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Acculturative Experiences of African American Military Wives in an Arctic Environment

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Abstract

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MA, University of Phoenix, 2007

BS, Wayland Baptist University, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

United States military wives typically relocate every few years with their active-duty husbands. But little is known about the acculturative stress and stressors associated with relocating and reestablishing a military home in an Arctic environment. This qualitative research focused on African American women who were also military wives and the acculturative stress they encountered in relocating to an Arctic environment. Face to face interviews provided a platform for 10 military wives to share their personal experiences. The acculturative stress that African American military wives' acculturative stress and stressors encountered in relocating from a non-Arctic to an Arctic environment are not readily known for establishing social services and other coping resources. Segmented assimilation theory revealed the acculturative challenges the women encountered with these four emerging themes: (1) environment, (2) community resources and services, (3) relocation stressors, and (4) social relationships. Positive coping strategies traditionally employed by African Americans were used to manage feelings of marginalization for integrating the Indigenous community. This study has implications for positive social change because the findings could improve the community and military support groups' awareness of Arctic acculturative stress on African American military wives. By using cultural coping strategies and cultivating new sociocultural relationships, the African American military wife can sustain her quality of life in support of military operations.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who supported me to start and complete this educational journey. I dedicate the findings of the research to the African American women and military wives. These women support the mission of the military, and they hold their families together through deployments and acculturative changes around the world. A quote by Joseph Campbell says, "We must get rid of the life we have planned to have the life that is waiting for us."

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The military sends its servicemembers around the world to defend the rights of freedom. Military wives help with the mission by becoming geographically mobile and establishing a home for the family, especially during deployments and training (Cafferky & Shi, 2015). Relocation for the service member occurs every 2 to 3 years. Relocation creates stress for the military family, which must adjust, settle into a new area, and create a balanced home life (Russo & Fallon, 2015).

Acculturation is an external change process whereby a person internally learns enculturation and modifies their attitude, values, and behavior to survive new surroundings (Yoon, Langrehr, & Ong, 2011). Acculturation can also initiate unknown stress when leaving a job, a familiar school, friends, extended family, and social ties that wives and family members grow to appreciate. The acculturation process disrupts familiar social patterns (Onyenekwu, 2015). During the acculturation process, change from the familiar produces stress for an individual; change requires accepting uncertainties and risks within a new community.

In Alaska, military wives encounter unfamiliar acculturative challenges, especially when acclimating to an Arctic environment. Arctic environments, such as Alaska, typically cause newcomers to encounter inclement weather, often triggering bouts of seasonal affective disorder (Gudenas & Brooks, 2013; Meesters & Gordijn, 2016). SAD brings depressive moods and behavioral challenges for being socially active (Menculini, Verdolini, Murru, Pacchiarotti, Volpe, Cervino, & Tortorella, 2018). SAD

becomes an unavoidable occurrence for new residents who are transitioning to Arctic Alaska and are unfamiliar with the challenging effects of limited cycles of daylight during the winter ranging from 6 to 8 months long (Meesters & Gordijn, 2016). After relocation, some profound differences in the new environment can trigger biological, psychological, psychosocial, and cultural changes in adapting to an Arctic community.

African American military wives need specific social service resources to help them adapt to life in an Arctic community. This research is relevant to the African American military wife to raise awareness of the need for cultural interactions and social services support for ethnic minority migrants in Arctic Alaska. Research outcomes that identify successful cultural coping strategies for adapting to an Arctic environment help offset acculturative stressors for African American military wives.

The following sections of this chapter will cover the following topics: background of the study, the problem statement, research question, nature of the study, the purpose of the study, conceptual framework, definitions of terms, assumptions, limitations, scope and delimitations, the significance of the study and summary.

Background

Acculturation has many layers and places stress on those moving to a new area. Acculturation is a multilayered and continuously changing process for migrants to navigate new cultural perspectives involving the culture and psychological change between two or more ethnic groups (Jadalla, Hattar, & Schubert, 2015). Birman and Simon (2014) described acculturation as a process of changing cultural patterns previously internalized by migrants while mastering a new indigenous language, new

coping behaviors, supporting their family, learning new cultural norms, and forging new social connections. For African American military wives, entering an Alaskan Native culture with the new host community is vastly different from familiar social connections and relationships of previous assignments. During the acculturation process, African American military wives enter new relationships with the Alaskan Native community, where they encounter adaptation challenges unique to an Arctic environment. The biological, cultural, social, and psychological challenges create acculturative stress and stressors towards integrating into an Arctic environment.

Assimilation studies focusing on some Asian, Greek, and African ethnic groups revealed that their selective acculturation experiences had strong ties to their cultural values as immigrants in a new host environment (Griffin, 2013; Howard, 2011; Nisanci, 2016). For some Korean immigrants, relying on one's cultural behaviors, values, and beliefs helped them to cope with stress while going through acculturation (Kim, Malonebeach, Heo, Kim, & Kim, 2015). For some Chinese international students, staying in the United States for studies relied upon social support networks comprised of their professors and ethnic, social groups to minimize acculturative stress (Li, Li & Niu, 2016; Panchang, Dowdy, Kimbro & Gorman, 2016). For some Asian immigrants, having an ethnic, social support system was key to reducing psychological distress and aided them in becoming culturally proficient in Western culture (Cura & Işık, 2016; Ra & Trusty, 2015). Some Greek immigrants who migrated to places like Australia coped with adjustment challenges—such as decreased mental health (depression or anxiety), increased psychosomatic symptoms, and culture shock—by relying upon sociocultural

systems (Georgiades, 2015). Within the host country, Greek immigrants trusted in sociocultural systems to establish a foundation for them to live and maintain working households. Ethiopian immigrants settling into Eastern cultures used specific cultural (i.e., family support and religious affiliation) and educational activities to not only maintain their identities, but to adjust to the new culture and to assimilate into new sociocultural groups (Kim, Heo, & Park, 2014; Korem & Horenczyk, 2015).

The literature on acculturation is vast. However, studies on African American military wives' perspectives on acculturation, their experiences in relocating from a non-Arctic to an Arctic environment, and the cultural coping strategies they used to ease acculturative stress and stressors in an Arctic environment are limited. Also, many of the relevant studies on African American acculturation attitudes and experiences are outdated and in need of current replication (Gillum, 2011). More recent acculturation research tends toward the experiences of foreign immigrants and the migrant population in North America.

Problem Statement

As military operations increase in Alaska, so increases the population of ethnicities of people in Alaskan society. A review on Alaska's residents from 2009 to 2013 revealed that 10% of new Alaskans were Hispanic, 10% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 7% were African American, and just 4% were American Indian or Alaskan Native. Though the differences are slight, they contribute to a continuously changing racial makeup of the state over time when coupled with differing birth rates by race (Alaska Economic Trends, 2015). In 2014, African Americans made up 4.5% or 4,463 of

the state's Alaskan population of 741,894 (ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2016; Vintage Population, 2016). By 2017, African Americans made up 6.7% or 6,717 of the state's 738,565 population (ACS Demographic Housing Estimates, 2017). This variance represented a 2.2% increase. In reality, the rate of African American residents per 100,000 adults progressively increased from 5,705 or 5.8% in 2012; 6,078 or 6.2% in 2013, to 6,505 or 6.5% in 2014. This positive development could have important implications for the African American community to show a steady population growth of African American women within the Arctic Alaska community for at least two reasons. African Americans are disproportionately underrepresented in relocating to Alaska (.34%) when African Americans comprise just 12.7% of the total United States population (ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates (2018). The military communities are consistently welcoming more African American military wives who are supporting their spouses and military operations than previously known (Sandberg, 2018; ACS Demographic Housing Estimates, 2017).

During relocations, the military focuses its resources on the active-duty service member. The military does not directly correspond or counsel the military wife about assimilating into new environments (Listen to Army Moms, 2015). The military wife does not receive cross-cultural resources about the new environment unless specifically requested by the active-duty service member (Department of Defense, 2016; Listen to Army Moms, 2015). The Arctic region has indigenous Alaskan Native cultures, inclement weather, and seasonal depression (Huskey, 2017). Immigrants rely upon social services and ethnic support groups to offer adapting resources for countering

acculturative stress, feelings of isolation, and coping with change (Birman & Simon, 2014; Cafferky & Shi, 2015).

Throughout history, African Americans shared their cultural experiences, traditions, and values with relatives to advise on heritage and overcome change (Chatters, Taylor, Lincoln, Nguyen & Joe, 2011). African Americans used their culturally acquired knowledge to survive unknown challenges. For an African American wife, ethnic-specific resources and assistance help buffer the effects of stress and change during acculturation. The African American military wife needs assistance in identifying and coping with biological, psychosocial, environmental, and psychological "side effects" of acculturation as they encounter Arctic Alaska and its indigenous culture.

The findings of this research will not only address the research question, What are the acculturation experiences of African American military wives who moved to Alaska in support of military operations? The findings from this research will also be a guide for advising military, social services' support groups, and incoming African American wives relocating to Alaska from non-Arctic environments (Ridder, Hoon & Baluch, 2014). During inception, social services resources help African American military wives in assimilating to the environment and new cultural elements (Ward, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The research explored the acculturative experiences of African American military wives who relocated to Alaska in support of military operations. The study revealed the military wives' experiences with SAD and its effects on them during acculturation to an Arctic environment. The study also identified cultural adaptation strategies the African

American military wives used to counter acculturative stress, change in family dynamics, and feelings of isolation in a new Arctic environment and Alaskan Native culture.

Research Question

The central research question that guided the conduct of this study is: *What are the acculturation experiences of African American military wives who moved to Alaska in support of military operations?*

Conceptual Framework

According to Berry, acculturation traditionally depicts assimilation as a continuous process coupled with a series of adjustments and adaptations (Berry, 1997). Berry's research (1997, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2017; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) indicated numerous factors that impact the acculturation process and potential coping strategies. According to Berry (2007), "Acculturation was a process of cultural and psychological changes that immigrants or individuals new to an environment or location experience when they were in contact with the culture of their host society" (p. 43). The new immigrants learned to cope with a "new and largely unfamiliar culture" using specific processes of coping with distress (Taft, 1977, p. 122). During relocation, people became both highly enculturated as well as acculturated to the host culture for adaptability (Owaka, 2015). Enculturation was the degree to which an immigrant retained his or her culture of origin while encountering a new culture (Yoon, Chang, Kim, Clawson, Cleary, Hansen, Gomes, 2013). Rather than assuming one was either acculturated to the host culture or enculturated to one's home culture, people could be both highly enculturated and highly acculturated. Yoon et al. (2013) further explained

that immigrants could assert the two constructs as "bilinear," in that one had the possibility for fluency in both cultures at once. Cultural change was achieved as a result of continuous contact and interaction between individuals from two or more different cultures (Berry, 1980; Berry, 1997; Berry, 2017; Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000).

Additional research depicted acculturation as an umbrella term or "melting pot," where ethnicities encounter cultural changes (Kunst & Sam, 2013). Ethnic groups blended into the mainstream while adding a bit of their own culture to the mix, the result being an assimilated consumer (Adrados, 1997; Berry, 2017). Sociocultural variables were also sources of cultural and social support impacting the acculturation process as well as being influential in developing friendships with locals for new cultural knowledge (Sherry, Tomas, & Chui, 2010; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Sociocultural variables not only enable one's ability to interact with different cultural groups and obtain new knowledge of the host culture heightens but improve one's ability to identify with the dominant group and undergo cultural change (Girmay, 2017). Increased awareness of the host society's cultural values and behaviors help migrants to integrate and influence positive cultural adjustment.

The segmented assimilation theory examined the acculturation experiences of African American military wives in an Arctic environment. Also, the segmented assimilation theory indicated how "an individual level of adaptation and behavior to transition into a new culture or community successfully" would appear (Lee, 2009, p. 48). Segmented assimilation is a derivative of the classical assimilation theory from

Berry's research, which expanded the definition of acculturation (Berry, 1997; Lee, 2009). The use of segmented assimilation theory expanded the current understanding of African American military wives' acculturation experiences and the cultural adaptation strategies applied in an Arctic community. A segmented assimilation theory helped contribute new knowledge on ethnic diversity, acculturation stress, and adaptation strategies of African American military wives.

In African American culture, strong social support, resilience, extended families, and child-centered families often seem to buffer the effects of stress and change in family dynamics. Cultural socialization plays a critical role in the coping process for African Americans, uniquely when placed in a situation where they feel marginalized (Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012). African American wives who moved to Alaska in support of the military operations shared their African traditions and military membership as social norms. The military wife seeks to interconnect with community social groups that can identify with the two cultures at the same time as help her to assimilate into the new environment. Socialization becomes an opportunity to connect with others who provide information and guidance to navigate both cultures and mediate problems (Eunyoung-Kim, 2014; Sapiro, 2011).

Numerous ethnic groups share their cultural and family traditions with others to build new relationships (Logan, Barksdale, James & Chien, 2017). African American military wives carry with them cultured practices: values, traditions, language, and other skills (Blackmon & Thomas, 2013). These cultured practices aid in coping with change, stress, and other uncertainties by maintaining traditions and social norms. Coping

becomes a fundamental element for African American military wives to use as a normalizing adapting strategy. During acculturation, the African American military wife comes to understand her two cultural environments: African American and military. From the two cultures, the African American military wife learns to adjust her behavior and family needs according to common beliefs, perceptions, and norms in order to cope (Okafor, Carter-Pokras & Min, 2014).

By examining the military wives' experiences for encountering acculturative stress in an Arctic environment, new knowledge materialized concerning cultural adjustment and adaptation skills and strategies (Berry, 2005). Within the new community, the wives sought out social contacts and organizations that help with cultural identity and stabilizing ethnic minority socioeconomic status (Berry, 2005; Tong, 2014). By exploring these experiences, contacts, and resources, more in-depth knowledge was learned about wives' abilities to handle daily life as a new resident in Arctic Alaska.

Nature of the Study

The study used a generic qualitative research design to explore the acculturation experiences and cultural adaption strategies applied by African American military wives who relocated to Alaska in support of military operations. The generic qualitative design aided me in investigating and narrowing down acculturative stress and culture coping strategies. Coping strategies aided in overcoming biological, psychosocial, environmental, and psychological stressors of a group of African American military wives during their first two winters or years in Anchorage or Fairbanks, Alaska. Birman and Simon (2014) described acculturative stress as a cultural transformation or

psychological change in the ethnic minority wives' attitudes, values, and cultural identity. By using thematic analysis, I focused on "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). According to Clarke and Braun (2013), "thematizing meanings" is a generic assessment skill shared across qualitative research. In generic qualitative research, the analysis uses open codes and categories, not restricting the data to form a detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation. The generic qualitative design makes use of an inductive analysis process to bridge theory (for seeking and discovering the perspectives and views of people involved in a phenomenon) with practice (sound evidence) (Smith, Bekker & Cheater, 2011). Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) emphasized that thematic data analysis is a nonlinear process that allows flexibility in the discovery of research. I followed a structured yet non-linear approach to discovering thematic meaning. Data collection incorporated thematic analysis for transcribing personal meanings and identifying speech and ethnic jargon associated with the African American culture (Saldana, 2016). Interviews documented what the military wives perceived and thought about themselves, the host culture, and the environment during acculturation (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis, & Sam, 2011). The interviews gave a personal depiction of the acculturation experiences and adaptation strategies applied during relocation to an Arctic indigenous community.

Operational Definitions

The following terms and concepts were used throughout this generic qualitative study and are defined below:

Acculturation: Acculturation is a multifaceted and continuous process for migrants to navigate new cultural perspectives involving cultural and psychological change between two or more cultural groups and their members (Jadalla, Hattar & Schubert, 2015).

Acculturative stress: Acculturative stress is a form of psychological and social stress for new residents. Acculturative stress causes discomfort due to differences in beliefs, values, and other cultural norms (between a person's country of origin and country of reception) (Sanchez, Dillon, Concha, & De La Rosa, 2014). Newcomers experience acculturative stress when they must adapt and adjust their behavior and lifestyle between their traditional culture and host society culture (Da Silva, Dillon, Verdejo, Sanchez & De La Rosa, 2017).

Seasonal affective disorder (*SAD*): Seasonal Affective Disorder is a sub-type of major depression that most often develops during winter (winter depression) and decreases during the following spring or summer (Hjordt, Stenbaek, Madsen, McMahon, Jensen, Vestergaard, & Knudsen, 2017; Rosenthal, Sack, Gillin, Lewy, Goodwin, Davenport, Wehr, 1984). SAD has substantial variations in the daylight hours across seasons prompting changes in their behavior, mood, and cognition (Rosenthal et al., 1984).

*Cope/Coping***:** Coping comprises the thoughts and behaviors used to manage internal and external stressors and negativity (Logan, Barksdale, James & Chien, 2017; Padden, Connors & Agazio, 2011b). Coping characteristics can indicate whether an individual adapted successfully or poorly adapted to stressful life events.

Globalization: Globalization is a process where the inter-mixing of various cultures is expanding the distribution of ideas and traditions across the country (Jitmanowan, 2016). Through globalization, culturally diverse communities come from an increasing connection with the interaction between different people and their cultures. Globalization initiatives are forging new relationships with people by blending diverse cultures and different ideological processes (Phillippe, 2016; Sorrells, 2013).

Indigenous people: Indigenous people in Alaska are Alaska Indian (AI) or Alaska Native (AN) (Wendt, 2010; Yellow Bird, 2006). In Alaska, indigenous people evolved from the Inupiaq, the Athabascan, the Yup'ik and Cup'ik, the Aleut and the Alutiiq, and the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian tribes (Mohatt & Thomas, 2006). Indigenous or "native" is a globally inclusive term employed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2007, p. 132).

Indigenous community: An indigenous community is a rural and holistic community where AI/AN residents live on or off United States tribal land (Wendt, 2010; Yellow Bird, 1999; Yellow Bird & Gray, 2008). An indigenous community is a self-sufficient community where Alaskan Native people co-exist together by using their cultural traditions, subsistence practices, and linguistic patterns (Balestrery, 2014; Hoeffel, 2012; Phillippe, 2016).

*Migrants***:** Migrants are people who immigrate for varying reasons, such as employment opportunities, education, or seeking refuge (Shoshani, Nakash, Zubida & Harper, 2016). Migrants face unique challenges in adapting to the new culture and

society, which are shaped by policies, individual experiences, and structure of communities (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Shoshani Nakash, Zubida & Harper, 2016).

Assumptions

Several aspects of this generic qualitative study had to be assumed as true in order to complete an impartial examination of the data. With a generic qualitative study, I assumed that there were some general, yet subjective, characteristics, such as the following: (a) data are collected in a natural setting using an interview or conversation; (b) participants' meanings and data were analyzed helping to establish patterns and themes; (c) was organized around a social context of the problem that was studied (Holmes-Wagner, 2017); and (d) used as an analytic lens to describe the methodological and interpretive influence that a researcher had on the data not to incorporate personal accounts and compromise the study's credibility (Caelli, Ray & Mill, 2003, p. 8).

Another assumption in this study was that African American military wives could provide first-hand knowledge of their acculturative experiences in relocating to Arctic Alaska. I continuously advised the participants, both verbally and in writing, to respond to all questions truthfully. In using a generic qualitative research model, each participant's experiences were slightly different, yet shared some context commonalities. The last assumption was that 10 interviews would lead to data saturation. As a result, the data from their interviews plus observational notes would adequately depict the military wives' acculturative experiences transitioning into an Arctic environment.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I explored the acculturation experiences of African American military wives who relocated to Alaska in support of military operations. The scope of the study involved a generic qualitative assessment of acculturation and cultural adaptation strategies by using interview questions to understand the acculturation process. The interview process would also explore relevant coping strategies used by African American women to acclimate to an Arctic indigenous community. The coping strategies expanded the scope to provide an interpretation of the African American military wives' biological, cultural, social, and psychological contexts of the study.

The scope involved only African American Mmilitary wives' experiences. Although the sampling population was solely drawn from African American military wives currently residing in Arctic Alaska, all of the African American women shared limited knowledge of living in an Indigenous community and previous exposure to extreme cold weather environments. The study did not include participants from populations other than the target population and sampling contexts of the study. Given these participant parameters, the findings from this study may not be transferable to all African American military wives outside the demographic characteristics or geographical location.

I chose Alaska as the locality for this study because it is the Arctic region of the United States and an expanding location for military operations (Sandberg, 2018; Posts & Installations, 2015). The results of the study could not be generalized to other cold-weather populations or localities. Arctic Alaska has a unique cultural and environmental

perspective, as well as the nature of generic qualitative research on African American acculturative experiences in Arctic Alaska (Smith, 2018). Any identified cultural themes and descriptions pertained only to African American military wives during their first two winters or years in relocating to Anchorage or Fairbanks.

Limitations

There are always limitations to qualitative research. First, the location was a limitation of this research study. The participants recruited for this study were military residents of Fairbanks or Anchorage, Alaska. The second limitation in this study was with the time frame for the military participants to be transitional residents amid the Arctic community. The third limitation focused on the small sample size of 10 participants for this generic qualitative research. Adequate data reflection of the target population may be extracted from a small, carefully selected, homogeneous participant group with expert knowledge related to the research topic (Clearly, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014).

Significance of the Study

A generic qualitative research study on acculturation and acculturative stress are expected to provide specific strategies and resources for African American military wives' adaptation to an Arctic environment. A qualitative approach offers a holistic view and examination of the experiences of African American military wives and the coping strategies used during acculturation. The findings present a comprehensive perspective on the ability of some African American military wives to adapt. A generic qualitative design identifies social resources and coping strategies for African Americans military

wives to use for understanding acculturative stress and stressors unique to Arctic

Alaska's indigenous community.

Summary

Acculturation is an on-going process of adjusting, which may involve

unaccounted stress and stressors in acclimating to a new location and its cultural way of

life. The Arctic environment of Alaska is an environment where the weather seasons and

climatic patterns are inclement and comprised of an indigenous community of Native

Alaskan traditions and customs. African American military wives relocating from non-

Arctic environments to Arctic Alaska encountered tremendous acculturative stresses

which triggered biological, psychological, psychosocial, and cultural challenges to adjust

within this unfamiliar environment. Given that African American residents account for

3.4% or 25,022 of the state population in Alaska in comparison to other ethnicities

residing in the state, social support holds critical fundamentals in the acclimation process

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Within the African American community, strong social

support, extended families, and child-centered families often seem to buffer the effects of

stress and changes in family dynamics and communities (Wright, 2013). For the African

American military woman, acculturative stress is more significant when there is limited

access to social networks (i.e., family and friends from past locations) and new social

connections with other friends in the community.

In Chapter 1, I presented the background, problem statement, research questions,

and theoretical foundation for acculturation stress on African American military wives.

Also, I outlined the nature of the research, limitations, assumptions, and delimitations of

acculturation stress into Arctic Alaska. I presented definitions of key terms used in this research and highlighted points of focus on the significance of the research sections towards expanding research on social change.

In Chapter 2, I review the literature on acculturation. I discuss the acculturative challenges encountered by African American wives. In Chapter 3, I review the research methodology, which includes the research design, sampling, data collection, and analysis procedures. In Chapter 4, I present the collected data, the results of the data analysis, and the findings. In Chapter 5, I discuss the research outcomes, formalize conclusions, and review limitations concerning the relocation experiences of African American military wives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the acculturative experiences of African American military wives in an Arctic environment. African American military wives face many limitations in research due to stigma, discrimination, and their resistance to participate in clinical and social research endeavors (Watson, Robinson, Harker & Arriola, 2016). I did not find research on African Americans' acculturative experiences nor on their cultural, behavioral patterns as other ethnic minority groups to influence change and specific social services support (George, Duran, & Norris, 2014; Miller, 2013). I did not find research that addresses African American military wives' acculturative experiences in an Arctic environment. There is a gap in research revealing the unique acculturative challenges experienced by African American military wives and the cultural adaptation strategies used to counter their acculturative stress into Arctic Alaska's indigenous environment.

For the African American military wife, following her active-duty husband to various locations creates economic stability and the possibility of better opportunities in the lives of her family. Researchers on cultural socialization identified the critical role that coping plays in supporting African Americans when placed in unfamiliar situations and where they feel marginalized (Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012). Thus, the cultural aspect of a person's social system has an impact on the her or his emotional life and ability to adapt to change within a new environment.

This chapter includes an examination of migration and acculturation theories of minorities who relocated to new environments. In these new environments, limited access familiar resources and services or having reduced social and cultural resources creates barriers for the marginalized population. Last, the chapter investigates ways to acclimate to SAD that are popular in a northernmost environment.

Literature Review Strategy

In the search for full-text, peer-reviewed journals, I accessed the following databases: PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, Academic Search Complete, PsycEXTRA, and SocIndex full-text collection, MEDLINE, Google Scholar, Research Gate, and SAGE full-text collection. I used the following terms: *acculturation, acculturative stress, ethnic minority, coping strategies, cultural anthropology, social support. military, Black, African, military wives, African American, wife, and female*. A combination of terms such as coping and Black military wives were also used to gather current data on African American military wives' coping experiences. Search within Google Scholar provided additional resources on the topic, focusing on terms such as *migration theories, stress, immigrants, enculturation theories, sojourners theories, and expatriate theories*. Because there was limited research (past or current) on African American migrants' acculturative experiences in Arctic Alaska, I used a broad approach to the current literature and considered general migration and the experiences of minority migrants.

Research on coping challenges for other populations (African Americans or other non-African American minorities) in an Arctic environment is not extensive. Little has been written about the culturally appropriate coping styles used by African American

females to an Arctic environment to off-set seasonal depression. I found limited studies

on coping challenges in an Arctic environment for African Americans or non-African

Americans. I also found limited current research on the impact of seasonal depression on

military wives in Alaska (Zauderer & Ganzer, 2015). I used general search terms such as

affective disorder, cabin fever, winter blues, and *seasonal depression* helped create a pool

of data on seasonal depression. I then narrowed the research by using terms such as *mood*

disorder and *seasonality* for a more in-depth perspective of the effects *SAD* had upon

military wives.

Theoretical Framework

Segmented assimilation theory emphasizes new migrants' assimilation process

and that "an individual level of adaptation and behavior are necessary for the person or

group to transition into a new culture or society successfully" (Xie, 2011, p. 48). The

segmented assimilation theory research recognizes the "individualized and segmented

nature" of the immigrant experience into the new host culture (Rumbaut, 2005). For

example, for African American military wives moving to a new environment like the

Arctic of Alaska, there is a need for the host society to offer "positive macro-level

conditions for individual-level assimilation successes during acculturation" (Xie, 2011, p.

971). Gratton, Gutman, and Skop (2007) suggested that segmented assimilation facilitates

the establishments of migrants' socioeconomic status and family structure like the host

culture. The segmented assimilation theory acknowledges that every immigrant does not

follow the same step-by-step acculturation path and process as other marginalized social

groups in society (De Burgomaster, 2012). Instead, groups such as African Americans,

migrants, and other ethnic minorities that possess few resources and encounter

unfavorable reception when relocating are susceptible and considered a marginalized

population. Researcher Lovink (2010) showed that the segmented assimilation theory

argues that adaptation of the marginalized population to the host culture's society will

depend on access to capital, social, human, and cultural support to adapt. Therefore,

segmented assimilation varied yet depended upon the instilled values.

       Additional researchers on the segmented assimilation theory also suggested that

the African American community is bicultural from its diversities in African culture

(Eunyoung-Kim, 2014), as well as military affiliations (Russo & Fallon, 2015) and

thereby needs a bicultural approach for adjustment and adaptation during acculturation.

Military wives of African American descent often share their African heritage and

military affiliation as social norms (Kees, Nerenberg, Bachrach, & Sommer, 2015). As a

social norm, researchers showed that the military wife seeks to connect with community

social groups that can identify with her two cultures while helping to assimilate into the

new environment (Amaechi, 2019; Listen to Army Moms, 2015; Meszaros, 2012).

Socialization becomes an opportunity to connect with others who will provide

information and guidance to navigate both cultures and positively mediate problems

(Eunyoung-Kim, 2014). Pedersen, Cruz, LaBrie, and Hummer's (2011) research suggests

that individuals such as those with a bicultural background may choose environments and

social networks that are compatible with their personality, interests, and other similar

traits for support. Since immigrants of African origin go through the assimilation process

in line with the segmented assimilation track (Chacko, 2003), this theoretical

conceptualization will relate to the research and will also provide an adequate framework to pattern research questions.

Acculturation

The acculturation process followed the social interactions of the individual into a "new and unfamiliar culture" (Taft, 1977, p. 122). Jadalla, Hattar, and Schubert (2015) described acculturation as a dual process of cultural and psychological change "between two or more cultural groups and their members" (p. 84). Research by Berry (1997) showed acculturation as an external change process using internal changes in one's attitude, values, and behavior to survive new or developing circumstances. For some African American military wives, this meant they had to quickly become stable motivators in their military homes within a new environment. The African American military wife had to push aside her potential struggles and transition needs towards adjusting to a new lifestyle (Padden & Posey, 2013). Depending on the needs of the military, the wife assumed the relocation responsibilities and full parental burden without the service member. Therefore, the military wife balanced the stress and acculturative experiences alone but be in dire need of a social support network.

As new residents, they were mainly a migrant-type group residing in a new community with different living conditions. Research on individuals of immigrant groups, ethnic minorities, and colonized indigenous peoples revealed that they were most likely to have acculturative experiences when relocating to an unfamiliar environment (Padden, Connors & Agazio, 2011a). The migrant, ethnic minority, or colonized indigenous individuals historically had been known to relocate and experience

acculturation to new areas while escaping hardships and financial limitations in their home country. Researchers on new residents (migrants) have revealed that they might expect the host community to be aware of, understand, and accept those with different cultural views needs such as those in or affiliated with the military (DeLeon, 2011; Listen to Army Moms, 2015). In turn, the new host community expected the new residents to become culturally competent by acquiring new skills, new strategies, and new approaches to living in the Arctic. Meszaros (2012) upheld that before African American military wives relocated to Arctic Alaska, they researched information about the community and environment. Once the new resident (migrant-type and ethnic minority) relocated to the Arctic, they brought an assortment of education, training, skills, and personal experiences into Arctic Alaska to contribute to their new host community. What is not clear is if their assortment of knowledge is usable within the new environment. As new residents in the host community with the co-affiliation to the military, the new residents (migrant-type and ethnic minorities) needed some assistance from the host society in adjusting to and coping with acculturative stress to the region (Dow, 2011).

Meszaros (2012) revealed that the skills and knowledge that the new residents have up to this point was a familiarity with their cultural traditions and the available services of the military. What was not evident for the new residents was the behavioral knowledge and cognitive skills to survive in an Arctic region when an individual historically comes from a non-Arctic region. For example, for the new resident concerns regarding issues of indigenous culture, extremely inclement weather patterns, and shifting family dynamics played an essential role in the psychosocial adaptation and adjustment

during acculturation. The new resident needed different skills, clothes, nutritional, and lifestyle habits to acclimate to the region. People like the indigenous natives who have been living in the Arctic for thousands of years developed "highly specific cultures, economies, and skills based on the physical and biological conditions of the long-isolated region" (O'Rourke, 2016, p.41). Research by O'Rourke (2016) supported the concept that living in an Arctic region is different from living in a non-Arctic environment because residents traditionally live off the subsistence of the land. Traditional Alaskans and Native Americans residents use the natural resources of the land and water to survive rural life in Arctic Alaska (Walch, 2016). Researchers revealed that within Arctic Alaska, the Alaskan Natives had traditional practices, native languages, and consumption norms and beliefs embedded in the community to sustain livelihood and culture. The traditional Alaskan living consisted of residents choosing a functional wardrobe over fashion because they maneuvered through a rural terrain during extended periods of darkness and freezing weather (Nowlan, 2013). Familiar food eateries, subsistence merchants, and seasonal community activities were not available. The cost of groceries and gas was higher than in the continental United States because products were shipped to the area (Baumann & Smith, 2012). Residents learned to survive in a community focused on rugged outdoor living with an overarching pioneering theme. Fairbanks and Anchorage have some urban communities amid the rural environment, which represents a different living experience for military families.

In Alaska, military wives may encounter environmental challenges in adjusting to an Arctic community because of the inclement weather and *SAD* (Gudenas & Brooks,

2013). The environmental problems trigger biological, psychological, and cultural changes that come with adapting to an Arctic community, as well as the knowledge of overcoming the effects of *SAD*. *SAD* can hinder social interactions for new residents who are unfamiliar with countering the effects of limited cycles of daylight, particularly during the winter months. In Arctic environments, such as Alaska, *SAD* can bring depressive moods and behavioral challenges for them to have social relationships and intergroup interactions (Gudenas & Brooks, 2013; Meesters & Gordijn, 2016). For a new resident, living in an Arctic community, consuming wild game subsistence, and variable weather patterns can create adverse experiences in adapting and unfamiliar challenges in acculturative stress.

Acculturative Stress

Acculturative stress is an outcome of relocating to a new region. Acculturative stress relates to any difficulties and stressors, which may surface for the new resident during the adaptation process. Acculturative stress arises when the resident moves from one's familiar culture of origin toward another unfamiliar culture (Berry, 1998). Sam and Berry (2010) explained acculturative stress as a "reaction in response to life events," deeply rooted in the personal experiences of acculturation (p. 474).

Other researchers suggested that this is a process of adjustment or adaptation to a new culture or society, whereas immigrants may experience distress or acculturative stress (Adewale, 2017). According to Berry's theory of acculturative stress (2006), the personal experiences of the immigrant are generalized towards their new culture and its

influences. This study suggests the idea that the American lifestyle and culture could consistently influence an immigrant's African culture (Daramola, 2012).

The researchers indicated that the influences of the American lifestyle and culture upon the immigrant /newcomer and remaining relatively intact to their heritage supports syncretism (Jackson, 2011). Over the years, African Americans have become involved in the process of syncretism or an infusion of an African culture blended with American culturalism. Landrine and Klonoff (2004) described acculturation as constant encounters where ethnic minorities actively engage in the host society's cultural traditions, values, beliefs, and practices versus their own. The ethnic-minority experiences cultural change and possibly a cultural shock.

Early theoretical works by Berry (1974) and Dohrenwend and Smith (1962) discussed the emotional reactions to stress, anxiety, and self-esteem without associating the acculturative process. Berry (2006) expanded the understanding of acculturative stress by implying it targets a person's behavior as a response to life events to the intercultural stress (p. 479). Acculturative stress can become symptoms of anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality, and ethnic identity confusion (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015). Nakash, Nagar, Shoshani, and Lurie (2015) suggested that new residents relocating to the Arctic region of Alaska may experience the *more significant* acculturative stress symptoms because of the cultural differences between their home culture and the Alaskan culture.

In research on displaced people, the acculturative strategy may be imposed if members of the receiving culture are reluctant to engage with new arrivals, or if policies

are not in place to support integration and institutions do not adapt to meet their needs (Nagar et al., 2015). The acculturative symptoms may challenge the new residents' motivation in adapting to or receiving support to their new culture. According to Xie (2011), acculturative stress incited an individual level of resistance and desire by the migrants for personal contact with the host culture. New residents (immigrants) to the region are highly susceptible to the relationship of their recent acculturation and the acculturative stress of a new environment. The adjustment is stressful, which may cause marginalization (Sullivan & Kashubeck-West, 2015).

Upon arrival in a new environment, new residents face different challenges in adjusting to living and learning in their new community. Akhtar and Kröner-Herwig (2015) revealed that new residents must adapt to a new environment related to the new cultural differences, language barriers, separation from home, deficient social integration, and problems in daily life tasks. Adjustment problems can vary by ethnicity, whether they come from collectivist or individualist cultures (Amaechi, 2016; Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2005). For example, previous researchers suggested that when people move from overseas and come to America, they experience life events that can lead to acculturative stress (Berry, 2010; James, 2014). The acculturative stress is both a combination of psychological and physical discomforts when adapting to a new cultural environment. Hsiao, Ashby, Gnilka, and Noble (2013) indicated that the individual does not have the openness or flexibility to cope with the stress. Research on stress by Miller (2014) suggested that maybe the individual does not have the maturity of age to deal with new changes in culture to adjust to things unfamiliar to them. Adewunmi (2015), in

research on acculturation and culture, disclosed that the cultural distance, or the dissimilar differences of cultures, such as ones' food preferences, climate, language, religion, traditions, values, and ideologies found in a collectivism or individualism society, challenges adapting. Therefore, if the new resident comes from a society where the home and host cultures vary or are dissimilar to what they know, the differences create acculturative stress (Akhtar & Kröner-Herwig, 2015; Berry, 2011). The differences suggest that interactions of people can counter these relevant factors, such as a lack of self-assurance, self-efficacy, and acculturative stress.

Acculturative Coping

In this section, I examine how African Americans, in general, have coped with acculturative stressors. Coping strategies, according to Folkman and Moskowitz (2004), can be conceptualized as cognitive and behavioral efforts used by an individual to reduce the effects of stress. Coping responses involve a wide range of behavioral and cognitive activities. The efficacy is thereby determined by factors that include the nature of stress, culture, social contexts, and personal resources (Noh & Kasper, 2003, p. 43). Black or African relatives sharing their generational knowledge, experiences about struggles, and their dependency on cultural norms to cope is a positive response to manage stress. Newcomers can use the acquired generational knowledge to adapt to various circumstances. Likewise, settled African American residents in Alaska can share their mixed African cultural practices infused with Indigenous cultural processes geared to an Arctic environment to help newcomers adapt during acculturation. Sharing these coping traditions and customs with other African Americans in a new and unfamiliar Arctic

environment like Alaska supports syncretism. Syncretism is a process of mixing different cultures and traditions to create new and meaningful knowledge for stabilizing transformative living practices (Long, Volk, Baines & Tisdale, 2013).

Researcher Gouch (2018) on adaptive coping strategies reveals how African Americans manage perceived stressful situations by using behavioral and cognitive efforts. Behavioral and cognitive efforts materialized as either emotionally focused or problem-focused responses. Emotionally focused coping comprises increasing positivity and being content to focus on what can be changed (Galor, 2012). Problem-focused coping involves directly addressing the problem, seeking information about the stressor, making a plan of action for resolving the stressor (Antai-Otong, 2002; Chesney, 2006). Although African American women may not be familiar with the mental or physical impact of acculturative stress upon them in an Arctic environment, they may still use adaptive coping strategies to cope with the stress. Researcher Bazelais (2011) teaches that African American women are taught to be self-reliant and to exemplify tenacity and emotional strength for handling challenges that come their way. Resolutions for both emotionally focused and problem-focused efforts mean that the African American individual relies on the community, families, friends, or social networks to help cope with adversities (Ross, 2014). Researchers also revealed that as a culture-specific coping strategy, African Americans have strong ties to religious or spiritual gatherings where their faith and prayer can be collectively exercised. Culture-specific coping strategies are shared resources members of a cultural group relate to as essential values and customs (Utsey, Chae, Brown & Kelly, 2002). For African American populations, research on

ethnic minorities revealed that "culture-specific efforts entail the use of prayer and rituals, connecting with friends and family, and reliance on community and spiritual leaders to address experienced problems" (Greer, 2011, p. 217).

Similarly, Constantine, Donnelly, and Myers (2002) found that spiritual coping and collective coping were related to positive self-esteem in some African American adolescents by using group-centered activities. Collective coping comes from an African-based cultural/value system that places the group's interest above that of the individual (Owaka, 2015). In this system, African Americans rely on group-centered activities for coping with adversity. Religious or spiritual coping enhances their resilience by providing "a basis for optimism as well as a cognitive framework for understanding stressful situations" (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Research by Milner (2006) found that since slavery, African Americans have "held strong spiritual beliefs and convictions" as a source of strength to survive the slave master's hate, chaos, and racism" (p. 373). Therefore, religion and spirituality are a constant influence and significant cornerstone among African Americans to cope. Mattis (2002) revealed that African American military wives view religion and spirituality as a means of negotiation and understanding the issues, struggles, and forms of oppression that they face on a day-to-day basis. Warren-Findlow (2010) disclosed that the interdependence of African American families had shaped cultural responses in the form of collective coping, spiritual-centered coping, and ritual centered coping. Researchers made known that the benefits of religious coping may be particularly salient for minority or marginalized populations, especially African Americans (Chatters et al., 2011; Richards, Petrie, & Chapman, 2016). During various

stages of the acculturative process, an individual may experience many emotions, stressors, and feelings, which may be dependent on their perceived past experiences. Therefore, the use of different coping processes may be required throughout the stages of acculturation.

African American Culture

The African American culture is a compilation of people who descended from Africa. People of African descent who retained a culture resume of its ancestral language, traditions, music, food, dance, religion, and festival customs of Africanisms. Africanisms become a unique cultural communication system for African Americans to transcend their social and cultural patterns, collectivism, and values (Green, 2011). Communication is a defining way of speaking experience, relationships, and information unique to one's past, present, and future (Neuliep, 2017). Communication becomes the mode of speaking social support as "encouragement" and pass on "meanings" from cultural achievements by family and family members. Family members communicate learned cultural traditions (what is known and how it is done) and accomplishments in social settings. Meaning is given to objects, people, and historical events based on a framework of interpretations one uses for practices that support racial and ethnic heritage (Hall 1997a; Smith, Reynolds, Fincham & Beach, 2016). Culture is an element of one's "mental programs" collectively taught and learned through being part of a family or social group (Hofstede, 1984, p.13). Culture is a composition of shared dispositions, rules, ways of living, meanings, and value systems of a specific population (Vondras et al., 2008, p.65). Dilworth-Anderson and Marshall (1996) questioned earlier assumptions and models of

social support (p. 76). Within the African American culture, family and family members pass on cultural knowledge through their communications designed to inspire courage to face change. Hill's (1997a) research further suggested that through the display of symbols engendered within subliminal messages for survival and culturally developed "social systems of support and service (p.1)." Distinct types and styles of social support impact the way African Americans best cope with stress and crises in their lives (Taylor, Sherman, & Kim, 2008). Signs and symbols are a social support language used "to stand for or represent other people, ethnic concepts, ideas, and feelings" (Hill, 1998a, p. 1). These aspects of culture include a "history of learned values," symbols, beliefs, and communication systems that form the basis for traditions that shape behaviors (Vondras et al., 2008, p. 65). Hill's (1998b) writings contended that "language is one of the approaches through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings represented in a culture" and argued that "representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced" in the African American culture (p. 1).

Core values and behaviors of the African American community include strong religious or spiritual beliefs and a family structure characterized by multi-generational kinship networks (Folkman, 2010). Family members share cultural experiences, traditions, and values, which began with those relatives geographically living close to them. African Americans interconnections with their African heritage, reinforces learning to not only rely on life experiences but also those of their ancestors, especially during stressful and challenging situations (Boulware & Bui, 2015). According to Jackson (2011), as a whole, African Americans have syncretism or a mixture of an original

African culture passed down and shared with other family members. The mixing of the culture has blended the traditions of Africa with the customs of Western culture societies.

African American Wives

As wives move around, they carry the knowledge of their heritage. Blackmon and Thomas (2013) recognized that African American wives bring with them learned cultural practices: values, traditions, language, and other skills. These cultural practices aid in surviving change by maintaining cultural norms. Also, these cultural practices help to forge social connections with other ethnic members and establish social interactions and relationships outside the home. African American military wives use cultural interactions as a strategy to adapt and sustain their emotional expressions (Blackmon & Thomas, 2013). Equipping the wives with appropriate coping skills may be beneficial when they encounter acculturative stressors, emotions, and feelings in relocating to a new community. Cultural practices could assist with managing the stressors during acculturation. Landrine and Klonoff (1996) theorized that during acculturation, African Americans tend to follow a philosophy or concept of return. A philosophy or concept of return which suggests that all African Americans return to the traditions and core values of their culture as a source of countering social discomforts faced by the local host environment (p. 61). Therefore, African Americans return to their cultural norms when experiencing isolation, alienation, and a disconnect (no satisfaction) with the mainstream culture.

Military Adaptation

Resilience among military wives is a dynamic process. While the active-duty service member takes an oath of commitment to the military, the military wife is presumed to take a similar assurance to be loyal during the various challenges that relate to the requests of the military way of living (Park, 2011). As a wife of a military service member, the African American woman must be aware of and accept the military and its cultural challenges and hardships for its civilian affiliates. Some of the challenges and hardships are the long and unpredictable duty hours, frequent geographic relocations, residences in a foreign country, social isolations, periodic deployments and separations, and the high risks of injury and death in service of the active-duty service member (Department of Defense, 2016). While the military is a rewarding institution with unlimited public and community service, conflict with family demands are constant (Dimiceli, Steinhardt & Smith, 2010; Segal, 1986). Members of the military have taken oaths and made commitments to honor, serve, and protect the country. As a part of this loyalty, many military wives have had to deal with the various challenges that relate to the requests of the military way of living (James, 2017). According to Herspring (2013) and Hsu (2010), military cultural and behavioral norms encourage military wives to support their active-duty members' loyalty and, in turn, show loyalty by being committed to the overall mission. The Department of Defense (2015) encourages military wives to provide both marital, psychological, and emotional support to their active-duty service members. According to Eubanks (2013), military spouses of active-duty service members have a significant influence on the service member's retention. It would be beneficial for

helping professionals, military agencies, and military leaders to do everything within their ability to ensure that these wives who move once every 2 to 3 years for supporting their wives' careers stressors are addressed as an outcome of this situation. An outcome in addition to making sure that they are receiving the proper assistance to have a robust quality of life. More importantly, identifying stressors in this area and having coping strategies and coping resources available will lead to enhancing the way that many of the African American military wives interact with their new community (Eubanks, 2013; Park, 2011).

De Los Santos (2015) disclosed that military wives must be able to assume the responsibility of adapting to the new environment, situating their family into a new community, and finding employment. According to van Aswegden (2009), during relocation individuals are forced to adapt to their new environment and may encounter problems with personal and cultural identity like job loss (Schöb, 2013), motherhood (Castro & Ellis, 2008), divorce and family relations (DeGarmo & Kitson, 1996), and foreign environments (De Los Santos, 2015). The military wife can experience physical, psychological, and social stressors and may need coping strategies and resources to balance out their feelings during relocating.

Family members must be able to balance the emotional stress of relocation. Resilience to cope with the stress requires some individual behavioral changes (Castro & Murray, 2010; Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010), and sometimes upon the reliance of community-level sources and social resources (Ungar, 2012). The family unit acts as the core support system for establishing stability during acculturation while

adapting to the new locations and overcoming adverse and stressful experiences

(Dimiceli et al., 2010; Masten, 2011). Service members work extended hours for training

and completing other mission tasks, which can interfere with their direct involvement in

family commitments in the home (Martin & McClure, 2000). Maintaining the military

household within a new environment and sometimes without the support of the service

member becomes the military wife's sole responsibility. Research suggests that the

military wife must learn how to cope with the change while holding the family together.

Research by Neblett, Terzian, and Harriott (2010) revealed that the African American

military wife relies upon coping as a way to help modulate the impact of stress (p. 134).

Coping is, therefore, a strategy for African Americans where they learn to balance their

physical and mental health (Greer & Brown, 2011; Ijoma, 2013). For an African

American military wife, coping is essential to her strength because coping is deeply

interwoven with her culture and cultural identity (Owaka, 2015). Culture, family, and

social support are sociocultural factors that aid in surviving acculturative change and

especially amid support for military operations. This research is relevant to ethnic

minorities such as African American military wives for raising awareness of cultural

interactions and improved social services support in Alaska.

Arctic Adaptation

Within two of Alaska's larger cities, where the military has extensive training

installation, there are smaller populations of military family support groups and

businesses. In 2015, Anchorage had a population of 298,192 residents with a military

presence supporting the Air Force (Department of Defense, 2016; Posts & Installations,

2015). This military community has 6.1% African Americans residing in the area. About 300 miles away in Fairbanks, the community has a population of 100,605 residents with a military presence supporting the Army. This military community has 4.2% African Americans residing in the area. African American females represent over one-third of this small population in Alaska (ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2018). Though the number of African American females represented in Alaska is small, the number does not necessarily explain or represent any barriers to them coping or acclimating to the Alaskan environment.

All ethnic groups present some unique challenges during acculturation or the dual process of cultural and psychological change between two or more cultural groups and their members (Jadalla, Hattar & Schubert, 2015). In the acculturation movement, new cultures have constant interactions with each other to survive to reside together. For African American military wives who move to Alaska in support of military operations, acculturation means residing in a foreign and sometimes self-sufficient Arctic society with severe weather patterns and conditions.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Arctic Alaska is a renowned location for residents who enjoy wildlife, mountainous terrain, and beautiful lakes. However, Arctic Alaska also offers residents severe weather, extensive periods of darkness, and isolated communities (Mottl, 2017). Within this unique environment, lurks seasonal attributes, or *SAD,* causing cyclic moods evident by a person feeling lethargic, increased appetite, irritability, and irregular sleep patterns during winter months. *SAD* is a form of major depressive disorder or a subtype

of the affective disorder recognized by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Disorders (5th ed.), where seasonal depression develops and fluctuates for at least 2 successive years for new residents in the environment (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Avery, 2017). *SAD*'s depressive episodes can alternate behavior intermittently from periods of normal moods to periods of low moods, even sadness. The depressive episodes tend to "impair the productivity of the individual to work, attend school, explore interpersonal relationships and sustain interest in most social activities" (Young, Hutman, Enggasser, & Meesters, 2015, p. 117).

According to research by Ho (2015), more women and children report being afflicted by *SAD's* depressive episodes than men each year. Alluding a connection for women and children between their susceptibility to biological, psychological, and social stressors occurring from transitional changes in living conditions and the lifestyle of living in northern latitudes and cold weather environments (Eliassen, Melhus, Hansen & Broderstad, 2013). *SAD* northern climates can often hinder social interactions for new residents unfamiliar with limited daylight cycles for predicting individual differences in the phenomena and using light therapy to counter *SAD* (Meyerhoff, 2018; Rohan, Meyerhoff, Ho, Evans, Postolache, Vacek, 2016). Recent *SAD* research revealed it is a reoccurring type of environmental depression that follows the seasonal patterns in northernmost regions (Holm, 2016). Bray (2017) supported the theory that some people are differentially susceptible to experiencing a depressive episode and its bouts of seasonal depression

According to Finzi and Rosenthal (2016), in their research on northernmost

communities, 9.2% of Fairbanks Northstar Borough population is afflicted with *SAD* each year, in contrast to 4.7% of New York City population. In Arctic environments, such as Alaska, *SAD*'s depressive disorder challenges an individual's mood and behavioral responses (Kõlves, Kõlves & De Leo, 2013; Seasonal Affective Disorder Association, 2011). Changes in the season alter a person's mood by disrupting regular eating and sleeping habits. Roman, Jervis, and Manson (2011) found that Alaska's atmospheric conditions of long, dark days and cold temperatures create "stress and low cycles of social participation" (p. 134).

By definition, Leahy (2017) depicted the symptoms of *SAD* to remit without treatment either by the start of the next season, whether it is spring to fall with winter beginning or by the end of winter and the beginning of spring. According to Yildiz, Batmaz, Songur, and Oral (2016), the mood and physical symptoms of *SAD* can significantly impact a person's psychosocial functioning, lasting almost 40% of the year. The debilitating symptoms for *SAD* can sometimes require prescription medications combined with other biological and social therapies (Nussbaumer-Streit, Pjrek, Kien, Gartlehner, Bartova, Friedrich, & Winkler, 2018). Counselors and nurses encourage patients to adopt healthy lifestyle habits not only to improve their physical health but also support improving mental health (Avery, 2017). I have found little data on the effects *SAD* has specifically upon African American military wives' ability to adapt to an Arctic environment.

Socialization

African American military wives enjoy socialization, reminiscing about ideas concerning their culture and social connections to the family. Socialization supports their social success. Researched studies on African American military wives collectively suggest that by maintaining their "ethnic identity and access to other sociocultural resources" during acculturation provides "sources of heritage meaning, outlets for managing their emotions and stresses and a mode for sharing traditions of sociocultural factors" for these military wives (Blackmon et al., 2015, p. 553). Ethnicity can influence the acculturation process. Researchers believe that these ethnic groups have different adaptive responses "to coping with and adjust to circumstances" involving acculturative stresses, personal demands, family demands, healthy relationships, and environmental factors (Miller, 2014, p. 38). Yoon, Langrehr, and Ong (2011) indicated that acculturation requires the individual to learn *new* requirements, *new* values, and *new* behaviors appropriate to the culture by which they are now residing (p. 547). This new process of socialization occurs somewhat unconsciously.

Similarly, socialization occurs among adults passing on traditions and ways of living to children and family members without necessarily being aware that what they are teaching them about the culture. Socialization researchers revealed that when African American military wives are in an environment where they feel isolated or have a lack of social support (marginalized), they will seek out other African American military wives who have been known to manage their emotions and stresses (established) by retaining robust social support systems (Blackmon et al., 2015). Therefore, the same seeking out

process occurs when African American military wives have concerns about preserving healthy family relationships (Pollock, Kazman, and Deuster, 2015). Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, and Handelsman (2012) supported the ideals that African American military wives have a strong commitment, discipline, and a high cognitive level to acquire the skills to survive in an unfamiliar environment. As a result, socialization provides a never-ending process to shape human interactions, behaviors, and attitudes needed to survive the change.

Social Support

Social support can have a positive impact in facilitating good reactions to relocating. Social support can help migrants and new residents with opportunities to discuss acculturative stressors and on decreasing stress in general. The American Psychological Association (APA) described social support as "the provision of assistance or comfort to others helping them cope with a variety of biological, psychological, and social stressors" (Gleason & Iida, 2015). Social support involved providing migrants and new residents with a caring community of resources and reassurances that they can rely upon during transition (Dunn & O'Brien, 2015). Recent research showed that social supports help migrants and new residents reduce the effects and challenges of acculturation and acculturative stress (Thomas & Sumathi, 2016). Social support builds relationships and provides a mode of conversation and interaction to give migrants and new residents coping skills. Social support has been essential for new residents and the promotion of their mental health, especially for individuals from collectivist communities (Markus & Kitayama, 2003). Palinkas and Suedfeld (2008) recounted their travels in

Alaska during the winter months, where an increase in social isolation and fatigue coupled with minimal time for sleep generated acculturative stress. Polar environments such as Arctic Alaska are filled with cold-weather hazards as blizzards, slippery ice, and frozen lakes increase the likelihood of accidental injury and death (Mottl, 2017). The cold temperatures are a significant characteristic of extreme environment, especially for people unfamiliar to its wintry attributes. Therefore finding the appropriate social support will minimize the acculturative stress for the migrants and new residents (African American military wives) to the community by focusing on their characteristics and different sources of social support. Regarding the issues of acculturation and acculturative stress among African American wives who are dependents of the military community, this research helps fill the gap in prior research concerning this population's acculturation experiences into Arctic Alaska.

Summary

Acculturation is a continuous process of interacting with diverse people, which spurns change internally within the individual and externally within their environment. Through globalization, diverse people relocate to new locations stimulating culturally diverse communities. Within these communities, migrants and migrant-type individuals encounter variations of acculturation and acculturative stressors to adapt to their new location. The African American military wife is a product of the migration by relocating with her active-duty husband in support of military operations.

The research outlined a foundation for disclosing the acculturative experiences of African American military wives who relocated to Arctic Alaska. The literature review

sought to reveal literature concerning the military wives' experiences regarding the seasonal affective disorder. The literature on *SAD* discussed how it was a reoccurring type of environmental depression that follows the seasonal patterns in northernmost regions. The literature review did not obtain research concerning the effects of *SAD* upon African American women. The literature review identified cultural adapting strategies common within the African American culture. The literature review did not reveal current research involving African Americans and the use of coping strategies to counter acculturative stress, change in family dynamics, and feelings of isolation in a new environment.

An abundant amount of research exists for addressing the acculturative experiences of refugees, migrants, and immigrants in relocating and adapting to new communities. Unfortunately, literature to support this migrant population into an Arctic environment is limited. Literature exists concerning African Americans and the adapting cultural strategy when in stressful situations. However, the literature review addressing the acculturative stressors, coping, and cultural adaptation for African American military wives is limited. Current acculturative literature addressed integration into the host culture but does not provide a lens for understanding how the African American military wife's heritage and culture are fundamentally vital with her successful adjustment to an Arctic community. Therefore, this current study may fill a gap in the existing literature by offering new information about adaptation anomalies for African American military wives into an Arctic environment created unfamiliar acculturative challenges to marginalizing them to rely upon cultural coping strategies to re-settle the family and

create normalcy. Limited research is available to reveal an African American wife's acculturation experiences and coping strategies to an Arctic environment.

Chapter 3 will include a detailed discussion of the qualitative method to achieve investigating the purpose of this qualitative research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the acculturative experiences of African American military wives who relocated to Alaska in support of military operations. The current study may provide evidence of the cultural adaptation strategies that African American military wives used to counter acculturative stress, change in family dynamics, and feelings of isolation in a new environment and culture.

In Chapter 3, I outline the step-by-step procedures for how the research was executed to contribute to the social services knowledge community. I discuss the methodology, including my role as the primary instrument in data collection, the population sample, sample size, and data analysis of the acculturation study. I also include details of the procedures for addressing the ethical issues and limitations of the research.

Research Design

The study was conducted using a generic qualitative research design, which allowed for an investigation of real-life acculturative phenomena using the subjective richness of individuals recalling their experiences (Cronin, 2014; Kennedy, 2016). The study was based on the following research question: What are the acculturation experiences of African American military wives who moved to Alaska in support of military operations?

Generic qualitative research is one of the qualitative research approaches for researchers to use for gathering and examining data that lacks quantification or a

numerical inquiry (Smith, Bekker, & Cheater, 2011). In this generic qualitative approach, authenticity was derived by obtaining first-hand information from face to face interviews about the African American military wives' experiences. A generic qualitative inquiry is appropriate when researchers possess a body of pre-knowledge about the phenomena or if they are studying participants' opinions of actual external happenings and events (Holmes-Wagner, 2017; Thompson, 2018; Percy et al., 2015).

Phenomenology was considered since it deals with the inward and ongoing acts of a phenomenon. However, the generic qualitative approach focused on the actual opinions, life experiences, reflections themselves of the African American participants versus a phenomenological approach, which has a focus on participants' internal organization and structure for experiencing the phenomenon (Payne, 2016; Percy et al., 2015). The generic qualitative approach enabled me to concentrate on what my participants experienced and what happens in the outer world or a "socially constructed" environment in Arctic Alaska (Bertero, 2015; Thorne, 2000). The generic research model provided data for identifying patterns and themes to form a composite synthesis of the data via the real-life acculturative experiences and cultural adaptation strategies that were applied in an Arctic environment. The synthesized data was used to answer the research question. From the interviews, I learned when specific coping strategies are useful and the outcome of using a given strategy. For African American military wives, specific coping strategies in an Arctic environment has not been explored and created an opportunity for acquiring new knowledge for military and local social services groups.

However, I discovered that local or state organizations had documented no new data on African American women relocating to an Arctic community with or without an affiliation to the military in Alaska. The United States Census Bureau-ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates (2018) data showed an increase in African American women residing in Alaska for the last 5 years relocating to the Alaskan communities. By collecting raw data from the 10 participants and secondary data from the U.S. Census-ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, I ensured data saturation through triangulation. Triangulation is the collection of data using multiple methods (source documentation, interviews, observation notes, journaling, member-checks, and triangulation) to reach data saturation; the point of finding no new codes, or themes in the data analysis (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Morse, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

According to Mertens (2015), the researcher is the principal instrument in qualitative research because he or she was responsible for recruiting participants, conducting the interviews, gathering, and analyzing the data. For this study, my role was that of an active interviewer for gathering data. I became the principal interviewer for collecting data, taking notes, analyzing the data, and developing a full report of the research study (Kahlke, 2014).

I was the primary person responsible for generating interpretations and analysis of outcomes within its natural setting; therefore, I adhered to strict interview guidelines (Held, 2009). I was also the primary person responsible for generating an interpretation and analysis of the participant's experiences to include collecting data and documenting

field notes about observations. Maintaining the highest levels of ethics while preserving the integrity of the participants' interview responses, identities, experiences, and personal ideals during the research was always at the core of my research.

I did not have extensive knowledge of the transitioning and adapting process. I acknowledged my subjectivity to the research under exploration. I am vulnerable to their experiences because I identified with the target population's struggles to transition and adapt to a new way of life (Kahlke, 2014). For my familiarity with their acculturation experiences, I disclosed all my expectations and biases before the interviews using self-reflective journaling (Mosavel, Ahmed, Daniels, & Simon, 2011). In self-reflective journaling, I expressed in my voice (words) my personal experiences with acculturative stress to the Arctic community and acculturative challenges as an African American military wife (Connolly, 2016).

I researched all questions to ensure they aligned with the essence of the research questions (i.e., affiliation, changes during the transition, and reactions to the indigenous community). I asked semistructured questions guided by the problem statement and documented the answers on paper plus audiotapes. By using open-ended questions during the interviews, member checking, observations, and journaling of the data, I established triangulation (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014). I was able to control biases as well as determine validity, reliability, and rigor in the research for instituting triangulation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Morse, 2015). Triangulation involves using multiple forms of qualitative research to form an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Morse, 2015). Triangulation reinforces how the research is accomplished

and by what means the findings are interpreted (Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien, & Rees, 2017). Therefore, I applied multiple sources to ensure the triangulation of information.

Research Methodology

I used a generic qualitative design to address the research question. A generic qualitative study is a term for procedures that focus on addressing social problems (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). Qualitative research gives its participants a platform to discuss their experiences, and by doing so, gives others insight into their human experience (Harland, 2014). Qualitative research is believed to be most appropriate when little is known about a given phenomenon, primarily as it can assist in making sense of complex social situations.

By using a qualitative approach, I gained a more in-depth view and knowledge of the African American wife's perception of her experiences with the physical, biological, cultural, and psychosocial dynamics in an Arctic environment (Cronin, 2014). A qualitative approach permitted me to gather data and generate meaning from their responses (Adewunmi, 2015). A qualitative approach can also create a method to quickly explore coping strategies by gathering and documenting first-hand data from interviews and observations. Moreover, in qualitative research, I attempted to describe and understand the way people dedicate meaning to their behavior (Patton, 2002). Since the description of the qualitative approach aligned with the purpose and research question, this generic approach was appropriate for the research.

Real-life perspectives of a military wife were frequent occurrences in relocating as a family member of the military as well as the stress and acculturation challenges of adapting. An essential factor kept at the center of the research was that the African American military wife must assume the bulk of responsibility for reestablishing the military home and helping their family to acculturate into a new community (de la Santos, 2015). The social, psychological, and biological needs of the family came from the military wife because the active-duty service-member resumes military operations as soon as the relocation is complete. The family needed social support to acclimate to the area. Overall, social support appeared indispensable to the well-being of a military wife and African Americans (Meszaros, 2012). Therefore, a qualitative methodology offered flexibility in analysis and exploration practices for pursuing an understanding of African American military wives' coping strategies during acculturation to Alaska.

Recruitment

The target population for the research included 10 African American military wives during their first two winters or years in relocating to Fairbanks, Alaska. I considered 2 consecutive years was a reasonable amount of time for the participants to establish some element of perspective reflection on acculturation, *SAD,* and adaptive lifestyle experiences to an Arctic environment.

Sampling Plan

The small sample size was 10 because the qualitative research concerns itself with meaning and not generalizing. Additionally, the sample size is essential to determine data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In order to reach data saturation, I sampled 10 African

American military participants who provided useful data that result in well-rounded, detailed oriented information about the phenomenon (Hoyland, Hollund, & Olsen, 2015). The African American military wives provided adequate information when answering the research questions addressing their first-hand experiences and knowledge of acculturative transition to an indigenous community in the Arctic. Thereby, the African American military wives' experiences and commonalities among their interviews could give significance to other circumstances and situations in support of the social change.

Qualitative researchers showed in previous studies that the sample size for qualitative research averaged from 6–25 participants for data saturation (Kostere et al., 2015). The small sample size produced sufficient information to answer the research question because participants provided uniquely rich and detailed acculturation experiences and cultural adaptation strategies (Fowler, 2009). There are no rules in qualitative research concerning the sample size (Patton, 2002). Therefore, a small sample size of 10 participants in the study is consistent with a generic qualitative approach. The sample size was dependent on what I was seeking to discover, how the findings were used, the availability of resources for the study, and the timeline for completing the study (Patton, 2002, p. 242). A smaller number of participants provided invaluable yet significant information informative about the topic and target population (Kostere et al., 2015). The study attained data saturation after the completion of the 10 interviews and with no further generation of new information. Patton et al. (2002) further explained that it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide valid explanations for how the sample size referenced and yielded enough information in answering the research questions.

Patton's recommendation regarding saturation was followed, interviewing 10 participants, then assessing information saturation.

Selection of Participants

The study used a purposive sampling strategy that sought individuals who self-identified as African American military wives who have moved to Arctic Alaska (Fairbanks or Anchorage, Alaska) within their first two winters or years. In using purposeful sampling and upholding its specific set of characteristics, I sought to recruit at least 10 participants for the research identifying as African American military wives. The women were recruited from social support entities (i.e., social media, fitness centers, educational institutes, and family support centers) in and around the military communities which promote healthy living, lifestyle, and physical activities for female residents of Alaska.

I recruited participants through the dissemination of flyers at social support entities, social media, and word of mouth. My contact information was listed on the flyer and social media networks. Participants meeting the selection criteria were scheduled for an individual interview (see Appendix A and B). After recruitment, 10 participants were interviewed face-to-face in a study room of a public library. The participants were asked 10 interview questions based on their exposure to or their experience of the phenomenon in question (see Appendix C). Purposeful sampling contributed to the investigation with regards to specific matters (residency, acculturative stress, adaptation challenges, and *SAD*) and their relationship (biological, cultural, social, and psychological associations) to the research (Owaka, 2015).

Instrumentation

The primary instrument used in this research to collect data was a semistructured interview protocol for guiding the interview process. The goal of the semistructured interview was to collect information or rich data about the acculturative experiences and cultural adaptation strategies applied by African American military wives (Patton, 2002). Interviews of African American military wives acted as direct sources of information on acculturation experiences and the cultural adaptation strategies applied because the women responded using their own words to express their insights (Cooper & Endacott, 2007; Kahlke, 2014). By using the interview questions (see Appendix C), I gave a voice to an under-represented group of military wives. The interviews provided in-depth information on individuals' thoughts, perceptions, attitudes, and meanings concerning acculturation experiences (Yin, 2014). I interviewed the targeted population, analyzed documents from the interviews until I reached data saturation, and labeled the participants' interviews responded using coded designators.

Throughout the interviews, I also noted and recorded facial expressions and signs of discomfort or stress demonstrated by the participants as they recounted their experiences in acculturation. The observation notes supplemented the interview data by highlighting participant interactions and commonality in occurrences and phrases, thereby giving more depth to the data collected and establishing greater study credibility through data triangulation (Dinovitser, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

For establishing the triangulation of data, I needed to collect data from different sources, compare the data, and review the findings for providing an interpretive

conclusion (Ezeife, 2017). In research, having an accurate depiction of the participant's data is vital for ensuring the credibility and dependability of the study (Leung, 2015; Morse, 2015). I accomplished triangulation through the merging of information collected from the participant's interviews, reflexive journaling, and notes. The combination of all the information collected substantiated the themes needed for the credibility of this study. Cope (2014) implied that in using method triangulation to confirm interpretations and look at the conclusion from more than one viewpoint.

Data Sources

This study corroborated with recent research to raise awareness on the topic of positive coping strategies for military wives desiring social support assistance in sustaining the active-duty service member for military operations. Thompson (2018) sought to reveal the availability and use of military social support programs by spouses of active duty for obtaining coping strategies during deployments. Similar research by James (2017) sought to inquire using generic qualitative research to detail how 10 military spouses' experiences as they relocate every 2 to 3 years to different geographical locations and associated coping mechanisms they relied on during the multiple relocations.

Procedure

1. I created flyers regarding the study and distributed them throughout the military-based communities, ethnic-minority social groups, churches, and community centers. The research flyers had contact information for potential respondents to

communicate with me for more details concerning the context of the study (see
Appendix D).

    a.   The flyers were posted publicly in fitness centers and family support
centers in and around the military communities for circulating interest
about the research.

    b.   Fitness centers and family support centers had been known to encourage
military wives to be physically active in the winter months to counter the
effects of *SAD* (Gudenas & Brooks, 2013).

    c.   Social and religious groups had been known to inspire military wives
within Arctic communities not only to renew their faith and spirituality but
to conquer cultural fears and isolation in an Indigenous society (Greer,
2011).

    d.   Military communities had been trying to acknowledge cultural differences
of service members and create a sense of belonging and civic obligation
about culture (De la Santos, 2015; Holm, 2016).

2. I connected with long-term Alaskan residents (e.g., African American small
business leaders, retired military veterans, and personal friends affiliated with
social service groups) using social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter,
and Instagram to recruit participants for achieving a chain referral sampling pool
(Emerson, 2015).

    a. In a chain referral sampling, long-term residents affiliated with the various local community, cultural, and military organizations introduced prospective candidates to the research.

    b. By using social networking and other media tools, prospective candidates learned about the public announcement concerning acculturative research.

3. I communicated with 11 African American females who responded to the public announcement.

4. I requested each responder to complete and return the demographics sheet via email (see Appendix A). The demographic sheet pre-qualified the respondent for the research and created a participation pool of African American military wives.

5. I made sure the participants reviewed and returned the signed consent form(s) via email (see Appendix B).

6. I contacted and communicated with the respondents via email or telephone to provide any additional information about the research. I used a research email account for research correspondence.

7. If the respondent felt that they understood the research well enough to decide on participating in the research, they indicated their consent via e-mail by replying to my email with the words, "I consent." I advised the participants to print or save the consent form for their records.

8. After recruiting 10 participants, I checked the African American military wives' residency to the Arctic community with no previous exposure, knowledge, or acclimation to the Arctic environment (see Appendix A).

9. I conducted interviews inside the study room in a public library using a dialogue format. The study room provided privacy for the participants to discuss their acculturation experiences.

10. I transcribed verbatim collected data into a Word document for analysis.

11. I analyzed the data on African American military wives' acculturative experiences by using thematic analysis and NVivo12 computer-assisted research software. I identified acculturation themes.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative research produces large volumes of raw data. An inductive analysis was data-driven and did not attempt to fit the data into any preexisting categories (Kahlke, 2014). I set aside all pre-understandings and allowed fresh, new information through interviews ensuring the data was analyzed individually. Therefore, I acquired and used approved procedures by Walden University committee for the research on the acculturation experiences and cultural adaption strategies applied by African American wives in an Arctic environment.

For confidentiality purposes, a numerical code was assigned to each participant and cross-referenced in NVivo 12. Each interview session was audio-taped and lasted 60-90 minutes, contingent on the participants' responses. The interview took approximately 60 minutes, and I also allowed an additional 30 minutes for introductions or questions. I did not rush the participant to respond quickly. I employed semistructured interview questions during a scheduled interview session. The thematic analysis encompassed the process of searching across a data set of interviews to find repeated patterns of meanings.

(Alhojailan, 2012; Clarke & Braun, 2013). NVivo required me to assign a numerical code to the data and to develop themes or categories (Sotiriadou, Brouwers & Le, 2014). After the semistructured, open-ended interviews were concluded, I transcribed the data verbatim into a Word document.

As I started to see patterns, then I identified items of data that corresponded to the specific pattern. Once the data from all participants were analyzed, the repeating patterns and themes from all participants were synthesized to form a composite synthesis (Patton, 2002; Percy et al., 2015). The composite synthesis sought to interpret the meanings and implications regarding the research question under investigation. Themes and subthemes emerged from the data to support the African American military wives' acculturation challenges to adapt by examining their relationship with culture, geography, and its implications on their attitude and perception. The subthemes acted as a revealing thread, which helped to identify and correlate the meanings of the major themes. The subthemes also assisted in addressing the African American military wives' unique influences within the Arctic Alaskan environment for discovering the context of their social and cultural challenges.

Procedure

I analyzed the transcribed verbatim responses of each African American military wife. Each participant was asked the same semistructured, open-ended questions which correlated with the research question. I developed the interview questions to allow the African American military wives to express their acculturative experiences. I evaluated

each participant's responses strictly following the inductive data analysis process (Percy et al., 2015):

1. I reviewed and familiarized myself with the data collected from the first participant (interview, my reflexive journal, field notes made during the interview, and any documents shared by the participant). Since I am the primary analyst, I reviewed each participant's data individually by reviewing the meaningful data and relating it to the research question.

2. I read the data and highlight any sentences, phrases, or paragraphs that appeared to be meaningful. I used NVivo12 to help manage and organize data in addition to facilitate the analysis of data using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis encompassed searching across a data set of interviews to find repeated patterns of meanings. (Clarke & Braun, 2013)

3. I reviewed the highlighted data. As I started to see patterns, then I could identify items of data that corresponded to the specific pattern. Percy et al. (2015), explained that similar direct quotes taken from the participants' transcribed interviews would reveal the patterns.

4. I eliminated all highlighted data that were not related to the research question.

5. I combined the analysis of data for all participants, including patterns and themes that were consistent across the participants' data. In doing so, I was able to retrieve and isolate patterns within the data (Ridder, 2017).

6. I took each set of data and coded or named the data.

7. I clustered the sets of data that related or connected in some way and started to develop patterns or themes (Percy et al., 2015; Patton, 2002).

8. I completed this process for the first participant's data ensuring I carefully coded and clustered data for analysis. Then I repeated the process for all participants.

9. As I repeated the thematic analysis on each participant, I inherently emerged constant comparison in the data.

10. Throughout the process, data that correspond to a specific pattern was identified and separated. The data was then placed with the corresponding pattern, and direct quotes were taken from the data to elucidate the pattern (Percy et al., 2015, p. 83).

11. I combined the data for all participants to validate consistency.

12. I integrated the data to form a composite synthesis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

This generic qualitative study used credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability to establish trustworthiness that the research is true and accurate. Trustworthiness declares the thoroughness and accuracy of the study. Trustworthiness also refers to the degree of confidence in the data, the method of interpretation, and procedures used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck, 2014) The content analysis obtained via interviews with 10 participants provided enough details that enabled me to discover and understand their Arctic acculturation experiences.

Credibility

I coordinated the research question and purpose of the study to expound on the acculturation experiences of African American military wives. By conducting good fieldwork, I provided an accurate and real account of acculturation experiences in an Arctic environment using a generic qualitative research design. I established credibility by conducting good fieldwork on the recruitment and selection of trustworthy participants who provide an honest and organic account of their experiences transitioning to Arctic Alaska. Connolly (2016) discussed the importance of using several techniques to establish credibility in the research. As the primary investigator, I purposively maintained consistent engagement with the participants, used observation skills, documented research notes in my reflexive journal and used data triangulation (Connolly, 2016). After the interviews were transcribed, the African American participants were able to review (member checking) their testimonies on acculturative stressors. The military wives' review of the testimonies ensured the transcribed interviews were accurate for reinforcing the foundation of credibility among the participants' experiences. Data saturation occurred when I reviewed and analyzed the collected data, and there is no new information, but the repetition of the same answer is occurring.

I addressed triangulation by using method triangulation, which involves using multiple sources of information to develop themes and make conclusions about the data (Anney, 2014; Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014; Cope, 2014). To address method triangulation, I used previous research related to acculturation, literature related to migrant travels, and Berry (1997) and Lee (2009) segmented

assimilation theory to develop themes and interpret the data. I accomplished triangulation by merging information collected from the participants' interviews, reflexive journaling, and notes. The combination of all the information collected substantiated the themes needed for the credibility of this study. Three methodologic observations were made about the derived data: (a) comparing the data led to an iterative process, whereby the phenomena was explored more deeply, (b) the combined data led to an enhanced understanding of the context of the phenomena, and (c) convergence of the data-enhanced processes greatly improved trustworthiness of the findings.

Confirmability

Korstjens and Moser (2018) research recommended to clearly describe the steps taken towards the development and reporting of the findings. The records of the research path are kept throughout the study. Within this study, confirmability was heightened by providing a thorough description of the data source, member checking, and systematically following each step of thematic analysis for the analysis of the data (Winston, 2017). Marshall and Rossman (2016) asserted that techniques such as follow-up member checking interviews, methodological triangulation, and probing questions during the interview process are used to confirm the overall results of the study and improve the confirmability of research results. I took extra steps to be transparent in my path to obtain research finding to establish a clear audit trail for trustworthiness. I documented every decision made for assessing an interpretation and analysis of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Major categories emerged from the data by reading the transcripts and taking notes. These notes were compared throughout all 10 interviews so

that significant themes emerged. The themes were compared with the literature review regarding theoretical frameworks. The themes and patterns helped me to answer the research question and establish credibility by identifying the importance and purpose of this study. Data saturation occurred when no new themes, information, coding, or patterns emerged by the study participants, and the possibility to replicate the study is possible, especially if participants respond to the same question within the timeframe of the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Dependability

I followed a meticulous approach and plan to ensure that all interviews were handled consistently in the same way. An audit trail was kept that consisted of raw data, the audiotapes, the transcribed interviews, the hand-coding, and the coding through NVivo12. The content analysis allowed me to develop codes that were formed into themes that reflect that the research study was completed reliably (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). By providing a clear account of all procedures and methods, the dependability of data was achieved.

Transferability

The generic qualitative study discovered the acculturative stress of African American military wives. Transferability was adopted by following the research design and presenting thorough details of the specific steps for generic qualitative research using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was done by providing a detailed, thick description to ensure that the reader was able to extrapolate information about the acculturative stress experience in Arctic Alaska. An inductive approach provided a step-by-step analysis

model. Using data analysis, I described the context, characteristics of the participants, data collection, and analysis process. A true and accurate depiction discovered the acculturative stress of African American military wives in relocating to Arctic Alaska. By demonstrating transferability, the selected participants were able to describe their experiences (personal and social experience) as an African American military wife transitioning to an Arctic environment, and the similarities in context forge meaningful connections (Cope, 2014). Connections readers can identify similar situations. Also, each African American woman was able to express in her own words how she had encountered the biological, psychosocial, environmental, and psychological side-effects of acculturation in Arctic Alaska. According to Morse (2015), transferability was obtained by providing sufficient information to intra-relate the authentication of data regarding me as the primary instrument, the context, processes, participants, and participant-researcher relationships.

Ethical Procedures

The Walden University Institution Review Board (IRB) gave its written IRB approval number to conduct research: # 03-28-19-0536510. The university requires its researchers to follow strict guidelines in obtaining approval to conduct qualitative research. I followed ethical guidelines for interviewing participants and gathering data. First, I constructed an outline with a detailed explanation of the research objectives, questions, analysis, and access to obtain consent for their participants. Second, I followed basic ethical guidelines when the research involves human subjects. There were strict

ethical procedures when gathering, concealing, and safeguarding data concerning the participants' right to privacy, confidentiality, disclosure, and identity.

I maintained all data to include notes, transcripts, and audio-taped information in a locked box in a locked safe in a private office. I encrypted all electronic files and use pseudonyms. Six years following the conclusion of the research, I will burn all files to destroy the data. Ethics are a matter of understanding and mitigating conflicts from moral imperatives (Avasthi, Ghosh, Sarkar, & Grover, 2013). Participation in the study was voluntary, and there was no monetary compensation for those willing to participate in the research. One significant outcome and benefit from the research was to shed light on the acculturative coping strategies that may help African American military wives. All participants received a list of social services and other community resources available to transition to an Arctic environment. Risks are always a likely occurrence in research when redacting information. However, I sought every means of positive communication and trust to uphold the integrity of the research.

Summary

I used a generic qualitative design to address the problem statement and research question to reveal and gain insight into the acculturation experiences of 10 African American military wives. I recruited 10 participants using snowball-like sampling. I recruited the participants during their first two winters or years in relocating to Anchorage or Fairbanks, Alaska. I spread the word about the research by using flyers posted in community centers and on social media networks. In the interview, I conducted semistructured, open-ended interviews to inquire about African American military wives'

acculturative experiences and its impact on their lives when relocating to Arctic Alaska. I ensured the participants' self-identified with the interview criteria, and ethics were followed. Using generic qualitative research, I collected and analyzed transcribed data using thematic analysis and basic coding.

Through meticulous data analysis of the participants' responses, I identified patterns and themes that are common to all the participants' experiences, that can apply to future research outlined in Chapter 4. I also established triangulation by using multiple sources to support data saturation. In Chapter 4 of this generic qualitative inquiry, I expect that the experiences of the African American military women will fill the gap in the existing literature. Currently, the available literature does not describe the biological, psychosocial, environmental, and psychological side-effects of acculturation in Arctic Alaska. Chapter 5 will provide a path forward for positive social change, resources, and improved awareness of specific coping strategies for African American military wives in an Arctic community.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to delineate the acculturative experiences (i.e., stress) of African American military wives who relocated to Alaska in support of military operations. In exploring the acculturative experiences of the African American military wives, the research will also identify cultural adaptation strategies used to counter acculturative stress, change in family dynamics, and feelings of isolation in a new Arctic environment and Alaskan Native culture.

Chapter 4 describes how the generic qualitative inquiry was applied to the data analysis process in order to reveal themes. This chapter also contains a description and demographic table about the participants. The demographic details on the African American participants reassure that the participants did not have any previous exposure to Alaska or the Arctic-type environment. In this study, data saturation was reached with 10 participants. The participants' responses to semistructured, open-ended interview questions resulted in emergent themes describing the experiences of their acculturation to an Arctic environment. When combined with other forms of research sources, the results of this study may promote a better understanding of the implementation of ethnic-centered interventions and strategies that are specific to the acculturation experiences of African American military wives. In Chapter 4, I describe the results of the data analysis and present the data and the findings of the study.

Setting

Alaska, known as the *Last Frontier*, is one area where the military relocates service members to meet mission requirements. Alaska's geographical location enables the military unique opportunities to train service members for tactical missions (Department of Defense, 2015). Relocation involves more than just being transported from one residence to another. Relocation sets in place a series of experiences that alter and challenge a person's biological, cultural, psychosocial, and psychological relationships. During relocation, the acculturation process disrupts familiar social patterns in a person's social identity, separating them from close social connections and cultural ties in the community (Onyenekwu, 2015; Van Winkle & Lipari, 2015). Social connections and cherished relationships promote a person's cultural identity, memorable experiences, and a sense of purpose in the community (Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012). Collectively, these social relationships and ties help influence the behavioral aspects of a person's life.

During acculturation, military wives become migrants who temporarily move from one location to another. Capps, McCabe, and Fix (2012) depict military wives as migrant-type populations who comprise a significant number of migrant communities in the United States. These migrants become part of a cross-cultural transition that emerges during acculturation to new localities. Ethnic minorities cannot always choose the best approach to initiate intercultural communications and relations with the host community. Migrants are unfamiliar with new local social protocols. Therefore, the host society's expectations on acculturation play a significant role in determining the ease of the

acculturation process and adaptation of migrants encountering acculturative stress

(Ramos, Cassidy, Reicher, & Haslam, 2015). Acculturative stress incurred during the

adaptation process to a new environment are considered common occurrences in some

cultures. New and unlearned ethnic minorities relocating to the area may not be aware of

the new culture's common occurrences. Traditionally, ethnic social support systems help

new ethnic minorities assimilate into the host community. New ethnic minorities

assimilate into the host community by using intracultural communications and

interactions to maintain their cultural identities and to developing professionally in the

new community (Eunju-Yoon, Adams, Clawson, Chang, Surya & Jérémie-Brink, 2017;

Jitmanowan, 2016).

Demographics

For the research study, 10 African American military wives were purposefully

selected because of their ethnicity and role as a military wife. The selection criteria for

inclusion were African American military wives who had recently experienced relocating

from a non-Arctic environment to an Arctic environment. The African American military

wives articulated their experiences as it related to the phenomena being investigated in

this research study. Overall, this study aimed to receive in-depth and rich information to

address the central research research question (Creswell, 2013).

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the 10 military wives for this

research study. The demographic characteristics include (a) the military wives' numerical

pseudonym for privacy, (b) current age at interview, (c) the branch of service for

husband, the number of months she has resided in Arctic Alaska, (d) the geographical

location of her previous location, and (e) the number of relocation assignments. Brief

biographies of the participants will follow in Table 1.

Table 1.

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Pseudonym	Age	Military Affiliation	Duration in Alaska (months)	Previous Location (state)	Number of Relocations
Participant 0A	23	Army	29	Florida	2
Participant 1B	42	Army	31	Georgia	4
Participant 2C	27	Army	26	North Carolina	2
Participant 3D	31	Air Force	26	North Carolina	4
Participant 4E	24	Army	33	Maryland	2
Participant 5F	27	Army	35	South Carolina	5
Participant 6G	38	Air Guard	27	Georgia	2
Participant 7H	30	Air Force	27	Texas	3
Participant 8I	26	Air Guard	28	Florida	2
Participant 9J	29	Air Force	32	Washington	3

All 10 of the African American military wives were females who resided in or

around the Fairbanks NorthStar Borough in Arctic Alaska (see Appendix E). They ranged

from 23-42 years of age with the average age of the participants being 27 years of age. At

the time of this study, the African American military wives resided in Arctic Alaska for

an average of 29 months. The African American military wives arrived in the Arctic

environment from a non-Arctic environment within the United States. Eight of the wives

resided on the Eastern Coast and only two military wives had direct exposure living

(growing up) in a old climate. All participants in this study relocated at least two times

with their active-duty husbands. The military provides access to many resources to help

the service member and family plan for relocation to the new community (MilitaryOne,

2019) and the participants are aware of these resources.

Data Collection

I began the process of collecting data. The approval from Walden's IRB permitted

me to recruit and gather information about the African American military wives'

experiences with acculturation in Arctic Alaska. As the principal interviewer, I recruited

participants using a purposive sampling method posting flyers in community centers and

on social media networks. As the sole researcher, I was able to recruit 10 individuals who

met the following criteria: (a) African American, (b) military wife, (c) residing in

Fairbanks or Anchorage, Alaska and (d) within their first two winters or years in

relocating to Arctic Alaska (see Appendix E).

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each participant for 60 to 90 minutes

and at the participant's convenience inside a community library study room. The

participants were described and referred by a pseudonym, which consisted of a binary

number and associate alphabet letter for concealing their identity. Following the

interview, all participants were debriefed. I provided each participant with a public listing

of community and military family support services.

The audio recordings were labeled using the assigned pseudonym to ensure the

participants' identities and responses remained private. The recordings were transcribed

into a Microsoft Word document and presented to each participant to confirm the

accuracy of their responses. The collected data were saved on a flash drive and kept in a

secured file cabinet in my home office and I have sole possession of the key. All the

African American military wives in this research study were willing to share experiences

concerning their relocation to Arctic Alaska. The military wives aired their perspectives

for transitioning alongside their active-duty service members into Arctic Alaska. The

military wives relied upon their current relocation knowledge, online research, and

demographics on Arctic Alaska, and resources presented by military support programs

and family readiness groups.

Data Analysis

Analyzing research data entails organizing, reviewing, and coding the data for

emergence of relevant themes. Marshall and Rossman (2016) posit that the purpose of

data analysis is to establish meaning out of the data through the interpretation of data

during a research process. A well-established interview protocol and a semistructured

interview technique facilitate collection of information appropriate for answering

research questions and analyzing the descriptions of their experiences for delineation of

the phenomenon in a real-life setting (Leskovec, Rajaraman, & Ullman, 2019).

Answering questions that depict the central research question will enhance relevant

information confirming data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

To analyze the data, I used a qualitative software program, NVivo 12. I

transcribed verbatim the interview responses into a Microsoft Word document by

listening to the audio-taped sessions. I transcribed the participants' responses 24-48 hours

following the interview. While transcribing the data, I made notes in my journal of hand-

coded keywords and frequent expressions used by the military wives. The responses were

imported into NVivo 12 qualitative software program for organizational support and to provide a subjective review process during data analysis. Since this research is explorative and the purpose is to obtain knowledge, the use of thematic data analysis was appropriate for understanding the African American women's description of their experiences with acculturation in Arctic Alaska (Percy et al., 2015). This step provided the basis for thematic analysis and examination of data via inductive analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013) for comprehension of the participant's relocation experiences.

NVivo 12 capabilities allowed me to subjectively examine the transcribed statements for common words, patterns, and reoccurring themes within the participants' statements. After reviewing the first transcript, I entered the initial themes in NVivo 12 software. Afterward, I was able to highlight direct quotes from the participants' interviews connecting the African American military wives' perspectives to themes. The data from the military wives were examined individually. Repeated themes from participants were combined as a single composite to interpret meanings regarding the research question under investigation (Percy et al., 2015).

To increase the inductive analysis, I used a nonlinear yet step-by-step method for recognizing significant keywords and phrases amid the participant's repeated processes along with observation and supporting tools to collect data (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The following steps were used during the inductive analysis::

Step 1. Became familiar with the data.

Step 2. Reviewed highlighted data for connection to the research question.

Step 3. Eliminated highlighted data not related to the research question,

Step 4. Coded each piece of the data.

Step 5. Clustered items of pertinent data which unmasked to patterns.

Step 6. Identified items in the data linked to specific patterns.

Step 7. Scanned for the materialization of any overarching themes.

Step 7. Assembled a matrix with corresponding supportive patterns.

Step 8. Repeated the process for each interview collected from the participants.

Step 9. Gathered all participants' data, and

Step 10. Gathered the data to form a composite organization.

The thematic analysis offered me a theoretically flexible process for analysis, identification, and observation of patterns within a set of data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). I relied upon a thematic analytic structure for describing and synthesizing detailed and rich data. I reviewed the transcripts in search of initial themes. Additionally, I used caution in maintaining the military wives' statements and accounts in order. I analyzed any subthemes and meaning of the data and provided an overall interpretation for the conclusion of the report (Clarke & Braun, 2013). I analyzed the themes for practical advice that could be provided to new African American military wives, the military communities, the military leadership, military support organizations, community support agencies, and health professionals.

Presentation of Data and Results of the Analysis

I analyzed the raw data to capture verbal and non-verbal cues and gestures. I transcribed the interview data into Microsoft Word files and uploaded the file into NVivo 12 to categorize codes and create themes. I used member checking to ensure data saturation and the authenticity of the participants' responses. After each transcribed interview, I developed an initial coding analysis to organize and capture emerging themes through data saturation. In this study, data saturation was reached with 10 participants. Specifically, reaching data saturation after reviewing interview documents, journaling, and observing notes of the six participant experiences indicating no new information from the interviews. I developed Figure 1 based on the four emergent themes in the study: (1) environment, (2) resources and services, (3) relocation stressors, and (4) social relationships. The themes were used to analyze, code, and reorganize the primary data. I used coding to discover any subthemes in the study, which were also grouped and clustered where appropriate.

The four themes that emerged from the interviews provided a foundation for building a textual and structural description of the wives' acculturative stresses and experiences encountered during relocating to Arctic Alaska. The purpose of presenting these descriptions was to provide a clear picture of what the perceptions were by African Americans military wives to cope with acculturative stress while living in an indigenous community positively. The intention was for the reader to concisely see what influenced perceptions of acculturative stress for positive coping strategies, and how expectations of coping impacted decisions to use it. The themes emerged based on the participants'

narratives of their acculturative experience and associated coping strategies used to subside adaptation. I identified four significant themes that substantiated the research question, which included: (1) environment, (2) community resources and services, (3) relocation stressors, and (4) social relationships. Figure 1 illustrates the final data analysis composite of the four themes materialized from the interview questions.

Figure 1. Perspectives on the Environment.
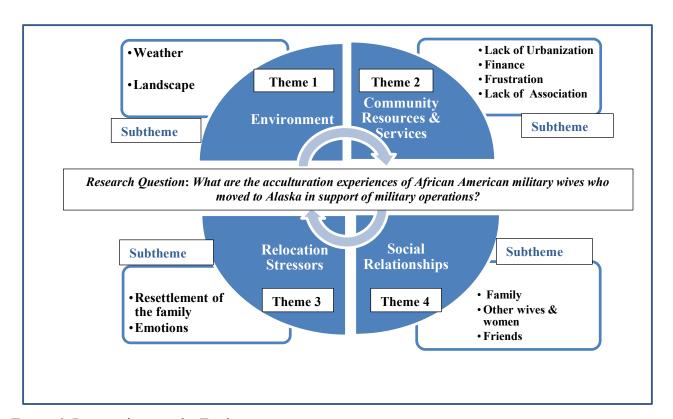
Theme 1: Perspectives on the Environment

Each African American military wife's interview was analyzed for themes and subthemes compared to previous interviews to discover if these themes were both different and similar between the military wives. Similarities and differences were analyzed in-depth to attain a better understanding of experiences that were different and

similar between these women. The first theme that emerged from the data about the African American military wives' experiences reflected the environment. Throughout the interview, each military wife communicated different reactions to being relocated to Arctic Alaska and realizing the impact of adjusting to the location.

Weather

The military wives learned about the environment and weather once they were settled into the community. Each viewed the Arctic geographical location as vastly different than any other location they had been exposed to in their travels with the military (see Appendix F). One of the most prominent themes to consider when transitioning to an Arctic community is the weather. The military wives relocated to a location which consisted of extreme winter-like conditions. Two asserted how they did not realize how long winter was in Alaska. The wives repeatedly discussed the temperature and how the temperature caused a shock to their bodies. Eight of the women called the Arctic environment cold. Three of the wives described the cold as numb or numbing. Numbing occurred when the woman's body (i.e., face, hands, and feet) was exposed during times of inclement winter weather. In particular, two wives described the environment as deep, meaning an absence of light. Alaska is known to have a long period of darkness during winter months. One wife described how she was excited about the snow but became tired of the blanket of snow.

Landscape

The military wives' narrative statements vividly labeled the Arctic Alaska location to have environmental features that resembled a desert or barren region, except it is cold and empty (see Appendix G). Two wives revealed that they were scared to leave their home or go about in town because moose roam freely. Two wives were emotional because they did not know how to drive or walk on ice. One wife exclaimed "the military should teach them how to maneuver in icy conditions." Statements by three wives vented, "I did not want to be here!", "There was nothing to do!", and "Watch out for a moose!" These are phrases which the military wives used to describe what they visually saw concerning the Arctic environment. The stress was revealed in the tone of their voiced words from being exposed to the elements of living in an indigenous environment. The African American military wives' experiences are some adverse outcomes expressed during the transition. Participants' descriptions of landscape features reveal vulnerability and sensitivity to climatic characteristics.

Theme 2: Perspectives with Community Resources and Services

The second theme was the participants perspectives with community resources and services. The African American military wives' narrative statements indicated that Arctic Alaska had minimal community resources and services reflective of their needs. According to Four of the wives, the community lacked variety among businesses; therefore, shopping was not pleasurable. One wife said she heard about the scarcity (shortages) in resources and elected to make purchases for her home before leaving her last assignment to help resettle her new home. Two of the wives talked about driving to

the city of Anchorage, which is 300 miles away from Fairbanks. Anchorage is one of the largest urbanized cities in Alaska, offering abundant businesses, shopping, and entertainment venues (Army Community Services, 2019). Two other wives spoke about shopping on the military base because they offer more options at a cheaper cost. One wife discussed how the community has an abundance of sports stores but a limited variety in other businesses.

Financial

Another subtheme that emerged from the data about community resources and services dealt with financials (see Appendix H). Relocating causes various stressors for military spouses, and financials are an area that impacts the fluidity of a household and re-settlement. Relocating can place many unknown stressors upon a family when moving to a new location. Military wives must be flexible within their employment and careers. Changes in financials can also impact or limit purchases necessary for the transition. Four wives shared that they were struggling financially and sought employment. Two of the wives spoke of the limitations of jobs or types of jobs. Participant 8I stated she sought assistance with online employment services but was not pleased with the outcomes. Participant J9 stated that money was a significant concern. Another wife sought financial counseling but wanted full-time employment to offset her debt.

Community Barriers

Another stressor relating to relocation to Arctic Alaska involved facing community barriers (see Appendix I). In relocating, new residents often do not know or understand community politics or protocols of services. Six of the military wives

expressed frustration with residing in and navigate through the indigenous community, bureaucratical obstacles in governmental processes. Four of the wives inquired about their options to positively pass the time away in an Arctic community. The wives discussed not knowing specific activities (entertainment which is amusing or appealing to an individual from non-Arctic environments) to do in the Arctic community other than outdoor sports. The wives inquired about if there were any local programs available to give military wives priority preferences in travel to visit other cities in or outside Alaska. The wives discussed if there were any job placement, recruitment, training opportunities for military wives to support the professional and business industries specific to Alaska.

Furthermore, the wives sought out educational programs to help convert or remodel their vocations to make them employable in Alaskan industries. It is not clear if or how the wives sought out help concerning available training or educational programs. One wife sought out help acquiring a happy light or funding to offset the cost of purchasing a happy light. A happy light is a psychotherapy lamp used to treat the adult *SAD* and vitamin D deficiency disorder (DeCapua, 2015). Unfortunately, the program ended for lack of available funding. One military wife expressed great dissatisfaction or mental anxiety stating the walls were closing in on her in the small indigenous community. The wife did not know who (professional counselor, social worker, or physician) to talk to in aiding new residents withstanding emotional or precarious-type stressors.

Community Associations

The last subtheme for community resources and services revealed some commonalities with the association. By association, the military wives expressed how they could not connect or establish a rapport with the people in the community (see Appendix J). One wife explained how other military wives discussed concerns involving *SAD*. The military wives advised of the benefits of a happy light lamp and recommended purchasing one in advance of arriving in Alaska. Three of the women made attempts to interact with the community by volunteering with the church, spouse, and family support services. Two of the wives formed bonds with the community by forging friendships through their husbands.

Theme 3: Perspectives with Relocation Stressors

The third leading theme that emerged from the interviews was the African American military wives' relocation stressors. Relocating from a familiar geographical location and moving to a new and sometimes unfamiliar geographical location caused various stressors (see Appendix K). These stressors were pronounced even though military wives traditionally rotate to new geographical locations every 2 to 3 years. Relocating to an unfamiliar geographical location, one may rely upon traditional coping strategies to cope with change. Stressors become conditions that increase stress and sometimes anxiety or perceived worry to an individual, even impacting the family (Nichols, 2018). Acculturative stress to an Arctic environment poses possible critical acclimation challenges for the military wife not previously known.

Emotions

All 10 of the military wives described stressors relating to their experience as they relocated (see Appendix L). The stressors added stress and anxiety into many of their daily routines during relocation. Two wives were bored and kept staring out the window at the snow. Another wife revealed she could not stop eating uncontrollably. Two wives expressed feeling sad and even depressed during the winter. One wife said she was on an emotional roller coaster. Another wife conveyed that she felt trapped, and another wife said she was isolated.

Re-settlement

Three of the wives discussed settling their home as a relocation stressor (see Appendix M). In settling up the home, the wives talked about trying to be creative and create a relaxing home environment. Four of the wives experienced symptoms or possible indicators of *SAD*. The women admitted to having irregular sleeping patterns, uncontrollable eating, mood changes, weight gain, and sadness. It was not clear if the women sought professional medical or mental health for diagnosis. One wife discussed losing her hair or hair breakage since residing in Alaska.

While supporting their husbands in the mission, social isolation and cultural challenges may present themselves as hardships. Three of the wives relied upon religion or spiritual support and the church outreach to fill the void of isolation. One wife said she attends church and supports community service but still feels lonely. The African American military wife may rely on cultural practices to overcome hardships or social

limitations in the new geographical location. This facet is a problematic aspect of the

military way of life (Department of Defense, 2016).

Theme 4: Perspectives with Social Relationships

The fourth theme that came out of the interviews focused on social relationships.

Managing social relationships presented challenges for military wives, adding stress and

anxiety to a military home (see Appendix N). For African American military wives,

social relationships stimulate a series of experiences (personal or individual), shifting the

views of the biological, cultural, psychosocial, and psychological relationships. African

American military wives rely on these social connections to remind them of cultural

practices and relationships of times past and encouragement in the present. Nine of the

military wives expressed a desire for social connections, reminiscing with family, and

desiring social connections (i.e., date night options, casinos, theater/drama-plays,

shopping, amusement parks, and concerts) in Arctic Alaska. Social relationships can offer

opportunities for African Americans to gather together to discuss and learn positive

practices for *SAD* and behavioral challenges for the women and their family members

adapting to Arctic Alaska.

<div align="center">

Evidence of Trustworthiness

</div>

Trustworthiness was achieved as the primary investigator and my persistent

involvement in the research. I maintained the research plan and protocols to ensure I

followed strict guidelines to gather, collect, interpret, and analyze the data. Overall, I

provided a rich, detailed-oriented description of the context, location, and people studied

for Arctic acculturation (Connolly, 2016). I presented a meticulously detailed process for

developing a high degree of confidence in the study's findings and basis for trustworthiness (Mertens, 2017). The credibility of the researcher was obtained by sustaining prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and providing participant feedback from the interviews. Threats, biases, or errors in this qualitative study were minimized by following strict interview guidelines. Cope (2014) explained that qualitative research focuses on the aspects of credibility to help support a philosophical belief in the usefulness and appreciation of a qualitative study and its methods. I conducted audiotape interview sessions to ensure I captured the facts and details of the African American military wives' answers to their perception of transitioning and adapting to the environment.

Dependability and confirmability were continued because the steps outlined in the research provided an audit trail for pure interpretation and analysis of the data which depicted similar phenomena among the women. Bracketing was necessary because I had previous knowledge and realization about the research from living and processing acculturative stresses (Hamill & Sinclair, 2010). I co-existed in the participants' community for 16 years (Dahlberg, 2006) and could be emotionally vulnerable and impressionable to their interview answers (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Therefore, I used bracketing to help maintain the focus and transparency of my research as well as ensure I did not interject my personal opinions, perceptions, or ideas into the collection, interpretation, or analysis of the data (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Records of the research path are kept for reference.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I described the investigative results of the study to understand the military wives' acculturative experiences in relocating from a non-Arctic environment to the Arctic environment. Relocating to familiar and unfamiliar geographical locations is a common practice within the military. The study findings can be shared to disclose coping strategies and coping resources used by African American military wives when faced with unfamiliar locations (i.e., Arctic Alaska). I interviewed 10 African American military wives to gather the acculturative data for a generic qualitative inquiry. Using a thematic analysis for analyzing the data revealed four themes which sought to support the women's perception of their experiences. Collectively, the four themes had an impact on the social, cultural, physical, psychological, and social well-being of each participant. The collective experiences of the African American participants spoke of unfavorable and challenging times rather than positive experiences.

The African American military wives developed stress, physical challenges and relationship challenges, financial challenges, and social or emotional detachment. However, six of the African American military wives integrated fitness, spirituality, and family as a mechanism for coping and for strength to endure and overcome their unfortunate circumstances in their lives. Somehow reiterating by sharing African American traditions with other African American wives, families, and friends provided a friendly and social activity for new military wives to reminisce about their ancestral past and learn how to acclimate to an Arctic environment.

Chapter 4 described the results of the data analysis, presented the data collected, presented the results of the data analysis and findings of the research study. In Chapter 4, I explained how I reached data saturation and the process for establishing data triangulation using multiple source documents plus the African American military wives' acculturative experiences. In Chapter 5, I will summarize and discuss the results and conclusions. Chapter 5 will conclude with the limitations of this study, recommendations for future research, and closing statements by the researcher.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to provide an understanding of the African American military wives' acculturative experiences and the coping strategies and resources they used as they adapted to Arctic Alaska. Collecting and examining the personal perspectives of the military wives allowed me to acquire a deeper understanding of their perspectives into this unique phenomenon. In Chapter 5, I will present the research outcomes, formalize conclusions, and review limitations about the relocation experiences of African American military wives. I will summarize how the outcomes of the study align with the current perspectives of the African American military wife as well as address major themes that emerged in narrowing the knowledge gap about the phenomenon.

In Chapter 5, I will also provide personal insight into, and an interpretation of, the results of this research study. Finally, I will make recommendations for future research and resources for military and nonmilitary social groups to circulate among African American military wives. For this section, there is an interpretation of the findings and a description of the themes related to the research question and the conceptual framework.

Chapter 5 is divided into the following sections: (a) interpretation of the findings, (b) themes related to the research question, (c) implications for positive social change, (d) conclusion, € . limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and summary. Capturing African American military wives' perspectives on this acculturative

experience will add a valuable perspective to military spouses who give their all to support their active-duty spouse.

Interpretation of Findings

In order to address the central research question, *what are the acculturation experiences of African American military wives who moved to Alaska in support of military operations*, I used a generic qualitative approach that incorporated semistructured, in-depth interview questions. The participants who answered the 10 interview questions provided first-hand data about their experiences in relocating from a non-Arctic environment to Arctic Alaska. To interpret the results and to understand African American experiences with acculturation in an Arctic environment, I employed a segmented assimilation theory as the conceptual framework. As discussed in Chapter 4, based on the data from the participants' interviews, I identified, coded, and categorized patterns using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis identified several themes and subthemes. In this section, I interpret the study findings and describe the four emerging themes.

Themes Related to the Research Question

Theme one revealed perspectives about the environment. The military wives painted a vivid description captured in the weather and landscape subthemes on what they saw, felt, and pondered regarding the Arctic Alaska environment. Understandably, relocating to Arctic Alaska involved being in a place that would be cold and have an abundance of snow. However, the snow created isolation within the environment amid significant and prolonged weeks of darkness. The military wives were not prepared to be

in a place that encountered several months of darkness, cold weather, snow, and isolation. For the last 10 years, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported mean temperatures in interior Alaska of -43.6 F (-26C) during the winter months and 75.2F (24C) during the summer months (McDonald, 2019). The wives continuously discussed the temperature, acute climatic conditions, and how the extreme temperatures caused a shock to their bodies.

The participants revealed that the military relocated them to a place they were only partially prepared to live in. The African American military wives relocated to Arctic Alaska from vastly different and some mild temperate locations, than any other localities they had been exposed to in their travels with the military. Having a lack of familiarity with the Arctic environment meant that the military wives were inexperienced with the environment to psychologically and physically prepare to reside in the community. A lack of familiarity meant the military wives could not plan in advance for acquiring suitable cold weather items (i.e. clothing, hats, gloves, and boots) to protect their extremities from extreme cold weather injuries as well as help them safely acclimate to the Arctic environment.

In addition to the cold and darkness, the wives commented on moose in the environment. Within the Arctic indigenous environment, moose roam free. The wives did not know how to protect themselves or their families from Arctic wildlife. Proactive mitigations of human populations into non-urbanized areas in Alaska have increased, stimulating a rise in the human to wildlife happenstances via vehicle and on foot (Brieger, Hagen, Kroschel, Hartig, Petersen, Ortman, & Suchant, 2017). While the

environment was a predictable stressor for being cold and containing snow, an unfamiliar stressor was the impact extreme cold weather and its uncontrollable landscape variables would have upon a person acclimating into an indigenous environment in Alaska.

The second theme focused on the geographical location, providing community resources and services, which would meet the needs of a military-based community. The military wives described acculturative stressors with the availability of and diversity in community resources for financial, childcare, employment, and sponsorship programs. After the African American military wives relocated and began to put down roots in the indigenous community, the wives became aware that minimal community resources and services existed to help them adapt to living in the northernmost community. This lack of resources corresponds to businesses not having a large volume (supply) of merchandise on hand to support (demand) for multiple requests (variations) of commodities. This deficiency also appears to be driven by frustration and a change in buying power for commodities found in abundant quantities within metropolitan areas.

Another subtheme that emerged from the data about community resources and services dealt with finances. Relocating causes various stressors for military spouses, and finances are an area that impacts the fluidity and resettlement of the household. Based on the narratives of the military wives, they sought work/employment assistance and childcare services offered within the community but did not help them obtain employment vital to sustaining their quality of life.

Another acculturative stressor conveying a subtheme of community resources and services within the Arctic Alaska community implicated the wives handling community

barriers. By identifying community barriers, the women perceived repeated frustrations of not knowing or being able to track down transparent processes to aid them in making rational decisions. Rules are required courses of action which do not necessarily have a chronological path (Borry, 2013). For a new resident, not having clear information but perceived knowledge of how to access community resources and services produce frustrations regarded as community-level red tape barriers. During relocation, new residents often do not know or understand the new community's policies or protocols for obtaining services.

When a new resident does not know the community's policies and procedurals, they revert to learned practices (past experiences) used at previous relocations for eliminating redundancy and frustration. The acculturative stress in Alaska can materialize as other responses when unfamiliar with known processes, especially when unique to the area. Referencing Dr. Tanner's statements regarding vitamin D deficiency and the literary data on SAD, revealed undiagnosed acculturative stress. The acculturative stress suddenly manifested in the military wives as physical changes in their appearance shortly after relocating to Arctic Alaska.

The last subtheme for community resources and services revealed some commonalities with the military wives desiring an association with people in the community. The African American military wives have an identity affiliated with the military and as minority women of color, both having a sense of belonging and group identity. Relocating to Arctic Alaska and into an indigenous community, the African American military wives became marginalized and excluded in their new location. While

relocating is not an unfamiliar element to military life, relocating to an Arctic indigenous community presented different aspects for transitioning and resettling than experienced in previous relocations. In general, humans have desires as an innate need or experience to belong (Hall, 2015). The belongingness depicts a "powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive" interpersonal motivation for forming and maintaining relationships with others (Baumeister & Leary, 2017, p. 77). As explained in the literature review, in order to meet the need for belonging, African Americans must have frequent interactions with others who care about them (social relationship). Social interactions and relationships occur differently in an indigenous community and develop over time while sharing like interests, hobbies, and cultural events.

In African American culture, community businesses (i.e, the barbershop, hair and nail salons, church, community social clubs, and pool halls) are establishments that anchor the Black community and support social interactions (Warren, 2017). The community businesses help establish a network of relationships (i.e., personal and professional) with other African Americans who share similar interests (e.g., church, spouse, and family support) to forge social interactions. During those social interactions, the wives share information concerning the community or indigenous ways of life (i.e., use of a happy light lamp for psychotherapy, techniques to dressing in layers for warmth and use of bright colored curtains in the home during winter months to lift the mood). The wives did not have a connection to or relationships with those in the community to build a rapport. Within an indigenous community, social interactions are not as popular during the winter months versus milder temperatures of summer and spring.

The third theme aimed at identifying relocation stressors with two subthemes: (1) re-settlement of the family and (2) emotions. As referenced in the Introduction to the study, relocation, and the support of the military wife with transitioning the family is critical. Acculturation and acculturative stressors are common occurrences the family may encounter with the military. The family home became the foundational meeting place for relaxation and establishing a sense of normalcy. Immediately after relocating, the African American military wives sought local businesses in the community to purchase items for decorating the home. By decorating the inside of the house, the home becomes an essential place for the family to achieve balance, well-being, and comforts. Having a home with familiar comforts brought peace and relaxation to the family from any outside threats and stress.

African American military wives consistently sought ways to quickly create an environment for attracting social support and empathy for coping. African Americans thrive for cultural interactions as a strategy to adapt and sustain emotional expressions (Blackmon & Thomas, 2013). Reverting to cultural practices and traditions is a positive coping strategy that manages a person feeling emotionally marginalized. Similarly, sharing the coping strategy with others so that their emotional state counters loneliness and minimizes feeling depressed about oneself despite environmental circumstances. These changes in routines versus new adventures in a new geographical area helped lift their spirits and kept them well engaged in the community. The women developed a focus or focal point to reflect positivity versus being sad or feeling pitiful. The women also shared their family traditions and acquired new knowledge concerning family

traditions with their newly formed social relationships. This theme became apparent as the military wives discussed previous relocations patterns and the practices to use religion, athleticism, social support, travel, and educational studies to problem-solve, rationalize, and even redirect stress or the management of stress.

The fourth theme emerged as the military wives discussed social support for employing coping strategies handed down to them by family and shared among friends. The African American military wives continually addressed their discomfort or disliked with what they perceived as lack of services, programs, and activities (i.e., urbanization) in Fairbanks. The wives internalized their frustrations, sometimes verbalizing internal and external needs to military support groups or social groups (i.e., church/faith-based attendees).

The military wives presumed that living in Alaska was like other locations only colder in temperature. They did realize not that Fairbanks is a community that is mostly non-urbanized. In the indigenous society, the wives did not have enough information on Arctic living to ask for specific assistance and support when they struggled to survive in a place that lacked urbanization. Overall, there was a strong preference to cope by spending time with family or establishing social relationships in community services groups (i.e., church, work, or the gym) for addressing life problems. In forming relationships, African American women shared their cultural experiences with other ethnicities, especially during holidays, deployments, and long winters.

Interpretation of the Findings Related to the Conceptual Framework

A segmented assimilation theory supports adaptation for migrant-type residents, such as African American military wives, which can occur differently than for those experiencing a classic assimilation theory (Portes & Rumbant, 2001). While in this Arctic indigenous community, African American military wives displayed a segmented assimilation path to integration and adaptation. The military wives encountered acculturative stressors not only with the Arctic environment but with community resources and services (i.e., finances, urbanization, and an association with people in the community). According to Diaz (2015), migrants like African American military wives depend upon three significant factors to be successful in assimilation into the host society: (1) the resources migrants (i.e., African Americans) bring with them, (2) family structure, and (3) framework of the host to show support. New knowledge emerged revealing the assimilation needs of Arctic Alaska's new residents who have ethnic diversities, familiar acculturation stress for a military wife relocating to the new community and unfamiliar stressors on military wives of African American descent, and adaptation strategies African American military wives used to overcome feeling marginalized in an Arctic community.

The generic qualitative inquiry revealed that many of the wives endeavored to convince family members to visit them while in Alaska. When unsuccessful or in the interim, the African American military wives scrolled social media sites to reminiscence family gatherings and communicated with family members on the telephone. Eventually, the African American military wives recreated memories from family traditions, events,

and gatherings to share African American traditions passed down within their culture and family for garnering social relationships.

Coping

The telling of one's story and sharing values and beliefs helps create a culture and self-sustaining community (Lavender-Bratcher, 2013). For African American military wives, sharing values and traditions established a familiar support system among friends. Being unprepared to be handle disruptive sleep patterns, variable changes in behavioral moods, incidents with feeling excluded or trapped, and unlearned on the advantages of light therapy were viewed as negative bi-products of living in an Arctic indigenous environment for the African American military wives. Traditional coping strategies helped the marginalized wives learn how to keep their families encouraged during the long winters and difficult transitional changes marginalized by *SAD* to intensify acculturative stress in an Arctic region.

Military members of a family are not able to interact with their physical family (i.e., mom, stepdads, uncles, cousins, and grandparents) due to a commitment to support the military mission. Military members may or may not be able to live close to family members. Separation can cause marginalization or negative feelings of exclusion (e.g., hurt, rejection, and sadness) from the family and family traditions, activities, and gatherings (Hall, 2015).

Environment

Alaska is home to the Northern Warfare Training Center (NWTC), which is the United States Army Alaska cold region training facility for geographic and

environmental expertise (Smith, 2016). Within this facility, the military have cold

weather instructors with expertise for search and rescue (SAR), teaching military

members and units how to operate within cold weather environments, withstand the

exterior elements of extremely freezing temperatures and landscapes, educate how to

safely maneuver tactical vehicles, maintain equipment, and care for personal gear and

health while supporting the military. Upon arriving in Alaska, commands have access to

specialized training for helping new soldiers acclimate to life in the Arctic. If the

commands choose not to use NWTC and develop their cold-weather training, the military

member is provided a foundation to begin adaptation to the environment.

A core acculturative obstacle causing disruptive and unfavorable perceptions for

adjusting the military wives' way of life for residing in an Arctic environment was not

knowing or having skills to shift living in a region with extreme weather and landscapes.

The military wives did not have a point of reference or training to teach them vital

survival skills required to live in an indigenous community. As mentioned in the

literature review, long-established Alaskan residents and Native Americans tribes have

traditional practices, wardrobes, consumption patterns, and tactical use of natural

resources to endure livelihood and culture in an Arctic region (Walch, 2016). Nowlan

(2013) described these daily practices as functional norms for sustaining, manipulating,

and maneuvering awareness for being in a rural terrain with landscapes involving

extended periods of darkness and freezing weather conditions. For many wives, the

active-duty service member is unavailable to help them acclimate and learn vital life-

saving tactics to living in an Arctic environment (i.e., driving on icy roads, purchasing

cold -weather clothing for the family, and survival skills when encountering wildlife). By having cold weather, instructors provide the military wives with educational resources and lectures furnishes them with a comprehensive awareness of Arctic knowledge, skills, and resources beyond depending on the active-duty service member.

Community Resources and Services

The second theme captures the military wives attempting to put down roots and establish some rhythm of routine for residing in an Arctic indigenous community. The second theme is not an unfamiliar stressor to a military wife who may use community resources and services into an Arctic indigenous community during relocation to help resettle the family. Obtaining clear guidance and availability concerning community resources and services within this indigenous community presented unique challenges that overwhelmed the military spouse.

The literature review outlined that 10% of the state population was military veterans. Also, 75% of Alaskan residents who reside close to one of the two military installations actively work in one of the five industries supporting Alaska's economy (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2018; Hunsinger, 2016). For a military wife to be a new resident of Alaska, employment trends support highly competitive employment ties and affiliation within industries comprised of oil, tourism, fishing, and federal government (Alaska Economic Trends, 2016). Fundamental economic roles and drivers are highly reflective based upon part-time and seasonality employment, ease of access to and possible expansive topography, public land ownership approvals, and natural resource benefaction through tribal council (Fried, 2016).

Furthermore, the military wife may encounter challenges to becoming employed without assistance to enter a unique workforce dominated by veterans as well as catering to more extensive corporate operations or specialized areas within the economy that are already underrepresented by African Americans, military veterans, and women. Possibly the community resources and services would be helpful for a military wife attempting to enter Alaska's workforce by offering alternative placement or recommendation on specific employers matching their job skills and experiences. Additionally, using the community resources and services for providing career re-modeling services to help re-train the military wives into another marketable career field suitable for industries in Alaska may be more supportive.

Another acculturative stressor under community resources and services focused on the geographical location and a lack of urbanization. By urbanization, the military wives were seeking access to assortments of businesses, restaurants, shops, boutiques, entertainment-focused establishments, and prevalent chain store merchants reflecting home or previous locations. The environmental and climatic aspects of Arctic Alaska mirror an extremely rural countryside with minimal industrialized features and accessibility to urbanized community services. Instead of the wives seeking assistance from public networks of support in the local community or within the military community, feeling overwhelmed, the women resorted to re-establish the intimate connections of home in their lives.

Alaska maintains a mostly rural environment in support of Alaskan Natives and the indigenous people's ways of life and economic development (United Nations, 1957).

In doing so, important factors are met in preserving Alaskan Native culture "handicrafts, rural and community-based industries, and subsistence economy and traditional activities" in addition to stressing the importance of land and indigenous peoples' right to it (Exner-Pirot, 2017, p24). While there are metropolitan areas within Alaska (i.e., Anchorage and Juneau), the vast majority of the state remains non-industrialized to uphold the unique beauty and frontier-like richness inhabited by Alaskan Native cultures. Communities use much local subsistence and businesses within the local and state economies.

Social Relationships

The traditional coping strategies also became an outreach tool for developing new social relationships to share acclimation knowledge with other women acclimating to an indigenous way of life. Families function to provide love, support (i.e., financial, emotional, & social), development, and nurturance among interactions to the family unit (Diaz, 2015). Therefore, marginalized African American military wives created non-traditional families while living in Arctic Alaska to help them and other military wives cope with indigenous living. Non-traditional families are not connected by kinship or marriage, instead they become functional families via interest, hobbies, or social relationships.

New friends and associates became the family the military wives created, not one necessarily born into within the Arctic Alaska community (Diaz, 2015). Social group relationships and social interactions provided comfort, guidance, and a reminder of intimate associations lost during relocation with the military to an unfamiliar community

far from home. Purposive interactions with other military wives provided opportunities to share the following: (a) ethnic foods, (b) religion, (c) family traditions, (d) personal values, and (e) beliefs reflective of positive thinking and patterns of behavior expressed in African American culture. Socializing and social relationships helped in adapting challenges and as outlets for learning to manage their emotions and stresses.

Within the new social relationships, the African American military wives learned how to survive in an Arctic environment (i.e., how to preserve fruits and can vegetables, maintenance of ethnic hair in cold environments, and dress in layers to offset the cold conditions). Thereby, the African American military wife reverted to historical African American traditions by re-creating a self-sustaining community that is familiar in helping them to overcome perceived relocation challenges, inadequate access to support, and absence in resources and provisions.

Limitations of the Study

In qualitative studies, it is challenging to quantify the data because each military wife had her perspective on how they perceived access to resources and relocating multiple times, as well as how they endured it. O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, and Cook (2014) describe limitations as uncontrollable restrictions that may affect the trustworthiness and validity of a study. The literature review is plentiful with military wives' experience in general; however, additional research is needed regarding the ethnic perspective of military wives' acculturation experiences into inclement locations that support military operations. The study was conducted with the probability of many limitations.

   The first limitation restricted the research to a city in the Arctic of Alaska. Arctic Alaska is an extreme northernmost community with a geographical location that supports on-going military operations. The literature review revealed limited research on African Americans' acculturation experiences and coping strategies to an Arctic community. The second limitation restricted the timeframe to 2 to 3 years for the African American military wives as transitional migrants to Arctic Alaska. A literature review substantiated military relocation occurs every 2 to 3 years as well as acclimation to an Arctic environment, and its unique climatic elements (i.e., temperature, SAD, and daylight) transpire within two winters but no more than three winters. Additionally, using method triangulation and source documentation using the US Census Bureau indicated a consistent increase in the African American female population residing in Alaska for the last 2 to 3 years (ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2018). Therefore, the scope and the results could not be generalized to other ethnic groups, geographical regions outside Arctic Alaska, or non-military wives of African American descent.

   The third and final limitation focused on the small sample size of 10 participants and obtaining data saturation in the research. According to Mohatt, Billera, Demeres, Monteith, and Bahraini (2018), data saturation is accomplished when enough interview data has been collected to answer the research question adequately and when the researcher no longer discovers any new resources or information. Data saturation was reached after the sixth participant's interview using thorough data collection and analysis practices. From the analysis, no new acculturation information materialized, and the repetition of the same answers occurred (Fusch & Ness 2015). The research revealed four

themes that African American military wives perceived as needed factors for acclimation and coping with acculturative stress into an Arctic environment: (1) environment, (2) community resources and services, (3) relocation stressors and, (4) social relationships. The findings have positive social change implications for the host society, military community, and ethnic, social groups for providing supportive social services practices to African American military wives. Social support services relating to a reduction in acculturative stress, overcoming adaptive challenges to an Arctic community, and improving the healthy lifestyle of African American females.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several areas exist for future studies, especially supporting changes in federal and state adherence to marriages. One area is to interview same-sex African American couples to see what their relocation experiences are similar in relocating to Arctic Alaska. A comparison can be made between same-sex African American couples and traditionally married African American couples' relocation experiences. This study investigated the experiences of traditional marriage military spouses. Same-sex military spouses are out there, and this study was not broad enough to capture this population.

Another area in research could focus on dual-military couples and their experiences and possibly different challenges than military couples where only one spouse is active duty (e.g., both military spouses are serving on active-duty assignments within the same geographical area). This experience is an additional stressor on the marriage, as well as on the children. These individuals have a different perspective on the

relocation experience, and this study does not capture this information. However, the research question could be targeted for an additional study of this population.

The current research study could be altered into a quantitative study by conducting a poll of a much larger sample of active-duty military spouses who have relocated multiple times from different geographical locations. This information could assist in helping agencies and professionals with a solid foundation of what subjects should be highlighted with military wives within their community.

The Implication for Positive Social Change

This study has implications for positive social change as findings can improve the local community and military support groups' awareness of Arctic acculturative stressors upon African American military wives. Research is unusually sparse concerning ethnic family support needs in an Arctic environment and how sociodemographic factors are necessary tools for identifying African American families needing supportive assistance for adaptation (Cross, Taylor & Chatters, 2018). The research problem addressed in this generic qualitative study was describing in detail the African American military wives' experiences and perspectives on relocating from a non-Arctic environment to an Arctic environment. Once the military wives moved to Arctic Alaska, they used coping strategies, coping resources to overcome acculturative stress, and meet the demands of daily life.

African Americans hold a strong sense of family and the need for social support and community. African Americans learn coping strategies through social encounters (St. Vil, 2015). The coping strategies help the marginalized African American military wives

learn how to keep their families encouraged during the long winters, as well as share with other women traditional coping strategies for enduring difficulties residing in an indigenous way of life. Family support created a positive impact and a direct effect on reducing acculturative stress and loneliness. When the African American military wives moved from the non-Arctic location to an Arctic location, many of these women experienced inner stress because relocating to Alaska meant leaving family, friends, careers, and social relationships.

Furthermore, African Americans possess strong ties to social relationships because mutual support, characterized by reciprocal giving and receiving of practical and emotional support, inspire an individual's positive self-esteem and sense of self-worth (St. Vil, 2015; Taylor, Chatters, Woodward, & Brown, 2013). Therefore, the implication for positive social change may evolve into professional counselors, social workers, physicians, mental health therapists, community advocates, social group leaders, community-based social service organizers being encouraged to develop, and implement culturally responsive strategies and supports for the migrant residents. A forum where the migrant residents can address the unique issues related to acculturation and coping strategies among African American military wives.

By following a generic qualitative inquiry, answers emerged about the research question, which asked, What are the acculturation experiences of African American military wives who moved to Alaska in support of military operations? Critical components on positive social support answered the research question for African Americans by substantiating the necessity for receiving emotional and instrumental

support (e.g., acclimation, childcare, & financial assistance) to cope with acculturation and acculturative stress. African Americans are more responsive to acculturation when they have social support resources tailored to them as new migrant residents of the military community.

Correspondence from ethnic, social groups, and the local host community help enhance the well-being of African American migrants to the new Arctic community. The research revealed that African American military wives need emotional support from family and friends in the community, which perform as a local resource guide in providing supportive information for a person to feel esteemed and accepted in the group (van Bakel, van Oudenhoven, & Gerritsen, 2017). The research revealed social implications for African Americans to receive informational support from medical officials, counselors, or spiritual leaders who help in defining, understanding, and coping with problematic events (van Bakel, van Oudenhoven, & Gerritsen, 2017).

Literature research reinforced the philosophy that African Americans thrive amid social companionship were spending time with others in leisure and recreational activities stimulate positive socio-emotional support to survive acculturative change. This sort of socio-emotional support can fulfill the basic human need of belonging, counteracting feelings of isolation, and loneliness (van Bakel, van Oudenhoven, & Gerritsen, 2017). The research findings revealed that African Americans require instrumental type support from the host society in countering feelings of isolation and loneliness. Instrumental support relates to community services for financial assistance, material resources, or social services' needs (van Bakel, van Oudenhoven & Gerritsen, 2017). Combined, these

social supports corroborate each other in alleviating acculturative stress in relocating and promoting problem-focused coping. The acculturative experiences materialized in several ways surfacing as unfamiliar elements with the environment, a lack of community resources, scarcity of resources for everyday relocation stressors, and establishing new social relationships. The research is consistent with its intent for revealing the cultural, social support, learning experiences, and strategies of African American military wives who had survived acculturation in Alaska in support of military operations, whereby other African American military wives receive valuable information about the Arctic community and cultivate new social networks for adapting to the environment.

Conclusion

The results of this study have positive social change implications for military wives. This research provides awareness and understanding of the acculturation stress African American military wives encounter attempting to transition into a community they have no connection to or familiarity with living. Additional research exploring the experiences of stress, social support, and coping strategies among African American military wives is needed. This research helps reveal how coping and social support significantly moderates the effects acculturative stress has upon African American military wives. Understanding the factors that play an essential role in the lives of mothers, is the first step towards helping those combat perceptions and management of stress. Adequate analysis and discussion of results in the generic inquiry allow expanding knowledge as to the interpretation of military wives relocating to unfamiliar geographical locations, its physical, psychological, and social well-being effects on the women.

Further, the analysis may help other military wives to cope with the unfavorable

environmental effects encountered when relocating.

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Appendix A: Demographic Background Information

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

1. What is your gender? Male/Female

2. Are you an African American Military wife affiliated with:
    a) Army
    b) Navy
    c) Air Force
    d) Marine
    e) Coast Guard
    f) Other: _____

4. What is your age? _____

5. For approximately how many Months_____ Year(s) _____ have you lived in Alaska?

6. For approximately how many Months_____ Year(s) _____ have you been an African American Military wife of an active-duty servicemember in the United States Military?

7. What was your previous Military assignment? _____

8. How many relocation assignments have you traveled with your active-duty servicemember in the United States Military?_____

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about African American Military wives' experiences and strategies applied when relocating to Alaska. The researcher is inviting African American women who are also Military wives to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via your e-mail or telephone communication response to the research. This form is part of a process called *"informed consent"* to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Demetria White, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to describe experiences and strategies for adjusting to a different culture used by African American Military wives who relocated to Alaska from a non-Arctic environment.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to:

- Answer multiple sources of data including a self-administered questionnaire (sent via e-mail). After the questionnaires have been completed, I will ask you to complete a semistructured , open-ended interview within one week of scheduling. Purposeful sampling will allow for data collection procedures among the target population to participate in the study. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes, and I will also allow an additional 30 minutes for introductions or questions. During the interview:

1. I will ask you to affirm you are an African American Military wife.

2. I will ask to validate that you are a transitional resident to Arctic Alaska during the first (2) years (winters).

3. I will ask about the experiences and strategies applied in relocating to an Arctic Alaska environment from a non-Arctic environment.

4. I will ask about your perceptions of SAD and its effects on African American Military wives. *SAD* is known as temporary winter blues or cabin fever.

Here are some sample questions:

- Tell me what you perceive as some difficult aspects for adjusting to Alaska?

- Tell me what you perceive as some easy aspects for adjusting to Alaska?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one within the community or social group(s) in Alaska or the Military will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as redacting information or memories. Being in this study would not pose a risk to your safety or well-being. Primary outcomes and benefits from the study are to shed light on the acculturative coping strategies that may help African American Military wives and add to Human Services' literature.

Payment:

There is no payment for your participation in the study.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. I will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research

project. Data will be kept secure by Demetria White. Therefore, there will be strict ethical procedures when gathering, concealing and safeguarding data concerning the participants' right to privacy, confidentiality, disclosure, and identity. The participant's identity will be kept private and disguised during and after the interview via numerical code name. I will maintain all data to include notes, transcripts, and audio-taped information in a locked box in a locked safe in a private office. I will encrypt all electronic files. Six years following the conclusion of the study, the researcher will burn all files to destroy the data.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Alternatively, if you have questions later, you may contact me via e-mail. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number 03-28-19-0536510** and it expires on **IRB will enter an expiration date: 03/27/2020.**

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by replying to this e-mail with the words, ***"I consent."***

   Please print or save this consent form for your records.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. Tell me your experiences relocating your family to Alaska?

2. Tell me about when you first learned you and your family would be relocating to an Arctic environment?

      a. Describe the time you talked to your family about relocating to Arctic Alaska?

      b. Tell me a story involving a barrier that significantly stressed you or your family in moving to Arctic Alaska.

3. Tell me what you perceive as some difficult aspects for adjusting to Alaska?

4. Tell me what you perceive as some easy aspects for adjusting to Alaska?

5. When you relocate to a new assignment, as a Military wife, tell me about your experience.

6. Explain how you perceive family background equips the Military wife to handle adaptation to a new environment.

7. During relocations, what items or activities assist you and your family in transitioning into the new assignment?

8. Now that you are living in Alaska, what is your understanding of SAD?

9. What coping strategies helped you or your family members with SAD?

10. How has your relocation to Alaska changed your priorities in reestablishing your household in a new assignment?

Dissertation Research

African American Military Wives' Experiences and Strategies applied when relocating to Alaska

- *Are you an African American Military Wife?*

- *Did you relocate to Alaska to support your active-duty husband and Military operations?*

- *Are you STILL within your first (2) winters or years in relocating to Alaska?*

  - ➢ **Public flyers posted in Fitness Centers and Family Support Centers.**

  - ➢ **Discuss experiences and strategies for adjusting to a different culture used by African American Military wives who relocated to Alaska from a non-Arctic environment.**

  - ➢ **The one-time interview session will take approximately 60 minutes, and I will also allow an additional 30 minutes for introductions or questions at the Noel Wein Library.**

  - ➢ **Participants will respond to a demographics and consent questionnaire before the interview.**

Interviews will be conducted at

The Noel Wein Library, 1215 Cowles Street, Fairbanks, AK 99701

Time: TBD in Private Study Room(s)

Demetria White, a Doctoral student at Walden University College of Social & Behavioral Science, is conducting a study. If you would like to be a part of this research or have any questions, contact me via emai.

This study has been approved by Walden University Institutional Review Board, # 03-28-19-0536510

Appendix E: Participant Biographical Data

P0A	P0A is an African American military spouse 23 years of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 29 months, previously residing in Florida, and has experienced two military relocations with her Army active-duty husband. She is a mom who works outside the home. She was born and raised in Florida and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P1B	P1B was an African American Military spouse 42 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 31 months previously residing in Georgia and has experienced four military relocations with her Army active-duty husband. She is a stay at home, mom. This participant was born and raised in Texas and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P2C	P2C was an African American military spouse 27 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 26 months previously residing in North Carolina and has experienced two military relocations with her Army, an active-duty husband. She is a stay at home mom. This participant was born and raised in Arkansas and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P3D	P3D was an African American military spouse 31 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 26 months previously residing in North Carolina and has experienced four military relocations with her Air Force active-duty husband. She is a mom who works and volunteers outside the home. This participant was born and raised in Kansas and Texas and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P4E	P4E was an African American military spouse 24 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 33 months previously residing in Maryland and

	has experienced two military relocations with her Army active-duty husband. She is a stay at home mother. This participant was born and raised in Mississippi and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P5F	P5F was an African American military spouse 27 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 35 months previously residing in South Carolina and has experienced five military relocations with her Army active-duty husband. She is a stay at home mom. This participant was born and raised in Florida and Tennessee and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P6G	P6G was an African American military spouse 38 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 27 months previously residing in Georgia and has experienced two military relocations with her Air Guard active-duty husband. She is a mom who works outside the home. This participant was born and raised in Illinois and had some previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P7H	P7H was an African American military spouse 30 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 27 months previously residing in Texas and has experienced three military relocations with her Air Force active-duty husband. She is a mom who works outside the home. This participant was born and raised in Washington and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P8I	P8I was an African American military spouse 26 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 28 months previously residing in Florida and has experienced two military relocations with her Air Guard, active-duty husband. She is a stay at home wife with no children. This participant was born and raised in Northern California and had limited

	experience living in an environment with cold weather.
P9J	P9J was an African American military spouse 29 yrs of age who has resided in Arctic Alaska for 32 months previously residing in Washington and has experienced three military relocations with her Air Force active-duty husband. She is a mom who started her own small business. This participant was born and raised in Georgia and had no previous experience living in an environment with cold weather.

Appendix F: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Weather

P0A	"I relocated to a cold, dark place like I never seen before. In the beginning, it was okay, but when the temperature changed, it was treacherous. The wind feels like tiny needles piercing against my skin."
P1B	"I could not believe how white and cold it was."
P2C	"Sitting around the first year waiting for the snow to leave. I did not know how to move or function in this cold, barren place. I never had to keep my body warm in negative temperatures."
P3D	"My body became numb in this empty and frigid place. It was way too cold to leave the house."
P4E	"The weather is awful. It was bitterly cold, and my spit froze. It was so white, and the cold wind and snow pierced my visible skin."
P5F	"I was excited to see snow. All I could see was a blanket of snow. It was too cold for a snowman. If the wind blew, it felt like sharp needles poking me."
P6G	"It was just dark all day and all night. Alaska was cold to blistering, leaving a bitter taste and attitude in your personality."
P7H	"Never have I seen anything like the cold and isolated area where we moved to. I did not like being miserably cold and downright freezing cold. I was sick of seeing white."
P8I	"When winter arrived with its blanket of whiteness, I did not realize how long winter would stay. It felt like winter would never leave. I became numb. I was bored looking at snow, shoveling snow, and watching for moose."
P9J	"It was a long winter. Always cold and nothing to do. I did not use to all that darkness and blowing snow in negative temperatures."

Appendix G: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Landscape

P0A	"I relocated to a freezing, cold dark place like I have never seen before. I did not want to be here!"
P1B	"They expect everyone to embrace a cold, empty wilderness! It is so cold that you do not want to move."
P2C	"Everyone thinks Alaska is an icy cold wilderness."
P3D	"I was scared because moose walk around everywhere in town and on the base."
P4E	"I did not know how to maneuver in the snow. Is there a class for the Military wife that teaches you how to walk and drive on ice and snow? I did not know how to walk on ice and especially in big boots. It was like I could not explain why the Military sent us to a barren place in the middle of a winter wilderness. Moose roam everywhere."
P5F	"This place is like a dry and abandoned desert, just white and cold."
P6G	"There is just nothing to do during the most prolonged and very dark time of the year. The air is very still, and you cannot make quick movements. You must practice walking."
P7H	"I screamed when I first saw a moose. I was walking to my car."
P9J	"I did not know how to drive-in snow and ice. I did not want to leave the house in fear of something happening."

Appendix H: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Lack of Urbanization

P0A	"No stores I heard of or local shops to buy trend or cute clothes. I researched online and knew that this place did not have a bunch of shopping options. I purchased a lot of things (charms, design accents, decorations, & accessories) before we packed up. I am glad I brought stuff with us because this place has nothing. When items hit the stores, it gets wiped out quickly."
P1B	"I heard how nice it is in Anchorage. It is the polar opposite of here. I wish we relocated there, but that place is 300 miles away. Why did the Military send us to Fairbanks? This place is empty. The thought of driving 300 gives me anxiety. Why does not the Military force or fund them into modernizing this community?"
P2C	"I cannot believe it is nothing here for shopping or entertainment. My kids do not have clothes to stay warm in Fairbanks. The clothes are ugly. They do not have a large volume of clothes. I can try to shop online. We try to go to Anchorage as much as possible. It is a long drive, however. We gotta leave this Mayberry USA town. There are no restaurants or nice clubs here. No variety, just hunting, and fishing." You must travel 300 miles to have options. In town and with the Military, there are few options."
P3D	"It's just cold and boring during the long winter. I see why people drink here. It is a lot to do in the summer but nothing during the winter? Everybody stays outdoors in summer cause you been shut-up for nine months. My husband plays in racquetball and baseball leagues. The kids and I go and watch."
P4E	"I shop for groceries on the base because it offers more options, and it's cheaper than in town. I attend church services on the base of convenience. The stores in town and on the base have limited products for Black/ mix hair and skin. My sister-in-law had to send me products for my skin and hair."
P5F	"This place is so scarce with resources to be considered a viable city in the USA. I have traveled around the world. Overseas seemed easier than here. You expect some differences or access to traditional stores, shops, hospitals, and schools."
P6G	"They got an abundance of sports stores for the kids and people who like being outdoors. They need stuff (businesses, stores, entertainment, etc.) here that nonlocals can recognize and those who don't like being outdoors. Just no options."
P7H	"I work not because of the finances but to stay active. It is easy to be depressed here. I get off work and just come home."

P8I	"Family support offers options to rent furniture and information about your finances. I just want more shopping options to explore and decorate. I am bored here just waiting for the snow and darkness to go."
P9J	"My family and I get frustrated desiring access to businesses, museums, theaters, concerts, and stores with variety. Overseas assignments are more accepting and more available support by locals to embrace the Military spouse."

Appendix I: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Financial

P0A	"They (Family Support) referred me to local community programs. The local programs lost their funding."
P1B	"It is hard to get a job here. I used online job sites. I think it is more word of mouth for openings. There are few Military preference jobs and positions here. The whole town is Military, and veterans, so Military wives are almost last in line for preference. You fight against the locals for Walmart jobs."
P6G	"Oh yeah, you need top quality gloves and boots for living here. This was an added expense we did not count on."
P8I	"We are struggling here financially. I have had financial counseling with the family support group, but I need to work full-time to make a viable contribution to our household. I want to work, but it is hard to find something substantial to pay off our debts. I go to school and hope I can get a degree which will yield a good income. I tried local employment services, but many jobs are minimum wage. My resume is well above minimum wage."
P9J	"Money is a major concern but going organic (changing eating habits) helps me to stay busy and not get depressed."

Appendix J: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Community Barriers

P0A	"Asked family support services for more Happy Lights, but they do not hand out any. I did use the Fairbanks childcare services once, but they got a long waiting list for help. They got many people doing home daycare, but we don't qualify for assistance."
P1B	"I am frustrated. Why did I leave my job to follow my husband for this? I can't qualify for, or I don't want to do those jobs for little pay."
P5F	"I accepted that my husband was gone, but this place feels like the walls are caving in on you."
P6G	"Cannot wait to go to Anchorage. I guess I got to learn how to sew and knit? I do not know what else to do to past the time."
P7H	"Nothing was here. No stores, restaurants, social events, or activities in Fairbanks for the Military or locals to do, especially during the winter. Other places, either the Military or events in the community, motivated you to participate."
P8I	"I am frustrated about it. There is nothing here to pass the time. It seems like Alaska gets the merchandise that everyone back home already has. We find out social news & developments or latest trends last. This includes music, sports, fashion, cars, shopping, and even news. We are disconnected from what is popular."

Appendix K: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Community Association

P0A	"Before we relocated to Fairbanks, other African American Military wives took me aside and educated me about living in an Alaska environment. They told me to purchase a happy light lamp. The lamp gives off vitamin D."
P3D	"I go to church, pray, and try to do volunteer in the community, but I cannot connect with these people."
P4E	"I used family support group services to help me stay busy. They told me about the community gardens and having organic food to help my children. I have booked a train-ride through Alaska with other families."
P5F	"I found one friend here whom I met at the gym in town. We connected well in class. We hung out a lot while our husbands were away. For 17 months, I was fine. We had gatherings at each other's house and with our families. When her husband came up on orders to leave, I became empty again. I did not know how to cope with this place."
P7H	"I asked my mom to come up for a visit when I was about to have the baby. It was great while she was with me. I did not want her to leave. She was my connection to my life back home. I have not found a connection to people like back home. I cannot seem to connect to locals here as in other places. We don't have anything in common."
P8I	"I am not super close to my family, but I do want friends here. I have not been successful in getting them yet. I think living here, you have to be in an activity to meet people and have friends."
P9J	"I meet other women through my husband. Funny thing is that they keep trying to show me how to knit. They sell items at auctions and church gatherings to raise money."

Appendix L: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Emotions

P0A	"I did not know what to expect besides cold weather. I tried to be positive."
P1B	"Trying to maintain our quality of life with limited resources. They expect everyone to embrace a cold, empty wilderness. We are not adjusting well to this way of life. The family struggles to make it through the day."
P2C	"I get really, really bored here. I try to find excitement here. I spend a great deal of time at church and involved in many ministries. I work not because of the finances but to stay active. It is easy to be depressed here."
P3D	"It felt like winter would never leave. I became numb. Someone told me to get a happy light. I was bored looking at snow, shoveling snow, and watching for moose. I heard in conversations to brighten up your house in the winter to fight off SAD."
P4E	"When I was bored, I cried and ate uncontrollably. To counter my sadness, I poured a lot into my family."
P5F	"I had to do something more than just eat and stare out the window. I was staring out the window waiting for the house to thaw out. I was sick of seeing white."
P6G	"I need help to support my children in balancing their emotions. They don't need a shrink; they need what is normal. They need balance. They need to be able to accept the change as well as remember the past."
P7H	"I have to keep moving so that I do not get depressed. I miss being back home, or at another location, you can at least drive to the next town in under an hour. Feeling trapped and having a lack of options makes me sad. If I am sad, then what about my kids. They are on an emotional roller coaster trying to adjust to life in the rural."
P8I	"I am tired more here than in the past. My body wants to just sleep. Sometimes I feel just off, like not myself. When I am bored, I just eat uncontrollably."
P9J	"We stayed on base for a while then purchased a house off-base. Although I love my home, I feel more alone and disconnected. Creating recipes and working in the garden helps with boredom. During the winter, I exercise at the gym to keep moving."

Appendix M: Data Analysis Sub-theme:Resetttlement

P0A	"I could find personal care products to keep my hair. I had to go more frequently to the salon to help me keep my hair so I could work. After moving to Alaska, I started having a hard time getting to sleep, then I would wake up a lot."
P1B	"Trying to maintain our quality of life with limited resources. This assignment is not like others. I don't know how to work through challenges in this cold, empty wilderness."
P3D	"I quickly set up the house for structure and sense of routine. An inviting home calms the family."
P4E	"I try to make our home very attractive. I search the internet for DIY stuff that will come off like Martha Stewart or on Pinterest."
P5F	"I had to do something more than just eat and sleep. I was staring out the window waiting for the house to thaw out. I was sick of seeing white."
P6G	"I got depressed and did not want to leave the house. I gained weight and cried a lot. Finally going to the doctor, they said I had SAD."
P7H	"I felt isolated. It was way too cold to leave the house or even go next door to the neighbor."
P8I	"My hair was breaking really bad. There are no hair products for Black hair sold in the stores in town or on the Military bases. Then my weight started fluctuating, and I could not fit my clothes."
P9J	"I started having weird moods and crying. I felt different, sometimes having anxiety moments. The church mothers told me to use bright colors in my house in the winter to lift the mood in the house."

Appendix N: Data Analysis Sub-theme: Family and Friends

P0A	"I was still very lonely, trying to adjust living here and missed having family & friends around. At home, there is always something going on to meet the social desires of anybody. If not, then you can go to the beach."
P1B	"I miss my family. I enjoy social outings and going out. I enjoy going to dinner at fine dining restaurants. I attend church and support church activities in the community. No one wanted to travel to Fairbanks. My family said they remembered how bad I described life here in Alaska. I left my friends whom I knew for years and struggled to make new friends."
P2C	"I scroll Facebook and other social media watching and reminiscing with my friends and family. I was missing all the gatherings. No one was curious to visit me. I told them I could not go shopping so my family says they cannot come. They do not have clothes to stay warm. We just talk on the phone or face time a lot."
P3D	"I called back home and listened to what was going on. I have not made any new friends here. This place makes me want my family. I wanted to change up the house to remind my family of happy and brighter days in this cold environment. I attend church, but they do not do a lot of projects or outings in the community. We socialized with other churches."
P4E	"I missed my family. My kids missed their friends and family. I felt so lonely when my husband was gone. I talked to other spouses in the family readiness groups who have lived here."
P5F	"When my friend was here, we went to the gym, got pedis and coffee shops. We had gatherings at each other's house with our families."
P6G	"I made some friends at work and at the gym. We hung out at each other's houses. We had a family game and movie nights. I could not have made it without friends here. I did not know what to do with myself. I was just alone. We planned trips out of town to travel to Anchorage and out of state. I believe it was so good because our spouses work together and get along as well. I am accustomed to not having my family around because of the Military. However, if I did not have these friends, I would have lost my mind."

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P7H	"I had no family around. I did what I was taught to by my mom and women in my family. I turned my loneliness into my family. I pray a lot and meditate."
P9J	"Military couples come over for game night & cookouts as we had back home. I have learned how to cook Filipino and Hispanic dishes. I have taken these get-togethers as opportunities to share Black culture and make new family and friends. I try to make Soul Food meals that can be stretched over several days. When I prepare dishes like Big Mama, my husband gets excited."