

PARENTING IN THE MILITARY CONTEXT: A CASE STUDY IN THE PORTUGUESE AIR FORCE¹

A PARENTALIDADE EM CONTEXTO MILITAR: UM ESTUDO NA FORÇA AÉREA PORTUGUESA

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ABSTRACT

A process that entails several changes, parenting is widely seen as the most complex and challenging role in an adult's life. Several studies have addressed the relationship between the family and work dimensions and found that, in order to optimise performance and improve personal well-being, there must be a balance between these two dimensions. This is a relevant issue in civil society but even more so in the military, given the specific demands of military life. This study will analyse the relationship between parenting and perceptions of the work-family relationship in a sample of 514 Air Force service members (369 parents and 145 non-parents). The study uses deductive reasoning, a quantitative research strategy and a case study design, and the data were collected using self-reported questionnaires which included measures to assess parenting styles and perceptions about the work-family relationship (Family Supportive Organizational Perception and Work-Family Conflict). The results revealed: that service members (especially those who are mothers) generally prefer the Democratic parenting style; that they feel that the organization strongly encourages work-family separation; that service members assigned to an operational area feel that the time they devote to work can be a source of work-family conflict; and that they feel that their children act as a “buffer” from work-related stress.

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Keywords: Parenting; Parenting Styles; Work-Family Relationship; Organizational Support; Work-Family Conflict; Military Aviation Context.

RESUMO

A parentalidade é sentida como o papel de vida mais complexo e desafiante de um adulto, comportando diversas mudanças. A relação entre as dimensões familiar e profissional tem sido estudada em diversos contextos, verificando-se importante conciliar ambas na otimização do desempenho e aumento do bem-estar pessoal. Uma temática pertinente na sociedade em geral, e mais ainda em contexto castrense, face às idiossincrasias da condição militar. É, assim, objetivo deste estudo analisar a parentalidade e a sua associação com a percepção da relação trabalho-família, numa amostra de 514 militares da Força Aérea (369 pais e 145 não-pais). Alicerçado numa metodologia de raciocínio dedutivo, assente numa estratégia de investigação quantitativa e num desenho de estudo de caso, recolheram-se os dados através de questionários, focados nos estilos parentais e na relação trabalho-família (Percepção de Suporte Organizacional à Família e Conflito Trabalho-Família). Pelos resultados concluiu-se que os militares: sobretudo mães, privilegiam o estilo parental Democrático; percebem uma acentuada exigência por parte da organização, quanto à separação trabalho-família; afetos à área operacional, sentem que o tempo dedicado ao trabalho pode contribuir para o conflito na relação trabalho-família; parecem perceber os filhos como uma espécie de “fonte” atenuadora do stress sentido em contexto de trabalho.

Palavras-chave: Parentalidade; Estilos Parentais; Relação Trabalho-Família; Suporte Organizacional; Conflito Trabalho-Família; Contexto Militar Aeronáutico.

1. Introduction

When people reach adulthood, they have to deal with important events and changes that can transform the course of their lives. The moment a woman becomes a mother or a man becomes a father is, without a doubt, one of the most significant events in a person's life. Some authors (e.g. Brooks, 2013, p.6) define parenting as the process in which a father/mother² interact with their child³. As the child grows, this process changes both parents and child. In this context, parenting is described as a role in which the child is the main focus of attention and action; however, parenting also has consequences for parents (Bornstein, 2002, p.X). Becoming a parent is often the most complex and challenging role in an adult's life because it entails changes across multiple dimensions (social, marital, work, intrapersonal, etc.) and it is a decision that can never be reversed (Palacios, 2005, cited in Carapito, 2017, p.3).

One of the things that marked the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first was the fast pace of change in two complementary areas of life: work and family (Vieira, Ávila, & Matos, 2012, p.31).

² The words mother / father / parent are used here to refer to adult caregivers who are responsible for children / teenagers with whom they have an affective bond and / or family relationship, and for whom they are responsible.

³ The words child / teenager and son / daughter will be used in the same sense, that of a household member who is a minor and / or is not yet independent and is cared for by one or more adults who are parental figures.

Since both parents increasingly work full-time even before their children become autonomous, families now face new challenges in balancing their different roles, which include spouse, partner, parent and worker (Zigler, 2002, p.xiv). Zigler (2002, p.xiv) describes two major stressors for working parents: the need to find affordable quality childcare and education, and the difficulty in finding time to be with their children.

The balance between the family and work spheres has been addressed in several studies, which concluded that work-family balance is crucial both to optimise employee performance and well-being (e.g. Carvalho, & Chambel, 2016, p.116) and to optimise the influence of organizational features on employee behaviour, attitudes and well-being (Carvalho, & Chambel, 2018, p.14).

These issues are particularly relevant in the military context. Earlier studies conducted in military environments have shown that military life is very demanding and that it leads to increased levels of stress for military families (e.g. Burrell, Adams, Durand, & Castro, 2006, p.53). Some aspects that make military life particularly demanding are the fact that service members are often physically separated from their family, the risk of injury or death while on duty, the frequent relocations that their families must endure, and the constraints that military life places on the family structure (Burrell et al., 2006, p.53). These constraints correspond to the requirements outlined in detail in a legal document, the *Law Establishing the General Basis for the Status of the Military* (Law No. 11/89 of June 1, p.2096), which, among other duties, demands a “[...] permanent availability for duty, even if it conflicts with personal interests” (Art. 2(f)).

There are still relatively few studies addressing the complexities of the family-work relationship when the work is performed in a military context (Carvalho, & Chambel, 2018, p.2). A notable exception are the recent studies on perceptions of work-family conflict among Portuguese Navy personnel (Pereira, 2016; Franco, 2018; Cavaleiro, Gomes, & Lopes, 2019). Portuguese studies on military parents are even scarcer, with the exception of a few works analysing military parents deployed to theatres of operations (e.g. Bóia, Marques, Francisco, Ribeiro, & Santos, 2018).

The Portuguese Air Force (PoAF) is not immune to this reality, both because it is an integral part of society and because it must manage its human resources in the face of budgetary constraints on the Armed Forces and declining staff numbers.

Against this background, this study on *Parenting in the military context: A case study in the Portuguese Air Force* aims to contribute to the body of knowledge about parenting in the military and specifically in the PoAF. The knowledge acquired here can be used to improve the PoAF’s human resource management policies by optimising the processes that balance the relationship between the organization and its members, that is, the relationship between the work and family spheres (with regards to parenting).

This investigation will examine parenting in the PoAF. As advised by Santos and Lima (2016), the study is delimited:

- In terms of time, to the present day (June 2019);
- In terms of space, to PoAF personnel;
- In terms of content, to parenting and the work-family relationship (among PoAF personnel).

Thus, the general objective (**GO**) of this study is *To analyse the link between parenting and*

the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship, and the specific objectives (SO) are:

SO1: To assess the parenting styles of PoAF personnel.

SO2: To analyse the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship.

These objectives are reflected in the study's research question (**RQ**), *Is there a link between parenting and the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship?*

2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

This chapter contains the literature review, the key concepts and the analysis model.

2.1. State-of-the-art and key concepts

The contents of this section will establish the research framework.

2.1.1. Parenting styles

To study parenting styles (and practices), one must first study parenting, one of the most complex, difficult, and challenging tasks and responsibilities in an individual's life (Holden, 2015, p.xiv). Parenting can be defined as the set of activities aimed at ensuring that children survive and develop (Hoghugh, 2004, p.5) in a safe environment (Reder, Duncan, & Lucey, 2003, p.5) that stimulates socialisation and gradually fosters their autonomy (Maccoby, 2000, p.2).

Thus, parenting is an ongoing process that requires constant investment and commitment during the child's long period of development. This involves responsible childrearing practices such as: bonding and interacting with the child; having the material resources to ensure the child has shelter, food, clothing, and health care; providing a moral and intellectual education; and preparing the child for the responsibilities of adulthood (Brooks, 2013, p.6).

Studies in this area have focused on identifying the characteristics of parents and the consequences of educational decisions for child development, that is, on studying parenting styles and practices and using them to establish parent typologies described by behaviour dimensions (Carapito, 2017, p.4).

Baumrind (1966, 1967, 1971) developed a model of parental authority based on three parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive.

Parents with an authoritarian style (Baumrind, 1966, p.890):

- Manifest power and exert control when the child's behaviours or beliefs conflict with the standards of behaviour that parents find acceptable, and often resort to punishments and coercive measures to exert such control, but also provide little by way of support, affection and two-way communication;

- Value obedience, respect for authority and order, and try to control the child's behaviour so that it fits a set standard of conduct.

Parents with an authoritative style (Baumrind's ideal style, 1966, p.891):

- Are demanding but also affectionate, and provide their children with an intellectually stimulating environment;

- Exercise firm control, are affectionate and responsive to the needs of their children;
 - Encourage open communication and verbal interactions with their children, encouraging autonomy and individuality;
 - Share the reasoning behind their decisions, respect both their own rights and the rights of the child, try to act in a rational manner and respond to divergent behaviour with control, but without overwhelming the child with restrictions;
 - Set clear standards of conduct and trust the child to comply with those that apply to them.
- Finally, parents with a permissive style (Baumrind, 1966, p.889):
- Do not exert punitive behaviour, respect the child's impulses, desires and actions, are affectionate and responsive to the child's needs, but do not set boundaries on their children's behaviour;
 - Make few demands, do not fit the expected image of an active agent responsible for shaping/ changing a child's behaviour, avoid exercising control, and do not encourage adherence to set behaviour standards, allowing their children to self-regulate their own activities.

The authoritative style is considered the ideal style because it allows children and teenagers to develop in a balanced way (Baumrind, 1966, 1967, 1991, 1993; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Turner, Chandler, & Heffer, 2009), improves parents' socialisation skills, and increases the effectiveness of parenting practices (Darling, & Steinberg, 1993, p.492).

Parenting styles are distinct from parenting practices (Darling, & Steinberg, 1993, pp.488, 492):

- A parenting style (a predictor of behaviour) can be defined as a set of parenting attitudes that establish an emotional climate. These attitudes include specific, goal oriented behaviours (such as tone of voice or body language) through which parents perform their duties (parenting practices) without a specific socialisation goal;
- Parenting practices are the actual behaviours, which are guided by specific contents and socialisation goals.

2.1.2. Work-Family Relationships

Achieving a balance between the demands of the family, organization and social spheres (work-family relationship, WFR) is crucial because it is only by integrating these domains that families, organizations and societies can develop and thrive (Chinchilla, & Moragas, 2009, p.5).

The recognition that the work and family roles mutually influence each other led to the emergence of several theoretical frameworks (e.g. Frone, 2003; Rothbard, & Edwards, 2003), which contributed to form a broader and progressively more integrative work-family interface (e.g. Ashfort, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Frone, 2003).

For example, Voydanoff (2004, p.398) conceptualises the WFR as a set of linking mechanisms embedded in the processes through which work and family characteristics lead to individual, work and family outcomes.

Similarly, the military has also emphasised well-being as an important dimension for attracting and retaining engaged, productive human resources (Alarcon, Lyons, & Tartaglia, 2010, p.301; Chambel, & Oliveira-Cruz, 2010, p.110). However, despite the growing concerns regarding this issue, relatively few studies have addressed it (Carvalho, & Chambel, 2018,

p.2). Other studies have analysed work-family enrichment from the perspective that the skills developed at work can positively influence behaviour in the family context (and vice versa) (e.g. Greenhaus, & Powell, Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006; McNall, Niclin, & Masuda, 2010).

The present study will approach the work-family relationship by focusing on the dimensions “family-supportive organization perception” (FSOP) and “work-family conflict” (WFC).

FSOP. While providing family-friendly benefits can help employees manage their various professional and personal responsibilities, this alone does not address fundamental aspects of the organization which may prevent employees from successfully balancing work and family (Allen, 2001, p.415).

Therefore, it is critical that the organization’s efforts to attain a competitive advantage and help employees through “family-friendly” benefits are effectively perceived by employees. That is, when these benefits are implemented, employees must perceive the organizational environment as favourable to their efforts to balance the work-family relationship (Allen, 2001, p.415).

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986, p.501) defined Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as an employee’s general perception of the extent to which the organization values, recognises and (fairly) rewards them. This construct has proved to be instrumental in explaining employee well-being and is an important mechanism to ensure that their social and emotional needs are being met.

After the emergence of the POS construct, Allen (2001, p.416) proposed the concept of Family-Supportive Organizational Perception (FSOP), which frames the organization’s attitudes in terms of family-friendly measures, i.e. of employees’ general perceptions about how family-supportive an organization actually is.

In the above study, a relationship was observed between a culture that supports the work-family interface and the use of the benefits provided by an organization described as “family-friendly”, which revealed positive effects on the variables associated with family and work (satisfaction, affective commitment, productivity, work-family balance) (Allen, 2001, p.430). Moreover, this confirmed earlier studies such as the one by Thompson, Beauvais and Lyness (1999, p.392).

Therefore, FSOP is a mediating variable in the relationship between the availability of “family-friendly” practices that facilitate family-work conciliation and dependent variables such as work-family conflict, affective commitment to the organization, and job satisfaction (Allen, 2001, p.430).

WFC. People’s psychological and physiological resources in terms of time, attention, and energy are not infinite, which means that they often find it difficult to meet the different demands of each role, which can lead to role conflict (Greenhaus, & Beutell, 1985, p.81). Based on studies by Kahn et al. (1964, cited in Greenhaus, & Beutell, 1985, p.77), Greenhaus and Beutell (1985, p.77) define WFC as a form of inter-role conflict in which pressures from the work and family domains make those two roles mutually incompatible. That is, engaging in the family role makes it more difficult to engage in the work role.

There are three forms of WFC (Greenhaus, & Beutell, 1985, pp.77-81):

- Time-based conflict, in which the multiple roles that people must perform compete for their time. For example, excessive work hours and overlapping schedules can lead to conflict when these factors are incompatible with the performance of another role;
- Strain / stress-based conflict, in which the pressure to perform one role makes it difficult to perform another role. For example, pressure to perform, psychological pressure, and interpersonal problems can lead to irritability, fatigue, or apathy, all of which can have a negative effect on the performance of the other role;
- Behaviour-based conflict, in which the specific standards of conduct associated with one role may be / are incompatible with the behaviour expectations of another role. For example, a behaviour style marked by power, authority, and impersonality in the work role may be incompatible with family behaviours such as showing affection, care and establishing close relationships.

WFC is a two-way concept in the sense that conflict in the family sphere can affect one's work or vice versa (Greenhaus, & Beutell, 1985, p.82). This investigation will focus on how the work domain affects the family context. Both time-based conflict and strain-based conflict will be analysed.

2.2. Analysis Model

The study was guided by the concept map presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Concept Map

General Objective	To analyse the link between parenting and the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship		
Specific Objectives	Research Question	Is there a link between parenting and the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship?	
	Subsidiary Questions	Concepts	Dimensions
SO1 To assess the parenting styles of PoAF personnel	SQ1 What are the preferred parenting styles of PoAF personnel?	Parenting Styles	Permissive
			Authoritarian
			Democratic
SO2 To analyse the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship	SQ2 What are the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship?	Work-Family Relationship	Family-Supportive Organization Perception (FSOP)
			Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

3. Methodology and method

This chapter describes the methodology and methods used in the study.

3.1. Methodology

The methodology included three phases: an exploratory phase (literature review, identification of the RQ, SQ, and the elaboration of the concept map); an analytical phase (data collection, analysis and presentation of the findings; a conclusive phase (discussion

of the findings, conclusions, contributions to knowledge, limitations, suggestions for future studies and recommendations).

The investigation uses deductive reasoning, a quantitative research strategy and a case-study research design.

3.2. Method

3.2.1. Participants and procedure

Participants. The study sample included 514 service members (Table 2), most of whom are parents (71.8%), male (74.5%), 36-45 years old (48.4%), serve in support specialties (48.7%), perform non-flying duties (81.5%) in a unit less than 50 km from their home (71.8%), and have served for > 20 years (35.6%). Of these 71.8% (n=369), most respondents have two children (49.6%) in different age segments, i.e., different categories (30%). Of the parents who have only one child (30.5%), 11.7% of those children are <2 years old (Table 2).

Table 2 – Sample characterization

Sociodemographic Variables		N
Gender	Female	131
	Male	383
Age	≤ 25 yrs old	17
	26 - 35 yrs old	167
	36 - 45 yrs old	249
	≥ 46 yrs old	81
Area of performance	Support	248
	Maintenance	141
	Operations	120
Length of duty	< 5 yrs	34
	5 - 10 yrs	45
	11 - 15 yrs	142
	16 - 20 yrs	110
	> 20 yrs	183
Flying Personnel	Yes	94
	No	419
Distance to Home	< 50 km	369
	50 - 100 km	76
	> 100 km	68
Parenting	Parents	369
	Non-parents	145
Number of children	1	157
	2	183
	≥ 3	29
Children's age	≤ 2 yrs old	60
	3 - 5 yrs old	46
	6 - 10 yrs old	38
	11 - 13 yrs old	24
	14 - 16 yrs old	11
	17 - 19 yrs old	6
	≥ 20 yrs old	30
	Children in different age segments	154

Procedure. The questionnaire was filled out electronically between 11 April and 2 June 2019. The respondents were duly informed about the purpose of the study, of the fact that there were no correct / incorrect answers and of the average time to fill out the questionnaire. They were also assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers and their authorization was requested to collect / analyse the data for statistical purposes.

3.2.2. Data collection instruments

The questionnaire designed to assess Parents was divided into four sections: Sociodemographic Characterisation; Parenting Styles; Family-Supportive Organization Perception; Work-Family Relationship. A different questionnaire was designed for non-Parents by removing the Parental Styles section, which is not applicable to this group.

Parenting Styles. Parenting styles were assessed using the abridged Portuguese version (Albuquerque, 2016) of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ) by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen and Hart (2001). The questionnaire consists of 21 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Never to 5=Always) and distributed by three dimensions / subscales, each corresponding to a parenting style: Democratic (9 items), Authoritarian (9 items) and Permissive (3 items).

Family-Supportive Organization Perception. FSOP was measured using the Portuguese version of the Family-Supportive Organization Perception scale (FSOP) (Allen, 2001) adapted by Campaniço (2014). Nine items were selected for use, distributed by 3 dimensions / subscales: Work Focus (2 items), More Time at Work (4 items) and Work-Family Separation (3 items). The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree).

Work-Family Conflict. WFC was measured using the abridged Portuguese version (Campaniço, 2014) of the Work-Family Conflict scale (WFC) by Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000). Six items were used, distributed by 2 dimensions / subscales: Time-based W-F interference (3 items) and Strain-based W-F interference (3 items). The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Never to 5=Always).

3.2.3. Data processing techniques

The qualitative analyses were carried out using the software *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* (SPSS 23.0) and IBM SPSS AMOS.

4. Data presentation and discussion of results

This chapter analyses and answers the SQs and the RQ.

4.1. Parenting styles of PoAF personnel.

The next section will address SQ1.

4.1.1. Analysis of the factor structure of the measuring instrument.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the factors / dimensions defined by the authors of the original scale. The factor structure of the original scale was

not confirmed. Therefore, an exploratory factor analysis (AFE) with Varimax rotation was performed, resulting in a three-factor solution (Table 3) which accounted for 45.5% of the total variance, with internal consistency indices that ranged from acceptable to good (*cf.* Hill, & Hill, 2002, p.149, and Garcia-Marques, & Maroco, 2006, p.73), a KMO of 0.836, classified as good by Kaiser (1974, p.35) and Hill and Hill (2002, p.275), and a significant Bartlett's Test for Sphericity ($\chi^2(210)=2489.01, p<.000$).

Table 3 – Parenting Styles Scale

Dimensions	Items
Democratic ($\alpha=.877$)	2.4. I encourage my child to talk about his/her troubles.
	2.6. I encourage my child to freely express him/herself even when disagreeing with parents.
	2.8. I give comfort and understanding when my child is upset.
	2.10. I give praise when my child is good.
	2.13. I take my child's desires into account for the family plans.
	2.15. I show respect for my child's opinions by encouraging my child to express them.
	2.17. I emphasize the reasons for rules.
	2.19. I help my child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging my child to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions.
	2.21. I explain the consequences of the child's behavior.
	Inconsequent ($\alpha=0.664$)
2.5. I find it difficult to discipline my child.	
2.7. I punish by taking privileges away from my child with little if any explanations.	
2.9. I yell or shout when my child misbehaves.	
2.11. I give into my child when the child causes a commotion about something.	
2.12. I state punishments to my child and do not actually do them.	
2.16. I scold and criticize to make my child improve.	
2.18. I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.	
2.20. I scold or criticize when my child's behavior doesn't meet my expectations.	
Coercive ($\alpha=0.708$)	2.1. I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child.
	2.3. I slap my child when the child misbehaves.
	2.14. I grab my child when being disobedient.

Source: Adapted from the short version by Albuquerque (2016).

4.1.2. Descriptive and inductive analyses

As Table 4 shows, the highest mean values observed in the PS scales correspond to *Democratic Style* ($M=4.38; SD=0.532$), and the lowest to *Coercive Style* ($M=1.68; SD=0.512$). Two correlations with statistical significance were observed, one strong and one moderately strong:

- Length of duty and age ($r=.768, p<.001$);
- *Coercive PS* and *Inconsequent PS* ($r=.389, p<.001$).

Table 4 – Correlations of Parenting Styles and Sociodemographic Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	2.77	0.749						
2. Length of Duty	3.71	1.222	.768**					
3. Number of Children	1.65	0.620	.272**	.217**				
4. Distance to Home	1.41	0.713	-.122**	-.177**	.030			
5. Democrático	4.38	0.532	.053	.168**	-.046	-.020		
PS 6. Inconsequent	2.36	0.467	-.070	-.003	.106*	-.058	-.063	
7. Coercive	1.68	0.512	-.209**	-.178**	.128*	.012	-.039	.389**

Note: Age (1_“≤ 25”; 2_“26-35”; 3_“36-45”; 4_“≥46”), Length of Duty (1_“<5”; 2_“5-10”; 3_“1-15”; 4_“16-20”; 5_“>20”), Number of Children (1_“1”; 2_“2”; 3_“≥3”), Distance to Home (1_“<50Km”; 2_“50-100Km”; 3_“>100 Km”)

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

Differences in means (t-Student / ANOVAS / Kruskal-Wallis). The differences in mean were analysed using a Student’s t-test for paired samples (Table 5), which revealed that the differences between the mean values obtained by each style were significant:

- *Democratic* ($M=4.38$; $SD=0.532$) vs. *Inconsequent* ($M=2.35$; $SD=0.467$) ($t=53.4$; $p < .000$) and *Coercive* ($M=1.68$; $SD=0.551$) ($t=66.5$; $p < .000$);
- *Inconsequent* ($M=2.35$; $SD=0.467$) vs. *Coercive* ($M=1.68$; $SD=0.551$) ($t=22.9$; $p < .000$).

Table 5 – Mean Differences for PS

Parenting Styles	M	SD	Paired t de Student	
			t	p
Democratic vs Inconsequent	4.38	0.532	53.4	.000**
Democratic vs Coercive	4.38	0.532	66.5	.000**
Inconsequent vs Coercive	2.35	0.467	22.9	.000**
	1.68	0.551		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

As Table 6 shows, the higher mean values obtained by mothers in *Democratic* style ($M=4.49$; $SD=0.534$) when compared to fathers ($M=4.35$; $SD=0.528$) are uniquely significant ($U=14531.0$; $p < .05$).

Table 6 - Mean Differences for PS regarding Mothers/Fathers

Dimensions	n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney			
				Z	U	p	
Democratic	Fathers	284	4.35	0.528	1.862	14531.0	.004*
	Mothers	85	4.49	0.534			
Inconsequent	Fathers	284	2.35	0.456	-0.131	11957.5	.896
	Mothers	85	2.37	0.504			
Coercive	Fathers	284	1.66	0.175	1.215	13098.5	.225
	Mothers	85	1.75	0.571			

Note: A non-parametric test Mann-Whitney was used, since the “n” of the analysed groups were very different (KentState University, 2019a).

* $p < .05$.

The results shown in Table 7 and the corresponding Post Hoc tests revealed statistically significant differences within the *Coercive* subscale ($\chi^2(3)=31.076, p<.000$) between the age groups “≥46 years old” ($M=1.38;SD=0.411$) and “26-35 years old” ($M=1.75;DP=0.557$) (*Post Hoc, p<.000*), and “≥46 years old” and “36-45 years old” ($M=1.77;DP=0.558$) (*Post Hoc, p<.000*).

Table 7 - Mean Differences for PS regarding Age

Dimensions	n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis			
						d.f.	χ^2	p	
Democratic	26 - 35	74	4.30	0.585	1.89	5.00	2	3.107	.375
	36 - 45	215	4.42	0.524	1.33	5.00			
	≥ 46	78	4.36	0.463	3.22	5.00			
Inconsequent	26 - 35	74	2.37	0.477	1.33	3.44	2	7.661	.054
	36 - 45	215	2.39	0.445	1.22	3.89			
	≥ 46	78	2.25	0.502	1.00	3.33			
Coercive	26 - 35	74	1.75	0.557	1.00	3.00	2	31.076	.000**
	36 - 45	215	1.77	0.558	1.00	3.33			
	≥ 46	78	1.38	0.411	1.00	2.67			

Note: A non-parametric test Kruskal-Wallis was used, since the “n” of the analysed groups were very different. The age group <25 yrs old was not considered (n=2) (KentState University, 2019b) * $p<.05$; ** $p<.001$.

Table 8 shows the following statistically significant differences between the mean values of each parenting style:

- *Inconsequent* ($\chi^2(2)=8.086, p<.000$) (*Post Hoc, p<.05*), 1child ($M=2.28;SD=0.469$) and 2children ($M=2.43;SD=0.445$);
- *Coercive* ($\chi^2(2)=10.108, p<.000$) (*Post Hoc, p<.01*), 1child ($M=1.58;SD=0.527$) and 2children ($M=2.43;SD=0.445$).

Table 8 - Mean Differences for PS regarding Number of Children

Dimensions	n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis			
						d.f.	χ^2	p	
Democratic	1	157	4.40	0.577	1.33	5.00	2	3.173	.205
	2	183	4.38	0.507	2.00	5.00			
	≥ 3	29	4.31	0.428	3.22	5.00			
Inconsequent	1	157	2.28	0.469	1.22	3.67	2	8.086	.018*
	2	183	2.43	0.455	1.22	3.89			
	≥ 3	29	2.33	0.535	1.00	3.44			
Coercive	1	157	1.58	0.527	1.00	3.33	2	10.108	.006**
	2	183	1.77	0.559	1.00	3.33			
	≥ 3	29	1.69	0.556	1.00	2.67			

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$.

The analyses of the PS subscales and the other sociodemographic variables (Flying Personnel (FP), Distance to Home, Length of Duty, and Area of Performance) did not reveal any statistically significant differences in means.

4.1.3. Brief overview and answer to SQ1

The above analysis provided the answer to SQ1, *What are the preferred parenting styles of PoAF personnel?* In the analysed sample of service members who are parents, respondents tend to prefer the *Democratic* parenting style, which is characterised by respect and verbal interaction, by an affectionate, responsive and engaged attitude which is not overly intrusive, by setting reasonable boundaries and expecting children to behave in a manner appropriate to their age. The second most preferred style is the *Inconsequent* style, an inconsistent parenting style that includes both permissive and authoritarian attitudes / strategies. That is, parents with this style can be both affective and rigid, unresponsive or accepting because they are inconsistent in terms of discipline. The third and least represented style is the *Coercive* style, which is characterised by the use of measures such as physical punishment to force the child to behave according to the parent's expectations of acceptable conduct. It is worth noting that the last two PS (*Inconsequent* and *Coercive*) are positively correlated, that is, parents who obtained high / low scores in one style also tend to score high / low in the other.

These findings, especially the higher scores obtained by the *Democratic* style, confirm that this parenting style is perceived as the most appropriate and adaptive, the one that leads to the best social, emotional and educational outcomes for children (Baumrind, 1991, p.746; Maccoby & Martin, 1983, p.98; Carapito, 2017, p.118), and the one that has been most disseminated in society (both implicitly and explicitly) as the ideal parenting style. In other words, the respondents' answers may have been influenced to some degree by social desirability. This style is expected and even desirable in today's society (a simple Google search on positive parenting and conscious parenting obtained 254,000 and 191,000 results, respectively, and the same search on Google Scholar obtained 43,166 and 7,000 results, respectively). Nevertheless, the answers show that service members who are parents try to adopt a balanced style that fosters family well-being and sound child development.

An intra-PS analysis revealed that more mothers tend to report a *Democratic* PS than fathers (this had already been observed by Carapito, 2017, p.86, and Winsler, Madigan, & Aquilino, 2005, p.6).

On the other hand, the *Coercive* PS occurs less frequently in the age segment "≥ 46 years old" (when compared to the "26-35 years old" and "36-45 years old" age segments). This could be due to the presence of older children (2nd/3rd time mothers, travel) and / or to the greater age and maturity of the service members in this age segment. Parents with only one child tend to score lower in *Coercive* and *Inconsequent* PS than parents with two children. This could be explained by the increased pressures associated with the arrival of a second child.

No relationships were found between the sociodemographic variables FP, distance to home, length of duty, and area of performance and parenting style.

4.2. Perceptions about the Work-family relationship (WFR) among Air Force personnel

The next section will analyse SQ2.

4.2.1. Analysis of the factor structure of the measuring instruments.

Family-Supportive Organization Perception (FSOP). A CFA was performed, which confirmed the basic factor structure (3F) (Campaniço, 2014, p.44) and obtained the following fitness rates: CMIN/DF=3.810; GFI=0.961; AGFI=0.928; TLI=0.949; CFI=0.966; RMSEA=0.074; SRMR=0.0489. Due to Campaniço's decision (2014) to combine the Work Focus and More Time at Work factors, an AFE was subsequently carried out, revealing a 2F structure (Table 9), which again confirmed the model proposed by Campaniço (2014, p.45) and accounted for 64.5% of the total variance, with internal consistency levels that range from reasonable to good (Hill, & Hill, 2002, p.149), a KMO of 0.858, classified as good by Kaiser (1974, p.35) and Hill and Hill (2002, p.275), and a significant Bartlett's Test for Sphericity ($\chi^2(36)=2016.33, p<.000$).

Table 9 – FSOP Scale

Dimensions	Items
Work Focus ($\alpha=.870$)	3.1. Work should be the primary priority in a person's life
	3.2. Long hours inside the office are the way to achieving advancement.
	3.4. Attending to personal needs, such as taking time off for sick children is frowned upon.
	3.7. Individuals who take time off to attend to personal matters are not committed to their work.
	3.8. It is assumed that the most productive employees are those who put their work before their family life.
Work-Family Separation ($\alpha=.773$)	3.9. The ideal employee is the one who is available 24 hours a day.
	3.3. It is best to keep family matters separate from work
	3.5. Employees should keep their personal problems at home.
	3.6. The way to advance in this company is to keep nonwork matters out of the workplace.

Source: Adapted from Campaniço (2014) and Chambel & Carvalho (2019).

Work-Family Conflict (WFC). A CFA revealed that the model had good fitness rates – CMIN/DF=1.125; GFI=0.994; AGFI=0.985; TLI=0.999; CFI=1.000; RMSEA=0.016; SRMR=0.0142 – and confirmed the original 2F structure (Table 10). Those 2F proved to have good to excellent consistency levels (Garcia-Marques, & Marôco, 2006, p.73; Hill, & Hill, 2002, p.149) (Table 10) and accounted 83.3% of the total variance.

Table 10 – WFC Scale

Dimensions	Items
Time-based work interference with family ($\alpha=.881$)	4.1. My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like
	4.2. The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities.
	4.4. When I get home from work, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities.
Strain-based work interference with family ($\alpha=.914$)	4.3. I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities
	4.5. I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family
	4.6. Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy

Source: Adapted from Campaniço (2014) and Carvalho & Chambel (2016).

4.2.2. Descriptive and inductive analyses

As shown in Table 11, with regards to *Work-Family Separation* (WFS) (M=3.30; SD=0.892), the factors FSOP and *Time-based W-F interference* (M=3.06; SD=0.839) obtained the highest mean scores in WFC.

Table 11 - Correlations of Sociodemographic Variables and WFR (FSOP and WFC) – total sample

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	514	2.77	0.749							
2. Length of Duty	514	3.71	1.222	.768**						
3. Number of Children	514	1.65	0.620	.272**	.217**					
4. Distance to Home	514	1.41	0.713	-.122**	-.177**	.030				
FSOP										
5. Work Focus	514	2.35	0.985	-.059	.017	.004	-.016			
6. W-F Separation	514	3.30	0.892	-.023	-.001	.060	-.025	.397**		
WFC										
7. Time-based W-F interference	514	3.06	0.839	-.130**	-.021	.013	.288**	.260**	.210**	
8. Strain-based W-F interference	514	2.93	0.918	-.121**	.006	.003	.045	.307**	.110*	.544**

Note: Age (1_“≤25”; 2_“26-35”; 3_“36-45”;4_“≥46”), Length of Duty (1_“<5”; 2_“5-10”; 3_“1-15”; 4_“16-20”; 5_“>20”), Number of Children (1_“1”; 2_“2”; 3_“≥3”), Distance to Home (1_“<50Km”; 2_“50-100Km”; 3_“>100 Km”).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

After removing the values highlighted in grey in Table 11 (this was already done above), three correlations with statistical significance could be observed:

- Strong correlation, *Time-based W-F interference* and *Strain-based W-F interference* ($r = .544$, $p < .001$);
- Moderately strong correlation, *Work Focus* and *Work-Family Separation* ($r = .397$, $p < .001$) and *Work Focus* and *Strain-based W-F interference* ($r = .307$, $p < .001$).

An intragroup analysis revealed that the significant relationships observed in Table 11 also occurred in the Parent (Table 12) and non-Parent (Table 13) groups. An additional statistically significant and moderately strong correlation was observed in the non-Parent group, which had not been found in the analysis performed on the total sample: *Work Focus* and *Time-based W-F interference* (Work-Family) ($r = .319$, $p < .001$).

Table 12 - Correlations of Sociodemographic Variables and WFR (FSOP and WFC) – Parents sample

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	369	3.00	0.659							
2. Length of Duty	369	4.09	0.991	.682**						
3. Number of Children	369	1.65	0.620	.272**	.217**					
4. Distance to Home	369	1.33	0.645	-.032	-.043	.030				
FSOP										
5. Work Focus	369	2.29	0.949	-.080	.004	.004	-.034			
6. W-F Separation	369	3.26	0.885	.009	.042	.060	-.029	.406**		
WFC										
7. Time-based W-F interference	369	3.03	0.817	-.173**	-.060	.013	.332**	.226**	.184**	
8. Strain-based W-F interference	369	3.03	0.898	-.147	.003	.003	.28**	.055	.511**	

Note: Age (1_“≤25”; 2_“26-35”; 3_“36-45”;4_“≥46”), Length of Duty (1_“<5”; 2_“5-10”; 3_“1-15”; 4_“16-20”; 5_“>20”), Number of Children (1_“1”; 2_“2”; 3_“≥3”), Distance to Home (1_“<50Km”; 2_“50-100Km”; 3_“>100 Km”).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

Table 13 - Correlations of Sociodemographic Variables and WFR (FSOP and WFC) – Non-Parents sample

Variáveis		n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Age	145	2.17	0.627						
2.	Length of Duty	145	2.72	1.200	.720**					
3.	Distance to Home	145	1.63	0.823	-.025	-.176				
FSOP	5. Work Focus	145	2.48	1.062	.128	.194*	-.034			
	6. W-F Separation	145	3.40	0.906	.024	.037	-.060	.369**		
WFC	7. Time-based W-F interference	145	3.14	0.890	.025	.149	.193*	.319**	.259**	
	8. Strain-based W-F interference	145	3.06	0.956	.063	.179*	.073	.350**	.219**	.612**

Note: Age (1_“≤ 25”; 2_“26-35”; 3_“36-45”;4_“≥46”), Length of Duty (1_“<5”; 2_“5-10”; 3_“1-15”; 4_“16-20”; 5_“>20”), Number of Children (1_“1”; 2_“2”; 3_“≥3”), Distance to Home (1_“<50Km”; 2_“50-100Km”; 3_“>100 Km”).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

Differences in means (t-Student / ANOVAS). Table 14 shows statistically significant differences in the mean values of the following dimensions:

- *Work Focus*_(M=2.35; SD=0.985) vs *Work-Family Separation*_(M=3.30; SD=0.893) ($t=-20.953$; $p < .000$);
- *Time-based W-F interference*_(M=3.06; SD=0.839) vs *Strain-based W-F interference*_(M=2.93; SD=0.918) ($t=3.703$; $p < .000$).

Table 14 – Mean Differences for WFR

Dimensions		M	SD	Paired t de Student	
				t	p
FSOP	Work Focus vs W-F Separation	2.35	0.985	-20.953	.000**
		3.30	0.893		
WFC	Time-based W-F interference vs Strain-based W-F interference	3.06	0.839	3.703	.000**
		2.93	0.918		

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

The intra-group analysis revealed that the significant differences in Table 14 are associated with the statistically significant differences in *Work Focus* between Parents_(M=2.29; SD=0.949) and Non-Parents_(M=2.48; SD=1.062) ($t=-1.948$; $p < .05$) and *Strain-based W-F interference* between Parents_(M=2.87; SD=0.898) and Non-Parents_(M=3.06; SD=0.957) ($t=-2.112$; $p < .05$).

Table 15 shows statistically significant differences in the mean values of the following dimensions:

- *Work-Family Separation* ($U=21979.0$; $p < .05$) ($M_{M=3.36; SD=0.863}$; $W_{M=3.14; SD=0.958}$);
- *Time-based W-F interference* ($U=20236.0$; $p < .001$) ($M_{M=3.14; SD=0.853}$; $W_{M=2.84; SD=0.758}$).

Table 15 – Mean Differences for WFR by gender

	Dimensions		n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney		
						Z	U	p
FSOP	Work Focus	Men	383	2.35	0.944	-1.084	23499.0	.278
		Women	131	2.33	1.099			
	W-F Separation	Men	383	3.36	0.863	-2.131	21979.0	.033*
		Women	131	3.14	0.958			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	Men	383	3.14	0.853	-3.334	20236.0	.001**
		Women	131	2.84	0.758			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Men	383	2.88	0.924	1.814	27726.0	.070
		Women	131	3.05	0.891			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

An intragroup analysis revealed that the significant differences in Table 15 are associated with statistically significant differences between:

- The Parents and non-Parents groups (Tables 16 and 17): *Time-based W-F interference* for Parents ($U=9683.5$; $p < .01$) (Father $M=3.10$, $SD=0.845$; Mother $M=2.80$, $SD=0.675$) and for non-Parents ($U=1800.5$; $p < .05$) ($M_{M=3.26}$, $SD=0.869$; $W_{M=2.91}$, $SD=0.899$);
- Only in the Parents group (Table 16): *Work-Family Separation* ($U=9957.5$; $p < .05$) (Father $M=3.33$, $SD=0.863$; Mother $M=3.04$, $SD=0.929$) and *Strain-based W-F interference* ($U=13831.0$; $p < .05$) (Father $M=2.82$, $SD=0.893$; Mother $M=3.05$, $SD=0.898$).

Table 16 – Mean Differences for WFR by gender – Parents sample

	Dimensions		n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney		
						Z	U	p
FSOP	Work Focus	Fathers	284	2.30	0.909	-0.998	11211.0	.318
		Mothers	85	2.28	1.076			
	W-F Separation	Fathers	284	3.33	0.863	-2.465	9957.5	.014*
		Mothers	85	3.04	0.929			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	Fathers	284	3.10	0.845	-2.790	9683.5	.005**
		Mothers	85	2.80	0.673			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Fathers	284	2.82	0.893	2.059	13831.0	.039*
		Mothers	85	3.05	0.898			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 17 – Mean Differences for WFR by gender – Non-Parents sample

	Dimensions		n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney		
						Z	U	p
FSOP	Work Focus	Men	99	2.51	1.026	-0.881	2070.0	.378
		Women	46	2.43	1.147			
	W-F Separation	Men	99	3.43	0.867	-0.483	2164.0	.629
		Women	46	3.33	0.993			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	Men	99	3.26	0.869	-2.044	1800.5	.041*
		Women	46	2.91	0.899			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Men	99	3.07	0.991	-0.056	2264.0	.956
		Women	46	3.04	0.888			

* $p < .05$.

Table 18 shows significant mean differences in:

- *Work Focus* between Flying Personnel FP_(M=2.56; SD=1.083) and non-Flying Personnel NonFP_(M=2.30; SD=0.957) (U=16948.5; $p < .05$);
- *Time-based W-F interference* between Flying Personnel FP_(M=3.60; SD=0.797) and non-Flying Personnel NonFP_(M=2.94; SD=0.801) (U=10917.0; $p < .000$).

Table 18 – Mean Differences for WFR by Flying Personnel (FP)

	Dimensions		n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney		
						Z	U	p
FSOP	Work Focus	Yes	95	2.56	1.083	-2.117	16948.5	.034*
		No	419	2.30	0.957			
	W-F Separation	Yes	95	3.31	0.986	-0.387	19193.5	.699
		No	419	3.29	0.872			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	Yes	95	3.60	0.797	-6.815	10917.0	.000**
		No	419	2.94	0.801			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Yes	95	3.02	1.020	-1.011	18390.5	.312
		No	413	2.90	0.894			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

An intragroup analysis revealed that the significant differences in Table 19 are associated with statistically significant differences between:

- The Parents and non-Parents groups (Tables 19 and 20): *Time-based W-F interference* for Parents (U=4853.0; $p < .0001$) (FP_{M=3.58; SD=0.741}; NonFP_{M=2.93; SD=0.790}) and for non-Parents (U=1154.5; $p < .0001$) (FP_{M=3.62; SD=0.886}; NonFP_{M=2.98; SD=0.835});
- Only in the non-Parents group (Table 20): *Work Focus* (U=1518.0; $p < .05$) (FP_{M=2.80; SD=1.145}; NonFP_{M=2.37; SD=1.015}).

Table 19 – Mean Differences for WFR by Flying Personnel (FP) – Parents Sample

	Dimensions		n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney		
						Z	U	p
FSOP	Work Focus	Yes	58	2.41	1.021	-0.728	8327.0	.466
		No	311	2.27	0.937			
	W-F Separation	Yes	58	3.19	0.939	9194.0	0.451	.652
		No	311	3.28	0.877			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	Yes	58	3.58	0.741	-5.479	4853.0	.000***
		No	311	2.93	0.790			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Yes	58	3.00	1.000	-1.075	8077.0	.282
		No	311	2.85	0.879			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$; *** $p < .0001$.

Table 20 – Mean Differences for WFR by Flying Personnel (FP) – Non-Parents Sample

	Dimensions		n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney		
						Z	U	p
FSOP	Work Focus	Yes	37	2.80	1.145	-2.182	1518.0	.029*
		No	108	2.37	1.015			
	W-F Separation	Yes	37	3.49	1.044	-0.973	1785.0	.331
		No	108	3.37	0.858			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	Yes	37	3.62	0.886	-3.862	1154.55	.000**
		No	108	2.98	0.835			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Yes	37	3.05	1.066	0.43	2007.5	.965
		No	108	3.07	0.921			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$; *** $p < .0001$.

Table 21 and the corresponding Post Hoc tests revealed statistically significant differences in the following subscales:

- *Time-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2=8.524$, $p < .05$) between the age segments “ ≥ 46 years old” ($M=2.84$; $SD=0.856$) and “26-35 years old” ($M=3.18$; $SD=0.879$) (*Post Hoc*, $p < .05$);
- *Strain-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2=15.005$, $p < .001$) between the age segments “ ≥ 46 years old” ($M=2.55$; $SD=0.872$) and “26-35 years old” ($M=2.94$; $SD=0.945$) (*Post Hoc*, $p < .05$) and between the age segments “ ≥ 46 years old” and “36-45 years old” ($M=3.02$; $SD=0.873$) (*Post Hoc*, $p < .001$).

Table 21 – Mean Differences for WFR by Age

	Dimensions		n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis		
								d.f.	χ^2	p
FSOP	Work Focus	< 25	17	2.09	1.1437	1.00	5.00	3	6.074	.108
		26 - 35	167	2.46	1.016	1.00	5.00			
	W-F Separation	36 - 45	249	2.34	1.019	1.00	5.00	3	0.849	.838
		≥ 46	81	2.20	0.735	1.00	4.17			
	Time-based W-F interference	< 25	17	3.37	0.970	1.00	4.67	3	15.005	.002*
		26 - 35	167	3.33	0.860	1.00	5.00			
Strain-based W-F interference	36 - 45	249	3.28	0.896	1.00	5.00	3	8.524	.036*	
	≥ 46	81	3.30	0.947	1.33	5.00				
WFC	Work Focus	< 25	17	3.16	0.972	1.00	5.00	3	8.524	.036*
		26 - 35	167	3.18	0.879	1.33	5.00			
	W-F Separation	36 - 45	249	3.05	0.783	1.00	5.00	3	15.005	.002*
		≥ 46	81	2.84	0.856	1.00	5.00			
	Time-based W-F interference	< 25	17	3.22	1.098	1.00	5.00	3	15.005	.002*
		26 - 35	167	2.94	0.945	1.00	5.00			
Strain-based W-F interference	36 - 45	249	3.02	0.873	1.00	5.00	3	15.005	.002*	
	≥ 46	81	2.55	0.872	1.00	4.00				

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

An intragroup analysis (Table 22) revealed that the significant differences in Table 21 are associated with statistically significant differences between:

- The Parents and non-Parents groups: *Strain-based W-F interference* for Parents ($\chi^2(3)=42.760$, $p < .05$) between the age segments “ ≥ 46 years old” ($M=2.56$; $SD=0.870$) and “36-45 years old” ($M=2.96$; $SD=0.862$) (*Post Hoc*, $p < .05$) and for non-Parents ($\chi^2(3)=8.154$, $p < .05$) between the age segments “36-45 years old” ($M=3.41$; $SD=0.845$) and “26-35 years old” ($M=2.95$; $SD=0.951$) (*Post Hoc*, $p < .05$);

– Only in the Parents group: *Time-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2(3)=52.208, p<.05$) between the age segments “≥ 46 years old”_(M=2.84; DP=0.861) and “26-35 years old”_(M=3.27; DP=0.867) (*Post Hoc, p<.05*);

Table 22 – Mean Differences for WFC by Age - Parents Vs. Non-Parents

Dimensions	n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis				
						d.f.	χ^2	p		
Parents	Time-based W-F interference	26 - 35	74	3.27	0.867	1.67	5.00	3	52.208	.017*
		36 - 45	215	3.02	0.767	1.00	5.00			
		≥ 46	78	2.84	0.861	1.00	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	26 - 35	74	2.93	0.944	1.00	5.00	3	42.760	.017*
		36 - 45	215	2.96	0.862	1.00	5.00			
		≥ 46	78	2.56	0.870	1.00	4.00			
Non-Parents	Time-based W-F interference	< 25	15	3.11	1.013	1.00	5.00	3	0.895	.827
		26 - 35	93	3.13	0.887	1.33	5.00			
		36 - 45	34	3.24	0.866	1.00	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	< 25	15	3.16	1.045	1.00	5.00	3	8.154	.043*
		26 - 35	93	2.95	0.951	1.33	5.00			
		36 - 45	34	3.41	0.845	1.00	5.00			

Note: In the sub-sample “Parents”, the age group <25 yrs old was not considered (n=2). In the sub-sample “Non-Parents”, the age group ≥46 yrs old was not considered (n=3) (KentState University, 2019b)

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.001$.

Table 23 and the corresponding Post Hoc tests revealed that the following subscales show statistically significant differences in:

– *Time-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2(2)=28.231, p<.000$) between Support_(M=2.88; SD=0.775) and Maintenance_(M=3.14; SD=0.865) (*Post Hoc, p<.05*) and Support and Operations_(M=3.37; SD=0.828) (*Post Hoc, p<.000*);

– *Strain-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2(2)=9.112, p<.05$) between Support_(M=2.83; SD=0.908) and Maintenance_(M=3.11; SD=0.890) (*Post Hoc, p<.05*).

Table 23 – Mean Differences for WFR by Area of Performance

Dimensions	n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis				
						d.f.	χ^2	p		
FSOP	Work Focus	Support	249	2.32	1.001	1.00	5.00	2	4.680	.096
		Maintenance	144	2.26	0.877	1.00	5.00			
		Operations	120	2.53	1.035	1.00	4.83			
	W-F Separation	Support	249	3.33	0.919	1.00	5.00	2	2.278	.320
		Maintenance	144	3.22	0.864	1.67	5.00			
		Operations	120	3.35	0.858	1.00	5.00			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	Support	249	2.88	0.775	1.00	5.00	2	28.231	.000**
		Maintenance	144	3.14	0.865	1.00	5.00			
		Operations	120	3.37	0.828	1.33	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Support	249	2.83	0.908	1.00	5.00	2	9.112	.011*
		Maintenance	144	3.11	0.890	1.00	5.00			
		Operations	120	2.91	0.931	1.00	5.00			

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.001$.

An intragroup analysis (Table 24) revealed that the significant differences in Table 23 are associated with statistically significant differences between:

- The Parents and non-Parents groups: *Time-based W-F interference* for Parents ($\chi^2(2)=28.231, p<.0001$) between Support_(M=2.87; SD=0.766) and Operations_(M=3.29; SD=0.812) (*Post Hoc, p<.000*) and for non-Parents ($\chi^2(2)=14.856, p<.001$) between Support_(M=2.90; SD=0.800) and Operations_(M=3.54; SD=0.842) (*Post Hoc, p<.001*);
- Only for the Parents group: *Strain-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2(2)=9.112, p<.05$) between Support_(M=2.76; SD=0.894) and Maintenance_(M=3.06; SD=0.863) (*Post Hoc, p<.05*).

Table 24 – Mean Differences for WFC by Area of Performance – Parents Vs. Non-Parents

Dimensions		n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis			
							d.f.	χ^2	p	
Parents	Time-based W-F interference	Support	174	2.87	0.766	1.00	5.00	2	28.231	.000**
		Maintenance	113	3.09	0.854	1.00	5.00			
		Operations	80	3.29	0.812	1.33	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Support	174	2.76	0.894	1.00	5.00	2	9.112	.011*
		Maintenance	113	3.06	0.863	1.00	5.00			
		Operations	80	2.88	0.923	1.00	5.00			
Non-Parents	Time-based W-F interference	Support	174	2.90	0.800	1.00	5.00	2	14.856	.001**
		Maintenance	113	3.29	0.908	1.67	5.00			
		Operations	80	3.54	0.842	2.00	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	Support	174	3.00	0.922	1.00	5.00	2	3.084	.214
		Maintenance	113	3.33	0.977	1.33	5.00			
		Operations	80	2.98	0.952	1.00	5.00			

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.001$.

Table 25 and the corresponding Post Hoc tests revealed statistically significant differences with regards to *Time-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2(2)=44.854, p<.0001$) between a Distance to Home “<50Km”_(M=2.91; SD=0.809) and “50-100Km”_(M=3.35; SD=0.792) (*Post Hoc, p<.000*) and between “<50Km” and “>100Km”_(M=3.55; SD=0.861) (*Post Hoc, p<.000*).

Table 25 - Mean Differences for WFR by Distance to Home

Dimensions			n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis		
								d.f.	χ^2	p
FSOP	Work Focus	< 50 km	369	2.34	0.985	1.00	5.00	2	0.785	.675
		50 - 100 km	76	2.41	1.028	1.00	4.83			
		> 100 km	68	2.26	0.932	1.00	4.83			
	W-F Separation	< 50 km	369	3.30	0.898	1.00	5.00	2	2.314	.314
		50 - 100 km	76	3.41	0.890	1.00	5.00			
		> 100 km	68	3.18	0.869	1.33	5.00			
WFC	Time-based W-F interference	< 50 km	369	2.91	0.809	1.00	5.00	2	44.854	.000**
		50 - 100 km	76	3.35	0.792	1.67	5.00			
		> 100 km	68	3.55	0.861	1.67	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	< 50 km	369	2.88	0.935	1.00	5.00	2	5.210	.074
		50 - 100 km	76	3.14	0.810	1.33	5.00			
		> 100 km	68	2.91	0.917	1.00	5.00			

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.001$.

The intragroup analysis (Table 26) revealed that the significant differences in Table 25 are uniquely associated with statistically significant differences in the Parents group with regards to *Time-based W-F interference* ($\chi^2(2)=38.815, p<.0001$), as well as between a Distance to Home “<50Km”_(M=2.89; SD=0.770) and “50-100Km”_(M=3.32; SD=0.728) (*Post Hoc, p<.05*), and between “<50Km” and “>100Km”_(M=3.73; SD=0.857) (*Post Hoc, p<.000*).

Table 26 - Mean Differences for WFC by Distance to Home - Parents Vs. Non-Parents

Dimensions		n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis			
							d.f.	χ^2	p	
Parents	Time-based W-F interference	< 50 km	284	2.89	0.770	1.00	5.00	2	38.815	.000***
		50 - 100 km	48	3.32	0.728	1.67	5.00			
		> 100 km	36	3.73	0.857	1.67	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	< 50 km	284	2.85	0.909	1.00	5.00	2	2.509	.285
		50 - 100 km	48	3.05	0.802	1.33	5.00			
		> 100 km	36	2.76	0.931	1.00	5.00			
Non-Parents	Time-based W-F interference	< 50 km	85	2.98	0.929	1.00	5.00	2	8.155	.057
		50 - 100 km	28	3.39	0.743	1.67	5.00			
		> 100 km	32	3.35	0.834	1.67	5.00			
	Strain-based W-F interference	< 50 km	85	2.97	1.020	1.00	5.00	2	2.756	.252
		50 - 100 km	28	3.31	0.811	2.00	5.00			
		> 100 km	32	3.2	3.08	1.67	5.00			

*p<.05; **p<.001; ***p<.0001.

The analyses of the sociodemographic variables Length of duty and Number of children in the FSOP and WFC subscales did not reveal statistically significant results.

4.2.3. Brief overview and answer to SQ2

In light of the above analysis, the answer to SQ2 – *What are the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship?* –, is that the surveyed sample generally feels that the organization encourages service members to separate their family issues from their work issues (and does not provide sufficient family-supportive practices), and that they perceive time as the major source of WFC.

The results show that service members who are not parents tend to report strain-based work-family conflict more often. The fact that military life is highly demanding in terms of personal and temporal availability can result in work issues contaminating the family dimension. Moreover, while children require a lot of attention, they also act as a buffer from work-related stress due to the strong sense of personal fulfilment and the quality of social interaction they bring to their parents’ lives.

Furthermore, the sense that the organization encourages work-family separation tends to be more common in men than in women, and time-based interference as a source of work-family conflict is most reported by men who are FP and who live more than 50 km away from their unit. With regards to gender, family responsibilities are still generally attributed to women, which could lead them to perceive the time factor (as a source of WFC) differently from men. Unlike service members between 26-35 years of age, older service members (≥46

years old) tend to feel that time is not a major source of WFC. Similarly, service members working in Support areas tend to feel that time does not influence WFC as much as those in Maintenance and Operations.

When compared to NonFP, service members who are FP tend to perceive / feel more strongly that the organization encourages them to focus on work issues and spend a great deal of time at work. This could be explained by the fact that the operation and maintenance areas are highly demanding in terms of temporal availability, which naturally has a negative impact on family life.

As expected, older service members (≥ 45 years old) are less likely to report stress as a work-family influence than younger service members (26-45 years old). These results could be explained by differences in maturity, which usually comes with age, and which can be reflected in (more adaptive) strategies to deal with work-related stress. And / or to the fact that senior military personnel usually enjoy greater job stability and do not need to prove themselves at work as much, and thus perceive work-related stress as having a reduced influence in their family life. Similarly, service members working in Support areas feel less influence of stress on the work-family relationship when compared to those in Maintenance. This could be explained by the fact that the daily activities of the Support area are largely predictable.

After the above analysis of the total sample, the intragroup analysis revealed differences mainly in regards to WFC. Although differences were observed in the Gender variable in the total sample (analysed above), those differences were not an influencing factor with regards to parenting, since both fathers and non-fathers perceive time as a source of WFC more than mothers and non-mothers. With regards to the type of duties performed, FP (both Parents and non-Parents) tend to perceive time as a source of WFC more strongly than NonFP. However, non-parents who are FP (and this difference only occurs in this group) are more likely to feel that the organization requires them to focus more intensely on work and spend more time at work when compared to non-parents who are NonFP. This could be explained by the fact that FP must be highly dedicated and focused, especially when they live in their units or when they do not have children who demand their attention and time. These aspects often make people change the way they prioritise these valuable resources. In regards to age, parenting also seems to be an influencing factor. As had already been observed in the global sample, parents ≥ 46 years do not report stress as a source of work-family conflict as often as parents in the 36-45 age segment. On the other hand, in the non-Parents group, service members who are younger (26-35 years old) are less likely to report strain-based WFC when compared to service members between 36-45 years old who do not have children. Thus, parent age seems to exert some influence on the strain-based WFC interference dimension, that is, service members who are parents tend to feel that children act as a buffer from work-related stress as a source of WFC. On the other hand, parents from 26-35 years old report a greater influence of time on WFC when compared to parents ≥ 46 years old. These results are discussed in the analysis of the global sample.

With regards to the Area of Performance variable, the Parents and non-Parents groups obtained different results in the strain-based WFC interference dimension, with Maintenance obtaining higher values than Support in the Parents group. It can be gleaned from this that, when they are parents, service members with Maintenance roles feel work-related stress

as a greater source of WFC than those with Support roles. As for the Distance from Home variable, parenting is an influencing factor because the intra-group results are similar to those obtained in the global sample, but only in the Parents group.

Briefly, parenting seems to influence: the way FP and Non-FP perceive the organization's demands for dedication and work focus; the way different age segments perceive WFC (parents tend to perceive time as the main source of WFC, while non-parents tend to perceive stress as the main source of WFC); and the way service members assigned to different areas of performance perceive WFC (when they are parents, service members with Maintenance roles perceive stress as the main source of WFC more strongly than those with Support roles).

4.3. Parenting, work-family relationship and answer to the RQ

The above analysis provided the answer to the RQ – *Is there a link between parenting and the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship?* While no correlations were found between parenting styles and perceptions about the work-family relationship, parenting tends to influence perceptions about the WFR. That is, the simple fact of being a parent influences the way service members perceive work-family conflict and / or their perceptions of the organization as being family-supportive.

The results revealed significant differences in the way service members who are Parents view the influence of stress as a source of WFC when compared to non-Parents. Therefore, parenting appears to have a positive effect on WFC perception when stress is the reported source of conflict by minimising negative perceptions of work-related stress as a negative influence in the family sphere.

The intergroup analysis (Parents vs. Non-Parents) showed that the parenting condition (whether one is a father / mother) has a greater influence on how service members perceive WFC than on FSOP, where it only influences the *Work Focus* dimension for FP. Furthermore, FP who do not have children tend to feel that the organization is very demanding in terms of prioritising work over family. This could be explained by the fact that several FP (non-Parents) live in their unit, and thus are less available to deal with personal / family issues. With regards to WFC perceptions, parenting appears to have an influence in how service members in different age groups perceive stress and time as sources of WFC, however, confirming this would require a rather complex analysis. To complement what has been discussed above, it is worth noting that non-Parents from 26-35 years of age strongly feel that stress is the main contributing factor for WFC, while Parents in the same age segment feel that time is the main source of WFC. That is, although service members who are Parents do not feel as much interference from work-related stress in the family component (because children act as buffer from stress), the time they devote to work seems to have a negative impact on their family responsibilities. Finally, Parents and non-Parents in different areas of performance feel stress affects the family component in different ways. In the Parents group, service members assigned to Maintenance roles feel stress more acutely than those in Support roles. This could indicate that service members assigned to Maintenance areas must endure greater emotional distress than those in Support areas, and that this interferes with the family dynamics of service members who have children.

5. Conclusions

There are many life-altering events in an adult's life, some positive, others negative. Some lead to meaningful changes, others do not. Others, perhaps only a few, are transformative events, such as the day when a woman or a man becomes a parent and enters the world of motherhood or fatherhood.

In other words, the world of parenting, which is often described as the most complex and challenging role in an adult's life inasmuch as it entails irreversible changes across multiple dimensions.

The relationship between the family dimension and the work dimension has been addressed in several studies, which confirmed that to optimise performance and increase the well-being of employees and of the organization, a balance between these two dimensions must be achieved.

These issues are particularly relevant in the military context because military life is highly demanding in terms of the time service members must devote to their duties and the unpredictability of those duties, both of which can be a source of family stress.

Naturally, the PoAF is not immune to this reality because it exists within society, but also because it knows that an Organization's human resources are its most valuable asset and because it is increasingly confronted with a decline in those human resources.

The present study analysed parenting among PoAF military personnel. The study was delimited in terms of content to parenting and the work-family relationship (among PoAF personnel).

Thus, the study was guided by the research question (RQ), *Is there a link between parenting and the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship?*

The methodological procedure combined deductive reasoning, a quantitative research strategy, and a case study research design, and the study was carried out in three phases (exploratory, analytical, and conclusive).

The present document is organized in five chapters: the introduction, the theoretical and conceptual framework (which includes the literature review, the key concepts and the analysis model), the methodology and methods, the data analysis and discussion of the findings, and the conclusions.

To achieve SO1 (which was analysed in the section that answers the RQ) – *To assess the parenting styles of PoAF personnel* – a self-reported questionnaire was delivered to 369 service members who are fathers / mothers. The data was subject to quantitative analysis, which revealed that the parents in this sample tend to prefer a *Democratic* parenting style, which is defined by open communication with their children and an affectionate, responsive and involved attitude that encourages autonomy. The second most used parenting style is the *Inconsequent* style, which is less consistent in terms of discipline as it involves both permissive and authoritarian attitudes and strategies. Finally, the *Coercive* style was the least reported by respondents. Parents with this style resort to physical punishment to force / prevent behaviours. The fact that the service members in the study sample tend to have a *Democratic* parenting style could be linked to the fact that it is seen as the most appropriate and adaptive parenting style, and the one that leads to better social, emotional

and educational outcomes for the child. As modern parents have been exposed to strategies that include open communication and affectionate relationships that encourage children's autonomy, it is to be expected that they will try to use this parenting style with their own children. Nevertheless, some respondents' answers may have been influenced by a social desirability effect. However, even if that social desirability effect is present to some degree, the answers to the questionnaires show that parents are aware that a balanced parenting style promotes family well-being and sound child development. It was observed that mothers are more aware of this than fathers. This is consistent with the fact in Portugal, social expectations of motherhood mean that women are still usually the ones responsible for household management and childrearing. The results also suggest that the arrival of a second child could increase stress and overload the family, as parents of two children obtained slightly higher mean values in *Coercive* and *Inconsequent* PS when compared to parents with only one child. Furthermore, older parents tended to resort less to the *Coercive* PS, perhaps due to the presence of older children, or to having developed more mature / balanced strategies to cope with the parental role.

In order to achieve SO2 – *To analyse the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship* – and answer the corresponding SQ, a self-reported questionnaire was delivered to 514 PoAF personnel (369 Parents and 145 non-Parents). The data collected were subject to quantitative analysis, which revealed that the service members in the sample tend to feel that the organization encourages work-family separation, and that it is not concerned for their well-being or does not care enough to implement family-supportive practices. As for work-family conflict, the fact that service members tend to report time as the main contributing factor to the emergence of work-family conflict seems to suggest that they resent the fact that the military demands so much of their time.

The results also suggest that service members tend to feel that the organization encourages work-family separation. This perception tends to be stronger in men, and is especially strong in flying personnel. These results are understandable considering that FP duties are mainly performed by men and that those duties (as does the PoAF's mission) often entail operational missions, deployments and distance from the family. These reasons are consistent with the fact that the Support area was the group that least reported time as a source of work-family conflict.

Furthermore, the results revealed that older service members (≥ 46 years old) had lower scores in strain-based work-family interference than younger service members (26-35 years old and 36-45 years old), which can be explained by the fact that the maturity that usually comes with age is reflected in the use of effective coping strategies to deal with work-related stress. Moreover, senior military personnel usually enjoy greater job stability and do not need to prove themselves at work as much, and thus feel less influence of work-related stress in their family life.

The analysis above achieves the GO – *To analyse the link between parenting and the perceptions of PoAF personnel regarding the work-family relationship* – and answers the corresponding RQ. While no correlations were found between parenting styles and work-family relationship perception, parenting tends to influence perceptions about the

WFR. Service members in the non-Parents group tended to report strain-based work-family interference more often than those in the Parents group. It is a well-known fact that military life is highly demanding in terms of time and personal availability, therefore it is not unexpected that work issues can contaminate service members' family lives. Moreover, children can act as a buffer from work-related stress due to the strong sense of personal fulfilment and the quality of social interaction they bring to their parents' lives.

Therefore, parenting appears to have a positive effect on how WFC is perceived when stress is the reported source of conflict by minimising negative perceptions of work-related stress as a negative influence in the family sphere.

Upon further analysis, the findings also revealed that parenting can influence family-supportive organization perceptions, particularly for FP. Parenting (being a parent) also influences WFC perceptions: non-Parents with ages from 26-35 tend to report stress as the main source of WFC, while Parents in the same age segment perceive time as the main contributing factor for WFC, which confirms that, in the latter group, the time devoted to work can negatively affect the family component. Finally, in the Parents group, service members with Maintenance roles seems suffer from a specific type of emotional distress (when compared to those with Support roles), which can interfere in the family component.

In terms of *contributions to knowledge*, this study explored issues pertaining to parenting and to the work-family relationship in a very specific context, that of military aviation. In other words, from a theoretical research standpoint, this study is innovative because it analyses psychological and organizational well-being to enrich the body of knowledge on parenting in military environments, a topic few studies have addressed. Furthermore, few studies have analysed the links between parenting and variables that specifically relate to adults. Therefore, this study aims to address that gap.

This study had two *limitations*, which do not affect the robustness of the data acquired, and which could serve as a starting point for future studies. The first limitation stems from the fact that the sample used is a convenience sample, and thus the results cannot be generalised to the whole universe. This limitation was mitigated by the fact that the sample is sufficiently robust to empirically affirm the relevance and soundness of the data, and to suggest that future studies attempt to replicate these results with more significant samples. The other limitation is that the measuring instrument was a self-reported survey, which can be subject to biases.

Future studies are needed to investigate other aspects related to parenting and the work-family relationship, such as parental stress, the use of hetero-reported measures for parents and self-reported measures for children, and the use of a qualitative measuring instrument (such as interviews), as well as to further explore the organizational dimensions. For example, in light of the extant studies in the field of work-family enrichment, it could be interesting to analyse the link between parenting styles and leadership styles, and to analyse how skills developed in a professional context can enrich the family dimension and vice versa. It would also be useful to assess the age of parents and of children, as well as other variables that may influence the measures studied here, in particular the aspects that relate to current family models (e.g. parents who do not live with their children).

Finally, this study's *practical recommendation* is that the organization's human resource management policies could benefit from viewing the family dimension as a way to leverage mission performance and achievement because a sound work-family balance improves people's psychological well-being. Therefore, the organization should implement protective measures and organizational family-supportive practices that foster psychological well-being, such as raising awareness about the fact that the organization and / or the peer group still instills feelings of guilt on mothers / fathers who need to take a high-risk pregnancy leave or family care leave.

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