook groups. This effort netted one volunteer. Through additional postings and snowballing, the researcher gained an additional four volunteers. The researcher provided each interviewee a detailed explanation of the research design, intended use of the data, the reassurance of confidentiality, and insight into the researcher’s positionality.

The researcher conducted each Zoom interview in a distraction-free environment. Each interview began with a (re)introduction, a review of the informed consent, and the statement “you are welcome to discontinue this interview at any time, or for any reason, with my complete support and understanding.” During each interview, the researcher began with the primary research questions before progressing into the secondary research questions while taking notes and observing non-verbal communication and inflection. As the secondary research questions directly tied to the study’s theoretical framework, the researcher directed the participants to the pillars of the Self-Determination Theory before posing the secondary research questions. The researcher consciously avoided making gestures or embellishing any statements but did seek to develop accurate interpretations of meaning. Within two days of each interview, the researcher began transcribing,

analyzing the data, and storing it within the Nvivo data analysis software. The researcher emailed interview participants asking qualifying questions regarding their responses to ensure accuracy and scheduled follow-up interviews, as needed.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative studies transpires concurrently with its collection. Data were analyzed using a framework, thematic, and both within and cross-case analysis (Ritchie et al., 2003; Gale et al., 2013). Framework Analysis contains five stages (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Lacey & Luff, 2009): familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, and mapping connections, and interpreting the data. The thematic framework for this research is based on the precepts of the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and includes competence, autonomy, social connectedness, and well-being. As this research also seeks to compare data themes from within and across cases, additional case analysis is utilized. Figure 3.1 below represents a graphical representation of the relationship between the collected data and the analyses used.

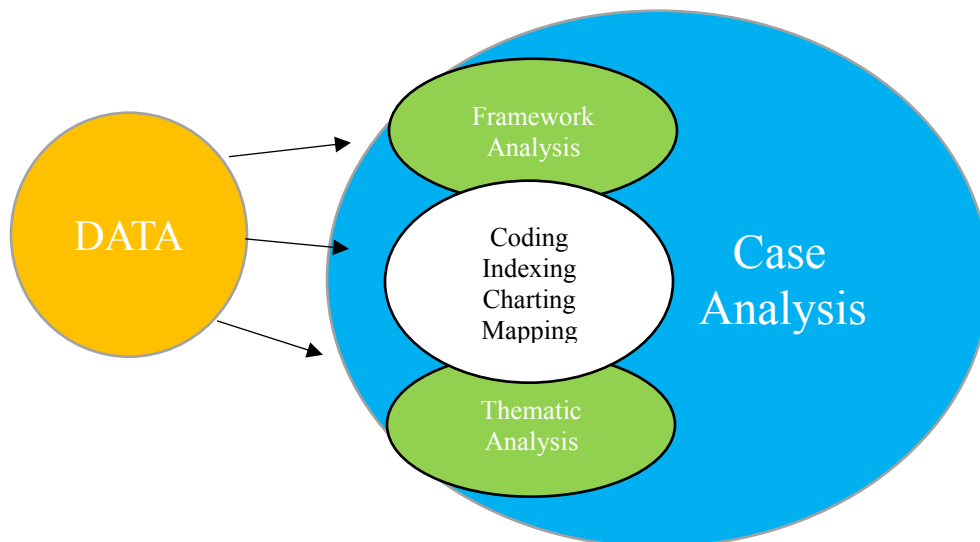


Figure 3.1. Data analysis relationship.

One of the benefits of framework analysis is it compliments a qualitative research approach in that data collection and analysis may occur concurrently. As depicted in Table 3.2, the researcher utilized seven data analysis stages.

Table 3.2

Data Analysis Stages

Stage	Process	Guiding Literature
1	Transcription of interviews	Ritchie et al., 2003
2	Familiarization with the interviews by reading transcripts and noting common words/phrases. Create “margin” notes of ideas and concepts. Highlight salient and interesting quotes.	Ritchie et al., 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016
3	Manual pattern matching and coding based on SDT (a priori) theoretical framework and emergent (inductive) thematic data. Within case analysis as each case is analyzed utilizing the theoretical framework.	Ritchie et al., 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2016; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008
4	Pattern matching, indexing, and coding into categories and themes until saturation and no new themes emerge. Case data is then clustered and across case analysis is utilized as thematic analysis is applied.	Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ritchie et al., 2003; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2016
5	Application of analytical framework utilizing Nvivo.	Ritchie et al., 2003
6	Chart and summarize data through a framework matrix.	Ritchie et al., 2003
7	Interpret the data, map connections, visually represent the data.	Ritchie et al., 2003 Merriam & Tisdell, 2016

All participants were assigned a unique name (pseudonym) for classification and reference to aid in the confidentiality of data during the analysis process. During the transcription phase, the researcher carefully reviewed and became familiar with field

notes and observations collected during the interview and weaved together to interpret and represent the participants' responses. The data was then manually coded based on the SDT analytical framework and based on emergent themes. The researcher repeated this process until no new themes emerged. The researcher indexed codes into predefined themes (based on the analytical framework) or emergent themes or subthemes. The researcher then constructed a framework matrix for each participant, highlighting the identified themes. The researcher then systematically compared, interpreted, and summarized the data through an analytical framework based on the SDT.

By analyzing the data through the precepts of the SDT, the information collected provides insight into the military spouse educator's experience with military lifestyle factors. The SDT highlights the perceived impact of those factors on their motivation and well-being. Moreover, the analysis provides decision-makers, military leadership, state education agencies, and others a window into the unique experiences and meanings ascribed to this phenomenon.

Validation Strategies

As proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative evaluation criteria for trustworthiness in research are different from the axioms often found within quantitative research. Table 3.3 showcases the differences in criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Table 3.3

Comparison of Evaluative Research Criteria (Modified From Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Traditional Evaluative Criteria for Quantitative Research	Alternative Evaluative Criteria for Qualitative Research
Internal Validity	Credibility
External Validity	Transferability
Reliability	Dependability
Objectivity	Conformability

Data validation strategies are purposeful steps and processes that a researcher utilizes to ensure the accuracy of their results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) and support their findings' trustworthiness. These techniques and strategies are employed to enhance the evaluative criteria as outlined in Table 3.3 directly. The researcher has incorporated three validation strategies to evaluate the accuracy of the findings. The first is detailed descriptions that articulate the participants' understanding, ascribed meaning, and interpretation of their experience. The second is the researcher's positionality and reflexivity to clarify potential biases and highlight applicable past experiences. The final data validation strategy utilized is member checking, which seeks participants' input regarding the interpretations and conclusions of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to several purposeful steps to ensure the proper safeguarding of the participants. The researcher received exemption status through Baylor University's Institutional Review Board. The researcher explained the risk, benefits, and alternatives to participating in this phenomenological case study. The researcher deidentified participant information to maintain anonymity, and consent forms were signed and

retained for documentation purposes. Participation was strictly voluntary, and interviewees were permitted to terminate involvement at any time. The research stored all documents on an encrypted cloud-based server to maintain the confidentiality and integrity of data. While the likelihood was low, if the research questions created psychological distress or made participants uncomfortable, information regarding counseling and other resources (e.g., Military OneSource) were available.

Limitations and Delimitations

In conducting research, multiple factors can influence results. Limitations are influences that are beyond the researcher's control. Delimitations are the specific boundaries and choices that are within the researcher's control. The researcher offers an overview of this study's limitations and delimitations to assist in the interpretation and relevance of findings.

1. From a post-positivist perspective, qualitative research, and by extension this Problem of Practice, is subject to five methodological limitations. First, the inductive, naturalistic, and descriptive focus of qualitative research presents challenges in that the findings could be subject to additional interpretations. The subjectivity of the data leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the information. The researcher has almost two decades worth of experience as a military spouse educator, which may contribute to biases, flaws, incomplete bracketing, which can lead to interference in the interpretation of data. Second, the researcher selected a small sample size given the time and resource-consuming nature of qualitative research. As this Problem of

Practice is paramount to attaining a doctoral degree, both time and funding factor into its completion. Third, as the intention is to garner an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, sampling is not randomized; instead, it is purposive. To obtain an understanding of the phenomenon, it is requisite the participants have experienced it. Factors such as age, disability, and embarrassment may influence participation. Fourth, in seeking experiences and descriptions of phenomena, the participants are self-reporting data subjected to biases such as attribution or exaggeration. Finally, qualitative research does not seek statistical generalizability, and therefore, the results do not extend to broader populations. This particular research is bound to female military spouse educators and is likely not generalizable to all military spouses. Despite repeated efforts to gain male military-spouse participation in the study, the researcher was unable to do so.

Four delimitations influence the scope of this Problem of Practice. These include the researcher's selection of theoretical framework, research questions, sampling, and researcher's experience. The rationale for these choices consists of the researcher's understanding, interest, access, proximity to resources, and familiarity with military lifestyle factors and military spouse educators.

Conclusions

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the intent of this study as well as the underlying methodology and philosophical influences guiding the research design. Information contributing to this study's sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical

considerations, credibility, procedural adherence, and rationale for the selected research questions were also elucidated. The essence of this research is to provide participants an opportunity to share their personal experiences in a detailed and reflective manner to gain knowledge into how the phenomenon impacts them personally and professionally. Moreover, it provides insight into the shared experiences of military spouse educators and the influence of the military lifestyle on both their career and perception of motivation and well-being. In the following chapter, the researcher provides a thorough review of the steps taken to analyze data.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Implications

Introduction

The objective of this phenomenological case study is to identify how military lifestyle factors and career-specific barriers within the profession of education impact military spouse educators (MSEs). The intent of this study is to provide insight into how military spouses perceive military lifestyle factors to impact their careers as educators. The ensuing chapter begins by answering primary research question 1, by highlighting the demographic information that describes the subset of military spouses who seek careers in education. The author provides context regarding the demographic information and a comparison to existing scholarship. A description of each participant and their respective cases are analyzed as the interviewer answers the research questions through the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) framework. The researcher then engages in both thematic and cross-case analysis by comparing the responses and themes elucidated in each case. Lastly, the author concludes with implications and limitations of findings, future considerations, and a summary.

Questionnaire Administration and Demographic Information

To answer primary research question 1, “What are the characteristics and demographic data that describe military spouses who pursue careers in education,” the researcher created a questionnaire utilizing SurveyMonkey. The first question being that the participants have read, understood, and agree to the research consent form. All 195

participants completed the questionnaire, and all answered yes to the consent form. Participant names and emails were optional but were encouraged to aid with future communication. Only fifteen (8%) participants provided their names and email. All questionnaire data is located in Appendix B.

Gender, Age, and Cultural Background

To better understand the demographic makeup of the MSEs participating in the questionnaire, the researcher discusses gender, age, and cultural background. All MSEs identified as female ($N = 195$). In comparison, the Department of Defense (2017) noted nearly 92% of military spouses are female, and the National Center for Educational Statistics (2019) claims 74% of public school teachers are female. Just over 92% of MSEs reported their ages as being between 25 and 50 ($N = 180$). The Department of Defense (2017) reported 75% of military spouses are 26 or older, suggesting MSEs tend to be slightly older than the average military spouse, perhaps due to the time invested in their academic degrees and professional certifications. Nearly 85% of participants identified as White ($N = 165$), 7% as Black or African American ($N = 13$), 4% as Asian ($N = 8$), with the rest of the participants identifying as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or some other race. Just over 93% of participants identified as non-Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or of Spanish origin ($N = 182$). Over 3% identified as Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/a/x ($N = 7$), 1% identified as Puerto Rican ($N = 2$), and 2% identified as another Hispanic, Latino/a/x or Spanish origin not listed. This is aligned with the findings of Maury and Stone (2014), that the vast majority (80%) of military spouses are White.

Military Affiliation

To expose the variety of military affiliations of MSEs, the researcher asked several questions related to military connectivity. Unsurprisingly, MSEs overwhelmingly indicated that their spouse is currently active duty (90%, $N = 175$), with the remaining percentage indicating retired (7%, $N = 14$) or National Guard or reserves (3%, $N = 5$). Similar to the demographics found by the Department of Defense (2017) for military spouses, MSEs reported their current affiliated branch of service as Army (37%, $N = 73$), Air Force (26%, $N = 50$), Navy (21%, $N = 40$), or Marine Corps (10%, $N = 20$). Nearly 6% ($N = 11$) of participants associated with the Coast Guard. Of note, one spouse indicated her military affiliation as Space Force, a branch of military service established on December 20, 2019 (United States Space Force, 2021). Associated military service member's rank indicated that most MSEs are married to Officers (59%, $N = 116$), followed by Enlisted (37%, $N = 73$) and Warrant Officers (3%, $N = 6$). Almost 95% ($N = 184$) of participants noted they themselves had not served in the United States Military, but 2% ($N = 4$) were former Enlisted, 2% were former Officers ($N = 3$), and 1% ($N = 2$) indicated they are current Warrant Officer Reservists. Of those former military service members or current reservists, seven were Army, two Air Force, and one Navy. In summary, most MSEs are Army affiliated, married to a commissioned officer, with no prior military service.

Educational Level

Previous scholarship indicates military spouses are more educated than their civilian counterparts (Lim & Schulker, 2010, Payne et al., 1992; Schwartz et al., 1991). The results of the questionnaire substantiate those findings. A majority of MSEs (59%, N

= 115) have earned a master's degree. Over 11% ($N = 22$) are currently in or have completed a doctoral program. More than 11% have earned a bachelor's degree and are currently enrolled in or have earned graduate credits. 18% ($N = 36$) indicated their educational level as a bachelor's degree. These findings seem to support the data captured by Harrell et al. (2004) that the most popular career field for military spouses with graduate degrees is education.

Licensing and Field of Practice

Multiple studies suggest that military moves directly impact the employability of military spouses (Cooney et al., 2011; Hosek, 2002; Payne et al., 1992; Schwartz et al., 2001). For those military spouses, whose career requires state-level licensure and certification, such as MSEs (also nurses, lawyers, etc.), they often incur additional burdens (e.g., financial, bureaucratic) when seeking employment as licensure reciprocity for educators, and other professional careers, are not universal (Maury & Stone, 2014). Less than half (41%, $N = 80$) of MSEs noted they are licensed and certified to teach in multiple states, including where they currently reside. 24% of MSEs ($N = 47$) noted they are licensed and certified to teach but only in the state (or location) where they live. Worryingly, 16% ($N = 30$) annotated that they are licensed to practice in one state, just not the one in which they currently live, and an additional 7% ($N = 13$) responded that they are licensed and certified in multiple states, just not in the one they reside. Nearly 8% ($N = 15$) shared they are still working on their requirements for their degree (or licensing), or their paperwork for certification is still pending. Due to the uncertain and poorly defined timelines of military moves, MSEs often find themselves ill-prepared for a career transition, especially given they may find themselves in a saturated job market, at a

location where their specific job specialty is unavailable or underutilized, or their transition occurs at a time that is misaligned with the educational hiring cycle. The ambiguity surrounding military moves and the inability to cultivate and progress within their career hinders career autonomy, a sense of professional connectedness, perceived content competence, which impacts motivation and can ultimately affect the quality of life of military spouses, to include MSEs (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008; Dumfries Engineer Associates, 2002).

In specifying which field of practice best describes their current or desired discipline, 50% ($N = 98$) selected elementary teacher, 30% ($N = 58$) selected secondary teacher, 6% ($N = 11$) selected school or district administrator or district support staff, 5% ($N = 10$) selected counselor or school support staff, 3% ($N = 6$) selected college professor, and 6% ($N = 12$) annotated “other” but elected not to specify their discipline. A majority (55%, $N = 108$) of participants described their place of work as occurring for a public education entity. Given the makeup of our current educational system and model, these findings do not come as a surprise; most professional jobs within education are teaching positions within K-12 public schools (NCES, 2019).

In indicating how many years of experience MSEs have in the field of education, 34% ($N = 66$) annotated more than ten years, 24% ($N = 47$) noted between six and ten years, 26% ($N = 50$) stated between three and five years, and 16% ($N = 32$) categorized their experience as less than two years. These results imply the selected sample of participating MSEs are well-experienced educators.

Employment Status

To better understand the participant's job status, they were asked to indicate their current employment utilization. Half (50%, $N = 97$) noted they are currently working full-time, and their job meets their level of education and experience. Almost 18% ($N = 35$) noted that they are working full-time, but they are more experienced and educated than their job requires, a potential indicator of perceived underemployment. Twelve percent ($N = 24$) indicated they are not looking for work but are interested in working; a potential indicator that military lifestyle factors are superseding their desire, and in some cases, their ability, to obtain employment and pursue their professional aspirations (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008).

With the uncertainty of the military lifestyle coupled with service-members varying duty hours, training schedules, deployments, and "other duties as assigned," military spouses often find themselves involuntarily obligated to a disproportionate amount of domestic duties (Schneider & Martin, 1994). The obstacles that MSEs face frequently necessitate them to put their career on hold. Highlighting this norm within the military culture questionnaire, participants illuminated similar findings to previous scholarship (Harrell, 2001; Payne et al., 1992) that military spouses often forego employment to support their military spouse. When asked for the reasons MSEs are not working, the responses were family responsibilities ($N = 23$), completing or anticipating a military-connected move ($N = 12$), licensure issues ($N = 7$), lack of job opportunities in their career field at their location ($N = 6$), or could not find meaningful work ($N = 3$). 7% ($N = 13$) selected they are not looking for work and do not plan to do so anytime soon. Some participants annotated that they are working part-time either by preference (6%, N

= 11) or not by their choice (3%, $N = 6$). Military transitions require MSEs to routinely, and sometimes abruptly, transition to unfamiliar geographical locations often far from already established support structures. This lack of control commonly leaves the MSEs responsible for child-rearing or the acquisition of childcare and other domestic duties, which hinder their motivation and ability for career progression. When coupling domestic responsibilities (Schneider & Martin, 1994) with the bureaucratic “red-tape” of licensure attainment and the uncertainty of the job market at their new location (Meadows et al., 2016), MSEs find themselves professionally demoralized (Faragher et al., 2005; Gribble et al., 2019).

Relocation

Military-connected moves are known to negatively impact spousal employment (Payne et al., 1992; Schwartz et al., 1991). More than half (52%, $N = 101$) of the MSEs noted they had moved within the last two years due to military orders. More than a quarter of respondents (27%, $N = 53$) anticipate a military-connected move within the next year. Over 75% ($N = 147$) of respondents indicated they moved three or more times, with the majority ($N = 83$) indicating they moved five or more times due to military orders. Frequent relocations are commonplace in the military lifestyle and are a predominant factor that impairs MSEs from controlling their career progression, utilizing their unique talents and skills, as well as establishing and maintaining their personal and professional connectedness (Payne et al., 1992). Consequently, MSEs are left feeling as though they must settle for un(der)employment (Lim et al., 2007; Lim & Schulker, 2010).

Children

Due to the uncertainty surrounding military trainings, deployments, duty hours, and geographical distance to kin, childcare is often reported as impacting military spouse employment (Grossman, 1981; Hayghe, 1986). Over 77% ($N = 151$) of respondents noted they have one or more children. Fifty-seven percent ($N = 92$) of respondents indicated they have one or more children in the home who are currently school-aged. Twelve percent ($N = 24$) noted they have one or more children who are at home but are not currently school-aged. Eleven percent ($N = 21$) shared they have both one or more children in the home who are not yet school-aged and one or more children in the home who are school-aged. The lack of established support systems and the unknown availability of childcare often leads MSEs absorbing childcare responsibilities.

Career Influences

In seeking a better understanding of the motivational influences for MSEs seeking employment or obtaining higher education the researcher posed questions about their career influences. Sixty-three percent ($N = 122$) highlighted personal fulfillment as their main motivator, while 30% ($N = 59$) noted financial earnings. Factors identified as most negatively impacting the careers of MSEs were frequent moves/relocation (49%, $N = 96$), licensure/reciprocity issues (19%, $N = 37$), service member's job demands (12%, $N = 23$), availability of employment opportunities (10%, $N = 19$), and parenting responsibilities (8%, $N = 15$). Collectively, these data confirm the findings by Castaneda et al. (2008).

Almost 100% (99%, $N = 193$) of MSEs believe the military lifestyle has or currently impacts their career. To further examine the military lifestyle factors that impair MSEs careers, over 96% responded that in some way, their service member's military job

demands and military moves directly impact their career. In response to their spouses' military job demands and frequent relocations, over 45% of MSEs revealed they made the conscious decision to geographically separate from their spouse for some time to continue their education or pursue career interests. 84% of MSEs noted that due to military-connected moves, they had trouble obtaining licensure due to differing state requirements for education and testing. Deployments, a unique and challenging factor of the military lifestyle, were also reported as impacting MSE's careers.

In understanding the factors influencing the well-being of MSEs, almost 97% ($N = 190$) shared that adequate employment impacts how satisfied they are with their life. Similar to findings by Hisnanick and Little (2015) and Trewick and Muller (2014), MSEs also noted the same factors perceived to impact their career could also impact their marriage. The influence of these factors resulted in 51% ($N = 99$) of MSEs discussing the consideration of leaving the military to pursue their career interests. To highlight how impactful these factors are, over 75% ($N = 148$) of MSEs expressed feeling resentful or upset with their spouse because their career creates challenges that collaterally impact their professional aspirations.

MSEs were asked several questions that were directly related to the researcher's SDT theoretical framework. The SDT posits that several factors, including control, competence, and connectedness, influence motivation and can impact well-being. Over 97% of MSEs shared they believe a sense of belonging and connectedness in their community and their career is essential. Almost all MSEs (99%; $N = 193$) reported that a sense of control in their career and career opportunities is important. Lastly, MSEs

overwhelmingly (98%) noted that the utilization of their education and professional skills to progress their career was vital.

In summary, the demographic information obtained through the questionnaire revealed that while MSEs are a unique subset with their own challenges (e.g., licensure, job market, hiring cycle), they share a lot in common with the general population of military spouses (e.g., frequent relocations, parenting responsibilities). The remaining parts of this chapter examine the case descriptions and thematic analysis of five MSEs and answer the remaining research questions.

Case Descriptions and Thematic Analysis

Each case begins with a quick overview of the MSE's military and career affiliations. As each case is presented and analyzed, the researcher answers the remaining research questions. The researcher analyzes responses through the SDT theoretical framework. The SDT specifies three basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, connectedness) that must be fulfilled to motivate behavior and support well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Autonomy, or control, allows individuals to place value on particular thoughts and behaviors. Without control, behaviors and feelings can feel contrived and foster a sense of avoidance. Competence, or self-efficacy, is one's belief that through the utilization of their skills and abilities, they can accomplish tasks. As competence wanes, self-doubt and insecurity regarding goals and growth dissuade purpose. Connectedness is a sense of belonging, integration, or connection to others. Positive social connectedness provides commonality amongst people, assists individuals in developing meaning, and influences one's identity. In summary, the SDT posits that any factor(s) that thwart the satisfaction of these basic "needs" will produce unfavorable

motivational conditions and will undermine well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008). If components of the SDT theoretical framework, control, competence, connectedness, motivation, or well-being, are revealed, the researcher highlights and refers to their significance. The remaining primary research questions are as follows:

1. How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers?
2. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers?

In addition to the primary research questions, the researcher answers the following four secondary research questions:

1. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy?
2. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy?
3. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness?
4. For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being?

The researcher then shares emergent themes elicited in each case before engaging in cross-case analysis. Emergent themes were generated after the theoretical framework coding was completed. The researcher utilized open and axial coding and constant comparative analysis of responses to identify themes and patterns both within-case and again during cross-case analysis.

The researcher identified five MSEs willing to provide insight into how the military lifestyle factors impact their career. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the interviewees' relevant military-connected demographic information.

Table 4.1

Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Years as Military Spouse Educator	Affiliated Military Branch	Number of Military Moves (PCSs)
London	28	1	Navy	0
Dublin	33	8	Air Force	2
Rome	28	6	Army	4
Madrid	41	15	Army	8
Paris	35	9	Army	2

Each participant was provided a pseudonym in the form of a random European city to maintain confidentiality. Only female MSEs elected to participate in the questionnaire and interviews.

Case 1: London

London states her current position as an adjunct faculty at a major state-supported university out west. London is also pursuing her doctoral degree in Criminal Justice from the same university. She is 28 years old and identifies as a relatively new Navy spouse of 14 months with one child from a previous marriage and is currently expecting. Due to her husband's military obligations, London and her spouse are geographically separated by a few hundred miles while London maintains employment and works to complete her terminal degree. London has never experienced a military-connected move but shared that her husband received PCS orders for East Asia with a report date that precedes her anticipated graduation.

Primary research question 2: How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers? Given London's investment in her education and preferred career path as a University Professor, London expressed deep concerns about the potential impacts of moving overseas. She explained,

Originally, my plan was to be on the job market sometime in the next two to four years probably. This would put me starting my career in my early thirties...and now we most likely have another ten years or so that I'm going to be putting that [my career] on the back burner...because it's hard to be in academia, and it's hard to be in that field moving around so often. So, by moving overseas, I think there will be a pretty big impact; I just haven't experienced it yet.

Even though London has yet to experience a PCS, she is already internalizing the impact of her upcoming relocation. Further elaborating on her career progression and the utilization of her education and skills she realizes her career will likely be on the "back burner." Despite already teaching as an adjunct professor, London shared her concern for finding meaningful employment in the competitive realm of higher academia, especially in an unfamiliar country. In applying the SDT, London elucidates several components that are critical to motivation and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In sharing her plan for her career, she underscores how the military lifestyle (i.e., upcoming PCS) diminishes her autonomy and limits her career competence and, potentially, her career path. Existing scholarship (Castaneda et al., 2008) illustrates London's concerns regarding the military lifestyle negatively impacting her career are warranted.

London foresees an impact in both her research and career due to her impending transition abroad. She notes the importance of her current network and the value of relationships in academia. In speaking about her current field of study, London shared, "my advisors have good connections within the police department, and that really allows

me to connect and network with the population that I'm studying...moving away is going to impact the opportunities I have for research." In contemplating her options, London discussed compromising on her existing research by pivoting to more available resources. She stated, "I've kind of started to consider getting more into studying military population because I will have that more at my disposal...more readily available to me than working with the police." London's candor illuminates two critical components of the SDT, connectedness and motivation. She speaks to how through her current social network and intentional professional integration, she has connections to opportunities, and she fears the transition will impact her motivation to remain focused on her preferred participants, civilian law enforcement. The SDT proffers that when environments are suboptimal for supporting connectedness intrinsic motivation, "the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges...and to learn" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70) will dwindle. London remains determined to achieve her academic and professional goals but is wary of the challenges she is likely to face in her pursuit.

Primary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers? London perceives that several military-connected factors will adversely affect her career. While the most obvious is her forthcoming OCONUS PCS, she also shares concerns for geographical separation when her husband returns to sea duty (in East Asia), the increased distance from her kin network, and the uncertainty of childcare options. London explained,

I'm a pretty new female spouse. So this will be my first experience with a PCS move. Right now, my husband and I are living apart. I have a nine-year-old from a previous relationship. I'm currently parenting on my own, and we're expecting a baby in April. We won't live anywhere near family, and when we do PCS, he will

be moving back to a ship [sea duty] which means that he's gone from a couple weeks to a year at a time.

London's statement signifies that her autonomy, or lack thereof, regarding the move coupled with a diminished support system (connectedness), will impair her career opportunities (competency).

Secondary research question 1: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy? Multiple factors can influence career self-efficacy, including compensation, professional growth, sense of belonging, and accomplishment (Dishon-Berkovits, 2019). The aforementioned factors can all play a role in enhancing or diminishing motivation towards professional aspirations (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In reflecting upon her professional goals, London is acutely aware that military factors, such as installation location, will be a factor in accomplishing her career goals. London shared,

My plan, originally, was to teach and be in academia at a university somewhere I wanted. In fact, my biggest goal was to teach at my alma mater, which won't happen, especially not right now, because it is in Kansas. The Navy does not get stationed in Kansas. So, if that is something that I am ever going to achieve, it is not going to be now.

London's educational ambitions are a testament to her motivation to achieve her goals. However, in verbalizing her "biggest goal" to become a professor at her alma mater, she recognizes that particular aspiration is unlikely to transpire while her spouse serves in the Navy.

Professional connectedness, or a sense of belonging, is another perceived factor that influences career self-efficacy. In grappling with the realization of her imminent transition to East Asia, London emphasized,

Moving around makes it a lot harder to make connections. Because you either make them and then you have to leave. Or, you know, you don't find people that really mesh well with you or, you know, people aren't in the same situation as you and, so, they don't really have that understanding of, well, why can't you come do this or...you know get a babysitter? It's just not that easy.

Despite never experiencing a military-connected transition, London contemplates how military-connected moves impact connectedness. Existing scholarship describes how a lack of childcare and kin network adversely impacts the careers (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008; Finlayson, 1969; Grossman, 1981; Schwartz et al., 1991) and creates an internalized conflict between the competing demands of the career and family (Gribble et al., 2019) of military spouses.

Secondary research question 2: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy? This section of London's interview centered around military-connected moves and her educational uncertainty and professional opportunities. In pondering the control of completing her doctoral degree, London stated,

I don't know if I would even call it a lack of motivation, but maybe just like uncertainty of...if I belong where I'm at...because my original plan was never to complete a program online. If I wanted to do a Ph.D. program online, I would have chosen that in the beginning.

Speaking to her perceived career autonomy, London offered,

Because of us moving, and I think the overseas move is what's going to be the most challenging...academia is a dog-eat-dog world. So, I'm not having the same research opportunities, networking opportunities, and things like that are really going to hinder my ability, I think, to obtain a tenure track position, which is my goal at some point.

Beyond career autonomy, London alludes to the guilt of maintaining her professional career and keeping the family unit together.

Positions are not available everywhere, and being with the military, I'm really limited to where I could apply if I choose not to separate our family, in order to get a job, wherever...in a perfect world (without the military) we would keep our options open and apply to anything and everything. And who knows where we would end up, but that's not really an option when you're limited based on duty stations.

Installation locations and job market conditions are known factors that impair military spouse employment (Castaneda et al., 2008; Hosek et al., 2002; Wardynski, 2000). Even as a relatively new military spouse, London is questioning the control she has over her career opportunities and goals based on Naval duty assignments available to her spouse and the commensurate teaching positions available near their assigned installation. To cultivate a career or to avoid underemployment, London considers the ramifications of geographical separation. London offered,

Let's say we get stationed, I don't know...back stateside...and I am able to find a position somewhere teaching, and then we have to move again. It becomes a question of, do I leave? Do I give this up? Or do separate our family again, for another how many years...

London's perceived threats to her career autonomy revolve around the frequency and location of potential military duty assignments. The researcher senses internal turmoil of choosing between her professional ambitions or being geographically separated from her spouse.

Secondary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness? London's situation is unique; she is pursuing a doctoral degree at the same university in which she is employed. She is also geographically separated from her spouse and a single parent, with a strong sense of connectedness to her students, colleagues, and academic advisors. Her move abroad will

have a profound effect on those established relationships. In expressing her apprehension over her impending professional and social network changes, she shared,

I'm kind of in a weird spot; I think just because I haven't had to experience some of that, you know, like, some of the moving around, and all the different changes and things that come. Do I think it will be something that impacts me? Yes, I'm leaving [my university]. I don't have the people every day; I'm not in the department. I'm not in my office; I'm not meeting with students in person. I'm not meeting with my advisors in person; I don't have the same support from my fellow students, my fellow colleagues, people in my cohort, I don't have the same support away [when I move] as I would here. So, I think, yeah, I think that you know, there are some of those factors that are going to really impact my, you know, social circle and support group and all of that stuff.

London views her upcoming PCS as the factor that will impact her social connectedness.

Her current connections also serve as her academic and professional support network.

London's lack of control regarding relocation to a foreign environment creates uncertainty surrounding her already established support structure. London emotes anxiety as she shares that once she moves, she will, simultaneously relinquish much of her career control, competence, and connectedness.

Secondary research question 4: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being? The SDT posits that well-being is tied to the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, connectedness. When asked about the perceived factors that affect London's sense of well-being London asserted,

One of my biggest issues with everything in life is the uncertainty of stuff, and with the military...there's a lot of uncertainty with everything. I'm a person who likes to plan things out. I'm a person that needs to have, you know, for an example, when the holiday's come around, I'm like, ok, when can we leave? What day? How many days do we get?

Planning is vital to autonomy and competence. Plans tend to originate from previous experiences which in turn assist in future planning. London desires to create meaningful

experiences and to remain connected to her family. However, she perceives her desire for connectedness to be incompatible with the uncertainty surrounding the military lifestyle.

The moving part...we still don't know where we're supposed to be going. We don't have hard orders. We're supposed to be leaving sometime between May and August, to [East Asia]. So, we have overseas screening paperwork that has to be completed, we have animals that we have to get, you know, into the vet and all this stuff, but we can't do any of that [without hard orders].

London likes to prepare, but the military lifestyle often does not lend itself to planning and scheduling. Duty hours, trainings, and deployments are variable and based on mission requirements. London shared how this uncertainty impacts her well-being.

I learned very quickly to stop asking my husband, "what time do you think you'll be home tonight"? Because we just don't know. Like, that's not a question he can answer. Right? So, that's been hard for me because I have to let go of a lot of that control, which really stresses me out. There's a lot of stress and anxiety that comes with not knowing what's next. These orders were kind of just thrown at us...we didn't pick them...it [the orders] was a shock. And, so, you know, that's another thing like, just the I don't know. I don't know, it's, yeah, there's a lot of things that for me, personally, I've had to really learn how to let go and just be okay with just...you know, flying by the seat of your pants.

The uncertainty stems from a lack of knowledge or information. Control, or the lack thereof, refers to the inability to influence or change a situation. London perceives these two similar, yet different, concepts as the predominant factors influencing her sense of well-being. Gribble et al. (2019) had similar findings but utilized the terms "choice" and "concessions" (p. 6).

Emergent Themes

London revealed in her interview three emergent themes: challenges, sacrifice, and uncertainty. As London is preparing for her first military-connected move, she speaks candidly about the challenges she foresees with military lifestyle factors. She notes that her upcoming move will create challenges in finishing her research, limit her access to

her personal and professional networks, spousal support (as he is slated to return to ship duty shortly after her arrival), and access to childcare for her newborn. London articulated her professional desire to become a tenured university professor but explains that she will have to make sacrifices due to unknown job market conditions, domestic obligations, and frequency of military-connected transitions. London forecasts she will, at least temporarily, put her career on the “back burner.” London prides herself on being organized and planning ahead. Despite London’s limited experience with the military lifestyle, she expresses her discontent for its uncertainty. Her husband’s varying work schedule, lack of official military orders, and the inability to plan out holiday events give her the sense that she is “flying by the seat of her pants.” London readily admits this uncertainty is causing her “stress and anxiety” and is negatively affecting her well-being.

Case 2: Dublin

Dublin is a seasoned Air Force spouse of eight years. She is currently employed as an elementary school principal and has diverse teaching experience, including special education. Dublin holds a master’s degree in education. Dublin and her spouse have two children: one school-aged and the other in childcare. She has already experienced two military-connected moves, including an OCONUS tour, and is due to PCS within the year.

Primary research question 2: How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers? Dublin has progressed within her career from a teacher to a coordinator, to now an administrator, but her path, due to military lifestyle factors, was not linear. She, at times, found herself having to “step backwards” in

her career but has remained resilient and steadfast in achieving her career goals. Dublin described,

I was teaching in...Maryland for six years, and I was actually a special education coordinator. So, I had moved up [into administration], and I was getting ready to interview for a leadership position on the assistive technology team, servicing students county-wide. But we got orders to [Texas]. So I was in the middle of my master's degree program. Luckily, I had chosen a program that I could switch to being virtual. So that was fine. But unfortunately, I had to start over in my career because...I wasn't certified to be an administrator in Texas. So, I started over again.

In discussing her career and “starting over,” Dublin provides insight into how her PCS from Maryland to Texas impacted her career progression. She discusses how she was unable to interview for a district-level administrative position, as state licensure requirements rendered her ineligible for an administrative role in Texas. Dublin described this career regression,

I don't regret going back into...the classroom...compared to my previous employment...I was a special education chairperson; I was supervising a team of 21 full-time special education teachers and 17 paraprofessionals. I had a program with over 300 students with IEPs [Individualized Education Plans] that I was running single-handedly. So, then I went back into the classroom as a special education teacher and was working with a caseload of 13 students. So definitely fulfilling, but for me, it was definitely a step backwards in my working towards becoming an administrator.

Dublin is passionate about education, and as a current elementary administrator, her dedication to instructional leadership and support is clear. In working to progress her career, military-connected moves and bureaucratic requirements have forced Dublin to adapt. These setbacks come off as unfortunate rather than resentful. While her motivation for career progression is evident, her lack of control coupled with the demoralizing reality of a looming PCS causes fear of an additional career setback. Dublin has worked exhaustively to cultivate career competence, regardless of state requirements, and has

built professional and sweat equity, all while knowing that at a moment's notice, her experience and certifications could be inconsequential to her next employer. In highlighting the profound impact of transitions on military spouses, Blue Star Families (2018) found that the likelihood of underemployment increases with the number of military-connected moves. Based on her previous experiences with underemployment and given she is currently in her preferred administrative role, Dublin senses her next move will likely lead to underemployment again.

Primary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers? Dublin has a strong work ethic and is distinctly aware of how military-connected moves impact her career. In discussing job opportunities and the often uncertain, and inopportune, variability of military-connected moves, Dublin offers,

The time of our last PCS was also challenging... we PCS in October, which for an educator is the beginning of the school year. And generally, those are not jobs that you necessarily want to jump into...if someone has quit from a job halfway through the school year, as there is usually a reason why. And so, because of that, we opted for me to take a year off when we moved here. And so, I took a year off...to allow us time to find childcare that I was comfortable with. We moved when [my daughter] was seven weeks old.

Dublin's concerns were compounded as her husband was sent on Temporary Duty Assignments (TDY) shortly after she went back to work.

When I did return to work, my husband was TDY a lot. I think in [my daughter's] first two years, he was gone for about a year, not on deployment, just TDY over and over and over again. And so that makes it challenging when you have to request days off because your husband's not here and your kid is sick, and there's nobody else to take care of them. So that has certainly impacted it [her career] even worse.

Ironically, given the impact of the COVID pandemic, Dublin offers,

So that (COVID) has certainly impacted it [career] even worse. I mean, one of the blessings of the pandemic is that he's not traveling. And so he has felt a lot more of the lift with childcare and sickness and quarantine. But his commanding officers are not very happy about that. They actually talked to him the other day about me needing to cover more of the childcare concerns, and I was like, hey, I did it for eight years. This is his first turn!

The military lifestyle frequently requires transitions where military families find themselves reestablishing their support networks (a cycle that often repeats itself every few years). Establishing a new home, finding childcare, medical care, a reliable support system are cumbersome and time-intensive activities. The difficulty in establishing networks and setting up your home is compounded when the military service member is geographically separated due to military obligations. In addition to the domestic obligations, MSEs are subject to variable job market conditions and face the stigma of being military-connected.

I think I would have gotten to a leadership role a lot sooner, right, an administrative role a lot sooner, were I still in my previous county. I was very blessed to come into a charter school here in Texas. If I were not at a charter school, I can pretty much guarantee that I would not have a principal seat anywhere in Texas, having only been here for four years. It's incredibly unheard of in a traditional ISD [Independent School District] to move up to a high leadership position that quickly. I was very blessed that I just happened to get hired by a charter school that has less traditional paths to leadership. So...if you're not blessed to find yourself in that seat, you're starting over once again; I'm looking at roles in other states now. We had orders to Maryland, and so I was looking at assistant principal positions. And they [a school district in Maryland] said (they were very transparent) they were like, it's very rare for us to hire a candidate not from within district into an assistant principal position. So, if we move there, it's like, I'll be starting over again.

Beyond stigma, Dublin spoke to a dilemma that many MSEs face between a sense of duty to their career and the high demands of the military lifestyle. Dublin posited,

It's very likely that we could be sent somewhere else. And then I'll likely have to at least separate from my husband for a period of time to make sure that my school is taken care of and has a strong transition to a new leader.

Dublin shares many military lifestyle factors that impact her career: the timing of transitions, the availability of childcare, job market opportunities, service-member duty requirements, geographical separation, support systems, and stigma. Individually and especially collectively, these factors can hinder Dublin's motivation and well-being. Gribble et al. (2019) found that spouses "expressed feelings of resentment" (p. 6) towards the military when they perceived to have to make sacrifices regarding their education or employment. Although Dublin's statements do not come off as resentful, it is clear that military lifestyle factors necessitate that she sacrifices basic psychological needs (i.e., control, competence, connectedness; Deci & Ryan, 2000) to maintain her career.

Secondary research question 1: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy? In speaking to factors that affect her self-efficacy, Dublin embodies resilient behavior and an uncanny pragmatism.

I'm a really driven person. But it [the military lifestyle] has definitely given me challenges that I would not have were we stationary in one place. Also, if we had family around us; so, that's the thing that we lacked because of the military...there's no grandparents to watch the kids so that you can be at work. There's just no support system there. I have a lot of colleagues who are like, oh, let me see if I can get my mom to watch the kids, or oh, I can stay late because my mom has them. So that definitely has impacted...but I don't think it's impacted my motivation. I've just had to be a lot more creative.

While Dublin provided insight into all facets of the SDT, she stresses how the military lifestyle hinders connectedness. Without a strong support system to relieve the responsibility for some of her domestic duties, it is and will remain challenging to place her career first.

Secondary research question 2: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy? In this section, Dublin relates her control to

the power of choice.

[Due to the military lifestyle] I've had to make choices that I wouldn't necessarily make. Otherwise, like, I never would have left my job in [Maryland]. I probably would not have chosen the master's program that I did. I mean, it ended up very successful. But it wasn't my first choice... I learn better in person. I find most students learn better in person than virtually. But I think that I had to make different choices because I knew what was coming.

Similar to findings by Gribble et al. (2019), Dublin highlights that while she has control to make decisions, her choices involve "concessions" (p. 6) because of the military lifestyle. She decides to go to graduate school, but her choice is limited to online programs due to the high likelihood of moving. Her resiliency is showcased in that she takes back some of her control by working within her constraints. However, she notes the uncertainty is taking a toll.

We've actually had orders three times in the last four months, and they've been canceled every time. And then now we're up for orders again. And so it's, I'm becoming more frustrated with the military lifestyle, as I'm experiencing this going on and on. But I guess I just learned to just accept it. And I don't think that's normal. But I think we just have learned that we don't have any other choice. You just have to.

Dublin highlights that move and the uncertainty surrounding moves lead to dissatisfaction with the military lifestyle but attempts to work within the parameters provided. Her temperament at this topic is best categorized as "frustrated"; for many, the military lifestyle is cyclical and leaves spouses feeling powerless to prevent its recurring effects on well-being.

Secondary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness? Dublin highlights that her social connectedness is rooted in her professional life.

So even looking at like [my child's] friends, they are all children of people I work with. Very rarely does she ever interact with other people, and I don't think that would be the case were we not a military family. I also think I make intentional choices not to get close to a lot of people...we never hang out with military people because you know they're going to leave or you're going to leave or everybody's going to leave...going to move. Also, but when we came here, and everybody's military, people just seem a little bit more closed off. And we also don't live on base, so there's not that like community of being on base.

Dublin again speaks to choice and control; the military lifestyle, specifically military-connected moves, require time and effort to establish social networks. Perhaps due to the frequency of transitions, Blue Star Families (2018) found that "military spouse respondents had a significantly lower sense of connectedness and sense of belonging to both their civilian and military communities than other respondent groups" (p. 31). For Dublin, she elects to invest in her professional connections knowing that military-connected families, like hers, are likely to be restationed.

Secondary research question 4: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being? The transient nature of the military lifestyle impacts MSEs not only professionally but also personally. Dublin recounts how the military lifestyle impacted her personal health and well-being.

We didn't know, and it wasn't diagnosed until much, much later. But I had postpartum depression. And we didn't realize it because of the move. I thought a lot of it was just because I had left my family. We had moved to a brand-new state; I wasn't working. So, I didn't have like that career fulfillment...didn't have any friends. And so, a lot of it went it went undiagnosed until my husband went to [training]. I was here by myself, and I finally started talking to my sister, and she was like, it sounds like it's more than you know...just what's going on. And so I talked to my doctor and reached out and got the support that I needed, but that's when we found out that it was really postpartum depression and that it wasn't just because of everything that happened, but I think it got brushed under the rug because I changed health care providers. We moved...so I didn't have the traditional like postpartum and follow-up. I didn't know my [new] providers.

Despite her resilient temperament, the lack of continuity with medical care, having a newborn, living in a new state, having no job, or established (local) support system, Dublin found both her health and well-being suffering. Deci and Ryan (2008) contend that psychological health, well-being, performance, and persistence are all directly related to the level of fulfillment of one's basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and connectedness.

Emergent Themes

In reviewing Dublin's interview, four themes emerged: challenges, sacrifice, uncertainty, and resilience. Dublin illuminates many challenges brought on by the military lifestyle. She outlines being ineligible for job positions because of varying state licensure requirements. Dublin states that the timing of a PCS, a lack of a support network, and the concern of finding childcare left her unemployed. Moreover, she highlights an unsettling concern with an indeterminate impact, medical care continuity. Dublin notes they moved shortly after her daughter's birth, and in having to reestablish medical care, she experienced a delayed diagnosis of postpartum depression. In speaking to additional challenges, Dublin bemoans the lack of choice in academic modality, as well as the stigma of being military connected. In several instances, Dublin alludes to making sacrifices, especially as it pertains to her career. She speaks directly to career delays, a lack of "career fulfillment," having to take a "step backwards" and "starting over," as well as being torn between having to make a decision between keeping her family unit together or maintaining loyalty to her students and staff. Dublin also shares her frustration in the uncertainty that often accompanies military-connected moves. This uncertainty is showcased in her statement about receiving orders several times just to see

them canceled. Despite the numerous obstacles she has faced, Dublin possesses a remarkable sense of resilience. Gribble et al. (2019) found that spouses in professional careers often find affirmation in overcoming obstacles and “re-establishing” (p. 7) their professional identity. This sentiment is best encapsulated by Dublin’s willingness to forgo preferred or more traditional paths in her quest for academic and professional fulfillment.

Case 3: Rome

Rome is an Army Spouse of six years and has experienced four military-connected moves with her husband and is anticipating another PCS this summer. She is an elementary math and science teacher with a master’s degree who currently lives at an installation near her kin network. Rome and her husband currently do not have any children.

Primary research question 2: How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers? For MSEs moving overseas, maintaining career progression can be difficult. Educational services for military-connected children abroad are typically provided by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). Rome shared,

My husband was stationed overseas. And so that was difficult when I graduated, and I joined him over in Germany; the only schooling program they have is DoDEA, which is very difficult to get a job within...the system. And so, my first-year post-graduation, I had to work as an aide within the special education department only because there were no openings. I finally got a position to teach pre-k for a year, and then we PCS back to the States. We were in Virginia for about five and a half months, just enough time to not get a teaching position.

Rome speaks to the lack of job market opportunities overseas, the phenomenon of underemployment, and the uncertain timeline that accompanies military transitions.

As a recent graduate and certified teacher, Rome found herself in a saturated job market with few opportunities to find employment commensurate with her education (competence) and training. Instead of accepting unemployment, Rome chose to take a position that would best be defined as underemployed, but she noted it provided her an opportunity to build professional equity and land a teaching position the following year. After a full year of teaching, however, her husband received (PCS) orders back stateside. The duration, just shy of 6 months, at their new duty station, made finding a teaching position unrealistic for Rome.

Recalling her experience overseas and contemplating future military-connected moves, Rome noted,

It's difficult to have to always hit that reset button, especially when you have your goals within education. You have to, you know, you have stepping stones to get there. By the time you reach the top of the stepping stone, you start over and renew.

Working hard to obtain her degree and teaching certification, Rome lamented the lack of control and stability within her career. In contemplating how having children will complicate her career autonomy, Rome introspected,

We don't have any kids...and so childcare hasn't been an issue for me personally, but a lot of close friends that I've worked with have had that issue....it gets into the balance of well, do I work or do I take care of my child? Do I teach for a little extra income? Or do I stay at home and put my career on the side? And that's a conversation my husband and I have had because we're moving to [Washington] DC this summer and expenses are so high. If you have a child, are you able to let me still work and be an educator, or do I have to take a backseat because his career comes first?

Gribble et al. (2019) found that the concept of agency for military spouses meant making concessions, or sacrifices, due to the military lifestyle. Rome articulates this point clearly when she questions what she will have to give up if she and her husband decide to have

children. Conflating the issue, Rome highlights the perceived high cost of living and the struggle between maternal instinct and career efficacy. Early in Rome's military-connectedness, she witnessed first-hand how the military lifestyle directly influences job opportunities, career progression, and the motivation to find gainful employment. Research by Ryan and Deci (2008; 2008a) suggests situations that deter autonomy drain vitality and motivation to persist.

Primary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers? Rome did not specify a particular military lifestyle factor affecting her career currently. However, she stipulated,

[If] the situation was slightly different, and I had a lot more on my plate...it'd be more challenging. I know when I was working on my master's program, it had an impact on my career because then I wasn't able to focus on just teaching in school. I had teaching school plus army endeavors and stuff and families to take care of. And so that did have an impact.

Green, Nurius, and Lester (2013) discuss the impact of "pile-up" stressors (i.e., parental responsibilities, deployments, frequent moves, etc.) on military spouses. Rome alludes to this "pile-up" but does not go into detail about military-connected obligations having impacted her career and her well-being in the past.

Secondary research question 1: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy? Rome is a passionate educator, but due to the constraints of the military lifestyle, she is contemplating a career move that makes her feel more valued and is subject to less bureaucracy.

I love teaching! My end goal would be to teach future teachers, and so still within education, but looking at going to, you know, college professor and whatnot. And I really enjoyed the educational policy aspect of my masters. And so especially going to DC, I thought that is a very appropriate time...kind of shift my career

path here. Is that going to open more doors as we move? Now, there's always going to be a need for teachers, but the demand on teachers or what is accepted...certification wise... could be challenging down the road.

Rome sees an opportunity to advance her competence and her career by pivoting into educational policy. The researcher denotes that Rome's penchant for a career shift is driven by both her love for learning, as well as finding a career that is more compatible with the military lifestyle.

I don't want to sit here teaching for 20 years or 15 years...and I have to take a new test every time I move somewhere because then I feel undervalued. I feel that my experience and my knowledge doesn't...what's the word? It doesn't translate. Why do I have to sit here and do it again if I've already proven myself over the years?

Support for both licensure portability and professional reciprocity for educators have gained some traction in the last few years (Kersey, 2013). However, Rome speaks to the fact that licensure reciprocity does not equate to standardized certifications, pay scales, or policy implementation. In considering her experiences with military lifestyle factors, it comes as no surprise that Rome is examining alternate career options, especially those that are less susceptible to arbitrary regulations. Rome is focused on her professional development and goals and in so doing, is attempting to fulfill her basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

In addressing her career self-efficacy, Rome reflects on the various impacts on her motivation.

The motivation was there, but it was more strain motivation, that if you don't get it [master's degree] done, you're gonna have to hit the pause button and then reset similar to you where you've had to pick up a few different times. And so, on top of everything else within the world of education right now, with COVID and everything changing...it's been challenging to stay motivated...with everything else going on with the unknown of when are we leaving.

Rome speaks to how the stress of her next move, the uncertainty and changes surrounding COVID, coupled with the need to finish her degree or face starting over, she finds her motivation “strained.” Research by Deci and Ryan (2008) proposes Rome’s environment is suboptimal in allowing for autonomous regulation and, consequently, diminishing her motivation and affecting her performance.

Secondary research question 2: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy? Rome speaks directly to the impact of military-connected moves on her career autonomy. She shares,

I feel by now I could have been a little higher and further in my [career] path that I was hoping for. I mean, there’s pros and cons to it, of course, but just strictly looking at career-wise, if I was stationary in one place, I would be now five years in [school district] or five years in another location, and I would have hit that first stepping stone. I’ll probably never have longevity in a school district, which is unfortunate. And that goes into a slew of other things...retirement and everything else.

Rome speaks directly to professional “stepping stones” and building professional equity to control her career progression. However, these “stepping stones” also refer to district longevity pay, retirement benefits, and credited years of experience. Multiple studies (Hosek et al., 2002; Grossman, 1981; Payne et al., 1992; Wardynski, 2000) have indicated that military spouses typically make less than their civilian counterparts, and this phenomenon may provide insight into why. Rome highlights how she would like to become a curriculum instructional specialist (CIS) and shares her struggles in finding a program that aligns with the transient nature of the military lifestyle. In reflecting upon continuing her education to support her career progression, Rome shares,

I’m going back to just simply my master’s I wanted to be able to...it’s not required that you have your masters to become a CIS, but it’s highly favored. And...it’s desired ...for you to have one. But it was difficult for me to get to that

point if I wasn't able to find a program to which I could complete because of the stipulations.

While Rome did eventually find a graduate program that fit her needs, her insight into wanting to obtain a master's degree (competence) and seek career progression was inhibited by military lifestyle "stipulations" (i.e., frequent moves). Rome speaks to the concept of professional duty and how the military lifestyle can disrupt the control over one's career. Rome notes,

My husband, he'll be probably moving up to [Washington] DC mid-May...and that leaves us to two weeks left of the school year. So, I can either uproot and leave my students two weeks early...right at STAAR test. So, good luck on your test; I'm leaving! But thankfully, I have the means to stay here. I have family I can stay with or whatnot. So, I have a little bit of control over that since we are here stateside. I can stay through the duration of the school year. However, [while stationed overseas], we had orders cut, we had to leave by the end of April and I... couldn't stay with anyone. I could not crash with anyone overseas for a month and then come back. So that left me with a lack of control over my career.

In the previous statement, Rome highlights a reported dilemma (Gribble et al., 2019) amongst military spouses, which is having to choose between keeping their family together or seeing a job through to completion. The Blue Star Families Survey (2018) reported that "separation" and "relocation stress" are top stressors for military spouses. The SDT suggests these stressors impair motivation and reduce psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Secondary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness? Military installations can vary in size and location, and this has the perceived ability to influence one's feeling of social connectedness. Communities surrounding large military installations often take on an

identity of being a “military town.” At smaller installations, locals may not understand the military lifestyle and culture. Rome keenly addresses this concept,

So here [large military installation], we have a very large military population. Obviously, Fort Hood is huge. Fort Bragg would be the same situation; it’s massive. Fort Lee, Virginia, where we were at right there...you get into Richmond, and then past that...when your military...[people ask] what does that even mean?

The concept of military identity and the understanding of military culture varies by installation. However, in 2018, Blue Star Families stated that nearly half of all survey participants reported not feeling a sense of belonging in either their civilian or military community. Connectedness and a sense of belonging, as viewed through the SDT, is a key component in supporting overall well-being (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Secondary research question 4: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being? Rome questions the concept of well-being alluding to her life being like a roller coaster of emotions controlled by the needs of the military. In speaking to the general uncertainty that accompanies the military lifestyle to include the military service member’s presence, daily routines, and reintegration into the family unit, Rome explains,

If he is [military service member] gone for two or three months, or even just a few weeks, you get into a lifestyle...it’s just you or you and your family, and then he comes back. Now you have to reintegrate them into your life and get that going again... and then they leave again. So, it’s just constant...roller coaster of, you’re changing your lifestyle based off of what Uncle Sam is needing for or from your spouse. I’ve been very fortunate with experiences that I’ve had, and communities that I’ve been a part of. And so even on those slumps, you have that support. But I would definitely say that there is an impact...just overall. Are you happy because you know, your spouse is finally home? Are you agitated because they are home and you’ve had the last year by yourself? I feel like...it’s just a constant up and

down based off of what their job calls for. You don't have a choice but to be resilient and to pick up whatever you're dished out and run with it.

In viewing this statement through the SDT, the military lifestyle hinders Rome's basic needs of autonomy and connectedness and creates an environment that leads to a sense of emotional variability. Research by Deci and Ryan (2008) indicates that psychological well-being and "positive behavioral outcomes" (p. 184) are directly correlated to the fulfillment of one's basic psychological needs.

Emergent Themes

Several themes emerged during Rome's interview to include challenges, sacrifice, uncertainty, and resilience. Many of the challenges Rome discusses revolve around her career and having to continually "prove herself." She speaks to having to take state-specific certification tests when she moves, balancing perceived military obligations and work-related duties, and the feeling of being undervalued. Throughout her interview, Rome acknowledges several military-connected factors that have, or potentially will require, her to make career sacrifices. Early on in her career, while she was overseas, she experienced unemployment due to job market conditions. Shortly after that, Rome experienced unemployment due to the frequency of her military service member's tour of duty. Rome speaks to her career progression, noting that with military-connected moves she struggles to build professional equity or earn longevity; she frustratingly shares that due to the military lifestyle her career "stepping stones" are often regressive. In looking towards the future, Rome and her spouse have concluded that having children, while still military-connected, will likely require Rome, at least temporarily, to sacrifice some of her professional aspirations; she emphatically questions, "do I stay at home and put my

career on the side?” Rome also reveals feeling guilty and a sense of sacrifice between “uprooting” her family or fulfilling her professional commitments. Insightfully, Rome offers how the uncertainty of the military lifestyle, especially regarding the reintegration of the service member into the family after deployments or trainings, can lead to a roller coaster of emotions. These reunions typically require a role readjustment and negotiated decision-making, activities that are known to heighten stress (Wiens & Boss, 2006). The SDT proffers that social environments that detrimentally affect one’s fulfillment of their basic psychological needs will impair well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Working within the perceived constraints, Rome displays resiliency, a mechanism for strengthening well-being (Wiens & Boss, 2006) in locating a preferable graduate program and in researching career paths that are more amenable to a transient lifestyle.

Case 4: Madrid

Madrid is 41 years old and is currently unemployed due to military transition but notes that (due to the COVID) she is currently teaching her children from home. Most recently Madrid worked as an English as a Second Language “ESL” elementary teacher and has obtained a bachelor’s degree. Madrid and her husband have two children, have been married 15 years, and have experienced eight Army-connected moves.

Primary research question 2: How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers? Madrid speaks to military-connected moves hindering employment opportunities at various times in her career.

We move quite often...we’re moving probably every two to three years. So, I only get to work for that short [amount] of time, which hinders, what positions I do take...if anything...and what positions are available at the time that we do move

to the new location, especially if we are not on a summer rotation... I also have to make sure I'm licensed in that state.

Madrid insightfully shares that both the frequency and the timing of moves can impair employment opportunities. She goes on to note that the location of the installation also impacts job availability.

When we were stationed overseas, it was my first time working for DoDEA. I applied there, there was no full-time teaching positions. I am a certified teacher, I teach elementary school, and they had no positions available for me. I've noticed, especially in that little area, when those women are in or those teachers are in, they stay in DoDEA for a long time, and they ride that system, which who wouldn't, you know, but at that time, the only position available for me was paraprofessional, it was the only thing, and it was part-time. I just became a floater kind of wherever they needed me. They used me as a tutor for children who were either struggling or need, you know, more enrichment, or interventions, things like that. And so, I worked with a special ed teacher, I did interventions I came in to help with small groups with children who were a little advanced or those that were struggling. And then I floated around into the kindergarten wing. I mean, I just kind of did whatever...I was there to assess not really teach if that makes any sense.

Madrid touches on all three components of the SDT, control, competence, and connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In her previous statements, Madrid speaks to the lack of control regarding the frequency and timing of moves as well as job market conditions and licensure reciprocity. The concept of underemployment, the lack of teaching positions, and taking a job with diminished responsibilities, are indicative of reduced competence. Madrid speaks to her challenges with social connectedness as it relates to her career.

Moving and trying to get in, I feel with a teaching position, especially in small towns that we end up in, it's kind of like who you know...to get you in. I feel like you need to kind of already be embedded in the community to kind of get your foot in the door, instead of [being] a newbie coming in with a resume and really trying to sell yourself to that, you know, group of people who are interviewing you.

Madrid's experiences have taught her to build social connectedness through temporary employment, in the form of subbing or volunteering.

I started subbing, just to kind of feel it out...feel out the schools...where I wanted to be. Because sometimes when you go to these job fairs, you know, they're putting on their front, their good front, I'm putting on my good face and we're hoping we will match. But sometimes you get into those [school] buildings, and you're not a good match with staff or, you know, that kind of thing. So, I think having to know at least just to say, you know, this, you might have a good deal over here at this elementary school, or the staff you might work with them. I think it is, it's really beneficial to at least know somebody, maybe...or like yourself to get out there and do maybe part-time [work] to get in the door. A little bit of volunteer work.

To combat known employment concerns, such as local labor market conditions (Booth, 2003) and the perception of stigma (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008), Madrid discusses utilizing a unique strategy of purposefully taking on substitute teaching or volunteer roles that permit her to build social equity and to determine whether a particular place of employment would be a good fit.

Primary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers? Madrid emphasizes the impact of transitions on her career.

Just moving. I mean, other than that, no...my husband's always been supportive...we [recently] moved to Kentucky...and I am not licensed in Kentucky. I'm not working mainly by choice and because of COVID.

Beyond how transitions impact her career, Madrid speaks to how underemployment may necessitate unemployment due to childcare and domestic responsibilities. Madrid shares, "I got pregnant with our first child after so many years, we had been trying, and I didn't make enough money in this part-time job to stick [my child] in childcare." Domestic

duties coupled with pride in profession can do more than just impact your career it can affect your well-being.

I sat out last year, one for their [children's] well-being...for my well-being because I know how much pressure I put in myself after sitting out...I'm like, I'm going to be brand new teacher again...where I'm going to be getting there early...I'm going to be staying late. And then what am I going to do with my two kids who have no dad at home right now? Right? You know, and childcare or having someone to pick them up, or they are gonna be running around in the classrooms like I don't know, like, I was just, I was already overwhelmed by the situation because I knew how much I enjoy my job and how much I'm going to put into that classroom. That I just felt like it [getting a job] was gonna be a detriment to my students and to my own children.

Similar to Booth's (2003) "confluence of factors" and the notion of stressors "piling-up" (Green et al., 2013) Madrid articulates how individual military lifestyle factors impact well-being, and how the impact may be force-multiplied when factors coincide. As these factors compound, they are likely to have a detrimental impact on the fulfillment of Madrid's basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Secondary research question 1: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy? Madrid did not highlight any perceived factors affecting her career self-efficacy. Madrid did note that her personal financial situation affords her the ability to stay home and focus on the "kids being more involved with social and their sports." Madrid goes on to say that not all MSEs are so fortunate, but that even though she is "staying home with the kids" she still has a desire to teach. She remarks that she has set up a makeshift classroom for her children; she highlights that the "ABCs" adorn the wall. In discussing returning to the classroom, Madrid discloses,

I still have a passion for it. I love teaching. I definitely want to go back into the classroom, even if it's in some form...something either in brick and mortar or I'm tutoring or homeschooling with a co-op or something.

Notably, Madrid's financial situation and opportunity to teach her children (who are virtual learners due to the COVID pandemic) from home are supporting her current sense of career self-efficacy.

Secondary research question 2: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy? Madrid speaks to how moves impact her professional growth, both in terms of her career and her educational attainment.

Mainly just the moves. I mean...I had started a graduate program to get my master's and when I moved to Colorado the program didn't transfer over...I had lost so many credits. I was gonna have to start back over again, to where I just, you know, just killed it for me to even try to go back and pursue it. So, I started again, just this past year getting my graduate stuff again because I did lose so many credits with Texas and Colorado coming back. So...it's taken a lot longer...I thought I'd be done with my masters a long time ago. I would not mind being a coach, like a reading specialist or something like that...and I definitely need my master's for that.

Madrid's struggles echoes findings in previous literature (Harrell et al., 2004, Maury & Stone, 2014) for military spouses; frequent relocations disrupt educational attainment (which for educators can hinder license and certification renewal) and career progression. Madrid explains her desire to increase her competencies in education and land a specialized teaching position but notes that military-connected moves have thus far derailed her attempts. The SDT suggests that Madrid's lack of control and ability to obtain specialized competencies will impair motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). This concept is exemplified in Madrid's statement "I had lost so many credits. I was gonna have to start back over again, to where I just, you know, just killed it for me to even try to go back and pursue it."

In speaking about getting a new job, Madrid questions whether she will be subject to discrimination.

The way the pay scale works for our salary, you know...now being an older teacher, I do have years under my belt...who do they want to pay for? Do they want to pay for that first-year teacher pumping out? Or do they want to pay for...I have nine years under my belt of teaching, who do they want to go for? I would hope they want the nine-year teacher, but you know, sometimes newer is better...they know the stuff that's coming right out. They are more technology advanced...I'm trying to keep up with the times.

In applying the SDT to Madrid's concerns for future employment, she questions whether her competence, that is her ability to maintain and grow her skills, is a detriment in the current (tech-centric) educational landscape (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Madrid reflects on how military-connected moves not only thwarts control but also her sense of professional competence.

Secondary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness? Madrid perceives that because of the frequency of military transitions, she has experienced military-connected stigma in her professional life. Madrid offers,

I feel like I'm pretty social. Like I feel like I make friends pretty easily. But I will say I've been on certain campuses where they just say...oh, you're only here temporarily. You're only going to be here for two years. Yeah, the stigma that you're only going to be here for a short while. You know why? Why do this, why start something...because you're only going to fill the position for so many years or not even...I put that pressure on myself, like, I'm only going to be here for six months...do I even want to do that to an admin either? Do I really want to do that to the school or the kids?

Madrid shares that frequent relocations impair her motivation to not only connect socially with her colleagues but to even pursue employment.

While stigma has impacted her professional life, Madrid does not allow stigma to impact her personal life. She seeks out opportunities to connect in her community and remains active with an online “exercise sorority” comprised of other military spouses.

I feel like I kind of get myself out no matter what...like I get myself involved volunteering...I’m part of the spouses’ club here. I’m also part of a really cool workout program that was brought on by a military spouse. She’s kind of made different affiliations all over the United States and abroad that other moms have bought into.

Madrid reports a dichotomy between her professional and personal connectedness.

Perhaps to retain control, Madrid chooses to avoid meaningful connectedness in her career, but then goes to great effort to ensure relatedness in her personal life.

Secondary research question 4: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being? Madrid highlights a concern common to most military spouses and that is the cyclical nature of military-connected moves and the constant reestablishing of networks and daily routines.

Moving. Starting all over again...every time. I mean, I think the move is just the biggest hit for me...just because I make such good friends so fast...so even then, so quickly, we’re gone, you know, and then we start all over again. Then we have to get into the community, figure your lifestyle out, because your spouse who’s the active-duty person...they come with their community...they come with their friends from that job...they get embedded quick and fast. But for the family, we have to kind of find our way. We have to find not only our own doctors or dentists but like our own group of friends, our own group of hangouts...we have to find for ourselves. So, I just think the moves...takes a toll on you. I mean, I get frustrated...how many times have we moved because of the military? Like, it’s a lot. I mean, I have lived in so many zip codes and area codes.

In contrasting her family’s experience with her husband’s, Madrid underscores that upon transitioning the military service member “come with their community” but the family must recurrently reestablish their communal support network. This “distal support” (p.

235) as opined by Deci and Ryan (2000), plays a significant role in positively supporting motivation.

After living abroad, Madrid reflects on how important it was for her well-being to make stable and lasting personal relationships.

I met these women who were also military spouses who were going through the same thing with me. I grabbed them and held on tight...I've been so lucky ever since I met these women in...Kansas. I've met them again [in Texas]...I mean, it's just been a nice network of people that I've been able to feel like, okay, so and so is here.

Despite finding a supportive network, you can sense Madrid's aggravation in how the military lifestyle has unapologetically required that she make career sacrifices. Madrid laments,

It's always been, like his career. No one asked me...it's always been like...the known because he's going to make more money, he has more benefits...it just so happened, you know...I took the I don't know...not the bad route. But I mean, for me teaching was the best route...No one asked me.

Emphasizing her perceived lack of autonomy and involvement in decision-making, Madrid illuminates the military as a “greedy institution” (Segal, 1986). The military commands loyalty and obedience from the service-member and, in many ways, the military family as well.

Emergent Themes

Five main themes arose during Madrid's interview, challenges, sacrifice, resilience, COVID, and guilt. Given the number of military-connected moves Madrid has experienced, it is no surprise that most of the challenges she speaks about are perceived to stem from frequent PCS transitions and short tours of duty. Limited job opportunities, licensure constraints, reestablishing personal, professional, and domestic networks, and

military-connected stigma are all perceived challenges Madrid has faced during her military-connected tenure. Another poignant theme that emerges during her interview is professional and educational sacrifice. Madrid speaks to “starting over” due to losing graduate educational credits multiple times and sacrificing her career, or “sitting-out” for the well-being of her family. She also discusses settling for positions that leave her underemployed due to limited job opportunities. Underemployment is indicative of diminished competence (Ryan, 1995). Madrid possesses an innate resilient nature. She employs a unique adaptive strategy when seeking employment. To ensure a good fit, she will first seek out temporary or volunteer positions. Madrid values connectedness, and after being overseas and feeling disconnected, she has been resilient in finding and “holding on to” her network and is resolute in engaging other military spouses when she transitions.

Case 5: Paris

Paris is 35 years old, has a master’s degree, and is currently working as a fourth-grade English Language Arts and Reading “ELAR” teacher in a heavily military-connected school district. Paris has three children, two of which are school-aged. Very recently, her husband of nine years medically retired from the Army. While active duty, Paris and her husband experienced two military-connected moves.

Primary research question 2: How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers? Paris suggests the military lifestyle has created career challenges, many of which she has faced alone. Within the same breath, Paris remarks that separation affords her certain benefits.

Without the support at home it [career] got a little tougher. And I mean, I just think through all of that...it was frustrating to have to do a lot of that alone. And in Washington, his hours...he left before we got up and sometimes a lot of times came home after we were in bed and I had just had [my son]...I had two kids that were two and under. And it was a lot doing my masters and schoolwork there. But I think it also helped me kind of hone in on what I really could do and be more focused...at work.

The researcher detected resilient behavior in Paris's ability to become more focused and routinized in her spouse's absence.

It's helped me be more focused...with him having to go and I have to kind of just, you know, you have to do what you have to do when they're gone. And so, I just kept going, you know, sometimes it helped me be on a better routine, and do things more purposefully because I knew I didn't have the help.

Paris is self-reliant, confident, and utilizes time-management strategies to remain productive and vigilant but discloses the disproportionate burden of domestic duties and a lack of spousal support is less than ideal. Like other military spouses, Paris voices irritation over the frequency of moves and the requirement to acquire state-specific certifications.

You know, I was really comfortable where I was, and loving teaching in Texas, and so having to go to Washington...I started really early on the certification. So getting it wasn't a huge problem. Just frustrating...a lot of steps.

Kersey (2013) discusses that licensure portability and reciprocity, while improving provides for subjectivity in determining whether a professional license in one state is "substantially equivalent" to the standards in the reviewing state. An MSE awaiting reciprocity determination is clearly not in control of their professional fate, practicing their skills, or building professional connectedness.

Primary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers? Paris discusses the predicament facing many

military spouse educators, separating their family or supporting their students (Gribble et al., 2019).

Everything's just moving. I gotta keep going...we just waited it out...I just stayed till the end of the school year. It wasn't worth moving in the middle. I don't...I didn't want to leave my students hanging with someone, so it was just best that way. And then when he came back, the three of us moved in the summer and [my husband] had to stay till October. I mean, we just did what I felt was the best...I wouldn't want to start a school year somewhere and...leave those kids hanging three months later, or do the opposite at the end of the year.

Paris speaks directly to taking control of her career and utilizing her competence to support her students, but at the sacrifice of having to be geographically separated from her husband.

Secondary research question 1: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy? Just as states have varying licensure and certification requirements, their compensation and benefits plans differ. When this difference equates to making less money doing the same job, career motivation and self-efficacy can wane. Paris succinctly states “The biggest thing was...knowing that I was going to take a huge pay cut. That was always a worry.” More than just financial differences, states often have a unique educational philosophy and culture. Paris asserts,

I could also just tell, you know, education was different. Their priorities were on kind of different things. And after being used to Texas...I was just kind of, in a certain mindset of this is how it is; it was very different there.

Paris elects to view the challenges associated with the military lifestyle as motivation to remain driven. In denoting her lack of career control and self-efficacy, Paris stated, “The lifestyle has motivated me to do more to ensure my career.”

Secondary research question 2: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy? While Paris does not acknowledge any military lifestyle factors impacting her autonomy she does mention that it has taken her twice as long to complete her master's degree. Paris notes, "I don't feel like...I lost my control of a lot of things. I've always felt pretty...good about my decisions." Paris does not internalize that military lifestyle factors as controlling her decisions but rather she has control over her decisions based on parameters provided.

Secondary research question 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness? Paris did not note any specific military factors affecting her social connectedness but alluded to the difficulty in acclimating to an unfamiliar educational philosophy.

They have their unions and their situation that...toward the end of that year, they [educators] were going to go on strike. And I was like, absolutely not. I'm not leaving these kids hanging...I was like, you know, I'm not here for you or for me, I'm here for them. And so that kind of was weird...it just kind of showed me how they felt about education, and I didn't really relate. So, I kind of distanced myself from a lot of that.

Paris admits the stark difference in educational culture hindered her ability to connect with colleagues.

There's still some people that I worked with there that I talked to...but it took me probably till February to feel like I knew the people there and could talk to any of them really. It was just a whole different environment.

In moving from Texas to Washington, Paris provides she experienced quite a culture shock in educational ideals. This stark difference in pedagogical approach impacted Paris' sense of belonging and connectedness (Ryan, 1995).

Secondary research question 4: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being? Paris reveals that a lack of control and perceived spousal support has impacted her well-being. However, she insists that it also forced her to be self-reliant and maintain a routine.

In the moment, I know I was frustrated a lot with things changing, not having control, you know, making plans and then all of a sudden [my husband] couldn't be there...to help with the kids parties, those kinds of things really bothered me.

The uncertainty that surrounds the military lifestyle has led to a palpable frustration, especially when attempts to plan are disrupted. Paris again speaks to finding resilience amongst her frustration.

It's definitely affected my well-being...in some ways just made me better organized...after those deployments...when I get to relax, it almost is like, I can relax too much and have a harder time staying on top of things. If I don't really stick with it and have a set routine...that relaxing can turn into like too much.

Despite a lack of control and perceived spousal support impacting her well-being, Paris maintains that she adapts and seeks opportunities to create consistency and routine.

Emergent Themes

Paris' interview revealed three themes: challenges, sacrifice, and resilience. Paris interprets one of her military-connected challenges, that of having minimal spousal support due to frequent TDY, and an irregular work schedule, as both good and bad. Admittedly, having to handle the brunt of the domestic responsibilities while maintaining a career, has been suboptimal. While Paris mentions that juggling both her career and household duties with limited support was "tougher" she also believes it has pushed her to become more focused and routinized. Other challenges Paris highlights are the frustration with obtaining state-specific certifications, varying district compensation and

benefits packages, and divergent educational philosophies. Although not explicitly stating it, Paris denotes the feeling of having to make sacrifices in her career. This is elicited in her remarks on how PCS moves do not necessarily align with the school year and feeling torn between her sense of professional obligation and maintaining a collocated family unit (see guilt; Gribble et al., 2019). Paris emotes a sense of resiliency as she has been forced to become more self-reliant and to “do more to ensure her career”.

Cross-Case Analysis

For this problem of practice, the researcher utilized cross-case analysis to compare the five cases. The technique of constant comparison analysis was used to compare emergent themes and commonalities amongst each of the research questions as well as general themes across each case. The themes and commonalities shared amongst the five cases are presented in Table 4.2. Then, the author provides a cross-case analysis by research question.

Table 4.2

Emergent Themes Cross Case Analysis

Pseudonym	Challenges	Sacrifice	Uncertainty	Resilience	COVID	Guilt
London	X	X	X		X	X
Dublin	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rome	X	X	X	X	X	X
Madrid	X	X		X	X	X
Paris	X	X		X		X

Challenges

All MSEs communicated military-connected challenges as impacting their control over their career and influencing their well-being. The prominent challenges aligned with the following themes identified in research literature, relocation (Cooke & Speirs, 2005; Grossman, 1981; Schwartz et al., 1991, Wardynski, 2000), geographical separation from their spouse (Finlayson, 1969; Grossman, 1981; Wardynski, 2000), labor market opportunities (Booth, 2003; Wardynski, 2000), licensure reciprocity (Castaneda & Harrell; 2008; Harrell et al., 2004; Kersey, 2013), stigma (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008), childcare (Grossman, 1981; Schwartz et al., 1991), and proximity to support (kin) network (Green et al., 2013). While not a strongly voiced theme, disturbing all the same, Dublin and Madrid both cited the challenges associated with reestablishing medical continuity for them and their families.

Sacrifice

All MSEs shared that due to the military lifestyle they have, or will have, to make career and personal sacrifices. Although the MSEs selected differing phrases in which to describe their career and educational sacrifices (e.g., career reset, career on the side, a step backwards, starting over, newbie) the perceived impact of loss was all the same. While the concept of sacrifice specifically emerged, it can be closely aligned with the lack of autonomy. The researcher noted a strong connection between the theme of sacrifice and the concept of control.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty was a theme that emerged out of the perception of not having enough information and time to plan. London expresses uncertainty regarding her career trajectory, research topic, spousal support, and establishing a new social network. London and Paris both speak to the frustration about making plans with their families only for them to be superseded by the needs of the military. Dublin and Rome lament the uncertainty regarding military orders; Dublin emphasizes her husband has received orders to move three times in the last year, only to see them canceled. Rome specifically shared that she has concerns regarding the impact of COVID on any potential transition.

Resilience

Almost all MSEs revealed they developed strategies and mental toughness to combat the unpredictable nature of the military lifestyle. Both Rome and Madrid mention maintaining a network for support in which to share “insider” information regarding certifications and favorable employers. Madrid utilizes a strategy of taking temporary employment positions to garner a better understanding of the institution’s climate and culture. Possibly as a coping mechanism, Rome and Paris articulate how they have developed self-reliant strategies to remain focused and organized when their spouses are unavailable to share in domestic duties. Dublin, Rome, and Paris offer that in adapting to the military lifestyle they have needed to become more “creative,” consider more conducive career paths, become increasingly independent, and remain steadfast in pursuing their goals.

COVID

At the time of the interviews, the United States and, indeed, the world found themselves embattled with the COVID pandemic. Given the pervasive and unforgiving nature of the virus, people found themselves helpless to control, connect, and in many cases, utilize their capabilities (competence). The impact on social norms and typical communal gatherings that once were sources of motivation and support for well-being were rendered taboo.

Dublin and Madrid both speak to COVID affecting their career. Dublin, an elementary principal, juxtaposes the challenges the pandemic has created for educators, with the benefit of shared domestic duties. Although saddled with the common challenges of transitions (e.g., licensure, domestic network), Madrid stipulates those challenges are superfluous given the pandemic, as she would likely have to stay at home to support her children's virtual learning. Both London and Rome discuss how COVID has thwarted their motivation and in turn wreaked havoc on their career self-efficacy.

Guilt

All of the MSEs consciously or subconsciously bring up the impact of guilt. As they have worked diligently to cultivate a career and a family, they suffer inner turmoil in seeking a home and work-life balance. Collectively, all MSEs expressed guilt in having to make difficult decisions, especially as they pertained to supporting their service member, their family, and their career.

Cross-Case Analysis by Research Question

Primary Research Question 2: How Do Military Spouse Educators Describe the Impact of Military Lifestyle on Their Careers?

Only one of the participants, London, had yet to fully experience the military lifestyle. Although she is geographically separated from her husband while they await “hard orders” for their first military-connected move together, London speculated on the anticipated impact of the military lifestyle on her career and her terminal degree attainment. Her uncertainty stems from unknown, but anticipated, obstacles to her degree completion. More to the point, she is concerned that the military lifestyle will prevent her from obtaining her lifelong goal of becoming a tenured professor. All MSEs, except Paris, perceived the military lifestyle as negatively impacting their career by forcing them to hit the “reset button” (Rome), “take a step backwards” (Dublin), or put their career on the “back burner” (London). However, Paris readily admits that it took her twice as long to complete her master’s degree due to relocation, and she has previously, and potentially currently, faces the daunting task of separating her family to complete the school year. Almost all of the MSEs spoke to the challenges of obtaining or maintaining their licensure and certifications due to military-connected transitions. Several spouses, London, Rome, and Madrid voiced their concerns regarding job market conditions and limited positions at installations (especially overseas). Madrid and Paris both described resiliency techniques they utilize to assist them in coping with the stressors of the military lifestyle. The only basic psychological needs that were not elucidated concerning this research question was connectedness by Dublin. The researcher notes that London speaks to all the basic tenets of the SDT, but not specifically to motivation or well-being.

However, the theory suggests that if any of the components are impacted then motivation and well-being will suffer.

Table 4.3 outlines the components of the SDT and the emergent themes that arose during the interview.

Table 4.3

Primary Research Question 2: How do Military Spouse Educators Describe the Impact of Military Lifestyle on Their Careers?

Pseudonym	Control	Competence	Connectedness	Motivation	Well-Being	Challenges	Sacrifice	Uncertainty	Resilience	COVID	Guilt
London	X	X	X			X	X	X			
Dublin	X	X		X	X	X	X				
Rome	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Madrid	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Paris	X	X	X	X	X	X			X		

Primary Research Question 3: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Careers?

Overwhelmingly MSEs perceived their lack of control and challenges associated with the military lifestyle as affecting their career. In conceptualizing a smooth transition for MSEs a lot of factors have to align. Assuming an MSE knows when and where they are moving, they must then determine the feasibility of employment. This requires MSEs to investigate local employment options to determine labor market conditions. They must also determine the licensure and certification requirements for the new location.

Moreover, MSEs need to ascertain whether their desired professional position exists in

proximity to the new location. The MSE must then apply and be available to interview, which will likely require them to make a separate trip to the new location, absorb associated costs, all while maintaining the “home front.” Upon receipt of an employment offer, the MSE must then negotiate a favorable start date while juggling their family’s transition and reestablishment of their domestic network.

All of the MSEs perceive separation from their spouses and their support systems as having an impact on their careers. Table 4.4 summarizes the perceived factors affecting the careers of the MSEs interviewed. Often the MSEs absorb the majority of the domestic duties which can interfere with their professional obligations. Between the myriad of challenges, the perceived lack of support, sacrificing personal and professional aspirations, all MSEs highlighted an impact on their well-being. London, perceives uncertainty as a factor hindering her career, most likely due to her limited experience with the military lifestyle. Surprisingly, only two of the MSEs spoke to COVID’s impact on their career. Madrid conceded to experiencing “mom guilt,” as she was dealing with a multitude of factors to include a transition, COVID, childcare, and licensure issues.

Table 4.4

*Primary Research Question 3: For Military Spouse Educators,
What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Careers?*

Pseudonym	Control	Competence	Connectedness	Motivation	Well-Being	Challenges	Sacrifice	Uncertainty	Resilience	COVID	Guilt
London	X		X		X	X		X			
Dublin	X		X		X	X	X			X	
Rome	X		X		X	X			X		
Madrid	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Paris	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		

Secondary Research Question 1: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Career Self-Efficacy?

Self-efficacy refers to the competence and confidence MSEs possess with their career. Similar to other responses, the MSEs reported challenges associated with a perceived lack of control, such as transitions, licensure concerns, and COVID impeding their career self-efficacy. The perceived factors affecting the career self-efficacy of interviewed MSEs are provided in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Secondary Research Question 1: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Career Self-Efficacy?

Pseudonym	Control	Competence	Connectedness	Motivation	Well-Being	Challenges	Sacrifice	Uncertainty	Resilience	COVID	Guilt
London	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Dublin	X		X			X			X		
Rome	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Madrid	X			X							
Paris	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		

Most of the MSEs alluded to what Rome termed “strained motivation.” In other words, the task or requirement is not appealing but its completion is seen as favorable to starting over or other potential outcomes of noncompletion. Some spouses revealed having to sacrifice (at least temporarily) their career goals and professional obligations to keep the family unit together. Both London and Rome speak to the uncertainty surrounding transitions. London, in attempting to complete her doctoral degree is concerned that her

impending transition overseas will impact the value and efficacy of her research. London states, “I felt like I wasn’t going to be able to be successful...or not as successful as I am wanting to be.” Rome, in attempting to minimize the impact of transitions on her career, speaks to seeking an educational specialty that is less subjected to bureaucracy. London and Rome also voiced that while they are uncertain of the specific role COVID is having on their self-efficacy, they believe it is having some impact. Most of the MSEs exude a spirit of resilience. Dublin remarks that constraints on her self-efficacy required her “to be more creative.” Both Rome and Paris admit to becoming more motivated to ensure their careers due to the impact of the military lifestyle on their careers.

Secondary Research Question 2: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Autonomy?

As this question relates directly to the SDT tenet of control and given the authoritarian nature of the military lifestyle, the researcher anticipated that challenges, especially as they pertained to control would be elicited. Table 4.6 outlines the perceived factors affecting the autonomy of the MSEs interviewed. Most of the responses concerning sacrifice and competence centered around control of their educational or professional responsibilities. Rome notes the collateral impacts of the military lifestyle. Rome shared, “I’ll probably never have longevity in a school district, which is unfortunate...and that goes into a slew of other things, retirement and everything else.” If being unable to establish longevity in a district is an initial impact, then cultivating professional growth and equity to earn incentive pay (for longevity, or stipends for additional certifications) is a secondary impact. A concern not often found in literature is the tertiary impact of being eligible to receive a meaningful state-supported retirement.

Rome cites short tours of duty (of which she has no control) as a factor affecting her ability to make connections and establish a sense of communal belonging. Uncertainty remains a theme for several spouses as the veiled process of military transitions leaves them insecure about successive career opportunities. As highlighted in other responses, many of the MSEs spoke to being resolute and determined despite the constraints placed on their autonomy. In discussing having to completely restart her master’s degree twice, Madrid perfectly summates how the moves impacted her motivation and well-being when she stated, “it [the moves] just killed it for me to even try and go back and pursue it again.” Given the cited lack of autonomy, the impacts on motivation and well-being align with the SDT framework.

Table 4.6

*Secondary Research Question 2: For Military Spouse Educators,
What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Autonomy?*

Pseudonym	Control	Competence	Connectedness	Motivation	Well-Being	Challenges	Sacrifice	Uncertainty	Resilience	COVID	Guilt
London	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			
Dublin	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		
Rome	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Madrid	X	X		X	X	X	X				
Paris	X			X		X			X		

Secondary Research Question 3: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Social Connectedness?

Logically, when discussing perceived factors that affect their social connectedness all MSEs expressed components of connectedness that are impacted by the military lifestyle. The challenges of the transient lifestyle make establishing and maintaining meaningful connections difficult. A summary of the perceived factors affecting the social connectedness of the interviewed MSEs is detailed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Secondary Research Question 3: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Social Connectedness?

Pseudonym	Control	Competence	Connectedness	Motivation	Well-Being	Challenges	Sacrifice	Uncertainty	Resilience	COVID	Guilt
London	X	X	X		X	X		X			
Dublin	X		X			X					
Rome			X			X					
Madrid			X	X	X	X			X	X	
Paris			X	X	X	X					

While some spouses accept the diminished connectedness of the military lifestyle, others look for ways to enhance their sense of belonging to improve their well-being. Madrid showcases her motivation and resilience to maintain social connections by volunteering locally and sustaining relationships with her “exercise sorority.” Unpredictably, only Madrid spoke of the impact of COVID on social connectedness. As Madrid is currently unemployed, she likely internalizes a greater sense of confinement than the other MSEs.

London conveys that uncertainty and a lack of control regarding her move and the loss of her support system are affecting her well-being. Paris remarked how at times she did not feel like she fit in with the culture, so she purposefully distanced herself to maintain her well-being.

Secondary Research Question 4: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Sense Of Well-Being?

Given the military lifestyle challenges that impair MSE's control and connectedness, the researcher anticipated disruptions in well-being. Unanimously, all MSEs noted the challenges of reestablishing networks, reintegrating their spouse, constantly moving, and the uncertainty and inability to plan have impacted their sense of well-being. A synopsis of the perceived factors impairing the well-being of the MSEs is found in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Secondary Research Question 4: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Sense of Well-Being?

Pseudonym	Control	Competence	Connectedness	Motivation	Well-Being	Challenges	Sacrifice	Uncertainty	Resilience	COVID	Guilt
London	X		X		X	X		X			
Dublin	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		
Rome	X		X		X	X			X		
Madrid	X		X		X	X	X		X		
Paris	X		X		X	X		X	X		

Though not all of the MSEs specifically mention career sacrifice or competence as impairing their well-being the researcher notes that all MSEs at some time during their interview remarked that their career (or the utilization of their education and skills) will have to be (or has been) sacrificed at some point. The SDT suggests that all three basic psychological needs must be fulfilled for well-being to occur. The MSEs all note that, due to military lifestyle factors, their control and connectedness are often limited. Resilient behaviors and coping strategies are prevalent in almost all MSEs and likely function to mitigate detriments to their motivation and well-being. London does not speak to resilient behavior but shares that part of her career (and educational) sacrifice will include her having to adapt to a new and unfamiliar environment.

Discussion

Research literature as far back as the 1960s indicates the military lifestyle presents challenges for military spouses. In the 1980s with authors like Grossman (1981) and Wickham (1983), research began to conclude that these challenges were leading to service member attrition. At this point the military was an all-volunteer force, so retention was paramount for military readiness. Scholarship increased through the 1990s and early 2000s, mostly focused on labor market concerns and pay discrepancies between spouses and their civilian counterparts. From the turn of the century to 2020, the breadth and depth of research on the circumstances military spouses face while seeking employment has flourished; researchers have examined earnings (Booth, 2003), experiences and perceptions (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008), the consequences of tied migration (Cooney et al., 2011), psychological well-being (Green et al., 2013) challenges to careers and education (Harrell et al., 2004), employment gaps (Meadows et al., 2016), career goals

(Ott et al., 2018), career impacts on Behavioral Health Clinicians (Stafford [Dissertation], 2018), quality of life (Trewick & Muller, 2014) and well-being (Gribble et al., 2019). This phenomenological case study aims to fill a gap in the literature regarding what is known regarding the impacts of the military lifestyle on one of the most preferred career fields for military spouses, education (Finlayson, 1969; Harrell et al., 2004; United States Department of Treasury, 2012). This study included five MSEs purposefully selected utilizing the following inclusion criteria: a military-connected spouse educator for more than a year and a current member of either the Military Spouse Educators or MILSpouse Network for Teaching Professionals Facebook groups or affiliate themselves with members of one or both of these groups. Each MSE's case was analyzed individually and then compared against the other cases utilizing cross-case analysis.

Interpretation of Results

In this section, the author provides context and meaning to the collective responses of MSEs to each of the primary and secondary research questions. The author also provides a summary highlighting the key findings and their associated links to existing scholarship and the Self-Determination Theory.

Primary Research Question 1: What are the Characteristics and Demographic Data that Describe Military Spouses who Pursue Careers in Education?

The characteristics and demographic makeup of MSEs yielded both similarities and differences to the existing scholarship on military spouses. While men make up approximately 8% of military spouses (Department of Defense, 2017) and 26% of public-school educators (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019), no participants in this

study identified as a male MSE. Despite 195 participants, the lack of male MSE participation is likely due to a dearth of male educators who are also military spouses. MSEs reported being older than average military spouses, with over 92% reporting their age as between 25-50 compared to 75% of military spouses reporting being 26 or older (Department of Defense, 2017). The discrepancy in ages is likely due to the study's inclusion criteria. Specifically, the time it takes to complete the prerequisite educational training and required licensing to become an educator. For race and ethnicity, 85% of MSEs identified as White whereas the general population for military spouses as well as educators is 80% (Maury & Stone; 2014; Riser-Kositsky, 2019). A greater, but insignificant difference, in percentage of MSEs, identified as Black or African American (7%) than reported for just military spouses (6%; Maury & Stone, 2014). Similarly, MSEs identifying as Hispanic (6%) were slightly lower than what Maury and Stone (2014) reported for military spouses. In explaining the tendency for MSEs to be older and identifying as White, it is possible that members of either Military Spouse Facebook group tend to be older and more racially homogenous, but the researcher was unable to obtain aggregated demographic information for either group.

Like previous scholarship (Department of Defense, 2017), the majority of military spouses are affiliated to members that are on active duty. The MSE's affiliation by military service branch mirrors that of military spouses. The Department of Defense (2017) reported the percentage of military spouses by branch as 40% Army, 25% Air Force, 24% Navy, and 11% Marines. Correspondingly, MSEs identified as 37% Army, 26% Air Force, 21% Navy, and 10% Marines. Even though less than 25% of military spouses are married to military officers (Department of Defense, 2017), the majority of

MSEs reported that their service member is a commissioned officer (59%). Graduate degree attainment for MSEs (59%) is in line with the percentage of public-school teachers who have earned a postbaccalaureate degree (58%; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). These findings also seem to support the data captured by Harrell et al. (2004) that the most popular occupation for military spouses with graduate degrees is education. This level of educational attainment also speaks to the value MSEs place on, and the motivation they have for, their competence, professional growth, and career aspirations. Supporting this concept, 63% of MSEs stated their main motivation for seeking employment was for personal fulfillment.

The majority (80%) of MSEs identified as either elementary or secondary school teachers with over 84% self-reporting they have 3 years or more of teaching experience. Most MSEs annotated substantial academic attainment and professional experience, but only 41% reported being licensed and certified to teach in multiple states. This fact is disconcerting for a subgroup that frequently moves across state lines. In speaking to the impact military spouses experience in fields that require licensure and certification, Kersey (2013) stated, “the patchwork set of variable and frequently time-consuming licensing requirements across state disproportionately affects these [military] families” (p. 123). The seemingly arbitrary barrier of differing state licensure requirements coupled with the frequency of military transitions serves to amplify the impact of both the autonomy and competence of MSEs. The phenomenon of underemployment often occurs when barriers, and transitions, and a disproportionate amount of domestic duties (such as childcare; Schneider & Martin, 1994) converge. This phenomenon is exemplified by the statistic that only half (50%) of MSEs noted they are currently working full-time, and

their job matches their level of education and experience. Frequent transitions are a predominant factor in underemployment, and over 75% of MSEs indicated they have undergone three or more military-connected moves. While existing literature (Hosek et al., 2002; Grossman, 1981; Payne et al., 1992; Wardynski, 2000) speaks to the career penalty associated with frequent transitions, for MSEs in particular the timing of those moves is critical in finding employment. School districts tend to hire the majority of their vacant positions in the summer months, and the timing of military-connected moves may not align with this typical hiring cycle.

Perhaps the most telling data captured through the questionnaire resounds in the fact that nearly all MSEs (99%) indicated they believe the military lifestyle impacts their career. Indeed 49% of MSEs selected frequent moves and relocations as factor that most negatively impacts their career. Following PCS moves, licensure issues (19%), service member's job demands (12%), labor market opportunities (10%), and parenting responsibilities (8%) were also noted as the factors most negatively impacting the career opportunities for MSEs. Personal and professional identities typically play a significant role in self-efficacy and well-being. Indeed, MSEs resoundingly (97%) shared that adequate employment plays some role in how satisfied they are with life echoing similar findings by Blue Star Families (2018) and Gribble et al. (2019). Highlighting the role meaningful employment has on their quality of life and well-being, 51% of MSEs stated they have engaged their spouse in a conversation about leaving the military, and 76% noted at times feeling resentful or upset with their spouse because their military career creates challenges for their occupation.

The questionnaire posed several questions directly related to the SDT theoretical framework to capture the perceived relevance of the basic psychological tenets of the theory to MSEs. The results of the questionnaire reveal similar findings to Gribble et al. (2019) in that feeling a sense of purpose and accomplishment enhances well-being. Showcasing the connection between internalizing a sense of purpose and fulfilling their basic psychological needs, 97%, or greater, of MSEs reported that having autonomy in their career, using their education and professional skills (competence), and building social connections to establish a sense of belonging were all crucial elements in their life.

Primary Research Question 2: How Do Military Spouse Educators Describe the Impact of Military Lifestyle on Their Careers?

In asking the MSEs to describe the impact of the military lifestyle on the careers, all but one participant, Paris, directly noted the adverse and ambiguous conditions that plague their career. As nearly half of all MSEs that participated in the questionnaire reported transitions as the primary factor impeding their career, it seems fitting that the MSEs described the concept of having to habitually start over, (sacrifice their career) due to military-connected moves. This concern was accurately captured when Wickham (1983) pronounced, “increasingly, the career development of spouses has forced military families to choose between one career or the other... due to frequent and unpredictable military moves” (p. 9). As outlined in Chapter Two, military-connected transitions create a significant burden for military spouses. Transitions most often limit opportunities to establish seniority and career progression. Worse still though, depending on job market conditions and licensure hurdles, many spouses find that relocations force them to settle for being underemployed, or that employment, in general, is counterintuitive to their

lifestyle. Overall, each of the basic tenets of the SDT are described as being impacted by the military lifestyle. While resiliency was an emergent theme, recurrent and disruptive moves foil MSE's career autonomy, competence, and connectedness. Almost all of the MSEs expressed a sense of sacrifice as a result of the military lifestyle. This sacrifice typically revolved around transitions. The MSEs expressed disdain for losing college credits, missing an opportunity to advance their career, losing their personal and professional support networks, or having to give up on the "job of their dreams."

Primary Research Question 3: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Careers?

In discussing the factors perceived to negatively affect their career, MSEs spoke at length about transitions, a lack of domestic support due to their service-members duty schedule (and typical geographic separation), losing connections, licensure issues, and childcare. These issues are all common amongst the existing research literature. However, a theme emerged that is seldom found in scholarship, guilt. Gribble et al. (2019) noted that military spouses often have several identities (e.g., mother, spouse, professional) and that internal struggles amongst balancing these identities can lead to feelings of inadequacy and guilt. Another theme that emerged was how COVID, a pandemic that took hold in the United States around March 2020, augmented the impact of military-connected factors. Multiple MSEs noted that career impediment factors like childcare were further compromised by COVID, while others mentioned that due to travel restrictions, their connectedness and domestic support from their spouses increased. The factors noted by MSEs all have the potential to hinder their autonomy, self-efficacy, and connectedness. What is notable is how military-connected transitions obstruct all three.

Secondary Research Question 1: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Career Self-Efficacy?

MSEs noted a variety of challenges affecting their career competence, including licensure concerns, locations of installations and their associated labor market, a lack of a kin network support system, and an inability to earn and maintain professional seniority. Almost all MSEs spoke to motivation being a factor because of the likelihood they will have to restart their career progression and reestablish social connections. Many of the MSEs noted COVID has complicated their sense of self-efficacy, as they are now teaching utilizing a foreign modality (online). The challenges associated with military transitions remain the predominant factor impairing self-efficacy. When MSEs are unable to find or maintain meaningful employment and utilize the education and experience they have obtained self-efficacy decreases. Rome shared that transitions leave her feeling “undervalued” as she must constantly “prove herself” by taking redundant certification tests. In search of career self-efficacy, several MSEs alluded to considering a career shift.

Secondary Research Question 2: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Autonomy?

The impact of transitions on the perceived autonomy of MSEs cannot be overstated. PCS moves are based on the needs of the military. While they take certain factors, such as family members with exceptionalities or unique medical conditions, into consideration before moving or PCSing a family, it is unheard of for the military to take into consideration the spouse’s career. That is unless the family is dual military (meaning both the husband and wife are active duty service members). For MSEs this means picking up and moving the family to a new location, or making the determination to separate, at least geographically, from their spouse. Deployments and trainings already

require geographical separation of the service member from the family unit, so voluntarily maintaining two households and accepting additional time apart, for many, is unthinkable. Spouses may have a choice regarding moving, but that is very different than having control over their relocation. Avoiding geographical separation requires MSEs to follow their spouse to their new duty station. For most MSEs to include the majority of those interviewed, one must then search for reemployment amongst an uncertain labor market, in a state or location with different professional licensing requirements, and hope that they can land a job that is aligned with their particular educational specialty. All MSEs noted that transitions impair their control, and all but Paris shared that the military lifestyle requires some form of career sacrifice. In contrast to the rest of the MSEs Paris also did not indicate that a lack of autonomy influenced her well-being. The remaining MSEs all suggested that factors influencing their control, hinder their sense of well-being and motivation. Of all the basic psychological factors outline in the SDT, autonomy is the one most influenced by military lifestyle factors.

Secondary Research Question 3: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Social Connectedness?

The transient nature of the military lifestyle typically obligates MSEs to reestablish their (local) social network and sense of belonging within their new community. While many of the MSEs have developed resiliency tactics to maintain a social foundation, typically through social media, most MSEs mentioned that the frustration associated with reestablishing a network or acclimating to a new culture only served to thwart their motivation and well-being.

Secondary Research Question 4: For Military Spouse Educators, What are the Perceived Factors that Affect Their Sense of Well-Being?

MSEs shared that military lifestyle factors present challenges to their well-being. Collectively, the MSEs perceived their lack of control and connectedness regarding the military lifestyle as creating “uncertainty” and “frustration” that, at times, can manifest itself as demotivation or depression. To enhance the well-being of MSEs a concerted effort to increase their perceived control and connectedness is necessary. Presumably, additional control over their career and educational interests will provide MSEs an enhanced sense of competence but more could be done to ensure spouses attain the “personal fulfillment” they seek. Despite all the challenges and impacts to their well-being MSEs maintain a resilient and adaptive nature.

Summary of Key Findings

This section provides key findings, to include emergent themes, and their associated links to existing scholarship and the Self-Determination Theory. Throughout the interview and data analysis process the researcher noted several emergent themes: challenges, sacrifice, uncertainty, resilience, COVID, and guilt. In discussing the military lifestyle factors that impair their careers, MSEs framed these factors as challenges. While most of the “challenges” elucidated broadly exist in current literature, the researcher noted a scarcely discussed concern regarding medical care continuity and the reestablishment of domestic networks. Sacrifice aligned closely with challenges and guilt. In describing sacrifice most MSEs revealed that in attempting to support their spouse and family and maintain their career progression, the military lifestyle often necessitates that they chose one of the other. This typically led to a sense of guilt, either in that they are not doing enough for their family or cannot fulfill their professional obligations. The

theme of uncertainty was paradoxical amongst the MSEs. Some noted that uncertainty, especially surrounding military-connected moves, created anxiety, frustration, and impaired their ability to plan. Others noted that while the uncertainty is disconcerting, some MSEs believe it has instilled them with a sense of resiliency and perseverance. Being just over a year into the COVID pandemic, it is no surprise that it emerged as a theme. COVID was less of a concern in isolation then it was when paired with the emergent themes. COVID seemed to magnify the effects of disconnectedness, require additional sacrifice, and present additional uncertainties.

During the interviews MSEs revealed that personal fulfillment is the main motivator for employment, and meaningful employment was necessary to satisfy their basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Military Spouse Educators (MSEs) perceive that military lifestyle factors as negatively impacting their careers but elected to frame them as destabilizing factors impeding their careers. Like scholarship on the general population of military spouses, MSEs note that frequent relocations, professional license and certification reciprocity, service member's job demands, the availability of employment opportunities, childcare responsibilities, and domestic obligations, impair their ability to find and maintain meaningful employment (Harrell et al., 2004; Hayghe, 1986; Grossman, 1981; Schwartz et al., 1991). Subsequently, MSEs note their career autonomy, competence, and connectedness are compromised by military lifestyle factors. Also similar to previous scholarship, MSEs, like other military spouses, are likely to be well educated and underemployed (Lim & Schulker, 2010, Payne et al., 1992; Schwartz et al., 1991; Maury & Stone, 2014). From these findings the themes of challenges, uncertainty, sacrifice, and

the divergent theme of resilience were evident. Of frequent discussion was the concept of career sacrifice, as frequent and poorly timed transitions coupled with saturated or barren labor markets led to underemployment. Deci and Ryan (2008) note that career goals and aspirations play a key role in the degree to which basic psychological needs are met. In attempts to maintain personal and career fulfillment and regulate their autonomy MSEs often reported creative and resilient behavior in spite of their unfortunate predicaments. Table 4.9 provides a summary of several key findings and their relationship to emergent themes existing literature, and the SDT theoretical framework.

Table 4.9

Findings Associated with Existing Literature, SDT Theoretical Framework, and Emergent Themes

Findings	Connections to Existing Literature	Connections to SDT Theoretical Framework	Connections to Emergent Themes
MSEs are well educated	Military Spouses tend to be more educated than their civilian counterparts (Lim & Schulker, 2010, Payne et al., 1992; Schwartz et al., 1991)	Behaviors and Motivation are “Need Driven” (Deci & Ryan, 2000)	Uncertainty regarding labor market opportunities and career progression; resilience was also evident
State Licensure and Certifications are Barriers to Employment	State-Specific Professional Licensure Requirements Hinder Employment (Castaneda & Harrell; 2008; Harrell et al., 2004; Kersey, 2013)	Environmental Factors Undermine Motivation and Functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000)	Challenges regarding the attainment of state-specific professional licensure due to frequent relocations
Employment Positively Impacts Quality of Life	Quality of Life Concerns are Top Issues for Military Families (Blue Star Families, 2018; Green et al., 2013; Trewick & Muller, 2014; Decision Engineering Associates, 2002)	Life Goals and Aspirations are Associated to Well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006) and a Sense of Identity (Gribble et al., 2019)	Due to frequent transitions and barriers to career progression MSEs often sacrifice their career; resilience was also evident
Underemployment a Common Occurrence	Military Lifestyle Factors Contribute to Underemployment by Educational or Specialization	Goal Pursuit and Achievement are Necessary to Satisfy Basic Psychological	Frequent transitions, unknown labor markets, and stigma create challenges and

Findings	Connections to Existing Literature	Connections to SDT Theoretical Framework	Connections to Emergent Themes
	Mismatch (Blue Star Families, 2018; Lim & Schulker, 2010; Schwartz et al., 1991)	Needs and Foster Motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2008b)	uncertainty for MSEs; this often leads the MSE to sacrifice their career due to the military lifestyle; MSEs engaged in resilient behaviors to remain employed
Personal Fulfillment is a Main Motivator for Employment	Military Spouses Work for Self-Enrichment and Personal Fulfillment (Finlayson, 1969; Harrell et al., 2004)	Intrinsic Goals are Associated to Improved, Self-Efficacy, and Well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004)	Despite the desire to utilize their skills and education MSEs report feeling guilty as they seek a work-life balance
Frequent Relocations Negatively Impact Career Opportunities and Progression	Military-Connected Transitions Disrupt Spousal Career Opportunities and Progression (Blue Star Families, 2018; Booth, 2000; Castaneda & Harrell, 2008; Dumfries Engineer Associates, 2002; Cooke & Speirs, 2005; Finlayson, 1969; Grossman, 1981; Schwartz et al., 1991, Wardynski, 2000)	Environmental Factors that do not Support Autonomy, Competence, and Connectedness Impair Well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Gribble et al., 2019)	Frequent relocations entail challenges, uncertainty, and sacrifice for MSEs; the COVID pandemic is perceived to further compound the impacts.
Childcare and Domestic Duties Impair Employment and Educational Opportunities	The Military Lifestyle Creates Hardships for Spouses Seeking to Balance Professional Attainment and Domestic Duties (Gribble et al., 2019; Schneider & Martin, 1994; Schwartz et al., 1991)	Environmental Factors that do not Support Autonomy, Competence, and Connectedness Impair Well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Gribble et al., 2019)	Relocations create challenges and uncertainty in reestablishing domestic support networks; as a result, career sacrifice and guilt are common
Career Autonomy, Competence, and Connectedness Tied to MSE Well-being	Military Lifestyle Factors Thwart Basic Psychological Needs and Military Spouse Well-being (Blue Star Families, 2018; Gribble et al., 2019; Krause et al., 2019)	The Fulfillment of Basic Psychological Needs is Imperative to Motivation and Well-being (Baard et al., 1998; Ryan & Deci, 2000)	Military lifestyle factors create challenges and uncertainty for MSE's control, competence, and connectedness

Implications

This phenomenological case study intended to provide insight into how the military lifestyle impacts the careers of military spouse educators and illuminate career-specific challenges that military spouse educators face. In utilizing a questionnaire and interviews to answer the research questions, two implications for policy and practice emerged:

- Implement military policies that support the basic psychological needs (control, competence, connectedness) of the family unit to foster well-being.
- Ameliorate arbitrary barriers to employment and career progression.

The implications and recommendations for each of these findings are detailed in the next section.

Implement Military Policies that Support the Basic Psychological Needs (Control, Competence, Connectedness) of the Family Unit to Foster Well-Being

In October of 2019, General James McConville, the current Army Chief of Staff, proclaimed the need to transform today's Army into a more people-centric (versus mission-centric) force (AUSA, 2019). In so doing, he emphasized five quality-of-life priorities that will bolster military readiness and retention. These priorities included improving military housing, streamlining medical care across installations, increase access to quality childcare, nurture spousal employment, and provide greater stability for military families by reducing the number of transitions.

General McConville's proclamation addresses the basic tenets of the SDT and, if implemented, would serve to mitigate many of the perceived military lifestyle factors voiced by the MSEs. In providing less fragmented medical care, issues cited by several of

the MSEs would assist in reducing the stress surrounding the continuity of care and the reestablishment of essential services. All MSEs spoke to the distress that frequent transitions cause. As evidenced by the emergent themes brought forth by the MSEs, PCS moves create personal and professional challenges. A lack of transparency and a disregard for familial input often requires MSEs to choose between their family or their career. Providing easy access to high quality, local, affordable, childcare would help reduce one perceived barrier to employment. Providing more certainty regarding time frames and the destinations of transitions would afford MSEs more control and opportunity to plan (i.e., seek licensure reciprocity, scout employment).

While General McConville's pronouncement provides a step in the right direction, this philosophy should be adopted across all services. This proposed cultural shift needs to transcend verbal commitment and become the ethos by which our armed services operate.

Ameliorate Arbitrary Barriers to Employment and Career Progression

A commitment to update military policy and procedures to be more people (and family) centered, especially as it pertains to the timing and frequency of relocations, providing career consideration for military spouses, and improving access to quality medical and childcare would enhance MSEs (and presumably all military spouses) opportunities for employment and career progression. While relatively unknown the military, the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act has begun reimbursing military spouses for fees associated with professional relicensing costs after transitions. This assists in reducing the financial burden of licensure but does little to mitigate the time and frustration of having to meet the varying "qualification standards" imposed by each state.

To meaningfully remove career hurdles for MSEs state and local policymakers to review and update their approach to educational licensure, certification requirements, and obtainment of continuing education units (credits) by removing vague language (e.g., “substantially similar”) and localized subjectivity of interpretation (i.e., definitions). To this extent state board of education policymakers should also work to ensure all “years of service” for educators are applied consistently within and across states and provide a mechanism for displaced MSEs to keep their licenses and certifications current. To effectively implement these changes in policies and procedures a concerted effort in educating governmental and academic institutions on the unique challenges of MSEs is paramount.

Considerations for Future Research

Future research should explore a more representative sample of participants, as no male MSEs contributed to this study. Additional interviews are warranted, and further examination of educational subgroups (to include specialties and roles) or other career professionals should be considered. Themes emerging from this qualitative study provide a foundation for future research to better tailor policy recommendations or general considerations for transitioning MSEs and their families. A follow-up study to examine if “People First” Army policies ease the impact of military lifestyle factors on the careers of MSEs. If so, how can best practices be applied to all branches of service?

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study was to describe how the military lifestyle impacts the careers of military spouse educators and illuminate

career-specific challenges that military spouse educators face. This study utilized a qualitative design to describe the lived experiences of military spouse educators in rich detail. This approach allows the MSE's to share their unique perceptions of military lifestyle factors and the subsequent impacts on their careers. As gleaned from previous scholarship (Finlayson, 1969; Harrell et al., 2004; United States Department of Treasury and US Department of Defense Report, 2012), education is a top career field for military spouses. Given the nation's current shortage of teachers, estimated by some to be well over 100,000 (Garcia & Weiss, 2019), job opportunities should not be a concern. However, MSEs experience unique military-connected challenges that often demotivate their participation or constrain their ability to seek and maintain meaningful employment.

CHAPTER FIVE

Distribution of Findings

Executive Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological case study is to describe how the military lifestyle impacts the careers of military spouse educators (MSEs) and serves to highlight career-specific challenges that MSEs face. The selection of this design allowed the researcher to capture military spouse educators' lived experiences in rich detail and conveyed the MSE's perceptions of challenges and insights concerning their employment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Another rationale for utilizing this design is to investigate and explore "deeper levels of meaning" within the MSE subgroup (Moustakas, 1994, p. 96).

Research indicates that several unique military-connected factors negatively impact spousal employment, such as military-connected moves, deployments, installation location, employer stigma, and professional licensure and certification requirements (Castaneda & Harrell, 2008). Previous scholarship elucidates these factors often leave military spouses overqualified and underemployed (Maury & Stone, 2014). Through the lens of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the researcher shares how barriers to career progression adversely impact MSE's motivation and well-being. This study complements previous studies on the impact of the military lifestyle and extends scholarship on how those impacts affect military spouse educators' career and well-being. Therefore, this case study informs potential and current military spouses, military leadership, policymakers,

teacher preparation programs, boards of education, military-connected communities, and military spouse support agencies.

Overview of Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The researcher employed a qualitative phenomenological case study design utilizing semi-structured interviews to answer the following primary research questions.

- 1: What are the characteristics and demographic data that describe military spouses who pursue careers in education?
- 2: How do military spouse educators describe the impact of military lifestyle on their careers?
- 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their careers?

In addition to three primary research questions, this study sought to answer the following four secondary research questions:

- 1: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their career self-efficacy?
- 2: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their autonomy?
- 3: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their social connectedness?
- 4: For military spouse educators, what are the perceived factors that affect their sense of well-being?

This research design was selected to address gaps in previous literature, specifically regarding qualitative understanding, and gain insight into how factors associated with the military lifestyle impact the careers of MSEs. The researcher utilized the SDT as an a priori theoretical framework (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The SDT framework offers a lens through which to interpret how military lifestyle factors impact the satisfaction of needs

and ultimately the well-being of MSEs. The researcher utilized pattern matching, constant comparative, and cross-case data analysis protocols to combine significance statements and quotes into themes to create structural and textural descriptions of the MSE's experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Two MSE's Facebook groups were targeted for participation in the demographic questionnaire to increase the likelihood of meeting the researcher's selection criteria. Purposive sampling was utilized to select diverse interview participants. The researcher conducted thirty-minute interviews coordinated, recorded, and initially transcribed through Zoom, a virtual meeting platform; a secondary transcription was completed using Otter.ai. Transcription of all interviews occurred within two days and stored on an encrypted, password-protected, cloud-based server as well as within Nvivo, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). Data was analyzed using a framework, thematic, and both within and cross-case analysis. This methodology provided an opportunity to compare and contrast cases, discover themes, and highlight military lifestyle factors' perceived impacts on their motivation and well-being. Three data validation strategies were used: detailed descriptions of ascribed meanings, member checking, and the researcher's reflexivity.

Summary of Key Findings

Collectively, the MSEs shared similar sentiments on how the military lifestyle and career-specific barriers impact their career. These impacts were viewed through the theoretical framework of the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Analysis of the effects perceived revealed several emergent themes from the MSE interviews.

These findings and their connections to the theoretical framework and existing research literature are summarized in Table 5.1 (Duplicate of Table 4.9) below.

Table 5.1 (Duplicate of Table 4.9)

Findings Associated with Existing Literature, SDT Theoretical Framework, and Emergent Themes

Findings	Connections to Existing Literature	Connections to SDT Theoretical Framework	Connections to Emergent Themes
MSEs are well educated	Military Spouses tend to be more educated than their civilian counterparts (Lim & Schulker, 2010; Payne et al., 1992; Schwartz et al., 1991)	Behaviors and Motivation are “Need Driven” (Deci & Ryan, 2000)	Uncertainty regarding labor market opportunities and career progression; resilience was also evident
State Licensure and Certifications are Barriers to Employment	State-Specific Professional Licensure Requirements Hinder Employment (Castaneda & Harrell; 2008; Harrell et al., 2004; Kersey, 2013)	Environmental Factors Undermine Motivation and Functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000)	Challenges regarding the attainment of state-specific professional licensure due to frequent relocations
Employment Positively Impacts Quality of Life	Quality of Life Concerns are Top Issues for Military Families (Blue Star Families, 2018; Green et al., 2013; Trewick & Muller, 2014; Decision Engineering Associates, 2002)	Life Goals and Aspirations are Associated to Well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006) and a Sense of Identity (Gribble et al., 2019)	Due to frequent transitions and barriers to career progression MSEs often sacrifice their career; resilience was also evident
Underemployment a Common Occurrence	Military Lifestyle Factors Contribute to Underemployment by Educational or Specialization Mismatch (Blue Star Families, 2018; Lim & Schulker, 2010; Schwartz et al., 1991)	Goal Pursuit and Achievement are Necessary to Satisfy Basic Psychological Needs and Foster Motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2008b)	Frequent transitions, unknown labor markets, and stigma create challenges and uncertainty for MSEs; this often leads the MSE to sacrifice their career due to the military lifestyle; MSEs engaged in resilient behaviors to remain employed
Personal Fulfillment is a Main Motivator for Employment	Military Spouses Work for Self-Enrichment and Personal Fulfillment (Finlayson, 1969; Harrell et al., 2004)	Intrinsic Goals are Associated to Improved, Self-Efficacy, and Well-being (Deci & Ryan,	Despite the desire to utilize their skills and education, MSEs report feeling guilty as they

Findings	Connections to Existing Literature	Connections to SDT Theoretical Framework	Connections to Emergent Themes
		2008; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004)	seek a work-life balance
Frequent Relocations Negatively Impact Career Opportunities and Progression	Military-Connected Transitions Disrupt Spousal Career Opportunities and Progression (Blue Star Families, 2018; Booth, 2000; Castaneda & Harrell, 2008; Dumfries Engineer Associates, 2002; Cooke & Speirs, 2005; Finlayson, 1969; Grossman, 1981; Schwartz et al., 1991, Wardynski, 2000)	Environmental Factors that do not Support Autonomy, Competence, and Connectedness Impair Well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Gribble et al., 2019)	Frequent relocations entail challenges, uncertainty, and sacrifice for MSEs; the COVID pandemic is perceived to compound the impacts further
Childcare and Domestic Duties Impair Employment and Educational Opportunities	The Military Lifestyle Creates Hardships for Spouses Seeking to Balance Professional Attainment and Domestic Duties (Gribble et al., 2019; Schneider & Martin, 1994; Schwartz et al., 1991)	Environmental Factors that do not Support Autonomy, Competence, and Connectedness Impair Well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Gribble et al., 2019)	Relocations create challenges and uncertainty in reestablishing domestic support networks; as a result, career sacrifice and guilt are common
Career Autonomy, Competence, and Connectedness Tied to MSE Well-being	Military Lifestyle Factors Thwart Basic Psychological Needs and Military Spouse Well-being (Blue Star Families, 2018; Gribble et al., 2019; Krause et al., 2019)	The Fulfillment of Basic Psychological Needs is Imperative to Motivation and Well-being (Baard et al., 1998; Ryan & Deci, 2000)	Military lifestyle factors create challenges and uncertainty for MSE's control, competence, and connectedness

The key findings highlight that military spouse educators are well educated and are motivated learners who seek to utilize and improve their skills. However, due to military lifestyle factors, such as frequent relocation, required domestic duties, licensure and opportunity impediments, military spouse educators often find themselves uncertain about their careers. As such, their life and career goals, as well as a sense of personal fulfillment, often go unachieved or are significantly delayed. This inability to obtain

personal and career satisfaction serves to diminish motivation and negatively influence well-being.

Informed Recommendations

This study's informed recommendations include a systems-wide review of Department of Defense policies, particularly as they relate to the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and connectedness of the military family. Frequent relocations tend to be the most destabilizing factor for MSEs. Allowing for consideration of the family's needs, including the military spouse's career, could pay dividends for service member retention and morale, spousal well-being, and general quality of life factors. Decreasing the frequency of transitions, all the while increasing the duration of each tour of duty, will allow for greater stability and community connectedness. In the event of a required relocation, the policy should provide as much advanced notice as possible to allow the family to decide when within the designated transition window in which to move.

The final informed recommendation is for states to ameliorate licensure and certification requirements for military spouse educators. A potential solution would be to allow for a universal license for MSEs and provide online options for continuing education credits. State boards of education should also work to ensure that subjective semantics in policies do not arbitrarily disenfranchise those that are military-connected.

Findings Distribution Proposal

Target Audience

The target audience identified for this Problem of Practice are MSEs. The rationale for this decision is that military lifestyle factors impeding spouses' careers are well documented. For decades military leadership and policymakers have been aware of this concern, and while some beneficial steps have transpired, more progress is needed. In sharing this study's findings with the MSE community, the researcher hopes to empower each MSE to advocate for change and educate others on the unique challenges faced when seeking employment and career progression. Secondary audiences include other military spouses, state and national legislators, military leadership, policymakers (e.g., Texas Association of School Boards), teacher preparation programs, departments and boards of education, communities, MSE support agencies, senior military spouse groups, and the Texas Workforce Commission as they all serve a role in bringing awareness and potential solutions to the forefront of this dilemma.

Proposed Distribution Method and Venue

To reach a large, MSE specific audience, the researcher shared a ten-minute narrated presentation summarizing this study's results and implications. As MSEs enabled the researcher to complete this Problem of Practice, the researcher wished to empower MSEs to be aware of the concern and provide them information to advocate on their own behalf.

The presentation was uploaded and disseminated to both private military spouse educators support Facebook groups. These venues were selected because each of these

groups contributed to both the questionnaire and interviews. This presentation seeks to highlight the findings of this research and incite advocacy for MSEs. The author intends to submit the results of this Problem of Practice (in its various forms) to peer-reviewed journals, such as *Armed Forces & Society*. To reach a broader military-connected audience the author will submit an informative essay to *Military Spouse Magazine*, *National Military Family Association*, *Military Families Learning Network*, and *DefenseNews.com*. The author will also distribute the executive summary to both the Texas Education Agency and the U.S. Department of Education to provide insight into the continued career challenges of MSEs.

To advocate for MSEs, the author has corresponded with state and local elected officials regarding this research to educate them on the plight of MSEs better and encourage their assistance in authoring and supporting MSE favorable legislation. The author has also written to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel and the Regional Defense-State Liaison Office Representative to bring awareness to the personal and professional hardships experienced by MSEs. The author remains active in seeking presentation opportunities and speaking engagements to advocate for MSEs.

Distribution Materials

Along with creating and disseminating the presentation video, the researcher shared the executive summary of the Problem of Practice through social media and military-connected forums. Additionally, the demographic questionnaire and associated findings are also available via a PDF file. Other potential distribution materials include journal publications, formal correspondences, conferences, webinars, podcasts, and blogs.

Conclusion

The researcher's military-connected history led him to examine whether other MSEs perceived military factors negatively impacting their careers. A lack of existing scholarship on both MSEs and qualitative inquiry into military spouses' lives, in general, influenced the researcher's decision to investigate this topic through a phenomenological case study. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that humans have a predisposition towards psychological growth and that growth is influenced by their environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The researcher selected the SDT theoretical framework to concentrate on the psychological factors that either enhance or diminish motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The research questions sought to understand how military factors are perceived to impact the careers of MSEs through their construction of perceptions and descriptions. Moreover, the researcher aimed to understand how the demographics of MSEs compare and contrast to the general military spouse population.

The demographic findings closely mimic that of military spouses in general. However, this study adds to existing scholarship unique insights into how MSEs perceive and describe the military lifestyle impacting their career opportunities and progression. All MSEs noted how challenges, albeit either military, institutional, or familial, required some sense of career sacrifice. The researcher noted that many MSEs had developed resiliency techniques to cope with the military lifestyle and potentially enhance their sense of career autonomy. While not every MSE stressed the impact of the COVID pandemic, the theme permeated the interviews. Given the relatively small sample size of this research, further exploration of this topic and the relationship between career progression and the well-being of MSEs is warranted. This researcher hopes to empower

MSEs to share with civilian and military local, state, and national policymakers their lived experiences on how the military lifestyle impacts their career and well-being through advocacy and education. The ultimate goal is to create “family-centric” military policies that take each spouse’s career aspirations and opportunities into consideration and ameliorate institutional barriers that hinder career progression.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Infographic



The infographic is divided into two main sections. The top section has a black background and features a photograph of a young boy with blonde hair, wearing a pink shirt and a grey vest, holding an open book and looking surprised. To the right of the photo, the text 'VOLUNTEERS NEEDED' is written in large, bold, teal letters. Below this, 'MILITARY SPOUSE EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE' is written in white. A bulleted list follows, and a QR code is in the bottom right corner. The bottom section has a green-to-teal gradient background. It starts with the title 'Why Participate?' in white. Below it is a bulleted list. To the right of the list is an icon of two overlapping speech bubbles, one with an exclamation mark and one with a question mark. Below the list is an icon of a book with an '@' symbol. To the right of this icon is the 'Researcher Information' section. At the bottom center is the Baylor University School of Education logo.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

MILITARY SPOUSE EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

- Less than 10 minutes!
- All multiple choice
- Seeking Insight Into the Impact of the Military Lifestyle on the Careers of Military Spouse Educators

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/milspousefeedback>

Why Participate?

- Contribute to the knowledge-base regarding military spouse educators
- Support a fellow military spouse

Researcher Information:
Jason "JJ" Johnson - jj_johnson1@baylor.edu
Doctoral Candidate
Baylor University
Leadership & Organization Change

 **BAYLOR**
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Data

The Impact of Military Lifestyle on the Careers of Military Spouse Educators: A Phenomenological Case Study

Saturday, February 06, 2021

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Informed Consent Form

The Impact of Military Lifestyle on the Careers of Military Spouse Educators: A Phenomenological Case Study

Prospective Research Participant

Please read this consent form fully. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research. You are invited to participate in a research study/problem of practice designed to investigate the impact of the military lifestyle on the careers of military spouse educators. Jason "JJ" Johnson, a doctoral candidate at Baylor University, is conducting this study/problem of practice. You were selected as a possible participant because of your association to military spouse educators.

Background Information

This phenomenological case study seeks to describe how the military lifestyle impacts the careers of military spouse educators and highlight career-specific challenges that military spouse educators face. This study utilizes a qualitative design to capture the lived experiences of military spouse educators in rich details and to allow their perceptions of challenges and insights concerning their employment to resonate fully.

Description of the Research

The researcher (Jason Johnson) will select a sample of participants from a questionnaire to participate in interview(s) (conducted virtually). Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym and only aggregated information will be used in the publication of this study. Participation in the study is bounded to current, and former, military spouse educators.

Voluntary Nature of this Student

Your decision whether to participate in this study/project will not affect your current or future relationship with the candidate-researcher or the associated University (or affiliates). Should you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Upon request, you will be provided a copy of the concluded study/problem of practice so that you have an opportunity to examine the manner in which the data are being applied.

Compensation / Benefits of Participating in this Study

Participation in this study/problem of practice is completely voluntary and you will not receive any monetary compensation for your participation. The potential benefits to participating in the study/problem of practice may include learning more about the impact of the military lifestyle and unique challenges associated to being a military spouse educator.

Risks of Participating in this Study

There is minimal risk to participating in this study/problem of practice, meaning that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. The researcher will seek to minimize risks by reinforcing that the discussions are confidential. If you experience some emotional discomfort after your participation, you are invited to contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 to speak with a Military Life Consultant 24 hours a day, seven days a week (eligibility requirements apply):

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Cq58km2MKJnj2VBDfIdQdRZrlc-ewInvaS_HFI7HUU/edit

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<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/non-medical-counseling/military-onesource/military-onesource-confidential-help-eligibility>).

Confidentiality

The data gathered from this study/problem of practice will be private and confidential. No names will be needed to complete the questionnaire. Any raw data with personal identifiers will only be seen by the researcher and raw data will not be used in reported findings. Data will be reported in the aggregate.

Research Contact:

JJ_johnson1@baylor.edu

Institutional Contact:

Institutional Review Board
Baylor University
One Bear Place #97310
Waco, Texas 76798
254-710-3708

* Required

1. Email address *

2. Participant's Name

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms

Q1: I have read the Informed Consent Form and agree to participate in The Impact of Military Lifestyle on the Careers of Military Spouse Educators: A Phenomenological Case Study (Consent Form)

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100.00%	195
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		195

Q2: Please describe your gender.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	100.00%	195
Male	0.00%	0
Non-Binary/Third Gender	0.00%	0
Other (Please Specify)	0.00%	0
Prefer Not to Say	0.00%	0
Prefer to Self-Describe	0.00%	0
TOTAL		195

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Q3: Please indicate your current age.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 24	2.56%	5
Between 25 - 30	23.59%	46
Between 31 - 35	22.05%	43
Between 36 - 40	19.49%	38
Between 41 - 45	17.44%	34
Between 46 - 50	9.74%	19
51 or older	5.13%	10
TOTAL		195

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Q4: Which race best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.51%	1
Asian	4.10%	8
Black or African American	6.67%	13
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.51%	1
White	84.62%	165
Some other race	2.05%	4
Prefer not to say	0.51%	1
Prefer to self-describe	1.03%	2
TOTAL		195

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Q5: Are you of Hispanic, Latino/a/x, or of Spanish origin?

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No, not of Hispanic, Latino/a/x or of Spanish origin	93.33%	182
Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano/a/x	3.59%	7
Yes, Puerto Rican	1.03%	2
Yes, Cuban	0.00%	0
Yes, another Hispanic, Latino/a/x or Spanish origin	1.54%	3
Some other ethnicity, or origin	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	0.51%	1
Prefer to self-describe	0.00%	0
TOTAL		195

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Q6: Please indicate if your service member is:

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Active Duty	90.21%	175
Selected Reserve (Reserve or Guard)	2.58%	5
Retired	7.22%	14
Discharged	0.00%	0
TOTAL		194

Q7: Please indicate your service member's branch of service.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Air Force	25.64%	50
Army	37.44%	73
Coast Guard	5.64%	11
Marine Corps	10.26%	20
Navy	20.51%	40
Space Force	0.51%	1
TOTAL		195

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Q8: Please indicate your service member's rank.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Enlisted: E1, E2, E3	0.51%	1
Enlisted: E4, E5, E6	23.08%	45
Enlisted: E7, E8, E9	13.85%	27
Officer: O1, O2, O3	24.10%	47
Officer: O4, O5, O6	34.87%	68
Officer: O7, O8, O9	0.51%	1
Warrant Officer: W1, W2, W3	2.05%	4
Warrant Officer: W4, W5	1.03%	2
TOTAL		195

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Q9: Please indicate your personal military status.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Does not apply – I do not or have not served in the United States military.	94.85%	184
Former Enlisted Active Duty	2.06%	4
Former Officer Active Duty	1.55%	3
Former Warrant Officer Active Duty	0.00%	0
Former Enlisted Reservist	0.00%	0
Former Officer Reservist	0.00%	0
Former Warrant Officer Reservist	0.52%	1
Current Enlisted Active Duty	0.00%	0
Current Officer Active Duty	0.00%	0
Current Warrant Officer Active Duty	0.00%	0
Current Enlisted Reservist	0.00%	0
Current Warrant Officer Reservist	1.03%	2
TOTAL		194

Q10: Please indicate your personal branch of service.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Does not apply – I do not or have not served in the United States military.	94.87%	185
Air Force	1.03%	2
Army	3.59%	7
Coast Guard	0.00%	0
Marine Corps	0.00%	0
Navy	0.51%	1
Space Force	0.00%	0
TOTAL		195

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Q11: Please indicate the location you and your family currently live (select all that apply)

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

The Impact of Military Lifestyle on the Careers of Military Spouse Educators: A Phenomenological Case Study		SurveyMonkey
North Dakota	0.51%	1
Ohio	0.51%	1
Oklahoma	0.51%	1
Oregon	0.00%	0
Pennsylvania	1.54%	3
Rhode Island	1.03%	2
South Carolina	1.03%	2
South Dakota	0.51%	1
Tennessee	0.00%	0
Texas	10.77%	21
Utah	0.51%	1
Vermont	0.00%	0
Virginia	11.79%	23
Washington	3.59%	7
West Virginia	0.00%	0
Wisconsin	0.00%	0
Wyoming	0.00%	0
OCONUS	1.54%	3
Alaska	5.13%	10
Australia	0.00%	0
Bahrain	0.51%	1
Belgium	0.00%	0
Cuba	0.00%	0
Germany	2.05%	4
Guam	0.51%	1
Hawaii	1.54%	3
Hungary	0.00%	0
Italy	1.03%	2
Japan	1.54%	3
Korea	1.54%	3
Netherlands	0.00%	0
Norway	0.00%	0
Puerto Rico	0.00%	0
Singapore	0.51%	1

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Q12: Please identify your current level of education.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Completed a Bachelor's program.	18.46%	36
Completed a Bachelor's program, enrolled in a Master's program and have earned graduate credits.	11.28%	22
Graduated from or completed a Master's program.	58.97%	115
Graduated from a Master's program; currently in a Doctoral program.	7.69%	15
I Have completed both a Masters and Doctoral program.	3.59%	7
TOTAL		195

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Q13: Please identify your current professional licensure or certification status.

Answered: 193 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable because I am still seeking the educational requirements.	3.63%	7
Not applicable because even though I have completed my educational requirements, I am unable to obtain a license with my current degree(s).	4.15%	8
Under supervision and obtaining hours.	2.07%	4
Completed supervision, paperwork or exam results pending.	2.07%	4
Licensed and certified to practice in the current state I live in.	24.35%	47
Licensed and certified to practice in multiple states, but not the one I live in.	6.74%	13
Licensed and certified to practice in one state, but not the one I live in.	15.54%	30
Licensed and certified to practice in multiple states, including the one I live in.	41.45%	80
TOTAL		193

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Q14: Which field best describes your current discipline or license (either obtained or working towards):

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Elementary Teacher	50.26%	98
Secondary Teacher	29.74%	58
Counselor	1.54%	3
School Support Staff (e.g., LCSW, Therapist, Instructional Specialist, Technologist, Librarian, etc.)	3.59%	7
School Administrator	2.56%	5
District Support Staff (e.g., Testing Specialist, Instructional Coach, HARP Coordinator, etc.)	2.05%	4
District Administrator	1.03%	2
College Instructor	3.08%	6
Other	6.15%	12
Other (Please Specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		195

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Q15: Please indicate how many years of experience you have working in the field of education.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	4.62%	9
1 - 2 years	11.79%	23
3 - 5 years	25.64%	50
6 - 10 years	24.10%	47
More than 10 years	33.85%	66
TOTAL		195

Q16: Please indicate which of the following settings best describes your current workplace.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
This does not apply to me	20.51%	40
Public School	55.38%	108
Parochial School	0.51%	1
Private School (Non-Parochial)	3.59%	7
University or College Institution	3.08%	6
Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)	6.15%	12
Non-Profit Agency	2.05%	4
For-Profit Agency	1.03%	2
Other (Please Specify)	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	7.69%	15
TOTAL		195

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Q17: Please indicate the current status that best describes your current employment situation.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am not looking for work, and I do not plan on looking for work anytime soon.	6.67%	13
I am not looking for work, but I am interested in working.	12.31%	24
I am not working, but I have been actively looking for work for the last several weeks.	4.62%	9
I am currently working part-time by choice.	5.64%	11
I am currently working part-time but not by choice.	3.08%	6
I am currently working full-time, and my job meets my level of education and experience.	49.74%	97
I am currently working full-time, but I am more experienced and educated than my job requires.	17.95%	35
TOTAL		195

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Q18: If you indicated you are not working, what is your main reason for not working?

Answered: 191 Skipped: 4

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of job opportunities in my career field at my location.	3.14%	6
Could not find meaningful work.	1.57%	3
Lack necessary schooling, training, skills, or experience.	0.00%	0
Employers think too young or too old.	0.00%	0
Other type of discrimination.	0.00%	0
Family responsibilities.	12.04%	23
Health reasons, physical disability.	0.00%	0
Transportation problems.	0.00%	0
Licensure issues.	3.66%	7
Completing move; settling into a new location.	3.14%	6
Anticipating move; did not want to commit to a new job.	3.14%	6
Does not apply to me.	73.30%	140
TOTAL		191

Q19: If you indicated you are working part-time what is your primary reason for working part-time?

Answered: 193 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business conditions	0.52%	1
Could only find part-time work	1.55%	3
Seasonal work	0.00%	0
Childcare problems	3.63%	7
Family/personal obligations	1.55%	3
Health limitations	0.00%	0
School/training	2.07%	4
Retired	0.00%	0
Does not apply to me	90.67%	175
TOTAL		193

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Q20: Please choose the statement that best describes your PCS or relocation status.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
My family and I have moved within the last two years due to military orders.	27.69%	54
My family and I have moved within the last year due to military orders.	7.18%	14
My family and I have moved within the last 6 months due to military orders.	16.92%	33
My family and I are preparing for a move within the next year due to military orders.	16.92%	33
My family and I are preparing for a move within the next 6 months due to military orders.	10.26%	20
My family and I have not moved in over two years and are not preparing for an upcoming move due to military orders.	21.03%	41
TOTAL		195

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Q21: Please indicate the total number of times you have moved due to military orders.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	4.62%	9
One	8.72%	17
Two	11.28%	22
Three	18.97%	37
Four	13.85%	27
Five or more	42.56%	83
TOTAL		195

Q22: Please choose the statement that best describes your parenting situation.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
We have one or more child(ren) in the home who are not yet school age.	12.31%	24
We have one or more child(ren) in the home who are in school (in-person or virtually).	47.18%	92
We have both one or more child(ren) in the home who are not yet in school and one or more kid(s) in the home who are in school.	10.77%	21
We have no children in the home.	25.64%	50
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	4.10%	8
TOTAL		195

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Q23: Please indicate how many children you have.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0	22.56%	44
1	18.46%	36
2	34.36%	67
3	14.36%	28
4	6.15%	12
5 or more	4.10%	8
TOTAL		195

Q24: Please indicate your primary reason for working or obtaining higher education.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Current or future finances	30.41%	59
Personal fulfillment	62.89%	122
To have something to do/not be bored	2.58%	5
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	4.12%	8
TOTAL		194

Q25: Please indicate which of the following negatively impacts your career the most.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Frequent moves/relocation	49.23%	96
My service member's job demands	11.79%	23
Licensure reciprocity/issues	18.97%	37
Availability of employment opportunities	9.74%	19
Parenting responsibilities	7.69%	15
Does not apply to me	2.56%	5
TOTAL		195

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Q26: Please indicate which of the following negatively impacts your career the second most.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Frequent moves/relocation	29.74%	58
My service member's job demands	15.38%	30
Licensure reciprocity/issues	18.97%	37
Availability of employment opportunities	18.46%	36
Parenting responsibilities	13.85%	27
Does not apply to me	3.59%	7
TOTAL		195

Q27: Please indicate how often your service member is typically away from home for military-related duties (not including deployments).

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 30 nights a year	32.82%	64
30 – 60 nights a year	31.28%	61
61 – 90 nights a year	19.49%	38
90 – 180 nights a year	11.79%	23
More than 180 nights a year	4.62%	9
TOTAL		195

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Q28: If you are currently working, please indicate your current annual income (not including your spouse's income).

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Does not apply to me	20.51%	40
Less than \$10,000 per year	2.56%	5
Between \$10,000 - \$20,000 per year	4.10%	8
Between \$20,000 - \$30, 000 per year	5.13%	10
Between \$30,000 - \$40,000 per year	12.31%	24
Between \$40,000 - \$50,000 per year	17.44%	34
Between \$50,000 - \$60,000 per year	14.87%	29
Between \$60,000 - \$70,000 per year	8.21%	16
More than \$70,000 per year	14.87%	29
TOTAL		195

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Q29: My annual income is commensurate with my education and experience?

Answered: 192 Skipped: 3

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.63%	78
No	59.38%	114
TOTAL		192

Q30: Please indicate if you have ever left the education field or paused your education and/or career interests due to the military lifestyle.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, but I have returned back to the field.	48.72%	95
Yes, but I am continuing my education.	2.56%	5
Yes, I am currently putting my career/education on hold due to the military lifestyle but plan to return at a later time.	16.41%	32
Yes, I put my career/education on hold due to the military lifestyle but do not plan to return to the field of education.	1.54%	3
Yes, I am currently putting my career/education on hold due to the military lifestyle but I am unsure if I plan to return to the field of education at this time.	9.74%	19
No, I have never paused my education or career interest or left the field of education due to the military lifestyle.	21.03%	41
TOTAL		195

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Q31: If you have left the education career field or paused your education and/or career interests due to the military lifestyle please indicate the length of time you did so.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	14.87%	29
1 - 2 years	20.00%	39
2 - 3 years	11.28%	22
3 - 4 years	7.18%	14
5 - 9 years	14.36%	28
10 or more years	10.26%	20
Does not apply to me	22.05%	43
TOTAL		195

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Q32: Have you ever lived apart from your spouse for any length of time to continue your education or career interests?

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	45.13%	88
No	32.31%	63
No, but I have thought significantly about it at some point.	22.56%	44
TOTAL		195

Q33: If you have ever lived apart from your spouse for any length of time to continue your education or career interests, please indicate the length of time you spent apart.

Answered: 133 Skipped: 62

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 Year	55.64%	74
1 - 2 years	30.08%	40
2 - 3 years	9.77%	13
3 - 4 years	3.01%	4
5 - 9 years	0.00%	0
10 or more years	1.50%	2
TOTAL		133

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Q34: Are you currently living in a different location than your spouse in order to complete your education or pursue your career interests?

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	7.73%	15
No	92.27%	179
TOTAL		194

Q35: The military lifestyle impacts my career.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	1.03%	2
Rarely	1.03%	2
Sometimes	13.85%	27
More than sometimes	14.36%	28
Often	24.62%	48
Very often	11.79%	23
Almost Always	14.36%	28
Always	18.97%	37
TOTAL		195

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Q36: My service member's military job demands impact my career.

Answered: 193 Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	3.11%	6
Rarely	8.29%	16
Sometimes	21.76%	42
More than sometimes	10.88%	21
Often	23.32%	45
Very often	9.84%	19
Almost Always	7.77%	15
Always	15.03%	29
TOTAL		193

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Q37: I believe our moves, due to the military, impact my career.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	2.58%	5
Rarely	1.55%	3
Sometimes	9.79%	19
More than sometimes	9.79%	19
Often	17.53%	34
Very often	13.92%	27
Almost Always	8.25%	16
Always	36.60%	71
TOTAL		194

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Q38: Whether or not I am adequately employed impacts how satisfied I am with my life.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	2.56%	5
Rarely	5.64%	11
Sometimes	15.38%	30
More than sometimes	8.21%	16
Often	16.41%	32
Very often	21.54%	42
Almost Always	12.82%	25
Always	17.44%	34
TOTAL		195

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Q39: I spend time thinking about our next move will impact my career.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	4.12%	8
Rarely	4.64%	9
Sometimes	12.89%	25
More than sometimes	8.76%	17
Often	18.04%	35
Very often	15.46%	30
Almost Always	11.34%	22
Always	24.74%	48
TOTAL		194

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Q40: I feel less competent in my career-related abilities and skills as a result of the military lifestyle.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	22.05%	43
Rarely	15.38%	30
Sometimes	20.00%	39
More than sometimes	8.72%	17
Often	8.21%	16
Very often	8.21%	16
Almost Always	6.67%	13
Always	10.77%	21
TOTAL		195

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Q41: I feel less connected with my colleagues and/or community as a result of the military lifestyle.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	9.74%	19
Rarely	6.67%	13
Sometimes	22.56%	44
More than sometimes	8.72%	17
Often	15.90%	31
Very often	15.90%	31
Almost Always	6.67%	13
Always	13.85%	27
TOTAL		195

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Q42: My service member's deployments impact my career.

Answered: 190 Skipped: 5

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	8.95%	17
Rarely	12.11%	23
Sometimes	33.16%	63
More than sometimes	6.32%	12
Often	10.00%	19
Very often	7.89%	15
Almost Always	5.26%	10
Always	16.32%	31
TOTAL		190

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Q43: I believe the military lifestyle impacts my career which creates challenges in my marriage.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	13.40%	26
Rarely	19.59%	38
Sometimes	30.41%	59
More than sometimes	8.25%	16
Often	8.76%	17
Very often	8.25%	16
Almost Always	3.61%	7
Always	7.73%	15
TOTAL		194

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Q44: I feel resentful or upset with my spouse because his or her military career creates challenges for my own career.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	23.71%	46
Rarely	21.13%	41
Sometimes	25.77%	50
More than sometimes	7.22%	14
Often	10.31%	20
Very often	5.67%	11
Almost Always	3.09%	6
Always	3.09%	6
TOTAL		194

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Q45: My spouse and I discuss leaving the military so that I can pursue my career interests.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	48.97%	95
Rarely	16.49%	32
Sometimes	11.86%	23
More than sometimes	4.64%	9
Often	8.25%	16
Very often	5.15%	10
Almost Always	1.55%	3
Always	3.09%	6
TOTAL		194

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Q46: I have had difficulty obtaining licensure when we move due to differing state requirements for education or testing.

Answered: 194 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	15.98%	31
Rarely	14.43%	28
Sometimes	28.87%	56
More than sometimes	6.19%	12
Often	9.79%	19
Very often	9.28%	18
Almost Always	6.70%	13
Always	8.76%	17
TOTAL		194

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Q47: Please indicate which of the following is most accurate to your situation.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I mostly worry about my financial contribution to the family	17.95%	35
I mostly worry about my retirement eligibility	34.87%	68
I mostly worry about my career progression	38.97%	76
I do not worry about my career	8.21%	16
TOTAL		195

Q48: Social connections and a sense of belonging in the community is important to me.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.87%	185
No	5.13%	10
TOTAL		195

Q49: Social connections and a sense of belonging in a career is important to me.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	95.38%	186
No	4.62%	9
TOTAL		195

Q50: Using my education and professional skills to progress my career is important to me.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	97.95%	191
No	2.05%	4
TOTAL		195

Q51: Having a sense of control of my career and career opportunities is important to me.

Answered: 195 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	98.97%	193
No	1.03%	2
TOTAL		195

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