4-26-2024

Administrators' Challenges to Provide Sustainable Instruction to Children of Military Personnel

Pamela Yvette Tucker
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Pamela Yvette Tucker

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Robert Flanders, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Elissa Dawkins, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2024

Abstract

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MA, Alabama State University, 1995

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Educational Administration & Leadership (Non-licensure)

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Abstract

Military-connected students (MCSs) face academic challenges because of frequent transitions. During military parents' permanent change in duty station (PCS), MCSs are absent for 15 days or more. PCS-related absenteeism has increased over the last decade, and academic achievement has decreased. This basic qualitative capstone project study examined the challenges of high school administrators from Southeast Asian Pacific Island district schools to provide teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS-related absences. The conceptual framework for the study was Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory (SLT). SLT suggests that administrators adopt leadership approaches to combat PCS-related absenteeism based on the dynamics of their learning and working environments. This qualitative study used open-ended, semistructured interviews to examine the perspectives of 10 high school administrators on PCS-related absenteeism and the challenges of providing teachers with systematic professional development (PD) that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs and SLT as a resource to meet teachers' PD needs. The study involved thematic analysis to identify seven themes (culture and climate, community, flexibility, mentorship, teacher readiness—PD, relationships, and social-emotional balance) that factor into improvement priorities. The findings of this capstone project study were used for positive social change by suggesting educational resources and PD strategies to the Department of Defense Education Activity’s Pacific Center for Instructional Leadership team through a leadership approach that influences sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during the transition.

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Dedication

I dedicate this capstone project study to veterans and veteran families who freely sacrificed their time, talents, and well-being for the American ideals of freedom and who endured multiple deployments and returned to the homeland with invisible wounds. Our collective determination to create normalcy and continue pushing ourselves towards achievement is commendable and symbolized in this moment. This capstone project is evidence that the forgotten can move past our fears and doubts and achieve and contribute to America once more. Reaching this educational milestone is our joint feat. It represents our service core values, our ability to rise and meet physical and mental challenges, and our commitment to bringing about social change for the good of all Americans.

Here is to the defenders of the air, land, and sea. Here is to our undefeatable spirits and unyielding will to place God and country above all. Here is to our families that struggle silently but support every endeavor. Here is to acknowledge that all veterans and veteran families gave some to upholding American ideals of freedom, and some gave all.

Acknowledgments

First, thank God for strengthening me when I felt weak and bestowing measures of grace and mercy upon me. Without Him, I would have indeed failed.

Secondly, I am grateful to my childhood best friend and husband, Kinsley Tucker. Thank you for being my champion. To my children, Zachary and Charity, your belief in me is a source of inspiration. I love you. To my daughter-in-law, Tanisha, thank you for brightening my writing breaks with video calls from my beloved grandsons, Jeffery and Chandler. Cousins Adrienne and Gwen, thank you for your continuous support. I am thankful for my sorority sisters, Georgia, Jackie, Ruth, and girlfriends, Amy, Leah, Paris, Marcy, and Tawanda. Your support is top-tier!

Thirdly, I extend gratitude to my capstone committee. To my committee chair, Dr. Robert Flanders, thank you for helping me shape my thoughts into a project representing my desire for social change for MCSs and families. I appreciate the compassion and encouragement shown during my battle with COVID-19 and multiple family deaths. I am grateful to my capstone committee members, Dr. Heidi Crocker and Dr. Elissa Dawkins, for helping create substance and clarity in the writing and sharpening my research skills. I am grateful to the Walden University library and writing center staff. I appreciate your willingness to help me locate resources and polish my scholarly voice.

Finally, thank the administrators who participated in this qualitative capstone study. Thank you for allowing me to learn and grow through their professional experiences. I am grateful to each of you.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

A 2020 Department of Defense (DoD) Demographics Report indicated that 1.85 million children have one or both parents serving in the U.S. military. Of the 1.85 million military-connected children, 1.2 million are K–12 education students (DoD, 2020). According to a 2020 Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) survey, military-connected students (MCSs) will attend six to nine schools in different cities, states, and countries before high school. Thirty percent of them will attend their third school by fifth grade. By the time MCSs reach high school, 27% will have changed schools at least once during their high school years (Grades 9–12), and 16% will have changed schools at least two times (Burgess, 2022). The frequent transition of MCSs creates academic complexities, increases military families' stressors, and challenges schools to provide sustainable instruction (Park, 2019).

As MCSs move around the country and world, they transition through schools with diverse course offerings, cultures, curricula, graduation requirements, schedules, and standards (MCEC, 2020). The increasing demands on their parents, when required to deploy or relocate every 2 to 4 years, increase the challenges MCSs face. In the past 16 years, MCSs and their families have lived on a continuous war footing, enduring recurring deployments and relocating frequently—making school and school-related activities difficult. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2022), MCSs have experienced frequent transitions from school to school, complicating teacher readiness and making it difficult for teachers to find effective instructional strategies and provide

high-quality instruction to this highly mobile and at-risk group, magnifying the academic difficulties of MCSs.

There are various levels of teacher readiness to manage the complexities of teaching MCSs. More professional development (PD) is needed for teachers to gain the skills and strategies to address the unique needs of this population. "Having less than 5 years' experience teaching in a military-connected environment, I often struggle to meet the challenges associated with high mobility and its impact on academic performance," said one Southeast Asian Pacific Island (SAPI) district school high school chemistry teacher. Veteran teachers have a better understanding of military culture and have learned adaptability. However, there needs to be more PD opportunities to train K–12 classroom teachers in topics related to the challenges of MCSs that impact the educational experience (Brosius, 2018). "Over the past two decades, I have learned to assimilate to the dynamic needs of MCSs. I spend my summers exploring technology integration as a coping tool for student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism," said a 22-year DoDEA veteran high school teacher from the SAPI district schools.

In 2012, then-Vice President Joe Biden addressed the unique social, emotional, and academic needs of MCSs. He communicated that PD plans, particularly those that include teacher leaders and differentiated training, may help teachers with fewer than 5 years of experience working with MCSs develop as educators who "lead classrooms and develop cultures that are more responsive to the social, emotional and academic needs of children in military families" (Office of the Vice President, 2012).

In response to Biden’s 2012 claim, DoDEA Senior Leader Linda Curtis reflected on the impact of teacher leaders as a form of PD and established three operational paths

for teacher leaders to effect change: Focused Collaboration time (FCOT), the Teacher Leader Summit (TLS), and the Teacher Advisory Board (TAB; DoDEA, n.d.). DoDEA's FCOT empowers educators to discuss student learning, develop learning outcomes, and collaborate with colleagues focusing on student achievement. Every teacher in the system participates in 90 minutes of FCOT weekly (DoDEA Blueprint, n.d.). Among the top 10 teacher concerns is the impact of student mobility and permanent change in duty station (PCS)-related absenteeism on the academic outcomes of MCSs (DoDEA Teacher Leader Café, n.d.). The TLS enhances the leadership and critical thinking skills of the agency's top-performing educators and builds capacity for teacher leadership by consistently training on the Teacher Leader Model Standards.

Developed by the National Education Association (NEA), the Teacher Leader Model Standards consist of seven domains describing the various attributes of teacher leadership:

- Domain I: Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning.
- Domain II: Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning.
- Domain III: Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.
- Domain IV: Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning.
- Domain V: Using assessments and data for school and district improvement.
- Domain VI: Improving outreach and collaboration with families and the community.
- Domain VII: Advocating for student learning and the profession. (NEA, 2020)

The TAB allows DoDEA's senior and teacher leaders to share insights, suggestions, and perspectives with the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) on priority topics. It allows educators to leverage the advisory role of teacher leaders, enable better educational and administrative decisions, provide strategic guidance, and offer PD that leads to significant student learning (DoDEA, n.d.).

Frost (2016) suggested that changes in instructional practice and student achievement require collaborative and coherent PD focused on instructional practice and sustained over time. He further indicated that the development of teacher leaders is a sustainable form of PD. The DoDEA TAB, guided by the Teacher Leader Model Standards, produced multiple PD plans focused on the challenges associated with student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism. However, high school administrators from the SAPI district schools need help to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs. The advancement of teacher leadership as a form of job-embedded PD and school reform is becoming more prevalent through the DoDEA system, and it may hold promise for increasing the quality of teacher learning globally (Harris & Jones, 2019).

Military families try to stay abreast of the ever-changing needs affecting the success of MCSs. They report being overwhelmed and experiencing stress related to a lack of consistency in academic, extracurricular, and testing requirements (Daily et al., 2019). In an already complicated education landscape, there is a need for global continuity and identical state-to-state academic requirements for MCSs (Mancini et al., 2020). DoDEA operates "160 accredited schools in eight districts across ten time zones, located in eleven foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico, but the schools

adhere to exact academic, extracurricular, and testing requirements" (DoDEA History Overview, 2016, p. 3). MCSs transferring from one DoDEA school to another are less likely to experience academic credit-related challenges. However, social and emotional concerns, such as adapting to a new school environment and making friends, exist (MCEC, 2019).

In contrast to the consistent standards of the DoDEA-accredited schools, state governments oversee the public school system in the United States. Each state establishes curriculum standards and mandates standardized tests for K–12 and academic requirements, making it difficult for schools to address unique challenges and provide sustainable instruction for MCSs.

Merritt (2023) suggested that unaligned credit requirements during transition cause difficulties for MCSs. For example, an MCS in his senior year transitioning from New York public schools to Florida public schools will need additional credits to meet the criteria for graduation. According to the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.), New York requires 22 credits, and Florida requires 24 credits for graduation. Based on their arrival at the graduating school, a senior may need more time to earn credits toward graduation. Ruff and Keim (2014) implied that the slow transfer of school records muddles the process.

The timing of the PCS move is significant. Whether MCSs move in their senior year of high school or the middle of the year, the timing of the move can cause issues related to earning or losing credits or graduating on time (Karre & Perkins, 2022). Other complexities stemming from transition timing are course sequencing and scheduling. Schools run on a six- or seven-period day or block schedule, which affects enrollment in

fine arts or vocational education electives and the core courses required to earn Carnegie units (MCEC, 2019). In addition, MCSs need help to retain or gain eligibility to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities at the gaining school. Students involved in sports who move late in the school year may miss tryouts for teams. Transitioning MCSs might also find that the receiving school does not offer the same athletic programs (Daily et al., 2019). Administrators need help to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles.

MCSs face unique challenges with the academic and extracurricular requirements governing schools. The most significant administrative challenges stem from the need for systematic processes governing the timely transfer of educational records, fair and transparent extracurricular placement procedures, and the lack of PD for teachers that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs (MIC3, 2020). This basic qualitative capstone project study examined the challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles. The study further examined the implementation of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) situational leadership theory (SLT) to help high school administrators from the SAPI district schools combat the challenges of student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism. Military personnel undergo a PCS cycle every 2 to 4 years, affecting student attendance and academic performance. MCSs are absent for 15 days during their parent’s PCS cycle (MCEC, 2020).

High school teachers from the SAPI district schools are frustrated by the need for more PD opportunities concerning instructional practices for highly mobile MCSs. "It is difficult to provide instructional continuity to students who are in transition and frequently absent," said one high school SAPI district school Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition teacher.

PCS-related absenteeism is akin to chronic absenteeism experienced in traditional school settings, and its root causes are complex and require a conceptual framework that helps organize policy responses within the educational system (Childs & Lofton, 2021). Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT framework empowers leaders to implement strategies based on the circumstances of their teaching and learning environments. With the Centers for Instructional Leadership (CILs) oversight, DoDEA's TAB drafted multiple PD modules. However, the CAO, senior leaders, and administrators grapple to agree on a way forward (DoDEA, n.d.). The SLT is helpful for high school administrators from the SAPI district schools struggling to provide teachers with systematic PD that targets student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism.

Rationale

The DoD includes 818,000 active-duty individuals (DoD, 2018; Huebner, 2019), making it the nation's largest workforce. Sixty percent of this number is military personnel with family members; a significant minority (40%) has two or more minor children (Huebner, 2019). Each PCS cycle causes MCSs to miss between 15 and 30 days of routine class instruction (MCEC, 2020).

According to the 2020 MCEC Military Kids Now Survey, MCSs have struggled to meet increasingly specific academic and testing requirements, complicating the

education landscape (MCEC, 2020). Survey respondents said that "different state-to-state qualifications/testing and the delay in paperwork/records/processing" (MCEC, 2020, p. 21) were problematic. Respondents further claimed that there are disparities in technology and other school resources and that the endless cycle of reassessments is tiresome and unnecessary (MCEC, 2020). MCSs are not alone in their anxiety and stress. The teachers who teach them find it challenging to provide sustained instruction to the highly mobile population of MCSs (Masten, 2013). DoDEA's teachers receive MCSs-centric PD, but more training is needed to support MCSs' frequent PCS-related absenteeism and transitions. Teachers need help to give MCSs instructional continuity during the transition. "It is nightmarish to prepare for standardized assessments with such prolonged absences," said one high school SAPI district math teacher. Another high school science teacher from the SAPI district schools said, "Annual professional learning is inadequate to address revolving door issues. We need to engage regularly in authentic professional learning to close the instructional gaps caused by PCS cycles."

For two decades, awareness of the education-related needs of MCSs has shifted. Factors related to MCSs' lifestyles influence the noticeable shifts. For example, the frequency and duration of military deployments have increased over the past 16 years, and these deployments threaten a child's academic and social-emotional well-being (Krane, 2019). Fairbank et al. (2018) found that during parental deployments, children can suffer from attention difficulties, depression, grief, school difficulties, sleep issues, and separation anxiety.

The publication of the MCEC's Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) in 2001 and its accompanying Memorandum of Agreement among multiple military

installations and school districts signified a new culture of awareness and intervention between the institutions that engage in the educational lives of MCSs (Bowen, 2018). High school administrators from the SAPI district schools need help to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles.

Definition of Terms

The key terms used in this study are the following:

Aspen: A complete data management tool for reporting attendance, enrollment, attendance, and scheduling, as well as form submission by the Southeast Asian Pacific Island district high schools (https://www.dodea.edu/ employees/modules).

Blue Star families: Military families with immediate family members serving in the U.S. Armed Forces (https://bluestarfam.org/about/).

DoD Enrollment Management System (EMS): The DoD schools' enrollment database (https://www.dodea.edu/datacenter/emrollment.cfm).

Gold Star families: Immediate family members of military personnel who have died in the line of duty. The immediate family includes children, parents, siblings, and spouses (https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/familyassistance/goldstarfamilies.jsp).

Military-connected student (MCS): Any student with an immediate family member, including a parent or sibling, currently in the armed forces either as a reservist, on active duty or recently retired from the armed forces (https://www.lawinsider.com/).

Permanent change in duty station (PCS): A change in a military member's geographic location, such as a change in city/town, county, state, or country (https://www.opm.gov).

PCS-related absenteeism: When military-connected students miss school due to a change in geographic locations (https://www.opm.gov).

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Nurses' Report: This report overviews health issues affecting military-connected students enrolled in DoD schools.

Southeast Asian Pacific Data Management Information System (SPEDMIS) is the Southeast Asian Pacific Island district high schools' system for managing assessment data (https://www.dodea.edu/pacific).

Significance of the Study

The highly mobile lifestyle of MCSs results in exposure to different academic curriculums and requirements, instructional techniques, and resources, making it challenging to stay abreast of academic criteria (Mancini et al., 2020). The results of this basic qualitative capstone project study could lend insight into instructional practices and close the instructional gaps caused by student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism. By exploring the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools on their challenges in providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs, innovative approaches to achieving instructional continuity may be identified.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools on their challenges to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs and Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT as a resource to help meet teachers' PD needs. The data collected apply to

the challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools to support systematic PD for the teachers of highly mobile MCSs, addressed in Research Question 1 (RQ1). The data collected on the high school administrators from the SAPI district schools' perceptions of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT as a resource to meet the PD needs of teachers who teach highly mobile MCSs will address Research Question 2 (RQ2).

- RQ1: What are the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools concerning the challenges of providing teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs?
- RQ2: What are the perceptions of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools of the situational leadership theory as a resource to meet the professional development needs of teachers who teach highly mobile MCSs?

Review of the Literature

Walter and Stouck (2020) suggested that the purpose of the literature review is to collect resources, make critical analyses, and relate them to current works to help find the focus of a specific research topic. Information explicitly associated with the impact of systematic teacher PD on the mobility of MCSs and PCS-related absenteeism needs to be more extensive. The literature review provides insight into the effects of absenteeism on the academic and social-emotional growth of MCSs, national legislation that supports the educational rights of MCSs, and the challenges of administrators to meet the PD needs of teachers who instruct MCSs. As the U.S. Armed Forces position itself to protect U.S. interests globally, MCSs will remain highly mobile, and their teachers will require

systematic PD to combat student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism and meet the dynamic learning needs of MCSs.

Literature Research Strategy

To find purposeful research for this basic qualitative project study, I searched multiple databases for topics on or related to the research. Limited articles focused on military student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism. I examined absenteeism, chronic absenteeism, the movement of MCSs, the culture of military communities, the dynamic nature of military communities, the belief of military parents in DoD schools, and the PD of military-connected teachers. I examined DoD policy manuals and articles through ERIC, EBSCO, Google Scholar, MCEC, SAGE Journals, Education Source, ProQuest, and the Walden University Library. The search produced multiple articles. I redefined the search and looked for resources published between 2017 and 2023. I further streamlined the search by narrowing the investigation to peer-reviewed articles published between 2018 and 2023. The redefined search reduced the number of articles from 12,521 to 267. There were 52 entries within the last 5 years. When I included the impact of teacher PD on student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism in the search engine, the search produced articles on related topics. The articles did not specifically address the local problem.

Using key terms, I explored databases and examined articles. The keywords and phrases were *absenteeism, academic achievement, civilian, chronic absenteeism, depression, gaps in instruction, gaining school, highly mobile, instructional practices, losing school, military culture, military-connected students, military grittiness, military transitions, permanent change in duty station (PCS), perspective,* and *professional.*

I read articles, abstracts, DoD initiatives and policies, and military after-action reports (AARs) to understand the ever-changing learning environments of MCSs. The articles were alphabetized and ranked to provide evidence of the instructional gaps for MCSs in transition and the significance of PD for teachers and administrators tasked with meeting MCSs' academic and social-emotional growth.

The inclusion criteria entailed all articles that were (a) published in the English language, (b) peer-reviewed, (c) in full text, and (d) current literature published between 2018 and 2023. The literature search also generated sources published outside of the established 5-year period. I gathered information from sources published outside the specified time when the sources supported critical claims and reinforced information essential to highlighting gaps in practice.

High school administrators from the SAPI district schools struggle to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs, and federal policies and military regulations influence their role as instructional leaders. The literature review reveals the impact of national policies and military laws on the decision-making processes of SAPI district school administrators.

I categorized a comprehensive collection of resources related to this basic qualitative capstone project study for the literature review. I alphabetized resources and grouped them according to their relevance or relationship to the circumstances and challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles. In addition, the literature review found multiple theories about the influence of administrators' leadership styles on student and teacher performance. A second literature

review in Section 3 provides an overview of this basic qualitative capstone project study and the administrators' role in using situational leadership approaches to meet the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs.

Conceptual Framework

In educational settings, administrators often distribute leadership roles, enabling academic leaders to proactively meet the situational needs of faculty, staff, and students. Administrators who select leadership approaches based on their circumstances adhere to Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) principles of situational leadership. Grounded in task behavior, worker commitment, and relation behavior, the strategies of the SLT encourage leaders to examine their leadership styles and the characteristics of their subordinates to discover which strand of the situational leadership model will yield the most efficacy (Arshed et al., 2023). SLT is ideal for high school administrators from the SAPI district schools challenged to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs because it allows flexibility. SLT uses four leadership strands that enable administrators to draw from different leadership styles intertwined with the subordinates' readiness behavioral pattern, connecting the leadership elasticity and producing leadership equilibrium of high and low tasks and relations (Rajbhandari, 2014). The four strands of the SLT are *delegating, supporting, coaching*, and *directing* (Leahy & Shore, 2019). Each strand or approach helps administrators guide and task subordinates to reach desired goals (Cnaff & Wright, 2013).

The effectiveness of the situational leadership framework depends on the administrator's awareness of the staff's maturity, trust, and readiness to perform tasks

(Leahy & Shore, 2019). Administrators select the strategy that best fits their situation. For example, administrators who have fostered a culture of trust and risk-taking with veteran staff might employ the situational leadership approach with the least direct oversight and management. Hersey and Blanchard (1979) proposed that situational leadership is both directive and supportive. Situational leaders can adjust plans based on the circumstances surrounding them. Hersey and Blanchard (1979) suggested that there is no specific way to lead; administrators guide the needs of subordinates. The staff's maturity level and skill set decide the administrator's leadership style. The ladder suggests that leaders have cultivated relationships with their staff and are aware of individual and collective strengths and weaknesses.

SLT strategies are ideal for high school administrators from the SAPI district schools challenged to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable MCS instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles. The situational leadership model, introduced in 1969, suggests multiple effective leadership methods. Successful leaders adapt to the situation and transform their leadership style between task-oriented and relationship-oriented (Khan et al., 2016).

The administrator’s relationship with subordinates is contingent on building relationships, communicating, demonstrating trust, organizing, and setting goals (Covey & Merrill, 2003). Bein (2020) further implied that the relationship between leaders and subordinates would undergo multiple phases of change driven by subordinates' working attitudes and savant skillsets.

By employing the four situational leadership strands appropriately, school administrators can better manage the needs of their staff. Each strand has distinctive

characteristics. The administrator can use all, a combination, or a single leadership strand to direct or support the interventions based on this theory. Bein (2020) implied that every leader has a preferred style; a good leader knows when to adjust and assimilate to the needs of his staff.

The directing or "telling" leadership strand supports subordinates who lack the ability or maturity to manage tasks well. It is best for leading minimally competent subordinates. The administrator directs the subordinates with detailed instructions and expectations. When using the directing strand, the administrator must provide information clearly and decide if the team can track and manage the expectations.

The coaching or "selling" leadership strand tells people what to do, and the school administrator sells the work concept and gives autonomy in transitioning the idea into concrete reality. Coaching requires administrators to define roles and tasks clearly, but the administrator takes suggestions from the staff. Chaudhury (2023) suggested that the coaching strand is better suited for leading staff members with minimal competence but high commitment. The school administrators can use the coaching leadership strand to involve community and military stakeholders in problem-solving concerning PCS-related absenteeism.

The supporting or "participating" leadership strand works best for administrators who entrust the staff to achieve daily operational tasks. Teacher and student performance increases when administrators cultivate a culture of trust and foster environments of commitment and intrinsic drive (Lee & Louis, 2019). When using the supporting strand, the administrator's role is to inspire and motivate the team. The administrators are confident in the staff's abilities and trust their talent, excellence, and professionalism. The

supporting or "participating" strand is ideal for giving military community stakeholders "voice and choice" in combatting PCS-related absenteeism.

Administrators want trusting staff who empower them to delegate tasks. In the delegating strand, the school administrators task the team without specific instructions but trust that the team will complete tasks. Through the delegating strand, administrators supply an overview of the functions. Delegating tasks often fosters shared leadership and ensures that administrators are calm. In this leadership strand, the administrators are confident in the talent excellence of the staff. Delegating is most effective when teams are collaborative, competent, and committed (Cosenza, 2015).

Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) situational leadership model is grounded in workplace task relationships and the administrators' experience. The four strands or approaches of the SLT will help administrators work towards implementing practices to meet the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS-related absenteeism.

High school administrators from the SAPI district schools can use SLT to partner with military installation leadership teams. The administrators, installation commanders, and leaders can work collaboratively to combat issues affecting the learning environment of MCSs. The school administrators can provide examples of extended PCS-related absenteeism's positive and adverse effects. Regardless of its cause, absenteeism adversely affects student learning outcomes (Klein et al., 2022).

According to the Air Force Instruction (AFI) manual, only 10% of a military unit is in rotation during a specific period (AFI, 2019). The high school administrators of the SAPI district schools, installation commanders, and leaders can use the approaches of the

SLT to discuss and direct positive options for keeping MCSs academically engaged during transitions. Each military installation includes a command staff consisting of the installation commander, vice commander, and all unit commanders. In addition, the military-school liaison officer, first sergeants, and DoD civilian deputies are installation leaders. DoDEA schools function as installation tenant units subject to command directives (Structure of the Air Force, n.d.).

In partnership with installation commanders and leaders, the school administrators can use the strands of the SLT to strengthen campus, community, and cultural relationships, which could foster robust stakeholder involvement. School administrators, commanders, and installation leaders could explain the school's circumstances, and stakeholders could critically think through solutions to combat the lack of systematic teacher PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles.

The school administrators' responsibility is to examine their situation and select the SLT strand or approach that is the most beneficial for all stakeholders. If school administrators can work with installation commanders, leaders, and other stakeholders (parents, students, school boosters, and support staff) to decrease the adverse effects of student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism on academic achievement and increasing student anxiety, MCSs and their families reap the benefits. The administrators are further responsible for learning the staff's strengths and weaknesses and guiding them toward successful outcomes.

As high school administrators discover, develop, and deploy their leadership approach, concerned stakeholders must focus on minimizing the impact of student

mobility and PCS-related absenteeism on academic achievement and increasing stress of MCSs. Frequent moves and adjusting to new environments affect MCSs' academic performance and stress levels (Blue Star Families, 2022).

Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT formed the conceptual framework for this basic qualitative capstone project study. The four strands of the SLT—*directing, coaching, supporting*, and *delegating*—could help high school administrators from the SAPI district schools select and implement the approach or approaches that best meet their environmental challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles. Based on current literature, the ever-changing military environment, student mobility, and PCS-related absenteeism are challenging for the high school administrators from the SAPI district schools. The research problem for this qualitative capstone project study is that high school administrators from the SAPI district schools struggle to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles.

Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT offers high school administrators from the SAPI district schools four approaches that could help adjust their leadership styles to effectively combat the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles.

MCSs are highly mobile and face academic challenges because of frequent school transitions. The differences in curricula and school requirements result in educational gaps for MCSs. Education gaps entail missing critical theoretical concepts associated with higher-level math and science courses (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Military parents express concern for their children's quality of education and list their children's education

among the top 10 stressors affecting the dynamics of military family life (Mesecar & Soifer, 2018). MCEC (2020) reported that the differences in curricula continue to vary from school to school, and parents' most discussed concerns were the differences in the scope and sequence of the mathematics curriculum, specifically as it leads up to algebra and higher level coursework (MCEC, 2020). With MCSs comprising 4% of the nation's school-age population, reducing the complexities associated with their learning environment is essential. Military families have difficulties advocating for access to quality education due to their mobility, frequent PCS cycles, and deployment rotations (St. John & Fenning, 2020).

Historical Context

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), established in 1945, is the Cognia-accredited educational organization operating primary and secondary schools for the families of active-duty military and DoD civilian and contractor personnel. DoDEA oversees 160 schools in 11 European and Asian countries, seven states, and the U.S. territories of Guam and Puerto Rico (DoDEA, 2018). As a result of its global reach and ability to implement context-specific practices free from external mandates, DoDEA's mission is to educate, engage, and empower military-connected students (MCSs) to succeed in a dynamic world (DoDEA, 2018).

The constant movement of military personnel makes providing sustained instruction to MCSs challenging. In 2014, DoDEA was restructured to provide more accountability for teaching and focus on student achievement (DoDEA, 2018). DoDEA developed and implemented a standards-based educational system that aligned its curriculum, instructional framework, and assessments system to more rigorous college

and career-ready academic standards and established an organizational structure with the capacity to "manage, operate, sustain a high-quality, worldwide, and unified pre-K–12 school system" (DoDEA, 2018, p. 4). To support the restructuring effort, DoDEA created three Centers for Instructional Leadership (CILs), one for each region: the Americas, Europe, and the Pacific. The CILs ensure accountability for effective teaching and student achievement and increase the capacity for teacher leadership. "The primary objective of the CIL is to provide high academic achievement for MCSs by developing high-impact district and school leaders" (DoDEA, 2018, p. 20). However, school districts struggle to provide systematic PD for teachers that support sustainable instruction for MCSs during the PCS cycles. Military and military-related DoD personnel relocate or PCS every 2 to 4 years.

Department of Defense Education Activity's Shared Leadership Approach to Professional Development

Cobanoglu (2020) suggested that shared leadership fosters positive feelings toward an organization and reduces departure from terminations or resignations. Shared leadership in primary and secondary schools predicts teachers' organizational commitment (Cobanoglu, 2020, p. 613). With the start of FCOT, the TLA, and TAB, DoDEA gave agency to shared leadership. Implementing the regional CILs cemented the organization's commitment to shared leadership. The CILs provide professional learning and support for district instructional leaders who replicate the professional learning structure with local school instructional leaders and teachers (DoDEA, n.d.). Professional learning focuses on building the capacity of local instructional leaders and developing and sustaining a culture of innovation, collaboration, continuous improvement, and

caring relationships within each school (DoDEA, 2018). Ongoing professional learning sessions are multifaceted and value (1) understanding the collaborative cycles of professional learning communities, (2) implementing enhanced professional learning using virtual and blended models of instruction, (3) understanding approaches to coaching the early majority, and (6) implementing coaching model to support the early majority (DoDEA, 2018). The CILs increase teachers' voices and skill sets and provide systemic leadership development and support based on the DoDEA policies, procedures, and programs for teacher leadership, school-level administrators, district specialists, and superintendents (DoDEA, 2016). District and school-level instructional leaders appreciated how the CILs have met their needs and empowered them to create desired changes (DoDEA, 2018). One school-level administrator stated: "The CILs have helped us design, deliver, and evaluate professional learning in all areas of instructional leadership"(DoDEA Pacific Center for Instructional Leadership, n.d.). Teacher leaders also value the contributions of the CILs and deem trust essential for team success. One teacher leader stated: " I think they have been working more on developing relationships, which is important. People need to know each other and develop trust. I think they have done a great job in doing that. And they have done a great job preparing teacher leaders to facilitate priority professional development" (DoDEA, 2018).

DoDEA’s CIL team members acknowledge that much work is involved in creating change processes but are pleased with their progress. "We see that the district leadership reflects and sees that we are part of their improvement process, that we are all in this together, that we are one team, and they see us as a part of their team. And so that has been exciting" (Kaufman et al., 2020, p. 9). The DoDEA Blueprint, the organization's

five-year continuous improvement plan, informs the CIL coaching and facilitating practices (DoDEA, 2021).

DoDEA has begun cultivating an environment for change and growth for change agents. Systematic change is slow, but the organization is committed to fostering an environment for shared leadership and providing a world-class education to MCSs (DoDEA, 2018). When asked about the impact of the organization's shared leadership approach, one SAPI district schoolteacher stated: "We are moving in the right direction, albeit at a snail's pace, but I suppose we will get there. We must meet our mobility issues with systematic professional development that uses technology and explores blended-learning options" (personal communication June 8, 2023).

As the DoDEA system works toward continuous improvement, change agents must (1) clearly articulate their role; (2) consider the infrastructure and resources of the social system when designing learning activities and considering what innovations to offer; and (3) ensure that the TLA, TAB, CIL, teachers, administrators, and all stakeholders (Anderson et al., 2020, p. 12).

Legislation for Military-Connected Students

The 2019 Blue Star Families report showed that military parents perceive their children's school experiences favorably. Respondents indicated that schools warmly welcomed their children and were receptive to their advocacy for their children. However, 47% of respondents perceived their schools and civilian communities as having "limited military family lifestyle cultural competency" (Blue Star Families, 2019, p.9). Furthermore, respondents agreed that schools could improve on implementing course

placement, particular program placement, and extracurricular participation - elements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, legislation geared towards military-connected children, addresses the educational challenges these children face when transitioning schools (MCEC, 2019). Developed jointly by the Council of State Governments and the U.S. Department of Defense, the compact supplies consistency and uniform treatment for MCSs regarding academic eligibility for extracurricular activities, enrollment, and graduation requirements. The compact further provides a detailed governance structure at the state and national levels with built-in enforcement and compliance mechanisms (America's Promise Alliance, 2019).

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was not explicitly enacted for MCSs' academic and socio-emotional well-being. It does mandate a military-connected student identifier (MCSI). The MCSI, given to the children of military personnel, enables military leaders, educators, and elected officials at all levels of government to understand how MCSs perform in school. Highly mobile MCSs move three times more often than their peers, creating the opportunity for disruptions and gaps in education (MCEC, 2018). MCEC Chief Executive Officer Mary Keller states, "Without the military student identifier, educators and policy leaders cannot know whether these students are faring well, keeping pace, or falling behind. The identifier supplies data to inform educators and policymakers, enabling them to adjust programs, direct resources, and adopt strategies that support these students and their military families" (On the Move, n.d., p. 36). The ESSA and the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) are national education laws

enacted for the equal and fair treatment of students. The ESEA authorizes state-run programs for eligible schools and districts eager to raise the academic achievement of struggling students and address the complex challenges that arise from students with disabilities, language deficiencies, poverty, and mobility issues (Malin et al., 2017).

The ESSA and ESEA legislation frequently removed logistical stressors associated with changing schools, but MCSs still endure prolonged PSC-related absences. PCS-related absenteeism causes MCSs to struggle academically and experience elevated stress levels. MCSs have significant challenges when adapting to an unfamiliar environment with teachers and classmates foreign to their culture and the dynamic nature of military life. Rossiter, Hernandez, and Mackie (2020) suggested that prolonged exposure to toxic stress, as seen with frequent transition, increases anxiety and depression in MCSs. Rossiter et al. (2020) further showed that "military-connected children's experiences with parental deployments may expose them to extended periods of uncertainty and chronic toxic stress, diminishing their capability to cope with academic matters" (Rossiter et al., 2020, p.7).

The Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3), established in 2007, helps MCSs mitigate the challenges associated with their highly mobile lifestyle. MIC3 focuses on military family concerns about attendance, eligibility, enrollment, extracurricular activities, and graduation criteria. The compact, which is nationally adopted, eliminates differing state policies. MIC3 eases the stress of meeting academic and testing requirements for MCSs (MIC3, 2017).

Military families are also concerned about the frequency and length of parental deployments. A 2019 Army Times article revealed that military leaders are worried about

and desire to decrease deployment cycle lengths (The Army Times, 2019). The Committee on the Assessment of Readjustment Needs of Military Personnel, Veterans, and Their Families reported that the average deployment lengths are between "7.7 months - 8.3 months for single deployers and 6.8 months for multiple deployers". Deployment length differs depending on the military branch and unit. Air Force deployments average 4.5 – 6 months, Amy deployments range 9.4 -12 months, Navy deployments average 8-12 months, and Marine deployments last 6-12 months (National Academies Press, 2010). Military deployments affect the military member's children, emphasizing the need for teachers, specifically those employed by DoDEA, to receive systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs.

Alternatives to the Southeast Asia Pacific Island District Schools

The SAPI district schools provide education and extracurricular services for 8,103 MCSs across seven communities. These students face multiple transition-related challenges, such as course placement and credit transfers. Some military families chose homeschooling as an alternative to enrolling their children in public or DoD schools. Homeschooling is an alternative to the DoDEA schools for military families on international assignments in Asia and Europe. Almost 10% of military families stationed in Asia and Europe report homeschooling compared to three percent of the general U.S. population (Blue Star Families 2019). When military families choose to homeschool, they do so for educational continuity. PCS-related absenteeism creates instructional gaps and can cause MCSs to stay caught up. Blue Star Families (2019) reported that 32-48% of homeschooling military families perceive homeschooling as an option to minimize transition distractions and alleviate concerns related to academic credits.

DoDEA's school system supports homeschooling military families to ensure that MCSs have opportunities to mature emotionally and socially through auxiliary and extracurricular activities. The DoDEA Administrative Instruction on homeschooled MCSs policy mandates that organization personnel do the following:

1. Recognize that sponsors have a choice in educational options and that homeschooling is a viable option for educating their dependents.
2. Ensure that DoD-dependent students educated in a homeschool setting but eligible to enroll in a DoDEA school are entitled to use or receive the specified auxiliary services offered by that school on a space-required, tuition-free basis.
3. Ensure that other dependent students educated in a homeschool setting are eligible to enroll in a DoDEA school and access auxiliary and extracurricular services from DoDEA (DoD Directive 1342.20, 2018).

Homeschooling military families are exploring innovative approaches to education, forming partnerships with school districts, organizing themselves into collaborative circles, and finding ways to promote equity and educational continuity for their children (Hirsh, 2019).

Benefits of the Southeast Asia Pacific Island District Schools

DoDEA schools struggle with mobility, but they offer a variety of benefits. The system's 160 schools leverage technology and innovation to provide MCSs with an inclusive and culturally responsive education. Eighteen (18) of the district's 22 schools honor a robust one-to-one technology plan for students and teachers. The plan provides every student and teacher with a laptop and access to Google Suites. In addition, teachers

have desktop and laptop computers, Elmos, SMART boards, and access to multiple digital instruction apps. The remaining four SAPI district schools rotate laptops on a two-to-one rotation. (DoDEA Technology & Innovation Plan, n.d.).

In addition, DoDEA SAPI district schools' students learn host-nation cultural norms and participate in cultural events. DoDEA Senior Leader and Pacific Region Director of Student Excellence Lois Rapp stated: "The cultural exchange programs offer our students unique opportunities to build relationships with their host nation peers" (Stars & Stripes, 2022, p. 4). Another benefit to these students is the amount of travel experience they get through extracurricular activities. Students in the Pacific region participating in extracurricular activities will compete against students in Guam, Hawaii, Japan, and Korea. "The exposure broadens the worldview of students and makes them citizens of the world," said one military spouse (personal communication, November 12, 2021).

DoDEA schools adhere to a comprehensive academic curriculum from prekindergarten to 12th grade, and the system monitors students' progress through multiple assessments. The DoDEA school system manages many challenges associated with military life. For example:

- the assimilation of Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC) into the school's counseling team.
- the frequent and abrupt absences of MCSs and
- the dynamic nature of military culture (NASSP Bulletin, 2017).

At the heart of DoDEA’s instructional program are eight core values. Those values are:

1. Student-Centered: Students are at the heart of everything the DoDEA does.
2. Excellence: DoDEA strives to exceed expectations in everything it does.
3. Continuous Improvement: DoDEA continually reexamines and improves the organization's systems and processes.
4. Diversity: DoDEA strives to honor the uniqueness of everyone, embrace diverse beliefs and backgrounds, respect differences, and create inclusive environments that contribute to a better society.
5. Individual Potential: DoDEA fosters an environment that nurtures intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and creative growth.
6. Lifelong Learning: DoDEA cultivates curiosity, perseverance, and the desire to learn.
7. Shared Responsibility: DoDEA forms partnerships with families, students, staff, and the community that enrich students' lives.
8. Trust: DoDEA seeks to cultivate a safe and risk-free culture that encourages and inspires innovation and builds relationships based on integrity, mutual respect, and open two-way communication (DoDEA Blueprint, 2021.)

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often called The Nation's Report Card, indicated that DoDEA schools serve all students well. The system commonly produces the highest scores of Black and Hispanic students on the NAEP and has the most minor statistical gaps in the assessments between minority and majority students (NASSP Bulletin, 2017).

Combatting Permanent Change in Duty Station-Related Absenteeism

The DoD civilian and military leaders have begun to recognize the adverse impact of frequent moves on the academic achievement and mental health of highly mobile MCSs. In 2022, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness USD (P&R) met an exploratory panel to examine ways to minimize PSC-related movement during the 180-day instructional cycle. Other DoD groups reviewing the problem were the Pacific Component Command Advisory Council (CCAC), Dependents Education Council (DEC), Defense Education Installation Advisory Committee (IAC), and the School Advisory Committee (SAC). Leaders meet quarterly to delve into the root-cause analysis concerning the declining academic achievement and mental health issues of MCSs (DoDI 1342.15, 2021).

In addition, DoDEA schools are exploring the system's Blueprint for Continuous Improvement to increase teaching capacity and close PCS-related instructional gaps. The DoDEA Blueprint for Continuous Improvement details four essential areas for overall system improvement; among the focal points is the need for improved teacher PD. The four key focus areas of DoDEA's Blueprint are as follows:

1. Equitable Learning Experiences for All Students
2. Successful Transition to College, Career, and Life
3. Equitable Employee Engagement
4. Equity for Students, Employees, and Families (DoDEA Blueprint, 2021).

Administrators, specifically high school administrators from the SAPI district schools, need help providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable MCS instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles.

Permanent Change in Duty Station-Related Absenteeism

Kirksey (2021) stated that school absenteeism is a prevalent and pervasive problem in the American education system. PCS-related absenteeism results from having military parents, and its impact on student achievement is akin to chronic absenteeism. Students missing at least a month of school are chronically absent; on average, MCSs miss 15 to 30 days during their parents' PCS cycle (MCEC, 2019).

The challenges of supporting highly mobile MCSs during the PCS transition are ongoing, and military and military-connected stakeholders are becoming increasingly concerned with the impact of PCS-related absenteeism on MCSs' academic achievement and mental health. Military personnel, DoD civilians, and contractors undergo a permanent change in duty station or PCS cycle every two to four years, resulting in their school-age dependents changing schools often.

During PCS cycles, students are absent for multiple weeks. Most military families take full advantage of authorized leave. MCSs are absent for 15 to 30 days during their parents' PCS transition (DoD Pacific East Enrollment & Attendance Document, 2019). Per the AFI manual, Airmen earn ten permissive temporary duty (TDY) days and 15 rest and relaxation (R&R) days in conjunction with a PCS move (AFI 36-3003, 2020). All DoD agencies have established leave (in conjunction with PCS move) policies. In addition to Permissive TDY and R&R leave, military and DoD civilian employees earn administrative leave to meet their quality-of-life necessities. Quality of life necessities include banking, education, housing, and transportation (AFI 36-3003, 2020). Military leave, regardless of the type, affects the attendance of MCSs. High school administrators

from the SAPI district schools reported noticeable student absences during the height of the 2019 PCS cycles (DoDEA Pacific East Enrollment & Attendance Document, 2019).

Permanent Change in Duty Station-Related Absenteeism in the Southeast Asian Pacific Island District Schools

Aspen (the SAPI district schools' information management system) showed that 20% of students enrolled during the third quarter needed consistent instruction and academic engagement for more than 15 days (Aspen Report, 2022). The complexity and frequency of movement for MCSs make teaching difficult. In response to teaching difficulties, high school administrators from the SAPI district schools must provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS-related absenteeism.

Mental Health Disorders: Fear, Anxiety, and Stress

Military permanent change in duty station (PCS) transitions are a source of fear, anxiety, and stress for military families. During PCS cycles, MCSs display elevated levels of emotional response (e.g., difficulty concentrating, disconnection from peers and adults, depression, self-harm, and hysteria), which affect academic and social-emotional growth (Educational Opportunities Directorate of the Department of Defense, n.d.). Elevated emotions are common in military families; the 2019 North Atlantic Treaty Organization study suggested that increased fear, anxiety, and stress for military-connected children worsen their parents' emotions.

General Effects of Permanent Change of Duty Station-Related Absenteeism on the Mental Health of Military-Connected Students

The frequent movement of MCSs affects academic performance and mental health. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 2022 report, stress-related anxiety in MCSs has increased by 25% in recent years. Burgin (2020) stated that military-connected children face risk factors during their caregiver's service, including attachment abnormalities, grief, and separation anxiety, which may result in emotional or behavioral difficulties. Military and Family Life counselors (MFLACs) report an uptick in mental health disorders associated with military-connected mobility (Sullivan et al., 2019). Significant increases in deployments affect the environment of MCSs and disrupt the emotional balance. When military personnel deploy, their children show signs of distress. Rossiter et al. (2020) indicated that MCSs experience more anxiety and lower academic achievement rates during parental deployments and endure more toxic stressors than their civilian peers. Military relocations happen often and sometimes without warning, causing children unwarranted stress. One DoDEA secondary school counselor suggested, "The slow transfer of student records from the losing school to the gaining causes worry in students and prevents them from being their best academic or socio-emotional self." Complications due to frequent and multiple school transitions result in MCSs missing critical higher-order thinking math and science skills or repeating classes. "Either way, the students are in an uncompromising position," said one high school counselor from the SAPI district schools.

Implications

The implications of this basic qualitative research study anticipate instructional continuity for highly mobile military-connected children. Through the four stands of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT: *directing*, *coaching,* s*upporting,* and *delegating,* high school administrators from the SAPI district schools will examine ways to provide systematic, sustained PD to the teachers of MCSs.

The literature review reveals how leaders who use SLT can produce positive outcomes based on leadership strategies that fit their dynamic circumstances. Situational leadership involves:

- an approach for leaders to choose the best leadership style based on the staff's maturity and readiness to perform tasks.
- an opportunity for leaders to manage tasks based on the needs of their staff.
- a strategy for leaders to build trust and mutual respect with their staff.

This basic qualitative capstone project study anticipates improved PD for teachers, which produces increased achievement for MCSs during their parent's PCS cycles. The study encourages high school administrators to implement leadership strategies based on their environment and the learning needs of their staff. The qualitative researcher further assumes the collaboration of stakeholders to strengthen the learning environment and social-emotional climate for highly mobile MCSs.

This qualitative capstone project study examined the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools concerning the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs and implementing the SLT to meet the learning needs of their staff. The basic qualitative

capstone project study used the four strands of the SLT: *delegating, supporting, coaching,* and *directing,* to form semistructured, open-ended interviews for the data collection. The study results were shared with DoDEA's Pacific region CIL team, education leaders, installation commanders, and stakeholders. I anticipate the study's results will persuade leaders to adopt SLT strategies to support the systematic PD of the SAPI district schools' high school teachers.

Summary

The complexity and frequency of movement for MCSs make sustainable instruction difficult. Relocation and parental deployments are significant aspects of the military lifestyle and affect the mobility of military-connected children. Most MCSs move four to six times during their high school (grades 9-12) years (Wilson, 2019), making providing sustainable education difficult. The PCS-related instructional gaps experienced by high school MCSs impact graduation requirements and sometimes lead to declining academic performance, anxiety, depression, and social-emotional duress. The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) reported a decline in MCSs (grades 9-12) academic performance and an increase in the same population receiving mental health services (MCEC, 2019). Schertz and Watson (2018) further highlighted the correlation between frequent military moves and MCSs' academic and mental well-being. Aspen, the SAPI district schools' attendance management system, showed that 20% of the students enrolled (within the last five years) were without sustained instruction for 15 days or more during the third instructional quarter.

The data displayed in the Southeast Asian Pacific Data Management Information System (SPEDMIS) showed that test scores declined during the height of the military

PCS cycle. From 2017-2021, SPEDMIS indicated a 42.3 % decrease in MCSs mastering the English Language Arts and Math performance goals. “Declining academic performance makes it imperative for administrators leading the SAPI district schools to implement practices that eliminate instructional gaps during PCS cycles,” said one SAPI District Schools' Community Superintendent.

School administrators, DoD education leaders, installation commanders, and stakeholders must work collaboratively to resolve PSC-related absenteeism. Leadership is essential in staff PD and student learning, and the challenges of leading military-connected communities are dynamic, mission-driven, and unique (DoDEA, n.d.). The success of MCSs is a collaborative effort between DoD civilians, contractors, and military stakeholders (DoDEA, n.d.).

The SLT encourages leaders to adjust to their staff's learning needs. In situational leadership, school administrators draw from their staff's maturity and readiness levels to perform tasks well. This essential qualitative project study examines situational leadership strategies for combatting the lack of systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles.

The literature review provides extensive background on the challenges of highly mobile MCSs. It examines national policies and military regulations that govern MCSs' educational processes and frequent moves. Additional background literature reveals the complexities of military and military-connected communities. The literature review also acknowledges MCSs' academic and social-emotional needs and challenges to overcome their dynamic circumstances and compete academically with their civilian peers.

The conceptual framework examined how SLT could play an integral role in providing systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles, resulting in academic and social-emotional growth. The limitations in examining administrators' challenges to supply sustainable instruction to MCSs are the small sample size and geographical location of high schools within the SAPI district schools.

High schools within the SAPI district schools are geographically 850+ miles apart. The results are local-specific and may be inapplicable to other school districts. Section two focuses on the open-ended semistructured interviews, research methodology, analysis structure, and data collection.

Section three includes recommendations for DoDEA's Pacific Area Center for Instructional Leadership (CIL) team. The Pacific CIL team is responsible for building systemic leadership development and support, PD for systemic priorities, learning networks, and innovative best practices (DoDEA, 2018.). Specifically, the Pacific CIL team collaborates with community, district, installation, region, and school-based leaders to ensure that these individuals are well-equipped to meet the learning needs of all stakeholders, especially those of MCSs. The results of this essential qualitative capstone project study give the CIL team data that might support changes in the planning and delivery of PD for the teachers of highly mobile MCSs.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

Crossman (2020) defined qualitative research as gathering nonnumerical data by investigating and interpreting the natural social processes of individuals or groups. Ravitch and Carl (2021) further suggested that qualitative research examines people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to understand their perspectives. A qualitative design is proper for examining the struggles of the high school administrators from the SAPI district schools to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during the PCS cycles. Ravitch and Carl implied that individuals or groups can learn more about their experiences and beliefs by evaluating the experiences and beliefs of others. Qualitative research enables us to make sense of reality, describe and explain the social world, and develop explanatory models and theories (Gray, 2021). The design for this basic qualitative study fostered flexibility, specified a circumstance-connected group of participants, and used a small sample size (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative design was well-suited for this basic qualitative study because it encouraged participants to share their experiences and perspectives on the frequent transitions of MCSs and associated complexities.

Yin (2018) suggested that interviews are purposeful in qualitative research because the RQs allow researchers to engage with participants and, through inquiry, learn about the participants' lived experiences. The open-ended, semistructured interview included predetermined, clearly written RQs, safeguarding against biases and personal perspectives (Rosenthal, 2016). This basic qualitative study focused on the challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools to provide teachers with

systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles. The difficulties faced by the SAPI district schools' administrators represent a secondary-level, districtwide problem of practice.

DoDEA's Pacific Area comprises 45 schools in three districts, two countries, and one U.S. territory. The DoD Enrollment Management Data (EMD) System showed the composition of the SAPI district schools. The SAPI district includes 22 schools serving 8,103 MCSs. Sixteen of the 22 schools serve Grades 7–12; six serve Grades 9–12. Regardless of school configuration, students have at least one military or DoD civilian parent who undergoes a PCS cycle every 2 to 4 years.

I interviewed and examined the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools on the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs. I interviewed 10 high school administrators using a predetermined set of semistructured, open-ended questions to collect substantial data. Doing so allowed flexibility and depth in the data collection process, enabling me to gain insight while maintaining the structure of the interviews (Creswell, 2009).

Participants

Ravitch and Carl (2021) and Yin (2018) suggested that purposeful sampling in qualitative research supplies context-rich cases, effectively uses limitations, and selects specific individuals based on experiences, professional knowledge, and location. Basic qualitative research makes sense of one's experience and beliefs by examining the unique experiences of others through a detailed description of an individual's beliefs about a particular topic (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I invited 40 administrators from the SAPI district schools to participate in this qualitative study. The 40-person sample included one

principal and at least one assistant principal from each school. I selected the first 12 administrators who met the inclusion criteria and responded to the invitation favorably. The participants' requirements were at least 5 years of administrative experience and three years of overseeing daily operations and performing supervisory tasks for high school teachers in the SAPI district schools.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested that the number of qualitative interviews needed to reach saturation depends on the qualitative research approach. For a basic qualitative project study examining a unique phenomenon through qualitative interviewing, three to 10 interviews can supply enough data to provide meaningful results and draw conclusions (Creswell, 2018, p. 157). I selected 12 participants and conducted 10 semistructured, open-ended interviews. I chose more than the suggested number of participants to increase the saturation probability. Although I met saturation, I prepared to continue interviewing participants who met the inclusion criteria from the initial 40-person sample to accommodate unmet saturation. Fuss and Ness (2015) suggested that saturation helps increase the robustness of a study and indicates that the researcher has exhaustively studied a phenomenon. Fusch and Ness further explained that failure to achieve saturation can undermine content validity. Saturation correlates with the sample size and the depth of data. The absence of saturation indicates the need for a larger sample size and more substantial data. In addition to saturation concerns, I selected more than the suggested number of participants to accommodate possible "no-shows" and ensure data depth. I explained the criteria to participants in the recruitment materials. The recruitment details are in Appendix A.

I sent participants an electronic invitation to participate in the study. The invitation included the participation requirements, the research rationale, and my contact information. After receiving approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I emailed invitations to each participant's agency-issued email address. A copy of the invitation is in Appendix B.

It is vital for researchers, especially novice researchers, to understand that conducting interviews is taxing and requires extensive questioning centered on a specific phenomenon. "The process of questioning during an interview (e.g., saying little, managing emotional outbursts, and using icebreakers)" creates challenges that the interviewer must expect and prepare to eliminate (Creswell, 2018, p. 173). In addition, interviewer–interviewee trust is critical to the data collection. I communicated the study's methodology, purpose, and projected outcomes to establish trust. I also answered questions about the study, emphasized that participation was voluntary, reiterated to participants that they could withdraw consent at any time, explained the procedures for ensuring participant confidentiality, and obtained the participants' consent form. The Walden University guidebook requires the following:

1. All study participants consent to participate by signing the consent form.
2. All identifying participant information is kept confidential.
3. All data collection sources and research notes are confidential. (Walden University, 2021).

Rubin and Rubin (2021) highlighted the importance of trust between the interviewer and interviewees. I adhered to the interview protocol, built trust with fidelity, and conducted each qualitative interview meaningfully and unbiasedly (Creswell, 2018).

As part of the interview protocol, 5 days after receiving a positive response to the invitation to participate, I emailed participants via their Dodea.edu email addresses to confirm their participation, provide a synopsis of the qualitative study, and set a mutually agreed-upon date and time for the interview.

The interview protocol was as follows:

- I communicated via Microsoft Outlook and the Teams platform. I emailed invitations and interviewed participants on Teams. I introduced myself and thanked each participant in writing and verbally for volunteering to participate in the study.
- I followed the scripted open-ended, semistructured research questions guide and asked each participant the same questions using the same sequence. Based on participants' responses, follow-up questions were presented differently.
- I used Microsoft Teams' audio recording and transcription features to ensure information accuracy.

Data Collection

This basic qualitative capstone project study used the qualitative interviews of 10 high school administrators from the SAPI district schools to collect data on administrators' perspectives on the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during their parents' PCS cycles. The study also gathered data on the administrators' perspectives on Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT as a resource to meet the PD needs of teachers who teach highly mobile MCSs. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gather practical answers through reflective, in-depth questioning. The qualitative research design aligned with the

purpose of the study because it enables administrators to draw from their individual experiences to implement strands of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT to combat a problem of practice.

I conducted and recorded interviews using the Microsoft Teams audio recording and transcription feature. I conducted eight 30-minute interviews, one 40-minute interview, and one 28-minute interview. In total, I conducted 10 interviews. All interview participants were high school administrators from the SAPI district schools. I took notes on each interview, compared the notes to the audio and transcription files, and reviewed notes from my reflective journal. According to Hinnker et al. (2020), the researcher's notes are essential to the coding process. My notes revealed common emotions, patterns, phrases, and themes relevant to the perceptions of the administrators concerning their challenges to providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs. The notes further revealed the administrators' perceptions of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT as a resource to meet the PD needs of teachers who teach highly mobile MCSs.

I transferred the information shared onto a Microsoft Office table and developed a frequency of response table using raw data. Through thematic coding, I found common patterns, phrases, and themes across participants to find consistency regarding the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs. In contrast, I discovered nuances related to the service installation that the participants' school supports. Coding is a method of analyzing qualitative data that decreases biases, increases validity, and helps researchers note common and uncommon participant responses (Saldaña, 2016).

Coding is beneficial because it helps researchers organize substantial data and shows patterns and themes that could lead to meaningful conclusions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Using Saldaña's (2016) coding process for thematic analysis, I reviewed the data, extracted information for first-cycle coding, and analyzed recurring data points for second-cycle coding. I identified recurring emotions, words, patterns, and phrases. I used Microsoft Office to create tables for multiple levels of coding. Creswell (2018) suggested that coding helps qualitative researchers reflect, interpret, and theorize based on the patterns from collected data. I induced interview data, highlighting the most significant patterns, phrases, categories, and themes (Creswell, 2018). The study examined general words, phrases, patterns, categories, and themes across participants to find the challenges and resources needed to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs.

The semistructured, open-ended qualitative interviews of 10 SAPI high school administrators supplied comprehensive data. Saldaña (2012) showed that first-cycle methods are coding strategies during the first data coding. I organized the data into grammatical, literary, and language techniques. In contrast, second-cycle coding strategies "require analytic skills like classifying, prioritizing, integrating synthesizing, abstracting, conceptualizing, and theory building" (Saldaña, 2012, p. 58). Creswell (2018) suggested that researchers avoid identifying more than seven themes. I followed Creswell's (2018) suggestion and examined the Microsoft Teams audio transcription files to induce themes shared from multiple perspectives. There was an exhaustive list of recurring themes; for example, *absenteeism, anxiety, collective mission, culture, constant change, depression, diversity, dread, emotional bandwidth, flexibility, human capital,*

mentorship, meaningful professional development, PSC cycles, sponsorship, teacher readiness, time management, social climate, relationships, social-emotional balance, shared leadership, and *stakeholder engagement.* Themes were scrutinized according to their correlation with the RQs. A discussion of themes appears in the Data Analysis section of this qualitative capstone study project. To prevent contamination, I kept an audit trail of analyzed data and ensured that conclusions were grounded in the conceptual framework of this basic qualitative study (Creswell, 2014).

Researcher reflexivity refers to the researcher's understanding and response to personal biases. According to Rubin and Rubin (2021), researchers can manage biases by journaling and following established protocols. I reflected on my thoughts, journaled, and adhered to the interview guidelines to minimize biases. Furthermore, I followed the protocols of the Walden University IRB process.

Role of the Researcher

As a DoDEA teacher leader and aspiring administrator, I am committed to conquering the challenges associated with the need for systematic PD for teachers that support sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles. Minimizing and eventually resolving mobility challenges are critical to DoDEA's goals for student, school, talent, and organizational excellence (DoDEA Blueprint, 2021). My active participation in the DoDEA TLA and TAB gives me an in-depth look at critical elements impacting the full implementation of the DoDEA Blueprint. PCS-related absenteeism and the lack of systematic PD for teachers that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles rank among the top five challenges to the Blueprint. My role as the researcher in this basic qualitative project study was that of a data-collecting instrument. I collected

substantial data to ensure that a credible study yielded relevant results. I was intentional about every aspect of the study.

My intentionality began with structuring well-crafted open-ended semistructured interviews centered on the two RQs that guided the study. Then, I sought support from the high school administrators of the SAPI district schools who were willing to share their authentic struggles to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles and perceptions regarding Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT as a resource to combat the problem of practice. I also created a safe interview environment conducive to honest, open, and transparent communication. I excluded the administrators from the high school where I was assigned. I work at one of the small schools within the SAPI district schools. I acted solely as a data-collecting instrument for this basic qualitative capstone project study.

Having been a teacher in the SAPI district schools for two decades, I understood the possibility of personal biases. Therefore, I used my journal as a reflective tool. Roberts (2020) implied that researchers write their thoughts before, during, and after interviews. Reflection is vital to PD and the maturity process. As a reflective practitioner, I welcome the opportunity to review practices, methods, and procedures and their impact on teacher and student outcomes. Jung et al. (2021) suggested that reflection builds competencies and evokes change.

The primary role of the researcher is to ensure that the data-collecting process is uncontaminated. I adhered to the Walden University protocols and provided respondents with a transcript of their interview, which helped ensure context accuracy (Rubin & Rubin, 2021). Participants received an electronic copy of their interview transcript after I

compared my written notes to the Microsoft Teams audio recording and interview transcript files. Participants only received the transcript of their interview. Three questions accompanied the transcript:

- Are there any discrepancies?
- Are there any clarifications?
- Is the information correct?

Ravitch and Carl (2021) suggested that researchers answer their research questions to ensure understanding. My role as a researcher was critical to the methodology and trustworthiness of the study, making transparency essential. I reflected on the process, eliminated biases related to the challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools to provide systematic PD for teachers that support sustainable instruction for MCSs, and journaled my thoughts about the phenomenon.

Data Analysis

The findings of this basic qualitative capstone project study appeared through thematic analysis. An inductive thematic analysis approach synthesizes data into a summary that connects to the RQs (Thomas, 2003). I examined text and audio recordings to establish relationships between the information, its context, and the words used to express meaningful thoughts. In addition, I used coding to separate data themes to create further analysis (Saldaña, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2021) suggested that coding allows researchers to take large amounts of data to identify patterns, categories, and themes. The initial step of coding qualitative data is transcribing the information. I used Microsoft Teams automated transcription. However, I compared my notes to the participants' transcripts and noted differences and similarities. Interacting with the transcripts helped

me become more aware of the collected data and led to effective sorting and organizing (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Hinnker et al. (2020) highlighted the significance of the researcher's notes to the coding process. From participants' answers, I gained insight into administrators' perceptions of PCS-related absenteeism, teacher PD, and readiness, and Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT as a resource to help combat or conquer the challenges associated with providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles. I identified emotions, patterns, words, phrases, and themes relevant to the perceptions of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools regarding their use of the four strands of situational leadership (*directing, coaching, supporting,* and *delegating*) to influence change toward the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles.

Confidentiality

Committed to the confidentiality of the study, I did not share the participants' names or demographic information. I captured interview data through the Microsoft Teams platform. After transcribing information, I deleted the participant's name and replaced it with the alphabet "P" for the participant and the number of their interview, for example, P1 for the first interviewee. I used the Microsoft Teams digital platform to record data for this basic qualitative study. The digital files and all study-related hard copy documents will remain securely filed for five years.

Coding

This basic qualitative capstone project study examined commonalities and differences between SAPI district school administrators to discover the challenges and resources associated with providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable MCS instruction for MCSs during transitions. Saldaña suggested that codes in qualitative research are words or short phrases that "symbolically assign a summative or essence-capturing attribute to a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 3). First-cycle coding uses single words, phrases, or whole sentences to convey meaning. However, second-cycle coding reveals similarities, exactness, and categories of data (Saldaña, 2013). Multiple levels of coding, including descriptive, which enabled me to use short descriptive phrases to help categorize data, were used. During third-level coding, I induced commonalities and differences in all interview transcripts. I used inductive thematic coding by reviewing the Microsoft Teams audio and transcription files' data and the researcher's interview and reflective journal notes to create data tables for NVivo processing. The Data Analysis and Results section of this basic qualitative capstone project study explicitly explains the data collection process.

Credibility

Ravitch and Carl (2016) suggested that credibility is essential to coding and helps cultivate confidence in the study's truth. Creswell (2018) further indicated that proving trustworthiness and credibility is crucial and that researchers must use multiple validity procedures. I achieved validity through clarification and member checking. I checked the interview questions' clarity, strength, and validity to ensure credibility. A recent Walden University doctoral program graduate and DoDEA administrator evaluated the interview

guide by reading and developing responses to the qualitative study's RQs. There were 12 open-ended semistructured interview questions. Informed by the RQs for this basic qualitative capstone project study, I structured each question to gain the participants' perspective on the local phenomena. Again, the research questions are:

- RQ1 What are the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools concerning the challenges of providing teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs?
- RQ2: What are the perceptions of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools of situational leadership theory as a resource for meeting the professional development needs of teachers who instruct highly mobile MCSs?

Hennink et al. (2020) argued that researchers need training in qualitative research methods. Peer debriefings and mock interviews are examples of essential training methods. "Conducting qualitative research requires learning the techniques and internalizing the concepts and assumptions that underlie qualitative research" (Hennink et al., 2020, p.10). Before the first interview for this capstone project study, I conducted three mock interviews. The mock interviews helped me better understand interview challenges and gave me confidence in conducting bias-free, semistructured, open-ended interviews.

Discrepancies

Discrepancies in qualitative research occur when contradicting data appears. It is important to note that participants' lived experiences guide their responses to questions in

a real-world setting. It is likely to receive contrasting viewpoints; alternative viewpoints strengthen the validity and authenticity of the results (Creswell, 2018). For clarity, I reviewed each participant's transcript with them. Participants provided data accuracy. Discrepancies can also stem from researcher bias, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. To minimize differences, I followed all Walden University guidelines. Creswell (2018) suggested that researchers manage their biases and adhere to proven data collection protocols. Four discrepancies stemmed from my lack of Navy installation environmental knowledge. The discrepancies were rectified through member checking.

Ethical Considerations

I adhered to the IRB research standards and Walden University's capstone project guidelines for this basic qualitative study. I informed participants of their role in the study and treated everyone respectfully and fairly. I did not coerce or compensate anyone to participate in the study. There were no identifiable risks for the participants in this study, and I reiterated to participants that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw anytime. I upheld the ethical procedures associated with the study's credibility, trustworthiness, and validity. I did not deviate from the rules governing the IRB process.

Limitations

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), limitations often result from methodology. There were two limitations to this basic qualitative study. First, there was the possibility of personal biases. As the school's Continuous School Improvement (CSI) Chair and DoDEA TLA and TAB teacher leader who continuously explored the impact of PSC-related absenteeism on student achievement, I might have approached the

capstone project with preconceived ideas and biases. I managed personal biases by remaining objective, journaling, and reflecting on my notes and role as the researcher. Creswell (2018) encouraged researchers to keep a reflection journal. Reflection is a tool to minimize research biases. As a reflective practitioner, I deem the reflection process fundamental to teaching and learning. Goker (2016) implied that reflection makes one aware of professional knowledge and actions by challenging assumptions of everyday practice and critically evaluating practitioners' responses to practical situations.

Secondly, there was the potential for participant biases. I managed participants' biases by creating a safe space for honest, open, and transparent communication, adhering to the interview protocols, and asking straightforward, semistructured, open-ended questions. I assured participants that their role was to help create data for this qualitative capstone project by sharing their lived experiences and expertise in combatting the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for military-connected students (MCSs) during PCS cycles.

Scope and Delimitations

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2018) suggested that delimitations in qualitative research are margins established by the researcher. The delimitation of this qualitative capstone project is that the scope of the study is extended to a specific populace. The study examined the challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools in providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs. Military children face unique academic, emotional, and social challenges because of frequent global, national, and state transitions. The lack of teacher readiness, differences in academic curricula, school requirements, and PCS-related

absenteeism result in educational gaps for MCSs (Bradshaw et al., 2010; MCEC, 2019). The delimitation ensured the study's scope was realistic in identifying and interviewing participants with authentic experience in leading the teachers of highly mobile MCSs. Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT delimited the study's conceptual framework. Another delimitation was literature. The current literature offered limited options for preparing teachers to engage and provide high-quality instruction to highly mobile MCSs. This basic qualitative study revealed innovative approaches to strengthening educational practice by giving teachers systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs. For example, teachers at the SAPI district schools engage in 90 minutes of Focused Collaboration time (FCOT) weekly (DoDEA, 2018). According to study participants, the FCOT is a structured form of collaboration that empowers teachers to make data-driven and input-driven decisions while working together to improve teaching effectiveness.

Aligned with DoDEA's Blueprint for Organizational Excellence, the first focal point, Equitable Learning Experiences, study participants (P1-10) viewed the FCOT as ideal for providing specialized PD for teachers. The FCOT relies on the support of teachers to create an environment that improves adult and student learning. Educators critically think about problems and collaborate towards solutions (DoDEA, 2018). The participants of this qualitative capstone project study indicated that FCOT allows teachers to galvanize around the intricate relationships between curriculum, standards, and assessments and could accommodate specialized PD. Based on the school environment and staff readiness, P3 offered that the *coaching* strand of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT would work well during FCOT.

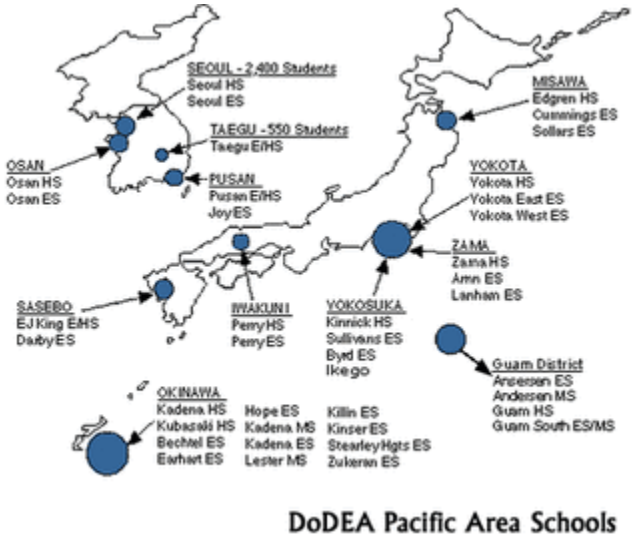
> "I believe that coaching would benefit our mostly veteran staff. It is ideal for mentor teachers to model effective teaching strategies and technology infusion." P3 further stated, "Mentor teachers could coach novice staff members on the delicate balance between instruction, PCS-related absenteeism, and other dynamics particular to the military-connected environment."

Data Analysis and Results

This qualitative capstone project study collected data from the semistructured, open-ended interviews of 10 SAPI district school administrators who met the inclusion criteria and responded favorably to the electronic invitations. The participant sample comprised five principals and five assistant principals. Of this number, four are males, five are females, and one is gender-neutral. Each administrator "commands" a tenant unit (school) located on a U.S. military installation. One school supports the Army, one the Marines, two the Navy, and six the Air Force. SAPI district schools are located 850+ miles apart and categorized by enrollment. Traditionally, a large school has a student enrollment of 1,000 or more, and a small school's enrollment is less than 1,000. The U.S. military manning documents impact enrollment (DoD CRS Report, 2020). Figure 1 displays a map of the Pacific Area schools.

Figure 1

Map of Pacific Area Schools



Note. From Technology and Innovation, by Department of Defense Education Activity, n.d. (https://www.dodea.edu/education/technology-and-innovation). In the public domain.

I emailed 40 invitations. I selected the first 12 administrators who met the criteria, responded favorably, and agreed by signing the consent form. I chose more participants than needed to accommodate possible no-shows and withdrawals and increase saturation probability. Due to a family emergency, one participant could not interview, and another withdrew consent. Table I shows descriptive data for the 10 study participants, including their leadership roles, administrative experience, and experience in the SAPI district schools.

Table 1

Study Participants' Descriptive Information

Participants	Leadership role	Years of administrator experience	Years of SAPI district school administrator experience
P1	Principal	15	5
P2	Assistant principal	5	3
P3	Principal	25	15
P4	Principal	15	5
P5	Principal	10	7
P6	Assistant principal	5	5
P7	Assistant principal	6	4
P8	Assistant principal	6	3
P9	Principal	12	7
P10	Assistant principal	5	3

The cumulative administrator experience represented in T1 exceeds one hundred years. Liebowitz and Porter (2019) indicated that administrator experience level affects leadership strategies, influencing student, teacher, and school outcomes. Ruslan et al. (2020) further suggested that the success or failure of schools displaying high levels of teacher professionalism correlates with the quality of the administrator's leadership style. Schermerhorn (1997) offered that "successful leaders are those who can adapt their behavior to meet the demand of their unique situation" (p. 5).

Results

Twelve open-ended, semistructured interview questions supported the research questions (RQs) informing this qualitative capstone project. The 12 questions correlated to Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT. In review, SLT involves four leadership strategies: *directing, coaching, supporting,* and *delegating.* Each leadership strategy entails specific characteristics and targets specific subordinate traits. For example, SLT Stragey1 (S1) *directing* focuses on providing direction to subordinates who lack the

ability and willingness to complete tasks. S1 leadership methods include simple instructions, clear explanations, and careful supervision. Interview questions 1-3 related to S1 were used to respond to RQ1.

Interview questions 4-6 were used to respond to RQ2 and related to SLT S2 *coaching*. *Coaching* gives direction and personal support to subordinates who may be unable to perform their tasks with fidelity but are motivated to succeed. Interview questions 7-9 were used to respond to RQ1 and related to SLT S3 *supporting. Supporting* focuses on giving feedback and motivating subordinates towards more significant PD.

Finally, interview questions 10-12 were used to respond to RQ 2 related to SLT S4 *delegating*. Leaders using SLT S4 are confident in their subordinates' professional skills and offer subordinates autonomy over their responsibilities. The leader and subordinates have fostered mutual trust, and work products meet expectations. The terms leader and administrator are synonymous within the *Results* section of this qualitative capstone project study.

The interviews were recorded using the Microsoft Teams audio and transcription feature. Once the interviews were completed, I downloaded the audio file and automated transcription. Then, I compared the interview and reflective journal notes and saved the data files individually. I created a Word file for each capstone project participant. The data in the Word file were composed of emotions, words, phrases, and ideas. Overwhelmed by the data codes, I invested in data analysis software. I used Phillips and Lu's (2018) NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The software generated thematic codes from the responses. I uploaded each participant’s Word document into the software. The data revealed 35 themes; saturation occurred during the third interview

transcript. The coding process seemed ongoing, but I wanted to ensure saturation; no new codes emerged, and codes relevant to this study's RQs. I reviewed the data and discovered identical responses in multiple interviews, prompting a review of my researcher's notes. After reviewing my notes, I determined that a follow-up for clarification was warranted. I contacted P2, P5, P7, and P9. I achieved clarity through member checking.

Seven recurring themes emerged from Research Question One: What are the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools concerning the challenges of providing teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs? Twelve (12) general themes emerged from Research Question Two: What are the perceptions of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools of the SLT as a resource to meet the professional development needs of teachers who instruct highly mobile MCSs? I examined the themes, eliminating those that did not directly contribute to the research questions. After several iterations, 22 themes emerged. Table 2 displays those themes.

Table 2

Themes

Anxiety	Absenteeism	Constant change	
Collective mission	Culture & Climate	Community	Stakeholder engagement
Diversity	Deployment	Flexibility	LWT data
Mentorship	Mobility	Mutual respect	Organizational Excellence
PCS cycle	Relationships	Shared leadership	Sponsorship
Teacher readiness	Social-emotional balance	Time management	

Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested that qualitative researchers limit themes to seven or fewer; therefore, I examined my notes and reviewed audio and transcriptions. I, again, read through the transcripts, searching for ideas essential to the RQs of the qualitative capstone project study. At the end of that analysis, nine themes emerged: culture and climate, flexibility, mentorship, relevant PD, teacher readiness, relationships, social-emotional balanced shared leadership, and stakeholder engagement.

In addition, I reviewed the frequency of codes looking to merge data into thematic concepts. I determined that *relevant PD* and *teacher readiness* were similar enough to merge and that stakeholder engagement is intertwined with culture and climate, giving me the seven essential qualitative capstone project study themes. Table 3 shows the final themes for this study, and Table 4 indicates the frequency of recurring themes.

Table 3

Final Themes

Culture & climate
Community
Flexibility
Mentorship
PD—Teacher readiness
Relationships
Social-emotional balance

Table 4

Frequency of Recurring Themes

Themes	Number of participants conceptualizing the theme	Percentage of use
Culture & Climate	10	100%
Community	10	100%
Flexibility	10	100%
Mentorship	10	100%
Teacher readiness—PD	10	100%
Relationships	10	100%
Social-emotional balance	10	100%

The final seven themes recurred, depending on whether participants answered questions relating to RQ1 or RQ2. The themes were repetitive and were mentioned more than 66 times across participants.

Culture and Climate

The culture and climate of schools are essential to high morale and student success. Strobel Education (2023) identified school climate as "the overall atmosphere, environment, and quality of life within a school, including safety, relationships, and academic expectations." Strobel Education (2023) further identified school culture as "the collection of values, beliefs, norms, and traditions that shape how a school operates and influences behavior," which includes the shared expectations and attitudes of teachers, administrators, students, and parents and the practices and procedures that

define the school's identity. All study participants regarded culture and climate as crucial to overall school success. However, participants P4 and P8 were explicit in noting the difference. Participant P4 suggested that school climate includes the "physical, emotional, and social aspects" of the school experience; P8 extended the concept to include the attitudes and perceptions of all stakeholders.

Although school culture and climate are connected, Gruenert and Whitaker (2023) differentiate by describing climate as "what is done" and culture as the "why behind what is done" (Gruenert &Whitaker, 2023, p. 8). Participants P2, P3, and P5 acknowledged the differences between school climate and culture and noted that school culture is steeped in core values and is challenging to shape. However, the school climate is dynamic and steeped in the attitudes and feelings of stakeholders. All participants agreed that administrators and their leadership styles significantly impact the school's climate and culture. Ridho et al. (2017) offered that administrators (as leaders) play a vital role in developing a positive school culture, and their primary duty is to foster an environment conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Participants P6, P8, and P10 alluded to the nuances of the military-connected environment that increase the challenges of cultivating a healthy school culture and climate. According to Participant P8, "The constant rotation of students and staff makes it tough to build consistency." Kitmitto et al. (2011) alluded to the difficulties military-connected students (MCSs) face when adjusting to new schools. "With each move, military children must cope with making new friends, adapting to a new school environment at awkward times, and figuring out how to fit in (Kitmitto et al., 2011, p.13). Participant P10 highlighted that teachers, specifically military spouses, transition often. "Annually, nearly 30% of the staff rotates creating

start, stop, and start initiatives again." Eight of the 10 study participants indicated that they rely on the expertise and talents of veteran teachers to provide cultural continuity. "Many of our schools have a core group, five to 10 veteran teachers, who have more than a decade of institutional history, and we depend on them to help cultivate the culture of our schools," said Participant P6.

Community

All participants in this qualitative study acknowledged the importance of community to their school's overall success. Participant P2 revealed that community engagement is essential to assimilating staff and students. "Depending on what branch of the military your school supports, the school is the hub of activity, and robust community engagement is necessary to enhance school programs." Participant P1 said the school depends on the community to provide host-nation enrichment and support MCSs in academic and extra-curricular activities on Navy installations. "The rotation from ship to shore duty and vice versa make community connectivity vital. Suppose a student's parent is on ship duty. In that case, physical support for that student during extra-curricular activities, like a football or volleyball game, comes from the community." Participant P4 further shared that the community facilitates multiple opportunities for cultural (American, Japanese, Korean, etc.) enrichment on Air Force installations. Participant P4 continued, "annual cultural events like *American Day* and *Learn Japan* are held to foster camaraderie and friendship between nations and to share cultures. These cultural days are important for the school because they strengthen campus, community, and cultural relationships".

Participants P1, P7, and P9 shared their perspectives on the community as a robust resource to provide mental health services to MCSs beyond the scope of school-provided services. MCSs experienced anxiety and stress related to acceptance, frequent moves, and parental deployments. According to Participant P7, school counselors can handle students' academic and social-emotional needs. However, the school relies heavily on military-community counselors and therapists to address issues like severe depression and suicide ideation. Participant P7 further explained, “On Army installations, the military community counselors staffed via Military Family Readiness often augment school counselors.” LeMenestrel et al. (2019) described Military and Family Readiness as a network of programs and services that promote military family well-being by offering programs and services that enhance the quality of life for military families. “Collaboration and integration across the system promote positive outcomes for service members and their families across the domains of military family readiness, including social, financial, health, and community engagement” (U.S. DoD, 2012, p. 13).

Russell et al. (2020) suggested that MCSs are more likely to engage in risky health behaviors and are more affected by mental health problems than their civilian peers. Hisle-Gorman et al. (2019) offered that MCSs experience coping difficulties, sleeping problems, compulsive behaviors, and conduct issues that extend beyond the scope of school counselors, making military-community counselors imperative. Participant P9 added that the school liaison officer (SLO) is instrumental in connecting military-community counselors to students who experience mental health crises. Participant P1 suggested that having military-community counselors augment DoDEA schools' counseling programs ensures that MCSs are adequately supported and

demonstrates the resources and unique opportunities and challenges of living and working in military-connected environments.

Flexibility

Flexibility in this qualitative capstone study refers to military-connected school administrators, teachers, students, and stakeholders' willingness to change practices, procedures, and processes quickly. All study participants cited flexibility as significant to meeting the challenges of educating MCSs. Participant P10 alluded to the frustrations associated with PSC-related absenteeism and stated the importance of flexibility. "It is important that teachers are flexible with their lesson plans and prepared to teach to unexpected student learning trajectories." Participant P1 added, "Teachers need to be flexible. Their students will likely exhibit huge instructional gaps. Sometimes, students miss a third of the grading period. Absenteeism affects lesson planning and often requires multi-level planning." Gottfried and Kirksey (2017) suggested a correlation between student attendance and academic performance and stated that "missing school reduces the amount of time students can engage instructional practices" (Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017, p.119).

However, MCSs experience absenteeism due to their parents' employment and struggle with academic challenges. Participants P4, P7, and P8 agreed that teachers must be flexible. However, they suggested that more PD is needed to prepare teachers to combat the impact of PCS-related absenteeism on student learning and achievement. The 2019 Blue Star Families report cited the quality of their children's education among the top five concerns for military parents. "Teachers new to the military-connected environment struggle to find successful strategies to close instructional gaps," said

Participant P4. As an agency, DoDEA must work harder to resolve this issue, Participant P7 added.

DoDEA's CIL teams help teachers use flexibility to develop innovative best practices. Participants P1 and P9 suggested that the CIL examine Focus Collaboration time (FCOT), searching for opportunities to implement specialized teacher PD centered around flexible instructional and learning options. All participants agreed that flexibility is essential to working with military-connected families and that the Southeast Asian Pacific Island (SAPI) district schools consider flexibility critical to mission success.

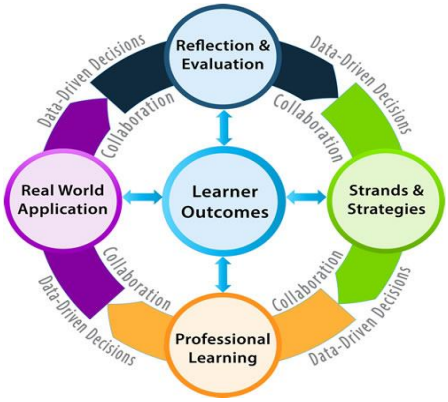
Mentorship

Teacher mentorship is vital in increasing the capacity for professional growth and subject-matter expertise. Walters and Walters (2020) indicated that mentor teachers experienced professional growth concerning their teaching identity and practice and built toward sustainable instructional strategies. All study participants acknowledged the positive impact of mentorship, but Participants P1 and P3 spoke explicitly about DoDEA's coaching and mentorship model. "Having a mentorship program helps cultivate school culture and builds camaraderie and craft knowledge," said Participant P1. Participant P1 further stated that DoDEA's mentoring is a source of job-embedded learning, "helping teachers identify and implement new and innovative practices in the context of their everyday work." The SAPI district schools use the coaching and mentoring model to help novice teachers assimilate to the military-connect environment and balance the challenges of teaching highly mobile MCSs. Participant P3 indicated that DoDEA's coaching and mentoring model depends on establishing healthy workplace relationships built on trust. "Trust is the foundation of all sound relationships, and

workplace relationships are not different. Coaching-mentoring partnerships are most effective and yield positive student outcomes when built on trustworthiness," said Participant P3. Drucker et al. (2018) suggested that setting and achieving instructional goals without trust is difficult.

Figure 2

DoDEA's Coaching and Mentoring Model



Note. From *The DoDEA Blueprint*, by Department of Defense Education Activity, 2021 (https://www.dodea.edu/about/blueprint-continuous-improvement). In the public domain.

Teacher Readiness—Professional Development

This qualitative research study generated recurring codes from all participants on the benefits of specialized PD and teacher readiness. The 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GOA) report indicated that DoDEA teachers viewed agency-wide PD positively and planned to implement what they had learned in their classrooms. However, 10 out of 10 participants in this research study identified specialized PD as a critical need for teachers to meet the challenges of PSC-related absenteeism. Participants P3 and P4 agreed that novice teachers need more PD to help them assimilate into the dynamics of the military community. Participant P4 stated, "It is overwhelming for

teachers who have not lived and worked in a military community to adjust to the lifestyle changes and deal with absenteeism. Not only are students absent due to the PCS cycle, but sports travel accounts for one-third of absences among grade 9-12 students. To the extent that funds are available, DoDEA provides interscholastic sports and co-curricular programs and activities to enrich the school environment and experience. Some schools are more than 700 miles apart, meaning athletes or participants miss one to five school days (Walker, 2000).

SAPI district schools' teachers engage in a comprehensive PD program, and DoDEA provides extensive PD training and activities multiple times throughout the academic year. However, much of it occurs during the school year and takes teachers away from the classroom. Participant P3 suggested that reimaging the FCOT would improve PD for teachers and meet their learning needs. Participant P6 offered that teachers advocate for their self-efficacy and repeatedly request more meaningful problem-specific PD. "Teachers want strategies to improve teaching methodologies that target absenteeism," said Participant P6. Lazarides and Warner (2020) indicated that teachers feel empowered when they control their PD needs, fostering a positive learning environment and school culture.

Lynch and Smith (2016) define "readiness" as a school willing and prepared to engage with "improvement agendas." Participant P8 suggested that most school administrators know their staff's strengths and weaknesses and are willing to create staff engagement and development capabilities, but "time" is required. Teacher readiness is vital to student achievement and requires high-quality PD (Didion et al., 2019).

Relationships

The data collection process generated more than 50 codes relating to relationships. All study participants deemed trustworthy reciprocal relationships essential to flourishing schools. Participants P4, P7, and P10 agreed that positive relationships between administrators and teachers affect commitment levels. Prince (2012) suggested that administrators' relationships with their staff impact attitudes, productivity, and job satisfaction. Participant P2 indicated that shared leadership – allowing teachers to have "voice and choice" in decision-making is a great way to increase relationship capacity. "The more teachers are involved in decision-making, the more valued they feel, and the more they will commit to the administrator's short and long vision for the school," said Participant P2. Participant P5 offered that strong relationships flow from the school to the community. "When administrators, teachers, and students work harmoniously, it is easier to engage stakeholders and get them involved in school initiatives and programs," said Participant P5. Robust stakeholder relationships are a by-product of positive administrator-teacher-student relationships. Relationships. As school leaders, principals' relationships strongly and directly affect teachers' attitudes toward relationship capacity and define the school-community climate (Price, 2012).

Social-Emotional Balance

The data collection process generated 66 codes related to the social-emotional balance of MCSs across all study participants. The dynamic lifestyle and unique challenges of MCSs require school counselors and staff to create learning environments conducive to academic and emotional growth. Participants P1 and P6 highlighted the increased number of MCSs requiring mental health support and their overall social-

emotional learning (SEL) needs. “MCSs already face unique challenges, coupled with the effects of COVID-19, and the need for effective SEL strategies becomes vital,” said Participant P1. Paolini (2020) defines SEL as the process by which children and adults regulate emotions, set goals, demonstrate empathy, build healthy relationships, and make constructive choices. Participant P6 suggested that effective SEL learning strategies are integral to education and human development.

In 2021, the SAPI district schools prioritized SEL and adopted Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), which includes the Response to Intervention (RTI) elements. The RTI elements are:

- universal screening to identify struggling students
- explicit and differentiated instruction for all students with increased frequency and intensity of tiered interventions to target specific students' needs
- ongoing progress monitoring with recommended timelines and entrance/exit criteria
- dedicated time in focused collaboration for teachers to analyze data and design interventions
- ongoing professional learning, coaching, and modeling support teachers and administrators (DoDEA, 2021).

All participants in this qualitative capstone project study agreed that it is essential for highly mobile MCSs to achieve social-emotional balance. MacDermid-Wadsworth et al.(2017) stated, “Healthy social development includes being able to achieve balance and satisfaction with interpersonal relationships despite the increasing complexity of those relationships” (MacDermid et al., 2017, p. 211). The Military Child Education Coalition

(MCEC) is aware of the struggles that MCSs experience building and maintaining relationships and has prepared a toolkit to help educators. Counselors help MCSs achieve balance despite parental deployments and geographical separation (MCEC, 2024). Participants P4, P7, and P9 agreed that MCSs struggle socially despite their best efforts. All participants of the basic qualitative research study further agreed that frequent school transitions and prolonged absences of MCSs lead to social-emotional duress.

Discussion

Administrators' Challenges

Administrators from the SAPI district schools face challenges in providing teachers with explicit PD that targets PCS-related absenteeism. Since 2016, DoDEA teachers have participated in weekly Focused Collaboration-embedded PD, a time dedicated to circulating knowledge and ideas, providing educators with the support that improves teaching effectiveness, and creating a culture that increases teachers' confidence (DoDEA Focused Collaboration Guide, 2016, p. 3). However, PD's focus on PSC-related absenteeism is limited, forcing administrators to partially meet DoDEA's tenants of instructional leadership. DoDEA defined Instructional Leadership "as building a shared vision of excellent instruction; establishing and sustaining a culture of continuous improvement; prioritizing collaborative and ongoing professional learning; maximizing time for instructional improvement; and being intentional about building and leveraging teacher expertise" (DoDEA CIL, 2020, p.11). The participants of this qualitative study agreed; in the absence of specialized PD concerning high student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism, it is challenging to "maximize instructional improvement."

From 2018 to 2023, the DoDEA Manpower document indicated that 10% of the new hires in the SAPI district schools were unfamiliar with military culture and did not understand the intricate details of teaching and living in a military environment. The district's Mentor Teacher program helps with assimilating novices to the military-connected environment, but helping new teachers adjust to providing high-quality instruction to MCSs and the associated complexities exceeds the scope of the mentoring program. In alignment with DoDEA's Continuous Improvement Blueprint, the SAPI district schools Mentor Teacher program helps new teachers meet their quality-of-life needs, understand the processes and procedures that govern the school and community, and employ culturally responsive teaching strategies. The mentor teacher is akin to a peer coach aiding in developing teaching skills, methods, or techniques (Lipton & Wellman, 2018). The DoDEA Blueprint states, "A talented workforce is an essential element of student achievement" (DoDEA Blueprint, 2021, p. 18), and practical instruction is essential to high-performing schools. However, teacher PD is most effective when timely and relevant to teachers' training needs (Lipton & Wellman, 2018).

Administrators' Resources

The participants of this qualitative study (P1-P10) indicated that the SAPI district schools enjoy a robust technology plan. Most schools are at a 1 to 1 student-computer ratio. In addition, teachers have desktop computers, laptops, and SMART boards, and administrators can manage the 90 minutes of weekly Focused Collaboration time. Participant P9 stated, "PD should be differentiated. Teachers are not identical in training needs. Focus Collaboration should be tailored to teachers' individual learning and training needs." Participants P4, P7, and P8 offered that administrators have access to PD

specialists who work collaboratively to develop comprehensive professional learning aligned with DoDEA's priorities and current initiatives. Participant P8 further highlighted the growing need for administrators and PD specialists to develop specialized teacher PD modules targeting PCS-related absences collaboratively.

Among administrators' resources is the SAPI district school administrators' Learning Walkthrough. The Learning Walkthrough is a systematic and coordinated method of gathering data on instructional practices and gauging classroom engagement to make data-informed decisions. Participant P3 indicated that the Learning Walkthrough tool is a powerful means of helping all educators learn more about how instructional practices support student learning, engagement, and achievement. However, Participants P1, P6, and P10 stated that the Learning Walkthrough needs to capture the lack of instructional continuity from high mobility and PCS-related absenteeism.

Summary

Data from this qualitative research study addressed the challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools in providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs. Administrators from the SAPI district schools identified the challenges of preparing teachers to provide high-quality instruction in a highly mobile, dynamic, military-connected environment. Participant P5 said, “Teachers need specialized PD focusing on mobility and absenteeism.” Participant P5 continued, “Teachers from the SAPI district schools struggle daily to meet the ever-changing learning needs of MCSs.” “It is like a revolving door; students are here today and gone today,” said study Participant P1.

Study participants shared their experiences and identified seven themes for minimizing or resolving challenges. Recurring subthemes related to expressed challenges were revealed. Study participants (P1-P10) alluded to the resiliency of MCSs, dynamic military-connected environment, and deployment frequency as characteristics shaping their schools and highly mobile student population. Participant P10 stated: “Military deployments are an additional source of absences. During long deployments, civilian parents and children will sometimes choose to return stateside, causing more instructional challenges for teachers.”

This qualitative capstone study involved the four strands of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) Situational Leadership model: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. The results of this study indicated that the challenges of the SAPI district school administrators are comparable with the struggles experienced by administrators in other DoDEA school districts. In addition, results revealed that high school administrators from the SAPI district schools agree that overhauling DoDEA's Focus Collaboration approach is essential to meeting teachers' PD needs. “Closing the instructional gaps of MCSs during PSC cycles requires specific recurring training,” said Participants P3, P5, and P8.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Section 3 includes this qualitative capstone study overview and recommendations for the DoDEA Pacific Director of Student Excellence, Pacific Area CIL Chief, and the SAPI district schools superintendent on revamping and redistributing the weekly time allotted for Focused Collaboration. Hersey and Blankard's 1979 SLT informed the conceptual framework for this study. Section 3 includes the rationale and implications of the study. In addition, Section 3 contains a review of the scholarly literature supporting this basic qualitative capstone study.

The results of this capstone study indicate a need to inform DoDEA Pacific's leadership team of the complexities encountered by administrators of the SAPI district schools struggling to give teachers PD that supports teaching highly mobile MCSs and PCS-related absenteeism. The study results suggest limited PD opportunities for teachers to strengthen their practice and increase efficacy toward teaching highly mobile MCSs. I hope the study's results will encourage DoDEA Pacific leaders, specifically the CIL Chief, to redistribute Focused Collaboration minutes and supply resources for teacher readiness and PD modules that target mobility and absenteeism.

Rationale

Data analysis from this qualitative capstone project generated 22 themes related to the struggles of providing teachers with sustainable PD that focuses explicitly on mobility and PCS-related absenteeism. This study aimed to identify leadership approaches that would help SAPI district administrators address teachers' learning and training needs. The findings indicate that administrators must use Focused Collaboration time to

differentiate teacher readiness and provide PD based on teachers' learning and training needs. Participants P1 and P4 recognized missed PD opportunities and agreed that redistributing the minutes allotted for Focused Collaboration time could provide time for meaningful PD.

Review of the Literature

This qualitative capstone project study examined the reshaping of DoDEA's Focused Collaboration time to help SAPI district school administrators meet the challenges of providing teachers with PD that explicitly targets mobility and absenteeism. I will share the study's findings with the Pacific Area Director of Student Excellence, the Pacific Chief for the Center for Instructional Leadership (CIL), and the SAPI District Schools Superintendent. I searched EBSCO Host, Google Scholar, and Sage Journals to locate articles on or related to the themes of this project study. I searched for articles published between 2018 and 2023. The keywords for the search were *school climate and culture, professional development, teacher readiness, teacher mentorship, the challenges of teaching in military-connected environments, social-emotional balance, stakeholder engagement,* and *the significance of positive administrator-teacher-parent relationships.* An exhaustive search revealed a gap in research related explicitly to PD that targets student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism.

School Climate and Culture

Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018) suggested that a positive school environment supports students' growth across all developmental pathways. A well-cultivated school culture is significant for students. MCSs experience poorer mental health outcomes than civilian children due to psychological strain in the present war

context, making a positive school culture and climate vital (Atuel & Castro, 2018). A longitudinal study on the mental health of MCSs found that behavioral disorders increased by 19%, stress disorders increased by 18% among MCSs with a deployed parent, and the number of mental and behavioral health visits increased by 11% (De Pedro et al., 2014). In addition, rates notably increased in adolescents and children of male military parents (De Pedro et al., 2014). Study Participants P6 and P9 addressed the significance of fostering a positive school climate and culture. Participant P9 said,

> "While it is essential for all students to feel safe and secure in their learning environment, we have an extraordinary obligation to ensure that MCSs feel protected and loved. Doing so helps these students with PCS transitions, parental deployments, and separation, giving them a sense of family and ownership."

Specialized Professional Development for Teachers—Teacher Readiness

Rajendran et al. (2023) suggested that teachers who engage in meaningful PD are "innovative and possess a growth mindset, positively affecting the learning environment and promoting student learning" (p.1355). The participants of this qualitative capstone study agreed that PD is essential to improving teacher and student performance and that PD explicitly aimed at combatting high mobility and PCS-related absenteeism would benefit SAPI teachers. Participants P2, P7, and P9 alluded to the lack of specialized PD for teachers. P7 said, "Teachers, especially those new to the military-connected environment, would benefit greatly from PD that targets mobility and absenteeism." P2 stated, "Teachers would find PD more meaningful if it addressed their learning needs." Participant P9 agreed and offered that the weekly Focused Collaboration time is ideal for delivering specialized PD to meet teachers' learning and training needs. Statistics from

the U.S. Department of Education reveal that a third of teachers leave the profession within 5 years of qualifying. The lack of relevant PD is among the top five reasons teachers leave the profession (Sabina et al., 2023).

Teacher Readiness

The readiness of teachers to give high-quality instruction is aligned with the quality of PD received. Teacher readiness means that teachers have the skills and knowledge required for effective teaching, sufficient understanding of the subject matter, and the personal characteristics and competencies that allow them to engage in the profession through effective relationship building. In addition, teacher readiness extends to sufficient training in navigating their learning and teaching environment. Participant P10 stated, "The high staff turnover rate is the Achilles hill of PD. It is difficult to advance PD beyond an introductory stage because we are constantly reviewing for new staff." Participant P6 added, "Even so, there is a need to develop PD modules tailored to the impact of mobility and absenteeism." Manasia et al. (2020) suggested that developing teacher professionalism through strategic PD is a way to improve teaching quality and teachers' perceptions of their professional status, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy, contributing to a sustainable education (p. 166).

Teacher Mentorship

Walters and Walters (2020) revealed that teachers viewed mentorship programs as meaningful PD, creating a professional learning community. Within the SAPI district schools, mentorship is essential to assimilating novice teachers. Participants P2, P4, and P6 agreed that teacher mentoring programs provide onboarding for new teachers. "Having veterans mentor new teachers serves a dual purpose; it increases capacity for

high-quality instruction and retention," said Participant P6. In addition to shaping the professional practices of novice teachers, mentorship programs help facilitate student equality. Abubakr-Abdulrahman and Kara (2022) stated that mentors help mentees select culturally responsive instructional strategies and prioritize curriculum standards.

Challenges of Teaching Military-Connected Students

The challenges of teaching MCSs are their highly mobile status and knowledge gaps. In addition, adjusting to students leaving and arriving throughout the school year is challenging**.** Study participants acknowledged the difficulties that teachers face. Participant P8 said, "Teachers must deliver high-quality instruction and increase performance but are rarely given PD on addressing mobility and absenteeism issues." Participant P9 further stated, "Teachers require specialized systematic PD to help them combat the challenges of teaching students frequently in transition. According to a 2020 MCEC report, the average MCS relocates every 2.9 years, or nine times before they complete high school, making it essential for teachers to engage in relevant PD that helps create education continuity (MCEC, 2020).

Project Description

This basic qualitative capstone project study used 12 semistructured, open-ended interview questions to learn about the experiences and challenges of 10 high school administrators from the SAPI district schools. The purpose of the study was to examine the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools concerning the challenges of providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs and to explore their perceptions toward the SLT as a resource to meet the PD needs of teachers who teach highly mobile MCSs. The study

included interview data from principals and assistant principals across the SAPI district schools.

I will present the findings of this study to the Pacific Director of Student Excellence, the Pacific Center for Instructional Leadership (CIL) Chief, and the SAPI district schools' superintendent. The Pacific Director of Student Excellence provides organizational leadership in performance, accountability, leadership development, and support for implementing education initiatives across the Pacific area. The Director of Student Excellence oversees three districts comprising 48 schools and more than 22,000 children of U.S. military and eligible DoD civilian personnel families stationed in Guam, Okinawa, Japan, and Korea (DoDEA, n.d.).

The Pacific CIL ensures that every educational leader receives the support they need to help teachers and students succeed. Through PD, the CIL develops high-impact educational leaders in their pursuit of excellence and equity. The SAPI district school superintendent oversees daily operations for the 22 schools comprising the SAPI district.

Appendix A contains a copy of the PowerPoint presentation. This study's results indicate a need to repackage DoDEA's Focused Collaboration model to create time and space for recurring teacher PD explicitly targeting high student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism. The results suggest that administrators embrace flexibility and differentiate PD based on staff training needs.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Pacific Area Director of Student Excellence will support sustainable PD for teachers that explicitly addresses student mobility and PCS-related absenteeism by

allocating time and funds to prepare and deliver PD modules**.** The Area Director of Student Excellence has an estimated operational budget of $3,276,276 (DoD Fiscal Year Budget Estimates, 2022, p. 6).

Recommendation 2

The Pacific CIL will design, deliver, and evaluate PD and learning, focusing on mobility and PCS-related absenteeism twice per academic quarter. In addition, the CIL will ensure that administrators are prepared to lead, understand, and leverage the subject-matter experts (SMEs) on staff. Adhering to its goal of PD for systemic priorities, the CIL will help strengthen learning networks, increase capacity for innovative teaching practices, and work in partnership with district superintendents, administrators, and teacher leaders to ensure that these individuals are well-equipped to lead and support their respective schools (DoDEA, 2021).

Recommendation 3

The SAPI district schools' superintendent will encourage high school administrators to adopt leadership approaches that increase differentiated PD based on staff readiness and training needs. In addition, administrators are encouraged and supported in their quest to utilize teacher leaders' savant skills to foster collaborative cultures and facilitate peer-to-peer professional enrichment.

Project Evaluation

I prepared an informational PowerPoint presentation highlighting the results of this basic qualitative capstone study examining the challenges of SAPI district schools' administrators to give teachers systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs. Through this capstone study, I aim to advocate for social change that results in

teacher efficacy and high-quality instruction for MCSs. This study may generate differentiated, recurring, specialized PD for military-connected teachers who struggle to provide instructional continuity to highly mobile–frequently absent MCSs. My goal is to leverage Focused Collaboration time and change the frequency and delivery of PD for SAPI district schools' teachers. The long-term effects will be evidenced through increased teacher performance and student achievement.

I chose to share the study's results through a PowerPoint presentation because it displays the information and makes the results understandable. The PowerPoint presentation will be uploaded to the SAPI district schools' SharePoint, making it available for all district employees.

Justification

Recommendations 1–3 aim for the Pacific area CIL team to develop specialized PD that helps teachers meet the challenges of mobility and PCS-related absenteeism challenges. The recommendations are justified because teachers teaching MCSs need help to combat instructional challenges from highly mobile students and PCS-related absenteeism. Providing specialized PD that targets mobility and absenteeism will help teachers become diverse and innovative in their teaching strategies and approaches to implementing the skills learned during PD. In addition, it will allow teachers to become better educators, producing positive student outcomes. Students demonstrate increased academic achievement when teachers own subject-matter knowledge, foster collaboration, and incorporate technology and other techniques to enhance learning.

Positive Outcomes

The successful integration of these recommendations will produce a highly qualified teaching force and decrease school stressors associated with MCSs, such as anxiety, fear, and sleeping disorders. Incorporating the recommendations will impact the SAPI district school and the military community at large by doing the following:

- encouraging high-quality instruction for MCSs
- informing the policies and procedures that govern the education of MCSs
- promoting positive student outcomes for highly mobile MCSs

Stakeholders

The stakeholders benefiting from the suggested change are U.S. Armed Forces administrators, CIL teams, directors of student excellence, superintendents, installation commanders, parents, school liaison officers, students, superintendents, and teachers. These stakeholders work collaboratively to ensure that the SAPI district schools adhere to the DoDEA Blueprint and meet the agency's mission of educating, engaging, and empowering MCSs to succeed in a dynamic world (DoDEA, n.d.).

Project Implications

This basic qualitative capstone research project gives agency to positive social change by providing data to the Pacific Area Director of Student Excellence, Pacific Area CIL Chief, and SAPI district schools' superintendent that supports restructuring DoDEA's Focus Collaboration Time to implement innovative specialized PD for teachers that address challenges associated with teaching highly mobile MCSs and PCS-related absenteeism. The anticipated results from presenting the findings of this study suggest redistributing time and money to elevate PD for teachers. Giving teachers specialized PD

that targets their challenges and meets their learning needs empowers them to increase their capacity for educational continuity.

The Pacific Area CIL team can significantly influence the support and resources available to help administrators in their quest to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs during PCS cycles. Doing so will eliminate the educational hurdles that require substantial effort to bridge gaps in knowledge and decrease military-connected stressors like anxiety and fear in MCSs. The study's most significant contribution to social change is fostering environments for teachers to deliver high-quality instruction, producing academically astute global-minded MCSs.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

As the U.S. Armed Forces continue to serve globally, meeting the education needs of MCSs entering state and federal school systems will continue to evoke challenges. Education researchers and practitioners must identify gaps in practice and develop effective and innovative PD modules to assist administrators and teachers with accommodating the diverse learning needs of MCSs. This basic qualitative study examined the challenges of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools in providing teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs. This study used SLT as its conceptual framework, which included the following approaches: directing, supporting, coaching, and delegating.

The limitation of this study was managing my potential biases and those of the study's participants. I sought high school administrators from SAPI district schools, sent invitations to 22 administrators across the widespread geographical district, and selected 12 study participants. Two were unable to be interviewed, leaving 10. I interviewed 10 administrators and strategically avoided biases by adhering to the guidelines in Creswell (2013). Collecting data from a single district limited the results to a specific area, creating a gap in data involving the challenges administrators in military-connected environments face.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

For this qualitative capstone project study, I collected data through open-ended semistructured interviews with high school administrators working with the SAPI district schools. Study participants shared their experiences toward combatting high student

mobility, PSC-related absenteeism, and meeting the training needs of teachers. However, the information is specific to SAPI district schools. An alternative approach would be to expand the area of focus to include another DoDEA school district, such as the Southeast Europe district schools, and increase data collecting tools to include observations and questionnaires.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Evaluation

This basic qualitative capstone research project study has increased my problem-solving capacity and strengthened my ability to interpret, integrate, and synthesize information. The scholarly journey has helped me evolve as a reflective practitioner and education change agent. The interviewing process allowed me to understand the critical assessments needed to allocate funds for teacher efficacy and professional learning. In addition, I gained insight into the difficulties administrators endure when trying to meet the learning needs of teachers and students.

The completion of the capstone study increased my advocacy for social change. I believe education expands individuals' worldviews and should be used as a compass to navigate the "good" for humankind. Part of that "good" is ensuring equity in instruction and learning opportunities for military-connected children. The passion of the 10 study participants who willingly shared time and experience with me showed humbling grace and dignity.

In addition, I became well-versed in SLT, a common-sense approach to helping school staff reach their full professional potential. SLT differentiates to meet staff readiness. Administrators must be empowered to address teachers' professional learning needs, increasing student achievement as a by-product.

Reflections on the Importance of the Work

The Pacific Area CIL team aims to ensure academic achievement by facilitating training that leads to high-quality instruction. The results of this capstone study give the CIL team insight from high school administrators on their challenges in meeting teachers' learning needs through specialized, systematic, sustainable PD modules. I anticipate changes in the use of Focused Collaboration time and the frequency of explicit PD that targets highly mobile students and PCS-related absenteeism.

The results of this study are relevant and address a SAPI districtwide problem of practice. Blue Star Families (2020) indicated that the quality of their children's education is among the top five concerns for military parents**.** Brosius (2018) further highlighted military parents' concerns regarding the effect of frequent transitions on their children's quality of education and academic achievements. It is vital for schools, specifically DoDEA schools, to allocate resources and time to military-connected teachers' professional learning and development.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The results from this qualitative capstone study generated three recommendations to the DoDEA Pacific Area CIL team to address the professional learning and development needs of military-connected teachers. The anticipated outcomes from the recommendations include a more robust, specialized, and differentiated PD to meet the learning needs of teachers. Another projected outcome is support for administrators in selecting the best leadership approach for their staff.

An unanticipated outcome of this qualitative capstone study would be incorporating technology to help close the instructional gaps for MCSs. According to

DoDEA's technology plan, virtual reality (VR) programs will be available in 2025 (DoDEA, n.d.). VR programs provide many features that could benefit highly mobile, frequently absent MCSs.

Conclusion

At the onset of this basic qualitative capstone project study, I knew teachers struggled to provide high-quality instruction to students frequently in transition. However, I was unaware of the many challenges administrators face in their quest to find time for PD that targets the learning needs of teachers. The district's demands on administrators to reduce site operational expenses and streamline processes hinder their ability to focus solely on specialized PD for teachers. However, the study revealed that administrators are concerned about the educational gaps experienced by MCSs and want teachers to engage in professional learning that will lead to increased competencies, elevated student achievement, and improved abilities to support students' well-being during difficult transitions.

Improving professional learning for military-connected teachers is essential to ensuring equity and diversity in education for MCSs. The Pacific Area CIL must continuously develop systemic priorities, increase capacity for learning networks, and implement innovative practices. Although delivering high-quality instruction is challenging without systematic PD, the teachers at the SAPI district schools have managed to prepare students for college and career readiness. Ninety-five percent of the district's seniors have a postsecondary plan to enter colleges, universities, or the workforce (DoDEA et al., 2018). According to the DoDEA 2018 Applied Research Report, DoDEA schools are ranked among the top 10 in the nation, and almost 60% of

DoDEA seniors indicated that they planned to attend a 4-year college or university after graduation; this is twice the national rate (DoDEA et al., 2018, p. 1). Improving PD for teachers is likely to increase the percentage of students entering colleges and universities.

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Appendix A: The Project

Administrator's Challenges to Provide Sustainable Instruction to Children of Military Personnel

Pamela Yvette Tucker
March, 2024
Doctor of Education
Educational Administration & Leadership
(Non-Licensure)
Proposal Oral Defense

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Background

- 1.5 million Military-connected students (MCSs) face academic challenges due to their highly-mobile lifestyle (DoD Demographics Report, 2020).
- MCSs transition through schools with diverse course offerings, cultures, curricula, graduation requirements, schedules, and standards.
- Highly mobile MCSs complicate teacher readiness.
- More professional development (PD) opportunities are needed to meet the various levels of teacher readiness.

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Problem Statement

- The problem is that high school administrators from the Southeast Asian Pacific Island (SAPI) district schools are challenge to provide teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for military-connected students (MCSs).

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Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to examine administrators' challenges from the SAPI district schools to provide teachers with PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs.
- Examine the implementation of Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) situational leadership theory as a resource for the SAPI district school administrators to combat MCSs mobility and PCS-related absenteeism.

Variables:

- Independent: military personnel PCS cycles and the geographic locations of the Department of Defense (DoD) schools.
- Dependent: frequency of teacher PD and high-quality instruction

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Research Questions

RQ1: What are the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools concerning the challenges of providing teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools of the situational leadership theory as a resource to meet the professional development needs of teachers who instruct highly mobile MCSs?

Conceptual Framework

- 1979 Situational Leadership Theory
- Authors: Dr. Paul Hersey and Dr. Ken Blanchard
- Grounded in task behavior
- Four approaches: delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing

Conceptual Framework (continued)

Situational leadership encourage leaders to examine their leadership styles and the characteristics of their subordinates to discover which strand of the situational leadership model will yield the most efficacy (Guo et al., 2023).

The theory is appropriate for the proposed basic qualative study because it empowers administrators to make PD decesions based on the readiness of their faculty.

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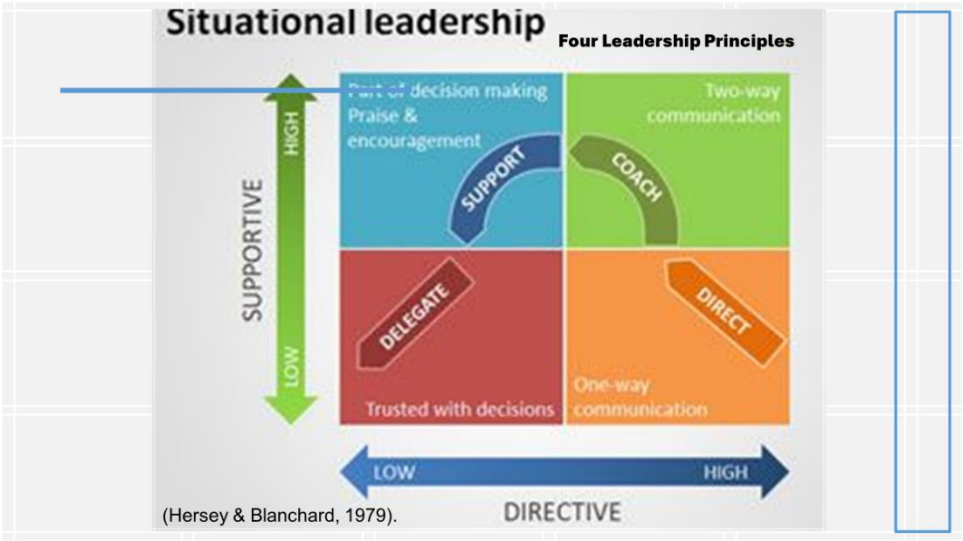

Method/Design

The basic qualitative design drew from the administrator's lived experiences.

Qualitative research enables us to make sense of reality, describe and explain the social world, and develop explanatory models and theories (Gray, 2021).

Research Design

In-depth interviewing using 12 semi-structured open-ended questions.

Participants/Sample Size

- SAPI district school composition
- Invitations
- 10 Participants
- Selection Criteria 5yrs administrator experience; 3yrs with SAPI district schools

Qualitative Study Participants' Leadership Role and Years of Experience

Study Participants' Descriptive Information

Participants	Leadership Role	Years of Administrator Experience	Years of SAPI Dist Schools Administra Experience
P1	Principal	15	5
P2	Assistant Principal	5	3
P3	Principal	25	15
P4	Principal	15	5
P5	Principal	10	7
P6	Assistant Principal	5	5
P7	Assistant Principal	6	4
P8	Assistant Principal	6	3
P9	Principal	12	7
P10	Assistant Principal	5	3

Data Collection Technique

- Data source: open-ended semi-structured interviews
- Data--collecting instrument: the researcher
- Transcription
- Member Checking
- Reflection

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Data Analysis Plan

- RQ1: What are the perspectives of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools concerning the challenges of providing teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs?
  - Thematic Analysis
  - Coding
  - First Cycle Coding
  - Second Cycle Coding

Data Analysis Plan

- RQ2: What are the perceptions of high school administrators from the SAPI district schools of the situational leadership theory as a resource to meet the professional development needs of teachers who instruct highly mobile MCSs?
  - Extract data for first-cycle coding
  - Analyzing recurring data points for second-cycle coding,
  - Identify types of coding (emotion coding, pattern coding, theme, etc.)
  - Categorize Common Words Phrases
  - Table Differences and Similarities

Results - Research Themes

Themes	Number of Participants Conceptualizing Theme	Percentage of Use
Culture & Climate	10	100%
Community	10	100%
Flexibility	10	100%
Mentorship	10	100%
Teacher Readiness-PD	10	100%
Relationships	10	100%
Social-emotional Balance	10	100%

Cultural & Climate

"The overall atmosphere, environment, and quality of life within a school, including safety, relationships, and academic expectations" (Strobel Education, 2023).

Community

- "Collaboration and integration across the system promote positive outcomes for service members and their families across the domains of military family readiness, including social, financial, health, and community engagement" (U.S. DoD, 2012, p. 13).

Mentorship

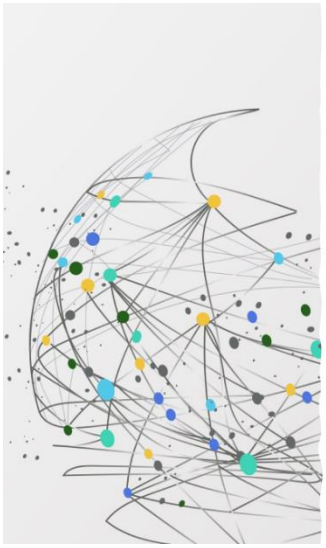
- Mentor teachers facilitate professional growth toward the teaching identity, practices, and instructional strategies of novice teachers (Walters & Walters, 2020).

Teacher Readiness

- Professional development is essential to teacher readiness. Lynch and Smith (2016) define "readiness" as willing to engage with 'improvement agendas."

Examples of Practice

- Hauge (2019) highlighted the significance of PD for teachers and indicated that professional learning goals must be adjusted to the teachers' needs. Teachers are autonomous and able to make their own decisions in their learning, have a high awareness of collaboration and how to support each other, and decide what and how they should learn to improve practice and assume ownership over learning and improvement of practice (Hauge, 2019, p. 13).



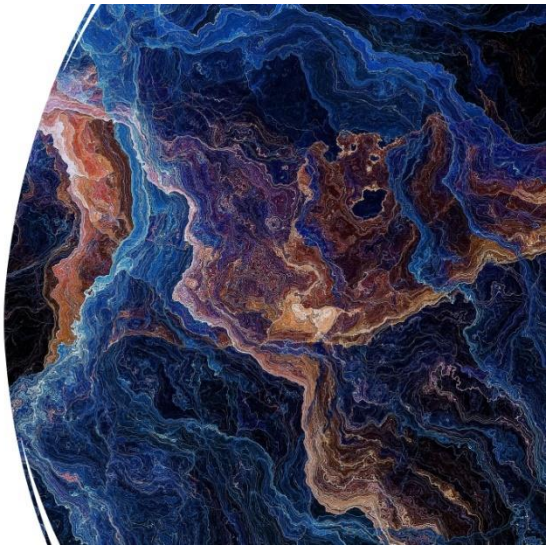
Limitations of the Study

- There were two limitations to this basic qualitative study:

1. The possibility of (researcher) personal biases.
2. The potential for participant biases.

Scope & Delimitations of the Study

- The scope of the capstone study project extended to a specific populace; Administrators from Southeast Asian Pacific Island (SAPI) District Schools.



Social Change Implications

Outcome of study can impact:

- Professional development for military-connected teachers
- Schooling option for MCSs
- Stakeholder confidence in DoD schools

Social Change:

- Encourages high-quality instruction and continuity for MCSs
- Informs MCSs education policies and procedures
- Promotes positive outcomes for highly mobile MCSs

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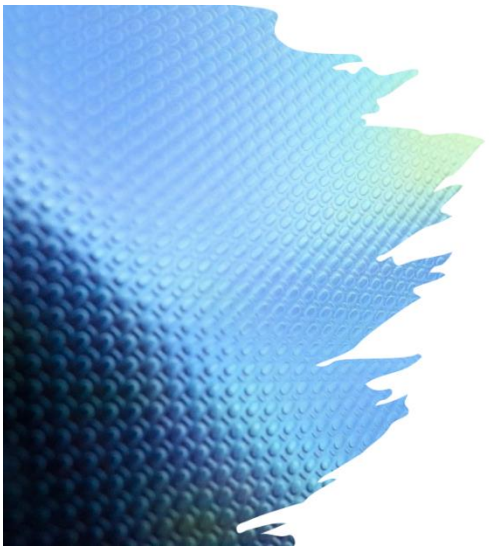

Qualitative Capstone Project Recommendations

- Implement weekly PD courses aligned with the DoDEA Blueprint.
- Reallocate the time given for Focused Collaboration to allow differentiated PD to meet the learning needs of teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

- Examine the actions, impact, and results concerning PD of administrators and teachers who routinely engage in PD that targets PCS-related absenteeism.
- Examine mentorship programs in schools that educate highly mobile MCSs.
- Evaluate the CIL's effectiveness in producing and delivering PD that meets the learning/training needs of novice teachers employed by DoDEA

Conclusion

- As the U.S. Armed Forces position itself to protect U.S. interests globally, MCSs will remain highly mobile, and their teachers will require systematic PD to combat student mobility, PCS-related absenteeism, and meet the dynamic learning needs of MCSs. This qualitative capstoneproject study examined general patterns and themes across participants looking to find the challenges and resources needed to provide teachers with systematic PD that supports sustainable instruction for highly mobile MCSs. Using DoDEA's Focus Collaboration time differently could alleviate education-related stress for military families and allow the nation's protectors of freedom to focus on eliminating threats to American ideals and values, rather than the lack of PD opportunities for the teachers of their children.

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Appendix B: Interview Questions

The following twelve questions, aligned with Hersey and Blanchard's (1979) SLT, will serve as the primary semistructured interview questions for each participant in this basic qualitative research study.

1. How do you onboard new teachers/staff members and orient them to the military-connected environment? (RQ1)
2. How do you foster a commitment to employing effective instructional strategies? (RQ1)
3. How do you facilitate assimilation for non-military knowledgeable teachers? (RQ1)
4. How does the school strengthen campus, community, and cultural relationships within the military-connected environment? (RQ2)
5. How do you foster a school environment where staff members can share their savant skills? (RQ2)
6. How does your leadership approach influence relationships between faculty staff, host-nation staff, students, and parents? (RQ2)
7. How do you prepare the staff to deal with PCS-related absenteeism? (RQ1)
8. How do you provide resources to foster staff leadership? (RQ1)
9. How do you pair teachers for co-teaching to improve student instruction? (RQ1)
10. How do you empower staff members to complete various tasks (i.e., department chair, after-school tutoring, club sponsors, and coaches)? (RQ2)

11. How do administrators use the learning walk-through (LWT) data to inform staff decisions? (RQ2)

12. How do you celebrate staff achievements and successes? (RQ2)

Appendix C: Email Invitation to Participate in Qualitative Research Study

Subject line:

Interviewing high school administrators on PD challenges (1 hr.) for the next two weeks ($20 Gift Card)

Email message:

There is a new study about researching the challenges of high school administrators to provide teachers with systematic professional development that supports sustainable instruction for military-connected students (MCSs) during military permanent change in duty station (PCS) cycles that could help administrators and teachers better understand the challenges of teaching highly mobile students. For this study, you are invited to describe your experiences providing teachers with professional development that supports sustainable instruction for MCSs during PCS cycles.

About the study:

- One 30–60-minute phone interview that will be audio recorded (no video recording)
- The published study will not share any names or details identifying you to protect your privacy.

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- High school administrators with at least five years of administrator and supervisory experience.
- High school administrators with three years of experience supervising teachers in Southeast Asian Pacific Island (SAPI) district schools.

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Pamela Y. Tucker, an EdD student at Walden University. Interviews will occur during the winter of 2023. Please respond to this email, pamela.tucker3@waldenu.edu, to inform the researcher of your interest.

Respectfully,

Pamela Tucker

Walden University Doctoral Student