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The Effects of a Multicultural Overseas Community on Military Adolescents

Nicole Hayes
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Nicole B. Hayes

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2019

Abstract

The Effects of a Multicultural Overseas Community on Military Adolescents

by

Nicole B. Hayes

MA, Webster University, 1999

BA, Auburn University, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

May 2019

Abstract

Several researchers have identified the challenges faced by military adolescent dependents. However, scholarly literature provides little evidence regarding examples of the impact of military adolescents' transition and adjustment to residing in a multicultural community overseas. A qualitative case study was conducted of 6 former military adolescents between the ages of 18 and 25, regarding their perceptions of the experiences and challenges they encountered while residing in a multicultural overseas community as a military dependent between grades 8-12. Benet's polarities of democracy served as the theoretical framework. All data were inductively coded and subjected to a thematic analysis from which 5 themes emerged. Participants unanimously agreed that the lack of needed information while discussing transition with their parents led to negative experiences. Participants also agreed that they have not been included in policy development regarding military adolescent programs, which negatively impacted their integration into the overseas communities. Overall, the results of this study highlight the challenges this population encounters and indicates that the polarity pairs have not been leveraged well, thereby negatively impacting the participants' overall overseas experience. This study may encourage positive social change by informing Department of Defense policy makers and local installation leaders regarding the enactment of programs that better support military families with adolescent dependents living in an overseas environment. Such policy changes may enhance the experience of dependent military adolescents, encourage the military personnel's future commitment to military service, and support service member retention.

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Dedication

My almighty creator, my strong tower, and my source of inspiration who has blessed me and has been the source of my strength. My grandmother, Naomi Hayes (heavenly angel) who first introduced me to critical thought. My loving parents Harry and Odessia (heavenly angel), thank you for the love and for instilling the importance of education. My sister Tiffany Charles, you never left my side and have been my biggest cheerleader. My heartbeats Xavier and Hailey, you are the wind beneath my wings and I love you both to the moon and beyond.

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24Fifty... there no words to express how grateful I am for you ladies. We agreed to uplift and support each other on this journey. Melanin magic!

To those family and friends who offered guidance, support, words of encouragement and prayers, I say thank you. Thank you to those who gave freely of their time so that I may inform on military adolescent transition and overseas living. Your cooperation allowed me to gather relevant data.

Finally, thank you to the teachers and administrators, as well as school support staff and librarians who assisted me with this project made this research possible.

I am honored and humbled...

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

On September 11, 2001, Al Qaeda terrorists hijacked two passenger planes and carried out coordinated suicide attacks against the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing everyone on board the planes. A third hijacked plane, with a course set for the White House, crashed into a Pennsylvania field after passengers and crew wrestled control of the aircraft from the hijackers.

The events of September 11, 2001, which became known as 9/11, required military personnel to prepare for deployed locations thousands of miles away from a United States and the loved ones, family members, and friends. Yet, on the home front, a challenge remained for family members left behind who made significant sacrifices and learned how to create a new normal as duty called their military member away from home. There was thus an increased need for military family programs specifically geared toward supporting families of deployed service members.

The events of 9/11 highlighted the importance of support programs for military family members. Many families relied upon the Department of Defense (DoD) and non-government organizations, which were involved in assessing and supporting military families during this period. These military family programs helped sustain and maintain the home front during continuous deployment cycles. With many families having minimal knowledge of military support programs, deployments led to challenges for military families, which included family health and well-being concerns and separation anxiety. Many families were not prepared to manage these, among other challenges over the next decade.

As deployments subsided after almost 11 continuous years, military families settled back into the normal permanent change of station (PCS) process, and many military family programs subsided as the focus was no longer on sustaining families of the deployed. This paradigm shift is the focus of this research. I thus designed this study to contribute to the literature on DoD policies regarding military family programs and services for families stationed in multicultural overseas communities, specifically highlighting support to military adolescents.

By exploring the perceptions of former military adolescents who were once stationed (with their families) abroad, I had the opportunity to gather feedback, analyze the data, and develop findings that may be useful to non-government organizations leadership, Congressional committees, and select DoD advisory leadership for military family programs. This up-to-date research could help maintain effective policies and strengthen support programs for military families, especially those with adolescents, whether it was in support of families transitioning to multicultural communities overseas or support absent a military member due to combat deployments.

In this chapter, I present background information on the need for military support programs for military families. Subsequently, I present the research problem, followed by the purpose of this research. In the subsequent sections, I present the research question and introduce the conceptual framework (polarity management) and theoretical framework (polarities of democracy model). I then summarize the methodology and provided key definitions. In the final sections, I describe the assumptions I made as I conducted this research. Last, I expound on the potential impact this research could have

on the development of a sustainable community for military adolescents and offer recommendations for future public policy.

Background

Family concerns of military life, frequent relocation, separation, and deployed combat were recognized by the DoD as potential problems that could affect the mission and service member readiness. In 2007, Hoshmand and Hoshmand conducted a study where they found relocation of military families separated them from their communities of familiarity and known support systems, such as non-government organizations, which is a recognizable issue that needs addressing (p. 172). While family concerns have been acknowledged by DoD, research on military adolescents and their needs is still lacking.

Cozza, Lerner, and Haskins (2013) highlighted the need for stronger research focused on military children to shape future programs and policies because there was limited formal research addressing the sufficiency of programs created to specifically assist and support military adolescent dependent transitions to overseas environments. The researchers specifically noted the absence of research on programs specifically designed to support social and behavioral concerns and possible re-integration challenges to military adolescents' host nations (Cozza, Lerner & Haskins, 2013). Therefore, to address the gap in the literature, I gathered the perceptions of former military adolescents regarding military adolescent transition, the effectiveness of military family programs, and living abroad. My goal was to provide more information about this population, their lived experiences, and the effects of those experiences in a multicultural overseas community.

To improve the development of future military family programs, there must first be an understanding of military adolescent needs, a review of current programs, and documented research. Gathering these critical elements of information will enable program developers an opportunity to incorporate received feedback. Therefore, the results of this study may compel policy leaders to review the development, planning, and implementation of programs, as well as allocate appropriate funding to support military families, as required.

Problem Statement

While research exists about military families in general, and military families and the effects of deployments, there has been little to no research regarding the effects of multicultural overseas transition on military adolescents, and researchers' knowledge about this population is still limited (Blaisure, Saathoff-Wells, Pereira, Wadsworth, & Dombro, 2015). Park (2011) posited that military family programs have not shown evidence of their effectiveness, and there is a "need to better understand challenges experienced, as well as strengths of military children" (p. 71).

Blaisure et al. (2015) acknowledged limited research on the effects of military families' overseas transitions, and Park (2011) questioned the effectiveness of military family programs. Building on this research, I specifically attempted to determine how do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived challenges of living abroad, and to understand their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs.

Research has proven that being an adolescent in a non-military family has its typical challenges; however, military adolescents experience additional stressors that

include but are not limited to frequent geographical relocations, adaptations to new communities and schools, living in foreign countries, and peacetime and wartime separations. In this study, I addressed whether stressors and challenges exist for military adolescents living in a multicultural community overseas.

In this study, I built upon prior research that identified significant gaps associated with the lack of research aimed at understanding military adolescents. Researchers have indicated the need for more-up-to-date research highlighting the creation of vulnerabilities during transitions for adolescents (Clever & Segal, 2013; Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2010). It was also apparent that future exploration was needed to determine whether certain phases of a move trigger additional stress, and if any additional criteria such as gender, academic history, or living on versus off base affect military adolescents. Additional focused research could provide accurate and timely data for policymakers to remain aware of military families' needs.

Thus, I sought to determine whether perceived stressors and challenges (such as cultural differences for example) identified were potentially exacerbated by external factors (such as alcohol consumption for example), and whether current military family programs and support service programs effectively acknowledge and address stressors and challenges encountered by military adolescents. I incorporated findings into recommendations as a proposal for policy and program leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to explore perceptions of former military adolescents regarding their lived challenges encountered while transitioning to and from and residing in a multicultural community abroad. Most research on transition and living

abroad focuses on third culture kids (TCKs) from the aspect of transition with civilian families, or the focus is solely on the military service member with families being an afterthought. In this research, my intent was to expand the focus of TCK research beyond the civilian aspect and contribute to the scholarly understanding of how perceived challenges of living abroad affect military adolescents based on those adolescents' perceptions of the effectiveness of military support services and programs.

With military spouses and children more recognized as a staple in lives of military members and now outnumbering service members by a ratio of 14:1, researchers have needed to shift from focusing on dependents as a secondary factor, to bringing them to the forefront of issues to understand and acknowledge their requirements (Clever & Segal, 2013). Military leaders now understand a service member's readiness and desire to serve is connected to the satisfaction of military family members, which requires input from this population to gather the issues of concern, and to ensure collaboration among non-government organizations, and government leaders (DoD and Congress) to positively affect policy change.

Research Question

There is limited research on military adolescents, and none focusing on perceptions of former military adolescents regarding challenges they encountered from the standpoint of assessing the effectiveness of military family programs and service support programs. Nor have any researchers studied the interface between underlying polarities that may be causing continued dilemmas. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to fill the existing gap in the literature by answering the following research question: How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and

negative experiences living abroad, and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs?

Qualitative research is used by researchers to gather the perspectives of participants by trying to see the lived experiences through their lenses. Therefore, I developed the research question to explore and associate meaning to their experiences using a qualitative research methods design (Creswell, 2013).

Framework for the Study

Benet's (2006) polarities of democracy model served as the theoretical framework for this study, and Johnson's (2014) polarity management was the conceptual framework. Johnson's framework served as a guide to gathering perceptions of former military adolescents that assisted in determining whether their perceptions of stressors and or challenges in a multicultural community abroad are solvable problems, or if they are ongoing challenges that require management. Benet's is a unifying theory to guide the understanding of the positive and negative aspects of selected polarity pairs to achieve "healthy, sustainable, and just social change efforts" (Benet, 2006, p. 26). Benet's theory also assisted me in developing interview questions regarding the selected polarity pairs, as well as highlighted whether the emergence of themes could be linked to additional paired elements for military adolescents living in a multicultural community overseas (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013).

Further, I used Johnson's (2014) polarity management concept to highlight solvable problems and unsolvable dilemmas noted within multicultural overseas communities, and to present findings for possible incorporation in future military support program development. Findings from this research could assist military families with

understanding their unique characteristics and how to champion for support programs to help them thrive in a healthy, sustainable community (Benet, 2013). It could also assist program managers in non-government organizations in developing support services to address discovered elements that can assist in creating “healthy, sustainable, and just communities” (Benet, 2013, p. 27).

Nature of the Study

In this study, I used a qualitative research design to gather real-world perspectives or actual experiences from participants. By gathering feedback from participants, I attempted to identify perceptions of former military adolescents, how those perceptions related to stressors encountered, and what programs were used, if any, to combat those stressors in regards to support programs available in their specific locations in multicultural overseas communities (King, Keohone, & Verba, 1999). Findings from the study show whether stressors and challenges identified are components of a larger problematic lack of understanding the needs of military adolescents in multicultural communities overseas and whether current programs provide adequate assistance to military adolescents. The population of interest was former military adolescents who lived in an overseas multicultural community between Grades 8 and 12. I recruited participants via purposeful sampling to understand challenges military adolescents encountered while transitioning to and from, and residing in a multicultural community overseas.

Definitions

There are several terms used throughout the paper, which I have defined here to ensure clarity and understanding.

Acculturation: This term was linked in research to individuals and groups as a “dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place because of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (Berry, 2005, p. 698).

Cross-cultural adjustment: A concept intertwined with understanding military adolescents inculcated into an overseas community. This is a concept Black and Mendenhall (1991) referred to as the degree of ease (or difficulty) individuals have with various aspects of an overseas assignment.

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS): DEERS is the system of record that establishes eligibility for dependents to receive benefits such as healthcare, access to military installations, and other programs/services offered by the DoD. Documentation (marriage certificate/birth certificate/legal paperwork) is required to show a relationship of unmarried biological, stepchildren, and adopted children under the age of 21, or 23 if enrolled as a full-time college student (TRICARE, 2018).

Department of Defense (DoD): Manages installations, facilities, and approximately 3 million employees (military personnel and civilians) worldwide. Any direction for engagement in combat operations are given by the National Command Authority (also known as the President of the United States), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense is responsible for tasking the services (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines), “the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unified commands” (Department of Defense Budget, 2018; DoD, 2018).

Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA): A field activity of the Office of the Secretary of Defense that operates in seven states and 14 countries, with

over 106,000 students. One of only two federally operated school systems responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, and managing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade educational programs on behalf of the DoD.

Family support programs: Family support programs designed by DoD provide aid and stability for individuals with a family member serving in one of five military branches.

Military adolescent: Individuals who are male or female, between the ages of 14 and 17 years old, who are dependents (as defined by DEERS database) of a military service member regardless of branch of service.

Military deployment: Military deployments are when military members receive assignments or are attached to a unit and specific cycle or rotational schedule in which the member must participate in covert operations in hostile foreign environments, which consists of various stages after deployment to sustainment, stabilization, length of presence, to withdrawal (Lincoln & Sweeten, 2011).

Military family: A streamlined definition of military family includes mother and father (one or both of which wears a uniform), and their biological children. An increasingly significant shift in the definition of family includes single-parent families (mother wears a uniform or father wears a uniform), blended families, and intergenerational families (Park, 2011).

Military family syndrome: Davis Blaschke, and Stafford (2012) noted Lagrone's (1978) definition of this term as including a rigid, authoritarian active-duty father who left home regularly, a stay-at-home submissive mother, and wild and out-of-control children with rootless identities who exhibited severe psychological problems as invalid

(Davis, Blaschke, & Stafford, 2012). Later researchers could not confirm the validity of this definition (Jensen, Xenakis, Wolf, Degroot, & Bain, 1991; Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996; Ryan-Wegner, 2001).

Military installation: Depending on the military branch of service, the location is classified as an air base (Air Force), support activity (Navy), or garrison command (Army).

Social connectedness: A feeling of closeness; a perceived bond between others and a sense of belonging with one's family members, peers, and community (Barber & Schluterman, 2008).

Third culture kids: John and Ruth Hill conducted a study of American workers stationed in India during the mid-1950s to determine effects of children growing up in distinct communities other than those in their native land (Bennett, 1993; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). The term TCK defined children who accompany their parents into another culture and reside in unique environments for an extended period away from their home country (McKillop-Ostrom, 2002).

Assumptions

My assumptions addressed four philosophical principles. These were ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology.

Ontology describes how a researcher understands the nature of reality. For my study I assumed that multiple realities exist. I studied military adolescents' perceived realities from their perspectives regarding transition and multicultural overseas communities, and I assumed that military adolescents experienced stressors and challenges at participants' specific age.

Epistemology addresses how we know something to be true. Consistent with my ontological assumptions that there are multiple realities and my intention was to discover the realities perceived by military adolescents in an overseas environment, I assumed that allowing my participants to voice their multiple realities would generate truth from their perspective.

Axiology relates to the values a researcher applies to the subject being studied. For my study I applied the ten values that make up the polarities of democracy theory (Benet, 2013). I listened to participants' multiple voices with the assumption that they would describe experiences that were consistent with or different from Benet's polarities of democracy theory and this would allow me to develop recommendation for policy initiatives that might lead to positive social change for military adolescents in an overseas assignment.

Methodology. Methodology is the process used to collect and conduct research. Based on my assumptions related to ontology, epistemology, and axiology, I developed a qualitative study that explored the perceptions of military adolescents in an overseas environment. My assumption was that this approach would allow me to discover the lived realities as experienced by my study participants.

Additionally, I assumed that (a) participants would provide accurate accounts of their experience if they can recall this period of adolescence, or whether they want to recall this period of their adolescent years; (b) that former military adolescents would share if they received support via military support services and programs (e.g. medical, counseling etc....) to cope with challenges encountered while living in an overseas multicultural community; (c) that former military adolescents would disclose their

thoughts regarding family programs effectiveness and relevance to their needs, and whether their parents had knowledge of available military family programs; and (d) any biases regarding interviews were minimized by confidentiality agreements.

Previous researchers had not focused on the effectiveness of military support services, or family programs and policies for this population in an overseas multicultural community. This led to additional assumptions that (a) there appeared to be a greater need for program development to ensure military families with adolescents receive the attention and focus needed to thrive in sustainable and healthy communities, and (b) that program development may require policy changes to be more robust, which may require additional government funding.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study included former military adolescents because they were the population of concern regarding adequate support programs at overseas military installations. Military adolescents are unique because they experience relocation at a rate higher than typical adolescents, approximately every 2 to 3 years, and on average experience military-related relocations on an average of nine times throughout their childhood (DoDEA, 2016).

Specifically, I identified the boundaries of this study by noting the lack of research on this specific population. Prior researchers have predominantly focused on military school-aged children and deployments, but little research has focused on adolescents and their perceptions with transition. Some researchers have noted that adolescents should be studied as a discrete population because they develop coping mechanisms to foster maturity (Milburn & Lightfoot, 2013).

The main subjects of this study were former military adolescents. Maintaining a sample size of at six interviews with former military adolescents with recent experience of residing in a multicultural community overseas allowed me to collect diverse data (see Maxwell, 2013).

Delimitations included geographical data collection from participants who resided in a multicultural community overseas. Because the targeted grades were middle and high school, military adolescents were the focus of the research; results are not generalizable to elementary school students in various bases domestically.

Limitations

A limitation of this case study was that I did not triangulate data, which may weaken the validity of the study (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Another limitation of this study was that I only gathered feedback from former military adolescents, as seen through their lens, and not from parents or teachers, nor did I review any documents (medical) to substantiate medical claims of treatment. The final limitation was the ambiguity of language the participants used to explain their experiences, which needed to be acknowledged during data analysis. For example, the word “blue” could be used in a reference to color, or it could be used as a reference to a political categorization or mood. To facilitate this ambiguity, interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and provided to participants for member checking.

Significance

The significance of this research is two-fold. First, my findings may increase scholarly understanding of stressors and challenges military adolescents encounter in a multicultural environment overseas. Second, this study provides insight on ways

government leaders can potentially incorporate former military adolescent feedback to assess current family programs to determine the effectiveness of those programs and military support services. Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, Mmari, and Blum (2010) noted adjustment problems are not just limited to “drug use, academic failure, health risk, and somatic complaints” (p. 83), which is in addition to normative development stressors for this population (e.g., puberty, peer relationships, increasing academic demands) (see McCubbin, Needle, & Wilson, 1985).

The study’s results could inform recommendations for changes in public policy that may assist in improving programs to support adjustment challenges and adolescent stressors associated with the transition. Recommended changes (if significant) to policies that govern family programs may require additional funding to the National Defense Authorization Act to support and facilitate modifications to military family programs and military support services. Potential implications for positive social change could reinforce the democratic process of ensuring military adolescents are prepared to function as law-abiding citizens whose experiences residing in a multicultural community overseas show they can handle life stressors as adults.

Summary

By gathering perceptions of participants who formed opinions about military challenges, I aimed to produce an empirically supported document to assist policy leaders in future decisions regarding future policy development. Considering the minimal amount of research on military adolescents living in a multicultural environment, my primary objective was to understand perceptions of former military adolescents regarding challenges they encountered.

I analyzed the collected data to aid military leaders and civilian program developers in generating strategies for a more intentional and directed approach to developing integrated military family and support programs for military adolescent dependents accompanying their families overseas.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gather perceptions of former military adolescents regarding their military adolescent experiences while residing in multicultural communities overseas, as well as their transition experiences, in order to gain a holistic view of the challenges they encounter. To gather data about the real-life experiences of this specific population, I used a case study research design. My goal was to explore how data on perceived challenges could be incorporated into future research, and how they could shape future policies for families with military adolescents, military family programs, and military communities overseas.

Concerns for military families and their needs are as pronounced now as they were the 1960s when policy leaders responsible for the creation of family programs and military policy came to terms with the fact that military family members outnumbered the number of military personnel (see Goldman & Segal, 1976). DoD leaders began to acknowledge military families and the demographic shift from the “single man’s Army” to the “married man’s Army” as important (Jensen et al., 1991). The next 40 years provided improved changes to family support programs, but it was not until the events of 9/11 when the need to support uniformed military personnel and their families became more evident, as many civilian and non-military-based organizations began focusing on the needs of family members.

With constant deployments, DoD recognized that challenges of military members wounded and/or killed in action, coupled with the high rotation of constant deployments, made for life-altering events that not only affected the service member, but also military

families. Service members left loved ones behind as they deployed, and families had to adjust to a new normal of raising military children, managing household requirements and continuing to maintain careers outside of the home. Some military families were even facing the unfortunate truth and ugliness of war, which was the death of a service member. Management of these family challenges plagued many spouses, with residual effects affecting military adolescents.

In this chapter, I present Johnson's (2014) polarity management as the study's conceptual framework, and Benet's (2006) polarities of democracy model as the theoretical framework. The chapter also includes a summary of literature relevant to additional theories, terms, and concepts dealing with U.S. military adolescents, beginning with definitions and other emerging terms. I reviewed previous research regarding the unique complexities of U.S. military adolescents in overseas multicultural communities, transition and its effects, and the evolution of current family support programs, processes, and policies designed to assist military families.

Literature Search Strategy

To ensure a thorough review of the literature, I searched academic databases to locate 138 peer-reviewed articles, books, and dissertations relative to themes noted published within the last 5 years (2014-2019). The search terms I used to search THOREAU, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and SAGE databases included *military policy*, *military adolescents*, *multicultural community*, *Department of Defense*, *polarities management*, *family stress*, *TCK*, and *overseas military*. In the process, I also reviewed several articles published beyond the 5-year parameter. The process I used to select these articles for my study required me to start with a generic baseline of topics regarding

military adolescents and the military. This led to numerous articles about military adolescents and military deployments (pre-and post), and military stressors affecting the entire family unit. It also clearly showed a gap in literature, as there was very limited research on U.S. military adolescents, military multicultural living, and overseas communities.

Theoretical Foundation

Much literature focused on cross-cultural experiences of missionaries, military members, and military spouse adjustment to a new overseas environment. However, two relevant researchers and their theoretical works were used to support this study. Johnson's (2014) polarities management and Benet's (2006) polarities of democracy model serve as the conceptual and theoretical framework respectively. These frameworks are the foundation for understanding how the management of polarities experienced and uncovered are important, and the relevance of paired elements for policy development.

Conceptual Framework

Due to the high mobility of military families, military adolescents commonly deal with challenges of maintaining relationships, relocation, culture shock, separation anxiety, and identity challenges. Constant relocation can affect military adolescents' development of personalities based on situations of constant moves and transition (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Each relocation brings the end of old relationships and the birth of new relationships; however, rootless emotions, or lack of stability, which can prove challenging for children.

I selected Johnson's (2014) polarities management concept as the conceptual framework to understand how polarities are ongoing, chronic issues that are unavoidable

and unsolvable. Polarities management is a way of balancing conflict between opposing dilemmas with the greatest possible benefit. To determine if a credible polarity exists, two criteria are considered: first, an ongoing difficulty, and second, two independent poles exist (Johnson, 2014).

I used this concept to understand the difference between solving problems and managing polarities. Polarities have negative and positive aspects, and the key to polarity management is to use polarities to maximize the positive aspects and minimize the negative aspects (Johnson, 1996). Discovery of polarities served as a baseline I used for determining whether there were dilemmas or problems that need solving. One must first understand the process in managing the perceived challenges of military adolescents and parents in a multicultural environment before engaging in developing solutions of perceived challenges. The unique and diverse multicultural communities overseas require that leaders have the foresight to capitalize on diversity without alienating members of the multicultural community that could potentially create conflict (Johnson, 2014).

Ever-changing requirements of military families' continuous, unsolvable problems will continue creating dynamic tension in polarities between the crusader and tradition-bearing forces. In this study, the crusader is viewed as the military family (a unit), and former military adolescents. Johnson (2014) noted there is a benefit in acknowledging the existence of polarities, and stated that through collaborative efforts, crusaders and tradition-bearers can work to facilitate spending more time in the upsides of both quadrants. Former military adolescents are the population who lived the experiences and understand the dynamic challenges of non-effective family support programs. In this study, I intended to gather the perceived multiple challenges the

crusaders experience when dealing with non-effective family support programs in a multicultural community overseas.

In this study, the tradition-bearing forces are the overarching system of the DoD, which includes uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard), their programs (family), and policy leaders. The tradition-bearing population is the population charged with creating and developing policy. Due to the massive size of the organization's bureaucratic process for policy development, effective changes to policies that affect crusaders may take years to review, revise, and implement. Constant review and revision (as necessary) of policies (polarities) are required through collaborative efforts between military families (parents), military adolescents (crusaders), the Department of Defense, and policy leaders (traditional-bearers) to maintain updates accordingly to ensure polarities remain in the upper quadrant as much as possible (Johnson, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Benet's polarities of democracy model served as the theoretical framework I used to understand perceptions of former military adolescents regarding the under-researched military adolescent population and their needs for existing in a sustainable community, coupled with a need for up-to-date policy support. An improperly placed structure within a community can create oppression (Benet, 2013).

While developing the polarities of democracy theory, Benet (2006, 2012 & 2013) determined that for democracy to achieve positive social change, a unifying theory must be developed to guide social change efforts toward the creation of a "healthy, sustainable community" (Benet, 2013, p. 32). The theoretical framework for this study builds on

Johnson's (2014) concept of polarity management. Benet expounded on Johnson's concept, by using critical theory as a foundation for developing relationships among selected elements of (a) freedom and authority, (b) justice and due process, (c) diversity and equality, (d) human rights and communal obligations, and (e) participation and regeneration (Benet, 2013).

Since military adolescents are an underserved population, using Benet's (2013) theory assisted in highlighting the need for social, organizational, and political awareness (development of policies) of military adolescents' requirements to sustain a healthy overseas community in multicultural environments. This theory also aligned with the development and refinement of military family programs regarding the transition aspect to and from the U.S. I aligned human rights and communal obligations pair to address the rights of military adolescents. This population should have a voice in developing policies and programs affecting them. I also aligned Benet's participation and representation theory, as used in Tobor's study. Tobor (2014) found involvement of key stakeholders would result in better management of the participation and representation polarity. Participation and representation was determined to be an additional element that required an understanding of needs to determine perceived challenges effectively, and help to present outcome and recommended solutions (Benet, 2006, 2013; Tobor, 2014).

Human Rights and Communal Obligations

Human rights and communal obligations are a defined pair within the polarities of democracy model that requires management of polarities "to provide the maximum benefits for the individual, the organization, and the community (Benet, 2006, p. 233). Human rights are those that every individual is inherently entitled to by simply being a

human, regardless of any label as defined by the government for classification purposes. The positive aspect of human rights are rights themselves, and the negative aspect is repercussions for violating these rights (see Benet, 2006).

Communities, organizations, and individuals must connect to avoid the violation of human rights (Benet, 2006 & 2013). Corresponding relationships among community members and organizations are communal obligations that, when adjudicated properly, can increase the protection of human rights. Whereas, when concerns of human rights are not addressed, results can prove negative and incomplete for services that need rendering to the community (Benet, 2006 & 2013). Huebner and Mancini's (2005) focused on adolescents' resilience and their ability to respond to changes in family life related to demands of military service. In alignment with Benet's communal obligations concept, they argued, "Community linkages are needed to assist families with information and life skills as they strive to be self-reliant," (Huebner & Mancini, 2005, p. 9).

Participation and Representation

Participation and representation is another polarity pair within the polarities of democracy model (Benet, 2012). To be present in a democratic system, one needs the functionality of representation, or a voice (Benet, 2012). The positive aspect of inclusion in the decision-making process is increased productivity and interaction, which enhances the overall democratic process (Benet, 2012). The negative aspect is too much participation or non-focused participation (Benet, 2012). Being present in the democratic process with appropriate representation is the positive aspect of participation, which allows the delivery of thoughts, interests, concerns, and feedback of many in one succinct voice (Benet, 2012). The negative side to representation is connections made by detached

leaders and omitting comments and feedback from certain groups or populations (Benet, 2012).

Takeuchi, Yun, and Tesluk (2002) noted life domains such as financial status/standard of living, housing, and neighborhood/community are intertwined in cross-cultural discussion and are factors that need consideration when transitioning to a multicultural environment. Spoth, Greenberg, Biernam, and Redmond (2004) advocated the importance of relationships among schools and communities to enhance capacity for sustained implementation of evidence-based programs. Focusing on military adolescents and their resiliency, Kudler and Porter (2013) posited, “policymakers must go beyond clinical models” and create a focus on building communities of care for military children and their families (p. 1).

Incorporating community service providers, stakeholders, community-based intervention implementation, evaluation, and refinement are necessary if intervention is successfully sustained in communities (Altman, 1995; Elias, Patrikakou, & Weissberg, 2007; Morrissey et al., 1997; Wandersman, Goodman, & Butterfoss, 1997). Strouble (2015), used Benet’s paired participation and representation polarity noted a significant emerging theme in his study, the poor relationship between the community and elected officials. The flawed representation highlights negative aspects of representation as participants in the research “expressed that they’re feeling overwhelmed” from the distrust displayed by local government officials concerning community improvement activities (Strouble, 2015, p. 117). This inherently forecasts a negative aspect of a population feeling their representation regarding community issues unacknowledged and not addressed.

Chaskin (2001) addressed the need for assessing “policies and their effects on community-based approaches” regarding social change and highlighted the importance of collaboration among resident and community organizations to foster collaboration (p. 291). The study utilized community capacity and capacity building as the theoretical framework, and defined community capacity as the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that are leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a community. Collaborative democracy should provide a method to outweigh conflict, and achieve a greater good of reaching community organizational goals through an organized, democratic process, which may operate through informal social processes and/or organized effort (Benet, 2013; Chaskin, 2001; Mohamad et al, 2012; Phori, 2016).

After analysis of existing literature, interviews and case study reviews, Chaskin (2001) noted additional research must foster the building community capacity concept which can “...influence policy and practice at higher levels of action” (p. 319). Incorporating the need for increasing community capacity is why the use of the concept of polarities of democracy theory was selected, as it seeks to build healthy, sustainable, and just communities (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). Previously described paired polarities are essential to democracy (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). Tobor (2014), using Benet’s polarities of democracy theory (2006, 2013), found in his research how the culture of the Urhobos noted the community had a passion for communal living and therefore understood government involvement in the development and implementation of programs was a key component for creating a sustainable community (Benet, 2013).

Again, the participation and representation polarity is an applicable polarity which needs addressing by gathering perceptions of former military adolescents regarding this under-researched population of military adolescents, and their needs for existing in a sustainable community. An improperly placed structure within a community can create oppression which Benet (2013) explained is viewed as a form of oppression. Failure to gain insight and incorporate feedback is viewed as an attribute of oppression.

Literature Review

Literature has focused on the transition of individuals into ethnic cultures from the beginning of time. For example, from the enslavement of African Americans to Mexicans forcefully exposed to European American culture, the transition has existed. These are just two examples of transition between cultures that have been around for centuries. These cultures, like other indigenous cultures, experienced oppression, which is an element of Benet's polarities of democracy model (2006). Benet's theory is used to address awareness of human consciousness as a response to overcome oppression (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). The dominance of alleged superior cultures is viewed as acculturation; a term used in psychology (cross-cultural and intercultural) which is used in the explanation of how European culture appeared dominant in indigenous cultures (Berry, 2005) and is explained later in Chapter 2.

Because one's homes and relationships can define a person's being, uprooting that individual, and placing them in a new community can challenge his or her sense of identity. This concept of transition is applied to military adolescents transitioning to new communities as well (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Even though military adolescents are typically already members of the military community, their experiences of transition into

new communities do not differ from those indigenous groups previously mentioned. Military adolescents do not have a choice to refuse transition, as they are a part of a military family.

Transition to a multicultural community requires an element of the resiliency of an expatriate. Transition requires a sociocultural adjustment to a multicultural community, and this transition is overwhelming as military adolescents struggle to find their place physically and culturally in a new community (Straffon, 2003). The assumption many researchers made about military adolescents was that they are resilient to change. However, research focused on susceptible characteristics (e.g., negative effects of deployments and frequent moves), where the focus should be more on understanding coping mechanisms to assist future policy development to support this population (Cozza et al., 2013).

Chandra and London (2013) determined a need to understand the military child and families, and conducted research to explore military children's experiences. However, the gap in their study highlights the strengths of this research by acknowledging literature has yet to focus on feedback from military adolescents. Another strength of this research is it will address prior research that fails to address the overall comprehensive understanding of experiences of military adolescents regarding their specific needs and requirements, especially in a multicultural community. Military members voluntarily accept overseas assignments as these assignments can be career enhancing. Because the typical length of an overseas assignment is 3 years (or longer), military members and their families are labeled as expatriates. An expatriate is an individual who travels voluntarily to a foreign country, usually for specific objectives

such as educational, professional, or personal opportunities, with intention of returning to his/her home country (Church, 1982; Ward & Kennedy, 1993).

Researchers Chandra and London (2013) also noted knowledge about military children is incomplete and, the lack of prior research regarding the exploration of subgroups of military adolescents should include exploration of adolescents with parents in various branches of the armed forces, single parents, and effects of the mother versus father serving as the active-duty member. Therefore, it is the collection of perceptions of former military adolescents, and their challenges encountered as a military adolescent that will serve as the focus of this study. Also, understanding their perceptions may provide non-government organizations affiliated with DoD information, to develop relevant and timely assistance to aid families as they prepare for the transition.

Non-governmental Organizations

Until 1847, Congressional lawmakers prohibited married men from enlisting in a military branch of service, and even though the Civil War, marriage was strongly discouraged. During World War I and II, the recognition of military dependents (spouse and children) became more noticeable, and military members started receiving subsidized benefits for housing, because of their families (Albano, 1994). By 1960, during the era of the Vietnam War, military leaders accepted that family members were starting to outnumber military personnel (Goldman & Segal, 1976), thus the birth of Army Community Service (ACS) in 1965. ACS, a Department of Defense program, was created specifically to provide support to military members and their families. ACS was borne on the heels of the Army Emergency Relief Program (AER), which was founded in the

1940s and funded by private donations to assist soldiers and their families experiencing financial hardship (Conroy, 2013).

By 1969, ACS had centers on Army installations worldwide that were primarily supported by Army spouses. Over the past 52 years, ACS has evolved and is still a viable organization today providing services for 20 core programs, ranging from support to families, to sexual assault victims, to survivor outreach services. ACS's services continue to evolve, "growing to meet the ever-changing needs of the global Army family" (Conroy, 2013).

Approximately 4 years later in 1970, the National Military Wives Association was created with the same goal as ACS; however, it was not governed by the Department of Defense. Today, this organization is called the National Military Family Association and is known for advocating for necessary services and benefits on behalf of service members and their families. This civilian organization highlights family advocacy programs that provided support to families and discovered the government allocated less than one ten-thousandth of the total defense budget for support to military families (Hoshmand & Hoshmand, 2007; National Military Family Association, 2015).

Several non-governmental organizations (e.g. the RAND Corporation, Military One Source, National Family Members Association) have partnered with the Department of Defense to assess challenges experienced by military families and to provide support resources to assist families with challenges. Military One Source, a DoD-funded program, serves as a one-stop shop for topics surrounding the military community. The site has information about the challenges military adolescents encounter. It also has several web pages discussing issues in an abbreviated format, yet it lacks in-depth

information and tools to assist families of military adolescents, especially those requiring medical assistance for stressors they encounter (Military One Source, 2016).

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Today, numerous civilian organizations advocate on behalf of the needs of military families. The Joining Forces Campaign, initiated by Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden in 2011, highlighted the need for integration from military communities, and civilian communities to support military families (Davis et al., 2012; The White House, 2016). The National Leadership Summit of Military Families report of 2009, prepared for the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, Military Community and Family Policy, created as another step in the ongoing process of transforming family support programs to solicit feedback for senior military policy leaders, program leaders and military families (Booth, Segal, & Place, 2009). Even though a blueprint was developed highlighting themes, challenges, and action steps, military families continue to experience challenges as emerging issues evolve, noting more efforts are needed for those far from military installations and locations outside of the continental United States (Booth et al., 2009).

While the evolution of data collection is improving with addressing military families, non-governmental organizations still lack in specifically addressing military

adolescent challenges beyond the effects of deployments on this population. Gathering lived experiences, addressing their responses to transition and residing abroad can only serve as an enhancement to future programs. This approach is achieved by researching literature, reviewing theories, and assessing the effectiveness of current programs via feedback from former military adolescents.

Overseas Military Transition Process

Service members receive a set of orders (or instructions) with details on when to report to their new assignment, how to ship their vehicle, and housing coordination. These sets of orders are desirably received about 3 to 6 months before their transition to an overseas assignment starting the PCS process cycle. A PCS is a cyclical event that usually occurs every 24 to 36 months after a service member has fulfilled their obligation at their current military installation (Blaisure et al., 2015). The decision to move a service member is based on an inventory of jobs, the skill level of the individual service member, and mission requirements. Movement of military personnel provides an opportunity for growth of a service member's career, an opportunity to accept positions of greater responsibility based on promotions, and an opportunity for services to rotate leaders into various organizations. Each PCS allows an organization to receive a service member with new, fresh ideas and approaches to problem solving.

Depending on the branch of service the PCS process may differ slightly, but the overall concept is similar, with the first stop for assistance being the family center for relocation. The family centers by service are Army Community Services (ACS), Navy Fleet and Family Support Services (FFSP), Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS), and the Airman and Family Readiness centers (A&FRC) (Blaisure et al., 2015). A

relocation program assists families in navigating mandatory requirements for overseas screening, which include command sponsorship requests, passports/visas, and screening or possible enrollment into the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP). Overseas screening, command sponsorship of dependents and EFMP are all requirements completed prior to a family transitioning to an overseas environment.

Command sponsorship requests inform leaders and staff of requirements needed to support the incoming service member while ensuring facilities can accommodate the inbound family and their needs. Command sponsorship also ensures adequate funding is appropriated to cover the transition of the service member and their family members, via the rules and regulations of the Joint Travel Regulations, as governed by the Department of Defense, Defense Travel Management Office (Defense Travel Management Office, 2017). Service members can receive either accompanied (with dependents) or unaccompanied without dependents (orders). Command sponsor essentially covers housing eligibility (type of quarters based on the number of family members or the amount of housing allowance authorized for off-post quarters), funding of travel for the family members to the new location (if not command sponsored then the family incurs travel expenses), temporary lodging allowance (in European theater this benefit allows a family up to 10 days to locate housing off post, if desired), and shipment of household goods (allowance is based on the number of family members and rank) (Defense Travel Management Office, 2017; U.S. Department of the Army, 2016).

Command sponsorship is critical, as community facilities must be able to accommodate new families. Resources such as employment opportunities, schooling, child care facilities, postal service, post facilities (e.g., lodging, Commissary), Post

Exchange (retail), gymnasiums, and medical and dental clinics for all dependents must have space to accommodate incoming families with approved visas.

Another administrative requirement of command sponsorship is ensuring all dependents have birth certificates/marriage certificates and proof of custody documentation to assist with obtaining visas and Status of Forces Agreement status for immigrant residency for the service member's family (Lostumbo et al., 2013). If family members arrive in an overseas community and are not command sponsored, they must obtain a tourist visa and must request permission from the host nation for residency. This process can take up to 90 days to complete and is another administrative requirement in obtaining command sponsorship.

EFMP is a critical component of the transition process. This mandatory program requires all service members transitioning to an overseas community have all dependents screened to ensure adequate support (community, educational, medical, housing, and personal needs) is available for families with special needs (Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, 2017) This screening determines if the location assigned has adequate support (e. g., ratio of medical personnel) for the service member's family. Screenings should include emotional, developmental, physical, or intellectual disorders that may require specialized services. This will provide leaders with an assessment of inbound needs and requirements.

Soldier readiness is an important component of the Army and the command sponsorship process, as it is used to ensure the military incorporates a readiness factor for military service members. Schumm, Bell, and Resnick (2001) posited past research lacked connecting the relationship between family and military readiness. Schumm et al.

(2001) noted military leaders found prior research regarding family factors and their effects on readiness non-existent. Their study found family factors must be incorporated in policy initiatives from higher headquarters, and programs should be “slanted toward military-family interaction and adjustment issues whenever possible” (Schumm et al., 2000, p. 162) to maintain retention

Cross-cultural Adjustment

A 26-year-old study by the Naval Medical Research and Development Command on the cross-cultural adjustment of military families overseas suggested the development of a systematic program of information collection and program evaluation as initial steps in addressing challenges of cross-cultural adjustment of military families (Nice & Beck, 1981). Failure of military adolescents to adapt in such unique multicultural community settings can have serious implications on an adolescent dependent’s social, cultural, and communal development, compared to their peers residing in U.S. military and non-military communities. Transition to and from cultures can also include challenges from understanding the language to balancing the difficulty of understanding units of measurement for clothes and money, to voltage conversion for appliances. Studies have shown living abroad can be challenging for military families due to “a new culture, language, and living conditions,” (Burrell, Adams, Durand, & Castro, 2006).

Per Black and Mendenhall (1991), there are three factors to consider when an individual is adjusting to another culture. Adjustment factors encompass the adjustment to the general living environment in the foreign culture, work expectations and roles, and interactional situations and norms. Adjustment to the general environment refers to the overall nature of the environment, or life domains such as weather, food, and living

conditions, which clearly connect with Benet's (2013) human rights and communal obligations paired element.

Second, work expectations and roles factor were focused on the adjustment of varied aspects and expectations of work and new relationships (subordinate, peer, or superior). Even though the freedom-authority pair is not focused on in this study, it still applies to Black and Mendenhall's (1991) work expectations and role, as Benet (2006) clearly distinguished the importance of worker's democracy and how senior-level leaders make decisions at the expense of a worker's freedom, failing to manage the relationship of this pair. George (2016), using Benet's polarities of democracy theory, found participants in his study noted a lack of relationship among leaders was influenced by barriers of collaborative leadership, which George (2016) found was influenced by the ineffective management of the polarities (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013).

Usunier's (1998) study of expatriates and the effects of oral satisfaction (e.g., host nation's eating habits, native language) of American expatriate managers living in France found a deficiency in oral pleasures had a negative impact on their personal and family satisfaction. Results of this study complemented Benet's (2006, 2012, 2013) freedom-authority pair, in that confinement to a host nation's culture can impede the effectiveness of the authority of a manager to be productive. The transition of military members into a new work environment could not only affect the military member but also could be compounded with additional stressors and challenges of the transition the military family, as a unit, could encounter.

The third factor was interactional situations and norms, and focuses on communication and socializing with local nationals in their communities, as they attempt

to adapt. This factor can be a challenge for military adolescents when residing in a multicultural community. Participating in any activity outside of a military installation typically requires a level of communication in the host nation's language. The inability to communicate can be challenging and frustrating. For example, attempting to make a purchase at the local mall requires knowledge of the host nation's language.

These three factors possess elements intertwined in the U-curve hypothesis. The U-curve hypothesis balances the adjustment of a cross-cultural environment, with time being the most critical element (Lysgaard, 1955). Most of the extant research conducted focused on military families coping with the wartime experience. Not so much on normal military transition and day-to-day living on military duty stations overseas, or effects of spousal adjustment and the stress created which can lead to culture shock, thus introducing the use of the U-curve hypothesis (Gautam & Vishwakarma, 2012).

Upon transitioning to a new environment, a basic adjustment comes with the exciting experience. Over time, variables of depression may set in which translate into feelings of homesickness, as the individual recognizes he must adjust to new cultures, beliefs and value systems. The final aspect is an adjusted settling with where the individual has moved to; with time, more understanding of the new environment develops a greater understanding of the host culture (Lysgaard, 1955).

Black and Mendenhall (1991) and Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve hypothesis shared similarities as Black and Mendenhall's model has four stages, versus three, and Lysgaard's model that acknowledges no mastery phase. Black and Mendenhall's (1991) model includes honeymoon, cultural shock, adjustment, and mastery. Through the years, Lysgaard's U-curve hypothesis was modified by Usunier (1998), Church (1982) and

Black and Mendenhall (1991), even though the overall concept remained the same (Gautam & Vishwakarma, 2012).

The first stage was the honeymoon stage and is one of excitement due to the transition and arrival into a multicultural community. The next stage was culture shock. As the military family experiences, a few challenges of managing life domains and understanding how to survive in the host nation. Frustration and confusion are met with attempts to develop coping mechanisms. The third stage was an adjustment, and this is where an understanding of multicultural environments, culture, customs, and courtesies become tolerable. The last stage was mastery; this is where the culture was familiar and became comfortable, and people felt stable.

While Lysgaard (1955) and other modifiers of the U-curve hypothesis discussed transition and inculcation to a new environment, they failed to discuss phases of transition into a multicultural community as they affect adolescents. Their studies covered adjustment from the adult perspective, which included military spousal adjustment, but not military adolescent adjustment. The service member typically transitions at a faster rate as he must be operational in his working environment shortly upon arrival. The spouse, however, usually unable to communicate in the multicultural environment, coupled with the initial inability to work, can become the first to display signs of stressors. Research determined successful transition can exist, but it is very dependent on the overall family adjustment, and their mental and physical satisfaction (Gautam & Vishwakarma, 2012).

Neither Black and Mendenhall (1991) nor Lysgaard (1955) discussed the length of each phase. Depending on the strength of an individual adolescent's coping skills, his

or her behavioral and social challenges of being inculcated into an overseas community, and his or her adjustment timeframe could vary between the lower and upper ages of the military adolescent. Prior transition experience and level of maturity need consideration. Military adolescents, labeled in prior research as resilient and quick to transition because they, like the military member, must be involved in work, the adolescent must attend school and learns with many students from the host or other nations. Yet, challenges may not develop until the middle or near the end of a service member's tour, affecting whether families can maintain and overcome challenges, or decide a multicultural community is not conducive to the military adolescent.

Overseas Living

Military families, regardless of location are affected by deployment rotations, whether they are in the continental U.S., or on an overseas military installation. The operational tempo, a term combining "operations" and "tempo" used by military personnel to define the rate/movement of a military mission or action, of military deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan began to decrease around 2010 (Blaisure et al., 2015; Castro & Adler, 1999). Many returning service members and military families faced the following challenges: financial setbacks due to lost incentive pay while deployed, re-integration challenges of the service member from having experienced multiple deployments, and a loss of a spouse's job due to transition to a new assignment upon the return of a deployed service member (National Military Family Association, 2015). Per the National Military Family Association (2015), these were a few of the most significant life change themes experienced by military families. Families felt a change of

pace to an overseas location might bring enjoyment to the family unit as they attempted to overcome the above-stated challenges upon return from their deployment.

Hayes (2014) asserted, “An elite U.S. military force requires its service members to be amenable to assignments worldwide, which could affect family members as well” (p. 1). The euphoria of an overseas assignment brings a multitude of rewarding and unique experiences, yet it can also present multifaceted challenges for individuals, especially adolescents, which can include several stressors: transition to new cultures, educational challenges, social anxiety, and a reassessment of family priorities (Clever & Segal, 2013). Clever & Segal (2013) also noted stressors acknowledged in prior research such as military family syndrome, can contribute to behavior problems and psychological disorders.

Even though there is excitement in an overseas assignment, families serving in military organizations overseas can still be affected by challenges, such as multicultural communities, language barriers, and geographical separations from extended family, as identified in the researcher findings. With all available research, there are very few scholars who have investigated the requirements of military families, and the military support programs needed to sustain a military family in an overseas multicultural environment.

Immersion into an unfamiliar environment presents new challenges, especially when the transition requires a shift to a different continent. Understanding that change can occur at different stages of an individual’s life, an experience of transition to a new culture can wreak havoc on the most mature individual, let alone the life of an adolescent. Canadian psychologist Berry (2005) suggested

When individuals are exposed to more than one culture, there are various experiences, which include a behavioral shift and emotional reaction to learning other's languages, sharing each other's food preferences, and adopting forms of dress and social interactions that are characteristic of each group, (p. 700)

Military relocation readiness programs are designed to provide services to assist families in making successful decisions regarding their relocation. Education, training, and information services include overseas orientation, cross-cultural training, pre-and post-move briefs, and relocation counseling. For programs similar to these and others to succeed, the inclusion of community member feedback in developing programs that will address their "own peculiar issues, needs and problems ..." are critical and need addressing (Tobor, 2014, p 145).

When military families experience challenges that extend beyond the level of support provided by available family programs, military leaders have an option to execute an early return of dependents (ERD). Initiation of ERD is a last resort, and every effort is considered to rectify problems encountered before approval of the request. Approvals for an ERD are usually considered if documented behavior can cause embarrassment to the U.S. government, or if any medical treatment needed, is not readily available, or if it is in the best interest of the government for compelling reasons the command cannot resolve. Guidelines from DoD (2013) required commands to a) provide evidence by command leadership the situation is affecting the service member's performance, and b) encouragement of mental health and religious counseling; if marital, family counseling, legal counseling is utilized, then the recommendations are included.

The inability of military families to adapt to life overseas presents a challenge not only for commanders regarding service member productivity but can also be a costly expense for the Department of Defense. Lostumbo et al. (2013) from the RAND Corporation, determined the average cost to move a family to an overseas location is approximately \$11,300, which is \$5,600 more than a military family moving within the continental U.S. Bower (1967) noted adolescents residing in multicultural communities overseas are typically unhappy with the host culture. Unhappiness, coupled with serious emotional or behavioral problems can cause a family's failure to adapt, which can lead to the family returning to the United States (Bower, 1967). Burrell et al. (2006) applied consistency to Bower's (1967) comments, in that a family's failure to adapt due to challenges affecting their physical and psychological well-being can lead to an early return of military dependents to a stateside location, forcing a family to live separately until the service member completes his or her overseas tour. Identifying stressors prior to the departure of military members and their dependents, could alleviate financial problems only exasperated with the cost of relocating and residing overseas, and uncovering undocumented family issues not activated until arrival in a multicultural community overseas.

Military Adolescent

Numerous articles and researchers focused on military members' quality of life, particularly in the Air Force, but not so much on military adolescents ranging in age from 14 to 17. Many blogs, such as Military Wives, Military Brat, and Expats, to websites, such as Military.com have discussed challenges of a military family relocating; however,

the limited discussion was available regarding challenges of military adolescents relocating to a multicultural environment overseas.

DePedro and Astor (2011) reviewed studies on military children and stressors and determined several themes: mental health status of military families, child maltreatment in military families, military families and war, and last, support to families of National Guard and Reservists. Reed, Bell, and Edwards (2011) conducted research which identified adolescent's well-being with deployed parents to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom as military adolescent stressors; however, again, there is limited research focusing on the impact an overseas assignment can have on adolescent dependents adjusting to behavioral and social practices in a multicultural community overseas. Previous studies in family research have described, and documented effects of parental military deployments on children, as deployments are thought to most acutely affect youth, but remain limited during no deployment periods of a military service member (Hardin, Hayes, Cheever, & Addy, 2003; Hillenbrand, 1976; Huebner & Mancini, 2005; Jensen et al., 1996).

McCubbin et al. (1985) determined the development of adolescent health risk behaviors start with family stressors that are left unmanaged. Over a 3-year period, this study sought to understand what critical factors help mold the creation of adolescent health risk stressors such as smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and consuming illegal drugs. These are a few of normal adolescent stressors adolescents encounter. These stressors, coupled with the transition of military adolescents to overseas communities can potentially create a negative effect.

The Military Health System Medical Data Repository served as the source of research on military adolescent medical records in 2008 regarding military adolescents and transition. The repository, which held approximately half a million medical records on military children, noted 25 % of the 543,366 military children who moved during 2008 had significantly higher mental health care visits in 2009 than children who did not move. Results were atypical as prior research noted military adolescents are typically resilient to change. Adolescents in this research, between the ages of 12 to 17 had four times as many emergency mental health visits as those between the ages of six to 11, which included problems like “adjustment disorders, attention deficit or conduct disorders, alcohol or substance abuse and self-injury and suicidal behaviors” (Millegan, McLay, & Engel, 2014, p. 278).

Bower conducted research in 1967 seeking answers to questions regarding American children and families residing in overseas communities. Results of the study provided answers regarding families living in a foreign culture, and positive or negative emotional impacts on those families; and the availability of adequate mental and health educational resources provided by the military and learning what new services were needed for such communities (Bower, 1967). Bower’s (1967) study acknowledged challenges but failed to offer solutions based on discoveries made from the feedback of military residents residing overseas. Applying Benet’s (2006) polarities of democracy theory, along with Johnson’s (2014) polarity management could have assisted Bower (1967) in achieving a different outcome by going a step further by determining which elements were negative, which were positive and was there any connectivity of elements that linked (or paired) together for correlation.

In a retrospective study of military adolescent experiences overseas, Finley (2014) used Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as his conceptual framework. Finley (2014) researched the effects of relocation on military children who are now adults. Known as Adult Third Culture Kids, Finley (2014) interviewed 12 individuals between the ages of 18 to 72 who were, at some point, a military adolescent. While this study acknowledged challenges military adolescents encounter during the transition, it was geared more toward understanding their feelings, and not focused on a solution to adjust policies to assist in fixing challenges discovered. Also, the greater age gap may have hindered the outcome due to varied generational differences and concerns. Having the ability to gather feedback of former military adolescents with recent overseas multicultural experience would have allowed for a greater balance of themes (positive and negative) to emerge based on interview questions.

Researchers have attributed challenges of transition of adults into overseas communities as culture shock. They explained stressors experienced as cross-cultural adjustment challenges, and used stages of the U-curve model to explain this phenomenon, but not the challenges of transition on military adolescents. Nice and Beck (1981) however, did consider the challenges of military adolescents and their transitions, but this research is over 20 years old and is outdated. Services such as the ACS Program, AER, and American Red Cross were in developmental stages in the late 1970s, attempting to create support programs for children and youth (Bower, 1967); but those programs continue to require constant refinement to provide modern and up-to-date services.

Numerous factors were identified affecting military adolescents and Palmer (2008) acknowledged those factors, highlighting the uniqueness of military families and

the risk and resilience factors of this understudied population. Researchers noted military adolescents cope with separation anxiety and frustration when a parent is deployed, which is compounded with multiple normative stressors including puberty, school transitions, and relocation (Huebner & Mancini, 2005, p. 11; Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Reed et al. (2011) characterized adolescence as a developmental period with “increased predisposition to health risk behaviors and stressors (e.g., alcohol and other drug use, risky sexual behaviors) that may be exacerbated with parental absence” (p. 1676).

In 1949, Reuben Hill developed his seminal theory, ABCX theory of stress while working as a social scientist with the Army. Hill’s (1958) theory was borne from assessing the impact of war casualties on American families who still serve today as a basis for researchers desiring more information on how families handle pressure. The ABCX model noted families dealing with stressors (a) have negative and positive stressors at their disposal, (b) maintain their own perceptions/family resources on the approach to problems (c) can potentially alter their ability to cope with or succumb (X) to crises. Hill’s (1958) crisis criteria align with Johnson’s (2014) polarity management of identifying positive and negative aspects, however; Johnson (2014) provided more management tools on solutions to maintain the balance to keep polarities in the upper quadrants. Benet (2006, 2013) provided polarity pairs to assist in guiding the positive and negative aspects of each pair to create alignment and synergy among the polarities.

Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinaraset, and Blum (2010) found researchers studied the impact of varied multicultural challenges facing military adolescent’s lives and determined the findings were inconclusive, granted the sample of military youth in this study was relatively too small, contributing to inconclusive results.

John and Ruth Hill conducted a study in the mid-1950s about TCKs, and defined the term as “children who accompany their parents into another culture during their developmental years” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 19). TCK was used in many studies from missionaries and their work in multicultural communities to military adolescents in a holistic sense. TCK explains a general phenomenon of labeling or grouping; however, it fails to specifically address perceived challenges or incorporate feedback from military adolescents regarding their overseas assignments.

Previous research applied the family stress theory to assist in grasping effects of life stressors faced by military families required to adapt to relocation (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Chandra and London (2013), conducted a similar study, utilizing national surveys and administrative records as the means for data review and recommended future research utilize large national surveys, administrative records, and convenience sample and recommended expansion of collection the ways data are collected for military children “to assist future research, intervention and policy development, (p. 197).” They also recommended future research should follow former military adolescents into adulthood to understand how military service can affect their lives (Chandra & London, 2013). Even though these recommendations are sound in concept, expansion on these recommendations is required to add the missing component of gathering lived perceptions and experiences of life stressors from former military adolescents, which is the primary focus of this study.

In 1994, the Department of Defense initiated The Youth Action Program (YAP) in conjunction with the United States Air Force and the Front Range Institute (specializes in military families). The intent of the program was to look at military youth (ages 11 to

12 years old), who were identified by teachers and school counselors as at-risk. While the program achieved high marks for connecting with an individual microsystem and mesosystem level, it failed to meet the needs of the United States Air Force by neglecting to identify community control measures, stakeholders and community representation (Perkins & Borden, 2004). Failure to incorporate community ownership into the YAP strengthens needs for this research, as the focus of this research was on incorporating feedback from former military adolescents who view their perceived challenges and stressors from the standpoint of an adult.

DoD created a formal education program to assist American children with education needs outside of the U.S. Military adolescents stationed on a military installation are typically educated by the DoDDS network of schools (DoDEA Eastern United States, DoDEA Europe, or DoDEA Pacific. The DoDDS network manages 166 pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade schools in seven states in the U.S., 12 foreign countries, Puerto Rico and Guam (DoDEA Data Center, 2014). Established after World War II (1946) to ensure an American educational experience for all American students was achieved, today educates approximately 72,000 students. The importance of educators in this school system provides military children with teachers who understand and are aware of the challenges they encounter (Clever & Segal, 2013). Therefore, the significance of including former military adolescent's perceptions is critical to understanding all aspects of their lived experiences as a military adolescent, regardless of the DoDEA location overseas.

It is imperative that studies about military children and their families focus not only on the challenges and strengths of this population but on the larger social contexts to

create more quality evidence-based programs (Park, 2011). Thus, it remains critical to gather the perceptions of former military adolescents, which serves as the focal point of this research to provide insight on the effectiveness of current military family policies/support programs managed by the Department of Defense.

Current Program

Overseeing military programs and policies for service members and their families worldwide is the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Manpower & Reserve Affairs. Manpower and Reserve Affairs (M&RA) directs overall policies and procedures for the military force and oversees the office of Military Community and Family Policy, also known as MC&FP, and all Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) (Manpower & Reserve Affairs, 2018). The MC&FP office establishes programs and policies that support quality of life programs, which include child care, youth programs, community programs, short-term non-medical counseling to name a few. The MC&FP office also coordinates with non-government organizations that provide services to military families and includes the Red Cross, Armed Services YMCA, and USO.

Founded in 1969, the National Military Family Association (NMFA) as it is called today, and a non-government organization, was initially the Military Wives Association and was created by military wives to ensure their widowed friends were taken care of in the case of a service member's death. From their inception, the Survivor Benefit Plan, an insurance plan that provides a monthly annuity, became law a few years later in 1972. Many family member concerns were initiated by military spouses as a way of serving as a voice for spouses and children, taking issues to Capitol Hill as necessary.

This civilian-based organization continues today to champion on behalf of military families regarding their issues and concerns.

In 1983, then Army Chief of Staff General John A. Wickham initiated a groundbreaking initiative, a white paper. This paper titled, *The Army Family*, was to address the social transformation of the Army solely focused on the transition from draftees to an all-volunteer force, with family members consisting of spouses and children. Goals of the white paper not only helped make sure the volunteer force was sustained but also managed the needs of families. This research from a sitting Chief of Staff was a paradigm shift to recognize programs and policies were needed to address Army service members and their family members.

The AER and ACS programs were initiatives created during the Vietnam War era but based on issues that arose during this period. However, it was determined these programs solely, could not meet the demands of such a long war. It was not until 1982 when the Army created the Army Family Liaison Office to receive feedback from families to determine challenges of Army living (Shinseki, 2003). Spouses met with commanders to discuss issues and seek solutions, and in 1984, the Army Family Action Plan was implemented to gather feedback from delegates regarding issues, where the most important issues of childcare and housing were then fed to senior leaders for recommendations.

The Army recognized in 2003 that it still had challenges in supporting military families with challenging circumstances. The service acknowledged to retain military service members, family problems still needed evaluation to offer successful programs. In 2004, NMFA, the organization created by military spouses, was charged by Congress

to query military families to determine items of importance and circumstances that may challenge the military family unit. A short list of most anticipated concerns surrounding deployments and re-deployments was presented to Congress, which included financial issues, divorce, and military children concerns to name a few (NMFA, 2015).

The Army retained the RAND Corporation to conduct a study in 2017 to assess the needs of soldiers and their families, and the report found 11% of all respondents expressed they had at least one unmet need (NMFA, 2015). It was discovered, even though there are resources available to assist families with challenges, it was determined there are possible barriers in accessing resources, experiences with existing resources are not helpful, or family members were unaware of which resource are available to support their concerns. Therefore, a follow-up survey is being conducted for spouses of active-duty personnel to reassess current programs and express their opinions and concerns of challenges encountered, and the current state of available resources.

A reassessment of programs could determine whether current support and programs for military family members are adequate. The challenge plaguing many military programs is the underutilization rate. The perception of utilizing certain family programs are often seen by families as programs designed for families in crisis (e.g., divorce) or families with serious, ongoing issues, which are linked to the lack of understanding, or a negative perception for using certain services (Jensen et al., 1991).

A major crisis experienced by families, especially on the heels of deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11 has been divorced. Research depicts the number of divorces of military service members increased during the years of major conflict (2001 to 2010), and Esposito-Smythers et al. (2011) determined a need exists to incorporate

emotional and behavioral health service evaluations, as this is a critical service required to assist military youth with coping with deployments, transitions, and separations, which can “diminish a child’s sense of security and... disrupt a child’s social network” (Lyle, 2006, p. 320).

Doty, Rudi, Pinna, Hanson, and Gewirtz (2016) conducted a study to determine if media-based interventions versus face-to-face interventions would be a better way to assist parenting challenges of military families who require assistance from programs established by the military and DoD. Due to limitations of availability of trained practitioners, and low parent participation in face-to-face intervention programs, many programs have seen declining utilization rates.

Doty et al. (2016) determined that to improve chronic and acute stress families encounter (especially with deployments), a need existed to enhance family resilience by using media-based intervention to supplement traditional in house programs for military families. The study determined an online parenting program could provide an alternative to those parents unable to participate in face-to-face programs; however, the study only addressed National Guard (NG) families residing in the Midwest who experienced a deployment. Unfortunately, challenges National Guard military families encounter, though similar in experiencing deployments differ from active-duty military families, as NG families are not susceptible to transition to multicultural communities overseas.

Attempts were made to create family programs to support military families of all service branches at various military installations/bases within the Department of Defense. Although programs developed by military and civilian organizations were created to address concerns, Lester and Flake (2013) found a lack of scientific evaluation to

determine the effectiveness of programs was included. Feedback from former military adolescents, coupled with focused research from practitioners and researchers will assist in understanding challenges encountered to create collaborative military family and support programs to support military adolescents and their families.

Summary and Conclusion

Much of the literature reviewed was peer-reviewed or gathered from surveys, and prior research projects commissioned by DoD. This literature review chapter served to (a) review relevant research concepts and prior research gaps, (b) highlight relevant research on theories, and (c) explore the impact of incorporating perceptions into up-to-date and relevant research to assist program managers with information that may help to develop timely policies and family support programs for military families and military adolescents residing in overseas communities. Because the operational tempo of deployments is slowing, military families are considering the opportunity of seeking an assignment in an overseas military community. The constant transition of a military adolescent and his or her lifestyle is more than just transition; it also encompasses a cyclical adjustment process, transition, and stressors that come with moving.

It is the substantial gaps in literature of the perceptions of former military adolescents regarding the challenges faced by those former military adolescents who have resided in a multicultural community overseas regarding their transitions and inculcations into multicultural communities overseas that may require adaptation to current policies to ensure maximum integration of feedback, as well as current, effective and relevant military family programs and support services, are in place.

Chapter 3 presents information on methodology, research design, participants, and sample size.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore perceptions of former military adolescents regarding their lived challenges encountered transitioning to and from and residing in a multicultural community abroad. Mmari et al. (2010) found researchers studied the impact of varied multicultural adjustments challenges facing military adolescent's lives and determined that the findings inconclusive. Therefore, I determined the need to gain additional information since the sample of the military youth from Mmari et al.'s (2010) study was relatively small, which may have contributed to inconclusive results. I thus attempted to fill the existing gap in the literature by answering the following research question: How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and negative experience in living abroad, and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs?

I used a qualitative approach to determine significant differences and possible similarities between perceptions, current programs, and policies because "individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). An understanding of participants' perceptions will assist policy leaders in determining if additional funding resources are required to create or modify military family programs, as well as policy to support the constant revolving needs of military adolescents and their families. Therefore, I used polarities management as the conceptual framework to understand the conflict between opposing dilemmas (Johnson, 1996). Additionally, I analyzed study results through the lens of the polarities of democracy model, which served as the theoretical framework that I could use to suggest policies that would

strengthen the multicultural overseas experiences of military adolescents to sustain a positive impact (Benet, 2006). There are five pairs in the polarities of democracy model: freedom and authority, justice and due process, diversity and equality, human rights and communal obligations, and participation and representation (Benet, 2013).

In Chapter 3, I discuss the research design and the rationale used for this study. First, I explain the case study design process and rationale for its selection. Next, I explain the role I played as the researcher. In the following section, I discuss participant selection, sampling data collection, data analysis, and interpretation, and my process for ethical protection of participants. Then I cover possible threats to credibility and trustworthiness of the research methodology and findings. I conclude with a summary key points in the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

For this case study, I investigated the stressors and challenges adolescents encounter during transition to and from an overseas multicultural environment, as well stressors and challenges encountered while residing in a multicultural overseas environment. I conducted this study to aid in determining the effectiveness of military family programs. The case for the current study is former military adolescents who lived overseas in a multicultural community between Grades 8 and 12. My intent in this research was to answer the following: How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and negative experience in living abroad, and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs?

When considering a design for dissertation research, researchers have a multitude of options. For this study, I considered using quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods

approaches. The quantitative approach was not appropriate given the descriptive nature of the data I sought to gather on challenges military adolescents encounter in multicultural communities. Mixed methods would have highlighted statistical qualities of the challenges; however, to bring awareness of the population's unique experiences, many challenges may not be as noticeable in statistical representation and thus detract from the descriptive feedback provided by the participants. Thus, I selected a qualitative approach.

Among the qualitative research design choices available for researchers are narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, case study, and phenomenology (Maxwell, 2013). I eliminated the narrative research method as an option due to its focus on exploring the life of an individual and telling the story of individual experiences. Grounded theory research involves the development of a theory grounded in data from the field. I had no desire to develop a theory about military adolescents, but chose to use proven theoretical frameworks that acknowledged polarities/challenges and then provide solutions. Ethnographic research is about describing and interpreting the culture of a specific group and would not have been the most effective for understanding participants' experiences in relation to improving policy. Therefore, I selected a case study design, which allows a researcher to discover contemporary phenomena in real-life holistic settings (Yin, 2014).

I used a case study to gain a better understanding and insight into the challenges and stressors military adolescents encounter with the transition to and residential living in multicultural overseas communities. Gathering lived experiences of multiple people is best done with a case study. Creswell (2007) noted the value of multiple perspectives in a case study. The polarities of democracy model supports such multiplicity by allowing

societies and communities to focus on positive aspects of identified polarities that may exist (Benet, 2006; Johnson, 1996). Experiences and perceptions of multiple groups residing in the same community may assist researchers and policymakers in understanding the challenges encountered by former military adolescents.

In the literature review, I found limited research on military adolescents, and no research focusing on perceptions of former military adolescents regarding the challenges they encountered and their understanding the effectiveness of military family support programs to assist with their challenges. Further, no researchers have studied the interface between underlying polarities surrounding these challenges.

For this dissertation, I selected a case study design, in part, because of definitions offered by modern case study methodologists Hancock and Algozzine (2017), Gerring (2016), Yin (2014), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Flyvbjerg (2006). Flyvbjerg noted contributions made by case studies are believed to strengthen social science; however, he did warn researchers to be mindful of five misunderstandings of case study research,

(1) theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; (2) one cannot generalize from a single case; therefore, the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development; (3) the case study is the most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; (4) the case study contains a bias toward verification; and (5) it is often difficult to summarize case studies. (p. 221)

Yin (2014) named five components of effective case study research design: (a) research questions; (b) propositions or purpose of the study; (c) unit analysis; (d) logic that links data to propositions; and (e) criteria for interpreting findings. The most

appropriate questions for this type of qualitative case study research are “how” and “what” questions (Yin, 2014, p. 29). Specifically, I asked participants about their experiences and their perceived challenges in multicultural overseas communities. Additionally, I inquired about their perceptions regarding military family programs and military support services in place to assist with the management of challenges encountered.

The second component of case study research is to define the study purpose clearly. This component is most commonly recognized as the purpose statement. The purpose of this case study was to explore perceptions of former military adolescents regarding their lived challenges as military adolescents while transitioning to and from, and residing in multicultural communities overseas. Also, I sought to determine the effectiveness of military family support programs based on emerging challenges, and whether current policies and military programs address the challenges experienced by former military adolescents.

The third component of the case study research design is the unit of analysis. Yin (2014) described the unit of analysis as the areas of focus that a case study analyzes and that is directly tied to the research questions developed by the researcher. The unit of analysis for this study was former military adolescents who lived in multicultural communities as adolescents. Because there is a limit to this population, not all military adolescents reside in multicultural communities overseas (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Understanding the challenges of military adolescents residing in multicultural communities was the central purpose of this study. Adolescent needs and requirements constantly evolve based on societal views. Societal views can affect the behavior of

adolescents. Add the element of the transition to multicultural communities along with military lifestyles, and this population's behavioral patterns can display significant challenges in dealing with multiple polarities.

The fourth component of the case study research design is to connect data to propositions. This connection is made following the data collection phase, as themes emerge. As data were analyzed, I attempted to match patterns that appeared in the data to theoretical propositions of the case study. The themes that emerged in this study served to answer the research question.

The fifth component of the case study design was the criteria for interpreting the findings. I coded the data prior to developing themes. After the development of themes, I extracted meanings from the findings to offer recommendations for practice and future research.

Roles of the Researcher

I assumed the role of an observer. I collected and analyzed data to answer the research question. I have served as a military officer for over 20 years. As a current active-duty military officer, I have preconceptions about multicultural communities overseas, in which I have lived. I lived in Ansbach, Germany for 3 years and in Mons, Belgium for 3 years. Having served as the executive officer for the United States National Military Representative from 2012-2015, I saw first-hand challenges military adolescents have encountered from residing in an overseas multicultural community.

This first-hand knowledge presented a potential concern for my own experiences to bias my perspective regarding this proposed study. Since former military adolescents

now in the U.S. are interviewed for this study, I conducted a purposeful sampling. Therefore, I had no personal or professional connection to the selected participants.

Methodology

The methodology section includes participant selection logic, data collection procedures and instruments, data analysis, and the trustworthy plan. In addition, this section includes a description of the sampling strategy, description of threats to data quality, the feasibility of the study and ethical considerations. I selected research participants who attended a DoDEA school in an overseas community (Pacific or Europe) to understand their lived experiences.

I used purposeful sampling when selecting participants, as the sampling strategy that worked well with military adolescents studied. Creating a realistic view to understand these phenomena is best suited for purposeful sampling. Former military adolescents who have experienced the phenomenon were selected for this study, as they have specific qualities on understanding the importance of effective programs most relevant to the topic studied (Creswell, 2007).

I sought former military adolescents in the U.S., residing in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia area, who had experiences as a military adolescent who previously lived overseas, and studied in DoDEA school abroad. Former military adolescents could not be older than the age of 23 at the time of the interview, and if enrolled in a higher learning institution, would possess a dependent military identification card, if the military member was still serving or retired. I employed the snowball-sampling procedure to identify purposeful participants of the study.

Sample Size

Sample size reflects a specific group of participants based on the purpose of the research. Because qualitative studies typically employ small samples, a researcher can be selective in the method of framing questions to be rigorous in collecting data from former military adolescents (Maxwell, 2013). I selected six former military adolescents who resided in the continental U.S..

I used social media platforms, post flyers at local libraries, the university's participant pool, developed letters and sent emails to reach potential participants. In addition, I contacted fellow military members who may have known former military adolescents willing to participate or know of potential former military adolescent participants. Participants selected for interviews meet a set of standards that ensured the trustworthiness of the study. First, the former military adolescent must not have been older than 23 years of age (within 5 years of their 18th birthday). Second, they resided in multicultural communities overseas as a military adolescent between the Grades of eight through 12. Third, participants were a legal dependent of a military member.

Instrumentation

I used a 20 question, open-ended, semi-structured interview. The instrument was reviewed to ensure questions were relatable to the focus of the study, avoided ambiguity, reduced repetition of questions, adjusted word choice to establish authenticity, and aligned with my theoretical framework. Questions were vetted by a subject matter expert to ensure the theoretical framework questions regarding polarities of democracy are incorporated. Information included respondents' education levels, ages, ethnicity, service affiliation, gender, and overseas location.

Ethical Procedures

I monitored the research for potential ethical issues of human subjects. I ensured high standards of ethical practices are in effect by following guidelines provided by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I did not begin my research involving participants until the IRB approved the proposal of this doctoral research.

Upon receipt of IRB approval, I began the research process. I avoided ethical issues in interviews by providing a consent form to all participants. This ensured all participants knew their rights as participants in this study. I also ensured they understood their right to withdraw their participation at any time with no retaliation. Due to the vulnerable information received from participants, I assigned code names for all interviews. All information was stored in a password-protected database, and hard copy consent forms were stored in a locked cabinet. Final reporting of findings does not include participant names, nor any other identifying information to disclose their identity.

Data Analysis Plan

Creswell (2014) noted case study data collection involves wide ranges of procedures that allow researchers to develop detailed descriptions of the case. To minimize concerns regarding validity, employment of various procedures can reduce the redundancy of data gathering, prevent the explanation of procedural challenges, and strengthen a study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). These methods include interviews, focus groups, document review, observation, and critical incident reports (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Even though surveys and questionnaires are traditionally linked to quantitative studies, they are used on qualitative studies to provide corroboration and/or supportive

evidence. Before data analysis can begin, a data management plan is developed to manage data received.

I audiotaped all individual interviews. I ensured I analyzed the raw data and assigned a well-organized coding process to track relevant quotes. Since interviews were audio recorded, I listened to interview tapes to provide transcription, whereby I wrote notes to develop coding categories and relationships. Using my theoretical framework, I monitored the coding to see patterns and themes emerged. I based my themes on the theoretical construct of polarities of democracy.

Before data analysis began, a data management plan was developed to manage data received. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) methods of data collection for a qualitative study include, but are not limited to, interviews, focus groups, document review, observation and critical incident reports. Even though surveys and questionnaires are traditionally linked to quantitative studies, they are used on qualitative studies to provide corroboration and/or supportive evidence” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 108). Maxwell (2013) noted the first step in qualitative analysis should include reading data collected before analyzing.

Data Collection

Individual interviews. I collected demographic information on the participant, which included name, age, ethnicity, gender, service affiliation, location abroad, and contact information. The interview proceeded with the protocol guidelines as outlined in Appendix A. The questions used reflected the theoretical framework selected for this study.

With this theoretical construct, I shaped my analysis of interview questions, responses, and observation notes and developed categorical aggregation of collected data. The structure of the questions allowed me to solicit the participants' answer to provide information about the main research question. I utilized codes to identify different examples of each category discovered, and then I looked for patterns within each category discovered to uncover themes. I employed theoretical categorization to code data that represents my concepts as the researcher rather than the participants' concepts (Maxwell, 2013).

A 20-question, open-ended semi-structured interview, developed in conjunction with my Chair, was used to gather feedback from former military adolescents on their experiences and challenges encountered while residing in a multicultural community overseas, as well as military family programs and their effectiveness. Informed consent forms were distributed prior to the start of the interview. The interviews did not last longer than 60 minutes.

Document review. Yin (2014) suggested that the importance of document usage in a case study is to “corroborate and argument evidence from other sources” (p. 107). Documents subject to review included papers initiated at the request of DoD, as well as reports initiated by non-governmental organizations concerning military adolescents, and white papers written by DoD leadership. These documents provided insight into the internal operations of DoD, as well as the need for reevaluation of family programs. These documents provided insight into the internal operations of DoD and the creation of family programs.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Taking an active role in the gathering and interpretation of participants' meanings of their lived experiences required being a credible, qualitative researcher. Having the ability to control potential biases throughout the study is the goal of this researcher. Qualitative research lends itself to requiring a stronger check of validity due to the lack of quantitative data. This research attempted to use several strategies to alleviate concerns of validity and reduce any biases. I used member checks and adequate engagement in data collection to increase the credibility of findings as an empowering strategy to increase the internal validity of this research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Credibility

Credibility is synonymously linked with internal validity. Both credibility and internal validity deal with determining whether research findings match reality, as qualitative research is always changing and is not fixed quantitative results (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In qualitative research, Maxwell (2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) both agreed reality is holistic and cannot "be proven or taken for granted" (Maxwell, 2013; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 243). First, triangulation was used to increase the credibility of this research by using multiple sources of data collection, which included interviews from perspective former military adolescents, and relevant research of documents commissioned by DoD. Upon completion of interviews, I employed member checks and encouraged feedback of my emerging findings from random interviewees to rule out any misinterpretation of the meaning of their responses. Last, adequate engagement in data collection through a review of surveys was used to understand the breadth and depth of this phenomenon of military adolescents in the written words of the

participants. I gathered enough interviews for data to emerge, and for my findings to reach the point of saturation where no new information was revealed during the data collection process.

Transferability

Transferability is synonymous with external validity. By using a method of diverse sample selection, I achieved a greater variation of offering the possibility for replication of this research to similar situations in the future. The diverse sample selection is highlighted as I was selecting former military adolescents from any overseas multicultural community overseas, allowing a greater range of application by readers and consumers of this research. Thick description as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) also served as a method of transferability. Results of this case study provide sufficient detail to help evaluate detailed patterns of cultural and social relationships (Holloway, 1997). Thereby, allowing conclusions drawn to be transferable to other times, settings, situations and people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

Unlike reliability in quantitative research, dependability in qualitative research is not assessed through statistical means (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). It was my goal to replicate research findings in this qualitative study, ensuring inconsistencies were not eliminated, but ensuring the I understood when they occurred. This was achieved by allowing participants interviewed to review their own transcript for accuracy once they were transcribed.

Confirmability

I ensured this fourth standard of trustworthiness was established regarding the quality of results based on the participant's involvement in the study. As the researcher, I conducted a confirmability audit, to determine if findings were shaped more by respondents than my personal perspective. This prevented any inclination of personal bias; personal interest or personal motivation made and confirmed results were corroborated by others, which are represented more than my own beliefs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 243).

A key component of confirmability is highlighting any predispositions of the researcher. Ensuring I disclosed and clarified any researcher bias, I tried to ensure emerged findings were from data and not my own personal predispositions. Using triangulation, along with member checking and thick descriptions has a logical connection.

Summary

The purpose of this case study was to gather perceptions of former military adolescents about their feedback regarding the challenges military adolescents encountered while residing in an overseas military community, as well as their transitions, and effectiveness of military family support programs and their effectiveness. The polarities of democracy model served as the theoretical construct setting the context of this study. I selected a case study as it presented the best opportunity to view data of real-life experiences of a selected population within a focused region.

Data collection involved gathering individual interviewee who had lived experiences in multicultural communities overseas. I coded data and put it through

multiple forms of analysis and categorization that allowed themes to emerge. Throughout the process, I utilized various procedures of triangulation, member check, and adequate engagement in data collection to ensure trustworthiness of findings, and adhered to strict guidelines of the IRB's ethical standards.

In chapter 4, I present the findings of this research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore perceptions of former military adolescents regarding their positive and negative lived experiences encountered while transitioning to and from, and residing in, multicultural communities overseas. In addition, I used polarity management and the polarities of democracy model as the conceptual and theoretical framework respectively in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the policies that affect this population. Ultimately, my goal was to increase researchers' and policymakers' awareness of military adolescent experiences while transitioning to and residing in multicultural communities overseas. In what follows, I present the results in a descriptive and interpretive manner.

By answering the research question and analyzing the experiences of military adolescents who have lived overseas, I offered insight and explored their perceptions as I sought to provide an answer to the following research question: How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and negative experiences in living abroad, and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs? The research question was designed after an exhaustive review of the extant literature to identify gaps regarding the positive and negative experiences of military adolescents while transitioning to and from and living in multicultural overseas communities.

The research design and approach were grounded in the study's two frameworks: Johnson's (2014) polarity management concept, which I used to identify polarities in varied situations to determine ways to leverage the polarities discovered, and Benet's

(2006, 2012, 2013) polarities of democracy model, which focuses on pairs that can assist in building healthy, sustainable, and just communities. The findings of this empirical research were aimed at advancing knowledge on military adolescents and their positive and negative experiences, and to contribute original qualitative data to the literature.

In this chapter, I describe the results of the case study and cover thematic analysis and emerging themes in the data collected (see Yin, 2017). This chapter contains data from (a) a semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) that has been reviewed and standardized by a subject matter expert, (b) reflective field notes I kept throughout the data collection process, and (c) seminal literature relevant to the study that I reviewed in detail in Chapter 2. I describe the main patterns and themes I identified, accompanied by their respective participant voices. Tables summarizing demographics of the study's sample population, coding, and themes are also presented (see Yin, 2017). As the researcher, I reviewed the evidence of trustworthiness and proceeded to the results by addressing the research question and by presenting data to support findings, which are highlighted in tables. In this chapter, I also review the setting and data recording procedures, and any unexpected anomalies that may have occurred. The final section of this chapter is a summary of all the issues discussed.

Setting

To answer the research question, I selected participants who resided in multicultural overseas communities while in Grades 8-12. At the time of data collection, all participants were required to reside in the United States. Most of the interviews occurred via teleconference because many of the participants were college students and either had started or were preparing to start college at their respective colleges and

universities. Based on detailed selection criteria that formed the basis for selecting the research participants, there were no factors, personal or parental, that had an impact on the interpretation of the study results.

Participants were recruited using LinkedIn, Facebook, and purposeful sampling. After acknowledging consent, I established an interview time via email. Several interviews were rescheduled based on participant request, but the overall scheduling process was not problematic. The criteria for selection required that participants (a) be former military adolescents no older than 25, (b) had been in Grades 8-12 when the parent was assigned to a multicultural community overseas, (c) were currently living in the United States, and (d) attended a DoDEA school in an overseas community. The participants were also fully aware of the confidentiality agreement and appeared to express themselves openly and without incident.

Demographics

A total of six individuals participated in this study. To create a realistic view and to help understand the phenomena of the specific qualities of military adolescents and gain their feedback, I used purposeful sampling and ensured military adolescents met the inclusion criteria. All interviews were recorded through two devices: TapeACall, a program that captures audio output via an iPhone 6 Plus, and an Olympus WS-853 handheld digital voice recorder. The participants had a vast range of time spent in multicultural overseas environments ranging from 3 years to 15 years.

The study considered age, military affiliation as an adolescent, and time spent in a multicultural community, since these demographics were pertinent variables. In order to address the issue of confidentiality, each of the participants is identified with an alias that

I assigned to them prior to the interview. All study participant ages ranged from 18 to 25 years.

Of the six study participants, five lived in Europe and one lived in the Pacific. There were four former military adolescents' parents or guardians who were in the Army, and two in the Air Force. The educational backgrounds of the participants ranged from high school to some college, but none were college graduates and all participants were African American. The individual participant demographic characteristics provided in Table 1 depict the pseudonym, gender, ethnicity, age while overseas, and years resided overseas. The grade distribution of the participants while overseas and the overseas location is shown in Table 2. Table 3 shows the participants' current ages and their current locations.

Table 1

Participant Overseas Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Age overseas	Years resided Overseas
Jordan	Male	African American	17-19	3
Erin	Female	African American	12-16	5
Destiny	Female	African American	15-18	4
Finley	Male	African American	14-16	3
Ashley	Female	African American	16-18	3
Mason	Male	African American	16-18	3

Table 2

Participant Grade Distribution (Overseas)

Pseudonym	Grades overseas	Overseas location
Jordan	10th - 12th	Hawaii
Erin	7th – 10th	Belgium
Destiny	10th - 12th	Belgium
Finley	9th - 10th	Belgium

Ashley	11th -12th	Belgium
Mason	11th - 12th	Belgium

Table 3

Participant Current Demographics

Pseudonym	Current Age	Current location
Jordan	22	Huntsville, Alabama
Erin	18	New Orleans, Louisiana
Destiny	22	San Antonio, Texas
Finley	19	Colorado Springs, Colorado
Ashley	20	Orlando, Florida
Mason	19	Colorado Springs, Colorado

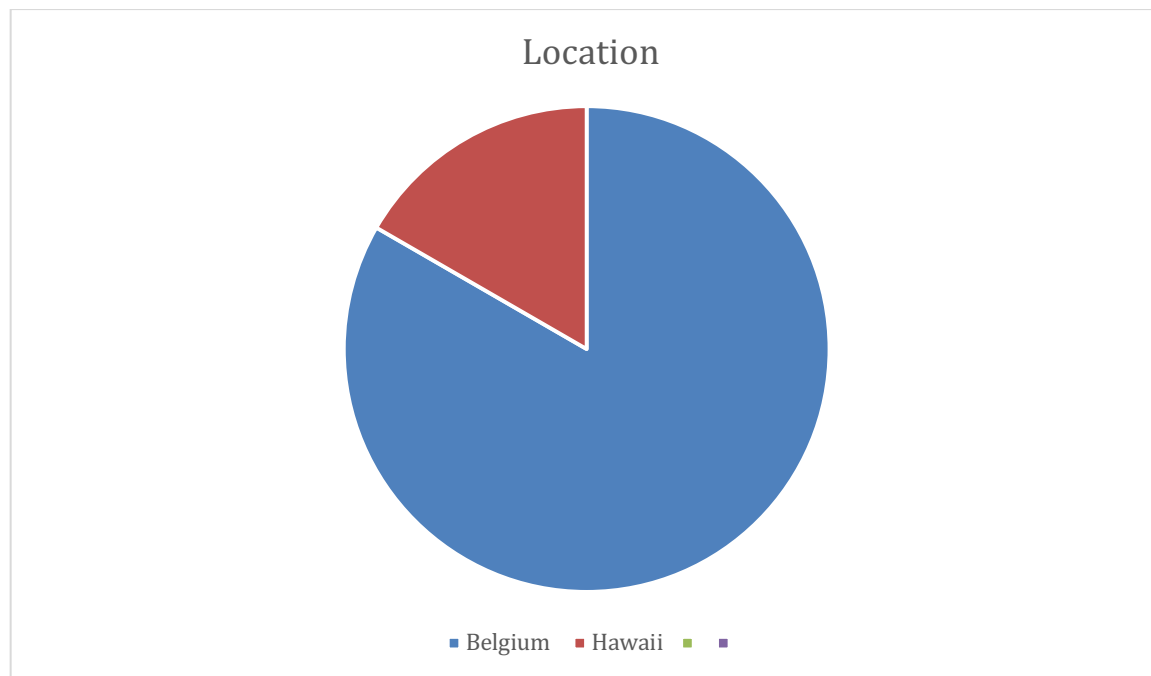


Figure 1. Chart of participant location in the multicultural overseas location.

Data Collection

I began the data collection process on 30 May 2018 following the Walden University IRB approval on 3 May 2018 (Approval number: 05-03-18-0201965), and the

IRB modification on 24 May 2018 to expand the age range and current location. The data collection phase concluded on 24 August 2018 when data analysis of interviews and reflective notes revealed no new themes, compelling me to conclude that I had reached data saturation. Evidence of data saturation in themes emerged after the fourth semi-structured interview with Finley, whose responses were similar to those of Jordan and Destiny. In the fifth and sixth interviews, I did not discover any new data or themes compared to responses from prior participants.

Evidence of data saturation manifested itself in themes that included issues of permanent change of station, programs, guidance, support networks, and culture. These appeared in the form of transition challenges, community programs, friends, and multicultural environment adjustment. The data analysis strategy of triangulation of the multiple resources proved useful in revealing commonalities among the participants' responses, combined with my familiarity with military culture (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yazan, 2015). The details of the saturation process and what was revealed are discussed in the results section of the study.

Over a period of 84 days, I developed and managed several tasks: (a) participant recruitment, (b) scheduling and conducting interviews, (c) recording reflective field notes, (d) reviewing the seminal literature, and (e) member checking by the participants of the study. I implemented a data collection process with a built-in audit trail to establish due diligence. I also relied on previously successful study recommendations, thus establishing content validity.

Participants

I collected interview data and personal reflection field reports from six former military adolescents. Data were collected via interview recordings, field notes gathered during interviews, review of documents related to military adolescents generated by DoD, and DoD-sanctioned research and conference material. I invited participants to participate in this study based on pre-determined criteria outlined in Chapter 3.

To find participants, I placed ads on social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, and Linked In). I also used the Walden university participant pool in attempt to reach potential participants for the study. I used purposeful sampling to locate additional participants and to ensure participants met the eligibility and inclusion criterion, based on their familiarity with the previously selected participants. Participants were military adolescent dependents of parents who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. I received interest from 12 potential participants, five of whom did not meet the inclusion criteria, and one who did not respond to the interview request.

The initial communication with potential participants afforded the opportunity to have future communication and discussions. In my initial meeting with the study participants, I explained their responsibilities and rights, as provided by the IRB regulations and guidelines. All the study participants were emailed the consent form prior to the initial meeting and were provided an additional opportunity to review and sign the consent form, or could respond to the emailed consent form with "I agree." Participants could ask questions related to the study and were informed that the study findings would be shared with them, based on their selection on the consent form, and shared as well

with other interested key stakeholders. All potential participants I contacted were willing to participate in the study.

Participants were also advised that any feeling of discomfort could be met with an opportunity to break and/or stop the interview. Participants were also encouraged to choose the locations that were appropriate and convenient for their participation. All participant interviews were eligible to be held in either a private library conference room, via teleconference methods, an office within my home, or a private room within their workplace or home environment. Many of these environments were free from interruptions, noises, distractions, and obstructions; however, there were some noticeable outside sounds that could not be managed. The participants were informed that interviews would be kept to no more than 60 minutes. Each participant selected was willing to discuss their lived experiences without hesitation and expressed their opinions without reservation. Participants were also informed their participation was strictly voluntary and they could opt out of the study without providing a reason our cause, and remain eligible for the \$10 gift card, upon conclusion of the data collection process.

Location, Duration, and Frequency

Prior to data collection, I contacted potential participants by email and phone upon them communicating interest in the study. During this initial contact, the intent, criteria, and time required of the study were clearly explained to each of the participants. Damianakis and Woodford (2012) indicated qualitative research must attempt to uphold ethical standards and principles. McCormick, Boyce, Ladd, and Cho (2012) added that all research on human subjects should ensure the research is conducted in strict observance of specific ethical standards in relation to protection of vulnerable populations, respect

for persons, autonomy, and justice, among other such important ethical principles, which reflect and are like formal evaluations through ethical boards. To protect participants' identity and to ensure confidentiality, the participants were assured their names would not be disclosed in the study, and they would be assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity. The assigned pseudonym was also recorded on the digital recorded before the taping of each interview began. This ensured I could proficiently match the field notes that were written with the digitally recorded tape interview.

Approximately six days shy of three months, I interviewed participants. I used a recording device to capture the audio while I took detailed notes during the interview process. I utilized the interview questions from the individual interview protocol that were developed in coordination with a subject matter expert; however, after a few interviews, I began to slightly modify the semi-structured questions and used more probe based questions based on information received from prior interviews.

Recording of Data

Interviews were recorded on an Olympus WS-853 handheld digital voice recorder and an iPhone 6plus via TapeACall, and subsequently stored on a laptop computer with passcode until transfer for transcription could occur. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by Rev transcription service to a Microsoft word document. Permission for digital audio recordings were provided by each participant prior to the recording. This process provided over 11 hours of audio data focusing on the participant's views and perceptions concerning their lived experience while residing abroad in a multicultural community.

Interviews remained casual, non-confrontational, and informal. Participants were engaged in small talk regarding current events to place the participant in a comfortable, trusting mood with the researcher. During the interviews, I used every opportunity to record participants' demeanor. Select participants answered the questions passionately and displayed peaked periods of excitement as they provided their lived experiences (Researcher's Field Notes, 2018). I maintained a journal throughout the process to track emergent themes during the fieldwork.

Interviews

Six interviews were conducted using 21 semi-structured questions (see Appendix A) between 30 May 2018 and 24 August 2018. Throughout the interview sessions, I was guided by Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) recommendation that the data collection procedure should not be so rigid that an opportunity is missed for unexpected interaction and conversation, and also recommended that during the interview an element of caution is established to ensure the interviewer does not influence the discussion toward a biased view. As required, follow-up questions were posed to the participants to gather further details, explain and clarify responses. Observation guided my data collection procedure and paved the way for my semi-structured interviews to produce positive, negative, and mixed answers from the research participants (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012). The time frame for each interview varied based on the participants' availability and demeanor, and willingness to elaborate and provide additional information.

Saturation is a standard for qualitative investigation (Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014; Robinovich & Kacen, 2013). Robinovich and Kacen (2013) further stated that

saturation occurs when additional data collection and analysis does not yield any additional information. To achieve data saturation, Nolen and Talbert (2011) posited many qualitative case study design approaches feature a protocol involving data collection. I relied largely on a semi-structured interview protocol technique as the major instrument for data collection. By employing the epoché method of gathering real-world experiences via the semi-structured interviews, and in conjunction with the assumption of epistemology, I ensured validity of the study was achieved. Moustakas (1994) and Yin (2014) agree that this technique reduces bias and allows for academic rigor throughout the research project.

Documents analyzed for the purpose of gathering information included Army White Papers, AFAB Conference Symposium Notes, and RAND Corporation studies. These were covered in the review of related literature, and were reflected on during data collection and analysis. The data collection processes and procedures involved clarifications and new perspectives in bridging the gaps in information already provided.

I began recording reflective field notes upon IRB approval on 03 May 2018. I recorded my initial excitement at starting the data collection process. I also recorded the ups and downs of the recruitment search, modification to the IRB, and other tasks with scheduling participants. I recorded the process to ensure accurate data collection as well my own reflections to minimize any personal bias and expectation. My interest resided with hearing their experiences as they shared them.

During the interview, I wrote a few observations, but primarily reflected afterward and reviewed the audio for inference (Patton, 2014). This added greatly in establishing patterns and themes as the interview process moved forward. The pauses and

uncertainty on how to answer conveyed the mindset at times. The hand-written notes offer insightful information as each interview affirmed their reflection and recollection they experienced.

Upon completion of the transcription of the interview, the participant was sent the transcript for review and verification. This exchange between the participant and I allowed the participant to clarify sentiments expressed adequately. This process of member checking reduced concern over the accuracy of data and improved credibility (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participant responses to review the transcript were slower than expected. Participants averaged a 72-hour turnaround, and a few took longer. I believe this was due to many participants' busy schedules as they prepared to return to school. Edits to the transcriptions were minimal errors such as clarification on the names of programs, or adjusted timelines but had no effect on the topic of interest for this study. Coding occurred with the revised and updated transcripts and the modified and approved file of the participants were stored according to the data collection design.

Triangulation. In addition to binding the data sources, the codes bridged themes across a variety of methodologies including interviews, field notes, and historical literature (Patton, 2014). This triangulation of data sources increased the quality of the study and promoted an aggregate consideration of the data (see Yin, 2017). Notes written throughout were valuable in the data collection process. These notes supplemented the audible data recorded in the interview, which provided a more comprehensive recollection (Patton, 2014). Each participant was provided a copy of the transcripts to read and verify the accuracy of their responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Use of an interview protocol to conduct the semi-structured interviews was done to standardize the data collection process (see Appendix A). An audit trail and methodological triangulation were used to attain the results of the study (Patton, 2014). During data analysis, the methods triangulation process allowed me to analyze data that was referenced in my reflective journal notes, as well as analyze physical documents, such as government reports of military adolescents.

My reflective journal helped me maintain a neutral state. Documenting and recording feelings regarding events, behaviors, or conditions that can trigger an emotional reaction are a recommended practice for researchers (see Yin, 2017), which helped me to practice reflexivity. This included taking notes in a journal about my emotions and beliefs about the data to avoid researchers bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Practicing reflexivity helped me to stop and note any preconceptions I had about military adolescents and their experiences prior to the start of my study.

I read and annotated peer-reviewed scholarly papers from approximately 145 scientific journals. I discovered approximately 28 articles that included government, media reports, and white papers relevant to the study. While these reports were not enough to sustain the literature review, they did serve as a source to accompany the semi-structured interviews.

Upon completion of the semi-structured interviews with the participants I continued the method triangulation process to answer the research question, by analyzing 14 physical artifacts directly related to my themes (see Yin, 2017), which led to me developing deep, thick, rich information within the themes of permeant change of station, guidance, support networks, programs and culture. This reading helped me question the

meaning of the reoccurring concepts and ideas to generate themes that were complete, accurate, value-added, and credible. Therefore, methodological triangulation of three data sources provided enough thick, rich information to replicate the study design (Patton, 2014).

Data Analysis

Goulding (2002) noted a distinguishing characteristic of qualitative research in the data collection phase is ideally the start of the data analysis. While the data were analyzed using thematic analysis and pattern matching recognition, several steps of data analysis were required. These steps included (a) organizing and incorporating data to develop relationships, (b) patterns, (c) themes explanations, and (d) interpretations. While I used data analysis software, the software did not analyze the data. As mentioned in Chapter 3, data analysis was conducted by using open coding, which employed data analysis techniques, as outlined by Yin (2014), which were: (a) examine the data to ensure familiarity, (b) categorize statements/comments, (c) use pattern matching to link data to the theoretical propositions, and (d) confirm results through member checking. I then used an additional process for inductive coding, to ensure I had captured all necessary data to answer the research question.

The objective of the data analysis phase was to develop thick, rich, commentaries from each participant, revealing their experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2014; Creswell, 1998). The data analysis takes into consideration all data, including all interviews, field notes, member checks, reflections of the researcher, and the findings of seminal research (Patton, 2014).

Coding Process

The process utilized to move inductively from coded units to larger representations encountered in data collection by indicators, themes, and sub-themes was Thomas et al.'s (2001) five-step process for using inductive coding:

1. Prepare the raw data files by ensuring they are ready for formatting.
2. Become familiar with the text.
3. Develop categories.
4. Overlap codes as needed.
5. Sustain the refining of each category to allow themes to emerge.

In preparing the raw data, after each interview the voice recorded conversations were transferred to a secure computer and stored under the assigned pseudonym for each interviewee. I then reviewed the digital recordings to analyze my field notes and confirm my comments and uploaded each audio file to Rev for transcription.

Prior to reading the transcripts and after each interview, I developed a list of potential codes, which included a description of the representation of each code. I then reviewed each transcription and conducted a member check of each interview. After a second review of each response (line by line), I imported the data into Quirkos software to be grouped by categories.

Category development began by identifying segments of data that were connected to the research question. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) labeled these segments as a unit of data, which “can be as small as a word a participant uses to describe a feeling or phenomenon ...” (page 203). Lincoln and Guba (1985) expand on the unit concept by stating it should be heuristic – the unit should provide pertinent information to the study

and require the audience to reason beyond the specific information provided, and that the information must be able to stand alone, without any additional information to broaden the context of the presented information. When attempting to determine the appropriate number of categories, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2013) offered similar guidance to make categorization manageable. Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered four guidelines for developing categories: (a) the number or frequency of something that is mentioned, (b) different audiences will view information more or less credible, (c) some categories may present a unique aspect that should be considered, and (d) a few categories may “provide a unique leverage on another common problem,” or may depict “areas of inquiry not otherwise recognized” (page 95). Creswell (2013, p. 184) recommended to start with many categories and then work to reduce and combine to “five or six themes that I will use in the end to write my narrative.”

Therefore, by implementing Quirkos to assist in the coding process, I was able to assign those categories that appeared to support or refute any of the theoretical propositions that were emerging. I began to examine the responses for consistency and similarity and then organized them into overlapping themes that allowed me to visually identify emerging themes that were consistent among the participants. The data began to display relationships of codes using thematic analysis via pattern matching recognition that allowed for the development of overlapping codes and the emergence of themes.

Finally, I was able to refine the categories where I was then able to strategically analyze and identify common themes and relationships that emerged from the study, as it was crucial to ensure the study question was adequately addressed (Patton, 2014).

Codes, Categories, and Themes

Using Creswell (2013) constant comparative approach, the codes were developed. This approach required reading the entire data several times, with the possibility of gaining new information until no additional information could be gathered. The codes were compared until the data became redundant. The codes were applied to the research question to explain the perceptions of military adolescents, transitions, and living abroad in a multicultural community.

The adoption of Yin's (2014) data analysis approach as the primary means of data analysis method, complemented with Creswell's (2013) constant comparative approach offered ease during the coding process. This dual combination allowed me to remember what was seen in the data, develop themes, understand the emerging themes, and establish conclusions from the data based on Creswell (2013) approach, defined as "hunches, insights, intuition, and interpretation within social sciences constructs or ideas or a combination of personal views as contrasted with a social science construct or ideas" (p.185). Researchers Moustakas (1994), Creswell (1998; 2013), and Stake (1995) all agree that qualitative data should be grounded in "detailed description, categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, correspondence and patterns, and naturalistic generalization."

The detailed description in this research provided an account of the data and the meanings. The categorical aggregation process was done as the coded records were joined with similar ideas. The process of direct interpretation was viewed as finding an idea that surfaced from the transcripts. I coded the transcripts and summed up how often an idea appeared which gave way to patterns that eventually merged into themes that

aligned with correspondence and patterns. Finally, the naturalistic generalizations were the claims and deductions made based on insights derived from the data. These steps were utilized in the data analysis process and are presented in figures and tables.

When conducting a rigorous and relevant thematic analysis, few step-by-step processes exist in literature (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). Nowell et al. (2017) suggest the write-up of a thematic analysis should provide “a concise, coherent, logical, nonrepetitive, and interesting account of the data within and across themes (p. 1).” King (2004) noted that following the thematic analysis the use of direct quotes from participants is an essential component. Shorter quotes assist in the understanding of specific points of interpretation and demonstrate the prevalence of the themes, while longer passages of quotation provide the reader with a clearer view of the original texts. In order to illustrate the complex story of data, the presentation of raw data needs to be embedded within the thematic analysis narrative. Thus, moving from a simple narrative of the data to a convincing analysis can support and establish trustworthiness (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Codes began to emerge using Yin’s (2014) data analysis technique. Further analysis and reflection of the 12 pattern codes (see Table 4) resulted in refinement of descriptive and interpretative patterns of the following codes: (a) moving, (b) new school, (c) leaving friends, (d) parents, (e) sports, (f) planned activities, (g) community, (h) confidence, (i) programs, (j) environment, (k) family, and (l) military liaison. These codes were clustered into five themes that provided the overarching structure for describing and interpreting the military adolescent’s perceptions and positive and negative experiences. The five themes were (a) permanent change of station is inevitable

being a military adolescent (b) guidance is critical for awareness, knowledge and a successful transition (c) programs can assist in the transition process and ease potential negative experiences, (d) support networks can enhance a military adolescent's confidence level during this transition period in their lives, and (e) any unknowns about a culture can put a damper on a military adolescent's perspective about how the enjoyability of a new environment e. The specific codes and descriptions led to themes that emerged from the data as are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Codes Aligned to Pattern Matching

Code	Description
Moving	Participants' beliefs about transition, the effects of transition to and from multicultural communities, and the emotional aspect.
New school	Participants expressed stories about interacting with peers in new schools and the lack of comfortability with teachers.
Leaving friends	Participants expressed difficulty with leaving family and friends and communities of familiarity.
Parent	Participants description of the positive effect of a parental influence.
Military liaison	Participants description of a resource available upon transitioning to a new school.
Sports	Participants description regarding their positive interaction with sports programs created a sense of belongingness and enhanced their confidence.
Groups/activities	Participants description regarding their experience and participation in leadership retreats and organized group activities.
Community	Participants description regarding their positive interaction with peers in programs which created a sense of belongingness.
Confidence	Participant stories, attitudes and beliefs about the climate upon arrival created a positive and negative social identities which either enhanced or depleted their level of confidence.
Programs	Participant stories about the role of programs and the positive impact it has on confidence.

Table 4

Codes Aligned to Pattern Matching (continued)

Code	Description
Family	Participant stories highlight the importance of family support to a successful transition and identified their families as an important element adding to the support network needed during the transition process.
Environment	Participants beliefs about the challenges associated with understanding the environment (cultural, social and educational).

Table 5 links the five themes to the 12 codes and shows the indicators, number of participant references, number of participant statements and themes that emerged. These themes and codes are supported by extensive participant quotes and are discussed in the sections that follow. After the presentation of each one, the chapter concludes with the results and summary that informed the research question.

As previously noted, each of these themes belongs to their respective codes (see Table 5). The frequency of occurrence varied for several themes in such a way that some participants presented themes that were more prominent than others were. These themes are discussed in the results section in detail. The following is a brief description of each of the five themes.

Table 5

Participant Emergent Themes

Theme	Code	Indicators	# of Participant References	# of Participant Statements
Permanent Change of Station	Environment Moving New School Leaving friends	Departure for and return to multicultural environment. Transition Overseas/multicultural	5/6	53
Guidance	Parents	Information Advice Direction Parental influence	1/6	19
Programs	Planned activities Sports	Athletics Retreats Community program	4/6	26
Support Networks	Community Military liaison Confidence Family	Friends Emotional	4/6	37
Culture	Environment	Exclusive/Inclusive Acclimation	5/6	30

Permanent change of station. This theme describes the challenges, both negative and positive associated with each participants transition to and from a multicultural environment.

Guidance. This theme describes the challenges, both negative and positive associated with each participants transition to and from a multicultural environment.

Programs. This theme describes the favorable activities, such as sports programs, retreats and community programs that were available or were participated in during the

participants time spent in the multicultural environment, as well as available programs regarding adolescent resources and policies.

Support Network. This theme describes how friends, community members, and military liaison supported their emotional transition.

Culture. This theme describes the environment from a holistic perspective and how challenging the acclimation process was, as well as the exclusive and inclusive environment.

According to Creswell (1998), “searching for convergence of information is recommended for handling discrepant cases” (p. 2013). I treated discrepant cases of interview data through proper data interrogation which was facilitated by detailed verification and employed the use of quality standard measures such as “multiple sources of data, rich thick description, member checking and peer review” to verify the research findings (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2014). To substantiate research findings, multiple sources of data were used by corroborating claims and understanding the meanings that emerged from the category of participants.

Further, the data from the semi-structured interviews were validated by using the method of epoché which, according to Moustakas (1994) is a method used by researchers to increase academic rigor and eliminate the preconceived notion one may have about an experience. In order to set aside my preconceptions about this research, I accomplished epoché by thoroughly reviewing the interview protocol, fully considering my responses to each questions, and using the journaling technique captured my preconceived thoughts about participant responses. I also confronted my own expectations and predispositions which allowed me to bracket my thoughts during the data gathering and analysis phase.

Discrepant Cases

In order to fight confirmatory bias and avoid a single point of view regarding the interpretation of data, I conducted an exploration for discrepant findings or disconfirming data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of discrepant case sampling was employed as a method of detailing, modifying, or refining my theoretical view (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I employed several methods to ensure trustworthiness of the study. Because the trustworthiness of research rests with the research, I ensured credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data collected using several procedures, even though Goulding (2002) and Maxwell (2013) note there is no distinct or adequate way of validating qualitative findings or capturing reality.

Credibility

In order to establish credibility, I utilized a member checking process which allowed each participant to provide feedback on the emerging findings and view their transcript for accuracy because the qualitative requirement of credibility demands that a researcher should establish that the results reached are consistent with the participants' perspective and beliefs (Moustakas, 1994). Also, in order to maintain the highest levels of academic standards, I followed Walden University's Institution Review Board (IRB) research guidelines to further establish the credibility of my study. This study was approved by the Walden University IRB with the approval number 05-03-18-0201965, and expires May 3, 2019. The use of multiple data sources, such as interview, analysis of documents, and field notes promoted triangulation and helped establish credibility.

Transferability

In order to maintain transferability according to Lincoln & Guba (1985), a study should have the ability to be transferred to other populations. What is transferred are the actions and events (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and transferability was achieved by methodically documenting and describing the entire research process. Because a qualitative study is designed to describe the phenomenon of the interest from the viewpoint of those who experienced it, transferability requires the researcher provide detailed characteristics of what was studied (Creswell, 1998, 2012 & 2013). This will allow an external assessment to be conducted and transferred. I provided detailed characteristics of the qualitative case study of the perceptions of military adolescents on the positive and negative experiences in transitioning to and from an overseas multicultural community and detailed patterns of cultural and social relationships (Holloway, 1997). No adjustment to the transferability strategy described in Chapter 3 was revealed.

Dependability

Dependability of the study was maintained by using a formulated case study protocol and following a list of pre-determined and vetted questions by my Chair, a subject matter expert, to ensure this study can be replicated. This was also achieved during the development of the categories where Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted the researcher could confidently state completion of categories based on two points. First, there was only a very small amount of data that remained unassigned, and while that information was able to provide an understanding of the phenomenon, it could not be assigned to a category. Second, the categories that emerged were relevant and applicable

to the study and can be agreed upon by independent researchers. Also, participant recruitment was based on purposeful sampling and participants were emailed the criteria for participation in the study and had to confirm whether they met the criteria for consideration, ensuring the participation selection process was carefully analyzed for dependability.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the implementation of measures that establish the rationale that findings are void of predisposition and are evidence based (Shenton, 2004). This was met by having the methodology expert of my dissertation committee audit the study for alignment of data collection, findings, analysis, and interpretations as stated in Chapter 3 (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (2014) notes confirmability is strengthened by the use of instruments that are designed not to depend on research manipulation. Also, data collection tools such as triangulation (Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2017) and audit trails capture the researcher's background, context and prior understanding (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and are useful in developing a “commonality of assertion” (Stake, 2013; Yazan, 2015). Even though this research is unique due to limited gaps in research, gathering current feedback from DoD sanctioned military conferences and white papers with parental feedback confirms the observation in the data. This rechecking process allowed the researcher to contain personal biases and to prevent personal motivations of the researcher to emerge that could impede a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 243). In addition, field notes maintained by the researchers rely on the rich, descriptive data provided in the detailed accounts of the experience of each participant (Yin, 2017).

Results

The findings of this case study culminate based on in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with six military adolescents regarding their positive and negative perceptions of transition to and living abroad in a multicultural community, as well as their perceptions of family and military programs. By recording the positive and negative experiences of military adolescents who lived in multicultural communities, I offered insight into their experiences and their perceptions.

Additionally, I looked at whether they believed family and military programs were effective in providing adequate resources required. The research question guiding this study was as follows: How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and negative experiences while living abroad and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs? This case study revealed such behaviors, characteristics, and experiences that emerged from the data analysis and the related themes gleaned from the raw data gathered from the interviews. Identification of themes were uncovered during thematic analysis of the textual data.

In order to ensure implications made in relation to the data are judged as credible and dependable, a thematic analysis must clearly present the logical processes by which findings were developed in a comprehensive way. Based on an exhaustive review of transcripts and key insights from in-depth interviews, the following themes of permanent change of station, guidance, programs, support networks, and culture are analyzed and presented here in relation to the central research question.

Theme 1: Permanent Change of Station

The first theme that emerged from the data analysis was that a permanent change of station to a multicultural location (in retrospect) was constrained by the unknown. The consensus among the participants was 80% negative experience with transitioning to living abroad in a multicultural community. Each participant was asked to describe a personal transition experience to a multicultural community and their experience upon their return to their host nation. Responses regarding their transition to an overseas environment found the participants were not thoroughly informed about the culture, community and school environment, and this lack of information contributed to a negative response when asked about their permanent change of station (PCS) experience. As can be seen in Table 5, five of the six participants referenced this theme over 53 times throughout the interview. Once military adolescents overcame the initial challenge of dealing with the information regarding the move, they were then confronted with dealing with their emotions. However, at the same time, Mason and Ashley, who had already experienced an overseas assignment in Japan, were more understanding, but still lacked the knowledge of the characteristics of their new location. The three codes that support this theme are: (a) moving, (b), new school, and (c) leaving friends. Each of these is discussed in greater detail in the next three subsections.

Moving, leaving friends, and new schools. The first code informing this theme was moving, which captures the participants' descriptions of their personal story about their initial move to the multicultural community as well as the return to their host nation. Jordan, an Army dependent transitioning to Hawaii, stated the transition to adjust took longer than six months based on his response to question #2, regarding any initial

challenges encountered upon arrival, as well as any existing challenges after the first six months. He shared, “due to a long waiting list for housing, the family lived in a hotel,” so he would basically just attend school and then return to the hotel. Living in a hotel for an extended period of time contributed to the unpleasant experience of the transition, which limited his access to his personal belongings that he believed could have assisted in his adjustment.

When families PCS, one common theme that continued to resonate throughout the interviews was the lack of communication between the family and the military adolescent, as all the participants were informed of the move, but were not included in the decision of the move. Ashley and her family moved to Belgium at the end of the summer, so she started school immediately upon her arrival. She did not understand what she was doing there (Belgium) and why they had to move to another overseas location. The failure to include military adolescents in the initial discussion regarding the acceptance of an overseas assignment generated a negative experience during the transition process. As Mason prepared for his transition, his main concern was not about the culture, “as he was kind of more focused on where I was gonna get friends.”

The second element addressed in the code of moving was the return experience to their host nation, which for all participants was the United States. After presenting question # 12 about their return experience back to the U.S., most of the participants emphasized a sense of relief when returning. Erin felt the transition to the U.S. was easier than transitioning to Belgium and her ease of transition occurred with the educational system. In Belgium, Erin felt “teachers weren’t helpful in assisting students as they adapted to a new cultural and educational environment.” Upon her return to the U.S., Erin

noted: “the teachers were more engaging and helpful and were willing to teach her about the culture of New Orleans, Louisiana.” She also stated the teachers in the U.S. were “a lot more helpful education wise.”

When looking at the return transition back to the U.S., Finley, one of two participants (along with Erin) who returned to the U.S. to complete high school, classified himself as being “too friendly while at SHAPE.” He mentioned the public school he returned to in El Paso, Texas did not evoke the same family feeling that he experienced while overseas. However, Jordan met his return to the U.S. to attend college with mixed emotions. Even though the weather was nice and the location was enjoyable, “because Hawaii is known as a great place to visit,” he felt challenged because “the cost of living was expensive, and being on an island, you can’t do much.” However, there was relief in just coming back to the continental U.S. “because coming back to the States allowed me to be able to see my other family and my other friends.”

The second code informing the theme was new schools. Jordan noted, “Arrival to a new school can be challenging.” He stated school (academically) wasn’t hard, compared to the family’s prior location in Virginia, but the hard part was “the friend thing.” As a student who moved in the middle of his ninth-grade year, he mentioned he would go to the cafeteria, get his lunch, and then go to the center where all new military (also called independents) would go until they could get more comfortable with the new school environment.

The third and final code informing this theme within the permanent change of station theme was leaving friends. Almost all of the participants shared observations about the impact of friends and whether there was a positive or negative impact on their

level of confidence. Destiny, currently an enlisted member in the Air Force, graduated from high school while living overseas, explained the transition to the overseas community as a military adolescent cost her “a lot of lost friends,” but upon her return to the U.S., many of the lost friends wanted to catch up and spend time with her. Jordan echoed the same sentiments upon leaving his friends in Virginia when they moved to Hawaii. When he was informed about the family’s receipt of assignment orders to move to Hawaii, he immediately felt stressed, and explained “I was there (Virginia) from elementary school all the way to half of my freshman year of high school ... I grew up with most of these people.” The belief that military adolescents are resilient can be met with the reality that leaving friends with strong bonds, like Jordan experienced, with whom he lived with at his last location for seven years prior to moving.

When asked about the transition and effects of school, Erin stated the teaching style of the teachers was difficult for her to understand, and so much more different from the American school she had recently left. Taking a retrospective approach and assessing their multicultural overseas experience, many of the military adolescents wished they’d had a voice in how their inculcation into overseas military environments could have been heard. Erin wanted to know “what kind of teachers I would have, that would have helped me to prepare myself,” and “I then maybe would’ve done better in school.” The unknown elements of a PCS lead to a lack of awareness of available programs to assist the family and military adolescents are they prepare for the transition overseas.

Prior to Ashley’s arrival in Belgium, she was the only participant to participate in a Student-to-Student program, where she had the opportunity to get to know someone before she moved, but she mentioned “having information about popular spots, or a

packet of things they can do upon arrival, or something that explains what kind of base it is would have helped, to include pictures.” She compared her experience in Belgium to her family’s previous assignment in Japan, and noted, “the kind of base we lived on there is not the same kind of base in SHAPE, because SHAPE is a NATO base, so there’s a lot more people from different cultures ... mixing with their religions and their cultural differences...” Being required to attend a school that supports the NATO mission means there are students representing over 20 plus nations, which means 20 plus languages, cultures and social beliefs that require military adolescent adjustment.

Theme 2: Guidance

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis described the impact and the importance of parental involvement and how it had a positive influence on their inculcation once they arrived at their respective multicultural overseas communities. While parents contemplate accepting an assignment that may offer career progression, according to the respondents, they presumed it was their responsibility to ensure upon their arrival to a new assignment location to get involved with the military adolescent's transition. Jordan recognized his mother’s involvement in meeting the teachers at the school was important to their recognition of his situation as a new military adolescent. The discussion surrounding any potential challenges or impact with teachers was met with positivity for Jordan. He shared “my mom... she likes to have a good conversation with people she is always happy...positive so that just brought positive energy towards me.”

Theme 3: Programs

The third theme emerged from the data analysis that described the positive impact that sports and group activities had on military adolescents, which are respectively coded within this theme. Four of the six participants' responses were met with positive comments and referenced 26 times throughout the interviews. The question also sought the perceptions of military adolescents regarding programs. Relying on the analysis of transcripts from interviews, relevant documents, and researcher's interview field notes, I arrived at the result that suggests that 60% of the military adolescents interviewed had a positive experience with community provided/athletic programs. Only one student (Ashley) had knowledge of and mentioned the Student-to-Student military family program, developed specifically for military adolescents who are transitioning to overseas communities. When participants were asked whether they participated in community and sporting activities, and did those activities positively or negatively affect your overseas experience, all six responded with a positive response.

Sports, groups, and planned activities. The first code in the program theme was sports. Destiny noted her participation in cheerleading was a positive experience, as she met and cheered with students from other nations, many of whom she still considers friends today. Jordan also used sports in a multicultural community as an opportunity to meet new friends and get more comfortable and involved in the culture. Even though he transferred in the middle of his ninth-grade year, it wasn't until his sophomore year that people started noticing his size, and different coaches would approach him asking if he wanted to play sports because, as they stated, "you're a pretty big guy."

Likewise, Erin joined the tennis team, the first sport she ever participated in, as a way of immersing herself into community activities while stationed overseas, which she immensely enjoyed. She even participated in martial arts for a short time because she felt the freedom to explore the many programs offered. Finley echoed Erin's enthusiasm for the positive impact sports had, as Finley participated and played basketball while he lived overseas as well.

The second code was groups. Ashely, an Air Force military dependent and currently a college student at the University of South Florida expressed her enthusiasm in joining the Keystone Club that allowed her the opportunity to engage in community beautification. For her, being a member of this group offered an opportunity to attend a youth leadership trip to Garmisch, Germany, where military adolescents discussed topics with the Army Garrison Commander, ranging from a discussion about bullies to challenges in transitioning from the U.S., with the Army Garrison Commander. These programs align with this researcher's literature review, regarding the study conducted by the Army and presented in white papers, as well as RAND Corporation studies, which highlighted the importance of connecting with military adolescents to gather their feedback.

Mason shared the importance of youth centers "it's a good way to learn people's names and faces and not feel so alone when you're in a new environment. Youth centers rely on funding from DoD to operate, yet many of the participants in this study aged out of these programs as Finley was the youngest participant who was able to participate.

When asked if you could develop a program that would assist military adolescents in acclimation to a new environment, four of the six participants responded with a

common theme of a need to develop programs for military adolescents to do on the weekend. Destiny suggested a program “where people who have already been there that know the area well can take you around and be like, oh, this is where this is, this is where this is, this is how you do this” would be helpful to newly arrived military adolescents in an overseas environment. Destiny further explained,

Whoever is in that larger company, or whatever you call it, they could get with the kids, because I know being a kid moving all the time, people like that, it's kinda hard so they could start talking before they leave and help give them an idea of what it might be like when they get there, and then once you find out, oh, we're going to be living here, and this is gonna be the school you're gonna go to, because they're not many schools to go to, but they could try talking to whoever is the principal, or the administration, or some faculty at the school to find out how the school is and things like that.

Mason agreed with the majority of the participants when discussing programs and information of interest that would include,

Mostly like things to do on the weekends and like, it could be not like a class, but like, like, kind of like, um, what's it called? Like an open house for the new environment that you're going into. Like, the things that people usually do on the weekends to keep busy or the things during the week that ... probably like the ins and outs, like how some places are like doors open on Mondays, so when you like, get all your stuff done on the weekend and not wait until Monday.”

When asked what information would you like to have known before moving, all of the participants were interested in information about the area. “I definitely would've

wanted to know what are things to do outside of, on the base, because when you move to a new place you kinda just get stuck on this tiny community and then you run out of things to do and everyone knows everybody. So, it's good to branch out into the economy,” Erin reflected.

Planned activities were mentioned 26 times during the course of the interviews, and participants strongly felt the lack of weekend activities significantly contributed to their negative feelings regarding their overseas experience. For the military adolescents in Belgium, comments about how the movie theater was only opened twice in the week limited activities which Destiny stated, could've had that open more it would give the kids something to do, instead of like always going around and getting in trouble.” Policy reviews, even at the local level could rectify this to ensure funding is available to have the movie theater open beyond the two days as described above.

Theme 4: Support Networks

Another theme emerging from the data analysis was how support networks can assist military adolescents with the transition. The essence of this theme is the importance of community – both in terms of the military adolescents’ sense of belonging and as a source of confidence. Four codes further informed this theme that are essential for military adolescents experiencing a transition process: (a) community, (b) confidence, (c) family, and (d) military liaison. Each of these codes is discussed in the next four subsections.

Community. Community emerged as the first code within the support network theme. Coping skills were addressed in question #5, where Erin mentioned she

participated in community theater that helped her to meet new people and provided a level of confidence.

Confidence. The second code to informing this theme was confidence and included participants' espoused beliefs about the importance of confidence and the implications of a lack thereof. Competence is often a subjective status, and the cultural norm that was described by the participants was met with mixed reaction. In retrospect, when asked question how has this multicultural community experience shaped you upon returning to the U.S., Jordan replied with a positive sense of emotions. He feels more outspoken than usual and feels he can start conversations with anybody. Yet, Erin stated she felt challenged and her confidence was low upon her arrival overseas due to being surrounded by multi-lingual students, "because the students at the school weren't American, and they already knew about eight different languages." But, she also mentioned, her challenge partially was attributed to her being too dependent on what others thought of her, as she arrived overseas at the age of 12. She was constantly concerned and aware about "how I looked to other people." However, six months later, those challenges still existed because every month or so "we would get a new student who would more or less know at least two languages." These challenges, six months later remained, and eventually affected her family life at home. She stated, "a lot of it came from me being too dependent on what others thought of me...being super young, I couldn't overlook that, so I was always aware of how I looked to other people."

Family. Family, the third code in the theme support networks includes descriptions of military adolescents' observations regarding family. Finally, the youngest of the participants expressed, although "living at SHAPE was a family friendly

environment, the transition back to the U.S. posed a challenge due to the competitive lifestyles, which were uncommon at SHAPE.

Military liaison. The final code that emerged within the support network theme was military liaison or military counselor. Jordan and Finley both experienced communications with a military liaison/military counselor. Finley expressed contact with the military counselor at his public school in El Paso, Texas, who provided him with a card that had her contact information so he could reach out to her whenever he needed, because he felt when he was at SHAPE, “everybody knew each other and you know what I mean. Um, it was like a big, felt like a big family. But you know coming back to the states it's not always like that, especially in public schooling.”

Jordan’s connection with his military liaison was more in-depth, as he was introduced to his military liaison who offered a more intuitive opportunity for military adolescents to adjust to their new environment. Upon a new student’s arrival, Jordan noted, “as soon as you walked in like you see, they actually had a big old board that actually had all of the people's names and where they actually came from. Uh, so, it was, it was pretty cool seeing all of those people's names, so, you know, it felt like I wasn't the only one.” Also, during lunch, the military liaison provided a meeting space, sanctioned by the school, which only allowed military kids. Here, they had the opportunity to meet other military kids like them, in a non-multicultural environment. Once military students felt comfortable in the new environment with other military students, according to Jordan, the military liaison informed them “you know, you can leave whenever you want, or you can come back, um, whenever you get comfortable, and then as soon as I got comfortable, I really didn't go back to that.” Jordan felt this sequestered area felt like a

nest that allowed enough time for military students to become comfortable enough to meet friends on their own, and he felt comfortable to “just hung out with the friends that I made in the hallways.”

Building on what Jordan and Finley shared about having a network for inbound military adolescents, Erin offered the idea of a program where “students who had already lived there for a good time could buddy up with someone who’s super new, and then that person can stick with them for maybe the first month or so.” She believes a support network like this would have helped her as she arrived into a new environment and new school. Erin continued “having that first friend” or a knowledgeable person who could “tell them a little bit about where they’re living ... what to do, what not to do, what to say, what not to say” would have helped. Finley echoed Erin’s comments noting from a retro perspective, he too wished a support network were available. He recommended as well, a “buddy-buddy” program, “so you don’t feel out of place while being the new kid at school,” similar to “having a sponsor,” which is what military members receive when they are preparing to transition to an overseas community.

Theme 5: Culture

Research indicates Third Culture Kid syndrome, as studied by Drs. Hill in the mid-1950s highlighted children who accompanied their parents into other cultures during their developmental years but did not focus on how to inculcate the children into their new environment. Five of the six participants referenced cultural indicators to support this theme.

This theme describes participants’ needs to acclimatize to a new environment upon transition. Erin and Ashley both felt the importance of acclimatization, as Ashley

stated, “So moving to a new place, you definitely have to get to know your surroundings, so you can feel comfortable where you have moved to.” Erin echoed these sentiments, “you should make friends with the international kids because they are actually a lot of help when it comes to going to all boys’ school overseas because not everyone’s going to speak the language of the country that you’re in. I went to school with Spanish people and Italian, and so it’s cool to, um, learn the language of where you’re living, but you should also learn something about their culture too because one, you never know where you might end up next. You might end up in Spain next, and then if you made friends with any Spanish people at the place you were before, then at least you learned something about Spanish culture before going to Spain.”

Jordan, when asked what would he share with a military adolescent moving to a multicultural community offered, “be open-minded before even moving.” Yet, in retrospect, he would have asked about the culture, language, and would have liked a program that had videos or book, geared toward military adolescents, that would have shared information about the new location, as Jordan stated he is a “big visual learner.” The code of environment was noted within the culture theme.

Finley reinforced the premium placed on understanding the culture as he prepared for his transition to Belgium. He shared his immediate challenged faced was “just the huge burst of a diversity I came across. It was something I had to get used to.” He would have liked to have prepared by asking a lot of questions starting with “are there any Americans there,” because “at first glance, you don’t think there’s a lot of Americans there, and if they spoke English, because Belgium is French and stuff.” Jordan also echoed Finley’s sentiments about transitioning to a new culture stating,

I would've definitely asked about the culture part. Um, I didn't understand it when I first got there. I was confused. Um, it was certainly like lingo and certain places that I just didn't know about it and understand the reasons why they act, but as time went on, you know, I finally got the knowledge of it. But that's definitely one question I would've asked, like, well, how is the culture, and what do I need to do," like, you know, things like that.

In retrospect, Erin and Finely commented having been exposed to living overseas was a unique opportunity in which they were grateful to have experienced. Erin noted how she was able to share some of her experiences with new friends when she returned to the U.S. and Finely commented, "I have a more open mind when it comes to meeting people of um from overseas cause there are some overseas people in the states. I don't see as many, but when I do see some, you know, like maybe somebody who came from Spain, I can be like oh I've been there. I've met people from there like it's more comfortable for me to talk to people.

Participants were asked question #17 referencing the democratic process, considering each participant is of the voting age, and how has experienced living outside the continental United States affected their thoughts as they can now address issues and concerns with their voices. Erin stated that she is excited that her vote and her voice counts and can make a difference, even if the outcome is not something she had hoped for. Finely mirrored Erin's excitement, "I think that's very relieving. Um, especially uh in the states. Like being able to vote I think it's a really um what's the word for it? Um, it's a relieving feeling for me because um you know being back in the states I get to pay more

attention to politics and what's going on in the country. So for me um being able to voice my own opinion openly, it means a lot.”

The cumulative theme frequencies of occurrence by each participant is illustrated in Figure 2, in which I combined the thematic analysis from each theme that emerged to graphically provide the reader with an idea of how many themes converged across participants based on the findings of this case study.

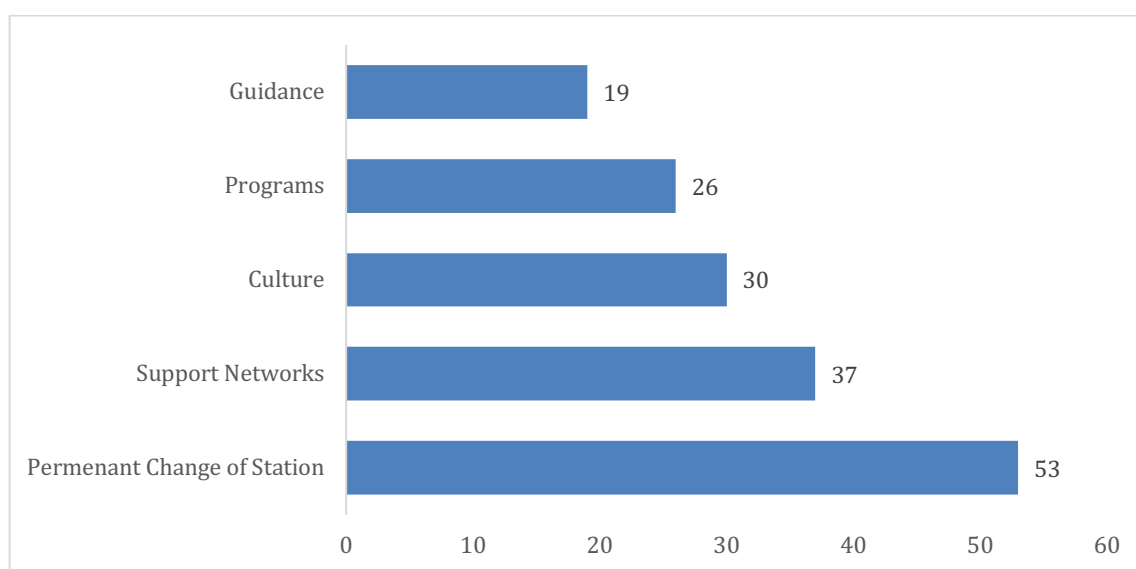


Figure 2. Case analysis (theme frequency of occurrence by participant).

Summary

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the process employed to gather, manage, and analyze data collected from six military adolescents, leading to a synthesis process to answer the central research question of this case study: How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and negative experience in living abroad, and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs?

Based on the findings of this case study, a total of 12 categories and five themes were identified for this study leading to thick, rich data on the lived experiences of military adolescents residing in a multicultural community overseas. The categories were: (a) moving, (b) new school, (c) leaving friends, (d) parents, (e) sports, (f) planned activities, (g) community, (h) confidence, (i) programs, (j) environment, (k) family, and (l) military liaison. These codes were clustered into five themes that provided the overarching structure for describing and interpreting the military adolescent's perceptions and positive and negative experiences. The five themes include (a) permanent change of station is inevitable being a military adolescent (b) guidance is critical to a successful transition (c) programs can assist in the transition process and ease potential negative experiences, (d) support networks can enhance a military adolescent's confidence level during this time frame in their lives, and (e) any unknowns about a culture can put a damper on a military adolescent's perspective about how enjoyable the experience in a new environment will be.

In addition to data sources, I enhanced the trustworthiness of the study's data by employing methodological triangulation of three data sources: (a) interviews, (b) reflective field notes, and (c) historical literature (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). This method of triangulation provided thick, rich information to replicate the study design, I analyzed and interpreted study results within the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and illustrated how study findings added to the body of knowledge related to the experiences of military adolescents residing in multicultural communities overseas.

In Chapter 5, I interpreted the study findings in terms of how they compare and contrast to the literature described in Chapter 2. I also described how future scholarly

research can extend these findings and further study military adolescents experiences as well as the effectiveness of family support programs and policies.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perceptions of former military adolescents regarding their lived positive and negative experiences encountered while transitioning to and from and residing in multicultural communities abroad. Yin (2014), noted a case study is useful when “a question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control” (p 2). Therefore, in this study, I addressed the following research question: How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and negative experience in living abroad, and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs?

Relocating to and living in another country can be stressful for young people (Nathanson & Marcenko, 1995), and the following factors can contribute to the stress: inadequate preconceptions for the move, transiency of friends in a new community, dissatisfaction with a new environment, and difficulty in replacing favorite activities (Pollock, 2009). The participants in this study overwhelmingly felt they had not been involved in the decision to relocate, nor had they received enough advance notification to prepare for the relocation.

Specifically, in this case study research, I included the following components: the study’s question, the study’s propositions, the study’s unit of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting findings, which revealed five prominent themes: permanent change of station, guidance, support network, programs, and culture. I developed the research question in response to the lack of literature about

military adolescents and their perceived experiences overseas, as well as the effectiveness of policies and programs to address their specific requirements.

As I noted in Chapter 2, the DoD has recognized challenges military members encounter with multiple deployments, combat injuries, and mission requirements. Yet limited research exists on assessing adolescents' perceptions regarding transition and policies created that may potentially affect them. Based on an exhaustive review of the literature regarding military adolescents, multicultural overseas communities, polarity management, the polarities of democracy model, and the results of Chapter 4, I suggest these theoretical propositions:

1. Various experiences will arise based on age, location and the structure of the familial structure.
2. Military adolescents will experience the downside of representation vs participation and.
3. The community obligation to help military adolescents during their transition and while they are residing in a multicultural community will not be as focused on this population as it would be on the military member.

The unit of analysis was the military adolescent in order to effectively address the research question and determine whether the theoretical propositions were valid. I selected a very specific research population of military adolescents who lived in multicultural communities overseas between Grades 8 and 12. This population was unique in that participants were obligated to reside with their parent/guardian who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. This population varies from TCKs in that TCKs are mainly children of missionaries who made decisions to reside in multicultural communities

specific and relative to their occupation, whereas military personnel are at times required to move based on their skill set and needs of their respective military branch of service.

Much of the literature showed how military adolescents are resilient and capable of adapting to environments without any concerns. However, when investigating the transition to and from, and the living of military adolescents in multicultural communities, I found that their claims of transition, new schools, leaving friends, and other experiences of living overseas are real and contribute to their stress (see Nathanson & Marcenko, 1995). Bridging and leveraging the positive and negative aspects of the findings of this study requires connections with policy leaders and military adolescents to increase the positive experience in overseas multicultural communities.

With these thoughts in mind, I used a well-established construct as the theoretical foundation for the study, which involved a researcher designed and subject matter expert-approved semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix A) to elicit descriptions of military adolescents' positive and negative feedback regarding their experiences.

The participants offered unique, individual perspectives on the experiences that influenced their responses. Using Yin's (2014) data analysis technique, I gained impactful perspectives from this group of military adolescents to the literature of polarity management and the polarities of democracy model (Johnson, 2014; Benet, 2006, 2012, & 2013). While some studies have been conducted on military adolescents' transitions and resiliency, researchers have never used the polarities of democracy model to explore retrospective feedback on their experiences of transitioning to and living in multicultural overseas communities. Further, the polarities of democracy model has never been used to

gather military adolescents' perceptions on family programs and policies that may affect them.

The theoretical framework that grounded this study was the polarities of democracy model (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). I used this framework to provide a better understanding of the use of policy development, and I incorporated the polarity pairs to provide a baseline for determining what a livable and sustainable community for this specific population is like. The emerging themes of the study are based on each of the research participants' responses.

The analysis of this data allowed an improved explanation of the forces shaping military adolescent's experiences in multicultural overseas communities. The use of a case study methodology allowed me to investigate their experiences from a retrospective perspective. To enhance trustworthiness of this study, I ensured data saturation and used member checks, field notes, and thick, rich description (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, the results of this research study can be used to inform policy leaders, as well as other community stakeholders about military adolescents in multicultural overseas communities.

In this chapter, I will interpret the findings from my analysis of the data presented in Chapter 4. Furthermore, this chapter will include a thorough explanation of the social change implications of the findings. Also, discussed is how the findings inform a set of conclusions aligned to the objective of this study, which was to inform policy leaders on how they can provide better experiences for current and future military adolescents. The findings may address gaps in the scholarly literature. Subsequently, I will provide

recommendations for future research. Last, I will provide a conclusion that summarizes the chapter and the complete study.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of this case study either confirm or extend the existing knowledge in the literature I reviewed in Chapter 2. Further reflection on the thematic analysis of military adolescent experiences I discussed in the previous chapter and the polarities of democracy pairs are relevant to the desire of this study and are aligned to the study's theoretical framework. Discrepant data emerged in contrast to the theoretical propositions and assumptions based on the scholarly literature in that military adolescents are resilient to transition as all participants expressed that they had a less than positive experience as they prepared and transitioned to a multicultural overseas community.

In this section, I present and review the findings by themes and categories emerging from the data analysis, and compare the findings with the relevant concepts from the theoretical framework and the scholarly literature. I provide evidence from the semi-structured interviews I conducted on how the study findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend such existing knowledge. Extension of existing knowledge, as presented in this research, not only provides replication evidence but also extends the results of prior studies in new and different theoretical directions (see Bonnett, 2012).

Permanent Change of Station Effect on a Military Adolescent

The most interesting research results are findings that are unanimous yet discrepant among participants. The theme of permanent change of station, which included the code of transition, hints at resiliency yet reveals evidence that contrast with assumptions in the scholarly literature. Easterbrooks, Ginsburg, and Lerner, (2013)

indicated, “Resilience is not a personal trait but a product of the relationships between the children and the people and resources around them” (p. 99). The military adolescent in Grades 8-12 sought involvement in the PCS process as they were negatively affected by the overseas transition, especially when they were not involved in the initial dialog regarding the decision because parents assumed their children were resilient.

Research was needed to address the effects of a multicultural move beyond the TCK concept that focuses solely on civilians and their role as missionaries who voluntarily transitioned to challenging locations and multicultural communities. Additionally, Nathanson and Marcenko (1995) suggested children in their study “overwhelmingly felt that they had not been involved in the decision to move,” and did not have enough advanced warning to prepare for the transition. The results of my study indicate military adolescents have negative connections when retrospectively speaking about their experience, as it is associated with relocating to multicultural overseas communities. This study also confirms McLachlan’s (2007) findings that highlighted that a child’s personality and perception of a move are important, and that parents need to consider these factors to ensure the children who participated in their study and commented on the elated feeling they had because the parents were interested in the childrens’ feelings regarding the move. Military families must find a way to include military adolescents in discussions about relocation.

Peer Support Provides a Sense of Belonging

Military adolescents can feel their investment in friendships can be limited due to the inevitable goodbyes (Crossman, 2016). Yet Mmari et al. (2010) revealed the importance of peer support and peer support networks, and how this support can make

transition an increasingly positive experience. Leaving old friends and moving to a new location has been proven to be challenging for military youth. Compound the moving with transitioning in the middle of the school year when other students have established peer networks can bring emotional distress and diminish the initial expectations of “fitting in” and making new friends.

I found that some military adolescents were challenged with the thought of having to be the new kid. This experience was also shown by Mmari et al. (2010), who found that one of the most significant stressors military adolescents encounter in a military family is frequent moves and making new friends. This confirms that military adolescents face significant emotional distress when navigating new communities and that military adolescents experience more pronounced anxiety than any other non-military group of adolescent youth simply because they are military dependent. In this study, I found several examples where military adolescents expressed their concerns about friends, whether leaving known friends or attempting to gain new friends.

Participants described how they were concerned about making new friends at their new location. This concern resonates with findings in Ward and Kennedy’s (1993) study that detailed that students are affected by cross-cultural transition where they experience insecure feelings. This insecurity impacted their ability to “fit in,” that parallels with aspects of acculturation, which is the cultural and psychological change that takes place between two or more cultured groups and their members.

These results can be considered discrepant evidence in the study. The process of analyzing and presenting discrepant data in a case study demonstrates the complexity of responding to the inductive and deductive evaluation process of qualitative data (Stake,

2013). Discrepant data is not to be ignored or considered outliers (Maxwell, 2013). In preparation for future research, the finding of discrepant data evidence among this sample of participants may provide a fresh perspective that will assist leaders with future policy development.

Support Networks can Lessen Stressors

Almost all participants in this study expressed the importance of support networks, be familial or communal. Participants reported better integration into communities when provided an opportunity to feel a sense of belonging. Hoshmand and Hoshmand (2007) conducted research on military families and communities, and recommended community capacity building is necessary for social support to overcome stressors and difficulties experienced by military families, which covers community needs assessments, resiliency in military families and the use of available support services. Scholars have begun to understand the focus is about not only the communities and what they fail to offer, but also more about the communities' resources and assets and how they can impact the youth to ensure they can thrive (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Confirmation of this and previous studies findings show the importance of social connectedness within the community, and how it plays a significant role in the lives of military families, and especially with the youth, when the need exists to develop strategies to assist in coping with the various stressors encountered (Mmari et al., 2010).

Family Interaction with Educators Help with Adjustment

The findings of this study contribute to the literature and confirm the importance of parental involvement in schools. McLachlan (2007) provides participant perspectives from parents in how the interaction in their children's school helped to ease their

transition. This study also confirmed active parental involvement and engagement with school administrators was important in being a new student, and Strobino and Salvetera (2000) validate parent involvement can be seen as a resource that supports adolescents, along with time spent conversing with educators, regardless of school transitions.

Established Programs Provide a Positive Experience

The military adolescents in a multicultural community interviewed for this study expressed a strong need to have established programs available. My findings are consistent with Strobino and Salvetera (2000), finding military adolescents who join programs (sports, community, youth programs, extracurricular, etc....) tend to acclimatize, integrate, and connect with peers in their community, suggesting this as another resource to mediate the effects of transition to an environment faster than youth who did not participate in established programs. The participants of this study state once they joined activities they were able to make friends that eased the transition of relocating to a multicultural overseas community.

Blaisure et al, (2015) found by providing a program to assist transitioning adolescents can have a positive effect and serve as a valuable resource. DoD provided \$56 million in October 2009 to assist public schools throughout the nation that serve military children to improve military student's education and educate educators to assist in their professional development of understanding military adolescents' unique challenges (Blaisure et al, 2015).

Participants of this study revealed programs allowed them to voice their opinions about feedback from the perspective of a military adolescent where quite valuable. According to Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve and Gautam & Vishwakarma (2012) U-curve

theory, youth adolescents who adeptly navigate successfully into a new community tend to decrease the stages of transition faster (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Church, 1982; Usunier, 1998).

Host Nation Re-integration

Specific to their transition back to their host nation, Fail, Thompson and Walker, (2004) find youth adolescents experience reverse culture shock when they move back to their home country, which is grounded in the feelings of rootlessness. This concept demonstrates a youth's lack of ability to cope and reintegrate themselves socially, and can invoke a sense of shock as they may not feel understood by their non-military peers. Also, they are faced with changes (e.g. family, friends, technology) that have occurred while they've been away. Limited research has studied the effects of: (a) a military adolescent returning to a host nation, (b) a military adolescent having spent several years living overseas, (c) nor a military adolescent returning to a host nation to complete high school. Less research exists regarding high school students headed to college and how they are prepped to deal with departure from family (Crossman, 2016). The results of this study revealed two of the participants transitioned back to their host nation (United States) to complete their high school education, where one reintegrated in a non-DoD high school which had no military resources to assist with the transition. Doyle and Peterson (2005) confirmed services organizations and communities should work in tandem to offer programs and procedures that "improve communication, mitigate distress, and resolve crisis during reintegration."

Valued Opinions to Affect Policy Development

Almost all of the participants addressed the importance of their opinion and described how their experiences and feedback should be received and incorporated in future initiatives for military adolescents. They report their real-world experiences and understanding of transitioning to and from and living in a multicultural overseas community should be viewed as relevant information. It was also confirmed that incorporating military adolescent feedback is essential to supporting future military adolescents. Army White Papers, AFAB meetings, and commissioned research projects by DoD confirm that collecting feedback is important in understanding the establishment, validity and usefulness of programs, and whether feedback is important to senior leaders at the highest levels within DoD.

Theoretical Alignment

Polarities of Democracy Model

The theoretical framework employed was the polarities of democracy model, developed by Benet (2013), and was used to connect the themes with the polarities of democracy pairs. The model encompasses the concept of democracy through five polarity pairs, which include freedom and authority; justice and due process; diversity and equality; human rights and communal obligation and participation and representation (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). I focused on all pairs except justice and due process. Table 7 depicts the pairs and association with the emergent themes. Addressing the research question, “How do former military dependent adolescents describe their perceived positive and negative experience in living abroad and what are their perceptions regarding military support services and military family programs?,” I used the theoretical

framework to examine the experiences of military adolescents that identified and connected four of the five pairs (see Table 6) from the polarities of democracy model (Benet, 2013).

Table 6

Polarities of Democracy Pairs with Emergent Themes

Theme	Polarity Pair
Permanent Change of Station	Freedom and Authority
Guidance	Diversity and Equality
Programs	Participation and Representation
Support Networks	Human Rights and Communal Obligations
Culture	Participation and Representation

As discussed in Chapter 3, I identified two polarities from the polarities of democracy model (Human Rights and Communal Obligations and Participation and Representation) that could potentially align with the results of the study, based on the theoretical propositions (Benet, 2006, 2012, 2013). After gathering data to view the emergent themes, freedom and authority and diversity and equality pairs I was able to apply the themes, as shown in Table 7. There were nine major findings that have been elaborated on previously, and align with the study's themes to further illuminate data patterns that inform the research question, as reflected in Table 7.

A discussion of each of the study's findings as they relate to the polarities of democracy model pairs, and supporting references from the literature follow. The polarity pairs freedom, authority, diversity, and equality were not presented in the theoretical propositions but have emerged during data analysis and are presented below for consideration. Military adolescents are an under-researched population that deserves the right to exist in a healthy and sustainable community. Military programs and policies developed for military adolescents require on-going revisions and continuous modifications to ensure the policies and programs are meeting the needs of this specific population (Benet, 2013).

Table 7

Findings as Aligned to the Polarities of Democracy Model

Polarity of democracy pair	Finding
Freedom and authority	<p>Finding 1: Participant's found as a military adolescent they lacked the freedom and authority to have an effect of the Permanent Change of Station process and had a negative experience due to lack of information sharing of the relocation of the family.</p> <p>Researcher Note 1: The participants' perceptions were based on whether the experiences had positive or negative effects on the polarity pair. Analysis of these stories informed the study findings in all categories.</p>
Justice and Due Process	<p>Researcher Note 2: There was no data found to support this polarity of democracy pair</p>
Diversity and equality	<p>Finding 2: Participants believed that peer support as a military adolescent affords a military adolescent a positive sense of belonging in diverse communities and provides access to support from peers who equally understand the challenges of transition.</p> <p>Finding 3: Participants viewed military liaisons and counselors as a diverse figure to help provide an equal footing in a new and unfamiliar community/environment.</p>
Human rights and communal obligation	<p>Finding 4: Participants found the positive effects of community support assisted in the transition process to a multicultural overseas environment by leveraging existing programs.</p> <p>Finding 5: Participants identified family as an integral element of their support networks with positive influences on their transition process.</p> <p>Finding 6: Participants found participation in extracurricular activities (sports/community programs) had a positive effect on their experience while residing in a multicultural overseas community.</p> <p>Researcher Note 3: The participants' stories were coded based on whether the experiences had a positive or negative effect within the polarities of democracy model.</p>

Table 7

Findings as Aligned to the Polarities of Democracy Model (continued)

Polarity of democracy pair	Finding
Participation and representation	<p>Finding 7: Participants found personal perception in retrospect yielded an evolution of ideas to assist up and coming military adolescents to potentially ease their transition and make the cultural experience more positive.</p> <p>Finding 8: Participants, upon their return to the U.S. and were identified as a military adolescent were provided opportunities to inculcate themselves into these environments.</p> <p>Finding 9: Participants felt their representation in community programs allowed them an opportunity to voice opinions and concerns regarding the life of a military adolescent in a multicultural environment in a positive manner.</p>

Participation and Representation

Two of the five significant emerging themes throughout the literature were the programs available when transitioning to and living in a multicultural overseas community and the culture. The inability to leverage the participation provided the lens into understanding the importance of programs and policies. The positive and negative aspects and the impact those experiences had on the participants are captured, as well as previous studies that highlighted the failure of programs that were unable to adapt to change.

Military adolescents are astute when it comes to organizational and leadership involvement, and quite politically aware when it comes to their needs, their voice and programs and policies that may affect them. Previous studies incorporated the polarities of democracy model and found that the involvement of key stakeholders would result in better management of the participation and representation polarity (Tobor, 2014).

Therefore, by providing military adolescents an opportunity to provide feedback to key stakeholders about their affected population early in the planning phase can assist leaders when developing policies that can result in better management of the participation and representation pair.

Easterbrooks et al. (2013) found many military programs are designed to assist military children at the time of need and therefore are created without the quality control measures to ensure functionality. The functionality of representation can lead to participation. Military adolescents and their families participating in ineffective programs can lead to non-participation that in turn can lead to the demise of programs that are actually needed.

Black and Mendenhall (1991) addressed the factor of adjustment to another foreign culture as it relates to the general living environment, aligns with this pair, and confirms the results of this study. Military adolescents' life domains in a new multicultural environment includes the culture and overall transition, which was highlighted by all participants as a key component of the permanent change of station and culture themes. Applying the participation and representation pair allows for a balanced democratic process to occur, where participation allows for feedback of concerns and interests to be provided to those who represent leadership and key stakeholders who can affect family program and policies.

The positive aspects of representation are the inclusion of military families and military adolescents feedback based on their lived experiences. The negative aspect of representation is key stakeholders not incorporating the provided feedback provided to assist in the development of and revisions to policies and family programs. The positive

aspect of representation is having key stakeholders who incorporate feedback and the negative side of representation is detached leaders and key stakeholders omitting any feedback during the course of creating and revising family programs and policies.

Human Rights and Communal Obligation

This pair is essentially the relationship between and among the community, its members, and the organizations that guide the aforementioned. The inability to effectively manage human rights and communal obligation contributed to the disconnect between military adolescents and their community. The positive aspects of human rights within the context of this study addresses all the maximum benefits afforded to military adolescents to thrive as an individual within a community when key stakeholders and leaders willing invest in this population. When study participants developed support networks that included military liaisons and counselors, school administrators and parents assisted in creating a positive immersion experience into multicultural communities.

The negative aspects of human rights are the repercussions of when this investment is ignored (rights are violated) and policies are created without consideration of the military adolescents. The positive aspect of communal obligation is when the community understands there is a requirement to embrace the needs of military adolescents. The negative aspect of communal obligation is when key stakeholders and leaders fail to embrace the needs to create sustainable communities. Concerns that are not addressed within this pair can have a lasting impacting on military adolescents and cause negative results that may impact the community.

I acknowledged although military family programs were available, only one participant actually mentioned a program that assisted with their transition (Student-to-

Student). In order to ensure the human rights of military adolescents are achieved, it is necessary for families to be aware of the available programs and resources within a community, especially when the community is multicultural and presents unique situations that are unfamiliar to this specific population.

Freedom and Authority

The upside of freedom is allowing military adolescents to freely express and communicate their thoughts and “shape the institutions that affect their lives” which would include shaping policies and family programs that affect military adolescents (Benet, 2006). The inability for a military adolescent to participate to contribute their concerns and thoughts in a familial setting regarding a PCS move to a multicultural overseas community denies them an opportunity to contribute to the decision making process. The downside to freedom can negatively impact the acclimatization process, potentially negatively impacting their school productivity and ability to embed themselves in a multicultural environment.

Authority has been confirmed as a viable polarity in this study as military adolescents offered options of programs they would have been interested in participating in during their transition overseas. Incorporating their feedback gives voice to their ideas for future recommendations of policies and programs that can be improved during the transition process and can be considered as a positive aspect of this polarity. The inability for military adolescents to provide their feedback to key stakeholders, policy makers, and local commanders is the downside of authority.

Usunier’s (1998) study of expatriates living abroad and the effects of feeling confined to a host nations culture can impede the effectiveness of the authority of leaders

(community, school, and parents) and aligns with this pair which confirms this study, as many participants also described the challenges of the language barriers and the ability to become settled that prolonged their transition during the first six months and made them feel insecure.

As participants were asked to recount their perceptions regarding their experiences transitioning to and residing in a multicultural community, a common occurrence was one of their awareness of not being involved in the discussion and decision-making process with regards to transitioning to a new environment which was seen as a negative aspect of freedom.

Diversity and Equality

Many of the participant's statements corresponded and identified with the neutral aspects of diversity and equality. Collaboration between resident and community can outweigh conflict and achieve community and organizational goals. Benet's (2013) polarity of democracy model provides a roadmap for understanding how to approach community challenges regarding social change and to effectively use human capital and organizational resources to leverage solving challenges through planning, guiding, and assessing efforts.

Justice and Due Process

Although the polarity pair of justice and due process was not connected based on participant responses, it was applicable considering when pairs are not effectively managed properly, the ineffectiveness can lead to the downside of justice and due process. This polarity pair is interrelated with the other pairs. When the other pairs are affected, the cause or negative aspect can derail justice. For example, the downside of

authority suggests the downside of justice and due process as military adolescents are not being treated fairly as they are not being included in the stakeholder planning process regarding resources that affect their specific population.

The polarities of democracy model served as the theoretical framework to apply the polarity pairs to the themes that emerged. Workplace democracy in the literal sense may apply to those in a working environment; however, I associated the term with embracing essential elements of democracy that applies to the lives of people. People deal with stress, disparate views on diversity and ethnicity, and adolescents deal with these same variables when transitioning to a multicultural overseas community. Individuals need networks of support and effective policies to know they are not operating in an autonomous community. By leveraging the pairs and applying them to military adolescents, key stakeholders and leaders can see how to balance the positive and negative challenges to ensure military adolescents become productive citizens in society.

Limitations of the Study

It was my intent to capture the experiences of military adolescents, from the beginning of the transition to, living in, and transition from a multicultural overseas community, yet this study was met with a few important limitations. While I expect the participants were honest in their retrospective views, there was no process to verify they did not embellish their statements or did not completely share their full experiences. Yin (2014) noted a challenging aspect of case study research falls in gathering a descriptive account of events and connecting those events to the literature to be of any value.

Another issue was the inability to generalize the findings for a broader base of ethnic and racial diversity. Being the minority culture (as all participants were African American), regardless of location, the ethnic and racial diversity most likely created an instant awareness of the surrounding multicultural environment. Whether ethnicity was a factor in perceived multicultural experiences specifically is an interesting topic to investigate.

I acknowledged early on that the location and age needed to be expanded, as many military adolescents were acquired via the snowball method, did not reside in the DMV, and many of the interested individuals were beyond the age of 23.

Due to the chosen methodology, the sample size was reflective of the snowball process, highlighting many of the participants resided in Belgium. Therefore, these results are not indicative of all potential multicultural overseas locations military personnel can be assigned. Potentially connecting with military service organizations to reach this specific population could have yielded a more ethnic and racial variation. Ultimately, these limitations explored could be more useful for informing researchers of the polarities management theory and polarities of democracy model, and how it was applicable.

Finally, another limitation was geography. Most of the respondents had their overseas multicultural experience in Europe, therefore, conclusions regarding living in other countries and different cultures could not be drawn.

Recommendations

Because military adolescents' needs may be a lower priority in the grand scheme of priority of effort to supporting the needs of the U.S. Armed Forces personnel, more

clarity and understanding of how and what they need today is required. In order to improve policies affecting this population, it is imperative that researchers conduct more research to provide greater insight into their needs and desires as well, to maintain a sustainable family unit.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the strengths and limitations of this study that I have detailed, I encourage future researchers to validate these research findings using an appropriate quantitative research method for inquiry or to replicate the study implementing qualitative paradigms that address the subject in various contexts. This section also includes five recommendations for future research that can use either methodological recommendations.

Methodological recommendation 1: Mixed methods validation. There is a significant need for more extensive and combined qualitative and quantitative research to identify the satisfaction levels of military adolescent experiences and gather their feedback through interviews, as well as surveys. For example, there should be more studies identifying the educational, familial, and cultural perspectives, as well as constant deployment rotations from overseas locations, coupled with open-ended questions to gain a deeper perspective based on the reality of the military adolescent and the familial unit.

Methodological recommendation 2: Qualitative replication. Conducting a qualitative study with increased variables to account for other locations, other branches of the military services and expanded age range may be useful to discover how research findings differ. Also, including the effects of service member enlistment, their likelihood to re-enlist, and whether their decision has a long-term negative impact on families.

Likewise, a study could be conducted between overseas and stateside military adolescents: which would offer a more comprehensive comparison regarding the challenges encountered with transition and services available during transition phases.

Given the scarcity of research on military adolescents living in multicultural overseas communities, and specifically military adolescent's perceptions and feedback regarding programs designed for them, I have five recommendations for future studies:

1: Military adolescent transition programs are critical for their success.

Transition is a constant aspect of life for a military adolescent. This study suggests military adolescents were seeking information prior to their transition that would have provided more detailed information about the community, the culture, and the overall environment. The research focused on military adolescents who are in varied phases of transition may offer a more robust overview and allow for a deeper dive into the type of information military adolescents require to feel they are prepared for to transition to a multicultural overseas community.

2: Data collection solely focused on policies and family programs. The research focused solely on military adolescents and their families regarding the availability, usage, and success rate of military family programs would be beneficial in order to validate the needs of this population and provide to better optimize current programs and policies or expand current programs and policies.

3: Incorporating a psychology aspect is a key component in understanding military adolescents. Although no participant in this study mentioned any destructive behaviors, providing emotional and mental support can be used to help them cope and self-regulate their emotions, should they arise. Understanding the challenges and strengths of

military adolescents through the lens of a psychologist can assist in the development of programs that are not only “strength-based but also problem focused (Park, 2011). Knowing the emotional and mental health impact of social isolation and lack of preparation can possibly prevent stressors and social awkwardness upon their arrival and integration in a multicultural overseas community (Purnell & Hoban, 2014). Future studies incorporating the mental state of military adolescents can ensure this population is prepared to handle the stressors of transition (e.g. leaving friends and family) and transitioning to a multicultural community where there may be a limited number of U.S. military students who understand their unique situation.

4: *Gathering experiences from current military adolescents.* All of the participants in this study are between the ages of 18 and 25. I recommend further research explore current military adolescents who are between the ages of 15 and 18. This may reveal a different perspective of military adolescents currently experiencing transition and living abroad and can offer. Granted, this recommended research will require additional parameters as this group would be considered a vulnerable population, and additional measures when need to be in place to protect them throughout the research process.

5: *Gathering feedback from parents and teachers.* Incorporating parents and teacher’s feedback will allow the researcher to potentially compare varied perceptions about military adolescents, their transition process, and their thoughts on living abroad. This feedback can also provide valuable insight into the exact feelings of inclusion or exclusion regarding familial decisions made about transition and why they choose not to involve the military adolescent in the decision-making process. It is also important to

gather parents feedback as parents should be aware of their emotions during transition to ensure they are prepared to support their military adolescent (Crossman, 2016).

The sample was small, yet adequate for the qualitative research design and offered in-depth inductive and deductive analysis that produced thick, rich descriptive data from which the study's findings were formed. Theoretical saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) supports the trustworthiness of the findings as their significance as working the research question that readers can assess for themselves.

Implications for Social Change

The overarching goal of this research is to increase the understanding and awareness of military adolescents, shed light on their lived experiences, and shows they have requirements to have family programs and policies developed to ensure they live a life where their needs basic needs are met as they transition to and from, and live in overseas multicultural communities.

Positive Social Change

Individual level. From the positive social change aspect at the individual level, the goal of this study stemmed from the desire to ensure military adolescents are exposed to opportunities to enjoy their adolescent years, even though they may be residing in a location external to the continental U.S. By living outside of the U.S. the typical adolescents experiences are limited, which include but are not limited to obtaining a driving permit and license, hanging out at the skating rinks, meeting friends at shopping centers and mega movie and enjoying arcade activities, all in their host nation language. Yet, during their military adolescent years, this population instead encounters language barriers, currency challenges, and cultural differences. Many are unable to experience a

part-time job due to the limited opportunities to work outside of the military base, and if they are high school seniors, they typically do not experience college tours.

Organizational level. From the impact for social change at the organizational level, military adolescent transition to public schools when DoDEA schools are not available requires them to learn how to embed themselves in a new environment that is unfamiliar with their circumstances. Not every school has a military liaison that may require leveraging other practitioners within the school (e.g. social workers) to be a conduit between the students (military adolescents), teachers, administrators, parents, and local military installations. DoDEA school leadership should continue to assess their acclimatization process to ensure a military adolescent's transition overseas is embraced. Blaisure et al. (2015) highlighted the efforts DoDEA teachers made to make to assist military adolescents with their overseas transition, yet the attempts were not received well according to the responses of the participants in this study.

Research on military adolescents have been more focused on the functionality of the family, or deployment related, therefore research has missed the opportunity to understand the cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral aspects of military children (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Studies following military adolescents through adulthood could provide how they handle adversity, which in turn may determine how they engage and become productive, law-abiding citizens.

Key stakeholders who can affect family programs and policy development have the charge to ensure this underrepresented population is provided, as many needed resources to thrive and enjoy their adolescent years, outside of their host nation. Fortunately, military adolescents who have lived overseas have a greater impact for

social awareness as they are more culturally aware of world issues from a global perspective, thereby potentially instilling a greater appreciation and awareness of worldviews.

Methodological, Theoretical, and/or Empirical Implications

The purpose of this qualitative study, using a case study design was to gain a deeper understanding of the positive and negative experiences of military adolescents, as well as the military and family programs they may have access to. The research that provides the basis for the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study is critical based on the lack of previous studies focused on this population. The findings of this empirical research were aimed at advancing the knowledge base for DoD professionals and policy leaders to be more aware of military adolescents and their requirements for policy development, and to contribute to original qualitative data for the study's theoretical framework. The empirical evidence presented in this case study provides a reliable research method for data collection into the lived experiences of former military adolescents who transitioned to and lived overseas in a multicultural community.

Recommendations for Practice

As a U.S. Army military officer with more than 20 years of experience, I believe very strongly in presenting practical recommendations that can be implemented within known resource and constraints. Based on this, I have five recommendations for practice which do not require major resources to implement and can serve as a quick assessment and azimuth check of military adolescent challenges at the local command levels in multicultural overseas communities: (a) institute climate surveys specifically for military adolescents; (b) conduct organizational culture assessments with military adolescents; (c)

provide ongoing feedback to ensure relevant and up-to-date programs remain effective (d) implement focused inculcation plan for military adolescents moving to overseas multicultural communities and (e) conduct exit assessments.

Institute climate surveys. Adding a climate survey within 6 months of the arrival of a military adolescent to an overseas multicultural community is a low-cost method that will allow community leaders a method to gather feedback. This survey can serve as a check on the sponsorship process prior to the transition of this population (from notification prior to departure from their host nation through the first 6-months of the assignment), which can lead to periodic reviews more often, and modifications more often, as required. This follow-up is critical to assess the results of the survey and planned actions based on the responses. Providing feedback and taking appropriate follow-up action is important to demonstrating a commitment to improving the transition process and creating a healthy, sustainable and just environment (Benet, 2013).

Conduct organizational culture assessments. Gathering feedback about cultural experiences from military adolescents can benefit understanding the organizations they must frequent, which is typically school, and how they believe they interact with the culture and how they can better prepare to exist in the culture. While DoDEA recognizes military adolescents face unique challenges as they frequent countries where they do not speak the language and are unfamiliar with customs and courtesies of those countries (Blaisure et al, 2015), the participants in this study confirmed, and believed they were not adequately prepared to handle the acclimatization to a new culture.

Provide ongoing feedback. Periodically, have military adolescent provide feedback to gauge the success of current programs, or simply provide anonymous

feedback about any positive or negative challenges this population may encounter while living in a multicultural community overseas.

Focused inculcation plan. By leveraging current assets, location and resource dependent, community leaders at the local level can ensure current policies and programs are reviewed often to reflect the changes in requirements, based on the climate survey feedback.

Conduct exit assessments. Make the exit assessment a required priority within 90 days of the military adolescent's departure. The initial climate survey can serve as a baseline, with the periodic reviews incorporated, including the exit assessments that can serve as a benchmark of positive and negative aspects of their time spent overseas. Taking a holistic approach, coupled with the feedback of can assist policy leaders in reviewing programs, understanding trends, and creating effective programs will be beneficial to this population. This information may also inform community leaders in requesting the appropriate resources, allocating adequate funding to support the needs and requirements of their communities, and identifying initiatives as each overseas location may have varied needs.

Conclusion

Ultimately, programs and policies should be supported by research that demonstrates their effectiveness. We must invest in research that will measure the challenges military adolescents encounter. Parents of military adolescents volunteer to serve; however, the military adolescents do not volunteer. Conducting research to support these population requirements to ensure policies and family programs are implemented to enhance their lives is a small act of gratitude for the sacrifices they have made.

This qualitative research study gave voice to six military adolescents about their experiences and perceptions surrounding transition to and from, and living in multicultural communities overseas and highlighted the prominent role of military adolescents in the lives of military service personnel. This prominent role had important implications on how they have needs and requirements that should be considered and expressed how including their feedback in decisions related to transition, activities, programs, and schools is important. This study also highlighted not all military adolescents are resilient and confident, and struggle with new environments and cultures.

The case study used interviews and documents to better understand the phenomenon of military adolescents within their real-life context. The analysis of the pattern codes, findings, and themes formed the basis of the study's conclusion. The findings were aligned with the study's themes and theoretical framework to further illuminate data patterns that informed the research question.

The goal of this theory-generating case research was to address the specific research question developed to provide answers within the context of the empirical setting (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). The results of this case study suggest that the most important factor in a military adolescents' perception of transition and living overseas has more to do with support networks, programs, and advanced preparation, which could prevent additional stressors on the military adolescent and the military family unit.

These findings strongly support Benet's (2013) polarities of democracy model whereby the importance leveraging individual characteristics (interacting with people, making friends) with situational variables (e.g. representation significantly influences their participation) can greatly increase positive experiences and reduce negative

experiences when transitioning to and living in multicultural communities, which encourages a healthy and sustainable community.

While military adolescents experience life overseas in a multicultural community enjoy a plethora of experiences (positive and negative), perspectives and stories to share, it is important to ensure they are provided adequate resources to this phase of their lives. What is most important is to ensure they evolve into mature, law abiding citizens and that their childhood exposure to living aboard don't affect their adult experience's as they prepare to transition adulthood.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions Former Military Adolescent

1. (Intro Question) Where was your overseas assignment?
2. (Intro Questions) How old were you when you arrive? When you departed?
3. What immediate challenges did you experience upon your arrival into a multicultural community overseas? Did they still exist after 6 months?
4. How did any challenges experienced affect your familial relationship? School behavior/education?
5. What coping skills did you use to help with living in a multicultural community overseas?
6. Which military resources (e. g., family programs) did your family use to assist them while living overseas? How effective were the military resources?
7. In retrospect, how did stressors you encountered while residing overseas affect your US friendships?
8. In retrospect, how did stressors initiated overseas continue to affect the family upon their return to the US?
9. Did you interact with teachers or community leaders to express your concerns regarding the challenges you encountered?
10. Did participating in community activities positively or negatively affect your overseas experience?
11. What programs were available (upon your return) to assist your readjustment to the US environment?
12. Was there a sense of relief upon returning to your host nation?
13. What type of school (public, private or DoDEA) were you enrolled upon your return to the U. S?
14. Was there engagement with a military liaison/was a military liaison available to assist with your transition at your school upon your return?
15. What social/behavioral challenges still influence you based on the time your family spent in a multicultural community overseas?
16. How did your multicultural community overseas assignment affect your life from age 18 to present?

17. As an adult, how do you perceive the democratic process of being able to voice your opinions or concerns regarding challenges you face as a college student, employee, or citizen?
18. In retrospect, what type of programs/resources do you recommend should have been in place to support the challenges experienced while residing in a multicultural community overseas?
19. In retrospect, what questions would you have asked prior to your arrival to the multicultural community overseas?
20. (Closing Question) If you could develop a program to assist military adolescents in transitioning and adapting to a multicultural community overseas, what would be the elements/components?
21. (Closing Question) What could have been done to shape your multicultural overseas experience into a more positive manner?

Appendix B: Interview Introductions

Hello. My name is Nicole Hayes and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University. I am conducting a study of military adolescents and the challenges they encounter as they transition to and from, and reside in multicultural communities overseas. I am a military officer and parent of military children. You were invited to participate, as I am very interested in ways to ensure military adolescents with challenges are provided adequate resources to cope with potential positive and negative experiences they may encounter while transitioning to and residing in a multicultural overseas community.

Before we begin, I would like to review a few rules to assist with making this interview productive:

1. To ensure accuracy, please be mindful this session will be recorded, so you will need to speak clearly.
2. Do not use your name. You have been assigned a pseudonym. To prevent any link to you in the report of this study.
3. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to exit the interview without any reprisal.
4. There are no right or wrong answers.
5. Silence all phones.

We will now begin the official recording of this session.

Appendix C: Email Requests for Participation

Hello. My name is Nicole Hayes and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University. I am conducting a study of military adolescents and the challenges they encounter as they transition to and from, and reside in multicultural communities overseas. As a military officer and parent of military children, I am interested in the perceptions of military adolescents regarding their experiences, to assist military adolescents with challenges encountered from multicultural communities overseas. I am currently seeking former military adolescent's participation for this study. To be eligible for the study, participants must meet the following criteria:

Former military adolescent:

- Former military adolescent, no older than the age of 23,
- Must have been in grades 8-12 when the parent was assigned to a multicultural community overseas,
- Must currently reside in the Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) area,
- Must have attended a DoDEA, school in an overseas community, and during the family's military assignment.

As part of the research study, participants will be asked to complete one interview in person or via Skype.

If you know of others who may be good candidates for this study, please share the information within your networks.

Participation in this research is entirely optional and all information provided is 100% confidential.

If you have any questions about the present study, please send me a direct message.

Thank you in advance for your time and your dedication to educating the youth of tomorrow.

Best,

Nicole Hayes

Appendix D: Inclusion Criteria Survey Questions for Former Military Adolescents

The following questions will be provided to potential participants to determine their eligibility to participate in this study:

1. What is your current age?
2. Where was your parent/guardian stationed overseas?
3. Which overseas Department of Defense Education Activity school did you attend?
4. What grades were you in while stationed overseas?
5. What branch of service was your parent/guardian?
6. Current area of residence?
7. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin? How would you describe yourself?
8. To which gender do you most identify?
9. What is your marital status?
10. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?