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MILITARY LIFESTYLE'S IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT

By

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Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

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MILITARY LIFESTYLE'S IMPACT ON CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT

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Abstract

Military families are an understudied population and the majority of research that does exist focuses on the effects of deployments on the family system. This study aims to answer the following questions: 1) “to what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children’s self-esteem?”, 2) “To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children’s social belongingness?”, and 3) “To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children’s resilience?” Data was collected from approximately 28 children between the ages of 14 and 20 who identified as coming from an active duty military member’s household. Analysis of this data identified significant, positive relationships between mother-child connections and self-esteem, father-child relations and resilience, and mother-child relationships and the number of deployments. Results from this study may assist practitioners in responding to students in military families, appropriating the best interventions and supports within the school environment, and collaborating with parents of military children.

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Chapter I

Introduction

The United States Armed Forces consists of 1.3 million active duty personnel (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Military families include children, spouses, and other dependents (i.e., parents of active duty personnel, or any other family identified as living within the home that depends upon the active duty service member) along with the active duty or reserve member. The literature purports that the experience of these families is distinctly different from those in the non-military population. Families in the military often experience unique stressors in addition to the common stressors civilians experience. For example, military families must learn to cope with deployments, constant fear of loss, frequent mobility, school transfers, and traumatic events (Chandra et al., 2009). Understanding these stressors requires an in-depth analysis of the supports, responses, and training needed to assist families in responding to stressors in an adaptive manner as they navigate life in the military.

Currently, much of the research on military families has specifically focused on the effects of deployments and long-term separations on the family system (Chandra et al., 2009; Esposito-Smythers, Wolff, Lemmon, Swenson, & Spirito, 2011; Gewirtz, Erbes, Polusny, Forgatch, 2011; Paris, DeVoe, Ross, & Acker, 2010; Sparks, 2011). Although this is invaluable research, the narrow focus of these studies does not allow for examination of the within group variance within the population. Further, researchers

often examine the family unit's pre- and post-deployment experiences from the parental perspective (either active duty member or spouse; Chandra et al., 2009; De Pedro et al., 2011). Few studies have examined the military child's perspective, which is vital information to consider when constructing intervention services (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Many barriers must be overcome in order to gain access to military children for research purposes as greater protections exist to protect this population because of their minor status and their affiliation with the military (Scarborough, 2014). Military families have been more guarded in sharing personal information to outsiders since 2003 when Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began (Scarborough, 2014). These two wars on terrorism were fought in Afghanistan and Iraq (Bouvard, 2012). This heightened level of caution may provide one possible explanation as to why few studies examine military family experiences from the perspective of the child.

The existing literature on military families provides limited information on military youth between the ages of 14 to 20 years old. The literature that is available stresses the importance of assisting these youths with on-time graduation so students are not delayed or deterred from graduating with a high school diploma (Bradshaw, Sudhinarest, Mmari, & Blum, 2010; De Pedro et al., 2011; Esqueda et al., 2012; Horton, 2005; Morgan, 2014; O'Connell, 1981; Sherman & Glenn, 2011; Weisman, 2012). However, beyond examining timely graduation, a paucity of research has examined how the military lifestyle impacts an adolescent child's psychological-emotional development.

Identification of barriers to timely graduation has provided a catalyst for multiple national policies which provide military children the opportunity to transfer credits between state lines more smoothly, assist in transitioning to new schools, and graduate on time (Esqueda et al., 2012). One of these programs is the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). MCEC offers specific programs for military children to become better acquainted with schools prior to arrival, and develop relationships through Student-2-Student programs (Esqueda et al., 2012). However, few studies are designed to focus on the impact of family relations and key variables of military life on children's psychological-emotional development, which has been found to be critical in predicting adjustment, resilience, and academic success of children (Kelley & Jouriles, 2011; Kelley, Finkel, Kelley, & Ashby, 2003; Lester et al., 2012; Posard, Hultquist, & Segal, 2013; Willerton, Schwarz, Wadsworth, & Oglesby, 2011).

A critical review of the existing literature on military children and the impact parent-child relationships have on the outcomes of military children provides insight on the development of military children's self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience. Adjustment is often defined as an overall understanding of depression, anxiety, self-esteem, resilience, and social belongingness with peers. An often-identified protective factor to life stressors includes a strong familial bond, specifically with one or both parents (Chandra et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2003; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Prevatt, 2003; Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). The parent-child relationship has been identified in previous research as having a greater impact on

the child's overall adjustment than it does on the child's ability to develop a strong sense of social belongingness with peers (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Chandra et al., 2009; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Gewirtz, Erbes, Polusny, Forgatch, & DeGarmo., 2011; Palmer, 2008). Parental relationships have a greater impact on the military child's outcomes (psychosocial and academic) than direct stressors, such as deployments or frequent mobility (Palmer, 2008). This can have positive and negative effects, depending on how parents respond to military life stressors as well as general life stressors, as parental health and child well-being are positively and highly correlated (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Chandra et al., 2009; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Gewirtz et al., 2011; Palmer, 2008; Paris et al., 2010).

Military adolescents may often experience a higher state of stress than civilian adolescents as adolescents are not only exposed to frequent mobility, deployments, and other military life stressors, but also experience an increase in academic demands, conflict with parents, and the struggle to connect with peers (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Of importance, qualitative studies have examined military youth's reactions to frequent mobility, noting that adolescents may harbor resentment toward their parents when they learn they will have to move once again (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Although programs such as the MCEC and Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS) are designed to ease transitions to new locations and environments for military children, universal programs do not apply to all military children and environments encountered.

Frequently mobile students experience continual changes in academic curriculum and may struggle with academic and social success beyond experiences of the average school-aged peer. Schools on a military base are believed to be better equipped to assist military children with life stressors, and function at a higher academic success rate than those who attend public schools (Esqueda et al., 2012). Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools often provide a better-aligned curriculum throughout the nation, easing transitions through academic stability and providing an increased understanding of personal experiences (Esqueda et al., 2012). However, this advantage ceases after the fifth grade, as DoDEA schools only educate children in primary schools (DoDEA, 2015). After fifth grade, students must attend public or private schools, where understanding of the military lifestyle is limited and military children may struggle in developing long-lasting friendships or have difficulty finding a sense of belonging within multiple new environments.

The experience of the military child extends beyond life stressors the average civilian child encounters (Finkel, 2001; Gewirtz et al., 2011; Lester et al., 2012; Park, 2011; Paris et al., 2010). For example, military youth experience a greater frequency of mobility, frequent deployments and the subsequent restructuring of the family unit, concerns for the physical and mental health of parents (Finkel, 2001; Gewirtz et al., 2011; Lester et al., 2012; Park, 2011; Paris et al., 2010). These experiences create a unique culture that separates military children from civilian children. Providing services that directly address these additional stressors are crucial to ensure students have positive

academic and psychosocial outcomes and become valuable, functioning members of society. Currently, limited information is available on the military child's personal experiences. The majority of the existing research has used gathered qualitative data from focus groups to develop and assess interventions. There is a scarcity of research collecting quantitative data from military children. Furthermore, of data collected and analyzed, an even lower number of studies examine the adjustment and positive outcomes of the military child through the perspective of the child. Instead the research focuses on collecting data from the active duty members or their spouse (Bradshaw et al., 2010; De Pedro et al., 2011). The purpose of this study is to examine the experience of military children and how this unique lifestyle impacts their sense of belonging, self-esteem, resilience, and the parent-child relationship through the child's perspective. This thesis examines the existing literature in detail, highlighting the parent-child relationship, social belongingness with peers, self-esteem, resilience, and key factors that identify immersion in the military lifestyle. The following questions were asked in this study: 1) to what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's self-esteem? 2) to what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's social belongingness? and 3) to what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of

transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's resilience?

Definitions of Terms

Military Dependent. A civilian member of an active duty service member's family, including but not limited to, spouse, child, or parent in which the individual is considered to be dependent of the active duty service member (National Military Family Association, 2005).

Active Duty. Full-time service in the United States Armed Forces (Oxford Dictionary, 2015).

DoDEA. Department of Defense Education Activity, an agency committed to preparing all military children across the globe with primary and secondary educational benefits adapted to their lifestyles to ensure success (DoDEA, 2015).

Deployment. Merriam-Webster (2015) defines this as organization and sending of military troops for a particular purpose. Most recent deployments (within the last 15 years) have included sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and the Global War on Terrorism (GWT).

Military OneSource. An organization run by the Department of Defense providing information relating to all aspects of military life, including but not limited to "deployments, reintegration, moves, parenthood, and retirement" (Military OneSource, 2015, para. 2).

MCEC. The Military Child Education Coalition is designed to assist military children with educational needs across multiple states (Military Child Education Coalition, 2015). The MCEC has also been called the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (Esqueda, Astor, & De Pedro, 2012).

Military child. A minor who has one or more parent (mother, father, guardian, or step-parent) in the United States Armed Forces (Black, 2007).

Mobility. The state of moving from one place to another (Merriam-Webster, 2015). For military families, mobility refers to frequent relocations (Military OneSource, 2015).

Combat stress. May often be referred to as operational stress or combat and operational reaction, it is a response to the mental and physical efforts exerted by military service members who have faced dangerous and/or difficult situations, and may occur during peace and wartime (Real Warriors Campaign, 2015).

Chapter II

Literature Review

Demographics of active duty personnel. According to the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (2012), over 1.3 million individuals are serving in the United States military as active duty personnel. Of those listed as active duty, 235,334 (17.7%) are identified as officers, while 1,090,939 (82.3%) million are identified as enlisted personnel in the United States Armed Forces. Thus, for every officer there are 4.8 enlisted military service members (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Active duty members recognized as female gender-types total 202,876, comprising only 14.6% of active duty members, while male gender-types total 1,185,152, comprising 85.4% of active duty members (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Less than one-third (30.3%) of active duty members self-identify as a minority (i.e., African-American or Black, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, multiracial, and/or other/unknown), with 52,911 of identified minorities registered as officers and 367,484 identified as enlisted personnel (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). An exception to the minority classification are those of Hispanic origin, who comprise 11.3% of active duty personnel (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Over 25.5% of active duty personnel are over the age of 41, while 22.7% are between the ages of 26 and 30, and the next largest age group (20.2%) is between 31 to 35 years of age (Office

of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). The average age of active duty officers is 34.7 and the average for enlisted personnel is 27.4 (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Of the reported military service members, over half (56.1%) are listed as married (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). A majority of active duty officers (69.5%) and slightly more than half (53.3%) of enlisted personnel self-identify as married (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). In relation to gender-types, 58% of males and 45% of females report being married. In addition, 6.3% of all marriages in the military are considered dual-military marriages, in which both partners are considered active duty (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012).

Demographics of dependents. More individuals are identified as military dependents than active duty service members, with 1,941,699 listed under dependent status (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Spouses of active duty service members are primarily female (93%), whereas only seven percent are male (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Of the percentage of married active duty members (56.1%), 38.7% of those married have children and 5.2% of active duty personnel with children are single parents (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Approximately 1,220,941 children under the age of 22 are identified as a military dependent (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). These children of active duty service members are often described as ‘military children’. On average, active duty service members, who have children, are estimated to

have two per household (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). Children between the ages of 12 and 18 (273,524) and 19 to 22 (53,132) are the third and fourth largest group, respectively. The largest age group of children is between birth and five years of age (517,734; Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). There are 186,883 high school age and above (i. e., between the age of 15 and 22) military children whose parents are considered active duty, with a majority (71.6%) of the children between the age of 15 and 18 (Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012). The current study specifically focuses on military children between 14 and 20 years of age to examine social belongingness

Demographics of military children who attend public and DoDEA schools.

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) opened schools after World War II to service children of active duty military families (Esqueda et al., 2012). This is one noteworthy effort of the Department to create educational systems to specifically attend to the unique experience in early development of military children. Of the 1.2 million children identified as having at least one active duty service member as a parent, only 78,000 children are enrolled in a DoDEA school (DoDEA, 2015). The DoDEA has 172 accredited schools across 11 foreign countries in 14 school districts located in seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico (DoDEA, 2015). DoDEA schools are divided into three regional categories: Europe, the Pacific, and the Americas (DoDEA, 2015). Over 80% of military children are in 214 civilian public school districts (De Pedro et al., 2011). DoDEA schools provide the advantage of a uniform curriculum in all locations, with

education supports structured for supporting any adverse circumstance associated with being a military child (Esqueda et al., 2012). Students who attend DoDEA schools are likely to perform at higher levels than the national average on standardized tests of achievement, and “the achievement gap between racial and ethnic minority groups and White students” is significantly smaller than in public schools (Esqueda et al., 2012, p. 66). Prior research has found that public schools are not as equipped at responding to multiple school transitions as the DoDEA schools, and the same positive academic outcomes do not result (Esqueda et al., 2012).

Parent-Child Relationship

Military service members and their families face additional stressors compared to their civilian-family counterparts (Chandra et al., 2009). Children and caregivers in military families have reported higher levels of stress compared to the overall population (Chandra et al., 2009; Palmer, 2008). In a military family, parent-child interactions highly influence the development of the child’s psychosocial and academic development (Palmer, 2008). In other words, a positive relationship between the parent and child can serve as a protective factor that is more powerful than specific stressors associated with the military lifestyle, such as deployments and frequent mobility (Palmer, 2008).

Family stress theory posits that each family member’s perceptions of and reaction to life stressors impact the entire family’s ability to adapt in a crisis or transition (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Beginning in the 1980s, the term “military family syndrome” was coined to describe military families with authoritarian fathers, depressed mothers,

and out-of-control children, caused by the struggles of adjusting to frequent relocations and separations (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Palmer, 2008). Although the term remains, no evidence exists to prove the military family stereotype (Palmer, 2008). However, military families may have a greater risk of maladjustment because they encounter both normal life stressors and military-related problems (i.e., frequent separation from one or more parents, deployments, and frequent mobility) and how one family member reacts affects other family members (Bradshaw et al., 2010). In a Pentagon report from 2006, an increase of mental health visits, behavioral health visits, behavioral disorders, and stress disorders escalated from 11% to 19% for military dependents, as youth and the spouse stay stateside during military deployments (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Esqueda et al., 2012;). In 2009, the Pentagon Report stated that outpatient care was sought more than two million times and inpatient care had increased 50% since 2003 in military families during deployments (Sherman & Glenn, 2011). As service members return from deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan, 28% of active duty service members screen positive for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; Sherman & Glenn, 2011). Prolonged parent absences, multiple moves, isolation from civilian community, and the feeling of uncertainty of potentially losing a family member are factors that influence the increase of mental health issues in the military community (De Pedro et al., 2011).

Parent mental health. The relationship between a parent's mental health and the well-being of a child are positively and highly correlated (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Chandra et al., 2009; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Gewirtz, Erbes, Polusny, Forgatch, &

DeGarmo., 2011; Palmer, 2008; Paris, DeVoe, Ross, & Acker, 2010). Palmer (2008) found that parents' responses to specific stressors of military life, such as deployments and continuous relocations, have a greater impact on a child's reactions to stress than the child's direct responses to stressors. Positive relationships with parents, as well as other family members in the household, are associated with greater psychosocial well-being of the military child (Kelley et al., 2003; Palmer, 2008). Willerton et al. (2011) note that a father's role (typically the parent who is deployed) has a limited impact on his child(ren)'s well-being and the parent-child relationship because of prolonged separations. The presence of psychological symptoms in the non-deployed parent negatively influence the adjustment of the child as the military family attempts to cope with deployment and deployment related stressors (Lester et al., 2012). Maternal depression, specifically, accounts for one half of the variance in adolescent social competencies, indicating that military children whose mothers are experiencing difficulty with the military lifestyle often mirror depressive symptoms (Kelley et al., 2003). Specifically, military children who observe the non-deployed parent struggling to adapt and manage daily actions while the other parent is deployed are likely to experience similar feelings, and find themselves struggling to cope as well. More than 39% of military children with a parent deployed are identified as at-risk for internalizing problems, with roughly 14% of those exhibiting behavior issues at school (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). Psychological symptoms of the non-deployed parent predict later child adjustment problems (Lester et al., 2012; Palmer, 2008). Attachment theory and

family systems theory are frequently supported by this occurrence, as research identifies the importance of positive behaviors and responses to stress. Positive behavior and positive responses to stressors have been identified as appropriate variables for measuring the mental health of the parent and have greater significance than any external environmental factors to the well-being of the military child (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). Parents who maintain adequate mental health are more capable of supporting their offspring in developing a stable state of well-being (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011).

Transition-related stressors may also impact a child's ability to adapt and transition (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Adolescents within a frequently mobile military family are of particular concern because individuals in this age range are adapting to pubertal changes, increasing academic demands, and evolving parent-child and peer relationships (Bradshaw et al., 2010). This adjustment period may decrease adolescents' ability to cope and adapt easily to changes if the family is frequently mobile (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Assessing parental attitudes (i.e., approach to relocation viewed as a positive or negative event) is important as it may identify risk factors associated with moving (Palmer, 2008). If a parent's response to moving to a new location is positive and encouraging, the adolescents may be more likely to hold similar responses, especially if this is a consistent response (Palmer, 2008). A parent who becomes upset or develops depressive symptoms may influence children within the household to also respond in a similar fashion (Palmer, 2008). It is important to note that a majority of research assessing positive youth adjustment with relocation has focused on civilian populations

(Palmer, 2008). Three major differences between military and civilian families are that the former experience a greater frequency of mobility (i.e., moving an average of every three years), are three times more likely to transfer schools than their civilian counterparts, and have experienced at least one parental deployment for a long period of time (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Palmer, 2008).

Mother-child connections. Historically, very little research has focused on the families of the deployed service members (Gewirtz et al., 2011). However, in recent years, research has expanded to include the overall impact of family members left behind during a deployment and other transitional phases that occur as part of the military lifestyle (Gewirtz et al., 2011). Research focused on the most recent wars of OEF and OIF has demonstrated that when the returning parent experiences combat stress he or she engages in fewer interactions with his or her child (Gewirtz et al., 2011). Children are three times more likely to be at risk for child neglect and four times more likely to experience moderate to severe child maltreatment during a deployment, compared to children whose parents are both stateside (Gewirtz et al., 2011). Thus, research has identified that deployments have an adverse impact on parent-child relationships within military families. After a deployment, parents report decreased satisfaction, problem solving skills, interpersonal expressiveness, and family cohesion (Gewirtz et al., 2011).

Mobility greatly impacts a child's attitude, as he or she must prepare to leave friends, classmates, and teachers and make new friends as well as adjust to environmental differences (Kelley et al., 2003). The relocation and readjustment process takes time and

mother-child relationships may serve as a buffer against the ill-effect of a child's experiences of social isolation (Kelley et al., 2003). Children are often emotionally vulnerable and in need of greater parental attention immediately after a move (Kelley et al., 2003). A positive and cohesive family relationship can reduce children's concerns about negative evaluations from others, especially as children enter into adolescence (Kelley et al., 2003). Kelley et al. (2003) found that a positive parent-child relationship, particularly between mother and child, and mothers' reports of cohesion within the family unit is predictive of the child's self-esteem reports.

Determining the level of tension at home and the child's response to military relocations assists with understanding the communication level between the parent and child (Bradshaw et al., 2010). As military children develop, they adapt to typical developmental stressors that include puberty, peer relationships, parent-child relationships; experience an increase in academic demands; and military stressors such as relocations and parental deployments (Bradshaw et al., 2010). In a qualitative study on mobility and school adjustment examining 11 families, Bradshaw et al. (2010) identified a common attribute of stress on the family system. Many military students self-reported feeling anger toward their parents for the disruption caused by frequent relocations. Staff at the schools confirmed self-reports, stating the student's behaviors were manifested at school (Bradshaw et al., 2010). One student in this study stated his personal belief that all military children experience a moment during frequent relocations where they sit down and promise themselves "I'm not moving [again]" (Bradshaw et al., 2010, p. 90).

Paris et al. (2010) recommends parents consider fostering better relationships through child-parent psychotherapy, trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy, and parent-child interaction therapy. While many parent-child therapies are modeled with trauma in mind, a traumatic event does not always need to occur for it to be effective for military families (Paris et al., 2010). Esposito-Smythers and colleagues (2011) recommend providing parents with basic instruction in stress management techniques as well as ways to identify and discuss problems with personal emotions and physical health.

Father-child connections. A limited number of studies examine the father-child relationship separate from the parent-child relationship within the context of the military lifestyle and a majority of parents who are the active duty personnel within the military are the fathers (Willerton et al., 2011). Frequently on-call for missions, deployments, and other service responsibilities, these long-term separations may limit the possibilities of father-child engagement within the home (Willerton et al., 2011). In a qualitative study, researchers examined involvement, focusing on separations and reintegration periods within the military family (Willerton et al., 2011). Data collected through focus groups of 71 active duty fathers throughout the United States assessed involvement, engagement, accessibility, and responsibility of the father to the military child. Multiple themes were identified in this qualitative analysis, including responsibility (role in family), evaluation of parenting (self-examination, military impact), developmental awareness (knowledge of child's development), psychological presence (child presence in father's cognition), planning (strategies to maintain a connection with children), monitoring (maintaining

knowledge and supervision), reintegration challenges (resuming parenting role), warmth and acceptance (praise, responsive, positive emotions), anxiety and distress (experience of negative emotions), emotional withholding (need to limit involvement), and observable engagement activities (behavioral involvement; Willerton et al., 2011). Researchers identified a key role in the father's cognition was related to physical absence; many fathers struggled to identify and connect with their children as they were often gone for long periods of time as a result of deployments and training. These prolonged absences led to discomfort in the family environment and a subjective view of lower levels of involvement in parenting responsibilities (Willerton et al., 2011). Fathers who are frequently absent because of the time constraints of the military may feel less invested in parenting responsibilities and child-rearing techniques.

Another study examined how changing the daily workout schedule affects work-life conflicts, work quality, and potential health outcomes of enlisted low-ranking service members (Posard et al., 2013). This study discussed the potential impact of daily schedule changes to reduce stress and work-home conflicts, as many active duty personnel deploy for combat or trainings frequently. Through a focus group on an Army base, researchers identified that when exercise was scheduled in the afternoon, instead of in the morning, a significant and positive impact on junior enlisted personnel was evident (Posard et al., 2013).

FOCUS. A key tenet in therapy and intervention methods is to ensure feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness (Lester et al., 2012). Family-centered skills training

promotes resilience for military families and can mitigate stress from deployments as well as military relocations (Lester et al., 2012). One such family-centered, preventive-intervention model is Families OverComing Under Stress (FOCUS; Lester et al., 2012). This intervention model focuses on strengths and skills. It is designed for military families and is considered practical and easily accessible (Lester et al., 2012). FOCUS was funded by the U.S. Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and was designed using over 20 years of collected data on military families. It is now available to all branches of the military (Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps) and is designed to build resiliency and coping skills for military stressors in 2009 (FOCUS, 2015; Lester et al., 2012). The program is delivered in eight sessions that last approximately 90 minutes for family sessions and 30 to 60 minutes for child sessions (Lester et al., 2012). Although a standardized format has been constructed for the FOCUS program, it still provides customization and flexibility to adapt to each family member's specific needs (Lester et al., 2012). The program has been drastically changed by the Internet-based cloud computing management system developed to track implementation of the program and provide opportunity for greater interaction between the family and the interventionist (Lester et al., 2012). An online version ("FOCUS World") is available for families who may be stationed at military bases that have not yet adapted an in-person service (FOCUS, 2015; Lester et al., 2012). FOCUS World also provides trackable data to evaluate effectiveness, a function that many previous programs designed to assist military families did not perform (Lester et al., 2012). While many studies on the effectiveness of

FOCUS have lacked a control group, researchers have demonstrated significant benefits for parents, children, and families (Lester et al., 2012). FOCUS assists military families with identifying and developing the necessary skills for a functional and well-rounded family unit (FOCUS, 2015).

The FOCUS program identifies the strengths and skills of each family member, provides education and skills training to enhance coping, and increases family cohesion and support (Lester et al., 2012). FOCUS is important to examine because it is one of the longest lasting programs within the military that has the family unit as its primary concern. The program recognizes the complexity and needed flexibility and ease of use for military families. Lester et al. (2012) conducted evaluations of the program as part of the service delivery project through a secondary analysis. Using de-identified data from July 2008 to February 2010, Lester et al. (2012) analyzed 488 military families (742 parents) handling military-related stressors who participated in the FOCUS program. FOCUS was found to increase family cohesion and support by providing education and skills training to enhance positive coping responses related to deployment (Lester et al., 2012). Although FOCUS is most often used by families experiencing deployment, it is an optional program available to all military families and may be offered under the discretion of higher-ranking military personnel. FOCUS has demonstrated effectiveness for families encountering challenging and stressful situations by enhancing communication among members of the family unit through the use of strength-based and evidence-based interventions (Lester et al., 2012). The program has reported successfully

assisting thousands of participants at dozens of sites throughout the United States and online (FOCUS, 2015). Development of coping skills and building resilience may help children increase their self-esteem and feeling of social belonging with peers. Military children who can appropriately handle the stress within their lives may be better equipped at socializing with same-age peers and report feeling a greater sense of belonging and be better socially adjusted (FOCUS, 2015; Lester et al., 2012; Palmer, 2008; Posard et al., 2013). The parent-child relationship may contribute to greater adjustment and therefore greater social belongingness with peers, if conflicts at home are handled well (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Kelley et al., 2003; Lester et al., 2012; FOCUS, 2015; Palmer, 2008; Paris et al., 2010).

Social Belongingness

When a child moves to a new location, he or she encounters a new culture, different academic expectations, and a variety of students who possess different backgrounds. In the United States of America, military families are 13% more likely than civilian families to move annually (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Relocating on an average of every three years forces children to continually form new social relationships (Sherman & Glenn, 2011). Continual readjustment may limit a child's ability to foster long-lasting relationships (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Park, 2011; Sherman & Glenn, 2011). This poses a threat to social stability and adjustment for children and their parents. Gaining insight from multiple sources has provided researchers with information on how to assist children through school policies by offering programs that ease the transition

into a new school (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Park, 2011; Sherman & Glenn, 2011). This collective body of information, however, is not widespread and what is considered useful information in one environment may be of limited use in another (De Pedro et al., 2011). For example, understanding a child's experiences and background in a military family may be more difficult in a public school that is not near a military base compared to a public school that enrolls a greater percentage of military children. The challenge is to incorporate policies and procedures that welcome military children and their families in any environment across the country regardless of whether they comprise the majority of the school population (e.g., at a school near a military base) or a minority of the population in comparison to the rest of the school.

Type of school enrolled. Academic challenges for students in a military family often include differences in curriculum requirements, quality of education, services available for individuals with special needs, and the size of the school (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Military students who attend civilian public schools are more likely to struggle establishing student-teacher relationships (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Military children who enjoy participating in extracurricular activities may miss multiple opportunities from kindergarten through 12th grade to do so, as the timing of a move (i.e., middle, beginning, or end of a school year) may inhibit opportunities for participation and cause coaches' to be hesitant to place a military student on a team because of fear of relocation (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Students who attend DoDEA schools, however, are more academically engaged in their enrolled school and are functioning at higher levels than the national

average on standardized tests of achievement (Esqueda et al., 2012). DoDEA schools aligned curriculum reduces many stressors for military students, such as course requirements, curriculum differences from one school to the next, and ability to transfer course credit (Esqueda et al., 2012). Military students are disadvantaged when they are forced to repeat classes or miss lesson(s) on critical topics because of the timing and frequency of move(s) (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Older adolescents preparing for graduation often experience the greatest amount of duress because requirements for graduation are likely to change one state to another and even from one school district to another, resulting in a potential delay of graduation (Bradshaw et al., 2010). This obstacle is often facilitated by the school's refusal to assist students in transferring their school credits and accepting what they completed from other schools to allow them to graduate within the expected time period (Esqueda et al., 2012).

Research has demonstrated that public schools are not as equipped at handling multiple school transitions as DoDEA Schools (Esqueda et al., 2012). Specifically, civilian public schools lack a uniform curriculum across schools, districts, and states (Esqueda et al., 2012). De Pedro et al. (2012) outlined the American Educational Research Association (AERA) program that explored over 10 years of data. AERA highlighted the limited amount of resources that have been used in attempting to understand the unique needs of military families. De Pedro et al. (2012) state that because no known empirical studies have directly focused on the population of military children, "it is important to examine non-educational practitioner publications from

medical and social work professionals” to help military students who must cope with war and parental deployments along with typical developmental issues (p. 568).

Approximately 250 schools have been recognized as military-connected education centers, with DoDEA schools assisting and providing education to over 78,000 children attending these educational facilities (DoDEA, 2015; Esqueda et al., 2012). In 2008, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Defense partnered to bridge the gap for students and developed the Interstate Compact on MCEC memorandum (Esqueda et al., 2012). As of 2012, 11 states had not endorsed the compact; nonetheless, 90% of military children are enrolled in state public schools which endorse the compact (Esqueda et al., 2012). The compact provides eight primary guidelines to reduce barriers for educational success and these include:

- Facilitation of a timely enrollment of children, and making sure no one is placed at a disadvantage for any reason;
- Expedition of the student placement process without placing any child at a disadvantage by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content, or assessment;
- Facilitating qualification and eligibility for educational programs and participation in extracurricular activities extending to any that are academic, athletic, or social by nature;
- Ensuring on-time graduation;

- Providing assistance and enforcement of administration rules of the compact top priority;
- Providing efficient collection and utilization of data for sharing information among and between states, schools, and military families that are within the compact;
- Coordination between any and all compacts that provide support for military children (including the MCEC but not limited to this compact alone); and
- Encouraging flexibility and coordination in the education system for optimal academic achievement of the student (Esqueda et al., 2012).

The compact's target audience are children of active duty personnel or retired or medically discharged personnel (i.e., up to one year after service) and seeks to assist them in a smooth integration at each new school (Esqueda et al., 2012). Adoption of this compact was more expedient than initially anticipated (Esqueda et al., 2012). However, some states have only endorsed it at a state-level and it is not currently represented at district- or school-levels (Esqueda et al., 2012). A greater emphasis is needed by administration (district-level staff) to assist in taking the necessary steps of disseminating the information of the compact and encouraging the notification of the correct and proper parties, while ensuring that districts accurately distribute the information and set in place the monitoring and compliance of the compact (Esqueda et al., 2012).

Adjustment. Multiple studies have addressed the well-being and psychosocial adjustment of military children and how mobility and deployments may impact these

variables (Chandra et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2003; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Prevatt, 2003; Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). Chandra et al. (2009) identified that levels of academic engagement, problem behaviors, emotional difficulties, and deployment related difficulties are contributing factors to the well-being of military children. McGuinness and McGuinness (2014) identified levels of anxiety, depression, and child behavior problems as factors of well-being and adjustment through multiple studies, including studies by Chandra et al. (2009) and Lester et al. (2012). Child behavior problems include academic and peer functioning, with an increase in problem behavior if a deployed parent returns with psychological problems such as combat stress or PTSD (McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014). Kelley et al. (2003) identified that psychosocial well-being was associated with parent-child relationships and better overall family adjustment, including maternal depression and stress. Also, Kelley et al. (2003) determined that peer relationships play a part in adjustment, and the longer it takes to make friends, the more difficult it becomes for the military child to adjust to each new situation. Resilience, self-esteem, parent-child relationships, and peer relationships have been identified as factors that influence overall adjustment for military children (Chandra et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2003; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Prevatt, 2003; Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). Although many studies examine adjustment factors, very few have linked each of the adjustment factors previously identified with well-being and psychosocial adjustment through causation and experimentation (Kelley et al., 2003). Several cross-sectional correlation studies on

military children examine resilience, self-esteem, and parent-child relationships in relation to depression, anxiety, and child behavioral problems (McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014). This research design may limit the ability to identify reciprocity of the factors on child distress with parent stress as it only examines the relationship through correlation and no direct causal link has been identified (McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014). Ethical considerations have prevented experimental analyses in studies concerning factors of well-being that influence military families. However, multiple studies identify similar contributing factors to well-being, including depression, anxiety, resilience, self-esteem, parent-child relationships, child behavior problems, and peer relations (Chandra et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2003; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Prevatt, 2003; Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). Military children are three times more likely to experience school transitions, which increases the likelihood they may struggle with maintaining stable peer relationships, have fewer close friends, and join deviant peer groups (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Frequent relocation adversely affects marital satisfaction, ability to maintain friendships, consistent spousal employment, and family financial status (Palmer, 2008). Each of these factors has the potential to disrupt a military child's ability to adjust to new environments, particularly in schools.

Through the MCEC Coalition, many student-to-student programs are available that engage social interaction (Park, 2011). One program, called 'Student-2-Student', is a student-led organization in which students already integrated within the school partner

with newly relocated students from military families (Bradshaw et al., 2011; Park, 2011). Matching new students with existing military students is an effective and powerful intervention that eases the transition for the student to establish himself or herself within a new school environment (Bradshaw et al., 2011). Student to student support groups for military youth are powerful opportunities for children to break down the stigma of military life and normalize the problems they encounter (Bradshaw et al., 2011).

Age and grade level. Given the lack of empirically-based research on military families and children (specifically in the educational community), there is even less research that examines the effects of military stressors on different age groups. However, a majority of the studies that do research these differences in age groups have generally shown deployments to have an adverse effect on young children under the age of 5 and on adolescents (Chandra et al., 2009; Paris et al., 2011). Chandra and colleagues (2009) examined reintegration specifically among age groups and noted that older children have a greater number of difficulties during and after a parental deployment which may impact resilience. O'Connell (1981) examined the effect of mobility on a child's personality within the military community using the California Personality Inventory (CPI). The CPI consists of 18 total scales of dependent variables and are divided into four main categories: measures of poise, ascendancy, self-assurance, and interpersonal adequacy (Class i); measures of socialization, maturity, responsibility, and interpersonal structuring of values (Class ii); measures of achievement potential and intellectual efficiency (Class iii); and measures of intellectual and interest modes (O'Connell, 1981). In Class i there

are six subscales, including: dominance, capacity for status, sociability, social presence, self-acceptance, and sense of well-being. In Class ii, six subscales were used to create this class: responsibility, socialization, self-control, tolerance, good impression, and communality. Class iii is comprised of three subscales labeled as achievement via conformance, achievement via independence, and intellectual efficiency. Class iv makes up the last three subscales of psychological-mindedness, flexibility, and femininity (O'Connell, 1981). O'Connell (1981) found a significant positive relationship between mobility during the ages of zero to five and the 13 traits measured by the CPI. It is inferred from the data collected through the CPI that mobility during this age range is an adaptive experience (i.e., flexibility); furthermore, little statistical evidence of hardship is found for ages 6 through 12 (O'Connell, 1981).

Relocation and deployments have a negative impact on many older children, who experience a great number of difficulties integrating into their new environment and socializing with others (Chandra et al., 2009). Minimal evidence exists to support the belief that older adolescent females struggle the most with mobility and reintegration of a family unit after a parental deployment (Chandra et al., 2010; Finkel, 2001). Chandra et al. (2009) conducted phone interviews of 1,688 families who had one child between the ages of 11 to 17 and had attended Operation Purple, a camp designed to assist children in coping with the stress of war and deployments. Military children and caregivers were interviewed to learn about the experience of deployment and the impact of the duration of deployment (Chandra et al., 2009). Using cross-sectional analyses, Chandra et al. (2009)

examined how the experiences of the military child affected child well-being and difficulties before, during, and after a parental deployment. In the main, results indicated students older than 12 experience a period of extreme growth and development, which impacts their social status and the ability to connect with other students. Children who move during the middle school or high school years are likely to feel more alone and ostracized by their peers than younger children (i.e., under the age of five; Chandra et al., 2009). The difficulties associated with transferring schools during adolescence is attributed to the developmental period, as adolescents begin establishing social connectedness at a more advanced rate than younger children, who may be more accepting of change and new students (O'Connell, 1981). For example, a child who relocates during his or her senior year of high school is forced to leave behind any extracurricular activities, friends, and relationships he or she may have established. This change can be highly stressful as the student is forced to not only cope with the loss of friends, adapt to a new school and home environment, but also prepare for adulthood by applying to colleges or vocational schools and ensuring his or her graduation will still occur on-time.

Active duty parent's rank and number of deployments. A parental deployment is highly stressful to the family members who stay behind (Aronson, Caldwell, Perkins, & Pasch, 2011; Chandra et al., 2009; De Pedro et al., 2011; Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Esqueda, Astor, & Pedro, 2012; Gewirtz et al., 2011; Lester et al., 2012; Park, 2011; Paris et al., 2010; Pisano, 2008; Sherman & Glenn, 2011). Many

family stress theories suggest that stressors place disruptive demands on families, and relocations and deployments are considered highly stressful as they alter routines, family and social relationships, and other aspects of day-to-day life (Aronson et al., 2011). Over 30% of active duty service members have deployed more than once and for an average of 12 to 15 months at a time, affecting over 500,000 children and youth (Aronson et al., 2011). Almost half of all military children have been affected by multiple deployments. Children of parents holding a lower military rank may experience even greater levels of stress responding to deployments and relocations because of a lack of familiarity with the military culture, particularly continual relocation and separation factors. Experienced families are more likely to “know the ropes” and adjust better to the changes and culture of military life. However, regardless of time spent entrenched in the military culture, length of a parental deployment and frequency of moves can increase a child’s problem behavior (Chandra et al., 2009). For example, on average, studies have shown that parental deployments lasting longer than 12 months at a time have a negative impact on children and adolescents (i.e., greater behavioral problems, increase in reported anxiety and depression) more significantly than shorter deployments (i.e., 6 to 8 months; Aronson et al., 2011).

Resiliency in the Military Child

Resiliency studies. Resilience is defined as the “capacity of individuals to navigate their way to resources that help sustain well-being...the capacity of individuals’ physical and social ecologies to provide those resources...and the capacity of individuals,

families, and communities to negotiate culturally meaningful ways for resources to be shared” (Resilience Research Centre, 2009, p. 6). As surveyed military families can attest, moving is considered to be the seventh most stressful event in life (Aronson et al., 2011). Long separations from loved ones who are serving in a capacity away from home, particularly in combat areas, are also in transitional periods of stress and change, as military children experience an increased level of anxiety and depression (Aronson et al., 2011). Children from civilian families do not have to experience separation in this manner on a frequent basis (Aronson et al., 2011). Many resiliency studies focus on children from civilian families, while very few take into account the different stressors associated with the military family. The military family is a relatively understudied population overall but especially when considering the factor of resiliency to life struggles (Palmer, 2008; Park, 2011). It is theorized that repeated exposure to stressful situations can provide learning experiences which are invaluable to the family as they may increase the child’s ability to adapt and mature, yet little empirical evidence exists to support this theory (Palmer, 2008). Palmer (2008) states that while little evidence exists on military families and children, a majority of the research focuses on the effects prior to, during, and after a deployment and frequent mobility. Gewirtz et al. (2012) highlight that it is important for parents to build on resilience by identifying strengths and weaknesses and connecting parenting values to goals.

Frequent relocation is believed to have less of an effect on military children in regards to academic and psychosocial problems than the effects of parents’ attitudes

towards the relocation and how well the relationship with the child assists in adjusting (Finkel, 2001; Palmer, 2008; Prevatt, 2003). Prevatt (2003) found that one's parenting style and response to relocation directly affects military children's resilience and response to risk factors. Family stress, conflict, parent psychopathology, and lower socioeconomic status are believed to lower resilience in civilian children (Prevatt, 2003). Protective factors that contribute to building resiliency in civilian children include family cohesion, social support, and moral-religious orientation (Prevatt, 2003). Prevatt (2003) examined 80 children between the ages of 6 to 12 years old and their mothers to assess parenting practices and how these practices influence resilience in the child. Participants were recruited through the mail and elementary schools within the southwestern United States. Prevatt (2003) identified family risk and protective factors by measuring family "conflict, parent psychopathology, family stress, and low socioeconomic status" (risk factors, p. 470) and "family cohesion, perceived social support, and moral-religious emphasis" (protective factors; p. 473). Positive parenting and parental involvement were also assessed through a regression analysis which compared family risk and protection factors to better understand children's outcomes. Three outcomes on adjustment were measured to examine emotional functioning and school achievement and included "disruptive behavior disorders, adaptive emotional functioning, and school achievement" (p.471). Prevatt (2003) found that the direct effect of parenting impacted family risk and protective factors, with negative family factors leading to negative child outcomes and positive family factors resulting in positive outcomes for the child. Although it is

necessary to separate the variables that contribute to risk and protection factors, it is important to recognize that not each factor holds equal weight (Prevatt, 2003). A longitudinal design would provide a better representation of actual risk and resilience factors, which Prevatt (2003) acknowledged as a limitation of her study.

Immersion of military lifestyle. Factors that may influence a military child's resilience include frequency of moves, deployment experiences, and exposure to hardship; these factors may increase in frequency the longer a parent is enlisted as an active duty service member (Finkel, 2001). The military child who moves annually may experience greater levels of hardship than a child who moves every two to three years, on average. Finkel (2001) notes that it is often not the number of the moves that impacts a child's ability to adjust to changes but the length of time spent at each residence. A greater length of time in one location is associated with lower levels of loneliness and stronger relationships with peers (Finkel, 2001).

A child experiencing parental deployments is often identified as being in a state of crisis, with different challenges prior to, during, and after deployment of a parent (Finkel, 2001; Gewirtz et al., 2011; Lester et al., 2012; Park, 2011; Paris et al., 2010). The length of a deployment period is also significant, as longer deployments may increase the risk of a child developing psychosocial problems (Park, 2011; Pisano, 2008). The experiences of the parent while on deployment have also been found to effect the child's resiliency, as parents with combat stressors may return with PTSD, depression, and/or anxiety (De Pedro et al., 2011; Lester et al., 2012; Paris et al., 2010; Pisano, 2008). The research is

mixed in relation to a military child's strength and resiliency, as some research finds the child's resiliency is not impacted by deployments while other studies demonstrate significance (Park, 2011; Prevatt, 2003). These inconclusive results may be attributed to a lack of methodologically adequate measures (Park, 2011). Park (2011) identifies the lack of evidence-based programs as a contributor to the limited understanding of the experiences of military families. Further, Park (2011) purports that a lack of methodologically robust assessment measures may attribute to the inability to fully identify factors which influence a military child's resilience. Thus stated, most of the research to date is cross-sectional, primarily descriptive, and does not account for confounding variables (Park, 2011). Palmer (2008) believes that while it is important to address and understand the different factors military families face compared to their civilian counterparts, a child may be more affected by the parent's responses to military stressors (i.e., relocations and deployments) than to the military lifestyle itself.

Summary and Critique of the Literature

Compared to children and spouses of civilian parents, life as a dependent of an active duty service member poses additional challenges (Park, 2011). In the background, the spouse and the children of the military service member provide support for resiliency and coping as military members adjust to returning home from deployments and training exercises (Park, 2011). Bradshaw et al. (2010) described family stress theory as the way in which each family member's perceptions and reactions to life stressors affect the entire family. Not only do military families experience normal life stressors but they also

encounter military-related stressors (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Military family members are subject to frequent relocations because the service member is reassigned duty stations on a rotation of every three years (Esqueda et al., 2012). Families who experience at least one deployment of a parent often face stress from war trauma, disability, illness, and the possibility of death (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Esqueda et al., 2012; Paris et al., 2010). Consequently, this impacts each child's academic, psychological, and socio-emotional health (Esqueda et al., 2012).

Effective research-based interventions aim to address the social, emotional, behavioral, and academic difficulties military children encounter in the face of military conditions. In 2011, the President of the United States of America issued a directive to all federal agencies of Education to make national education for military children the highest priority (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Esqueda et al., 2012). This directive has increased funding for educational researchers and programs, however, few programs have actively called upon researchers to examine the existing gaps in research and practice for military children (Esqueda et al., 2012). Esposito-Smythers et al. (2011) highly recommend the use of evidence-based treatment approaches that incorporate skill-building techniques. However, evidence-based programs applicable to the military family may prove limited or difficult to find because methodology in the research often lacks rigor, minimal data is collected, and cross-sectional confounds are usually not measured (Park, 2011). Researchers should be mindful when working with military families by considering the feasibility, practicality, and ease of access to interventions, as

military families are continually shifting and adjusting to the challenges of the military lifestyle (Lester et al., 2012).

A primary focus of many educational research studies are the effects of deployment on military families. This is an important factor to research, specifically how functions and adaptations are necessary before, during, and after a deployment. However, previous research only focuses on one aspect related to military life stressors. A plethora of research focuses on specific age groups, either infancy into childhood (ages 0 to 5) or the transition period of adolescence (between 12 and 15 years of age). While these are important developmental time periods to research and understand, few studies examine older adolescents.

Problem Statement

A primary problem with research on the population of military children is a lack of understanding of the additional stressors they encounter. Military families are faced with normal, everyday stressors similar to their civilian counterparts and with additional stressors unique to the military lifestyle (Palmer, 2008). These unique stressors include frequent relocations, parental deployments (and with this comes the stress and worry of death or injury to deployed parent(s)), extended frequent parental absences, and extra responsibility of the military child when one or both parents are away (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Esqueda et al., 2011). Identifying factors within a military family that may increase or decrease social belongingness, resilience, and overall adjustment may assist practitioners who work with this population. Understanding the variables that influence a

military adolescent who exhibits social behavioral problems, low self-esteem, and/or limited peer attachment will help practitioners in identifying effective interventions.

Research Questions

Three primary questions will be addressed, which examine crucial variables for understanding the military lifestyle. It is important to examine further the parent-child relationship in military families as many researchers connect changes to the family's environment (i.e., mobility, deployments) and the adjustment to these changes to the strength of the parent-child relationship, especially between mother and child (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Gewirtz et al., 2011; Kelley et al., 2003; Lester et al., 2012; Palmer, 2008; Paris et al., 2010; Pisano, 2008; Prevatt, 2003; Willerton et al., 2011). Developing an understanding of the parent-child relationship may assist practitioners in identifying how children adjust to specific situations present in the military lifestyle. Knowing the parents' amount of immersion and length of duration in the military lifestyle may assist practitioners in understanding a child's degree of social belongingness. For example, if a family shows signs of being well adjusted and the child identifies with higher levels of social belongingness it is important to examine factors such as duration within the military context, parent's rank, and length of time within the identified location. Exploration of these questions can guide practitioners in understanding which population is at greater risk of developing problems related to adjustment. Without initial information of all these factors, it is unknown what the impact of these variables will have on social belongingness. The level of resilience and

its effect on social belongingness among children is also an important factor to examine. A greater understanding of resilience in military children may assist researchers in creating future interventions as well as identifying current strengths. To better understand the connection between the parent-child relationship, self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience, three primary research questions will be answered:

- R1. To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's self-esteem?
- R2. To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's social belongingness?
- R3. To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's resilience?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be accepted or rejected:

- H1. Relationship with parents and key features of the military lifestyle (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) will not predict a significant amount of variance in military children's self-esteem.

- H2. Relationship with parents and key features of the military lifestyle (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) will not predict a significant amount of variance in military children's social belongingness.
- H3. Relationship with parents and key features of the military lifestyle (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) will not predict a significant amount of variance in military children's resilience.

Chapter III

Methods

Design. This study was completed using a correlational design. The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between military parent-child relationships, key factors of the military life (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) and how it impacts the variance of self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience of the military child. Three primary research questions were identified in this study: to what degree does the relationship with the parents (mother and father) and key factors in the military lifestyle (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) predict the variance in military children's self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience?

Participants. Military children were defined as children who have at least one active duty parent serving in the United States Armed Forces. Participants were military children between the ages of 14 and 20. The mean age was 16. Approximately 38 participants who were military children, completed the adolescent survey. Adolescent participants identified race/ethnicity as the following: 73.7% identified as White, 7.9% identified African American, 16.2% as Hispanic/Latino, and 5.3% as Native American, Aleut, or Aboriginal Peoples. A power analysis to determine statistical significance was conducted by calculating the sample size, with a confidence level of 95%, a margin of error of eight (confidence interval), and the population size of 326,656 (total number of military dependents between the ages of 14 and 20 as identified in the literature; Office of

the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2012)). The analysis determined that 150 participants were needed. The study attained responses from 23 female (60.5%) and 15 male (39.5%) adolescents. Similar to the representation of enlisted active duty members and active duty officers, 20.8% of the obtained sample were military children who have one or more parent listed as an officer in the military (17.7% nationwide are reported to be active duty officers; Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2014), while 79.2% of the sample obtained identified one or more parent as an enlisted service member (82.3% of active duty are reported to be enlisted personnel; Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2014).

Procedure

The original design of the study will be described, as it provides an explanation for the limitations inherent in the redesign which occurred outside of the control of the researcher. Initially, a survey was designed to be administered through official military channels as a means of dissemination to the intended population. Official military channels included Family Readiness Officers, Family Response Groups, Commanding Officers, Battalion Officers, and command personnel. The military personnel would then directly contact military families with adolescents in the targeted age range. After permission from the command to contact families with at least one child between the ages of 14 and 20 was granted, consent was to be obtained from one or both parents, through an informed consent form. The informed consent form describes the details and purpose of the study, including potential harm and risk to the family that may be foreseen. A

statement was included to ensure participating families that the command would not have access to the information collected.

Through communication with official military channels specific requirements were identified that were needed in order to obtain the necessary permissions to recruit through military commands. The United States Marine Corps' (USMC) Institutional Review Board's (IRB) Chair detailed a list of six main requirements. First, a complete copy of the protocol and all supporting documents were required to be reviewed. Second, a copy of the IRB approval letter from the institution was needed prior to approval from the USMC's IRB Chair. Third, verification of a current Federalwide Assurance (FWA) was needed. Fourth, a Commanding Officer's approval letter to allow access to the Marines who desire to participate voluntarily. Fifth, a letter of support from a General Officer. Sixth, proof of completion of Research Ethics Training, particularly one entitled "DON Supported Extramural Performers", to ensure the researchers understand the Department of Defense (DoD) regulations regarding the human research protection program. Another request, separate from these six requirements, was the survey to be modified to adhere to military terminology and use of language. This was not done because approval was not attained through the military's IRB and would have required an additional approval from the researcher's university IRB. Although five of the six requirements were met, a current FWA could not be provided by the researcher's university because the provost did not renew the university's license. Therefore, an alternate method of recruitment was established and re-approval through the researcher's

university IRB was obtained. Other agencies were not attempted to be contacted (Navy, Air Force, and Army) as many processes between branches are similar and it would be incomplete to refrain from collecting data from one branch only, provided they did not require the FWA.

The revised method of recruitment consisted of identifying and joining multiple (unofficial) closed, private, and public groups on the social media pages of Facebook. The researcher then posted prompts explaining the purpose of the research, the researcher's participant requirements, and links to both parent and adolescent surveys. Parent and adolescent surveys were separated to increase participation, as many adolescents have their own social media sites. See Appendix A for the prompt used. After the researcher was accepted into the social media groups provided at various bases, and the prompt was initially posted, the researcher checked on and pushed the post to the top of the newsfeed each day. Initially, the researcher checked the pages on a weekly basis. However, after two weeks of minimal participant responses, the researcher began providing daily survey reminders to elicit greater participation. The total collection time of the survey lasted two months. The prompting did not occur at a specific time each day, instead it was decided that a random time would increase the chances of greater participation. This was to account for the variation in times individuals check Facebook and the availability of participants based on the activities of their day. Some of the groups the researcher requested to join required sending a message to the administrator, explaining the purpose of the request and intention upon being accepted into the group.

A few of the groups declined access to the group but granted permission to send the link to the administrator to post on the page. Other groups denied admittance as well as permission to post the link. In total, 65 groups accepted admittance to post the survey, four accepted permissions to send the links and post the survey independently (without group access), and approximately 15 groups denied access to the group and refused to post the links. Two groups initially granted access without a message from an administrator, but upon discovering the purpose of the researcher's request to join, asked the researcher to leave the group and/or delete the post. No apparent patterns could be identified between the groups that did and did not approve the post. Administrators of each group applied subjective control on whether or not he or she felt comfortable allowing this type of research solicitation in the group. Although data was collected from both parents and adolescents, only information from the adolescent survey was analyzed for the purposes of this study.

Survey description and time. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of surveys which measured adjustment, social belongingness, the parent-child relationship, general demographics, self-esteem, and resilience. One adult parent and the adolescent within the required 14 to 20-year age range completed the requested information (see Appendix B). The dataset analyzed and described here is derived from a larger dataset, where both parents and adolescents were asked questions pertaining to the military lifestyle and the parent-child relationship. For the purpose of the study described, only the adolescent survey was used. All surveys were provided online, using the Qualtrics

system, for ease of the family members. The questionnaire was estimated to take 60 minutes for the adolescent. However, many participants reported it took significantly less time, approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete for the adolescent. All information collected was coded to maintain confidentiality of the participants and data collected was coded through the online security system built into Qualtrics. No identifying information was collected from participants.

The surveys were administered online and presumed to occur in individual's homes. Surveys were completed by an adolescent between the ages of 14 and 20. The questionnaires used include a demographic and potential career choices survey, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009), Child and Youth Resilience Measure (Resilience Research Centre, 2009). All questionnaires used in the study are located in Appendix A.

Dependent variables.

Adjustment. Accurate measurement of adjustment includes multiple factors. For the purpose of this research study self-esteem, social belongingness (peer attachment), and resilience were selected for further analysis (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009; Chandra et al., 2009; Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Fiona, 2007; Kelley et al., 2003; Lester et al., 2012; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Prevatt, 2003). Although the research literature also identifies anxiety and depression as factors of overall adjustment, these factors were

excluded from the present study because of resource limitations (e.g., the ability to assist those identified with depression or anxiety) and to reduce these confounding variables.

Self-Esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale is a popular and commonly used self-report instrument (Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997). It contains 10 items that measure one's level of self-esteem, with higher numbers indicating higher self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Rosenberg's scale has good construct validity and adequate internal consistency, with an alpha coefficient of .83 (Hatcher & Hall, 2009). Ciarrochi et al. (2007) found that self-esteem, trait hope (belief in one's abilities of accomplishment), and style of positive attribution (way of explaining how one perceives the positive and negative situations in life) directly predicted future high school grades, teacher-adjustment ratings, and self-report of the student's affect. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale has been used in multiple studies that analyze self-esteem since its development in 1965. Similar to other studies, Crowe (2002) identified a mean of 32.16 and standard deviation of 4.16, in a study of 200 participants.

Social belongingness. The IPPA-R Peer Attachment subscale measures adolescents' perceptions with close friends and its impact on psychological security and adjustment (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). Using Cronbach's alpha, the peer attachment subscale was found to have strong internal reliability with a coefficient of .92 (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). Also, the peer attachment subscale was found to be moderately correlated with the Care dimension, $r=.36$ (Gullone & Robinson, 2005). Previous studies have examined the mean and standard deviation of the IPPA-R Peer Attachment subscale

and report an average mean of 24.56 with a standard deviation of 8.36 from a sample size of 281 participants (Gullonee & Robinson, 2005). Higher scores indicate higher reported social belongingness and lower scores indicate lower reported social belongingness to peers.

Resilience. The Child and Youth Resilience Measure - 28 (CYRM-28) is designed for youth between the ages of 9 to 23 (Resilience Research Centre, 2009). Administration of the CYRM-28 takes approximately 20 minutes and contains 28 items that culturally and contextually measure youth resilience (Resilience Research Centre, 2009). Ungar and Liebenberg (2011) followed a mixed-methods approach to produce good content-related validity across multiple locations. Research supports the CYRM-28 as a reliable and valid self-report instrument, with adequate psychometric properties (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2011). The mean scores and standard deviations for a study using Canadian participants with a sample size of 1,157 can be found in Table 1 below (Liebenberg, Ungar & Van de Vijver, 2011).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for CYRM-28 (Canadian Population)

| Girls | | Boys | |
|-------|------|------|-------|
| Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| 4.06 | .083 | 3.89 | .0615 |

Independent Variables

Parent-Child Relationship.

Child's perception. The IPPA-R subscales of Mother Attachment and Father Attachment is designed to examine adolescents' perceptions of positive and negative relationships with parents and the impact it has on psychological security (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). This measure was originally designed for youth between the ages of 16 to 20 (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). The revised version is comprised of 25 likert-type items where adolescents rated from 1 to 5 the level of agreeance with each statement (1 being "almost never or never true" and 5 being "almost always or always true") to examine the relationship between the mother and father separately, resulting in two attachment scores (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). Internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha has a coefficient of .87 for mother attachment and .89 for father attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009). Armsden and Greenberg (2009) found moderate correlations between parent attachment scores and positive family coping with the FACES (Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale) for individuals between the ages of 12 to 18. A convergent validity of $r = .73$ was reported for the Parent Attachment subscale and the Care subscale of the FACES (Gullone & Robinson, 2005). Previous studies identified means and standard deviations of the IPPA-R parent versions, with an overall mean of 23.03 and a standard deviation of 8.18 with a sample size of 281 youth and adolescents (Gullonee & Robinson, 2005). Lower scores indicate lower attachment to parents and higher scores indicate higher attachment to parents. It is important to note

the difference compared to previously sampled civilian groups, where the mean is 23.03 with a standard deviation of 8.18. Although smaller sample size can be a contributing factor to this difference ($n = 28$ in this study versus $N = 281$), relationships may also be very different than they are in civilian populations. It is possible that military children report greater levels of detachment between social and parental attachments.

Immersion and duration in military life. The demographics questionnaire for adolescents contains 15 items and surveys general demographic information, including age, sex, parent and self-education status, employment status, ethnicity/race, identification of active duty parent, number of moves, number of parental deployments, and number of school transfers. Although multiple factors differentiate military families from civilian families, two primary questions were used in this survey to identify factors in the military lifestyle: number of school transfers and number of deployments. These two factors are intended to identify two general differences between military children and civilian children: frequent mobility and frequent separation to combat zones of parents. No operational definition for immersion and duration could be found in the existing literature. For the purposes of this study, immersion and duration were defined as number of deployments, frequency of moves, and academic transfers.

Method

A demographic questionnaire was administered to participants. The parent-child relationship was measured using the IPPA-R. The IPPA-R scale, completed by the adolescent, examines the adolescent's perception of the relationship between the

adolescent and the individual's mother, father, and peers. Of the demographic variables collected, six of these variables were selected as significant to the study. The adolescent's reported age was used to verify the appropriate age range of 14 to 20 as identified in the parameters of the study, number of deployments, and frequency of mobility and academic transfers indicated one's immersion and duration in the military lifestyle. Data on resilience levels of the youth was collected through the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28). Resilience scores were used to examine the impact on social belongingness. Measures of parent-child relationships were collected to examine their impact on the child's ability to adapt to a new environment. Self-esteem was examined through Rosenberg's Self-Esteem scale. The Peer Attachment subscale of the IPPA-R was used to identify social belongingness with peers. Resilience was measured by the CYRM-28. Each of these were self-reported sections of the survey.

Chapter IV

Results

Sample Demographics

The adolescent survey yielded 58 total respondents; however, of the demographic questions asked, only 38 respondents answered all of demographic questions. Further, only 28 respondents finished all necessary questions to complete the analyses for all three research questions. This number varies as some demographics questions were answered by 38 participants, yet only 28 completed the entire survey, which included questions pertaining to social belongingness, resilience, self-esteem, and perceived parent-child relations. Participants self-identified as adolescents of at least one active duty service member in the United States Armed Forces. Adolescents ranged in age from 14 to 20 years. Participants' grade levels represented a wide array of education: 10 (26.3%) reported to have graduated high school and were enrolled in college, 9 (23.7%) reported to be in 9th grade, 8 (21.1%) in 10th grade, 5 (13.2%) in 11th grade, 4 (10.5%) in 12th grade, 1 (2.7%) graduated high school and was not in college, and 1 (2.7%) identified as enrolled in 7th grade.

The ethnic makeup of this sample was as follows: 31 (83.8%) reported to not be of Hispanic or Latino origin and 6 (16.2%) participants reported to be Hispanic or Latino. The racial identity (according to the U. S. Census Bureau's definition) of the sample is as follows: 28 (73.7%) Caucasian, 5 (13.2%) Hispanic or Latino, 3 (7.9%) African

American (non-Hispanic), and 2 (5.3%) Native American, Aleut, or Aboriginal Peoples. Family income was not reported on the adolescent survey.

Adolescents were also asked to identify which parent(s) were considered active duty within the household, their own employment status, and the education levels of both their mother and father. The following information was reported by the adolescent: 27 (71.1%) reported their biological father held active duty status, 7 (18.4%) reported their stepfather was active duty, 1 (2.6%) reported his or her biological mother was active duty, and 1 (2.6%) reported his or her adopted father was active duty. Employment status was reported as follows: 28 (48.3%) employed as a full-time student, 13 (22.4%) employed for wages, 4 (6.9%) unable to work, 1 (1.7%) out of work and currently looking, 1 (1.7%) out of work but not currently looking, and 1 (1.7%) identified as self-employed. This question was completed by 48 of the 58 participants.

The reported education level of the father is as follows: 9 (23.7%) had a high school diploma or equivalent, 7 (18.4%) had a Bachelor's degree, 7 (18.4%) had a Master's degree, 6 (15.8%) had an Associate's degree, 5 (13.2%) had some college but less than one year, and 4 (10.5%) had one or more years of college. The reported education level of the mother is as follows: 10 (27%) had a Bachelor's degree, 7 (18.9%) had less than 1 year of college, 6 (16.2%) had a Master's degree, 5 (13.5%) had an Associate's degree, 4 (10.8%) had one or more years of college, 4 (10.8%) had a high school diploma or equivalent, and 1 (2.7%) had a GED. Table 2 displays the demographics of the adolescent sample.

Table 2

Sample Demographics

| Variable | N | Percentage |
|--|----|------------|
| Sex | | |
| Male | 15 | 39.5 |
| Female | 23 | 60.5 |
| Age (years) | | |
| 14 | 7 | 18.4 |
| 15 | 7 | 18.4 |
| 16 | 7 | 18.4 |
| 17 | 6 | 15.8 |
| 18 | 3 | 7.9 |
| 19 | 1 | 2.6 |
| 20 | 7 | 18.4 |
| Education level of Father | | |
| High School Graduate | 9 | 23.7 |
| Some college credit, less than 1 year | 5 | 13.2 |
| 1 or more years of college, no degree | 4 | 10.5 |
| Associate's Degree | 6 | 15.8 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 7 | 18.4 |
| Master's Degree | 7 | 18.4 |
| Education level of Mother | | |
| High school graduate | 4 | 10.8 |
| GED | 1 | 2.7 |
| Some college credit, less than 1 year | 7 | 18.9 |
| 1 or more years of college, no degree | 4 | 10.8 |
| Associate's degree | 5 | 13.5 |
| Bachelor's degree | 10 | 27 |
| Master's degree | 6 | 16.2 |
| Unable to work | 4 | 6.9 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6 | 16.2 |
| Not Hispanic or Latino | 31 | 83.8 |

Sample Demographics (Continued)

| Variable | N | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Racial Identity | | |
| African American (non-Hispanic) | 3 | 7.9 |
| Caucasian (non-Hispanic) | 28 | 73.7 |
| Latino or Hispanic | 5 | 13.2 |
| Native American, Aleut, or Aboriginal Peoples | 2 | 5.3 |
| Identify Active Duty Parent of the House | | |
| Biological mother | 1 | 2.6 |
| Biological father | 27 | 71.1 |
| Adopted father | 1 | 2.6 |
| Stepfather | 7 | 18.4 |
| Both parents | 2 | 5.3 |
| Current grade level | | |
| 7 th grade | 1 | 2.6 |
| 9 th grade | 9 | 23.7 |
| 10 th grade | 8 | 21.1 |
| 11 th grade | 5 | 13.2 |
| 12 th grade | 4 | 10.5 |
| Graduate high school, in college | 10 | 26.3 |
| Graduate high school, not in college | 1 | 2.6 |
| Total | 38 | |

Assumptions Check. Before conducting any analyses in response to the three research questions, all continuous variables were assessed for normality of distribution and the assumptions of regression analysis. As part of the assumptions check, the samples were examined to identify any potential outliers. The dependent variables of overall parent-child relationship, number of moves, the number of school transfers, self-

esteem, resilience, and social belongingness were in the generally accepted z values of +1.96 and -1.96, indicating no outliers existed in the sample (Field, 2013).

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation was conducted for all three research questions to identify correlation values and check for multicollinearity. The dependent variables were: social belongingness, self-esteem, and resilience. The independent variables were: mother-child relationship, father-child relationship, number of deployments, and number of academic transfers. It is important to note that, as identified in the literature, the probability of multicollinearity for the three dependent variables is usually very high and used to measure adjustment (Chandra et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2003; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Prevatt, 2003; Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). As noted in the correlational matrix below, no significance was identified between the three dependent variables and they remained separate throughout the analyses. It is important to note, all variables except one were continuous. Number of transfers was not continuous, as the option choices were separated into two categories: either zero to six transfers had occurred, or the adolescent experienced seven or more transfers. A point-biserial correlation coefficient was used in the analyses, with a positive number indicating the child experienced seven or more transfers and a negative number indicating the child experienced between zero and six transfers at the time the survey was taken. A positive correlation ($r = .379$) between the father-child relationship and resilience was significant at the .05 level, with $p = .043$, indicating the stronger the reported relationship between the child and his or her father, the higher reported

resilience. There was also a significant and positive correlation between self-esteem and number of deployments, indicating the higher number deployments reported also yielded higher ratings of self-esteem, $p = .034$ ($r = .410$). A positive correlation was originally anticipated between self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience. However, no significant correlations were found. The means, standard deviations, minimum, and maximum of each variable were also reported. These correlations can be viewed in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-----|
| 1. Social Belongingness | - | | | | | | |
| 2. Resilience | .323 | - | | | | | |
| 3. Self-Esteem | -.057 | .363 | - | | | | |
| 4. Mother-Child Relationship | .211 | .190 | .372 | - | | | |
| 5. Father-Child Relationship | .176 | .379* | .099 | .115 | - | | |
| 6. Number of deployments | .001 | -.014 | .410* | -.095 | .070 | - | |
| 7. Number of transfers ^o | -.088 | -.193 | -.193 | -.167 | .096 | -.117 | - |
| Means | 3.3 | 4 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 3 | 6.1 | .21 |
| Standard deviations | .41 | .51 | .22 | .21 | .40 | 2.8 | .41 |
| N | 28 | 36 | 27 | 30 | 29 | 37 | 38 |
| Minimum | 2.29 | 2.93 | 1.80 | 2.72 | 2.12 | 1 | - |
| Maximum | 4.08 | 4.68 | 2.80 | 3.64 | 4.00 | 12 | - |

Note: * $p < .05$ point-biserial correlation coefficient

A hierarchical regression was conducted to answer the three primary research questions: 1) “To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children’s self-esteem” 2) “To what degree does the relationship with

parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's social belongingness?" and 3) "To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children's resilience?" Hierarchical models are designed to identify predictors of the dependent variable, starting with known predictors (independent variables known to influence dependent variables) of the model, then follow by new predictors (Field, 2013). Known predictors for self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience are generally related to protective factors, specifically the parent-child relationship (Chandra et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2003; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Prevatt, 2003; Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). This information was utilized when selecting the mother-child relationship and father-child relationship as constant within each regression model.

Self-esteem. The hierarchical multiple regression revealed that in Model 1, the mother-child relationship and father-child relationship did not contribute significantly to the regression model on self-esteem, $F(2, 26) = 1.98, p = .16$ and accounted for 14.2% of the variance. Introducing number of deployments and transfers to the model explained an additional 20.3% of the model in self-esteem and this change in R^2 was significant, $F(4, 22) = .289, p = .05$. Together, these four independent variables accounted for 34.5% of the variance in self-esteem. It is important to address that in examining partial correlation coefficients in Model 2, the mother-child relationship ($p = .03$) and number of

deployments ($p = .02$) were noted as having a significant effect on self-esteem.

Social Belongingness. The hierarchical multiple regression revealed that in Model 1, the mother-child relationship and father-child relationship did not contribute significantly to the regression model on social belongingness, $F(2, 27) = 1.65, p = .21$ and accounted for 11.7% of the variance. Introducing number of deployments and transfers to the model explained an additional .3% of the model in social belongingness and this change in R^2 was not significant, $F(4, 27) = .78, p = .55$. Together, these four independent variables accounted for 11.73% of the variance in social belongingness.

Resilience. The hierarchical multiple regression revealed that in Model 1, the mother-child relationship and father-child relationship did not contribute significantly to the regression model on resilience, $F(2, 28) = 2.57, p = .10$ and accounted for 16.5% of the variance. Introducing number of deployments and transfers to the model explained an additional 2.5% of the model in resilience and this change in R^2 was not significant, $F(4, 28) = 1.41, p = .26$. Together, these four independent variables accounted for 19% of the variance in resilience. It is important to note that when examining partial correlation coefficients within Model 2, the father-child relationship was noted to have a significant effect on resilience, with $p = .05$. Table 4 displays the hierarchical regression analyses for each dependent variable. To account for the possibility of a Type I error, in which a false positive is identified (indicating significance when there actually is none), a Bonferroni correction is often utilized to address the problem of multiple comparisons in a data set. Dividing the p value by 3 would indicate significance is measured at the .01

level within this study. Measuring the data using the Bonferroni correction indicates no model within this study currently has statistical significance.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression for Self-Esteem, Social Belongingness, and Resilience

| | <u>Self-Esteem</u> | | | <u>Social Belongingness</u> | | | <u>Resilience</u> | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------|---------|-----------------------------|------|---------|-------------------|------|---------|-------|--------------|--|
| | B | SE | β | B | SE | β | B | SE | β | R^2 | ΔR^2 | |
| <u>Model 1</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mother-child relationship | .383 | .199 | .366 | .560 | .360 | .294 | .354 | .430 | .149 | | | |
| Father-child relationship | .032 | .106 | .057 | .144 | .192 | .142 | .460 | .229 | .361 | | | |
| | | | | .142 | | | .165 | | | .117 | .117 | |
| <u>Model 2</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mother-child relationship | .416 | .187 | .397* | .544 | .384 | .286 | .272 | .452 | .114 | | | |
| Father-child relationship | .017 | .098 | .030 | .150 | .202 | .148 | .489 | .238 | .384* | | | |
| Number of transfers | -.042 | .097 | -.078 | -.052 | .199 | -.053 | -.200 | .234 | -.162 | | | |
| Number of deployments | .035 | .014 | .436* | .002 | .029 | .012 | -.009 | .035 | -.048 | | | |
| | | | | .345 | | | .190 | | | .120 | .003 | |

* $p < .05$

Chapter V

Discussion

The current study was designed to examine three primary research questions to assist practitioners in understanding how the military lifestyle impacts children. These three research questions included “To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children’s self-esteem?”, 2) To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children’s social belongingness?” and 3) “To what degree does the relationship with parents (mother and father) and the military lifestyle (number of transfers and number of deployments) predict the variance in military children’s resilience?”

These results allow the researcher to reject the null hypothesis of the first research question, in which the “relationship with parents and key features of the military lifestyle (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) will not predict a significant amount of variance in military children’s self-esteem” as the mother-child relationship and number of deployments accounted for a significant amount of the variance in self-esteem. The null hypothesis of the second research question must be accepted, in which “relationship with parents and key features of the military lifestyle (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) will not predict a significant amount of

variance in military children's social belongingness." No significance was identified in the variance of factors examining social belongingness. For the final research question, the null hypothesis must be accepted, as it states the "relationship with parents and key features of the military lifestyle (number of deployments and number of academic transfers) will not predict a significant amount of variance in military children's resilience." This study concluded that the father-child relationship was found to provide a significant contribution to the amount of variance in resilience of the military child within the model, however it was not significant to the overall model on resilience. This study identified no correlational significance between self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience. In general, previous researchers have combined these variables; however, the current study found these variables to be independent of one another (Chandra et al., 2009; Kelley et al., 2003; McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Prevatt, 2003; Sabatelli & Anderson, 2005). Further research should replicate this study to determine if this is consistent with the same population or if other findings may be indicated.

A primary contributor to the lack of significance for social belongingness may be attributed to the small sample size ($n = 28$). Researchers have found that children are more likely to have a stronger emotional response based on their parent(s) reaction to changes associated with the military than they are to the military change itself, such as deployments and relocations (Morgan, 2014; Palmer, 2008). Adjustment was measured through resilience, social belongingness, and self-esteem. It is important to note that

these adjustment variables are often collapsed because of multicollinearity. However, multicollinearity between the variables was not identified in this study. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience separately. The mother-child relationship and number of deployments had a significant impact on self-esteem, indicating that self-esteem may be influenced by the mother's relationship with her child. In addition, a higher number of deployments may influence the mother-child relationship. A significant positive correlation was found for resilience when accounting for the variance of the father-child relationship. This indicates that the relationship a child has with his or her father may have a significant positive effect on resilience. Although the significance identified in this study did not contribute to the overall model on resilience, an adolescent may be better equipped at handling life stressors within the military when the relationship with the father is viewed positively. Previous studies have focused on overall parent-child relationships, and few have examined the relationship from the perspective of the military child (Finkel, 2001). This study contributes to the growing body of research by focusing specifically on the perspective of the military adolescent and his or her relationship with his or her mother and father separately.

It is important to note that generalizability to the mainstream military population may be limited, as the population sample was small and no significance was identified between the three variables used in this study to measure overall adjustment (self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience). Interventions focusing on assisting with adjustment

(i.e., social belongingness, resilience, and self-esteem) should be designed to involve parental participation, particularly that of the mother. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) model highlights the domain of family-school collaboration when working with children who exhibit academic, socio-emotional, and behavioral difficulties (NASP Practice Model, 2016). The response of the parent(s) to military life stressors has the greatest impact on an adolescent (Palmer, 2008). Providing techniques to assist families with coping skills encountered during deployments, moves, and other military-related situations may assist military families. Overall, military families have minimal control over where they live, what schools their children attend, whom they live near, and the frequency at which these changes occur (Hooper, Moore, & Smith, 2014). Such changes may result in an increase in depression, anxiety, or other externalizing or internalizing behaviors. Parents who are provided with effective coping strategies and skills for responding to a lack of complete control may minimize negative effects on their children in regard to how they respond to stressors inherent in the military lifestyle (Hooper et al., 2014). Jacobson (2013) recommends holding regular welcoming events for new families at the schoolwide level. This may include schools hosting events where they are welcoming students as well as parents to the neighborhood and introducing them to key members of the community (Jacobson, 2013). Providing families the opportunity to become established in a new community, partnering the school-family relationship and establishing a foundation for family-school connections in a collaborative effort.

Teaching techniques to increase resilience and self-esteem is recommended when working with military children. Interventions from such programs as MCEC and FOCUS provide insight as to how to increase these skills within military children. These programs often include creating and developing connections between military and non-military children who have been attending the school for a while with military children who have just arrived at the school, in an effort to build resiliency skills and increase self-esteem (MCEC, 2016). The MCEC has programs incorporating active duty and veteran families. MCEC programs include such programs as “Supporting Veterans’ Children Through Transitions”, “Supporting Military Children through School Transitions: Social/Emotional Institute”, and “Responding to Military Children with Special Needs” (MCEC, 2016). Each of these programs provide the best interventions designed to address and overcome the unique difficulties military children encounter. An important component of this resource is understanding how it connects to practitioners within the school system, either as school psychologists, administrators, or teachers. By understanding the effects of social belongingness, resilience, and self-esteem, and how the parent-child relationship impacts each factor, it may assist in designing interventions that positively effects military families. Although the MCEC has multiple programs to train practitioners with, this study may contribute to understanding how military families interact and provide the opportunity for updates and changes within a program. For example, knowing that the father-child relationship impacts resilience, interventions can be designed to specifically target that relationship and foster positive growth between the

father and child, despite frequent deployments or long-term separations. In contrast, MCEC interventions currently focus on general outcomes of the overall parent-child relationship in fostering resilience.

FOCUS programs provide counseling interventions and techniques to assist military children and their families responding to transitions, returns from deployments, and preparations for upcoming deployments, and aim to build resiliency skills (FOCUS, 2015). Historically these programs have only been offered at select military installations, specifically in California, Hawaii, Mississippi, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, Okinawa (Japan), and Wounded Warrior Regiment (FOCUS, 2015). However, incorporating these interventions at the school level in DoDEA schools and public schools would provide adolescents and their families with materials to assist with the additional life stressors that military families often encounter when interacting with school personnel.

Research on the interaction between resilience and the father-child relationship may also be a crucial component to delivering effective interventions for military children between the ages of 14 and 20 years. Family communication skills training may be furthered by adjusting and adapting the resiliency training to focus on father-child relationships, introducing ways to foster this relationship before, during, and after deployments as well as during periods of relocation. Early intervention through couple's workshops addressing preparation for parenthood are also recommended. A crucial component to resiliency-building skills is prevention, and FOCUS is designed to address

skills before problems occur, assist with problems as they occur, and focus on mitigating issues after the incident.

Limitations. There are multiple limitations to this study that may impact the overall interpretation of the study and should be considered when examining the overall results. Limitations do not completely negate a study; however, they are important to know when interpreting the results, making decisions based on the results, and designing future research studies.

Limitations of the research design include a lack of overview and examination of the impact of deployments and PTSD. The effects of deployments and PTSD were beyond the purview of the current study. A primary focus of research on military children is the impact deployments and/or PTSD have on active duty service members and their families. Further, the effects of PTSD and long-term deployments or separations on social adjustment, resilience, social belongingness, parent-child relationships, and self-esteem should be comprehensively examined.

Another limitation of this study is the exclusion of Reserve, Ready Reserve, and National Guard members and their families. This is in part because of the different stressors these families encounter. For example, they are less likely to move as frequently compared to their active duty counterparts (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). Reserve and National Guard families face similar yet unique obstacles to those of active duty military families. Although long-term deployments and separations from training occur, families from the Reserve or National Guard are not likely to move as frequently

and most often live in civilian neighborhoods. Living in a civilian neighborhood instead of a military neighborhood may limit the amount of social support available when a family member is deployed. A family of a Reserve or National Guard member who has been recently deployed may feel especially isolated or separated from the neighborhood as this is not a common phenomenon in civilian dominated neighborhoods and cities (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011), which introduces a different aspect of social belongingness. The impact of deployments on Reserve and National Guard families is an important area to be researched, but is markedly different from those experiences of active duty families.

A primary limitation of this study includes the small sample size and outlet for dispersing the survey. Small sample sizes have been a consistent problem within the military family population and this problem is likely to persist (Bradshaw et al., 2010). Primarily, qualitative studies have been used to understand and describe problems within the military population and ways to correct them. A qualitative design is often used to circumvent low sample sizes within the military population, as it may be difficult to obtain large numbers for analyses given the multiple permissions required for each military branch. Military families may often be hesitant to share personal information, for fear of retribution from higher-ranking officials, shame in sharing personal problems, and a concern that personal information may place their family in harm's way (Scarborough, 2014). Researchers without a valid FWA number face many challenges in adequately researching military populations. It is recommended that researchers attain

permission from the IRB of the military branches to acquire official permission from Headquarters and the Department of Defense. This top-level support will assist in acquiring a more accurate representation of the population in future studies. However, it is important to note that there are multiple steps involved to obtain this level of permission from Headquarters, which are addressed in the Methods section of this study. Obtaining permission to disburse the survey through Headquarters of military branches may grant greater access to military families but is an extensive and time-consuming process to ensure and protect the privacy of families who serve in the United States military. Another limitation of the questionnaire was the length of time estimated to complete the survey. It was initially estimated to take 60 minutes to complete the adolescent survey yet the survey took approximately half of the projected amount of time. If this had been correctly estimated, it is possible the survey would have generated a greater number of participants, as it would have required a lower level of commitment.

Future research is warranted with a larger sample size. However, it is important researchers understand the inner-working of the military population. The military family population often prides itself on staying quiet, remaining the unseen ranks of the military and maintaining a code of silence to protect their own from terrorism (Ferdinand, n.d.; Scarborough, 2014). It is important to know that obtaining a larger sample size may prove troublesome, as not all within the military population will want to discuss internal troubles within the military; either denying there are any issues or refusing to speak of any occurrences within the home (Scarborough, 2014). A larger sample size may result

in more significant findings. One of the main limitations of this study is the between group difference, as means and standard deviations of resilience, self-esteem, social belongingness, and parent-child relationships were significantly lower than found in the general population. This limits the ability to compare the results of this study to the general population. It is important to identify that this study cannot be generalized to the overall civilian population and may have limited generalizability to the military population (as many may not wish to discuss problems within the military or cannot be reached through social media).

Future directions. Future studies should identify how deployments and other long-term separations may influence adjustment, the parent-child relationship, social belongingness, resilience, and self-esteem. This is an important aspect to examine, as it is a factor that has far-reaching effects on military families. Specifically, future studies should consider pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment effects on social belongingness, self-esteem, and resiliency. Understanding how a parent deploying affects the parent-child relationship is important as well as how the child is impacted by the non-deployed parent.

Current research demonstrates that over two million children have been affected by deployments since the start of the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011). National resources have been employed to focus on the effects of deployments and the long-term separations of the active duty parent in response to social, emotional, and behavioral issues experienced by military children. Stress levels are often

increased for not only the parent left at home but the children within the home, as added responsibilities become the burden of older children and the remaining parent (Paris et al., 210). The research should be extended by including factors such as self-esteem, social belongingness, and resiliency, to measure overall adjustment. Adjustment is crucial as it determines and assists practitioners, teachers, administrators, and parents in recognizing how well or how poorly a child is coping with his or her environment and the daily stressors the child encounters therein (McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014; Prevatt, 2003).

Often, the effect that PTSD and deployments have on resiliency (and stress-coping skills) are measured, but self-esteem and social belongingness are not (Esposito-Smythers et al., 2011; Palmer, 2008; Paris et al., 2010). Future studies that add the component of factors (social belongingness, self-esteem, resiliency) identifying adjustment can develop an understanding of how the military lifestyle impacts military children because it incorporates the overall well-being of the child. An adolescent whose parent faces challenges unknown to the majority population may experience a significant reduction in functioning with peers, struggling with lower self-worth, and may be less resilient in difficult situations (Bowen & Martin, 2011). Although social belongingness, self-esteem, and resilience were the only factors of adjustment identified in this study, it is important to note that anxiety and depression are also important variables to consider when assessing adjustment (Armsden & Greenberg, 2009; Chandra et al., 2009; Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Fiona, 2007; Kelley et al., 2003; Lester et al., 2012; McGuinness &

McGuinness, 2014; Prevatt, 2003). In addition to deployments and long-term separations, the effects of PTSD should continue to be examined by researchers. Active duty service members and veterans who return from the battlefield may experience traumatic events during their time in service. Traumatic experiences have long-term effects on the military member, which often impacts the overall family as the service member struggles to understand how he or she has changed and strives to return to a sense of normalcy (Paris et al., 2010).

An online platform can still be utilized in this situation, as ease of access may increase the chance of a larger sample size. Connecting with the Department of Defense directly and receiving permissions from the IRB Headquarters of the military is a time-consuming but efficient process, as it increases the opportunity to expand the targeted sample population size. By contacting units and battalions directly, researchers are given direct access to this population, which may increase the sample size. A direct link provides more representative data on this population and allows for more definitive conclusions to be made.

Replication of this study is also recommended. However, it is still advised that participants be solicited through official military channels. This may provide the opportunity for researchers to reach more military families who may not actively engage in social media and may provide greater assurances of privacy. Military families may be less likely to use social media, as concerns of terrorist threats are frequent within the community, especially via social media sites (Scarborough, 2014). An increase in

terrorist threats and a rising threat to military families has raised caution among the military community, with many shutting down their social media accounts, becoming weary and suspicious of solicitations via social media, or avoiding joining groups online to prevent exposure to harmful situations (Scarborough, 2014). Increases in security and caution among the military community have increased the safety and security of military families, but decreased researcher's ability to access this population. Private and secure channels of official military support may increase the likelihood of participation, as military families are more likely to trust online communications that arrive from official military sponsors (such as Family Readiness Officers, Ombudsman, or active duty officers) than from a researcher using social media as the primary platform. It is also recommended that populations sampled extend beyond active duty military to include families of veterans, as the primary age of children in this study focused on adolescents between 14 and 20 years old, and many active duty parents may be transitioning out of the military or retiring when children are in this approximate age range.

Development of future interventions is also recommended. Specifically, interventions focusing on parent-child relationships and the provision of resiliency training for military children. Currently, the two largest programs are FOCUS and MCEC. Both organizations have multiple programs and intervention seminars built into their organizations but these programs are not always available at schools which enroll military children. Bradshaw et al. (2010) stress the importance of interventions being feasible and easy to implement to ensure widespread acceptance and adoption.

Understanding the factors that are likely to impact overall adjustment, specifically the parent-child relationship, can direct researchers to important areas of focus for intervention purposes. Interventions that target building family resilience and a positive relationship between mother-child and father-child dyads may contribute to greater adjustment within the military child.

Conclusion. The overall purpose of this study was to examine specific variables present in the military lifestyle and their impact on military children's adjustment. Military families face adversities that civilian families typically do not, including long-term separations, deployments, fear of death or loss, frequent school transfers, and frequent mobility. Many of these factors have previously been viewed as risk factors that potentially reduce academic engagement, harm social belongingness, and affect long-term choices for children and adolescents. Understudied and under-evaluated, military families face an increasing number of challenges, not all of which have been examined in previous studies. This study sought to assess factors that contribute to overall adjustment (social belongingness, resilience, and self-esteem). The findings demonstrate how crucial the parent-child relationship is in affecting a military child's self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience. Specifically, this study found a positive correlation between the mother-child relationship and number of deployments and their effect on self-esteem. A positive correlation between the father-child relationship and its effect on resilience was also identified, indicating that a child's resilience was likely to be higher if he or she perceived a strong relationship between his or her father. Although many of

these factors have been assessed in previous research, this study differed in important ways. A majority of the research which examines adolescents assesses the parental viewpoint on the adjustment of the adolescent. This study provides new insight to the field as it examined resilience, social belongingness, self-esteem, and parent-child relationships through the perspective of the adolescent.

The design of MCEC and FOCUS, which are intended for military children, may be altered to account for these findings. For example, MCEC may add a program that addresses the father-child relationship when examining resiliency-building skills, or a program that aims to strengthen the mother-child relationship when focusing on self-esteem building skills. Future studies incorporating interventions should specifically focus on family dynamics, working to positively influence the parent-child relationship. Identifying the impact of the parent-child relationship on resilience and self-esteem may assist with understanding how military children are able to overcome the challenges they face in the military lifestyle, such as deployments, fear of losing a loved one, and frequent mobility. Results from this study contribute to an overall body of existing literature on the parent-child relationship with the military population by providing an examination of adjustment through a different perspective. Overall, this study contributes to the field as it questioned the adolescent to learn about the youth's experience instead of gathering data from the parent's perspective, as done in previous studies. Although replication is needed, this study may assist practitioners who work

with military children to identify and strengthen the parent-child relationship when examining self-esteem, social belongingness, and resilience.

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Appendix A

Social Media Prompt

I am conducting a study (my thesis) on military families in an effort to better understand the struggles military children and parents go through so school psychologists may provide better support to families. If you are interested in participating and have a child between the ages of 14 and 20, please follow the links below. Thank you and please contact me if you have any questions. One parent would take the survey from the first link, and an adolescent would complete the second link.

Please note there are two links, one for the parent and one for the adolescent to participate. Thank you so much!

Parents participating in the survey, please click here:

http://sfasu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_e8qe7F3d61xaL4h

Adolescents participating in the survey, please click here:

http://sfasu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bdWsm9umU1cpdT

Additional prompts after the initial posting included:

Please feel free to share with your friends! (If you can't copy and paste here, page has the ability as well)

Please note: Both parents are allowed to take the adult version of the survey. Please make sure your adolescent participates too (if they want!) Thank you!

Appendix B

Assent Form

This next section is for your teen(s) to answer.

This part of the survey will take approximately one hour for the adolescent (you) to complete and will assist in gaining a greater understanding of the impact the military lifestyle has on your adjustment and vocational choices.

What is a research study?

A research study is when people collect a lot of information about a certain topic to find out more about it. Before you know if you want to be in this study, it's important for you to understand why we're doing the research and what's involved.

Please read this page carefully. You can discuss it with your parents or anyone else, if you have any questions about the research, please contact me.

Why are we doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to better understand how the military lifestyle impacts you as a teenager. We want to gain a better understanding of how you adjust and adapt to the challenges you and your family face every day as one or both of your parents deploy or relocate. This information is collected so we can better serve you as practitioners in school psychology. Our intention is to understand where you're coming from and provide a greater amount of support within the school system and bridge the gap between home and school.

What will happen if you are in this study?

If you agree to answer the questions in this study and your parents give permission, we will ask you questions related to how you make new friends, what your relationship with each parent is like, your self-esteem, and any future plans you may hope to have (such as going to college, joining the military, etc.) when you graduate high school.

Are there any benefits to being in this study?

By being a part of this study, you assist administrators, school psychologists, and other professionals in the understanding of military life. You help all of us in the path of providing better support to military families.

Are there any risks or discomforts to being in the study?

There is little risk involved in being part of this study. All information is confidential and no identifying information about you will be collected so you will not be singled out.

Who will know about your study participation?

Besides you and your parents, the liaison officer from the military branch your active duty parent is associated with will know that you participated. The researcher may only be made aware if you contact her directly, and even then she will know only that you intended to participate. She will not know your personally identifiable information or if you completed the survey.

We plan to keep this information for 5 years in case we or other researchers want to use it for later studies. The Institutional Review Board (the group that makes sure research is done correctly and that procedures are in place to protect the safety of research participants) may look at our research documents. However, these documents will not have any information that identifies you on them and your personal information will not be shared with anyone.

Will you get paid for being in the study?

You will not be paid for being in the study. However, your contribution will further assist in the knowledge and understanding of military families.

Do you have to be in the study?

No, you don't. Volunteering is something you do only if you want to. No one will get mad at you if you don't want to be in the study.

Do you have any questions?

You can contact us if you have any questions about the study. You can talk to me, or your parents, or someone else at any time during the study. My phone number is (936) 707-5764, or you can e-mail me at dossan2@jacks.sfasu.edu. If you would like to speak to someone else about your concerns, please contact the

Office of Sponsored Research:

(936) 468-6606

P.O. Box 13018

Stephen F. Austin State University

Nacogdoches, TX 75969

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ASSENT OF ADOLESCENT (14-17 years old)

By clicking 'Next' I acknowledge that I will answer all questions to the best of my ability. I recognize that I may leave the survey at any point should I feel uncomfortable with the questions. Clicking 'next' means that I understand I will not be compensated for answering any questions, and I recognize there are no foreseen risks involved in this survey. I recognize that all information will be kept confidential.

Demographics Questionnaire—Adolescent

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Gender: What is your sex?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Male b. Female c. Other | <p>2. What is your age?</p> <p>_____</p> |
| <p>3. Education level of father: What is the highest degree or level of school your father completed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. High school graduate – high school diploma or equivalent (for example: GED) b. Some college credit, but less than 1 year c. 1 or more years of college, no degree d. Associate’s degree e. Bachelor’s degree f. Master’s degree g. Doctoral degree | <p>4. Education level of mother: What is the highest degree or level of school your mother completed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. High school graduate – high school diploma or equivalent (for example: GED) b. Some college credit, but less than 1 year c. 1 or more years of college, no degree d. Associate’s degree e. Bachelor’s degree f. Master’s degree g. Doctoral degree |
| <p>5. Employment status: Are you currently...?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Employed for wages b. Self-employed c. Out of work and looking for work d. Out of work but not currently looking for work e. Full-time student f. Unable to work g. Other | <p>6. Ethnic Identity: Please specify your ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hispanic or Latino b. Not Hispanic or Latino |
| <p>7. What is your city of birth? City:_____</p> | <p>8. Racial Identity: To which racial or ethnic group(s) do you <i>most</i> identify (Mark more than one if applicable).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. African-American (non-Hispanic) b. Asian/Pacific Islander c. Caucasian (Non-Hispanic) d. Latino or Hispanic |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Native American, Aleut, or Aboriginal Peoples f. Other _____ |
| <p>9. Please indicate which parent is an active duty service member in your household (not including Reserves or National Guard):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mother b. Father c. Both | <p>10. Please indicate your current grade level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 9th grade b. 10th grade c. 11th grade d. 12th grade e. Graduated high school, in college f. Graduated high school, not in college g. Graduated high school, enrolled in vocational school h. Graduated high school, enrolled to enlist (DEP program) i. GED Program |
| <p>11. If you have not graduated high school, please indicate expected plans after graduation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. College, 2 year university b. College, 4 year university c. Vocational school d. Enlist in the military e. Military Academy f. No plans currently g. Travel h. Work i. Other _____ | <p>12. Please indicate how many times you have moved since one or more parent has identified as an active duty service member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 0-1 times b. 2-4 times c. 5-7 times d. 8 or more times |
| <p>13. Please indicate the number of school transfers you have experienced since one or more parent has identified as an active duty service member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 0-2 times b. 3-6 times c. 7-9 times d. 10 or more times | <p>14. Please indicate how many times one or both parents have deployed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 0-1 times b. 2-3 times c. 4-6 times d. 7 or more times <p>15. Have you ever attended a school on base?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No |

Resilience

To what extent do the statements below DESCRIBE YOU? Circle one answer for each statement

| | Not at all | A Little | Somewhat | Quite a Bit | A Lot |
|---|------------|----------|----------|-------------|-------|
| I have people I look up to | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I cooperate with people around me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Getting an education is important to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I know how to behave in different social situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My parent(s)/caregiver(s) watch me closely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If I am hungry, there is enough to eat | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I try to finish what I start | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am proud of my ethnic background | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| People think that I am fun to be with | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others (for example, by using drugs and/or being violent) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel supported by my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I know where to go in my community to get help | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel I belong at my school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My family stands by me during difficult times | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| My friends stand by me during difficult times | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am treated fairly in my community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am aware of my own strengths | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I participate in organized religious activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I think it is important to help out in my community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel safe when I am with my family/caregiver(s) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I enjoy my family's/caregiver's cultural and family traditions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I enjoy my community's traditions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I am proud to be (Nationality: _____) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment

Part I

Some of the following statements ask about your feelings about your mother or the person who has acted as your mother. If you have more than one person acting as your mother (e.g., a natural mother and a step-mother) answer the questions for the one you feel has most influenced you.

Please read each statement and circle the ONE number that tells how true the statement is for you now.

| | Almost never or Never True | Not Very Often True | Sometimes True | Often True | Almost Always or Always True |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|------------------------------|
| My mother respects my feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel my mother does a good job as my mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I wish I had a different mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother accepts me as I am | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I like to get my mother's point of view on things I'm concerned about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother can tell when I'm upset about something | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Talking over my problems with my mother makes me feel ashamed or foolish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother expects too much from me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I get upset easily around my mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I get upset a lot more than my mother knows about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When we discuss things, my mother cares about my point of view | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| My mother trusts my judgment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother has her own problems, so I don't bother her with mine | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother helps me to understand myself better | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I tell my mother about my problems and troubles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel angry with my mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I don't get much attention from my mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother helps me to talk about my difficulties | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother understands me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I am angry about something, my mother tries to be understanding | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I trust my mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My mother doesn't understand what I'm going through these days | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I can count on my mother when I need to get something off my chest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If my mother knows something is bothering me, she asks me about it | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part II

This part asks about your feelings about your father, or the man who acted as your father. If you have one or more person acting as your father (e.g., natural and step-father) answer the question for the one you feel has most influenced you.

| | Almost Never or Never True | Not Very Often True | Sometimes True | Often True | Almost Always or Always True |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--|
| My father respects my feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel my father does a good job as my father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I wish I had a different father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father accepts me as I am | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I like to get my father's point of view on things I'm concerned about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel it's no use letting my feelings show around my father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father can tell when I'm upset about something | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Talking over my problems with my father makes me feel ashamed or foolish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father expects too much from me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I get upset easily around my father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I get upset a lot more than my father knows about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When we discuss things, my father cares about my point of view | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| My father trusts my judgment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father has his own problems, so I don't bother him with mine | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father helps me to understand myself better | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I tell my father about my problems and troubles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel angry with my father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I don't get much attention from my father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father helps me to talk about my difficulties | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My father understands me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When I am angry about something, my father tries to be understanding | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I trust my father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I can count on my father when I need to get something off my chest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If my father knows something is bothering me, he asks me about it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part III

This part asks about your feelings about your relationships with your close friends.

Please read each statement and circle the ONE number that tells how true the statement is for you now.

| | Almost Never or Never True | Not Very Often True | Sometimes True | Often True | Almost Always or Always True |
|---|--|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--|
| I like to get my friend's point of view on things I'm concerned about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends can tell when I'm upset about something | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| When we discuss things, my friends care about my point of view | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Talking over my problems with friends makes me feel ashamed for foolish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I wish I had different friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends understand me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends encourage me to talk about my difficulties | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends accept me as I am | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel the need to be in touch with my friends more often | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends don't understand what I'm going through these days | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel alone or apart when I am with my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends listen to what I have to say | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel my friends are good friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends are fairly easy to talk to | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I am angry about something, my friends try to be understanding | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends help me to understand myself better | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends care about how I am feeling | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I feel angry with my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I can count on my friends when I need to get something off my chest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I can count on my friends when I need to get something off my chest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I trust my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends respect my feelings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I get upset a lot more than my friends know about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| It seems as if my friends are irritated with me for no reason | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I can tell my friends about my problems and troubles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| If my friends know something is bothering me, they ask me about it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Self-Esteem

Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| On the whole, I am satisfied with myself | | | | |
| At times I think I am no good at all. | | | | |
| I feel that I have a number of good qualities | | | | |
| I am able to do things as well as most other people. | | | | |
| I feel I do not have much to be proud of. | | | | |
| I certainly feel useless at times. | | | | |
| I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. | | | | |
| I wish I could have more respect for myself. | | | | |
| All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. | | | | |
| I take a positive attitude toward myself. | | | | |

