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A Study of Military-Connected Parental Perceptions of
Support, Engagement, and Climate

by

John Patrick Finnane

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty
of Lindenwood University School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

A Study of Military-Connected Parental Perceptions of
Support, Engagement, and Climate

by

John P. Finnane

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education
at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

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Abstract

This quantitative study was conducted to determine military-connected families' perceptions concerning Family Support, School Climate, and Family Engagement after implementing the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity (Astor et al., 2012). Further, this study aimed to determine whether there were significant differences between the districts participating in the study. Two school districts participated in this study. One school district had a student population of greater than 25% military-connected, and one had a population of less than 25%. A third district, which was 100%, chose not to participate in the study due to personnel's stressors on their garrison caused by the global pandemic.

The first part of the study consisted of the participants completing three portions of the School Family Relationships Survey (Panorama Education; 2015) on Family Support, School Climate, and Family Engagement. The second part of this research study was to conduct a statistical analysis, MANOVA, to compare the mean scores of the dependent variables to each other to test the hypotheses represented in this study. The results were analyzed to determine if statistically significant differences were present between variable mean scores.

The statistical analysis results revealed the dependent variable means were similar, regardless of the percentage of military-connected families in a particular school district. The variance of means was not statistically significant. For this reason, the researcher chose not to reject the Null Hypotheses and supported the Hypotheses.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

In 2016, there were 1.2 million school-aged children of military service members, but only 86,000, or 7%, actually attended schools administered by the U.S. Department of Defense on military installations throughout the world (Cole, 2016). The remaining military children attended schools administered by civilian public schools, private schools, and/or other civilian-run educational agencies (Cole, 2016). The educational success of military-connected children in schools was contingent upon educational professionals assessing their status on a routine basis (Kudler & Porter, 2013). However, military-connected children were often marred by institutional obstacles, which prevented educational professionals from measuring their status (Kudler & Porter, 2013). The U.S. Department of Education (2017) demanded solutions to address student achievement by enacting legislation targeting achievement and linking it to the federal funding of public schools. Parental involvement and the link to student achievement was the focus of numerous studies (Epstein, 2001). According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), “Parents with high involvement ratings, compared with those with low or median ratings, tended to have children with higher grades and scores. This finding held across all family income levels and backgrounds” (p. 30). An important focal point in improving students’ academic achievement has been determining how and to what degrees parental engagement affected student achievement (Fredricks et al., 2016).

Engagement was consistently linked in research as a conduit to student success (Fredrickset al., 2016). Further, engagement was an important factor in respect to students' academic pursuits (Fredericks et al., 2016). An important component of

parental involvement was how parents perceived family supports, school climates, and family engagements, as such knowledge might have informed parenting practices, as well as school-based policies, practices, and interventions that involved school personnel working with parents (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). For example, such research might have helped to inform the design and development of school interventions and programs intended to maximize parental involvement, which has been shown to have the most positive and powerful effects on student success (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Consideration and study of the plight of military-connected families with respect to the success of their military-connected children was warranted (Woodworth, 2016). Woodworth (2016) highlighted how frequent separations due to deployments of parents and other military commitments often created instability in military-connected families' lives and educations. Parents' military obligations presented students and their families with unique challenges different than their civilian peers (Woodworth, 2016). Elfman (2018) shared military-connected children typically attended nine different schools throughout their lives. These military-connected children were more susceptible to socioemotional and academic challenges at home and school than their nonmilitary-connected peers (Cole, 2016). Additionally, military-connected children faced increased exposure to intense issues and stressors related to their parents' military obligations, which often took priority over attending to their children's individual needs (Cotton, 2018).

At the time of the research, there was a knowledge gap in educational research regarding how military-connected students and parents navigated the challenges related

to supporting military-connected children in schools (Cole, 2016). It also was apparent military-connected parents found it challenging to balance schedule demands of the military, while also trying to meet their military-connected children's overall needs (Cole, 2016). Elfman (2016) asserted school administrators required a comprehensive understanding of military children's needs to ensure they could better implement interventions that addressed students' needs. Further, school employees needed to promote successful transitions for these transient students between schools, including specific programs and supports exclusively tailored to the needs of military-connected students (Masten, 2013). Cotton (2018) further identified educational professionals must facilitate families' connections to the opportunities and resources available to military-connected children outside of school. Numerous military-sponsored programs existed to assist with the most significant transition situations military-connected children encountered (Flittner-O'Grady et al., 2018).

However, institutions educating military-connected children not directly affiliated with the military bases faced resource challenges, as these support programs were typically being managed at military installations that were not logistically close to school (Flittner-O'Grady et al., 2018). Thus, the physical location of the military-connected family members' homes often created access issues to assistance programs designed for the military-connected children and their families (Flittner-O'Grady et al., 2018). This created a need for local school district employees to be incorporated into the trainings and programming that addressed the needs of military-connected students and their families (Flittner-O'Grady et al., 2018).

A major barrier in military-connected families' successful integration into civilian

schools was those military-connected perceptions with respect to the schools' climates, family supports, and family engagement levels (Astor, Jacobson, & Benbenishty, 2012). The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity (The Compact) was developed to provide support for military-connected families in the educational arena with respect to logistical challenges that arose due to families' relocations (Astor et al., 2012). The intent of The Compact was to establish a support structure to assist military-connected families in educational transitions (Astor et al., 2012). The language of The Compact also established requirements of all educational institutions to ensure success for military-connected children during transitions from school to school (Astor et al., 2012). The authors of The Compact sought to diminish the impact on military-connected children of military-connected separations from their parents (Astor et al., 2012). The language of The Compact provided a structure to assist these families through transitions in schools which may have had significant differences with respect to procedures and structures (Astor et al., 2012). Promoting a culture of resilience and well-being for military-connected children was positively connected to how well the children adapted to stressors presented by students' military affiliations (Masten, 2013). However, The Compact's mandated support interventions only accomplished the goal of eliminating structural barriers faced by military-connected families when military-connected families perceived the support to be valuable (Masten, 2013).

Beyond the need for support structures to ensure academic success, researchers have demonstrated parental engagement in a school positively impacted students' success in schools (Bahena et al., 2016). Positive parental perceptions and strong engagement with their children's schools had a significant impact on students' attitudes about their

schools and their motivation to achieve (Bahena et al., 2016). Studies and researchers have demonstrated that children with parents who were more engaged in their children's schools performed better academically (Bahena et al., 2016). Family engagement in schools also has been associated with the successes of school-level initiatives (Bahena et al., 2016). Researchers further have identified that parental engagement levels may have served as levers to boost academic achievement (Bahena et al., 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand parental perceptions related to the family support, school climate, and family engagement programs afforded to military-connected families in schools in order to assess the current views of military-connected families following the implementation of The compact. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military-Connected Children addressed issues related to military-connected children transitioning from one school system to another and attending public schools (Elfman, 2018). The Compact served as a guide for procedural measures related to enrollment, extracurricular participation, and educational programming (Elfman, 2018). Limited research has been conducted to further investigate parental perceptions of the schools' family supports, school climates, and family engagement programs for military-connected children post-adoption of The Compact (Stites, 2015).

The perceptions parents had of their children's schools and support services often influenced their children's attitudes about their schools (Cohen et al., 2009). Parental attitudes influenced children's attitudes and were linked to students' motivations, behaviors, and academic performances (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). Parental perceptions

also had a significant effect on students' engagement in school activities (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Positive perceptions of the school climate enhanced the levels of parental involvement in schools (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Increased parental involvement translated to enhanced academic outcomes and contributed to the emotional well-being of the student (Hill & Tyson, 2009). School personnel have made significant investments to develop programs to support students and their success in schools (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Families' perceptions of their schools' climates and support systems were found to be directly related to their children's successes in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Also, according to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), parents played crucial roles in their children's educational journeys. Parental engagement within schools required school employees to effectively engage parents in all facets of school life in order to build connections to their children's schools and learning environments (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). A cooperative partnership with parents occurred when school personnel clearly understood parents' attitudes and perceptions about their connections to the schools (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). When school personnel explicitly shared ways parents could be engaged at schools, parental engagement increased (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

The Gehlbach's Family-School Relationships Survey provided an instrument to the researcher which measured family perceptions and attitudes about topics critical to understanding family support, school climate, and family engagement (Schueler et al., 2017). These surveys provided a means of measuring the parental perceptions of their schools' climates and family supports being provided to their children, and family engagement programs available for military families (Panorama Education, 2015).

Investigation of the perceptions of parents with respect to the support provided to military-connected children in schools promoted opportunities to enhance the relationships between parental perceptions and students' achievement (Bahena et al., 2016). This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of military-connected parents of the three key areas related to children in schools. This study examined the relationship between the perceptions of military-connected parents and the following facets: (a) family supports, (b) school climates, and (c) family engagement programs. The Gehlbach's Family-School Relationships Survey was utilized as the conduit to military-connected parents to allow the researcher to gather data related to perceptions of family supports, school climates, and family engagement programs (Panorama Education, 2015).

Developing an understanding of parental perception as a means to improve the way parents viewed their children's schools was linked to significant gains in students' outcomes (Schueler et al., 2017). Family engagement in schools was positively correlated with student academic and social achievement (Schueler et al., 2017).

Research related to parental perceptions with respect to their children's schools was critical to the development of academic initiatives targeting the needs of special populations in schools (Schueler et al., 2017). Military-connected children were a special population due to the unique life circumstances they faced as a result of their parents' military services (Cotton, 2018). Parents' perceptions of schools and their levels of engagements needed to be examined to identify factors leading to students' academic achievements and successes when transitioning from school to school, which was very common for military-connected families (Schueler et al., 2017). Parents had significant roles and provided valuable perspectives that could have been to inform, to develop, or to

enhance school components addressing students' achievements, stability levels, and successes (Schueler et al., 2017).

Significance of the Study

In a study of the challenges faced by military-connected children, which included 1,000 social workers, Frey et al. (2014) presented respondents at a rate of 74.3% indicated interpersonal and family concerns were most critical. Furthermore, Stites (2013) indicated schools were essential to the individual development and growth of every individual person. Additionally, parents' deployments stress was directly related to increased emotional and behavior problems in school-aged children (Lester et al., 2016). Bolton (2011) added all military-children were impacted by the deployment process. Additionally, students in each age group experienced issues related to stress and changes that occurred in schools (Bolton, 2001). Typically, children who encountered adversity needed supportive adults who provided emotional and physical support (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). The purpose of this study was to provide data and to analyze parental perceptions of school support, in relation to family engagement, and school climates, which were key indicators related to military-connected children's success in school (Astor et al., 2012). This research contributed to parental perceptions of support provided to military-connected children schools systems' abilities to provide services, resources, and support to military-connected children (Astor, Jacobson, & Benbenishty, 2012). Perceptions of parents of military-connected children's schools' supports, climates, and family engagement programs afforded to military-connected parents and their children represented an area of research not previously studied in depth (Astor et al., 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Parent and school relationships and motivation of parents to form collaborative and cooperative relationships with the teachers in schools in which their children attended, and how these interfaces impacted the success of children in school have been extensively researched (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Epstein and Salinas (2004) shared positive parental involvement was a critical element for school personnel to understand and nurture. There was a significant body of research pertaining to parental involvement, but seldom have the perceptions of military-connected parents with respect to their child's schooling been considered (Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Elfman, 2018). There were additional stressors placed upon military-connected families with respect to deployments, temporary duty assignments, frequent relocation, and financial challenges (Elfman, 2018).

The lives of military-connected members also had been researched and documented extensively in literature (Elfman, 2018). However, the connection of parental involvement to the military-connected children's success in school was a topic which was a relatively sparse body of research (Elfman, 2018). The researcher used Epstein's et al., (2020) six typologies of involvement as a guide to the theoretical framework which were (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with the community. The researcher chose to utilize Epstein's (1995) model for parent involvement which outlines six types of parent involvement to provide support for children's learning and well-being in school as the theoretical framework for this study (Epstein et al., 2020). Framing the parental perceptions of school support, family engagement, and school climate required a connection to a framework, which correlated closely to those variables. Epstein's typology (Epstein et al., 2020), which formed the basis of a framework for understanding

parental involvement in schools included:

Type 1 – Parenting: Helping families to establish conducive home environments to support their children’s learning and helping schools to understand family cultures and backgrounds to the benefit of their children. •

Type 2 – Communicating: focusing on effective two-way communication channels between the school and the home. •

Type 3 – Volunteering: Improving the recruitment, training and schedules of volunteers to assist teachers and at other events at the school, and enabling teachers to work with volunteers who can support the school and pupils. •

Type 4 – Learning at home: involving parents in the academic learning of their children, including goal-setting, homework assignments and other curriculum-related activities. •

Type 5 – Decision-making: including parents as participants in governance, making school decisions and advocacy activities through various school committees and parent organizations. •

Type 6 – Collaborating with the community: coordinating services and resources for parents, pupils and the school with various community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations and colleges or universities, and enabling all to render their services to the community. (Epstein & Salinas, 2004), (Epstein et al., 2020).

Epstein’s (1995) social organization model highlighted the successes of children in schools were reliant upon parents and teachers working together to exchange information and ideas (Epstein et al., 2020). Also, Epstein’s (2001) model of overlapping

spheres of influence demonstrated the three major elements to children's learning and development, which were schools, families, and communities. It was important to distinguish all three spheres' success was contingent upon the other two spheres, thus each sphere required pairing with the other two spheres (Epstein, 2001). When the three were directly linked, schools were recognized as cooperative entities with both families and the communities at large (Epstein, 2001). Gehlbach, Young, and Roan (2012) emphasized it was crucially important to have extensive knowledge related to all of the people within the school settings. Certainly, in-depth knowledge of students' academic and social tendencies led to a plethora of positive indicators related to the student (Gehlbach et al., 2012). Student success was suggested by Epstein (2009) to be contingent upon a close relationship between teachers and parents. This resulted in a more trusting relationship and parents who were sensitive to the plight of teachers (Epstein, 2009). This study examined military-connected parental perceptions of three variables: (a) school support, (b) family engagement, and (c) school climate. Gaining insight through the administration of surveys aimed at understanding parental perspectives, including their thoughts and feelings yielded what Gehlbach et al. (2012) explained as social perspective taking. In this case the researcher was seeking to gain perspectives related to the perceptions of parents with respect to school supports, levels of family engagement, and school climates. Once perceptual data was collected, the researcher made inferences about a process, which in this case is the administration of surveys (Gehlbach et al., 2012). Gehlbach et al. (2012) referred to as the perceiver making determinations about the "target" (p. 4). In this study, the perceiver was the researcher, and the targets were the parents who participated in this study (Gehlbach et

al., 2012). Epstein's (1995) framework for parental involvement was well suited as a theoretical framework, as the typologies contained within his model directly correlated to the three variables in this study (Epstein et al., 2020).

The Gehlbach Family-School Relationships Survey was used to provide a measure of perceptions of parent engagement, parent support, and school climate to address the following research questions. The following research questions guided the study:

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

RQ1: What were parents' perceptions of family support in schools that were (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H1: There is a significant difference between parent perceptions of family support in schools that were (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ2: What are parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H2: There is a significant difference between parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ3: What are parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H3: There is a significant difference between parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

Study Limitations

1. The researcher chose to limit the study to three military-connected school districts which represented one 100% military-connected, one greater than 25% military-connected, and one less than 25% military-connected schools? The one school district which was 100% chose not to participate, due to issues related to the global pandemic. This is further explained in the methodology chapter three.
2. Quantitative data was limited to surveys conducted at schools connected to military bases. A smaller sample size in respect to the overall military population was generated.
3. The researcher only selected military-connected school districts.
4. The COVID Pandemic could present issues with respect to parental responses.

Parental responses will need to be related to the prior year of school due to COVID restrictions currently in place in all three school districts.

Study Assumptions

The researcher assumed approval will be granted from school superintendents. The researcher also assumed the superintendents found value in the study and will encouraged district parents to complete the survey. Further, the researcher assumed parents seriously weighed their survey responses. It was also assumed parents completing the survey will do so with integrity. The researcher assumed parents were thoughtful

with respect to their responses. Additionally, the researcher believed the data collected was accurate. The researcher believed the data provided the necessary detail to address the research questions in this study. Additionally, it was assumed the researcher's hypothesis was correct.

The researcher also made further assumptions related to the MANOVA statistical measure that the samples were independent, Multivariate normality (somewhat robust, unless highly skewed), and equality of variance-covariance multivariate. There were three dependent variables contained within this study. The researcher believes the MANOVA was a good fit with the intent of this study. Further, the researcher assumed the use of the MANOVA allowed means to be compared within each set of parent responses, as well as descriptive statistics related to a comparison of means between the sets of parental responses.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for the purposes of this research study.

Department of Defense Education Activity. The Department Defense Education Activity, or DoDEA, as one of only two Federally operated school systems, was responsible for planning, directing, coordinating, and managing pre-kindergarten through 12th grade educational programs on behalf of the Department of Defense (DoDea, 2020).

Deployment. Deployment referred to the relocation of forces and material to desired operational areas and encompassed all activities from origin or home station through destination (Farmer et al., 2014).

Family Engagement. The degree to which families become involved with and interact with their children's school (Panorama Education, 2020).

Families Overcoming Under Stress or FOCUS. A program which provides resilience training to military families (FOCUS, 2020).

Family Support. Families' perceptions of the amount of academic and social supports they provided their children with outside of school (Panorama Education, 2020).

Greater than 25% Military-Connected schools. Military-Connected referred to service members, their spouses, and their children whether active duty, National Guard, reserve, or retired military -- regardless of branch or length of service. For the purpose of this study more than 25% of the families in a school district meet this definition (Bonura & Lovald, 2015).

Less than 25% Military-Connected schools. Military-Connected refers to service members, their spouses, and their children --whether active duty, National Guard, Reserves, or retired military regardless of branch or length of service. For the purpose of this study less than 25% of the families in school districts met this definition (Bonura & Lovald, 2015).

Military-Connected. Military-Connected referred to service members, their spouses, and their children, whether active duty, National Guard, Reserves, or retired military regardless of branch or length of service (Bonura & Lovald, 2015).

Military Family. Military families were defined as spouses and dependent children (age 22 and younger) of men and women on active duty or in the National Guard or Reserve (Cozza & Lerner, 2013).

NAD. The Non-Active Duty, or NAD, was defined as Non-Active-Duty reservist members of the military regardless of branch of service (Lester et al., 2012)

No Child Left Behind. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which passed

Congress with overwhelming bipartisan support in 2001 and was signed into law by President George W. Bush on Jan. 8, 2002, was the name for the most recent update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Klein, 2015.)

100% Military-Connected schools. Military-Connected referred to service members, their spouses, and their children whether active duty, guard, reserve, or retired military regardless of branch or length of service (Bonura & Lovald, 2015). For the purpose of this study, 100% of the families in school districts met this definition (Bonura & Lovald, 2015).

Parents. "Parents" were defined as parents of a student and included a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as parents in the absence of parents or guardians (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2020).

Perceptions. Source of behaviors that individuals needed to understand in order to understand specific behaviors of others was defined as perceptions (Bosworth et al., 2011).

Permanent Change of Station. Permanent Change of Station, or PCS, was defined as a directive requiring the service member to change duty stations per the needs of the military (Farmer et al., 2014).

Pre-Deployment. Pre-Deployment was defined as the period where the service members and their families were organizing and preparing for the service members' deployments and absences from the immediate family units (Farmer et al., 2014).

School Climate. School climate referred to the quality and character of school life (National School Climate Center, 2020). School climate was based on patterns of students', parents', and school personnel's' experiences of school life and reflected norms,

goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Center, 2020).

U.S. Department of Education. The agency of the federal government that established policy for, administered and coordinated most federal assistance to education. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Temporary Duty Deployment. Temporary Duty Deployment, or TDY, was defined as the requirement of a service member to travel to another duty station to obtain additional training or to attend advanced schooling in their military careers (Farmer et al., 2014).

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children was defined as specific guidelines that supported the military-connected child through school transitions from state to state (Astor et al., 2012).

Summary

The focus of Chapter One was in part to elaborate on the challenges faced by the military-connected child and the reasons for the implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Lester & Flake, 2013). The Compact provided military-connected children and their families with specific educational process assurances when transitioning to new schools (Lester & Flake, 2013). These safeguards were important logistically, but did not ensure social and emotional support for combatting stressors military-connected children encountered as part of their parents' military commitments (Lester et al., 2016). Another focus of the chapter was to discuss the issues military-connected children encountered and how this contributed to

their school performances (Lester et al., 2016). An additional focus of Chapter One was the role of parental perceptions of the school environments and specific interventions provided to their children (Lester et al., 2016). Limited research has been conducted investigating parental perceptions of school and military-connected children for this reason this study was significant (Lester et al., 2016). Wadsworth et al. (2017) supported this significance, as she detailed neither the U.S. Department of Defense nor the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs had examined the emotional or academic success of military-connected children as they related to the perception of their parents.

Chapter Two will detail a review of the literature surrounding the topic of the military-connected children, the impact on military-connected children, and background information related to the military's structure and culture. The researcher provided definition to this area of research and explore research elements associated with the military-connected child in school. The research included school personnel who were part of the military-connected children's experiences at school. The study included information related to the roles and responsibilities of administrators, counselors, social workers, and classroom teachers in military-connected schools. The primary objective was understanding parental perceptions related to the military-connected children, their school experiences, and the stressors commonly associated with military separations. Specifically, the researcher sought to research the following variables: (a) school supports, (b) family engagement levels, and (c) school climates.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The lifestyle of military personnel has imposed hardships on military-connected families and their children (Wolf et al., 2017). Frequent moves where military service members received permanent changes of station or moved from one assignment or base to another are a reality in the life of military-connected children (Wolf et al., 2017). Military service members also have encountered frequent separations from their families and children due to temporary duty deployments or assignments, which were referred to as TDY or Temporary Duty Assignment (Bonura & Lovald, 2014). The TDY assignments could have been more frequent, and the duration of TDY assignments ranged from two to three months and could have lasted up to a year (Blaisure, 2016).

Military-connected children endured lives without parents and sometimes without both parents due to both parents actively serving in the military (Lester & Flake, 2013). Consequently, one significant aspect of the military-connected children's lives compromised was their abilities to be successful at school (Lester & Flake, 2013). Lester and Flake (2013) supported this assertion, while conveying 14% of the children in their study had experienced negatively skewed outcomes at school.

Academic success in school was contingent upon the child having the support systems and structure to support academic achievement (Buffman, Mattos, & Weber, 2009). When children did not have the necessary support to be successful in schools, it was common for school personnel to respond using interventions, which were specifically designed to remedy deficiencies the child lacked to be successful (Buffman et al., 2009). Buffman et al. (2009) also depicted the intervention process as a series of steps that included identification of the problems students or families encountered, the

origins of the problems, prescribed intervention, and determinations as to whether the intervention provided was successful. Tomlinson (2015) articulated it was a common occurrence for teachers who were desiring to provide for children who lacked clothing, school supplies, or food often were directed to utilize resources to assist from school social workers or other adults in school. Children experiencing emotional issues in which children needed food, medical assistance for their mental well-being, or proper housing presented a figurative roadblock to the children's learning and emotional statuses with respect to Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs (Tomlinson, 2015). Further, it was necessary to train teachers to understand the obstacles presented to students and to implement supports to ensure the children's basic needs were met (Tomlinson, 2015).

Military-connected children were different from their non-military peers with respect to seeking assistance or asking for help (Astor et al., 2012). Military-connected families were often more private and less forthcoming in relation to struggles they may have been encountering due to fear, such information may negatively impact their military career path (Chandra & London, 2013). Children's needs with respect to emotional status, feeling safe, being hungry, and the desire for children to feel loved and cared for were often unintentionally hidden by the children themselves (Tomlinson, 2015). School professionals, such as teachers, counselors, social workers, and administrators, were often unaware of problem areas related to military-connected children (Kudler & Porter, 2013). There were a variety of reasons military-connected families were more closed with respect to information divulged to school personnel, ranging from loyalty to the military system to security issues related to their roles in the military (Chandra & London, 2013). Access was often limited due to researchers' lack of

understanding of the military structure and the fear that the service members or their families might have been overwhelmed due to the additional burdens, which could have been imposed upon them due to research elements (Chandra & London, 2013). Many studies have documented the difficulties spouses experienced related to military service (Chandra & London, 2013). However, Chandra and London (2013) conveyed few studies had explored the impact of parental military service on military-connected children. The challenges of obtaining insight through the lenses of the military members or their families were significant (Stites, 2015). Stites (2015) conveyed prior research failed to arrive at any findings in relation to military service and its impact on military-connected children in schools.

Columbia (2017) shared a large portion of the responsibility to assist military-connected children was placed on the local school district budget with less than 10% of funds related to services for military-connected children derived from the Federal Government. Bolton (2011) presented the notion numerous researchers felt additional study was future research needed to include the impact of military-connection on military-connected children. The emphasis of this review of the literature was to understand the military-connected family and military-connected child's life and school challenges. Further, the researcher sought to understand parental perceptions of the school climate, family engagement in schools, and family support, post-adoption of The Compact. The frequency and availability of such resources were researched to gain an understanding of the needs of military-connected children and available tools to address them.

The number of military-connected children identified with parents serving in the

U.S. Military in 2013 between the ages of birth and 10 years was 750,000 (Lester & Flake, 2013). Military families were represented as a diverse group who had varying needs and represented numerous, varied demographics (Clever & Segal, 2013). The need to support this special population of children was encouraged by Cole (2016), who stressed advocates of children in school districts should align support systems for military-connected children. Specifically, Astor et al. (2012) indicated military children changed schools approximately every three years. Cotton (2018) stressed the U.S. Military was a unique subgroup and should be considered its own unique entity, because military-connected children experienced stressors non-military peers did not experience.

When evaluation of all of the impacts on children was complete, school mobility was identified as the most common risk factor for military-connected children (Masten, 2013). Although school mobility was a common component of the military lifestyle, their civilian counterparts were unaware of how military families' life experiences and frequent family separations impacted a child (Woodworth, 2016). Woodworth (2016) identified that 43% of military-connected families reported having at least one child in their household. The total military child population was estimated to be approximately 1.9 million (Woodworth, 2016). This highlighted the need to address the challenges military children faced due to the significant size of this sector of the population (Woodworth, 2016). Cole (2016) noted the plight of military-connected children often included both academic and emotional issues in school - related to separations caused by their parents' military obligations. Masten (2013) also identified young military-connected children were especially sensitive to military-family separations and education could have been the stabilizing force for these children.

Demographics of Military-Connected Families

The military-connected child faced a plethora of obstacles related to their parents' military service (Cotten, 2018). Lack of stability and adjustment were common challenges faced by military-connected children (Cotten, 2018). Clever and Segal (2013) provided data, highlighting the impact on grade school children whose parents were deployed 19 months or longer in a three-year period. The children did not perform as well in schools as their military-connected peers who had parents deployed for less than the 19-month time period (Clever & Segal, 2013). Farmer, Jackson, and Franklin (2014) cited that 33% of military families relocated each year, often separating the active-duty service member from their children. Farmer et al. (2014) detailed a variety of reasons active-duty service members were forced to separate, including the permanent change of placement (PCS), which sometimes forced the service members to decide if their families relocated with them. Temporary Duty Deployments, or TDY, also were described as short-term assignments in which family members were not permitted to accompany the service members (Farmer et al., 2014). Deployments were defined as long-term relocation of forces to support needs in the intra-continental United States, or more remote locations around the world (Farmer et al., 2014). In this case, military-connected spouses and children were not permitted to travel with the active-duty service members (Farmer et al., 2014). Woodworth (2016) shared the majority of military-connected children stated the most challenging part of being a military family was the separations from their parents for deployment or training. It was not uncommon for military families to have significant stressors related to adjustment and instability often met with minimal and insignificant forms of support (Ohye, et al., 2016). Additionally, Esposito-Smythers

et al. (2011) cited Pentagon documents that revealed mental health-related visits connected to military-connected children increased 50% since the invasion of Iraq that took place in 2003.

The complexity of military-connected families, which consisted of the service members and their spouses, the service members, and their spouses and children, or just the service member and their children represented a significant portion of the combined military population (Clever & Segal, 2013). In fact, according to Clever and Segal (2013), the number of military spouses to children had exceeded military service members at a ratio of 1.4 to 1. Historically military-connected spouses' children were referred to as military-dependents, which was often considered degrading to military spouses (Bonura & Lovald, 2015). Since the early 1970s, the military transitioned to an ALL-VOLUNTARY FORCE, or AVF family composition, and dynamics became more important to the operation of the military (Clever & Segal, 2013). Military-connected populations were largest for spouses and children under the age of 26, as military-connected children received benefits until the age of 21 (Bonura & Lovald, 2015). President Barack Obama worked with the joint chiefs of staff to redefine the definition of the term military family (Clever & Segal, 2013). This definition was significantly broader and more inclusive, as he included active-duty service members, National Guard Members, and Army Reserve members. Additionally, Clever and Segal (2013) emphasized the immediate family, as well as extended family members, were part of President Obama's vision of the military family. This represented a fundamental shift in how our nation recognized the members of the military family (Clever & Segal, 2013).

The inclusive nature of the more comprehensive definition of the military family

was concurrent with the change of the military's vision of the military-connected family itself (Clever & Segal, 2013). In fact, before the transition to AVF in the draft era where members were generated from a formal procedure where they were mandated to serve, the military's definition of the military-connected family only accounted for military officers, and their families as enlisted members were typically young and unmarried (Clever & Segal, 2013). Recognition of the vast increase in the number of enlisted members who also had spouses and children was a fundamental shift (Clever & Segal, 2013). Prior to the advent of the AFV enlisted military members were discouraged from having spouses or children as military membership expected enlisted service members to ensure military service was their primary focus (Clever & Segal, 2013). Current military leadership did not encourage enlisted members or officers to delay marriage or having children due to their service commitments (Clever & Segal, 2013). Clever and Segal (2013) also shared, having a spouse and children in the military had become a familiar entity of military life.

Understanding the military-connected family required comparison to the civilian population. Clever and Segal (2013) documented selected demographic characteristics of active duty, National Guard and Reserves, and civilian populations, which included sex, race, ethnicity, education and degree attainment, marital status, and data related to children. Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve total population was a fraction of the civilian worker population represented in the table as 2,266,992 versus 91,208,300 when compared with the total population of civilian workers from a similar age range, 18 to 45 years old (Clever & Segal, 2013). The average percentages of female civilian workers were 47.3%, and male civilian workers were 52.70% (Clever & Segal, 2013).

The average age of Active Duty members was 28.6 years, the average age of Guard and Reserve was higher at 32.1, whereas the average age of Civilian Workers was 31.9 (Clever & Segal, 2013). Perhaps most striking was the disparity which occurred when male and female data were compared (Clever & Segal, 2013). The female Active Duty percentage was a mere 14.5%, and the female Guard and Reserve was 18%; astonishingly the female civilian worker percentage was 47.3% (Clever & Segal, 2013).

In contrast, the male Active Duty was 85%, the male Guard and Reserve was 82%, and the male civilian worker percentage was 52.7% (Clever & Segal, 2013). This stark contrast was relevant with respect to understanding the makeup of the military and the dynamics of the military family as the hegemony of the military was depicted as male (Clever & Segal, 2013). The race disparity was significantly less slanted as White comprised 69.80% of the Active Duty, 75.7% of the Guard and Reserve, and 72.2% of the Civilian workers. Black or African American for the Active was 16.9%; for Guard and Reserve it was 15.00%; and Civilian Workers was 12.90% (Clever & Segal, 2013). Asians represented a small percentage per category with 3.80% Active Duty, 3.10% Guard and Reserve, and Civilian Worker at 5.70% (Clever & Segal, 2013). The category of Ethnicity had two subcategories, Hispanic and Non-Hispanic (Clever & Segal, 2013). Active-Duty Hispanic was 11.20 %, Guard and Reserve Hispanic was 9.80 %, and Civilian Worker Hispanic was 19.32% (Clever & Segal, 2013). There was a disparity that ranged from 8.12% to 9.51% (Clever & Segal, 2013). Active-Duty Non-Hispanic was 88.8 %, Guard and Reserve Non-Hispanic was 90.2 %, and Civilian Worker Non-Hispanic was 80.8% (Clever & Segal, 2013). The ethnicity data represented showed a significant difference between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic at each category (Clever &

Segal, 2013).

Education, or highest degree achieved, was evaluated in five subcategories: (a) No high school diploma or GED, (b) high school diploma or (c) GED, Bachelor's degree, (d) advanced degree, and (e) Unknown (Clever & Segal, 2013). Active-Duty members who did not achieve a high school diploma or GED were 0.5%, Guard and Reserve in the same category was 2.4 %, and civilian workers for the no high school or GED category was 10.7% (Clever & Segal, 2013). The high school diploma and GED category was interesting as the Active Duty and Guard and Reserve were 79.1% and 76.8% respectively, which contrasted with the Civilian Worker in the same category, which was 60% (Clever & Segal, 2013). The data represented most military service members attaining their high school diplomas or GEDs (Clever & Segal, 2013).

Bachelor's degree completion percentages were 11.3% for Active Duty, 14.3% for National Guard and Reserve, and 20% for the Civilian Worker (Clever & Segal, 2013). Active duty who completed advanced degrees was 7.0%, Guard and Reserve was 5.5 %, and Civilian Worker was 9.2% (Clever & Segal, 2013). The category of marital status data showed almost 60% of active duty were married at 56.6%, Guard and Reserve was 47.7%, and Civilian Worker was 43.0% (Clever & Segal, 2013). Divorced members of the Civilian Worker were 10.0%, the Guard and Reserve was 7.3%, and the Active duty was 4.5% (Clever & Segal, 2013). The Widowed/Other category was not significant as all values were 40% or less (Clever & Segal, 2013). There were two subcategories represented in the category of children portion of the data set: (a) With dependent children at home and (b) the Average number of Children (Clever & Segal, 2013). The Active Duty with dependent children percentage was 44.2%, National Guard and Reserve

43.3%, and Civilian worker 43.1% were all similar (Clever & Segal, 2013). The average number of children for each category was identical to two children (Clever & Segal, 2013).

In summary, the military was mostly male, white, non-Hispanic, and a vast majority had only achieved their high school diplomas (Clever & Segal, 2013). The Active Duty members had a higher percentage with respect to marriage as well (Clever & Segal, 2013). The average percentage of Active Duty and Guard and Reserves was 43.75%, which was very close to the Civilian worker at 43.10% (Clever & Segal, 2013). It appeared the data represented showed the military population was like the Civilian Worker concerning the families and children (Clever & Segal, 2013).

While the information related to Clever and Segal's (2013) depiction of the Active Duty, National Guard, and reserve, there were differences between the membership of the military. Whether a service member was permanent active-duty status, or if they were called to duty often defined the level of stress encountered by the service member and their families (Bonura & Lovald, 2015). Stark contrasts also were described between active-duty officer families and those of enlisted service members (Bonura & Lovald, 2015). This distinction was important as military-connected children were likely to exhibit similar stressors to their parents (Bonura & Lovald, 2015). Understanding the role the parents had in the military was an important factor with respect to understanding issues their children might encounter (Bonura & Lovald, 2015).

The Military-Connected Child

The study of the military-connected child concerning deployment was an opportunity to gain understanding related to the plight of military-connected children

(Cotton, 2018). It was also essential to understand what military-connected children were exposed to and encountered as they followed the path of their parents' service commitments (Cotton, 2018). Children needed love, affection, and consistency (Cotton, 2018); they excelled with predictable routines and familiar surroundings (Cotton, 2018). Military-connected children carried an extra bane as their parents' or guardians' military service created an environment that was not predictable or stable (Woodworth, 2016). The military-connected children encountered hardships that included family separation due to service commitments, frequent moves, and changing schools (Cozza & Lerner, 2013). When children were separated from their parents, the children's emotional stability was compromised and sometimes revealed adverse behaviors (Osofsky & Chartrand, 2013). Military-connected children faced frequent school moves, which prompted children to respond to situations through their unique capacity to manage stress (Astor et al., 2012). How children responded to the demands of military-connected service obligations, specifically, the deployment cycle was often contingent upon variables related to their family and school connection dynamics (Cotton, 2018).

Military-connected children were a large group (Woodworth, 2016); in fact, the current population of military-connected children was more than two million children who represented 43% of the total military who had least one child (Woodworth, 2016). Lester and Flake (2013) noted military-connected families typically moved every two to three years. The impacts on military-connected children included being forced to leave friends, classmates, teachers, and community support systems (Lester & Flake, 2013). These stressors impacted the military-connected children's well-being and ability to maintain success in school (Wadsworth et al., 2017). This often made it more difficult

for the children to form relationships with their peers (Wadsworth et al., 2017). Frequent moves and separations further resulted in curricular gaps with respect to standard mastery and prerequisite skills, due to disparities between schools and school districts (Garner, Arnold, & Nunnery, 2014). Military-connected children were generally young children (Clever & Segal, 2013); in fact, 47% of active-duty members' children fell in the preschool age (Clever & Segal, 2013). This was significant in respect to further understanding the military-connected child, as Clever and Segal (2013) documented, many were school age or younger, as only 11% were high school age or older. The Military Child Coalition (2014) reported data correlated to military-connected children that identified several significant areas of concern. The data highlighted the notion where military-connected children were likely to move six to nine times during Kindergarten through 12th grade education (Military Child Coalition, 2014). The Military Child Coalition (2014) "also provided additional information, sharing the military-connected children moved and changed schools three times more often than their civilian peers, while over 80% of military-connected children attended public schools and less than 8 percent attend Department of Defense schools" (p. 40).

Challenges, transitions, separation, loss, and relationship maintenance were common factors associated with military-connected children due to their parents' military careers (Dayton et al., 2014). Most military-connected children conveyed their most significant challenge was related to their parent or guardian being deployed (Woodworth, 2016). Transitions included children being parented by both parents then transitioning to a single parent structure, due to the military obligation that separated parents or caregivers from their children (Wolf et al., 2017). Lester et al. (2016) shared military

members often were absent due to service commitments from important milestones of their military-connected children, which resulted in the children experiencing decreased emotional and social stability.

Military-connected children often were left to cope with getting adjusted to new surroundings and new communities (Wadsworth et al., 2016). There were numerous cases where the military-connected children had to adjust to temporary relocations (Wadsworth et al., 2016). This was due in part to the fact family members who lived across the country were charged with the tasks of supporting the military-connected parent who was left to single parents at home (Wadsworth et al., 2016).

Understanding the military-connected child and their development was clarified and defined from consideration of Easterbrooks et al.'s (2013) depiction of what they referred to as a Model for Positive Youth Development: "The Seven C's, Competence, Confidence, Character, Connection, Contribution, Coping, and Control" (p. 103). Competence was described by Easterbrooks et al. (2013) as the skill set youths needed to find success in schools, future workplaces, and in their family units. Further, it was also where youth learned to endure and to overcome stressors while maintaining safe paths to adulthood, which was an essential skill for military-connected children (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). The author's comprehensive description of confidence included the ability for youth to develop the capacity to be confident through reinforcement from adults, which could have provided a significant challenge when a parent or parents were absent, due to work commitments (Easterbrooks et al., 2013).

The way in which youth viewed others and behaved with respect to norms that society had imposed were included in Easterbrooks et al.'s (2013) definition of character.

The way youth related to adults and whether the child bonded with an adult was what Easterbrooks et al. (2013) defined as a connection. Easterbrooks et al. (2013) wrote, “Children who had confidence, competence, character, and connection” (p. 103) were likely to contribute to society in a positive way. Moreover, the intrinsic reward children felt for serving others in ways where youth felt appreciation and gratitude from adults as opposed to negative reinforcement (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Life presented children with numerous challenges (Easterbrooks et al., 2013) framed coping as the ability for children to work through issues that bothered them in a positive, safe, and preventative fashion. Self-worth and how effective one felt was primarily formed due to the youths’ perceptions they were strong enough to avoid behaviors and actions leading to physical or emotional harm, which were summarized as control (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). All children had the capacity to exhibit resilience (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Easterbrooks et al. (2013) explained individuals needed to recognize each individual person had unique characteristics that defined them. Additionally, there were environmental factors which could have enhanced or inhibited a person's development of resilience (Easterbrooks et al., 2013).

It was essential to emphasize the distinction between civilian children, who often had family support systems close to where they lived, and their military-connected peers, who did not have the same benefits (Esposito-Smyhers et al., 2011). Common characteristics of military-connected children were derived from separation from their parents and fear of loss of parents, due to wartime service, included (a) loneliness, (b) worry, (c) sadness, and (d) anxiety (Esposito-Smyhers et al., 2011). Military-connected children also endured changes in eating habits due to these circumstances, which could

have significantly impacted their daily lives (Esposito-Smyhers et al., 2011). Military-connected children also were likely to feel more separated from their peers (Rossen & Carter, 2012). Their parental military commitments, like deployments, fostered an inability for some military-connected children to attend functions and to interact with their peers on a regular basis (Rossen & Carter, 2012). It also was likely the frequency of stressors related to their parents' military service increased the likelihood of military-connected children exhibiting characteristics detrimental to healthy living and development (Clever & Segal, 2013). Younger military-connected children were particularly susceptible to increases of stress-related to parental military obligations due to their dependence on their parents or guardians for most of their growth and development (Osofsky & Chartrand, 2013). Changing schools also meant leaving friends and people military-connected children counted on for emotional support, which often resulted in mentally detrimental situations (Garner et al., 2014).

Further, the burden of a parental deployment placed on the military-connected child at times also led to a decline in classroom conduct and academic performance (Garner et al., 2014). According to Lester and Flake (2013), in their portrayal of focus group responses they facilitated, teachers reported military-connected children who had parents who were deployed were more often absent from school and less likely to complete homework on time. Respondents in their study also indicated they had at least one child who was challenged by issues at school (Lester & Flake, 2013). Concerns related to military-connected children were further documented by Rossen and Carter (2012), who revealed a challenging and complex picture of the military-connected child. They shared military-connected students with deployed parents had higher rates of

behavioral issues and lower academic performance than their non-military-connected peers (Rossen & Carter, 2012). Additionally, military-connected children were more likely than their civilian peers to experience increased tension and were more at risk for increased maltreatment and neglect due to the stress levels of their military-connected parents (Rossen & Carter, 2012).

Benefits of Military Life

It was also important to document the lives of military-connected children also included some benefits (Lester & Flake, 2013). Lester and Flake (2013) emphasized the structure and support families received were significant in the military. Military-connected children had more access to early childhood education, reduced or fully funded dental and health care, and housing provided by the military (Wadsworth et al., 2017). Masten (2013) shared military-connected children had access to numerous agencies and networks, including the Department of Defense Education Activity, the Military Child Education Coalition, and the Inter-State Compact on Educational Opportunity, while their civilian peers did not. However, access to support programs was often contingent upon whether their parents or caregivers knew about the programs available to their families (Cotton, 2018).

Parents of military-connected children also indicated they were more likely to attend military-sponsored training or to seek assistance if the intent was to support or to assist their children (Wolf et al., 2017). A majority of respondents, 73%, of Woodworth's (2016) study, indicated they enjoyed new relationships when they moved. Moving also carried positive benefits, including cultural exposure to new countries and languages (Clever & Segal, 2013). Financial benefits extended military-connected children while

their parents served were an additional benefit (Wadsworth et al., 2017). The burdens of military service also contributed positively to some military-connected children as added roles within their family structures provided them with leadership opportunities, which led to greater self-awareness and self-assurance (Masten, 2013).

It was clear parental military service had an impact on military-connected children's school performances, moods, behaviors, family life at home, and their physiological statuses (Chandra et al., 2010). There were numerous resources available to military-connected families (Cotton, 2018). However, exposure was limited to very few military bases, which proved to be challenging for families to access support at all bases where they were stationed (Guzman, 2014). For example, Guzman (2014) cited one program, the Families Overcoming Under Stress, or FOCUS, which was designed to provide family-centered resilience training; but the program was limited to 18 military bases. The FOCUS provided training to families who needed strategies to help their children cope with military life issues (Guzman, 2014). Primary topics and tasks of the FOCUS program centered on the communication between children and parents, sharing their feelings related to deployments, and increased understanding related to their perceptions about each other (Guzman, 2014). Analysis of the FOCUS program data was conducted by Lester et al. (2012). His findings revealed a positive outcome related to interventions for parents and children with respect to the symptoms participants experienced and the interventions provided through FOCUS (Guzman, 2014; Lester et al., 2012). Implementation of the FOCUS program also contributed to the reduction in the percentage of military-connected children experiencing difficulties, conduct problems, and emotional symptoms (Lester et al., 2012).

The most recognized military-connected child program designed to support military-connected children, the Military Child Education Coalition, was the sponsor of and, in many cases, the implementer of formal and informal programs (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Those programs provided educational opportunities and structured training programs that assisted school districts in developing and sustaining military-connected support programs for their school personnel (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). One program was referred to as Student Two Student, which was a peer support program for military-connected children and was designed to be led by the students themselves (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). The program also provided specific assistance to military-connected children who may have had academic issues or questions in transitions from one school to another (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Easterbrooks et al. (2013) also emphasized the program was designed to foster conditions to promote resilience for military-connected children and their families. School administrators were critical agents for spotting trouble signs with military-connected children (Elman, 2018). Thus, it was important for school leaders to have a significant understanding related to the urgency military members might have faced and the implications for their children at school (Elman, 2018).

Support systems and programs were parts of the solution, but understanding the nature, style, and structure of military-connected families was also a necessary part of the role of a military-connected administrator (Elfman, 2018). Another essential support program available to military-connected children was what Easterbrooks et al.(2013) described as Operation Military Kids, or OMK. The OMK was a collaborative effort between the United States Army, 4-H Club of America, and the Army Youth

Development Project (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Civilian non-military youth were connected to the program in the form of service related to military-connected children (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). The intent of the program was to assist and to address physical needs like backpacks and school supplies (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Military-connected youth also participated in after-school programs where they gave presentations about their experiences as military-connected children (Easterbrooks et al., 2013).

It was essential for school personnel and committees to include simple accommodations for military-connected youth (Elfman, 2018). This included gestures community leaders might have considered, such as reserving spots on sports teams prior to potential of a military move (Elfman, 2018). Online classes that allowed military-connected children the opportunity to continue their studies amid transitions were necessary, because the classes may not have been available in their new school districts (Elfman, 2018). Whether it was formal, informal, or research-based, it was emphasized by Easterbrooks et al. (2013) the investment was necessary to shape a clear understanding of the research and to fully embrace the impact of military life on children and families. The burden placed on military-connected families was extensive, and the research needed to be comprehensive in order to match their plights (Easterbrooks et al., 2013).

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, approved in all 50 states, developed clear guidelines that supported military-connected children through school transitions (Astor et al., 2012). Prior to 2008, most states lacked policies specifically supporting military-connected children (Astor et al., 2012). The lack of stability and frequent changes in family dynamics required educators to review and to

develop programs and resources available to military-connected children (Cotton, 2018).

Military-connected children's transitions to new schools and their enrollments in their new schools often were inhibited by numerous issues related to prior attendance, schedules, grading, course content, or assessment methods (Astor et al., 2012). One of the focal points of The Compact included school personnel enrolling students in school children on a timely manner regardless of typical factors that might otherwise have delayed children's enrollment in schools (Astor et al., 2012). Regardless of these factors, like proof of residency, immunizations, and transfer credit verification, schools were required to enroll the children quickly (Astor, et al., 2012). School districts were further tasked with ensuring military-connected children had access to all extracurriculars and academic programs (Astor et al., 2012). This included, but was not limited to, participation on athletic teams and inclusion in social activities which, took place at or away from school (Astor et al., 2012). Astor et al. (2012) also noted the language in the compact set the expectation for military-connected children to graduate on time, despite any impact their families' transitions posed with respect to curricular alignment and prior credits earned.

The language in The Compact also included information-sharing requirements between member states, schools, and military-connected families to facilitate better transitions between schools (Astor et al., 2012). Flexibility concerning communication and coordination with parents to promote student academic success were also outlined in the language of The Compact (Astor et al., 2012). Bonura and Lovaid (2015) identified families experienced considerable difficulty with the permanent change of placement, or (PCS), and public-school systems due to different rules, policies, and procedures. Parents

also experienced concerns with the different states' and local approaches to student achievement and the quality services delivered (Bonura & Lovaid, 2015). Lack of connection was common between sending and receiving schools and presented barriers to the military-connected child experiencing inclusion in their new school systems (Bonura & Lovaid, 2015). Learning gaps also often arose, due to what Hattie and Yates (2014) described as new learning not to be linked to prior learning, which resulted in lower levels of mastery of learned concepts. Socially, mobile children had to rebuild friendships and ways to find programs and individuals that supported them through their transitions (Elfman, 2018). Often, children who moved from one school system to another were expected to know the rules and procedures of their new settings upon arrival (Hattie & Yates G, 2014). A concept some thought was simple, but was not always easy for another person to complete or understand, was related to Hattie and Yates' (2014) depiction of procedural learning. Children should not have been expected to understand hallway and recess procedures they had not been taught or given time to acclimate to in their new schools (Hattie, & Yates G, 2014). Lack of connection was common between sending and receiving schools and presented barriers to the children experiencing inclusivity in their new systems (Hattie, & Yates, 2014). The children had to learn new sets of expectations and rules, some of which were not explicitly shared with them (Hattie, & Yates, 2014). The Compact's language also included requirements to close such learning and programming gaps through student transitions between school systems (Elfman, 2018).

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity provided detailed guidance, which schools were mandated to follow (Elfman, 2018). Investigation of the perceptions

of military-connected parents related to elements outlined in The Compact in public military-connected schools also was a necessary concept to research (Elfman, 2018). The key elements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children also defined requirements school districts were mandated to adopt, (a) such as timely enrollment, (b) participation in extracurricular activities, and (c) waiver of immunizations for all military-connected children (Lester & Flake, 2013). Further, primary structural components of the way schools interacted with families through the enrollment in school and interscholastic activities were outlined in the compact for all military-connected school districts regardless of the percentage of military-connected membership represented in their school system (Lester & Flake, 2013). It could have been surmised the most important issues related to the successes of military-connected children in schools were not included in the language of The Compact either (Cole, 2014). The socio-emotional characteristics of military-connected children during the deployment process were not specifically addressed in the compact (Cole, 2014).

Family Support

A positive school climate and culture correlated positively with overall school achievement (Gostick & Elton, 2009). It was clear military-connected students were susceptible to psychological issues, due frequent school moves (Berkowitz et al., 2014). The perceptions of the parents of their children's schools' environments needed to be positive to ensure their children experienced positive climates and cultures (Gostick & Elton, 2009). Military-connected parents emphasized their greatest need was information from their children's schools and resources to meet their children's educational needs (Berkowitz et al., 2014). Student motivation was not static or in the sole control of the

learners, but rather it was linked to characteristics within the learning environments (Gostick & Elton, 2009). Everri (2014) identified a concern for school leaders and educators who facilitated student transitions. Specifically, precise and defined support for students was common, while support for parents was seldom explored in the literature (Everri, 2014). Further, it was important to consider the assistance parents needed as they managed their children's transitions to schools and to new communities (Webb, Knight, & Busch, 2017). While parents expressed a degree of satisfaction with most elements of their children's schools, a large number of military-connected parents shared they often felt misunderstood and disconnected from their children's schools (Berkowitz et al., 2014). Further, military-connected parents also shared school personnel lacked understanding with respect to their military statuses, and when concerns were expressed parents expressed concerns related to how administrators handled these issues (Berkowitz et al., 2014). It was necessary for schools to develop programs to involve military-connected families in schools (Berkowitz et al., 2014). School programs and the personnel who implemented them were in good positions to assist with the emotional components parents experienced in school transitions (Webb et al., 2017). However, not all parents observed school support as beneficial and some may even have interpreted the support as meddling in their affairs (Webb et al., 2017). Additionally, Webb et al. (2017) challenged school systems to modify current support programs to include parental support, which required significant modification to most current school practices. Schools were interconnected systems that relied on the quality of relationships with all parties in daily interactions, especially the interactions between students and teachers (Bruggencate et al., 2012). There was a significant impact on family engagement, on

student development, and growth in school (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011).

Family school partnerships were mutually important between school personnel and families (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). As Bruggencate et al. (2012) explained, school officials should engage families in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways, and families should take the initiative to actively support their children's development and learning (Bruggencate et al., 2012). Webb et al. (2017) added that school staff must develop programs to support parents to ensure they have the necessary tools to enhance parents' connections with their new schools and to provide ways for parents to participate in their children's school experiences (Webb et al., 2017). These family-school partnerships were essential for helping students achieve success in school (Webb et al., 2017). Parent and community involvement has always been a crucial element in public schools (Webb et al., 2017); however, greater recognition of the need for schools to support parents in their roles and the significance of these collaborative efforts was needed. (LaRocque, 2008).

School Climate

A positive school climate correlated with overall school achievement (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011); however, the perceptions of the parents in the environment needed to be positive as well (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). Positive relationships between teachers and students were associated with various desired outcomes that included (a) academic achievement, (b) low frustration, and (c) appropriate social development (Rohner, Khaleque, Elias, & Sultana, 2010); whereas poor relationships were associated with retention and learning problems for students (Rohner et al., 2010). It was important to nurture relationships with teacher leaders to responsible behaviors, prosocial behaviors,

as well as higher academic performance (Rohner et al., 2010). There was a strong correlation between supportive teacher-student relationships and a substantial impact on student conduct, achievement, and student adjustment (Rohner et al., 2010). At the conclusion of their study, Khan, Haynes, Armstrong, and Rohner (2010) found supportive relationships in school were vital to the success of students in development tasks school tasks, and were correlated to predicting academic success. Children who had negative relationships with their educators were much more likely to have difficulties in the areas of engagement, trust, and, most importantly, academic achievement (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). Conflicts between teachers and students often led to lower grades on report cards and lower scores on standardized achievement tests (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). The student and teacher relationships were most important for at-risk students in order to obtain success and to develop resiliency (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011).

Multiple types of interactions in classrooms have been researched and reported (Khan et al., 2010). Teachers who advocated motivation in teaching and learning also had positive social outcomes, as well as positive academic outcomes (Khan et al., 2010). Khan et al. (2010) reported that effective climates were reported by students to be caring and supportive. Environments without judgment, and filled with trust and common goals, led to the development of productive school climate conditions (Price, 2011). Development of bonding in school was critical to reinforce the social integration of students in the school (Maele & Houtte, 2011). Student well-being, engagement, relationships, and trust were based upon student perceptions of the teachers' interpersonal behaviors (Maele & Houtte, 2011). The student perceptions of their teachers in the area of academic support and expectations were directly related to more engagement in

schools and better behavioral compliance in classrooms (Khan et al., 2010). Rejected students often disengaged and performed less adequately in academics (Khan et al., 2010). This relationship and perceptions of students also correlated to competence, self-efficacy, and achievement (Khan et al., 2010). During times when students felt alienated in schools, negative educational outcomes more often occurred (Khan et al., 2010). Social integration, on the other hand, led to positive educational outcomes (Maele & Houtte, 2011). According to Price (2011), students achieved best when school personnel enhanced their academics and their social growth with additional support and programs. Student attachment to school was correlated to positive student outcomes as a result of students perceiving that their teachers supported them (Maele & Houtte, 2011). Frequently, relationships of school leaders directly affected the attitudes of teachers and students and defined the climates of their schools (Price, 2011).

The primary objective of a school was to facilitate and to support climates and cultures that were welcoming and warm (Price, 2011). Solid school cultures and climates were necessary to achieve high academic success for students (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). Culture and cultural processes were also researched in connection with social processes and academic motivation research (Anderman & Kaplan, 2008). Climate and culture were concepts that generally overlapped one another, according to a number of theorists (MacNeil et al., 2009). Since the 1980s, attention to positive school climate and culture has been a focal point of practitioners and policymakers within school systems and educational departments at the state and federal levels (Price, 2011).

The term of school climate had various meanings and often was interpreted in literature differently (Johnson et al., 2007). It was described as a social system of shared

norms and expectations of school personnel and students (Johnson et al., 2007).

Interpretation of school culture also included teacher morale and levels of teacher empowerment within a school (Johnson et al., 2007). The personality of the schools or the environments tended to be defined by the amount of negative behaviors that might have occurred within the schools (Johnson et al., 2007). Climate was described as the heart and soul of the school (MacNeil et al., 2009). Climate was a contributing factor related to teachers' and students' love of a school and led to a desire to remain a part of the school (MacNeil et al., 2009). A positive school climate led to the classroom being a "supportive workplace," which principals generated for teachers in order to establish appropriate environments to ensure a strong learning environment (Price 2011, p. 43). A school's culture was a set of complex norms and patterns, attitudes and beliefs, values and behaviors, traditions, and ceremonies deep-rooted in the core elements of the school. School environments helped students feel positively about their abilities to learn and to succeed (Pepper & Thomas, 2002). When school climate and achievement were positive attributes of a school the students at the school experienced success (Owens, 2004).

The members of the National School Climate Council (2007) reported a safe, supportive school with positive relationships, quality, character, and respect fostered learning and achievement, as well as high levels of achievement. The Council's report further identified when climates decreased academic partiality and promoted student success, schools were successful (National School Climate Council, 2007). School environments were either positively or negatively related to students' desires and interests to learn and to be successful (National School Climate Council, 2007).

Students with a school environment that met the developmental needs of all their

students typically experienced success (National School Climate Council, 2007). Most studies related to school fit, relied on teachers' and students' perceptions (National School Climate Council, 2007). However, little research has examined the school-child fit from the perspectives of the parents (National School Climate Council, 2007).

The number of military-connected children identified with parents serving in the United States military in 2013 between the ages of birth and 10 was 750,000 (Lester & Flake, 2013). Military families were represented as a diverse group that had varying school needs and represented numerous and varied demographics (Clever & Segal, 2013). Military-connected children were the recipients of stressors, including (a) separations, (b) deployments, (c) moving, (d) changing schools frequently, and (e) reunification following separations due to their parents' military commitments (Woodworth, 2016). Military-connected children were highly sensitive to separations as they were in a period of their lives where they were developing an attachment to their parents, while shouldering the detrimental effects of their parents' military obligations (Masten, 2013). The need to support children in times of separation was encouraged by Cole (2016), who stressed advocating for children in school districts included alignment of support systems for connected military children. Specifically, Astor et al. (2012) indicated military children changed schools every three years. Cotton (2018) stressed the United States military was a complex and diverse organization. The military should be considered as such because military-connected children experienced stressors non-military peers did not (Cotton, 2018).

Family Engagement

The U.S. Department of Education's family engagement model included language

that encouraged a link of engagement with families to student learning importance (Reid, 2015). School system leadership personnel had placed a significant priority on family engagement (Reid, 2015). Kraft (2017) identified the need for school systems to develop opportunities to engage families. Schools were responsible for identifying strategies to connect with parents and families (Kraft, 2017). The need for parents and students to be active participants with respect to multiple aspects of the school curriculum and assessment in order to support their children's successes in school was asserted by Cohen et al. (2009). Communication was identified as a critical item with respect to family interaction and engagement strategies (Kraft, 2017). Reid (2015) articulated how numerous state evaluation models included language, which connected family engagement in the teacher evaluation process. Schools were charged with the task of establishing and implementing new and creative ways to engage families through increased communication measures (Kraft, 2017). School district leaders have established specific initiatives to develop, to address, and to track data related to family engagement efforts (Reid, 2015).

School personnel who effectively engaged families found their students earned higher grades, scored higher on tests, and developed better socially (Reid, 2015). Schools and districts targeting family engagement had to work and to develop strong relationships with families to support student achievement (Schueler et al., 2017). School personnel relationships with families and teachers often led to higher levels of student engagement (Schueler et al., 2017). High levels of student engagement were identified as a necessary precursor to academic achievement (Schueler et al., 2017). Parental perceptions of how well they and their children fit with a school was also a significant factor in engaging

families (Bahema et al., 2016).

The relationship between parental perceptions of the school and the children's success was significant (Schueler et al., 2017). School personnel taking the time to understand parental perceptions of the school was essential to a school's overall development (Schueler et al., 2017). Schuler et al. (2017) emphasized children who had highly engaged parents were more likely to achieve success academically. Further, parental engagement in schools was often related to parents having positive perceptions of their children's schools (Schueler et al., 2017). Another critical element in gauging parental perception was the concept of school fit (Bahena et al., 2016). Bahena et al. (2016) defined "school fit" as how well a student's schools contributed positively to their overall needs. Measurement of parental perceptions related to school fit afforded educators with concrete information contributing to their plans for students' academic and social success in schools (Bahena et al., 2016). Challenges that contributed to difficulty measuring parental perceptions, engagement, and school fit included parent work schedules, the locations where they worked, and languages of origin of the parent (Schueler et al., 2017).

Parental engagement was linked to student achievement (Schuler et al., 2017). It was important for school personnel to exercise creatively with respect to engaging parents and to move beyond traditional models of parent engagement, like parent conferences, as a predecessor to academic success (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Schuler et al. (2017) linked parent and family engagement to student motivation. The responsibility placed on school personnel was to study the barriers families faced and to present them with opportunities that counteracted the barriers and increased parental

desire to be more engaged with their children's school (Schuler et al., 2017). Bahena et al. (2016) wrote that family engagement and school fit should not be measured universally across a school district. These important attributes should have been measured and deciphered for specific schools within school systems (Bahena et al., 2016). Students and families who held a particular school in high regard because of an academic or social program that aligned to their needs were in stark contrast to students who did not perceive a school well (Bahena et al., 2016). This was due to their schools not offering programs or services they desired (Bahena et al., 2016). Common measurements of school effectiveness included attributes of whether schools were welcoming, inclusive, and nurturing (Bahena et al., 2016). Bahena et al. (2016) also stressed school fit was more aligned with whether the school was congruent with the students and their families than specific school attributes. School climate, which embodied parent perception and school fit, was a critical factor on whether parents perceived their children's schools were a good fit for their children (Bahena et al., 2016). School personnel needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the families' perceptions in order to diminish barriers to engagement (Bahena et al., 2016).

Furthermore, parents were more likely to understand their children's needs as they advanced through various stages of development than the children's teachers, because they observed them in multiple settings outside of school (Bahena et al., 2016). It was essential that building principals led efforts to create cooperative school climates (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Principals were recognized as central agents with respect to building trust and partnerships with parents (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Building leaders also were charged with the task of fostering the relationships teachers

built with parents to ensure sustainability (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Recognition of different opinions families shared with respect to children's school experiences was important to understand (Schuler et al., 2017). Schuler et al. (2017) shared a scenario that involved parents of fifth graders. Both parents prioritized their children's well-being in schools, however, both had very different views of the schools, and their commitment relative to school involvement contrasted with each other (Schuler et al., 2017). Educator awareness of parental motivation and their prior experiences in schools helped to alleviate potential issues that eroded parental desire to maintain involvement in their children's educational pursuits (Schuler et al., 2017). Parental perception of school also was shaped by factors not directly related to the schools (Schuler et al., 2017). For example, parents' work schedules, distances from school, and at home obligations to other family members contributed to parental perceptions (Schuler et al., 2017).

Perceptions

Parents were the bridge to educational success in more ways than one (Duhman, et al., 2018). Their perceptions influenced many academic variables related to their children (Duhman et al., 2018). Family perceptions of school support and climate were significant variables that supported or were a detriment to student success (Duhman et al., 2018). Perceptions of intervention school personnel provided to support students which was intended to have been positive may be perceived as negative, due to how it made the children feel in relation to their peers (Schuler et al., 2017). Thus, Schuler et al. (2017) added that school support can be counter to the goal of improving certain aspects of a student's school life if the intervention was not perceived to be positive by the family

who received the support. Duhman et al. (2018) conveyed parents' opinions often skewed how children viewed their schools. Additionally, parental attitudes related to their children's schools impacted how engaged their children were in schools and weighed into where parents wanted their children to attend school (Duhman et al., 2018). Parents often considered types of technology available to students, the physical locations of the school, the quality of teachers, and the safety plans of the schools when determining the best school choice for their children (Schneider & Buckley, 2002). Parental perceptions with respect to the economic status of students attending school and even the racial profiles of schools impacted parents' choices of school for their children (Schneider & Buckley, 2002).

Additional evidence was cited in Schneider and Buckley (2002), as parents repeatedly expressed the quality of academics at school shaped their perceptions of whether they sent their children to school. Parents indicated the quality of educators was important to them (Schneider & Buckley, 2002). However, many did not take time to click the link on the school web site that provided information related to educator quality (Schneider & Buckley, 2002). Due to the complex and diverse nature of school systems and individual schools, Schneider and Buckley (2002) encouraged the use of multiple measures to gain a better understanding of parental perceptions about a specific school or system. Parental perceptions were a necessary contributing factor to school districts creating school environments, which were equitable and efficient (Schneider & Buckley, 2002).

Summary

The logistical elements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity

provided families with assurances their children would be enrolled and were able to participate in school activities and have access to school programs (Astor et al., 2012). In addition to examining the elements of The Compact afforded to military-connected families, the purpose of this research study was to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of parents and families related to family support, school climate, and family engagement in military-connected public schools. It was essential to identify that positive parental perceptions of their child's school and the school's programs were correlated with student academic and social success in schools (Gostick & Elton, 2009).

Military-connected children in schools faced numerous obstacles, such as frequent moves, parental separation, changing and saying goodbye to friends, and changes in programming and modifications to extracurricular program participation as they moved from one district or state to another (Cotten, 2018). Schools and school personnel needed to develop strategies to maintain the involvement and strengthen the school-to-home partnership that was so vital to students' success in school (Schueler et al., 2017; Webb et al., 2017). Research, while limited concerning military-connected families related to parental perceptions, was clear that the vital link to positive student perceptions and success in school was positive parental perceptions about their children's schools (Duhman, 2018).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology and details how the research problem was explored in the study. The research design and the Research Questions are provided. An explanation of data collection materials, sample selection, and procedures are detailed. Issues of reliability, validity, and protection of the rights of the participants are also addressed in the chapter.

This research investigated the parents' perceptions of family support, school climate, and family engagement in military-connected schools. Specifically, schools represented in this study were 100%, greater than 25%, and less than 25% military-connected.

This research sought to contribute to a limited body of literature on military-connected parents' perceptions of school environments, specifically family support, climate, and engagement post-adoption of the Multi-State Compact on educational opportunity. Surveys were conducted with parents of children enrolled in the school districts.

Three Research Questions were addressed:

RQ1. What are military-connected parents' perceptions of family support programs in schools which are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ2. What are parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ3. What are parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

Three Null Hypotheses were addressed:

H1₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family support in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H2₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H3₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and less than (c) 25% military-connected schools?

Research Design

The research design was descriptive. The research involved the collection of data from a sample group on a single occasion. The variables, perceived school climates, perceived family support, and perceived family engagement post-adoption of The Compact were measured using a survey developed from the Gehlbach Family-School Relationships Survey and administered to participants from three different school districts in Mid-Western states. This quantitative study involved a survey designed to explore perceptions of military-connected parents. Because parental perceptions have been shown to influence the behaviors and academic experiences of stakeholders in schools, it was desirable to ascertain their perceptions of these three key school variables that could

directly impact school climate. Survey methodology provided minimal intrusion by the researcher.

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of approximately 200 parents from three separate school districts in the Midwest section of the United States. The first district, labeled District A for the purpose of this study, included a student population of 6,136 (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2020). District A had six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Further, there were 483 certified staff in District A (MODESE, 2020). District A was 61% military-connected (MODESE, 2020). The second was labeled School District B for the purpose of this study and had a student population of 5,074 (MODESE, 2020). District B had six elementary schools, one middle school, one junior high, and one high school (MODESE, 2020). There were 482 certified staff members in District B (MODESE, 2020). School District B was 15% military-connected (MODESE, 2020).

The third district labeled District C for the purpose of this study had a student population of 1,417 students (Kansas Department of Education [KSDOE], 2020). There were three elementary schools and one junior high school in District C (KSDOE, 2020). In District C, 148 certified staff worked (KSDOE, 2020). School District C had a student population that was 100% military-connected (KSDOE, 2020). The school district samples included: (a) three elementary schools, (b) three middle schools, (c) one junior high school, and (d) two high schools. Permission to conduct the study and an agreement to provide relevant data was obtained from the individual school district superintendents (see Appendix A). All schools examined in this study had some level of military-

connected families attending their schools. The 2019 COVID Pandemic presented issues with respect to parental responses, resulting in one potential school district (District C), which was 100% military-connected electing not to participate in this research study. School Staff members from District C elected not to participate due to concerns related to the COVID pandemic and stress related issues, which currently impacted service members stationed at this garrison.

Instrumentation

Parents' perceptions of family support, school climates, and levels of family engagement in military-connected schools' post-adoption of The Compact was measured using a 21-item survey instrument derived from the Dr. Gehlbach Family-School Relationships Survey, which was currently hosted by Panorama Inc., for the purposes of this study. The survey was adapted to obtain a perspective on the military-connected parents' perceptions of family support, school climates, and family engagement in military-connected schools. A review of the literature on family support, family engagement, and school climate, post-adoption of The Compact, informed the development of the instrument. The directions prompted respondents to respond to each question on a five-point, Likert-type scale. Each item of the Likert scale was defined for each question. Items 2 through 8 examined the parents' perceptions of the school climate, the perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school, Items 9 through 14 examined the parents' perceptions of family engagement, the degree to which families became involved with and interacted with their children's schools, and Items 15 through 21 examined the parents' perceptions of family supports, families perceptions of the amount of academic, and social supports provided for their children outside of school

(see Appendix B).

Procedures

The researcher identified three school districts that met the needs of this study. The researcher applied to Lindenwood University's Institutional Review Board and, upon IRB approval, school district superintendents received a letter via email requesting permission to include the districts in the study (see Appendix C). The letter to superintendents requesting approval included a copy of the research prospectus, IRB approval, and a copy of the survey to be administered to parents. District superintendents received the letter via email requesting permission (see Appendix C), the data were collected through the administration of the 21-item Likert instrument developed for the purposes of this study. The survey was completed by participants from three school districts. The data were collected through an email survey administered through *Qualtrics*. The email survey was sent out directly to parents through the school districts' offices. After receipt of the data collected from the questionnaires, the researcher coded the schools by number and coded the responses to the questionnaires. Parents self-identified as military-connected in the first question of the survey. Only surveys of parents who self-identified as military-connected were used for purposes of this study. After the data were sorted, each school's data were downloaded into a spreadsheet and then a statistics software program was used to analyze the data and allowed the researcher to identify themes and make interpretations of the statistical findings.

Data Analysis

Survey data were assessed to assure the collected data were unbiased and met the criteria of this study, including being completed by a parent in one of the school districts

selected. Surveys submitted were verified for compliance with the research criteria, ethical compliance, and completion of online surveys. Any errors in surveys or outliers were eliminated from the sample.

Statistics on the data set were obtained through the use of statistics software program, Intellectus Statistics, which was a software platform offered that enabled the researcher to use the program to generate statistical analysis (Intellectus, 2021). Further, Intellectus Statistics Software supported hypothesis testing, which was required with the use of a MANOVA (Intellectus, 2021). Descriptive statistics were generated for each of the three factors on the survey, parents' perceptions of family support, school climate, and family engagement in military-connected schools' post-adoption of the compact. This included frequency and count percentage to describe data collected in this research study. Measures of central tendency, including mean, median, mode, as well as standard deviations, were computed for each item to evaluate the distribution of data to determine if statistically significant relationships existed among family support, school climate, and family engagement in participating school districts. Descriptive statistics included all means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables.

The Multivariate Analysis of Variance, or MANOVA, was used to determine the differences in multivariate means among the multivariate-normal samples (Warner, 2013). The MANOVA compared the linear composite of the means between two or more groups (Warner, 2013). It also tested the null hypothesis that the sample population means on a set of related dependent variables did not vary across different levels of factors (Warner, 2013). Essentially it combined the dependent variables to form a new dependent variable to maximize the differences between groups (Warner, 2013). It helped

control for the relationship among dependent variables and Type 1 error (Warner, 2013). If the MANOVA was found to have a significant variance in means between Districts A, B, and C, and Post Hoc tests were conducted to determine where the differences existed (Warner, 2013). Post Hoc tests compared mean results from District A to B, District B to C, and District C to A to determine the origin of the differences between means (Warner, 2013).

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted (Warner, 2013). Since the researcher was attempting to determine if three groups mean scores differed on multiple dependent variables, MANOVA was most appropriate (Warner, 2013). Analyses of variances (ANOVA) on the dependent variable means were conducted as follow-up tests - Post Hoc to the MANOVA - to develop data to explore reasons for the differences (Warner, 2013). Warner (2013) shared that an ANOVA should be used when a researcher seeks to compare mean scores on independent variables across groups. There was one independent variable and three dependent variables represented in this study.

The researcher interpreted the results using the following steps to interpret the Intellectus MANOVA output (Scalelive, 2020). The researcher reviewed the Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices to determine the p -value that was interpreted. If the p -value was less than .05, then the researcher violated the assumption of homogeneity of covariance and did not interpret the outputs further (Scalelive, 2020). If the p -value was more than .05, then the researcher planned to continue with the analysis, which met the assumption of homogeneity of covariance (Scalelive, 2020).

The researcher used Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for each outcome variable that had a p -value testing the assumption of homogeneity of variance

(Scalelive, 2020). If a p -value was less than .05, then the researcher had violated the assumption and would not continue with the analysis (Scalelive, 2020). If the variance was more than .05, the researcher continued with the data analysis and interpretation of the data (Scalelive, 2020). The researcher then examined the Multivariate Tests Table, under the Sigma column for the row that consisted of the categorical predictor variable's name and Pillai's Trace (Scalelive, 2020). This table represented the interpretation of the p -value (Scalelive, 2020). If the p -value was less than .05, this provided the researcher evidence of a significant main effect (Scalelive, 2020). If the p -value was more than .05, the researcher did not have evidence of a significant effect (Scalelive, 2020). If this was found, no further interpretation would have been conducted.

The researcher then reported the p -value (Scalelive, 2020). The researcher examined results between subjects and reviewed the categorical predictor variable (Scalelive, 2020). These were the p -values, which were interpreted for each individual outcome variables (Scalelive, 2020). Categorical predictor variables were interpreted, if there was a significant main effect in the Multivariate Tests (Scalelive, 2020). If the researcher p -value for one of the outcome variables was less .05, then there was a significant main effect among the independent groups or levels of that outcome (Scalelive, 2020). If the researcher found this significant main effect, then a post hoc analysis was run to determine the effect (Scalelive, 2020). If a p -value for one of the outcome variables was more than .05, then the researcher determined there was no significant main effect among the independent groups or levels of that outcome (Scalelive, 2020). The researcher then reviewed the estimated marginal means (Scalelive, 2020). These were the means and standard errors of the outcome for each

group or level of the categorical variable (Scalelive, 2020). Next, the researcher reviewed the pairwise comparisons, which were the post hoc p -values interpreted (Scalelive, 2020). If a p -value was less than .05, then the researcher documented that there was a significant difference between the independent groups or levels of the categorical predictor variable (Scalelive, 2020). Lastly, if a p -value was more than .05, then the researcher documented there was not a significant difference between the independent groups or levels of the categorical predictor variable (Scalelive, 2020).

Summary

The researcher attempted to determine if three groups' mean scores differed on multiple dependent variables. In order to accomplish this task, it was necessary for the researcher to conduct a MANOVA. Post hoc analysis was conducted to identify reasons for any outliers revealed. There was one independent variable and three dependent variables represented in this study.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

This chapter contains the results from the quantitative study conducted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What are military-connected parents' perceptions of family support programs in schools which are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ2. What are parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ3. What are parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

This chapter also contains data related to the following null hypotheses:

H1₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family support in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H2₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H3₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and less than (c) 25% military-connected schools?

The chapter also includes a descriptive analysis of the survey questions.

The Family-School Relationships Survey was 21 items in length. Questions 2 through 8 represented the dependent variable School Climate. Questions 9 through 14 represented the dependent variable Family Engagement. Questions 15 through 21 represented the dependent variable FamilySupport. The independent variables were represented as District A and District B. Results were presented in the form of tables and charts, as well as written descriptive analysis.

The purpose of this study was to understand parental perceptions as they related to the variables of family support, school climate, and family engagement programs, which were attributes of schools where military-connected students and families resided. It was important for the researcher to gain understanding of military-connected families' perceptions of school life following the implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military-Connected Children (Elfman, 2018). The intent of The Compact was to provide assistance to military-connected families who relocated from one public school to another (Elfman, 2018). The Compact also contained specific language, which served as a reference for school leaders with respect to required processes related to enrollment, extracurricular participation, and educational programming (Elfman, 2018).

The intent of the researcher was to answer the research questions and determine if the hypothesis or the null hypothesis were valid. Specifically, the researcher chose to survey military-connected families in a military-connected school district which had less than 25% military-connected students and one that had more than 25% military connected students. The researcher was granted permission from Dr. Gehlbach to utilize portions of his family-school relationships survey, which was housed by Panoramic

Education (Appendix A). Summary statistics were calculated for each interval and ratio variable. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each nominal variable.

Dependent variables represented in this study were School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support.

The independent variables were the individual districts where the student and families were currently enrolled. For the purpose of this study, the district with greater than 25% military-connected students and families was labeled District A. The district with less than 25% military-connected students and families was labeled District B. The 2019 COVID Pandemic presented issues with respect to parental responses, resulting in one potential school district (District C), which was 100% military-connected electing not to participate in this research study. The superintendent of the potential school district (District C) cited stressors related to the pandemic as the reason they chose not to participate at this time. The researcher chose to limit the study to two districts: one military-connected school district which were greater than 25% military-connected, and one district that was less than 25% military-connected.

Sample Size

A power analysis was conducted to determine the minimum target sample size for the analysis. The power analysis was conducted for a MANOVA with three dependent variables, two comparison groups, a desired power level of .80, a statistical significance level of .05, and a medium effect size assumed. The result of the power analysis revealed that the target sample size for the MANOVA was 180 participants. The sample size collected from the survey instrument yielded 111 responses from District A and 147

responses from District B for a total of 258 responses. The sample size from this data met the minimum target sample size requirement.

Demographics Military vs. Non-Military

For the purpose of this study, Q1 identified survey respondents as Military or Non-Military. The most frequently observed category of Q1 was Yes. The most frequently observed category of District was B. Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequencies of Military vs. Non-Military Families in Each District

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Q1 Total Military vs Non-Military		
Yes	197	76.36
No	58	22.48
Missing Response	3	1.16
District Respondents		
District A (Less than 25% military)	111	43.02
District B (Greater than 25% military)	147	56.98
Missing Response	0	0.00

Note. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not equal 100%.

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Intellectus, 2020).

Family Support Summary Statistics in Total

For the purpose of this study, Family Support was correlated with questions Q15 through Q21 of the survey and were measured on a Likert scale ranking One to Five. There were 111 observations in District A and 147 observations in District B. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than two in absolute value, the

variable was considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to three, then the variable's distribution was markedly different from a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics for school climate, family engagement, and school support was found in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables by District

Dependent Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Family Support								
District A	3.84	0.64	111	0.06	1.86	5.00	-0.25	0.09
District B	3.89	0.51	147	0.04	2.71	5.00	-0.07	-0.54
Total	3.87	0.57	258	0.04	1.86	5.0	-0.21	0.04

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

Family Support Summary Statistics by Question Both Districts

Summary statistics were calculated for Q15 through Q21. The observations for family engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 4.49 and a low mean of 3.03. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than two in absolute value, the variable was considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. The skewness for questions 2 through 8 did not meet this requirement. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Combined A and B Districts Family' Support Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q15	4.49	0.81	258	0.05	1.00	5.00	-2.18	5.75
Q16	4.35	0.73	258	0.05	1.00	5.00	-1.12	1.62
Q17	3.89	0.82	258	0.05	1.00	5.00	-0.65	0.79
Q18	3.55	1.07	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	-0.46	-0.31
Q19	3.66	0.99	258	0.06	1.00	5.00	-0.67	0.19
Q20	3.03	1.27	258	0.08	1.00	5.00	-0.16	-0.97
Q21	4.12	0.91	258	0.06	1.00	5.00	-1.15	1.45

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

Family Support Summary Statistics by Question District A

For the purpose of this study Family Support was correlated with questions Q15 through Q21. The observations for family engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 4.40 and a low mean of 3.25. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than two in absolute value, the variable was considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. The skewness for questions 2 through 8 did not meet this requirement. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics can be found in Table 4.

Table 4*District A Family Support Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q15	4.40	0.96	111	0.09	1.00	5.00	-2.05	4.20
Q16	4.25	0.80	111	0.08	1.00	5.00	-1.12	1.64
Q17	3.77	0.86	111	0.08	1.00	5.00	-0.58	0.64
Q18	3.59	1.06	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-0.41	-0.39
Q19	3.59	1.08	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-0.70	-0.08
Q20	3.25	1.32	111	0.13	1.00	5.00	-0.35	-0.92
Q21	4.05	1.01	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-1.29	1.46

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Intellectus, 2020).

Family Support Summary Statistics by Question District B

For the purpose of this study Family Support was correlated with questions Q15 through Q21. The observations for family engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 4.56 and a low mean of 2.86. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is asymmetrical about its mean. The skewness for questions 2 through 8 did not meet this requirement. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution is markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics are found in Table 5.

Table 5*District B Family Support Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q15	4.56	0.67	147	0.06	1.00	5.00	-1.93	5.36
Q16	4.42	0.67	147	0.06	2.00	5.00	-1.01	0.93
Q17	3.97	0.78	147	0.06	1.00	5.00	-0.66	0.86
Q18	3.52	1.08	147	0.09	1.00	5.00	-0.48	-0.27
Q19	3.71	0.92	147	0.08	1.00	5.00	-0.57	0.26
Q20	2.86	1.22	147	0.10	1.00	5.00	-0.06	-0.92
Q21	4.17	0.82	147	0.07	1.00	5.00	-0.84	0.62

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

School Climate Summary Statistics in Total

For the purpose of this study School Climate was correlated with Q2 through Q8 of the survey and were measured on a Likert scale ranking One to Five. There were 111 observations in District A and 147 observations in District B. The observations for School Climate had an average score of 3.69. For District A, the observations of School Climate had an average of 3.69. For District B, the observations of School Climate had an average of 3.69. The summary statistics are found in Table 6.

Table 6*Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio School Climate by District*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
<hr/>								
School Climate								
District A	3.69	0.85	111	0.08	1.29	5.00	-0.62	-0.14
District B	3.69	0.76	147	0.06	1.00	5.00	-0.71	0.30
Total	3.69	0.80	258	0.05	1.00	5.00	-0.67	0.10

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

School Climate Summary Statistics by Question Both Districts

For the purpose of this study, School Climate was correlated with Q2 through Q8 and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. School Climate for both districts by question had a high mean of 3.91 and a low mean of 3.31. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution is markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics are found in Table 7.

Table 7

Combined A and B Districts School Climate Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q2	3.72	0.98	258	0.06	1.00	5.00	-0.75	0.40
Q3	3.37	1.03	258	0.06	1.00	5.00	-0.50	-0.17
Q4	3.91	1.11	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	-1.09	0.57
Q5	3.66	1.14	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	-0.60	-0.36
Q6	3.68	1.06	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	-0.73	-0.01
Q7	3.79	1.00	258	0.06	1.00	5.00	-0.74	0.07
Q8	3.72	1.05	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	-0.67	-0.09

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Intellectus, 2020).

School Climate by Question District A

For the purpose of this study, School Climate was correlated with Q2 through Q8 and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. The observations for school climate for District A by question had a high mean of 3.95 and a low mean of 3.36. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable was considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to three, then the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics are found in Table 8.

Table 8*District A School Climate Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q2	3.68	1.00	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-0.85	0.51
Q3	3.36	1.02	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-0.56	-0.02
Q4	3.95	1.03	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-1.08	0.78
Q5	3.50	1.15	111	0.11	1.00	5.00	-0.40	-0.55
Q6	3.72	1.09	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-0.79	-0.01
Q7	3.87	0.94	111	0.09	1.00	5.00	-0.62	-0.11
Q8	3.76	1.11	111	0.10	1.00	5.00	-0.73	-0.12

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

School Climate Summary Statistics by Question District B

For the purpose of this study School Climate was correlated with Q2-Q8 and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. The observations for school climate for District B by question had a high mean of 3.89 and a low mean of 3.37. It was important to note that when the skewness is greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. The skewness for questions 2-8 did not meet this requirement. When the kurtosis is greater than or equal to three, then the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics are found in Table 9.

Table 9*District B School Climate Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q2	3.76	0.97	147	0.08	1.00	5.00	-0.67	0.26
Q3	3.37	1.04	147	0.09	1.00	5.00	-0.46	-0.27
Q4	3.89	1.17	147	0.10	1.00	5.00	-1.07	0.37
Q5	3.78	1.12	147	0.09	1.00	5.00	-0.77	-0.08
Q6	3.65	1.04	147	0.09	1.00	5.00	-0.69	0.01
Q7	3.73	1.04	147	0.09	1.00	5.00	-0.78	0.03
Q8	3.69	1.00	147	0.08	1.00	5.00	-0.62	-0.06

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

Family Engagement in Total

For the purpose of this study, Family Engagement was correlated with Q9 through Q14 of this survey and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. In total there were 111 observations in District A and 147 observations in District B. The summary statistics are found in Table 10.

Table 10*Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables by School District*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Family Engagement								
District A	2.25	0.80	111	0.08	1.00	4.83	0.80	0.20
District B	2.06	0.71	147	0.06	1.00	4.33	1.02	0.76

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

Family Engagement by Question Both Districts

For the purpose of this study, Family Engagement was correlated with Q9 through Q14 and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. The observations for family engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 2.68 and a low mean of 1.76. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable was considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. The skewness for questions 2 through 8 did not meet this requirement. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to three, then the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics are found in Table 11.

Table 11

Combined A and B Districts Family Engagement Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q9	1.97	0.92	258	0.06	1.00	5.00	1.11	1.64
Q10	2.02	1.20	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	0.92	-0.23
Q11	2.41	1.16	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	0.71	-0.22
Q12	2.68	1.36	258	0.08	1.00	5.00	0.35	-1.05
Q13	2.02	1.13	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	0.86	-0.24
Q14	1.76	1.11	258	0.07	1.00	5.00	1.47	1.32

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Intellectus, 2020).

Family Engagement by Question District A

For the purpose of this study, Family Engagement was correlated with Q9 through Q14 and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. The observations for Family Engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 2.62 and a low mean of 1.86. It was important to note that when the skewness was greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. The skewness for questions 2 through 8 did not meet this requirement. When the kurtosis is greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics are found in Table 12.

Table 12

District A Family Engagement Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q9	2.16	0.86	111	0.08	1.00	5.00	1.16	2.39
Q10	2.09	1.24	111	0.12	1.00	5.00	0.81	-0.46
Q11	2.43	1.16	111	0.11	1.00	5.00	0.80	-0.03
Q12	2.62	1.33	111	0.13	1.00	5.00	0.46	-0.90
Q13	2.33	1.27	111	0.12	1.00	5.00	0.57	-0.77
Q14	1.86	1.15	111	0.11	1.00	5.00	1.36	1.00

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Intellectus, 2020).

Family Engagement by Question District B

For the purpose of this study Family Engagement was correlated with Q9 through Q14 and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. The observations for Family Engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 2.72 and a low mean of 1.68. It was important to note that when the skewness is greater than 2 in absolute value, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean. The skewness for Questions 2 through 8 did not meet this requirement. When the kurtosis was greater than or equal to 3, then the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). The summary statistics are found in Table 13.

Table 13

District B Family Engagement Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Q9	1.82	0.94	147	0.08	1.00	5.00	1.26	1.64
Q10	1.96	1.18	147	0.10	1.00	5.00	1.02	-0.01
Q11	2.39	1.17	147	0.10	1.00	5.00	0.64	-0.37
Q12	2.72	1.38	147	0.11	1.00	5.00	0.28	-1.15
Q13	1.78	0.95	147	0.08	1.00	4.00	0.92	-0.32
Q14	1.68	1.07	147	0.09	1.00	5.00	1.56	1.59

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Intellectus, 2020).

Total Summary Statistics by Dependent Variable

According to the mean values represented in this data set respondents ranked family support higher than school climate and family engagement at 3.87. The mean value for school climate was represented at 3.69. The mean

value represented for family engagement was 2.14. The summary statistics are found in Table 14.

Table 14

Summary Statistics Table for Interval and Ratio Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>SE_M</i>	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Family Support								
Total	3.87	0.57	258	0.04	1.86	4.83	-0.21	0.04
District A	3.84	0.64	111	0.06	1.86	5.00	-0.25	0.09
District B	3.89	0.51	147	0.04	2.71	5.00	-0.07	-0.54
School Climate								
Total	3.69	0.80	258	0.05	1.00	5.00	-0.67	0.10
District A	3.69	0.85	111	0.08	1.29	5.00	-0.62	-0.14
District B	3.69	0.76	147	0.06	1.00	5.00	-0.71	0.30
Family Engagement								
Total	2.14	0.76	258	0.05	1.00	4.83	0.93	0.51
District A	2.25	0.80	111	0.08	1.00	4.83	0.80	0.20
District B	2.06	0.71	147	0.06	1.00	4.33	1.02	0.76

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Intellectus, 2020).

MANOVA of Dependent Variables

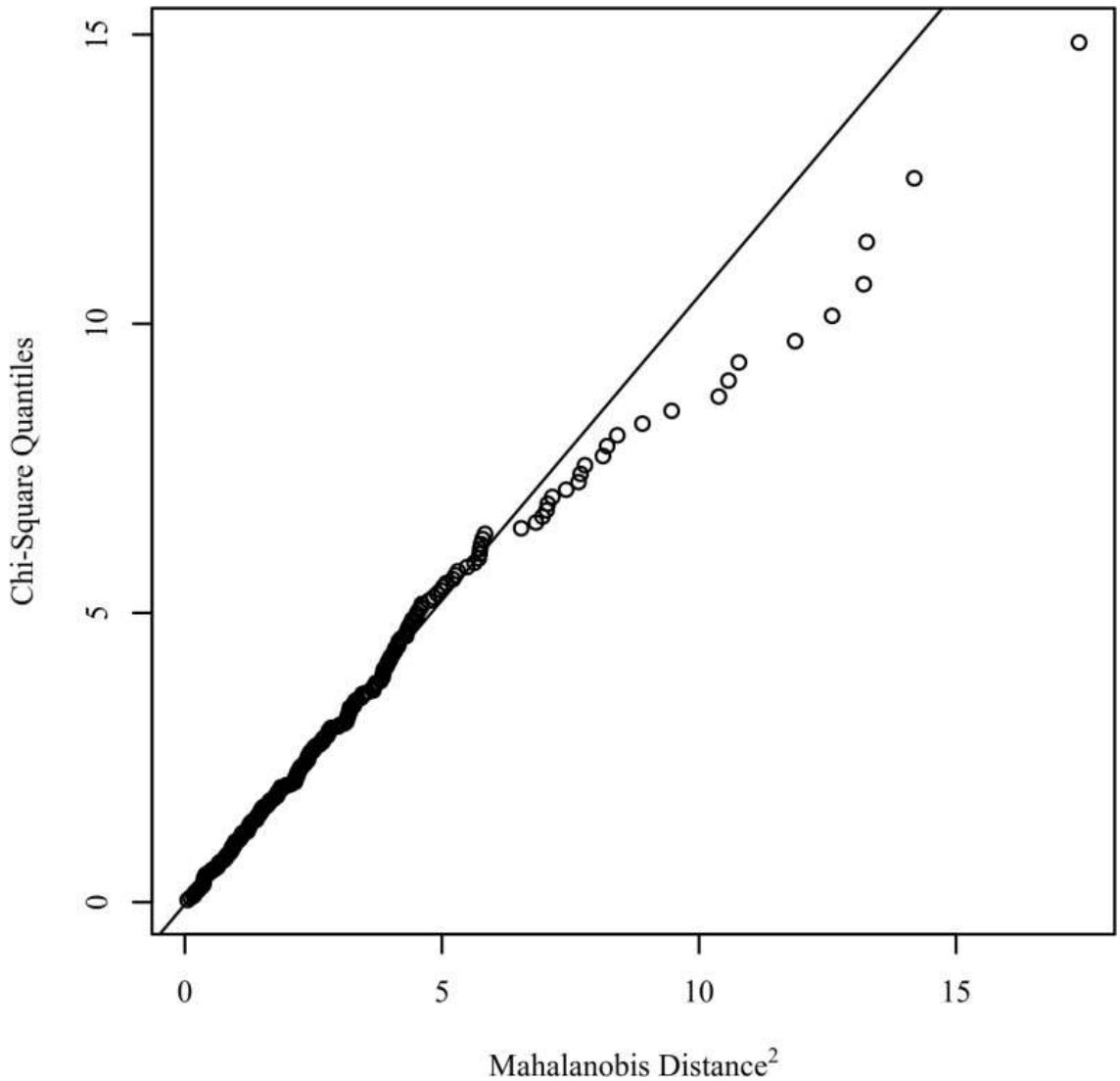
A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to assess if there was a significant difference in the linear combination of the dependent variables, School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support, between the two participating school districts. The main effect for District was not significant. This data suggested the linear combination of School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support was similar for each level of military-connected District.

Assumptions

Multivariate normality. To assess the assumption of multivariate normality, the squared Mahalanobi's distances were calculated for the model residuals and plotted against the quantiles of a Chi-square distribution (DeCarlo, 1997; Field, 2017). In the scatterplot, the solid line represented the theoretical quantiles of a normal distribution. Multivariate normality was assumed if the points formed a relatively straight line. Strong deviations would have indicated that the parameter estimates were unreliable and multivariate normality could not have been assumed. The researcher concluded the last point on the plot might be an outlier. The scatter plot for normality is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Chi-square Q-Q plot for Squared Mahalanobis Distances of Model Residuals to Test Multivariate Normality.



Homogeneity of covariance matrices. To examine the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices, Box's M test was conducted. The results were significant based on an alpha value of 0.05, $\chi^2(6) = 14.17$, $p = .028$, indicating the covariance matrices for each District were significantly different from one another and the assumption was not met.

Multivariate Outliers. To identify influential points in the model residuals, Mahalanobis distances were calculated and compared to a χ^2 distribution (Newton & Rudestam, 2012). An outlier was defined as any Mahalanobis distance that exceeded 16.27, the 0.999 quantile of a χ^2 distribution with 3 degrees of freedom (Kline, 2015). There was one observation detected as an outlier.

Absence of multicollinearity. A correlation matrix was calculated to examine multicollinearity between the dependent variables. All variable combinations had correlations less than 0.9 in absolute value, indicating the results were unlikely to be significantly influenced by multicollinearity. The correlation matrix was presented in Table 3.

The main effect for the independent variable of District was not significant, $F(3, 254) = 1.93, p = .125, \eta_p^2 = 0.02$, suggesting the linear combination of School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support was similar for the two school districts. The MANOVA results were presented in Table 4. The summary statistics are found in Table 15.

Table 15

Correlations Between Dependent Variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. School Climate	-		
2. Family Engagement	0.11	-	
3. Family Support	0.10	0.31	-

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

Since there were no significant predictors, additional testing was not required. However, additional analysis was conducted to ensure the outlier represented in Figure 1 was not significant. A Two-Tailed Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted to further examine the possibilities of differences between the dependent variables. The summary statistics are found in Table 16.

Table 16

MANOVA Results for School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support by District

Variable	Pillai	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Residual <i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
District A and B	0.02	1.93	3	254	.125	0.02

Note. Data obtained from Panorama's Family School Relationships Survey and Intellectus Statistics software (Panorama Education, 2015; Itnellectus, 2020).

Two-Tailed Mann-Whitney U Test School Climate

A two-tailed Mann-Whitney, two-sample rank-sum test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in School Climate between the two Districts. The two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was an alternative to the independent samples *t*-test, but did not share the same assumptions (Conover & Iman, 1981). There were 111 observations in District A and 147 observations in District B.

The two-tailed Mann-Whitney *U* test on School Climate was not significant based on an alpha value of 0.05, $U = 8191$, $z = -0.05$, $p = .956$. The mean rank for District A was 129.79, and the mean rank for District B was 129.28. This suggested that the distribution of School Climate for District A ($Mdn = 3.86$) was not significantly different from the distribution of School Climate for District B ($Mdn = 3.86$) category. These results identified that parent perception of School Climate did not differ significantly between the two districts.

Two-Tailed Mann-Whitney U Test Family Engagement

A two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in Family Engagement between the levels of District. The two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was an alternative to the independent samples *t*-test but did not share the same assumptions (Conover & Iman, 1981). There were 111 observations in District A and 147 observations in District B.

The result of the two-tailed Mann-Whitney *U* test was not significant based on an alpha value of 0.05, $U = 9290$, $z = -1.91$, $p = .056$. The mean rank for District A was 139.69 and the mean rank for District B was 121.80. This suggests that the distribution of Family Engagement for District A ($Mdn = 2.17$) was not significantly different from the distribution of Family Engagement for the B ($Mdn = 2.00$) category. These results indicated Family Engagement did not differ significantly between the two districts.

Two-Tailed Mann-Whitney U Test Family Support

A two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in Family Support between the levels of District. The two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was an alternative to the independent samples *t*-test but did not share the same assumptions (Conover & Iman, 1981). There were 111 observations in District A and 147 observations in District B.

The result of the two-tailed Mann-Whitney *U* test was not significant based on an alpha value of 0.05, $U = 7852$, $z = -0.52$, $p = .604$. The mean rank for District A was 126.74 and the mean rank for District B was 131.59. This suggested the distribution of Family Support for District A ($Mdn = 3.86$) was not significantly different from the distribution of Family Support for District B ($Mdn = 3.86$) category. These results

indicated Family Support did not differ significantly between the two school districts.

Summary statistics were calculated for School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support in total by district and split by question. Summary statistics were calculated for sections of the survey to include variables titled School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support in total by district and organized by question banks, which were included in each variable section. Statistics also were generated to enable the researcher to compare District A with District B.

Null Hypotheses

H1₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family support in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H2₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

H3₀: There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and less than (c) 25% military-connected schools?

The researcher did not reject null hypothesis H1₀, due to the similarity in mean scores. Additionally, the researcher chose not to reject the null hypotheses H2₀, due to the mean scores being similar. Finally, the researcher also chose not to reject the null hypothesis for H3₀, because the mean scores were markedly similar.

Summary

This chapter contained the results from the quantitative study conducted to

measure parental perceptions as they related to the variables, family support, school climate, and family engagement in schools, where military-connected students and families resided. Summary statistics were calculated for each variable in total, by district, and by individual question on the survey instrument. Statistics were generated to enable the researcher to compare District A with District B. Summary statistics were calculated for each interval and ratio variable. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each nominal variable. For the purpose of this study two districts were represented one with greater than 25% military-connected students and families and one with less than 25% military-connected students and families.

The result of the power analysis revealed that the target sample size for the MANOVA was 180 participants. The sample size collected from the survey instrument yielded enough responses to meet the target sample size. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) identified no significant difference in the linear combination of the dependent variables, School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support, between the two school districts. A correlation matrix examined the multicollinearity between the dependent variables, revealing no significant influence of multicollinearity. Correlations between Dependent Variables were examined with a Two-Tailed Mann-Whitney U Test with no significant differences noted.

Chapter Five will explore the results from the quantitative study conducted to understand parental perceptions as they relate to the variable's family support, school climate, and family engagement programs as attributes of schools where military-connected students and families reside. Data from the survey instrument was analyzed to understand military-connected family's perceptions of school connections following the

implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military-Connected Children. This analysis will enable the researcher to determine if the hypotheses or the null hypotheses were valid. Analysis of this data may provide important insights into military-connected families perceptions of schools and identify opportunities for growth in enhancing this important relationship. Further the analysis of data may reveal opportunities to consider implications for practice and to describe future research revealing trends which will contribute to the researcher's findings and conclusions in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Summaries and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of military-connected parents of the three key areas related to children in schools: (a) family support, (b) school climate, and (c) family engagement programs. Gaining an understanding of military-connected family's perceptions of school life following the implementation of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military-Connected Children was significant, as this compact introduced significant reforms which were implemented to assist military-connected families attending public schools. While the number of children who were military-connected in 2016 exceeded one million, an essential distinction was that only 7% attended department of defense schools (Cole, 2016). The remainder attended either public schools or private schools of their choosing (Cole, 2016). The Compact was established to provide assistance to military-connected families with respect to required processes related to enrollment, extracurricular participation, and educational programming (Elfman, 2018).

The Compact contained language which defined parameters common to military-connected families in public schools (Elfman, 2018). Enrollment, transfer credit, participation in extracurricular activities, and graduation requirements were among the most significant elements in The Compact (Elfman, 2018). Knowing that the logistical elements contained in the language of The Compact prompted the researcher to consider whether The Compact positively impacted the lives of children and families who were military-connected. All parents had opinions about their children's schools (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). The opinions were often shaped by interaction with the school whether

those interactions were formal or informal (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). Parental opinion, or more formally parental perceptions, of their children's schools were important with respect to the children forming their own perceptions about school (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). This was an important connection as the relationship between the child's perceptions about school were related to parental perception (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). In fact, parental perceptions of the school environment provided an important bridge to better understand the state of how military-connected families benefitted from the implementation of The Compact. Further, understanding parental perceptions may also enable the researcher to identify areas that require additional resources or programs to assist military-connected families with their connections to schools. A review of literature revealed perceptions parents had of their children's schools and whether the support services available to them influenced their children's attitudes about their schools (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). Parental Perceptions were also linked to students' motivations, behaviors, and academic performances (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). A student's engagement in school activities was impacted by positive perceptions of the school climate, which was also enhanced by the level of parental involvement in schools (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Families' perceptions of their schools' climate and support systems were found to be directly related to their children's successes in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). A knowledge gap existed in educational research regarding how military-connected students and parents worked through the challenges related to supporting military-connected children in schools (Cole, 2016). Elfman (2016) asserted school administrators required a stronger understanding of military-connected children's needs to better identify interventions essential to elements connected to student success.

The study sought to measure parents of military-connected children's perceptions of family support, school climate, and family engagement programs, by using criteria established in Gehlbach's Family-School Relationships Survey (Panorama Education, 2015). An adapted version of Gehlbach's Family-School Relationships Survey provided a means of measuring the parental perceptions of their children's school climates and family supports being provided to their children, and family engagement programs available for military families. Specifically, the researcher chose to survey military-connected families in a military-connected school district with less than 25% military-connected students and one that had more than 25% military connected students. The researcher was granted permission from Dr. Gehlbach to utilize portions of the family-school relationships survey which was housed by Panoramic education (see Appendix B). Beyond the need for support structures to ensure academic successes, researchers have demonstrated parental engagement in a school positively impacted students' success in multiple facets in schools (Bahena et al., 2016). Positive parental perceptions and strong engagement with their children's schools had a significant impact on students' attitudes about their schools and their motivation to achieve (Bahena et al., 2016).

Summary statistics were calculated for each interval and ratio variable. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each nominal variable. Dependent variables represented in this study were: (a) School Climate, (b) Family Engagement, and (c) Family Support. For the purpose of this study the district with greater than 25% military-connected students and families was labeled District A. The district with less than 25% military-connected students and families was labeled District B. The independent variables were the individual districts where the student and families were

currently enrolled. The 2019 COVID Pandemic presented issues with respect to parental responses, resulting in one potential school district (District C) which was 100% military-connected electing not to participate in this research study. The superintendent of the potential school district (District C) cited stressors related to the pandemic as the reason they chose not to participate at this time. The researcher chose to continue the study with the existing two districts: one military-connected school district which was greater than 25% military connected, and one district that was less than 25% military connected.

The researcher will discuss the research questions and hypothesis that guided this study in this chapter. Additionally, the researcher will discuss the findings from analysis of quantitative statistical analysis. Further, in this chapter the researcher will present conclusions as well as implications for practice and suggest additional research. In order to examine the parental perceptions of military-connected children in schools the following research questions and Hypotheses guided this study:

RQ1: What are military-connected parents' perceptions of family support programs in schools which are greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

H1: There is a significant difference between parent perceptions of family support in schools that were (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ2: What are parent perceptions of school climate in schools that are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

H2: There is a significant difference between parent perceptions of school climate in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

RQ3: What are parent perceptions of family engagement in schools that are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

H3: There is a significant difference between parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools?

Findings

To examine the research question of what are military-connected parents' perceptions of family support programs in schools which are greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools, the researcher examined data collected from a survey adapted from Dr. Gehlbach on two individual districts.

Research Question 1. What are military-connected parents' perceptions of family support programs in schools which are greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

Research Question 2. What are parent perceptions of school climate in schools that are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

Family Support. For the purpose of this study, Family Support was correlated with Questions 15 through 23 of the survey that were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. The mean value for District A was 3.84, and the mean for District B was 3.89,

with the total mean for both districts being 3.87. The observations for family support for District A by question had a high mean of 4.40 and a low mean of 3.25, District B in total by question had a high mean of 4.56 and a low mean of 2.86. The high mean for both districts was within the Standard deviation the observations for family engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 4.49 and a low mean of 3.03. Similar means prompted the researcher to assess whether the similarities were statistically significant. To test whether a statistically significant difference existed the researcher used a test of statistical significance. This involved using the mean score for perceptions of Family Support, for each district in a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to assess if there was a significant difference in the linear combination of the dependent variables, School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support, between the two districts computing Interval and Ratio Variables. The results of this test did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the family support measure.

School Climate. A two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in School Climate between the two school districts. The two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test on School Climate was not significant suggesting that the distribution of School Climate for District A was not significantly different from the distribution of School Climate for District B. These results identified that parent perception of School Climate did not differ significantly between the two districts. Therefore, the researcher did not reject the null hypothesis of Question 1 stating that there was not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family support in schools which were the following: (a) 100% military-connected, (b)

greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools, and supported Hypothesis 1.

The second research question was examined by the researcher reviewing data collected from a survey adapted from Dr. Gehlbach on two individual districts, one with greater than 25% military connected families and one with less than 25% military connected families. For the purpose of this study, School Climate was correlated with Question 2 through Question 8 and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. The observations for School Climate had an average score of 3.69. For District A, the observations of School Climate had an average of 3.69. For District B, the observations of School Climate for both districts had an average mean of 3.69. School Climate for both districts by question had a high mean of 3.91 and a low mean of 3.31. The observations for School Climate for District A by question had a high mean of 3.95 and a low mean of 3.36. The observations for school climate for District B by question had a high mean of 3.89 and a low mean of 3.37. The similarity in means prompted the researcher to believe the means were not statistically different. To test whether a statistically significant difference existed the researcher used a test of statistical significance. This involved using the mean score for perceptions of family support for each district in a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to assess if there was a significant difference in the linear combination of the dependent variables, School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support between the two districts and computing Interval and Ratio Variables. The results of this test did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the School Climate measure. A two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was conducted to examine whether there were

significant differences in School Climate between the two Districts. The results of the two-tailed Mann-Whitney *U* test on School Climate suggested that the distribution of School Climate for District A was not significantly different from the distribution of School Climate for District B. These results identified that parent perception of School Climate did not differ significantly between the two districts. Therefore, the researcher did not reject the null hypothesis of Question Two. There was not a significant difference between parent perceptions of school climate in schools which were (a) 100% military-connected, (b) greater than 25% military-connected, and (c) less than 25% military-connected schools.

Research Question 3. What are parent perceptions of family engagement in schools that are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools?

The third research question of what were parent perceptions of family engagement in schools which are 100% military-connected, greater than 25% military-connected, and less than 25% military-connected schools, was examined by the researcher by examined by the researcher by reviewing data collected from a survey adapted from Dr. Gehlbach on two individual districts, one with greater than 25% military connected families and one with less than 25% military connected families. For the purpose of this study Family Engagement was correlated with Questions 9 through 14 of this survey and were measured on a Likert scale ranking 1 to 5. In total there were 111 observations in District A and 147 observations in District B. The observations for Family Engagement for both District A and B combined in total by question had a high mean of 2.68 and a low mean of 1.76. District A by question had a high mean of 2.62

and a low mean of 1.86. The observations for Family Engagement for both District B in total by question had a high mean of 2.72 and a low mean of 1.68. The researcher believed the similarity in means may not have been statistically significant. It was also important that the researcher indicated the mean scores for Family Engagement were markedly lower than the means of the other dependent variables represent in this study. This fact could certainly prompt the researcher to recommend future research to determine the reason for the disparity. To test whether a statistically significant difference exists the researcher used a test of statistical significance. This involved using the mean score for perceptions of family engagement for each district in a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to assess if there was a significant difference in the linear combination of the dependent variables, School Climate, Family Engagement, and Family Support between the two districts and computing Interval and Ratio Variables. The results of this test did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the family engagement measure. A two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in Family Engagement between the two levels of the Districts. The result of the two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test was not significant suggesting that the distribution of Family Engagement for District A was not significantly different from the distribution of Family Engagement for District B. These results indicate Family Engagement did not differ significantly between the two *districts*. Therefore, the researcher did not reject the null hypothesis of question three, Hypothesis 3. There is not a significant difference between parent perceptions of family engagement in schools, which were (a) 100% military-connected,

(b) greater than 25% military-connected, and less than (c) 25% military-connected schools.

Conclusions

Family Support. Family Support has been a powerful bridge to student success in the areas of behavior, academic success, and the comfort level of students in schools as there was a strong connection between supportive schools and student success (Rohner et al., 2010). It was also significant to include the student and the parent as essential members when drawing conclusions around themes embedded in the Family Support portion of the survey. This concept drew a direct connection to the concept that parents played a crucial role in multiple facets of student success in schools (Duhman et al., 2018). Based on the scores reported in the survey, parents in District A and District B reported having had frequent conversations with their children about the learning taking place at their schools which was the theme of Question 15, for which the mean for both districts was 4.49, which ranked between the “frequently” and the “almost all the time” rankings, indicating parents perceived these conversations about learning were regularly occurring. Learning conversations about school at home connected to Bruggencate et al.’s (2012) assertion that families needed to actively support their children’s advancement in school. Further, families also played a part in developing independence or promoting students doing things for themselves, which was evident by the score on Question 16, which was a mean of 4.35 centered on the effort parents put into helping their children do things for themselves. The concept of learning at home or undertaking learning tasks at school was more moderately received by families represented in this study, based on the score of 3.89 on Question 17, which ranked above “Sometimes” but

below the more desirable “Frequently” ranking. Parents sharing content knowledge with children at home or providing clarification of school concepts at home could have been slightly less likely to occur than engaging in educational activities at home, as the scores were different for the two areas. The importance of this conclusion could not have been overstated, as it connected a direct parallel to what was referred to as Type 1 parenting, the first element in Epstein’s (2020) parenting typology, which promoted the need for families to establish home learning environments promoting learning growth. Further, the significance of learning at home and parental involvement in the academic pursuits of their children at home represented in this sample was also supported by Type 4 parenting from Epstein’s (2020) typology for parental involvement in schools.

Families represented in this study appeared to have marginal knowledge, reflected in a mean score of 3.55 regarding how their children performed socially at school, which was the primary focus of Question 18. This is important, as social integration of students is correlated to positive student outcomes (Maele & Houtte, 2011). Providing additional context to the aspect of social acceptance as it related to family support, on Question 20 parents and families perceived that they did not know their children’s friends very well, as the mean score for this question was 3.03, which certainly made sense as military-connected children were often challenged by the concept of forming relationships with other children (Wadsworth et al., 2017). The researcher concluded that the median score of 4.12 indicated that discussions with their children about problems related to others may have occurred more frequently, which was the theme of Question 21. This was particularly important as children were often presented with obstacles which may have led to children having a lower self-worth, emotional distress, or even hurting oneself, if

such issues were not discussed (Easterbrooks et al., 2013). Students who encountered feelings that they were not fully included encountered increased difficulty in school, while students who benefitted from social acceptance reaped the benefits through positive educational outcomes (Khan et al., 2010; Maele & Houte, 2011).

School Climate

There were many factors that contributed to a positive school climate and children's desires to attend school and how well they perceived their school experiences. In fact, children often measured how well they belonged in their school by recognizing the ways the school provided direct support to the students' wants (Bahena et al., 2016). Parents seemed to perceive that their children enjoyed the school experience, as the mean for Question 2, which measured the perceptions of parents about the extent their children enjoyed school, was 3.72. The issue presented in Question 3 was related to how motivating lessons were to their children's schools yielded a slightly lower outcome and a median score of 3.37. When presented with consideration of how fair or unfair the system of grading was for children, parents' perceptions indicated median for Question 4 was 3.91, which was close to "Frequently". When bias was suspected or children felt they were not being treated fairly, the result could have been lower grades and lower scores on assessments (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011). School Climate, as it related to motivation was the driving force beyond whether students or teachers developed a fondness for their schools (MacNeil et al., 2009). Positive student attitudes were essential to their successes in school. Special significance should have been given to the military-connected children in school, as they were highly susceptible to psychological issues, which may have been detrimental to their overall development (Berkowitz et al., 2014).

When asked to consider the diversity of other children's backgrounds on Question 5, parents' median score of 3.66 fell between "quite a bit" and "some," which led the researcher to conclude parents perceived this could have been of moderate importance.

The primary role of school leaders was to ensure that systems were in place to foster learning and growth in a welcoming and warm setting (Price, 2011). It was clear by the median score, which was 3.79, and related to administrative involvement in the establishment of a positive learning environment presented in Question 6, parents perceived their administration was a part of the creation of a positive environment where learning is a priority. Parental perception of the notion that teachers and staff were recognized as members of the school community that were respected by the children at school was evident, with a mean score on Question 7 of 3.79. It is clear that this leads to positive behavioral, academic, and students being able to adjust to the school setting (Rohner et al., 2010). It was also apparent that parents perceived that teachers had a relatively high level of respect for the students, as represented on Question 8 with a mean score of 3.72, which matched the response of "quite a bit" of respect and "just under" a tremendous amount of respect. This bears importance as parental perceptions can often shape the view the child has of the staff in school (Dotterer & Lowe, 2011).

Family Engagement

Parental engagement in schools often has been related to parents having positive perceptions of their children's schools (Schueler et al., 2017). Another critical element in gauging parental perception related to school fit (Bahena et al., 2016). Bruggencate et al. (2012) explained school officials needed to engage families in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways, and families should take the initiative to actively support their

children's development and learning. Reflecting upon what this study revealed about the parent perceptions of family engagement in schools, one must recognize Family Engagement was notably the lowest of the three categories in the survey, with a median score of 2.14. The lower scale scores reported in this category may be related to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the school's level of direct interaction with students and parents. Despite the impact of the pandemic, schools needed to work to engage families and students for multifaceted reasons, including engagement's direct and significant link to student achievement (Schuler et al., 2017). It was important to recognize that over the past year there were varying models of what school looked like through the pandemic. Schools in Missouri, where the survey was administered, were mandated to suspend in-person learning after the third quarter of the year. It certainly stands to reason that the mean score of 1.97 on Question 9, which measured how often parents perceived they met with teachers at school, was significantly lower than the scores summarized for School Support and School Climate and could correlate with the school closures. Virtual learning, hybrid learning, and even a return to in person learning, where visitors are prohibited from visiting the school, could also have directly impacted the lower scores in this area. The family engagement model derived for the U.S. Department of Education solidified the importance of the link between family engagement and productive learning outcomes that are factors in the success of educational systems (Reid, 2015). The modifications made to the educational process due to the pandemic may have created challenges for school districts to meet this charge, as noted in the perceptions of families being involved in groups at school, represented with a mean score of 2.02 on Question 10. This aligned with parents' perceptions of

minimal involvement in this practice. The restrictions imposed certainly could have been a factor prompting families to express lower scores with respect to in-person support at school. There were certainly multiple ways school district staff engaged parents in typical school years. Among them were phone calls, emails, and text messages, but the impact of in person conversations and events that take place at school are not easily replaced. Physically being present at school allows for direct human interface, which is not easily replicated. The mean score for Question 11, which measured the perception of how often parents visited their children's schools was 2.41, which could be attributed to pandemic-imposed situations, which prevented parents from visiting the school. The highest mean score for the section of Family Engagement presented with a mean score of 2.68 on Question 12, which measured the perception of how often parents communicated with other parents about their children's schools. The uncertainty facing schools certainly could have led to communication and engagement deficiencies resulting in parents seeking information from other parents. The pandemic seemed to impact people socially and, by all accounts, it was detrimental financially, as some families were not able to work during the shutdown. When asked about their involvement in fundraising efforts at their children's school, families' responses on Question 13 were represented with a mean score of 2.02. Clearly, there could be a strong connection between the financial issues imposed from the pandemic and families perceiving they were only slightly involved in fundraising at their child's school. The mean score on Question 14 of 1.76 for a question related to how often parents helped out at school, which was the lowest in the Family Engagement section, runs counter to Kraft's (2017) belief that schools needed to develop and to identify multiple methods to promote engagement in school. Further, this should

have included the development of programs or systems, which afforded parents the opportunity to assist in the learning process (Kraft, 2017). School officials may need to think differently about opportunities for parental engagement that creates value for all stakeholders (Kraft, 2017).

Implications for Practice

It was important to acknowledge the purpose of this study, which was to better understand military-connected parents' perceptions of family support, school climate, and family engagement in their children's schools. The impact of gaining insight into the perceptions of military-connected parents could positively impact 1,114,000 military-connected children attending public schools in the United States (Cole, 2016). The researcher concurred with the notion that parents were the bridges to educational success in multiple ways (Duhman et al., 2018). Parental perceptions often influenced children with respect to academic variables in both positive and negative ways (Duhman et al., 2018). School practitioners understanding perceptions of parents, specifically military-connected parents contributed to improved positive relationships with students and their families. Analyzing parental perception could also have served as a catalyst for much greater system changes. For example, data analysis related to engagement led the researcher to conclude that low engagement at a particular school was simply a fact based on the tabulated scores. Exploring reasons for low engagement in a particular school district would afford professional educators' topics to explore, to discuss, and to collaborate to generate potential changes in programs or services, which may lead to enhanced engagement. Further, professionals in the field of education certainly could

have benefitted from greater understanding of the perceptions of not just military-connected families, but all families.

Military-connected families have certain attributes that make them unique (Kraft, 2017). Meshing programs and services tailored to their unique characteristics allowed for greater symmetry in the relationship between the school personnel and the children and families they served (Kraft, 2017). This could have certainly led to increased sense of belonging and academic and social efficacy (Duhman et al., 2018). Why does this matter to the whole school population? If one considered the military-connected student population was just one subgroup as part of the overall school, then one could also have speculated that improving process, procedures, and communication for military-connected children, based on family perception, could have been applied to other subgroups in practice. Application of the knowledge gained about perception of military-connected parents could have been beneficial to other subgroups in public schools. When considering an innovation or modification to the school business, school district leaders needed to consider that, while military-connected children were part of the whole, the whole school benefitted if the same principle was applied to other specific groups contained within the school (Duhman, 2017).

School districts have been mandated to do certain things in certain ways. One such example was The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for military-connected children. Educational systems were accountable for specific legal requirements within The Compact. Beyond these legal requirements, this research study provided insight for school leaders and educators into the perceptions of military-connected parents following the implementation of The Compact. The compact has been

implemented as absolute and understood as a matter of law. This research contributed to a greater understanding of the perceptions of military-connected families who were beneficiaries of The Compact. Their perceptions provided an important link to the existing academic and social successes and challenges of military-connected children in public schools.

Suggestions for Future Research

The first recommendation is to follow up on this quantitative research study with a qualitative study to explore why members of members of families responded the way they did. Particular emphasis should be placed on the Family Engagement portion, as the scores represented were substantially lower than Family Support and School Climate. It was important to delve into the “why” behind parental perceptions to identify any significant factors. It also is important to generate themes for analysis to determine what trends contributed to a particular response or set of responses.

The second recommendation is to conduct a quantitative research study measuring the academic impact of the low family engagement scores represented in this study. Research supported the concept that highly engaged families in schools led to positive academic outcomes (Schueler et al., 2017). This research study could include multi-year academic information such, as state achievement tests to allow the researcher to compare data from years prior to the current pandemic situation. It would also be beneficial to utilize local data in the form of grade averages per pupil and class, as well as multiyear standardized test results, as a baseline for academic achievement.

The third recommendation for future research was to conduct a mixed methods study to determine if other sub groups represented in schools had similar perceptions as

military-connected families. The qualitative portion of this recommended study could include interviews and focus groups to gather information to identify themes and concepts, which contribute to the responses for each particular sub group in the areas of School Support, School Climate, and Family Engagement.

The fourth recommendation for future research is to conduct a quantitative research study in other geographic regions where military-connected families reside and enroll their children in schools. This study could have included participants from the west, central, and east regions of the United States where military-connected families resided. Administration of the Family Support, School Climate, and Family Engagement portions of the Family School Relationships survey in these areas afforded the researcher geographic-based data to analyze. This analysis allowed the researcher to measure variations between these groups to evaluate if the geographic region a family resided was a factor that impacted the perceptions of parents about their children's family support, school climate, and family engagement.

Summary

The researcher sought to fulfill the purpose of this study, which was to understand the perceptions of military-connected families in relation to the variables of family support, school climate, and family engagement. The researcher addressed the gaps in the literature related to understanding the demographics, challenges, and characteristics of military-connected families. The researcher gained significant understanding of the dynamics of military members and their families. The review of the literature revealed common attributes, which were characteristics of many military-connected families, as well as their children. It was evident that there was a relationship between military-

connected parental perceptions and military-connected children's perceptions. Thus, the researcher chose to study the perceptions of military-connected families in school.

The researcher accomplished this task by first administering three adapted portions of Dr. Gehlbach's Family-School Relationships Survey, which aligned with the dependent variables represented in this study to two military-connected school districts. One district was less than 25% military-connected and one district was greater than 25% military-connected. Once the data was collected from the administration of the survey, the researcher analyzed the data for each dependent variable, as well as the independent variable, which was the district classification.

The results of the survey and subsequent analysis prompted the researcher to determine parental perceptions in the areas of family support and school climate were generally favorable. The researcher also concluded, based on similar mean scores, there was little difference between the responses provided by parents in each district. Analysis of the area of family engagement revealed that parental perceptions were less favorable in this area, as the means were substantially lower in both districts. While slight differences in mean scores per question, variable and district, were noted in the analysis of the data collected, the researcher concluded that they were not statistically significant.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Please respond to each question with the number that best correlates with your personal perceptions about the statements

1. Are you a military-connected family?

Yes No

School Climate: Perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school.

2. To what extent do you think that children enjoy going to your child's school?

Do not enjoy at all

Enjoy a little bit

Enjoy somewhat

Enjoy quite a bit

Enjoy a tremendous amount

3. How motivating are the classroom lessons at your child's school?

Not at all motivating

Slightly motivating

Somewhat motivating

Quite motivating

Extremely motivating

4. How fair or unfair is the school's system of evaluating children?

Very unfair

Somewhat unfair

Slightly unfair

Neither fair nor unfair

Slightly fair

5. How much does the school value the diversity of children's backgrounds?

Not at all

A little bitSome

Quite a bit

A tremendous amount

6. How well do administrators at your child's school create a school environmentthat helps children learn?

Not well at all

Slightly well

Somewhat well

Quite well

Extremely well

7. Overall, how much respect do you think the children at your child's school have for the staff?

Almost no respect

A little bit of respect

Some respect

Quite a bit of respect

A tremendous amount of respect

8. Overall, how much respect do you think the teachers at your child's school have for the children?

Almost no respect

A little bit of respectSome respect

Quite a bit of respect

A tremendous amount of respect

Family Engagement: The degree to which families become involved with and interact with their child's school.

9. How often do you meet in person with teachers at your child's school?

Almost never

Once or twice per year

Every few months

Monthly

Weekly or more

10. How involved have you been with a parent group(s) at your child's school?

Not at all involved

Slightly involved

Somewhat involved

Quite involved

Extremely involved

11. In the past year, how often have you visited your child's school?

Almost never

Once or twice

Every few months

Monthly

Weekly or more

12. In the past year, how often have you discussed your child's school with other parents from the school?

Almost never

Once or twice

Every few months

Monthly

Weekly or more

13. How involved have you been in fundraising efforts at your child's school?

Not at all involved

Slightly involved

Somewhat involved

Quite involved

Extremely involved

14. In the past year, how often have you helped out at your child's school?

Almost never

Once or twice

Every few months

Monthly

Weekly or more

Family Support: Families' perceptions of the amount of academic and social support that they provide their child with outside of school.

15. How often do you have conversations with your child about what his/her class is learning at school?

Almost never

Once in a while

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost all the time

16. How much effort do you put into helping your child learn to do things for himself/herself?

Almost no effort

A little bit of effortSome effort

Quite a bit of effort

A tremendous amount of effort

17. How often do you help your child engage in activities which are educational outside the home?

Almost never

Once in a while

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost all the time

18. To what extent do you know how your child is doing socially at school?

Not at all

A little bit

Somewhat

Quite a bit

A tremendous amount

19. How often do you help your child understand the content s/he is learning in school?

Almost never

Once in a while

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost all the time

20. How well do you know your child's close friends?

Not well at all

Slightly well

Somewhat well

Quite well

Extremely well

21. How often do you and your child talk when s/he is having a problem with others?

Almost never

Once in a while

Sometimes

Frequently

Almost all the time

Appendix B: Survey Approval

Warrensburg R-VI School District Mail - Fwd: Form Submission - Conta... <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ik=d86c4bc5ea&view=pt&search=all...>



John Finnane <jfinnane@warrensburgr6.org>

Fwd: Form Submission - Contact Page Form - Dissertation

Hunter Gehlbach <gehlabach@ucsb.edu>
To: jfinnane@warrensburgr6.org

Wed, Sep 18, 2019 at 8:33 PM

Of course, happy to have you use any/all of the survey. Please find attached the various publications that talk a bit about them and their measurement properties (I think these cover about 4 of our 7 scales) to help with citations etc. Good luck,
Hunter

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Squarespace** <no-reply@squarespace.info>
Date: Wed, Sep 18, 2019 at 1:59 PM
Subject: Form Submission - Contact Page Form - Dissertation
To: <hgehlabach@education.ucsb.edu>

Name: John Finnane

Email Address: jfinnane@warrensburgr6.org

Subject: Dissertation

Message: Dr. Gehlbach,
My name is John Finnane. I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. I am in the process of writing my dissertation and the components of the Family-School Relationship Survey aligns well with my research questions. Would it be possible to request permission to use the survey in my dissertation?
Thank you for your consideration,
John Finnane

(Sent via *Social Psychology In Education & the Environment*)

--
Hunter Gehlbach

Associate Dean for Academics & Faculty Development

Department of Education
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Website: www.huntergehlabach.com

Vitae

John P. Finnane

John Finnane is a professional educator. He has worked in the field of education for 27 years. He has taught 1st grade, 5th grade, and 6th grade English. He is also a certified practicing school administrator. He has served as a middle school assistant principal, kindergarten center head principal, and elementary principal, and the director of curriculum and assessment for the Warrensburg School District.

John worked for the first 6 years of his career in 1994 teaching first grade for one year at William Yates Elementary in Blue Springs, Missouri and five years teaching grade 5 at James Lewis Elementary in Blue Springs, Missouri. Mr. Finnane transitioned to the Warrensburg School District in 2000 when he assumed the role of half-time assistant principal and half-time 6th grade English teacher for one year. He then transitioned to Southeast School where he served for one year. John was named the principal at Martin Warren Elementary in 2007 where he served for 6 years prior to being named the Warrensburg School Districts' director of curriculum and assessment. He served in that capacity for three years. He was asked by district leadership to serve as liaison to the predesign and preconstruction of new elementary school in Warrensburg. Following construction John began his service to Maple Grove Elementary in 2011 where he currently serves as building principal.

Mr. Finnane holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Kansas State University, Manhattan; A Master of Arts in Teaching from Webster University, Kansas City, Missouri, and finally a Specialist Degree in Administration and the Principalship from the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, Missouri.