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The Perceptions, Experiences, and Stories of Tied-Migrant Music Educators: How the Personal and Professional Blend

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**THE PERCEPTIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND STORIES OF TIED-
MIGRANT MUSIC EDUCATORS:
HOW THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BLEND**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Music Education

in

The School of Music

by
Rachel Kathryn Broyles
B.M., James Madison University, 2021
May 2023

*Dedicated to My Family and My Fiancé, Benjamin
Thank you for your inspiration, support, and love*

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Abstract

Centering around the purpose of examining the lived experiences and perspectives of self-identified tied-migrant music educators and how the transitory aspects of their personal lives impact their professional careers, this phenomenological case study discusses the findings of both a review of literature and completed original research utilizing two participants who are tied-migrant spouses in the music education field and examine their stories. For this study, tied-migrant spouses are defined as persons who are married to individuals who frequently relocate due to their professional occupation (Mincer, 1978). Participants include tied-migrant military spouses and tied-migrant civilian spouses.

Specific research questions include: 1) How do tied-migrant music educators describe the impact of their personal transitory lifestyle on their professional careers? What are the biggest challenges? 2) What challenges, if any, are unique to the tied-migrant music educator as compared to tied-migrant music educators in other academic disciplines? 3) How does the tied-migrant music educator's perspective of their transitory status impact their outlook on their current teaching situation and their career trajectory?

Data was collected from digital correspondences, questionnaires, individual interviews, and focus groups. Data was analyzed through thematic coding for findings and the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which aims to interpret motivation and the pursuit of one's goals in relation to their personal well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to help generate discussion. The emergent themes that appeared through the coding process were then applied to each primary research question. These themes were the basis for a detailed discussion about the lives of these tied-migrant music educators, with a focus on how these findings can be examined through Self-Determination Theory.

Chapter 1. Introduction

It is no secret that music educators face a significant amount of challenges when dealing with their day to day life as a teacher. These challenges can range from building a sense of connection with administrators and fellow school community members, dealing with a sense of isolation in a specialized field such as music, and building the music program up at their particular school throughout the years in order to give students the best musical experiences possible. But what if a teacher cannot simply stay in one school, district, or even state for an extended period of time, such as five or more years? How would these music educators be impacted when their personal lives called for frequent relocations across the country or even the globe? What happens to the teacher who must move?

As a young pre-service music educator, I always had the idea that, in an ideal situation, I would one day teach instrumental music for a large program at one school for the entirety of my professional career. The thought of being able to build up a program over an extended period of time, make generational connections with school families, and become a “living legend” as a music teacher for my particular school was rather appealing to me. However, the reality of this actually occurring began to erode over the years, and it was significantly altered and abandoned when I met my current fiancé, got engaged, and began planning our future together.

My fiancé, Benjamin, serves as a First Lieutenant Officer within the United States Army. With his chosen profession, I quickly learned that frequent moves due to Permanent Duty Station Relocations are often associated with the military lifestyle. In fact, the average American military family will relocate approximately every two to three years over the course of a standard military career (Burke & Miller, 2018). Given my imminent status as a transitory, tied-migrant music educator, I began to search through my undergraduate and graduate training, experiences,

and professional sources. How is one successful as a tied-migrant music educator? How does one tackle the issue of frequent moves, acquire different state teaching licensure, seek employment opportunities in their field, and ultimately feel growth in their own professional career?

As I prepare for this new chapter of my life as a military spouse, I hope to gain insight into the lived experiences and perspectives of other tied-migrant music educators. What are some of the challenges they face in their career? How do they perceive their own success? What professional development, training, and resources should be made available to assist in keeping these educators in our classrooms? The following thesis will examine both the existing literature on the professional lives of tied-migrant spouses, both within and outside of the field of education, as well as the original research conducted utilizing digital correspondences, questionnaires, individual interviews, and a focus group session with two tied-migrant music educators in order to gain a greater perspective into the lives of these remarkable teachers.

Chapter 2. Review of Literature

In this review of literature, I have chosen to organize the studies as they relate to the various kinds of tied-migrant spouses commonly seen in modern society. Readers will first be introduced to the concept of the tied-migrant spouse (Cooke, 2005; Hisanick & Little, 2015; Hosek et al., 2002; Mincer, 1978), followed by an in-depth look into two distinct categories of tied-migrant spouses, those being military spouses (Burke & Miller, 2018; Cooke, 2005; Harrell, 2004; Hisanick & Little, 2015; Hosek et al., 2002; Johnson, 2021; Jowers, 2022; Meadows et al., 2016; Segal, 1986; Shuls, 2017; US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017; US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018; Van Winkle & Lipari, 2015) and civilian spouses (Gray, 2011; Krieger, 2020; Riaz et al., 2019; Taylor, 2006).

Next, we funnel down to one of the most commonly selected professions for tied-migrant spouses, that being the field of education, which is examined by current challenges faced by the tied-migrant educator (Costrell & Podgursky, 2010b; Education Commission of the States, 2020; Goodrich, 2020; Gray, 2011; Harrell, 2004; Johnson, 2021; Klassen et al, 2012; Shuls, 2017; Yin et al., 2023). I will conclude with an explanation of how these studies relate to one another, providing a broad understanding of the experiences of tied-migrant individuals and educators; however, many questions regarding tied-migrant music educators in particular are left unanswered, thus the need for the current study and purpose of the study will be examined.

2.1. Who is a Tied-Migrant Spouse?

A term becoming more common in today's fast-paced professional world is a tied-migrant spouse: an individual who is married to another who is required to relocate frequently, most often due to their professional work and career (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Mincer, 1978). The term was first coined by Mincer (1978) in his explanation of family migration decisions, as

these individuals often would not choose to move if they were unmarried. Since then, it has been applied to countless transient situations, most notably military spouses as well as civilian spouses in tied-migrant positions. These individuals can find themselves in several different careers, from all backgrounds, and anywhere throughout the United States and the world.

Tied-migrant spouses often find themselves at the whims of their spouse's career decisions and occupation, as they are frequently subject to relocations. As such, tied-migrant spouses face an additional set of challenges stemming from their personal life when engaging in their professional career. Some of these challenges can include, but are not limited to, changes in professional licensure across state lines, lack of professional networks in new locations, isolation from friends and family spread across the country and globe, and constraints in the hiring process due to the known tied-migrant status (Cooke, 2005; Hosek et al., 2002).

2.2. The Military Tied-Migrant Spouse

The tied-migrant military spouse is the most common and easily identifiable group associated with this phenomenon simply based upon the transitory lifestyle of military families. Of people married to active-duty United States military members, 80% have reported some form of a relocation across state lines at least once within the past five years, with 50% of these spouses reporting relocating twice within that same timeframe (Johnson, 2021). Likewise, studies have suggested that the average military family relocates approximately every two to three years throughout a typical military career, meaning large moves are constant and inevitable (Burke & Miller, 2018).

As military spouses are expected to move frequently, their predicted professional earnings decrease significantly. Studies imply that a three-year military rotation, as compared to a six-year military rotation, will decrease the tied-migrant military spouse's earnings by upwards

to 40% (Cooke, 2005). Due to the transitory lifestyle and expectations of the military, the military spouse can often find themselves unable to have autonomy or say in the relocation process, thus leading to negative impacts on their career and personal well-being (Segal, 1986).

Military spouses may have difficulty in obtaining a job when transitioning from duty station to duty station. As of 2018, 48% of military spouses found themselves unemployed at some point during their professional career (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2018), and in 2022 alone approximately 22% of all employment-seeking military spouses were unemployed (Jowers, 2022). Of those military spouses who are employed, 70% consider themselves to be under-employed – in relation to the training they have received – in comparison to their civilian counterparts (US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017). In a similar vein, many studies have shown that not only are these military spouses under-employed as compared to their civilian counterparts, but they are also paid significantly less and often receive much lower pensions than their civilian counterparts (Hisanick & Little, 2015; Meadows et al., 2016; Shuls, 2017).

In addition to the perceived stresses of relocating and obtaining a new job in the professional arena, tied-migrant military spouses also face additional stresses due to the nature of the spouse's career. One of the biggest stresses that accompanies the military spouse revolves around a spouse's military deployment and the social support levels spouses perceive in this situation (Van Winkle & Lipari, 2015). In their 2015 study, Van Winkle and Lipari suggested military spouses experience significant amounts of stress upon initial military deployments of the spouse; however, strong social support networks and community, such as friends, family, and co-workers, are shown to reduce the overall stress levels of the military spouse during this time.

Although strong social networks can improve the tied-migrant military spouse's general outlook on their career and personal life, opportunities for building such strong roots within their

local community are often less viable due to the transitory nature of their spouse's career. In Harrell's 2004 qualitative study, military spouses spoke to the issues of the military lifestyle on their career and life, as illustrated in this Navy spouse educator's comments, "Well it's just that you never get to develop at one place. Everywhere I go, I have to teach a different grade. And I'm the low man on the totem pole and so I usually get the worst classes. And so that makes it hard" (p. 119). Troubles with connecting to the surrounding community and professional setting are echoed through many other studies as well (Hosek et al., 2002; Johnson, 2021).

2.3. The Civilian Tied-Migrant Spouse

Although a less common category of tied-migrant workers, the civilian spouse can also find themselves in a position where frequent relocations are a necessary part of their spouse's professional career. The tied-migrant civilian remains a relatively small group, with studies suggesting that these individuals only make up approximately 2% of the employable population (Taylor, 2006).

Like the military tied-migrant spouse, the civilian spouse also faces unique challenges in their career choices, as many tied-migrant civilian spouses report a lack of roots and connection to community while in the moving process, as well as difficulty with adjusting quickly enough to feel successful in their new positions (Gray, 2011). People in this category tend to fall into the "Flight or Thrive Model," in that the experiences of the tied-migrant spouse deal with how their perspective on the situation is focused: whether they tend to view things through a positive or negative lens (Gray, 2011; Riaz et al., 2019). Those who perceive having greater support in their transitory positions also tend to fair better in the overall lifestyle as compared to those who perceive a lack of community support. These individuals are often characterized as being more innovative and intrinsically motivated in the working environment (Riaz et al., 2019).

Interestingly enough, Krieger's (2020) study found that those in tied-migrant civilian situations may have greater negative consequences if the tied-migrant individual is a male. In this study focused on international tied-migration to Germany, Krieger suggests that males married to women who must relocate are significantly less likely to be employed shortly after migration, versus females married to a male needing to relocate for business reasons (Krieger, 2020). This could possibly be due to careers tied-migrant civilian males are seeking or that tied-migrant civilian males tend to be more of an anomaly as compared to tied-migrant civilian females within a patriarchal society.

Although their reasons for frequent relocations are not connected to military service as tied-migrant military spouses are, the tied-migrant civilian spouse often faces similar challenges in their professional careers and personal lives. This category of tied-migrants has not been studied extensively, thus research in this domain remains rather small.

2.4. Current Challenges of the Tied-Migrant Educator

Teaching is one of the most common career choices for the tied-migrant spouse, with approximately one quarter of all tied-migrant military spouses with graduate degrees choosing to establish their profession within the education realm (Harrell, 2004). Despite teaching being a common occupation for those in tied-migrant situations, there are a slew of challenges that accompany the job in regards to the individual's personal life and mental well-being.

Most individuals who find themselves in the tied-migrant category tend to face additional challenges that are unique to their personal situations, one of the most prominent being inequities in the job market (Goodrich, 2020). Many tied-migrant educators often voice frustration with the transitory lifestyle associated with their spouse's career and how it can negatively impact their own professional career choices. As such, participants of Goodrich's (2020) study stated that the

tied-migrant lifestyle does not allow sufficient margins to work and accomplish professional advancement in their field of education.

Another troubling facet of professional careers for tied-migrant spouses are wage disparities that occur as a result of the transitory lifestyle (Shuls, 2017). In the case of educators, Shuls examined the teacher salary schedule from 464 school districts in the state of Missouri in an attempt to better understand the retirement and pension programs in place for teachers. As such, they found that Defined-Benefit Plans (DB Plans) were implemented across the state of Missouri and did not support tied-migrant spouses within their districts (Shuls, 2017). The teachers' pension was based upon the number of years of experience in that particular school system in addition to the final average salary. Likewise, in order to even begin reaping the benefits of said pension plan, the employee must remain in that specific location for minimum of three years due to the Missouri pension plan being based upon a specific formula that takes into account the teacher's years of service to that district.

This notion of DB Plans being unfavorable to tied-migrant employees is supported in additional research. Researchers Costrell and Podgursky (2010) wrote, "Indeed, teachers lose a significant portion of their pension wealth if they leave a DB plan before reaching their peak retirement age." They further illuminate their point by estimating that a teacher who has put in the same number of teaching years across their whole career but rather has split them between two or more districts will often lose well over half of their net pension. Clearly, these pension and retirement plans place a heavy penalty on those who do not remain in their system, and tied-migrant spouses tend to bear the brunt of this disadvantage.

Tied-migrant educators also face several internal challenges as a result of the transitory status, with isolation, feelings of incompetence, and lack of autonomy taking center stage in

impacting the tied-migrant educator's mental health and personal satisfaction with their career (Goodrich, 2020; Gray, 2011; Johnson, 2021; Klassen et al., 2012). Tied-migrant educators are often susceptible to poor well-being depending upon the outlook and perspectives they possess in regards to their career. Those who tend to view their situation in a more positive light exhibit greater professional satisfaction, whereas those with negative perceptions will often express less professional satisfaction and corrupted well-being as a direct result of their tied-migrant status (Yin et al., 2023).

On a positive note, recent political initiatives have pushed to aid tied-migrant military spouses, specifically tied-migrant educators, who possess professional licensure. In 2012, former First-Lady Michelle Obama and current First-Lady Jill Biden campaigned for states to assist military spouses when transferring licensure from state to state (Goodrich, 2020). Since then, many states have passed legislation which eases the ability to procure licensure for military spouses, allowing for temporary and provisional licenses, and often processing tied-migrant military spouse applications quicker than average. As of 2020, 38 out of the 50 states offered some form of special teacher licensure reciprocity or supports for these military spouses, including states such as Louisiana, Virginia, and Washington (Education Commission of the States, 2020).

Despite efforts to ease in the transition period with most tied-migrant educators, the transitory lifestyle of the tied-migrant spouse leads to significant challenges within the teaching profession. The voices of those who currently live or have lived through this phenomenon are not well documented in formal research, thus indicating a need for further study. What are the experiences of these educators? What are their perceptions on their career? Many of these questions have yet to be explored in the research realm.

2.5. Need for the Study

Although there is a small body of existing literature on tied-migrant educators as a whole, few to no sources tackle the stories and lived experiences of tied-migrant music educators specifically through a qualitative lens. Based upon the lack of current research regarding this phenomenon, it is apparent that new studies concerning the experiences of tied-migrant music educators is crucial, not only to those who identify with this phenomenon, but all those in the music education field who train, prepare, and assist music educators both before and during time spent in the professional world. Understanding the tied-migrant music educator's experiences and stories will allow us to understand how they view their position and professional career, what intrinsic qualities are necessary for success, and how we can best support this population of modern-day music educators.

2.6. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological case study was to examine the lived experiences and perspectives of self-identified tied-migrant music educators and how the tied-migrant aspect of their personal life impacts their professional career. Specific research questions examined in this study include: 1) How do tied-migrant music educators describe the impact of their personal transitory lifestyle on their professional careers? What are the biggest challenges? 2) What challenges, if any, are unique to the tied-migrant music educator as compared to tied-migrant educators in other academic disciplines? 3) How does the tied-migrant music educator's perspective of their transitory status impact their outlook on their current teaching situation and their career trajectory?

Chapter 3. Method

In order to best examine the lived experiences and perspectives of tied-migrant music educators, this phenomenological case study was qualitative in nature, drawing upon several techniques and existing frameworks to best illuminate this area of the music education world. I gave specific attention to the participants' holistic well-being and satisfaction with their chosen career in relation to their personal transitory lifestyle. The purpose of this study was to focus in on the viewpoints and outlooks of modern tied-migrant music educators and how their personal lives interact with their vocation.

In this section, I provide explanations revolving around participants and sampling techniques, my bias and positionality, types of data and data collection methods, frameworks utilized in data analysis and coding, my trustworthiness and limitations faced in my study, and brief participant profiles. All aspects of this study were further reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana State University, and samples such as data collection tools are provided for examination in the appendixes sections following the final conclusion section of this paper.

3.1. Participants and Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques utilized within this study were primarily criterion-based, as defined by Creswell (2018), indicating participants were asked to join the study if they met the following conditions:

1. They self-identified as a current or veteran tied-migrant or transitory music educator.
2. They have taught some form of K-12 music, either general, vocal, or instrumental, in at least two different schools and states within the United States of America.

3. They belonged to either the Military Spouse Educators Facebook group or a state-level or national-level music educator Facebook group, such as Elementary Music Teachers or Virginia Music Educators Facebook groups.

For the purposes and time constraints of this study, I chose a total of two participants, one with a tied-migrant background associated with a military spouse and one with a tied-migrant background associated with a civilian spouse. These purposive sampling techniques have been utilized in similar research (Goodrich, 2020; Johnson, 2021; Trewick & Muller, 2014), and likewise provided me with the most readily available, obtainable, and appropriate forms of sampling due to the transitory nature of the participants. Both participants utilized in this study likewise represent two sides of possible tied-migrant spouses, those being military spouses and civilian transitory spouses, which further allowed for greater perspective and understanding as to how the tied-migrant lifestyle impacts select music educators of all different family constructs.

I posted a recruitment message to potential participant Facebook groups, inviting eligible tied-migrant music educators to reach out to myself through email and complete the introductory electronic questionnaire. Based on this initial posting, two eligible participants reached out, in which I provided them with the informed consent form, and completed the electronic questionnaire. These were the only two participants selected for this study.

3.2. Research Bias and Positionality

I, as the primary researcher for this thesis study, have not worked with any of the participants in any facility prior the start of this project. Both participants were selected on the basis of meeting my prescribed criteria for eligibility and initiated interest in the study through digital correspondence with myself and through completion of the electronic questionnaire. As someone who will soon find myself amongst their ranks of being a tied-migrant music educator,

I believe their insight and experiences will provide both myself and the greater music education community with valuable perception into the lives of these esteemed teachers in our field. Furthermore, my personal experiences with regard to these topics will assist in my interpretation of research through appropriate lenses.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

For the purposes of this study, data was gathered through a combination of semi-structured individual interviews, digital correspondences, electronic questionnaires, and one focus group session. I developed these data collection tools after consultation with the various methods utilized in Creswell (2018) for qualitative study design. All data was gathered through online methods due to the transitory nature of participants.

The goal of each data collection tool was to provide greater insight into the experiences and outlooks of real-life tied-migrant music educators on how they balanced their personal lives with their professional careers. Both participants were asked to provide additional resources and recommendations for both in-service and pre-service music educators who may find themselves within this transitory position.

The research process for both participants took place in three stages: 1) Introductory Questionnaire, 2) Individual Interview, and 3) Focus Group Session. The introductory questionnaire utilized the software program, Qualtrics, and asked participants several essential demographic questions, including, but not limited to, age, gender, states/countries taught in, number of moves made due to relocation of the spouse's occupation, years of experience teaching, primary music concentration taught, connection to the tied-migrant lifestyle/occupation of the spouse, and family makeup, as well as questions relating to personal satisfaction with their career, perceived challenges due to their transitory nature, and which elements were most

important for them to feel successful as a tied-migrant music educator. I sent the questionnaire to participants in advance of their individual interview, allowing them to process through questions and personal themes beforehand and likewise provide me with insight into their experiences prior to each individual interview. Based upon these multiple-choice/short-response answers, I curated several questions that were utilized during individual participant interviews.

Both individual participant interviews and the focus group session were conducted over the Zoom platform, with later audio and text recordings and transcripts being made available following their conclusion. I utilized a semi-structured interviewing format for both individual interviews (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019) that consisted of several pre-formed, open-ended questions to prompt thinking and engagement, which were then followed by additional probing based upon the given answer. This technique allowed participants to communicate thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic and dive into reflective thought on a meaningful level. The focus group session that followed both individual interviews utilized a similar approach where questions were formed based upon previous responses of participants and lingering questions from myself. Participants were encouraged to engage in conversation with each other during this time and share insights into their lived experiences.

Following a careful transcription process in which I listened back through both individual interviews and the focus group session twice to ensure the document matched with the audio, I completed the coding process in three phases: 1) Open Coding, 2) Thematic Analysis, and 3) Closed Coding (Saldaña, 2021). This coding process found emergent themes from both participants, aiding in answering the three primary research questions previously mentioned.

A second phase of data analysis occurred utilizing these findings and examining them through the existing theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which aims to

interpret motivation and the pursuit of one's goals in relation to their personal well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This second phase of analysis was utilized to generate and guide the discussion section of the paper. Throughout this discussion process, I focused on conceptualizing how the well-being of participants was influenced by three separate psychological needs, those being: 1) competence, meaning self-efficacy, 2) relatedness, meaning relationships with others, and 3) autonomy, meaning control over one's own life (Deci & Ryan, 2000). According to the framework, all three needs must be met in order to achieve a positive personal well-being. I chose this framework for data analysis as it was used in previous research regarding the perceptions of tied-migrant educators, thus aiding in establishing reliability of my findings (Goodrich, 2020; Johnson, 2021).

3.4. Trustworthiness and Limitations

This study, like most within the realm of qualitative research, is viewed through a subjective lens and therefore data may be interpreted through a personal viewpoint. In order to ensure the greatest sense of trustworthiness and validity to the study and myself as the researcher, all information presented in this this report went through the member-checking process with its participants in order to ensure the lived experiences and perspectives of participants were represented in an accurate and appropriate manner (Saldaña, 2021).

In addition, this study also implemented triangulation techniques, as I analyzed data from the participants' individual interviews, digital correspondences, questionnaires, and focus group commentary. Finally, the information drawn from this data was peer-briefed and reviewed by other in-service educators and scholars in the music education field, including those who have obtained a graduate degree in music education and those who have not. This provided opportunities for outsider perspectives in regards to the study and prompted questions revolving

around all aspects of the research. This process helped inform myself what areas of the study report may have needed additional work and/or analysis before publication.

Furthermore, all data was securely stored on my password-protected computer and was backed up to a password-protected and encrypted cloud system throughout the entire research process. As previously stated, this research study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and I completed all necessary human research subjects training before beginning my work on this thesis study.

Regarding perceived limitations of the study, the more inductive and descriptive nature of qualitative research can result in multiple interpretations of the data, thus leading to findings viewed through a subjective lens. Likewise, due to the nature of the thesis research process, I faced time constraints that did not allow for exposure in the field for significant extended time, such as beyond one year. Rather, communication with participants, data collection, analysis, and formulation of the final thesis report took the time span of approximately six months. This half-year process allowed for some extended time in the field, but not as much as would likely be necessary for a larger-scale research project.

Finally, the sample of participants for this study remained focused and provided greater insight into the lived experiences of a select few tied-migrant music educators. As such, more research is warranted to make findings more generalizable to the entire population of tied-migrant music educators through analysis of larger portions of these individuals. I chose the participants to specifically represent two main categories associated with tied-migrant spouses, those being military spouses and civilian spouses who move specifically for the job relocation of the spouse. Other factors for transitory movement from teaching position to teaching position are not analyzed in this study, and thus present another great option for future research.

Chapter 4. Findings

In this section, I will review my research findings for both participants, through the lens of each of the three research questions previously mentioned in the purpose of this study. I will examine and expand upon the emergent themes for each participant on the basis of those research questions. In conclusion, I will summarize my findings and draw upon the similarities and differences of both participants.

4.1. Via

Via currently is an elementary general music teacher in her early 50's in the state of Virginia. She describes herself as being a tied-migrant retired military spouse, with her husband serving as an officer in the United States Army for over 25 years before retiring. Her family has moved multiple times to multiple different locations due to military orders, including Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, New York, Oregon, and Virginia, and they have also been relocated internationally before in Germany.

She describes herself as someone who did not begin her career in music education; rather, she obtained a bachelor's degree in sacred music before making the decision years later to pursue her music educator's certification as an adult learner. Before entering the classroom, she worked in several "small jobs," serving as an accompanist for a military chapel, accompanying a local school musical, teaching private piano lessons, facilitating Army Family Team Building and Army Family Action Planning classes on military bases, and volunteering in her children's classrooms. During her time working with her children's classes, one of her child's teachers asked why she wasn't already a music teacher, seeing that she was volunteering to do the work that a typical music teacher would do. She considers this one of the turning points in her life when she knew her true calling was teaching elementary music as a full-time career.

Via is now in her 13th year as a music educator, and she has taught primarily in the public schools of Kentucky and Virginia. She and her husband have three children who have all grown up and “left the nest,” and her primary reason for continuing to work is for her own personal fulfillment. She expressed great joy in her current teaching position and profession, and upon meeting her over Zoom, it was clear to see she had a strong passion for the job. Despite the struggles of being a military spouse and following an untraditional path to the music classroom, Via conveyed confidence in herself as a teacher, and she provided valuable insight into her unique story.

Research Question 1: How do tied-migrant music educators describe the impact of their personal transitory lifestyle on their professional careers? What are the biggest challenges?

Via was honest in describing how her military spouse status heavily impacted her career as a music educator. Although she did not begin her official career teaching music in a full-time setting, her journey to initial licensure, changing state certification, and securing positions in new areas was impacted by her tied-migrant military status. In particular, three major themes emerged throughout Via’s interview, questionnaire, and participation in the focus group session. Those themes include: 1) Struggles with Frequent Relocations, 2) Licensure Concerns, and 3) Developing Her Own Sense of Identity.

Theme 1: Struggles with Frequent Relocations

Perhaps one of the most obvious concerns with being a tied-migrant spouse of any profession is the struggle one would face with frequent relocations that aren’t entirely of your own choosing. This was the case for Via as well, as she recounted the inherent struggles with frequent military relocations and the toll it took on her music educator career progression. The concept of moving to this extent was especially foreign for her as she explained in her individual

interview that she grew up in a family where people never moved away, especially not to the extent that she would find herself moving with the military:

I was raised on a farm in Michigan and grew up on the same farm that my dad grew up on, and all of my aunts and uncles were there, so basically no one ever moved. So I had never moved away before meeting my husband, and at the time he was already active duty and stationed in Germany. And so just the moving thing was very different, it was so new to me.

Via later recalled, however, that she felt as though she had become an “expert in moving,” seeing that her and her husband ended up moving 12 times in the 25 years that they were married while he was still active-duty military. However, despite her new-found expertise in frequent relocations, Via expressed during her individual interview that in moving every few years, it felt like she was starting all over again every single time. These constant new beginnings caused some additional stressors and challenges. She revealed during the individual interview with me that due to some of these quick changes in duty stations – and her turn towards music education as her profession later in life – that she only taught professionally in the states of Virginia and Kentucky due to the infeasibility of teaching in locations where her family would only be stationed for a short period of time. Although the frequent relocations in themselves carried a lot of on-the-surface challenges, there were several additional impacts stated by Via.

Theme 2: Licensure Concerns

From my first interactions with Via, it was clear that she perceived licensure reciprocity to be the biggest challenge she faced as a direct result of being a tied-migrant music educator. In her introductory questionnaire, she indicated this specific challenge as having the most negative impact on her career as a whole, and further stated she always had difficulty obtaining licensure when moving due to different state requirements for music education and/or testing.

When I brought up this topic to Via in her individual interview, she was quick to explain her journey to music teacher certification and the struggles she faced when transferring licensure in-between Virginia and Kentucky. Her road to music education certification actually began in the state of Georgia where she and her family were stationed at the time; however, her husband was informed of new military relocation orders during her certification process, thus causing her to have to pick up and continue her certification journey in a new state without completing her initial training. Her husband was now stationed right outside of Washington, D.C., and Via contacted a local Virginian university to complete her journey to initial certification. Via recalled her engagement with switching pre-service music educator training:

So I contacted the Virginian university's music department, and they had a similar program, but it was weird; it was a music ed certification. But I had to enroll as a graduate student, because I already had my sacred music degree, but I wasn't actually getting a master's. It took me two more years; there they took my credits, but they also had extra requirements for me to fulfill since I wasn't a voice major, I was a piano major, but my licensing was only in the vocal area. They wanted me to take vocal pedagogy and voice lessons and I was like, "Whoa! This is way outside of my comfort zone!" But I did it eventually.

Another challenge Via found herself in while switching pre-service programs was trying to establish Virginia in-state residency, for the purpose of paying in-state tuition for the completion of her training. Because of the challenge of establishing her in-state residency and not being able to afford multiple out-of-state credit hours, she had to take a singular one credit-hour course during her first semester while petitioning to prove her residency. She said the university eventually recognized her residency and provided her with in-state tuition following this; however, she considers this a major challenge of moving throughout this process.

After she received her music educator certification in the state of Virginia, her husband was informed they would be restationed in Kentucky. Via expressed significant frustration with having to transfer her educator credentials from Virginia to Kentucky so soon after completing

the long process of initial teacher certification. When discussing the challenges faced while communicating with the Kentucky school districts that her family would soon be moving to, Via recalled being irritated by the districts' claim that she was not qualified to teach in their state:

And they [school districts in Kentucky] were like, "Well, you're not qualified to teach in the State of Kentucky." And I said, "I just finished getting a license from Virginia. Here's my Praxis scores. Here's everything I've done. Here's my transcript, I literally have a 4.0. How am I not qualified?" I felt like my education was exceptionally strong, and then to be told by what I considered to be Podunk Kentucky that I was not qualified to teach there, you know, that was kind of like a big slap to the face. I just thought I've worked really hard to do this and it was very discouraging to hear that.

Via then recalls the Kentucky school districts requiring additional testing to be licensed in the state of Kentucky, and she found herself quickly discouraged by the struggles of trying to transfer state teaching credentials. She was able to eventually complete the additional testing and secured a Kentucky music educator's license and elementary music position; however, she articulated during all correspondences with me, the questionnaire, interview, and focus group, that getting her certification and licensure was more of an issue for her than almost anything else in terms of moving around frequently due to her tied-migrant situation.

Theme 3: Developing Own Sense of Identity

One of the most introspective themes to emerge from Via's commentaries was that the tied-migrant lifestyle had a large impact on her ability to develop her own sense of identity throughout her life and profession. During her individual interview and focus group session, she expressed the idea that early on in her career and marriage, much of her identity was tied to the idea that she was a "military wife," which she said came with its own set of unique expectations. Although this was certainly a large part of her identity, she disclosed frustration with attempting to not make her entire identity revolve around that one aspect of her life. In discussing with me her decision to pursue music education as her full-time career, Via said how a career advisor on

her local military base encouraged her to think beyond her circumstances when trying to imagine her dream career:

I went to an Education Center Open House on the military base, sat down with an advisor one-on-one, and we just chatted. She said, “You know, if you had a dream world where nothing stood in your way, not your location, not your husband’s deployment status, or whatever, what would you do if you could just start over again? What career would you choose?” And I said I’d be an elementary music teacher.

Via expressed how her choice to pursue music education helped her, for the first time, really feel as though she had her own identity outside of being just a military spouse. In her individual interview, she passionately explained what it felt like to go and pursue something that was truly just for her own interests:

While going back to school for music education, I felt it was the first time that I was judged for who I was and accepted for who I was, and not who my spouse was, not what unit he was in, not what position he was in. I literally felt like these people [those in the music education department] accept me for who I am, regardless of who he is. And I just hadn’t experienced that in over 20 years. I had an identity now that was my own, and not connected to the military.

Via reiterated this concept of developing an individual sense of self and identity outside of one’s personal tied-migrant situation in her comments during the focus group session. Although much of her married life felt intrinsically dominated by the sole identity of military spouse, Via communicated gratitude that pursuing a career in music education, even while remaining a tied-migrant military spouse, really improved her personal sense of self and identity.

It’s hard sometimes as a spouse to build your own identity, and it’s easy to get lost and have the military spouse become your whole identity. Teaching music helped me to develop an identity that was separate from my identity as a military spouse. That role in expectation as a spouse can be very challenging, and it’s nice to feel like, “This is who I am, away from other people’s expectations of me as a spouse.”

Research Question 2: What challenges, if any, are unique to the tied-migrant music educator as compared to tied-migrant educators in other academic disciplines?

All tied-migrant educators face challenges that are unique to their particular transitory personal status; however, what about those teachers who work in more specialized subjects, such as music? What kinds of challenges will those tied-migrant music teachers face that are not shared with other tied-migrant teachers of various academic areas, such as mathematics or social studies? This was a concern Via brought up with me, stating that being both a tied-migrant educator and a music teacher presents two uniquely challenging positions brought into one profession. In particular, two themes emerged from her data in regards to this research question: 1) Limited Job Opportunities and 2) Isolated Subject Matter.

Theme 1: Limited Job Opportunities

When asked what some of the unique challenges of the tied-migrant music educator are, one of Via's first responses was the concept that from a purely logistical standpoint, open music education positions are less common, compared to those in other academic disciplines, such as general elementary positions or those in more common secondary subjects, such as science. When embarking on the job search after learning about an upcoming military relocation, Via expressed her struggles with contacting local school districts only to hear of few schools – with even fewer music positions – open for the school year. Recalling one of her moves, Via explained in her interview:

I contacted the school district where we were moving, and they had Elise City Schools. And in Elise City Schools, they had only two elementaries, one middle, and one high school. I remember thinking there's not going to be a job for me, because there's only one of me in every school. If you're a grade level classroom teacher or a math, science, or English teacher, you know you'll eventually be placed because there are more positions. But when you're an elementary music specialist, there's just so many less opportunities available to you.

Her frustration with this problem was voiced again in the focus group session, where she reiterated the challenge of seeking out a teaching position for a more specialized, unique area such as general music while still maintaining the tied-migrant lifestyle. She even suggests that tied-migrant educators in other academic disciplines have a much easier time in this department due to the general volume of teachers needed in those areas:

There always seems to be opportunity for a lot more jobs available and advertised for grade level teachers or secondary teachers in subjects like math, languages, and English. And you know, some schools have only one music teacher, and just depending on where you are at any given time, there could be 25 applicants for one position, whereas you know right now especially, if there were 25 applicants for elementary school teachers in first grade, they'd all get hired. But music teachers sometimes just don't have as many openings as they would find for other subjects, and I think that specialty niche area just makes things a little less flexible for those who find themselves in that position.

Via found herself frustrated with the challenge of so few positions being available in the specific place her family was ordered to relocate. Although she eventually found teaching elementary music positions in the school districts she moved to, she claimed a lot of her success in locking down a job was by being in "the right place at the right time." She stated that connections to others in the area was vital in finding a position, but most of the time attributed it to luck. In her interview, she explained:

You know, I kind of set my frustrations out on Facebook like, "They say [referring to the state she was moving to] I'm not qualified to teach here," and a friend of mine from my Army connections, her mother-in-law was on the school board there, and she called me and said, "This is not right. Molly says you're a fabulous person, and you'd be a wonderful teacher. I'm going to make sure that your resume is on the top of the resumes when we need to hire another elementary teacher. But you know the teachers here, they aren't transient." And like two weeks later the teacher they had hired resigned six weeks into the school year, and they called me and said, "Can you come in later today for an interview?" "Sure!" So I had the interview at 1:00pm and at 4:00pm they called and said, "We'd love to offer you the job!" So it was a whirlwind, but I certainly felt very lucky to have been in the right place for that exact moment.

Theme 2: Isolated Subject Matter

Another challenge frequently brought up in Via's communications with me was the idea that music education is an isolated subject within the school community; this challenge can make the isolation of a tied-migrant educator all the more intense. Via indicated the idea of struggling to communicate and collaborate with other teachers within her school community in terms of building curriculum and working with state standards, a challenge she suggests other tied-migrant educators likely do not face. In the interview session we had, she expressed:

I think the state standards can pose a serious problem when moving from state to state. NAFME [National Association for Music Education] has the national music standards, but most states go off their own state standards, which they may adapt, and even some school counties or districts may have their own standards, so it's challenging to figure out what each school expects from you and it's difficult to develop a solid curriculum you can use from year to year because of this and because you're usually the lone music teacher in your building. So there's not a team of people to help unpack these standards with you, like you might have if you were part of the fourth grade team, and teachers typically unpack their standards together. We can't co-plan and it can be very isolating.

Via asserted great concern with how these individual standards and the isolation of elementary music can cause seclusion and a feeling of starting over again constantly if one moves from state to state every few years. Her status as a tied-migrant music educator likewise caused her to feel isolation from the rest of her school community, specifically the other faculty members who were not music educators, at times during her career as she conveyed in this focus group sentiment:

I did feel like it was hard to feel a part of the staff at one of my school's because they knew that I had just moved there. They knew that my husband's in the military and I think they were so used to having teacher turnover. Weirdly enough, most of their music teachers had been military spouses, so they were used to getting a music teacher and losing the music teacher every two years, so it was hard to build that relationship with the staff. The negative part of moving around so frequently was finding my tribe. You know how long it can take to find that tribe of people, and in my first two locations I wasn't at places long enough to build that tribe. Whether at a school or even in the district as a whole, you really want to feel like you can find that tribe of people that you can rely on. It just took me a little longer to find that places where I wasn't there long enough.

Via expressed concerns that tied-migrant educators in all disciplines share: concern over retirement eligibility, licensure reciprocity, and isolation in general. However, she did feel that the experience of being a tied-migrant educator in combination with being a music educator resulted in additional, unique challenges within her own professional journey.

Research Question 3: How does the tied-migrant music educator's perspective of their transitory status impact their outlook on their current teaching situation and their career trajectory?

While listening to Via's perspectives, stories, and journeys as a tied-migrant music educator, it became apparent to me that despite the challenges she had encountered throughout her career, she found a great sense of confidence in her abilities and felt generally successful in her career path. Her perspective of her transitory status impacting her overall career showed great reflection, honesty, and growth as she was able to work through the challenges associated with being military tied-migrant and utilize those lessons in continuing her improvement as a musician and educator. In particular, the main themes that emerged regarding this research question include: 1) Success in an Untraditional Sense and 2) Maturity.

Theme 1: Success in an Untraditional Sense

Perhaps what is the most encouraging point taken from all the interactions and discussion with Via was her undoubted sense of success in her life and music educator career in spite of the challenges that arose as a result of being a tied-migrant spouse for much of her life. At the end of the focus group session, when asked if she viewed herself as being successful in her career, Via was quick to explain that she had found great success throughout her career through untraditional and unique ways:

You know, I feel successful when I get to be honest with the kids. It's okay to make a mistake. When I first started teaching, I was just afraid of making a mistake, and somehow being able to destroy everything musical about these kids weighed heavy on my shoulders. And then realizing that I don't have to be perfect, it's okay to make mistakes. Especially with moving as often as I did, and even with COVID-19 where all of us had to be flexible and re-learn everything just to make things work, I learned it's okay to be real with the kids. And my understanding of that has helped me to feel really successful in my growth as a teacher.

Furthermore, Via suggested the idea that being military-connected for much of her life helped her achieve success in the music classroom: it allowed her to truly connect with many of her students on a much more personal level. Since she herself had moved around so frequently throughout her life and career, many students would come to her to seek comfort and advice for dealing with the hardships that arise from moves to different states and even countries. In her own words, she describes this aspect of her life as helping her feel incredibly successful in being a mentor to students:

In my previous school in Northern Virginia, which is the hub of a lot of military or government-connected employees and families, the school that I was at had one of the largest populations of military-connected students in our county. The school made it a point of championing the military child, showing them all the support we could, and even staff members were encouraged to really participate in supporting these families. I would have a student who would say, "We're moving to Germany, and I'm really nervous about moving to Germany," and I'd be like, "Well, I went to Germany and lived there for a while, and my kids went to elementary school there and they enjoyed it!" And that helped those kids out a lot. My connection to the military was a way to help connect better to a lot of those military students and families and help out students who had to move around, which made me feel like I had a unique role to play in the health and success of those students.

Via used her military connections and tied-migrant lifestyle to make meaningful connections with her students that found themselves in similar situations, and likewise, she was able to personally grow in her ability to be content with where she currently was as a teacher, and being open and honest with her students. Her ability to accept where she was at on her

educational journey and her ability to accept who she was as a military spouse and music educator allowed her to find successful and personal fulfillment in teaching elementary music.

Theme 2: Maturity

Via accredits some of her career success and ability to navigate music education while being in a tied-migrant personal situation with the concept of maturity over time. In discussing what she perceived as being helpful in her career development over the course of her husband's military career, she expressed the notation that being a little bit older and gaining wisdom as the years went on really improved her self-confidence and ease in navigating the classroom. As she stated in her individual interview:

Things got easier for me the longer I was in the classroom and the older I got. It helps having kids that are around the same age as those you are teaching too. I'm not sure if I would have been able to navigate this whole process of being both a military spouse and a music teacher if I had started out in this field as a young adult right after getting married. So much of my confidence in my teaching abilities has come from my maturity and age. It just took me a long time to feel in-control and settled in my career as a result of all the relocating all the time, but age really helped.

Being settled now in her career and leaving the tied-migrant aspect of her life behind following her husband's retirement from active duty military, Via now feels that her experiences with the transitory lifestyle has helped her to gain confidence in any teaching situation she may tackle. In looking back on her career during the focus group session, she recalled one of the great lessons she learned from teaching in multiple different schools and states: the purpose of teaching always remains the same:

I've worked in three different school districts, two in Virginia and one in Kentucky, and to be able to see the differences in how it's organized is certainly important, but also to know that there's actually no difference in the day-to-day actions in my room in the sense that the kids are kids, regardless of where they're from, regardless of their economic status, regardless of their ethnic status, kids are kids, and it all boils down to families all generally wanting the same thing for their kids. They want their kids to feel loved. They want their kids to have success, and it doesn't matter if you're in an affluent school or a Title I school, whether it be a rural school or an urban school. Ultimately the purpose is

the same; we are here to educate kids and it doesn't matter where you are. And I think that's a lesson that really hit home for me after working in so many different places and moving around so much.

Viewing Via's story through the aforementioned Self-Determination Theoretical Framework, it is clear that she was able to fulfil the three crucial components that eventually lead a person to a feeling of self-worth and professional satisfaction. Despite challenges faced throughout her career as a tied-migrant music educator in the areas of relatedness, competence, and autonomy, Via still found ways to satisfy these needs in a way that ultimately allowed her to express confidence and acceptance of how her personal lifestyle had blended with her professional career path. A more in-depth explanation of Via's findings through the lens of SDT will be explored in the following discussion chapter.

In conclusion, it was evident while talking with Via that although she certainly faced many challenges as a result of being a tied-migrant military spouse and music educator, she ultimately learned to grow with, and through, her identity. She found a stable sense of success in her current and overall career. Via was open, honest, and encouraging when discussing the aspects of her life that helped shape her career, and she encouraged me – and any other music educators who find themselves in the tied-migrant position – to stay open and flexible to the journey. Although her career was certainly not the standard, cookie-cutter layout many of us are accustomed to seeing in music education, her journey towards growth, fulfillment, and success illuminated the idea that with the right attitude and motivation, a music educator's dreams cannot only happen while being a tied-migrant educator; they can even flourish as a result of it!

4.2. Jamie

Jamie is a K-12 band, choir, and musical theatre teacher in Hawaii. In her late 30s, she describes herself as being a tied-migrant civilian spouse, with her husband serving as an

Episcopal Priest throughout their marriage. She describes his job as being one where her family has moved around frequently depending on where the Episcopal Church takes them, and they have moved multiple times for job-related reasons. Both Jamie and her husband are originally from Australia, and they have been relocated within their home country multiple times to various states, cities, and internal territories including Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane, and Young. Her and her husband eventually moved to the United States due to work-related reasons, first relocating to Hawaii, then Louisiana, and then back to a different location in Hawaii where their family currently resides.

Jamie also describes herself as someone who did not begin her official music education career right away and likewise has experienced periods of time away from the classroom, despite graduating from her undergraduate university with a double degree in both education and music. Following this, she describes her early work career teaching regional extracurricular choirs in Sydney before moving to Brisbane with her husband and getting into the Australian public schools as a full-time music teacher. As a result of frequent moves and her family situation, she describes herself as someone who has been “going in and out of education” for a while, having periods of time working as an arts administrator and church administrator depending on the needs of her family. She describes these positions as providing her with strong organizational skills that have translated well into her current full-time position as a music educator.

Jamie has now taught for over 10 years as a music educator, primarily within private schools in Louisiana and Hawaii. She and her husband have two children in grade school, and her primary reason for continuing to work is her own personal fulfillment. She conveyed enjoyment and a sense of humor in her current teaching position, despite working through the challenges of being a tied-migrant spouse. Her self-described key to success has been her

flexibility with herself and her career, and she provided excellent insight into her career and life's journey.

Research Question 1: How do tied-migrant music educators describe the impact of their personal transitory lifestyle on their professional careers? What are the biggest challenges?

Jamie had a self-reflective personality when explaining her life's journey thus far as a tied-migrant music educator. Jamie described many positives of her transitory lifestyle in relation to her career, which I discuss in depth in Research Question 3 below; however, she was not afraid to discuss some of the largest challenging impacts that her personal status has had on her career so far. Two major themes were: 1) Isolation from Friends and Family and 2) Exploring Other Job Opportunities.

Theme 1: Isolation from Friends and Family

The sense of isolation from friends and family was the number one negative impact of being a tied-migrant music educator stated in Jamie's introductory questionnaire. I wanted to talk much more about her experiences with this going into the individual interview and later the focus group session. When talking about her experiences moving between countries and states, she claimed a lot of the difficulty and isolation came from where her and her husband were stationed. In particular, she has found the most challenges regarding isolation being stationed in Hawaii, where many of the local residents tend to function independently, making social connectedness a challenge in her career as a result of her moves. In her individual interview, Jamie said:

It's the social isolation from everywhere else in the world here in Hawaii. But also the social isolation from other people who live here, because everyone very much so works in their own little silos. A lot of people in the Hawaiian islands aren't really focused on getting to know you here, which makes building up your sense of community really hard. I'm this white person from Sydney, Australia, so it's kind of hard to try to fit in. I think that's been really hard when moving from place to place, especially if the place you move to isn't super welcoming and warm. Like in our previous station in Louisiana, it was quite a hospitable climate and everyone wanted to help you out. Here, I feel like I

have to do everything by myself. I'm okay with that, because I've known that was the expectation when moving to somewhere like the Hawaiian islands, but you do really feel removed from all your friends and family you've made in other places. You do really feel like you have to fend for yourself.

Jamie also expanded upon that sense of isolation from everyone else as a result of her most recent tied-migrant move to Hawaii, as she expressed the sheer distance experienced by being apart from the continental United States. This isolation from the rest of the country not only posed a social concern for her and her family, but it also posed a logistical concern with getting the proper supplies and support she needed to run her school music program. In discussing this topic further, Jamie articulated during the focus group session:

Moving to the Hawaiian islands, even though it's beautiful, it poses a lot of challenges. As a music teacher, it's really difficult to get resources, and there's always a longer delay in fixing instruments just because we're so far away from everything. There's only a couple of places where you can take in your instrument, so you mostly have to do it yourself.

Theme 2: Exploring Other Job Opportunities

Another major theme in my conversations with Jamie was the idea that due to her tied-migrant situation, she had to move “in and out” of education and teaching, seeing that maintaining that career consistently between each move didn't always fit into her own personal family situation. Although she considers herself now to have made her home in music education full-time, it hasn't always been that way as a result of the frequent moves. Jamie also explored other careers and jobs for those moments when she personally did not feel like teaching full-time was best suited for her situation: jobs that provided her with a better sense of flexibility than the standard full-day teaching position:

We have just been moving around, and I've been kind of going in and out of education. Now education is my main career, but I was in arts administration for a while, and I worked in church administration a little bit which actually helped me. All those jobs, they helped me in some way, because now I'm a performing arts teacher. So you know, having strong organizational skills when you have to do it all really did help. It just

highlighted the fact that I can do all the aspects. I'm not relying on other people. But moving so frequently just made teaching full time not a consistent reality for me early on.

Although Jamie's position as a church administrator provided some benefits to her, as she looks back, she realized that even then she knew it wasn't something that she wanted to do in the long run. She wasn't fulfilled by her work in that position, which caused her to seek out a teaching career again for the next relocation:

I was an administrator for a church for about two days a week, and it was really, really easy. But then after a year, I noticed I wasn't really depressed, but I just wanted something more, and then I was contacted about conducting an after-school girls' choir, which kind of spurred me to seek out a career in music education again. I really enjoyed working with that choir, and it made me realize that when the timing of going back to teaching was more appropriate, I was going to make that my career priority.

Something that did not cause Jamie to explore other careers, however, was transferring music educator licensure, unlike what Via had asserted in her communication. Jamie said that it was much easier for her to transfer her licensure from Australia to the United States than she'd expected. As she has worked in only private schools in the United States, she said that those schools had not required her to obtain their state-specific teaching license, so it never really impacted her ability to teach in the American schools. Despite her schools not requiring transferred state credentials, Jamie explained in her individual interview that she still maintains her teaching license for wherever she is teaching at that time because of her desire to maintain accountability in her credentials.

Research Question 2: What challenges, if any, are unique to the tied-migrant music educator as compared to tied-migrant educators in other academic disciplines?

Like Via, Jamie felt there were some unique challenges associated with being a tied-migrant music educator versus being a tied-migrant educator in a more commonplace subject area. Although she was honest with the idea that there are many similarities that all tied-migrant

and transitory educators face, such as building community and feeling secure in your new position quickly, she echoed many of the same concerns as Via regarding the music education aspect of the tied-migrant lifestyle. Two major themes appeared in her comments: 1) Difficulties Communicating with School Administration from Each School and 2) Isolated Subject Matter.

Theme 1: Difficulties Communicating with School Administration

One of the major challenges Jamie associated specifically with tied-migrant music educators – compared to tied-migrant educators of another academic discipline – was that she often found school administrators had difficulty understanding the ins and outs of a school music program. Moving between schools so frequently made communication in this area especially difficult to overcome. In her individual interview with me, Jamie said:

I think it's hard with music educators getting to be understood by the head of your school. I think music has an interesting dynamic, because if you have a full program like band or choir, there are also intricate little things, like budget, that most other subject areas don't have to deal with to the same extent. Like, what's the expectation of instrument repair, and all those kinds of nitty-gritty details? Especially if you are coming in after someone who did not know what they were doing in that area, it just adds another layer of challenge to being a transient music educator.

Jamie recalled her story of moving to Hawaii for the first time and finding herself in a position where she had to do an overhaul of the school's performing arts department as part of her new job:

When I came to Hawaii for the first time, the girl that had just left only did string orchestra. So the school didn't have a choir, so I added the choir, and they didn't have any musical theater, which I thought was insane and needed to be added into the school's fine arts department. So I had to work with my admin on adding that in too, and sometimes it was difficult to get them to see the importance of adding in these areas.

Theme 2: Isolated Subject Matter

Another major theme shared between both participants was the idea of music being an isolated subject as compared to other academic disciplines, and navigating music teaching by

oneself can pose as a real challenge to those in the tied-migrant position. Jamie disclosed that as a music educator, you are often one of the only people in your building, if not the only person, who deals with music, which makes running a program all the more challenging when you already feel out of place in your new community. She was quick to address this challenge in her individual interview with me, where she explained:

Music is very difficult to navigate because there are so many intricate little pieces that you have to bring in. There's so many things that you have to communicate well. Like if you're a math teacher for example, and I'm not dumbing down anyone that teaches math or English or another subject like that, but you're generally going to be teaching with a heavy utilization of a textbook or an already set curriculum that other teachers in the school can help you understand better. But this isn't the case when you're a music teacher; you're pulling from all these different types of resources and areas, which can make things difficult as well in moving to new places frequently.

As a follow-up, Jamie communicated the notion that as a music teacher, you have to rely on your own skills to find and utilize materials in helping your program grow and helping you grow as a music educator as well. She advocated for seeking out online music educator communities, such as the American Orff-Schulwerk Association, to help establish a consistent set of curriculum for use despite moving between schools. During the end of the focus group session, Jamie expressed this concept:

As a tied-migrant music educator, you really have to rely on your own resourcefulness and skill set. That's why I would highly recommend that these music educators get connected to some kind of association, like Orff or Kodaly, because you need to branch out and be connected with these groups. It can really be life-changing being a part of these, and it can give you that sense of community you need too within your own school. I get my best ideas from these people, not myself, and I can feel more connected with the field in that way even if the people I'm talking to aren't even in the same state.

Research Question 3: How does the tied-migrant music educator's perspective of their transitory status impact their outlook on their current teaching situation and their career trajectory?

Similar to the responses given by Via, Jamie displayed great confidence and positivity in her skills as a music educator. She also felt a strong feeling of gratitude and success in her career as a direct result of being a tied-migrant spouse. Although she was not afraid to address the challenges that came along with her personal transitory status, Jamie found herself to be successful considering she has been able to adapt and make the most out of her teaching situations. She was self-assured and reflective. The main themes that emerged through all correspondences with Jamie in regards to this research question include: 1) Flexibility, 2) Gaining New Perspectives, and 3) Feeling Secure in Yourself.

Theme 1: Flexibility

When asked the question in her individual interview, “Do you feel successful in your current position and in your career as a whole?”, Jamie responded with a resounding yes. She attributes much of her success as a music educator to her transitory personal lifestyle. In particular, she said one of the biggest components of her educational growth and maturity has come from the need to be readily flexible and adaptable to all situations thrown at her: a skill she has honed in on as a result of moving frequently. In her own words:

I view myself as successful because I am on this continued educational journey! I don't think this learning ever stops. I think you just have to try out different things, see what works, stay flexible, and you'll get better and better over time.

Her perspective on how being tied-migrant has impacted her in the long run was certainly one of thoughtful reflection. She emphasized the need for teachers of all varieties, regardless of whether or not they are tied-migrant or not, to be able to stay flexible in their positions and to develop a sense of resilience in their personal lives and careers. During the same interview, she provided insight into how she would guide other music educators who find themselves in a position that seems out of their control where they must move:

I would say to anyone that's in that position, it is absolutely going to strengthen you, and it's going to make you more of a resilient teacher, and it's going to make you a better teacher overall, and you'll be less narrow-minded as a result.

Jamie compared this tied-migrant push for flexibility in her career to that adaptability gained as a result of navigating teacher life during the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. She expressed during the focus group session that when the two factors were combined – tied-migrant spouse and COVID-19 challenges – she was able to build a strong sense of adaptability and grit that helped her persevere in the classroom. She suggested that these tools of flexibility are critical for all music teachers, regardless of whether they will stay in one school for two years or twenty:

So I think that all this moving and going through COVID and all, I have a new perspective in that no matter what is thrown at me, I can do this. I can be flexible. I've got this. And that's a lesson all teachers can benefit from.

Theme 2: Gaining New Perspectives

One of Jamie's greatest strengths she gained as a result of being a tied-migrant music educator was that she now has many new perspectives that have helped her to stay open-minded in her teaching. She has had the unique pleasure of learning how music education is approached in both Australia and the United States, as well as two very different parts of the United States: Louisiana and Hawaii. During her individual interview, Jamie conveyed the notation that before getting married to her husband, she had never even considered moving out of her hometown of Sydney, much less the idea that she would eventually move to the United States. However, after marrying him and being stationed in different parts of Australia and the United States due to his position as an Episcopal Priest, she has been able to gain new perspectives that have significantly impacted her skills as a music educator.

We never thought we would move as much as we have, but we've been put into situations where we simply have been called to relocated frequently. We moved from

Sydney, then to Brisbane, then to O’ahu, Hawaii, then to Baton Rouge, and now back to Maui, Hawaii, so six times in total. But I wouldn’t regret anything, even if it has been hard. I think it’s all been an overall positive experience, and more importantly, it has helped me be more flexible in my teaching and has given me a worldly, more comprehensive perspective. It’s another perspective that I never would have had if I had just been in one place my whole life and career.

Theme 3: Feeling Secure in Yourself

Perhaps the most apparent theme from Jamie’s commentaries was the concept of feeling a sense of confidence and security in yourself as a person and a music educator, which she credits her tied-migrant lifestyle as impacting this in a significant way. As she stated in the focus group session, her confidence in herself has come from her journeys as a tied-migrant music educator, but also her sense of maturity:

You know, as we get older, I think that the age does help. I feel like I have a better sense of self because of maturity. I definitely know now when to speak up, and when to just let things go. I know you what battles I need to pick, and what I need to fight for in my career. And I think that really does instill confidence in me for the position I’m in now. Having taught in all these places, I do feel a sense of confidence that has come along with age.

Jamie has also developed a sense of security with herself through cultivating a better work/life balance as a result of her experiences as a tied-migrant music educator. Taking those lessons learned from her time spent teaching in other places, she expressed having a better understanding of who she is and how this improved upon her own emotional and mental well-being. As she discussed in the focus group session:

You know, I don’t regret anything with moving around so much. I think having more of a work/life balance has become much more important to me through this process, especially in the last two years, but I think that has really come from my own sense of self and self-worth and my own emotional maturity. The factors that I think are most important for my self-being and mental health in regards to my job have been location, good administration, good sense of self and self-worth, and having a strong sense of confidence in who I am.

Jamie also displayed hope that her sense of security and self-worth will transfer into each program she teaches even after she has left the classroom for the next relocation her family receives. She believes she can build a program upon its own identity and sense of value, one that is not dependent on her identity as the music teacher of that program, but one that can flourish and grow regardless of who might be in front of the students any given year. She explained this concept of sense of self for her programs in the focus group session through her comment:

My hope is not just to give the program an identity with me as the teacher, but also to give the program a chance where it can grow without me for whenever I leave this school. I would hope that the next person coming in will say, “Oh this is a really great working program.” And that allows me to feel like I can make a difference for the group no matter the length of time I’m actually there as their teacher.

Viewing Jamie’s experiences through the aforementioned Self-Determination Theoretical Framework, it is evident that she was able to accomplish those three crucial components that led to feelings of pride and professional gratification. Despite struggles faced throughout her career as a tied-migrant music educator in the areas of relatedness, competence, and autonomy, Jamie still found ways to quench these needs in a way that ultimately allowed her to express self-assurance and recognition of how her personal lifestyle had blended with her professional career path as a tied-migrant music educator. As mentioned with Via, a more in-depth explanation of Jamie’s findings through the lens of SDT will be explored in the following discussion chapter.

In conclusion, Jamie shared a similar sentiment to Via: of courage, growth, reflection, and positivity in relation to her career as a tied-migrant music educator. She was able to engage in honest and constructive dialogue with me outlining how her personal journey as a tied-migrant spouse has impacted her professional career, and although she acknowledged the inherent challenges she faced amongst the way, she now views herself as incredibly successful in both her personal and professional life. She has applied the importance of flexibility and continuing to

learn and grow as a student herself all throughout her career. These lessons of flexibility, new perspectives, and self-security are not solely bound in usefulness to those within the tied-migrant music educator field, but rather, are applicable to all music educators.

4.3. Summary

Although the reasons behind their tied-migrant situations were different, both Via and Jamie shared multiple similarities in their experiences as tied-migrant music educators. Both participants pinpointed with great clarity the struggles and challenges they have faced over the years as a result of their transitory status. Many of these challenges were shared and expanded upon by both participants: dealing with isolation from the moves and isolation within the schools, struggling to keep up with curriculum for new locations, finding jobs that were well-suited to their experiences and training, and learning to stay flexible and confident in themselves as educators.

Furthermore, in the focus group session when both participants were able to meet for the first time, the joy present in recognizing someone who had gone through such similar experiences to them was instantly noticeable. This session gave these women a chance to connect with others who had been through their same experience and could provide that sense of empathy to their professional journey. As a facilitator of this session, I was moved by the passion expressed by both, the stories and experiences shared, and the sense of humility that both possessed, ready to discuss and ready to divulge in their life's adventures with one another.

Although both women's stories and backgrounds with the tied-migrant music educator phenomenon were different, the core of their message to the world remained the same: you can find success in whatever you are truly passionate about regardless of external factors you may face. No matter how large the obstacle appeared, it could serve as an opportunity to grow and

mature into the person you were meant to be. With the right mindset, determination, grace, and will, both women found great success in their careers. Regardless of your situation in life, whether frequently moving or teaching in the same town you grew up in, cultivating positivity and internal motivation is crucial to success, and this is a lesson all could stand to learn.

Chapter 5. Discussion

In this section, I will discuss the findings of my research with an additional examination utilizing the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory, which aims to interpret motivation and the pursuit of one's goals in relation to their personal well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2012; Deci & Ryan, 2014). According to this theory, three main components must be successfully achieved in one's life in order for personal satisfaction and fulfillment to occur: relatedness, competence/self-efficacy, and autonomy. I will provide a brief introduction to the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), followed by an investigation of each of the three components as I interpreted within the findings from both participants. I close with a consideration of both participants' perceived levels of personal satisfaction and well-being based upon SDT, accompanied by my recommendations for future research and final thoughts on the project.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a prominent modern approach to studying and understanding motivation in humans, based upon the *organismic paradigm* that assumes all humans are active and motivated to adapt to new physical and social environments while incorporating previously retained knowledge and skills (Adams et al., 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, 1995; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). This approach views human behaviors as being growth-oriented and proactive, with an individual's three basic needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy needing fulfillment in order to thrive in one's environment, personal satisfaction, and individual growth (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). If individuals find themselves in environments that restrict personal fulfillment in any of these three critical areas, stagnation, separation, and a lack of personal growth and ill-being for the individual are expected as a result (Adams et al., 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan, 1995).

A need for relatedness suggests humans' natural requirement for social belonging in their personal and professional environments (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For a tied-migrant music educator, this sense of relatedness is often tied into the educator's sense of belonging in the classroom, the school, the educational community within their region and state, as well as their personal social and family environments (Johnson, 2021).

A need for competence and self-efficacy suggests humans' natural motivation to successfully and efficiently "master" their environment, whether novel or familiar, and feel competent in their work and personal lives (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For a tied-migrant music educator, this sense of competence is often reflected in the educator's ability to feel successful in navigating classroom curriculum, materials, student behavior and development, and professional growth (Johnson, 2021).

Finally, a need for autonomy suggests humans' natural desire to "maintain in control" or feel as though they are the cause and selector of their actions (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For a tied-migrant music educator, this could appear in the form of the educator feeling as though their voice has been heard in selecting where to move next and remaining "in control" in selecting a suitable job opportunity (Johnson, 2021).

I examined whether or not these needs were met for both Via and Jamie, and explored these ideas in-depth. This section is followed by an evaluation of their overall well-being, personal satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation as observed through all forms of communication.

5.1. Relatedness

Perhaps one of the most profound themes found between both participants through this research was the struggle of isolation from friends, family, and community as a result of the tied-migrant status. Both participants addressed feelings of general loneliness within their school

communities initially, placing a strong emphasis on the importance of finding one's "tribe" in order to feel connected with their newfound school, community, and location. Both women agreed that social connections and a sense of belonging in the community and music education career were vitally important for them, as seen in the introductory questionnaire; however, both women admitted that frequent relocations as a result of the tied-migrant lifestyle had a negative impact on their sense of belonging with their colleagues and community.

The findings related to this component of SDT align well with previous research in regards to tied-migrant educators as a whole. Tied-migrant spouses often consider one of the greatest struggles of the transient lifestyle to be the lack of social-connectedness with their loved ones who may be located in other parts of the country or across the globe (Blue Star Families, 2018; Johnson, 2021). In making this an even greater challenge for those who find themselves as tied-migrant music educators, research finds that tied-migrant educators of other academic disciplines often combat the feelings of isolation experienced as a result of their personal state with co-planning and creating networks with teachers in the same subject or grade level as them within their new school (Johnson, 2021). This is something which music educators often do not have the luxury of experiencing in most relocation settings as stated by both Via and Jamie throughout the research process.

So where does this leave us? Were our tied-migrant music educators destined to have an overall negative sense of personal well-being and fulfillment as a result of their relatedness not reaching its full potential? I would argue against this statement, as both women articulated that although isolation was a significant negative aspect of the tied-migrant lifestyle, both were able to eventually build their own communities and establish their own sense of relatedness even if it did not come naturally right away in each new school and situation.

Although maintaining a sense of relatedness to fellow educators in the building remains an important aspect of teacher well-being and sense of support, relatedness does not always deal directly with relationships made with fellow teacher colleagues. A teacher can also have a sense of community with the students that they teach on a daily basis. Feelings of connection to students in the classroom is an often overlooked factor in teachers' mental well-being, with stronger relatedness to the students having perhaps the biggest impact on the teacher's general sense of belonging (Guay, 2019; Klassen et al., 2012). This concept was addressed head-on in both Via and Jamie's commentary. In both the interview and focus group session they highlighted the important role they played in connecting to the students – using methods and ways that most teachers at the school simply could not.

Music education, and education in whole, is about the students, and having a sense of connection to the students you teach is a vital area for teacher well-being and personal satisfaction. Teachers who feel as though they are making a difference in the lives of their students report higher levels of individual fulfillment, and likewise the sense of relatedness experienced by both teachers and students supports the child's personal growth and intrinsic motivation (Guay, 2019). Both participants said that although they perceived their sense of belonging to be negatively impacted from frequent relocations with their fellow teachers and colleagues in the new school community, the sense of relatedness they experienced with their students ultimately remained strong wherever they went. It was even strengthened as a result of being tied-migrant; they could connect with other transient students and families on a more profound level. I would consider the fundamental area of relatedness to be fulfilled in both participants' professional careers and lives.

5.2. Competence/Self-Efficacy

Both Via and Jamie expressed great confidence in their competence in the area of music education. Both responded that they never felt less competent in their career-related abilities and skills as a result of their tied-migrant lifestyle in the introductory questionnaire. Both women voiced assurance in their educational pre-service training, asserting that they felt well-equipped to navigate a career in music education. Possessing a “can-do” attitude regarding their subject matter was apparent in both individual interviews and the focus group session, as both women recalled the ability to remain positive and robust in their professional self-efficacy. Neither of them considered the tied-migrant lifestyle to impact this area in any negative fashion.

The findings of this research study in the area of self-efficacy vary slightly from previous research utilizing tied-migrant educators on a broad level. Often times, educators who find themselves in transitory personal situations suffer in the area of career competence, as they feel ill-equipped to tackle the changing atmospheres of their jobs from move to move (Gray, 2011; Johnson, 2021). As each school possesses differing curriculum, standards, environments, and expectations, the tied-migrant educator’s ability to retain a strong sense of self-efficacy is often thwarted (Goodrich, 2020; Gray, 2011; Johnson, 2021). These individuals can often feel as though they are a “master of none” in the educational setting.

Conversely, it is apparent that many of the findings show alignment with previous research regarding self-efficacy when viewed through the lens of age. As such, young tied-migrant educators are more likely to experience greater bouts of self-doubt and lowered self-efficacy compared to their older, more mature peers (Gray, 2011; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). This aligns well with the findings of this study: both Via and Jamie attribute some of their success in the field to their age and maturity experienced over years of navigating the tied-migrant lifestyle.

Additionally, research finds that the personality of the individual can serve as the greatest predictor of self-efficacy, as those who tend to possess higher levels of “grit” and positivity in their overall professional outlook will have greater senses of competence (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Klassen & Tze, 2014; Yin et al., 2023). This sense of positivity and determination are certainly present in both Via and Jamie as observed in our conversations and communication. Both women possessed vibrant personalities and spoke very highly of themselves, their current teaching position, and their overall career path. Although they did not sugarcoat or stray from explaining their experiences with challenges of the profession in relation to their transitory personal state, both Via and Jamie ultimately went about their career with a strong, committed, and optimistic attitude, something which was entirely evident from their individual personalities and existing sense of self.

I argue that Via and Jamie’s upbeat and confident attitudes and personalities in addition to their strong music education training supported their personal need of self-efficacy and competence in relation to their professional careers. Their outlook on this area of their life could have been greatly diminished if they had upheld a negative, self-deprecating position, as is the case for many tied-migrant educators; however, their strong-will and resilience allowed them to find success and confidence in that they could truly master any educational setting they came across as a result of their skills as a music educator.

5.3. Autonomy

Autonomy, or the sense of feeling in control of one’s personal situation and life, is crucial for the mental well-being and personal satisfaction of an individual according to the SDT theoretical framework. Autonomy is also crucial for the success of teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2014; Goodrich, 2020; Johnson, 2021). This view of

personal autonomy can vary from person to person depending upon the individual perspective of how much autonomy is necessary for personal well-being, as the level of autonomy necessary for SDT to be achieved is subjective (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2014). Both Via and Jamie confirmed this statement through their introductory questionnaires when stating that it was important to them to have a sense of control in their careers and career opportunities. However, the sense of autonomy in one's life is dependent upon the intrinsic perspectives of each individual, thus this component of SDT can be applied to our tied-migrant participants through the appropriate lens that reflects their subjective stance.

On the surface, one might argue that tied-migrant music educators lack personal autonomy in their private and professional lives and circumstances, seeing that these individuals are often at the whims of external factors that determine when and where they might relocate. Both participants affirmed this statement to an extent, stating they continuously sacrifice their individual choice of location due to the occupation of their spouses.

This lack of autonomy in relocation choice is a common theme echoed in previous research on the subject, as those who find themselves in tied-migrant situations often attribute negative experiences to the deficiency of autonomy in their career (Goodrich, 2020; Harrell, 2004; Johnson, 2021; Krieger, 2020). Many tied-migrant educators find that they lack the control and independence they desire in their professional careers due to their spouses frequently relocating occupation, and in result they miss out on the "stepping stones" of remaining in one location that would assist them in advancing and achieving their career goals (Johnson, 2021).

However, autonomy cannot be solely viewed through the lens of control in where and when one relocates; autonomy can take on different meanings for different tied-migrant teachers. Autonomy might refer to the ability to select one's own curriculum for the classroom, procure a

teaching job in their new location, and on a more internal level, develop a sense of identity and independence not reliant on the profession of their spouse (Goodrich, 2020). As seen in the previous findings chapter, these are all areas that both Via and Jamie felt confident in. They have been fortunate enough to develop mostly their own musical curriculum depending on where they were relocated, secure a teaching position in most states where they have possessed the desire to work, and develop a secure sense of self and personal identity through music education.

Although both women considered some of their job hiring to be due to sheer luck in that they were “in the right place at the right time,” both agreed that much of their success in this area has come from their own drive and self-sufficiency to seek out new teaching positions, something which they expressed feeling a sense of control over. Furthermore, one of the largest themes between these two women was that of feeling secure in oneself and developing their own personal identity as a music educator. In conversation with both Via and Jamie on the matter, they both remark how their tied-migrant personal situation has forced them to become more secure in themselves and their own identity, something which has provided them with that sense of control in their personal lives and professional careers.

As such, I would argue that both our participants were secure in their own sense of being, identity, and self-worth, something which aided them significantly in feeling a sense of autonomy over their lives. Although surface level negative components of autonomy, such as frequent moves to places not entirely chosen by the participants, were present in both participants, they ultimately did communicate an overwhelming consensus that they felt in control of their careers, lives, and destinies, thus suggesting the SDT component of autonomy was fulfilled. This finding is somewhat out of the ordinary compared to previous research done

on tied-migrant educators, as the narrative surrounding autonomy is typically bleak and lackluster, thus indicating this to be a significant finding of my research.

5.4. Implications and Recommendations for Practice

From the narratives of both tied-migrant music educators, and their perspectives on their growth and success within the field, I was able to draw upon several implications for our understanding and practice as music educators. Below I will list practical suggestions for various groups that the tied-migrant music education field may impact: music education professors, in-service music education colleagues, and finally pre-service and in-service music educators of either tied-migrant or location-stable background.

From the perspective of the music education professor preparing pre-service teachers to move out into the real world, the lessons of Via and Jamie's stories of personal sense of well-being and maturity could be taught through the lens of adaptability and mental well-being within the music education coursework. Encouraging young educators to develop the skillset they need for strong senses of intrinsic motivation and self-determination is crucial at this stage of their careers. These skills are not only valuable to the future tied-migrant music educator but to all music educators. Bringing in-service music educators, from both tied-migrant and location-stable positions, to talk about their perspectives on the components of Self-Determination Theory and their overall experiences as a current music educator is crucial for a real-world glimpse into the profession, the potential obstacles pre-service teachers may face, and the steps they can take now to prepare themselves internally to succeed in the music education profession. Specifically with those students who may find themselves in tied-migrant positions or simply may need to relocate to another state at some point in their music education career, music education professors should implement more practical advice and guidance for pre-service educators on professional self-

marketing strategies, state certification transfer experiences and resources, and ideas on achieving and maintaining personal and professional success and well-being in new surroundings. Professors have a strong part to play in preparing future music educators for any challenges they may face in regards to their career, and that certainly includes the challenges that are associated with relocation.

For the in-service music education colleague who finds themselves working with another tied-migrant music educator either within their own school or broader school district community, it is imperative to play the role of immediate supporter, ally, and resource for those new to your music education community. One of the greatest struggles articulated by Via and Jamie was the challenge of finding one's "tribe" and a sense of community quickly specifically with their teacher colleagues. Making the intentional effort to welcome these tied-migrant music educators into the music education community in their new surroundings would greatly benefit these teachers, and furthermore their diversity of experiences they bring to the table would be of great benefit to the location-stable music educator as well. Take the time to introduce yourself and support these tied-migrant music educators; your mentorship and guidance not only will significantly benefit them, but you will also grow in your professional music educator career.

From the perspective of the current or pre-service tied-migrant or location-stable music educator, both Via and Jamie's stories illuminate that one's external circumstances do not need to dictate the internal growth and success one can achieve within the field of education. Although challenges can and will emerge throughout the career as a whole, these challenges can be used to strengthen you as a teacher, providing you with opportunities to grow in flexibility, internal motivation, and grit. These are all lessons that music educators, whether they be tied-migrant or not, can learn. You make a daily, conscious effort to choose to view yourself on continued

educational journey, always improving, always overcoming, always striving to be better today than you were yesterday. Your circumstances do not need to define you; only you have the power to define how you will respond to your circumstances, thus taking control of your internal sense of well-being.

5.5. Future Research

As this area previously had little to no formal research conducted, there are many areas for future research and growth in understanding the tied-migrant music educator phenomenon. In particular, future studies should consider utilizing a larger participant population, as only two educators were examined for the purposes of this study. Researchers should likewise be intentional on examining the experiences of male tied-migrant music educators, as this study solely examines the phenomenon through the female lens.

Additional research should also be conducted utilizing participants of various teaching levels and music subject areas, such as elementary general music teachers and middle and high school ensemble directors. Gaining a greater understanding into how the tied-migrant lifestyle impacts music teachers of all grade levels and subject areas would provide better insight into the respective breadth of our field from a K-12 perspective.

Furthermore, future research studies should consider tailoring research to the perspectives of K-12 music students who may find themselves in classrooms and schools where tied-migrant music educator turnover is high, such as the case near large military installations. A similar approach could also be taken with location-stable music educators teaching in similar schools or districts to learn more about their perspectives on working with tied-migrant music colleagues.

5.6. Conclusion

Ultimately, both Via and Jamie found success, personal well-being, and professional satisfaction while journeying through life as a tied-migrant music educator. Utilizing the theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory, it was evident that these remarkable teachers were still able to fulfill all three crucial components, those being relatedness, competence, and autonomy, with their intrinsic personal and professional outlooks, personalities, and perspectives on their careers. It is not that these women did not face challenges in their careers as a direct result of being a tied-migrant spouse; both were open and honest in discussing the serious impacts their personal transitory status had on their full career as a music educator. However, neither Via nor Jamie let their tied-migrant status overshadow their identity as a music educator or deter them from achieving personal success in their careers. Both women considered themselves successful, fulfilled, and thriving in their professional careers, and they often attributed a great deal of their achievement to the experiences gained through the tied-migrant lifestyle. It pushed them to be flexible, be their own best advocate, gain new perspectives, and develop an incredibly strong sense of intrinsic motivation and determination to succeed in their careers and life no matter what was thrown at them.

Tied-migrant music educators have many obstacles to overcome in their unorthodox living situations; however, these obstacles do not necessarily need to define the music educator. It is possible to find great success in one's career as showcased in both Via and Jamie's personal testimonies throughout this research process. The lessons of grit, positivity, adaptability, and security in one's self were crucial to the stories of both outstanding music educators, and these lessons can and should be applied to all music educators of all backgrounds. These life skills should be made a focal point in all pre-service and in-service music education professional

development and training, and all can benefit from learning about these tied-migrant music educators' experiences and perspectives. I was astonished by the will of these tied-migrant educators and learned extremely valuable lessons from their outlooks and mentalities. In closing, I'd like to consider this quote from Michelle Obama (2016) on the importance of cultivating a resilient personal perspective in the face of obstacles:

“You should never view your challenges as a disadvantage. Instead, it's important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages.” – Michelle Obama

Appendix A. Institutional Review Board Approval



TO: Ann Marie Stanley
LSUAM | EM and SS | Admissions and
Student Aid | CC00378

FROM: Alex Cohen
Chairman, Institutional Review Board

DATE: 05-Oct-2022

RE: IRBAM-22-0973

TITLE: The Perceptions, Experiences, and Stories
of Tied-Migrant Music Educators: How the
Personal and Professional Blend
Phenomenological Case Study

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial Application

Review Type: Exempt

Risk Factor: Minimal

Review Date: 05-Oct-2022

Status: Approved

Approval Date: 05-Oct-2022

Approval Expiration Date: 04-Oct-2025

Exempt Category: 2b

Requesting Waiver of Informed Consent: Yes

Re-review frequency: Three Years

Number of subjects approved: 3

LSU Proposal Number:

By: Alex Cohen, Chairman

Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the

study ends.

5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

** All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/research>*

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Appendix B. Recruitment Script

Dear Educators,

I hope your school year is off to a great start! I am currently working on my Master of Music Education degree at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, LA, and as such I am currently in the process of working on my thesis research. My research study entitled, “The Perceptions, Experiences, and Stories of Tied-Migrant Music Educators: How the Personal and Professional Blend” seeks to examine the lived experiences and perspectives of self-identified tied-migrant music educators and how the tied-migrant aspect of their personal life impacts their professional career. A tied-migrant spouse can be defined as an individual who is married to an individual who is required to relocate frequently, most often due to their professional work and career (Hisanick & Little, 2015). In order to participate in this study, you must...

1. Self-identify as a current or veteran tied-migrant or transitory music educator
2. Have taught some form of K-12 music, either general, vocal, or instrumental, in at least two different schools and states within the United States of America
3. Belong to either the Military Spouse Educators Facebook group or a state-level or national-level music educator Facebook group, such as Elementary Music Teachers or Virginia Music Educators Facebook groups

Participation in this study would involve the following:

- Completing an introductory questionnaire, which can be found below
- Engaging with email communication to establish meeting times and ask follow-up questions
- Being interviewed by me via Zoom for 30 minutes once during the month of October or November 2022
- Participating in one focus group session with myself and all other participants via Zoom for 45 minutes in the month of January 2023
- Reviewing your portion of the written thesis report to ensure all information presented accurately and respectfully reflects your experiences

If you would be interested in participating in this study, please fill out this tied-migrant music educator questionnaire! It should only take about 10 minutes of your time and all questions are multiple choice and short answer.

https://lsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zEwjE5lZ2E6nt4

Why participate in this study? Your experience and stories can contribute to the knowledge-base of tied-migrant music educators, and you will also be supporting a future tied-migrant music educator! (My fiancé serves in the U.S. Army, so I would love to hear how you’ve navigated this world!)

If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me. I would love to hear from you!

Researcher Information:

Rachel K. Broyles – rbroyl1@lsu.edu

Master of Music Education Candidate

Louisiana State University

IRB Approval Number – IRBAM-22-0973

Appendix C. Informed Consent Script

1. Study Title: The Perceptions, Experiences, and Stories of Tied-Migrant Music Educators: How the Personal and Professional Blend Phenomenological Case Study
2. The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experiences and perspectives of self-identified tied-migrant music educators and how the tied-migrant aspect of their personal life impacts their professional career.
3. Inclusion Criteria: You are eligible to participate in this study if...
 - a. You self-identify as a current or veteran tied-migrant or transitory music educator.
 - b. You have taught some form of K-12 music, either general, vocal, or instrumental, in at least two different schools and states within the United States of America.
 - c. You belong to either the Military Spouse Educators Facebook group or a state-level or national-level music educator Facebook group.
4. Exclusion Criteria: You are not eligible to participate in this study if you do not meet the above criteria.
5. Participating in this study involves minimal foreseeable risks. Reflecting on teaching and professional career experiences may cause you to experience negative emotions if you have had difficulty in this area.
6. Investigators:
 - i. Ms. Rachel Broyles, MM Candidate, Louisiana State University, rbroyl1@lsu.edu
 - ii. Dr. Ann Marie Stanley, Associate Dean of College of Music and Performing Arts Graduate Studies, Louisiana State University, astanley1@lsu.edu
7. Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose to not participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which they might otherwise be entitled.
8. Results of study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Participants will be referenced exclusively by pseudonyms. Participants identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law. All written responses, interviews, interview recordings, and interview transcripts will be confidential and will be stored in the password-protected, encrypted online platforms and Zoom. Please be aware that participants will be recorded through Zoom during individual interviews as well as the focus group. Following Zoom interviews, the auto-generated transcript will be provided by Zoom, all identifying features will be removed by the researcher, and then uploaded to the researcher's electronic device for further examination. All data and associated materials will be retained for approximately one calendar year before being permanently deleted.
9. This study has been approved by the LSU IRB. For questions concerning participant rights, please contact the IRB Chair, Alex Cohen, at 225-578-8692 or irb@lsu.edu.
10. By being interviewed or submitting written responses, you are giving consent to participate.

☐ Yes, I give permission

☐ No, I do not give permission

Appendix D. Questionnaire

9/24/22, 11:40 AM

Qualtrics Survey Software

Default Question Block

I have read the Informed Consent Form and agree to participate in The Perceptions, Experiences, and Stories of Tied-Migrant Music Educators: How the Personal and Professional Blend Phenomenological Case Study (Consent Form).

Yes

No

Please list your name (First and Last) as well as your preferred email for contact.

Name:

Email:

Please select your gender.

Male

Female

Non-Binary / Third Gender

Prefer to Self-Describe

Prefer Not to Say

Please indicate your current age.

Under 24

Between 25 - 30

Between 31 - 35

Between 36 - 40

Between 41 - 45

https://lsu.yul1.qualtrics.com/Q/EditSection/Blocks/Ajax/GetSurveyPrintPreview?ContextSurveyID=SV_6zEwjE5lZ2E6nt4&ContextLibraryID=UR_40JUjeNODH... 1/16

Between 46 - 50

51 or older

Which race best describes you? (Please only choose one.)

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian

Black or African American

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Some other race

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe

Please indicate whether your spouse's career/occupation is related to the U.S. Military or civilian realm.

Military

Civilian

If your spouse is associated with the military, please select your service member's current standing.

Active Duty

Selected Reserve (Reserve or Guard)

Retired

Discharged

Does not apply to me

Please indicate your service member's branch of service.

Air Force

Army

Coast Guard

Marine Corps

Navy

Space Force

Does not apply to me

Please indicate your service member's rank.

Enlisted: E1, E2, E3

Enlisted: E4, E5, E6

Enlisted: E7, E8, E9

Officer: O1, O2, O3

Officer: O4, O5, O6

Officer: O7, O8, O9

Warrant Officer: W1, W2, W3

Warrant Officer: W4, W5

Does not apply to me

If your spouse has a frequently relocating civilian occupation, please indicate their job below. (Ex: Lawyer, Salesman, Corporate Employee...)

Civilian Job Description:

Does not apply to me

Please indicate the location(s) you and your family have lived in together. (Select all that apply)

Alabama

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Delaware

Florida

Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah

Vermont

Virginia

Washington

West Virginia

Wisconsin

Wyoming

District of Columbia (D.C.)

International (Please describe)

Please indicate the current state or location you and your family reside in. (Please select one.)

Alabama

Alaska

Arizona

Arkansas

California

Colorado

Connecticut

Delaware

Florida

Georgia

Hawaii

Idaho

Illinois

Indiana

Iowa

Kansas

Kentucky

Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Massachusetts

Michigan

Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming
District of Columbia (D.C.)

International (Please describe)

Please identify your current level of education.

Completed a Bachelor's program

Completed a Bachelor's program, enrolled in a Master's program and have earned graduate credits
Graduated from or completed a Master's program
Graduated from a Master's program; currently in a Doctoral program
I have completed both a Masters and Doctoral program

Please identify your current licensure or certification status.

Not applicable because I am still seeking the educational requirements

Not applicable because even though I have completed my educational requirements, I am unable to obtain a license with my current degree(s)

Under supervision and obtaining hours

Completed supervision, paperwork, or exam results pending

Licensed and certified to practice in the current state I live in

Licensed and certified to practice in one state, but not the one I live in

Licensed and certified to practice in multiple states, including the one I live in

Which area(s) of K-12 music education best describes your current teaching situation.
(Please select multiple if necessary.)

General (Elementary)

General (Middle or High School)

Vocal (Middle School)

Vocal (High School)

Instrumental - Orchestra (Elementary School)

Instrumental - Orchestra (Middle School)

Instrumental - Orchestra (High School)

Instrumental - Band (Elementary School)

Instrumental - Band (Middle School)

Instrumental - Band (High School)

Other (Please describe)

Currently not employed in K-12 education setting/Different working situation (Please describe)

Please indicate how many years of experience you have working in the field of music education.

Less than 1 year

1 - 2 years

3 - 5 years

6 - 10 years

More than 10 years

Please indicate which of the following settings best describes your current workplace.

This does not apply to me

Public School

Parochial School

Private School (Non-Parochial)

Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA)

Non-Profit Agency

For-Profit Agency

Other (Please specify)

Please indicate the current status that best describes your current employment situation.

I am not looking for work, and I do not plan on looking for work anytime soon.

I am not looking for work, but I am interested in returning to work in the near future.

I am not working, but I have been actively looking for work the last several weeks/months.

I am currently working part-time by choice.

I am currently working part-time not by choice.

I am currently working full-time, and my job meets my level of education and experience.

I am currently working full-time, but I am more experienced and educated than my job requires.

Are you currently employed in the field of music education?

Yes

No

If you indicated you are not working, what is your main reason for not working?

Lack of job opportunities in my career field at my location

Could not find meaningful work

Lack necessary schooling, training, skills, or experience

Employers think too young or too old

Other kind of discrimination (Please describe if comfortable)

Family responsibilities

Health reasons, physical disability

Transportation problems

Licensure issues

Completing move; settling into a new location

Anticipating move; did not want to commit to a new job

Does not apply to me

If you indicated you are working part-time, what is your primary reason for working part-time?

Business conditions

Could only find part-time work

Seasonal work

Childcare problems

Family/personal obligations

Health limitations

School/training

Retired

Does not apply to me

Please select which of the following best describes your tied-migrant relocation status.
(Please remember, these are relocations you have embarked on primarily due to the work demands of your spouse.)

My family and I have moved within the last 5 years due to work-related reasons.

My family and I have moved within the last 3 years due to work-related reasons.

My family and I have moved within the last year due to work-related reasons.

My family and I have moved within the last 6 months due to work-related reasons.

My family and I are preparing for a move within the next year due to work-related reasons.

My family and I are preparing for a move within the next 6 months due to work-related reasons.

My family and I have not moved in over 5 years and are not preparing for an upcoming move due to work-related reasons.

Please indicate the total number of times you have moved due to your spouse's work-related reasons.

None

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six or more

Please choose the statement that best describes your parenting situation.

We have one or more child(ren) in the home who are not yet school age.

We have one or more child(ren) in the home who are in school.

We have both one or more child(ren) in the home who are not yet in school and one or more child(ren) in the home who are in school.

We have no children in the home.

Other (Please specify)

Please indicate how many children you have.

0

1

2

3

4

5 or more

Please indicate your primary reason for working or obtaining higher education.

Current or future finances

Personal fulfillment

To have something to do/avoid boredom

 Other (please specify)

Please indicate which of the following you perceive to negatively impact your career the most.

Frequent moves/relocation

My spouse's job demands

Licensure reciprocity/issues

Availability of employment opportunities

Parenting responsibilities

 Other (please specify briefly)

Does not apply to me

If you are currently working, please indicate your current annual income (not including your spouse's income).

Does not apply to me

Less than \$10,000 per year

Between \$10,000 - \$20,000 per year

Between \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year

Between \$30,000 - \$40,000 per year

Between \$40,000 - \$50,000 per year

Between \$50,000 - \$60,000 per year

Between \$60,000 - \$70,000 per year

More than \$70,000 per year

True or False: I believe my annual income is commensurate with my education and experience level.

True

False

Please indicate if you have ever left the music education field or paused your education and/or career interest due to the tied-migrant spouse lifestyle.

Yes, but I have returned back to the field.

Yes, but I am continuing my education.

Yes, I am currently putting my career/education on hold due to the tied-migrant lifestyle but plan to return at a later time.

Yes, I put my career/education on hold due to the tied-migrant lifestyle but do not plan to return to the field of music education.

Yes, I am currently putting my career/education on hold due to the tied-migrant lifestyle but I am unsure if I plan to return to the field of music education at this time.

No, I have never paused my education or career interest or left the field of music education due to the tied-migrant lifestyle.

If you have left the music education career field or paused your education and/or career interests due to the tied-migrant lifestyle please indicate the length of time you did so.

Less than 1 year

1 - 2 years

2 - 3 years

3 - 4 years

5 - 9

10 or more years

Does not apply to me

Have you ever lived apart from your spouse for any length of time to continue your education or career interests?

Yes

No

No, but I have thought significantly about it at some point

If you have ever lived apart from your spouse for any length of time to continue your education or career interests, please indicate the length of time you spent apart.

Less than 1 year

1 - 2 years

2 - 3 years

3 - 4 years

4 - 9 years

10 or more years

Are you currently living in a different location than your spouse in order to complete your education or pursue your career interests?

Yes

No

How much does the tied-migrant spouse lifestyle impact your career?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

More than sometimes

Often

Very often

Almost always

Always

Which of the following choices best reflects your perspective on the following statement:
Whether or not I am adequately employed impacts how satisfied I am with my life.

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

More than sometimes
Often
Very often
Almost always
Always

Which of the following choices best reflects your perspective on the following statement:
I spend time thinking about how our next move will impact my career.

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
More than sometimes
Often
Very often
Almost always
Always

Which of the following choices best reflects your perspective on the following statement:
I feel less competent in my career-related abilities and skills as a result of the tied-migrant lifestyle.

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
More than sometimes
Often
Very often
Almost always
Always

Which of the following choices best reflects your perspective on the following statement:
I feel less connected with my colleagues and/or community as a result of the tied-migrant lifestyle.

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
More than sometimes
Often
Very often
Almost always
Always

Which of the following choices best reflects your perspective on the following statement:
I have had difficulty obtaining licensure when we move due to different state requirements for music education and/or testing.

Never
Rarely
Sometimes
More than sometimes
Often
Very often
Almost always
Always

Please indicate which of the following is most accurate to your situation.

I mostly worry about my financial contribution to the family.
I mostly worry about my retirement eligibility.
I mostly worry about my career progress.
I do not worry about my career.

True or False: Social connections and a sense of belonging in the community is important to me.

True
False

True or False: Social connections and sense of belonging in the music education career is important to me.

True

False

True or False: Using my education and professional skills to progress my career is important to me.

True

False

True or False: Having a sense of control in my career and career opportunities is important to me.

Yes

No

Powered by Qualtrics

Appendix E. Interview Questions

The following list of questions will be utilized during the individual interview process. Additional questions and focus group questions will be determined based upon participants' responses to the following.

- Please introduce yourself, describe yourself and your family.
- How and when did you meet your spouse and become affiliated with the tied-migrant status?
- Why did you want to become a music educator?
- What is the occupation of your spouse?
- Please describe your experience in how you gained teacher licensure, both initially and for your current position.
- How many times have you moved schools within your career so far?
- On average, how often do you and your spouse move?
- How many and which states have you moved to?
- How many of those states have you procured a music teacher job?
- Please describe your experiences in moving to a new state and school.
- Did you return to music teaching each time you have moved? Why or why not?
- What influenced your decision to return to teaching?
- If you did not return to the music classroom, what influenced your decision to not return?
- Please describe your experience in finding and securing a new teaching position after each move. What was the application and interview process like?
- Please describe your experience in teaching at your new position.
- What challenges have you encountered that are unique to tied-migrant music educators that other tied-migrant educators of different academic disciplines don't encounter? What challenges do you perceive all tied-migrant educators face?
- Please describe any concerns that you have had in regards to your professional career.
- What are your goals, both in your personal and professional life?
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Where do you see yourself in ten years?
- Do you feel like you are currently successful? Do you feel like you've experienced success as a whole in your career and life? Why or why not?
- Are there any forms of preservice training or professional development that you believe would be helpful to future or current tied-migrant music educators? What might this training look like or cover?
- What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experience as a tied-migrant music educator?

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Vita

Rachel Broyles grew up in Chesapeake, Virginia, where she began engaging with music at a young age. She ultimately chose to perform on the saxophone as her primary instrument, and her passion for music led her to participate in various kinds of ensembles all throughout her public education, serving as both musician and leader for her school community.

Her love for music and helping others experience the gift of music eventually led her to pursue a Bachelor of Music in Music Education at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. There, she was able to grow significantly as both a musician and educator, teaching music in various different settings with a wide range of ages, and she later graduated with the highest grade point average in the College of Visual and Performing Arts as well as the honor of summa cum laude in May 2021. She decided to continue her education by immediately enrolling in the Master of Music in Music Education program at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she has furthered her understanding and expertise as a music educator. She expects to graduate in May 2023 and later move to Lacey, Washington to continue her career as a music educator with her new husband, Benjamin.