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Nomological Network of Turnover in the Portuguese Military Context

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NOMOLOGICAL NETWORK OF TURNOVER IN THE
PORTUGUESE MILITARY CONTEXT

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Human Resources

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Biographical Note

João Carlos Alves Batista was born in 1979. He holds both an Advanced and a Master's degree in Military Sciences – Military Administration, earned from the Portuguese Military Academy. In addition, his educational background is significantly augmented by three postgraduates: Joint Staff Course, Military Science – Security and Defense, and the General Staff Course – Army, Higher Studies of Military Terrestrial Defense, both completed at the Military University Institute; and Health Services Management and Administration obtained from the Porto Business School. He also holds five distinct complementary education courses: the NATO Staff Officer Orientation Course at NATO School Oberammergau; the Senior Management Program for Health Institutions at AESE Business School; the Senior Officer Promotion Course at the Institute of Higher Military Studies; the Captain Promotion Course at the Infantry School and Services School; and the Commandos Course at the Troops Commandos Centre.

Acknowledgments

The pieces of this gigantic puzzle have finally been put together!

I started my doctoral thesis shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, a period that presented numerous challenges, limitations, and uncertainties. From the beginning of 2022 until the end of 2023, I joined a United Nations mission in the Central African Republic, which forced me to suspend the research.

Nonetheless, I made it to the finish line!

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the brilliant individuals who supported and guided me throughout this journey, enabling me to successfully obtain my doctorate despite the many unforeseen obstacles that arose and were fortunately overcome.

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Abstract

Despite the military sector's specific needs, opportunities, and potential, there is a lack of research about its military personnel. This gap is particularly relevant regarding their retention, considering the voluntary turnover and the current management policies. This thesis comprises three intertwined Studies aimed at better understanding the intention-turnover gap in *inclined abstainers*, i.e., those who have expressed a positive intention to leave but have not acted, and the adoption of flexible work arrangements (FWA) by the Portuguese Army to enhance military personnel retention. A case study was used as the research strategy. Findings of the thesis's first goal were derived from 73 semi-structured interviews and four focus groups with experts and (ex-)military personnel, and from 486 ex-military personnel who answered a survey by questionnaire. For the second goal, findings were derived from policies implemented by Armies other than the Portuguese, and 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from seven countries with field experience. Results suggest that the military's turnover behavior is being hampered by inhibiting factors that prevent and/or postpone the actual turnover from happening. In tandem, the results inform practitioners about the courses of action to improve the military retention system. In addition, the Portuguese Army should explore and embrace, rather than belittle, the efficiencies and advantages gained through non-permanent presential work.

Furthermore, results suggest that, for the near future, the Army has a long way to go to have enough military personnel to meet its needs, whether through recruitment or retention. Two development vectors meet these needs. Through the reinforcement of endogenous turnover-inhibiting factors (e.g., job stability), thus contributing to shed some more light on the intention-behavior gap of the theory of planned behavior (TPB), and through an improvement in the military labor options, the Portuguese Army should allow FWA to align the offer with civilian organizations that compete for human resources. Due to the cross-sectional nature of one of the Studies, no causal claims can be made. Besides, by focusing on a specific context, such as the military, future longitudinal research should explore human resources policies that retain more and better.

Keywords: Theory of Planned Behavior, Voluntary Turnover, Intention-Behavior Gap, Inhibiting Factors, Flexible Work Arrangements, Military Personnel, Management.

Resumo

Apesar das necessidades, oportunidades e potencialidades do sector militar, há uma falta de investigação sobre os seus militares. Esta lacuna é particularmente relevante no que diz respeito à retenção, considerando a saída voluntária e as atuais políticas de gestão de recursos humanos. A presente tese é composta por três Estudos interligados que visam compreender melhor a lacuna entre a intenção e a saída da organização, nos *abstêmios inclinados*, ou seja, aqueles que manifestaram uma intenção positiva de sair, mas não agiram, e a adoção de regimes de trabalho flexíveis pelo Exército Português para aumentar a retenção de militares. Um estudo de caso foi utilizado como estratégia de pesquisa. Os resultados do primeiro objetivo da tese foram baseados em 73 entrevistas semiestruturadas e quatro grupos focais com especialistas e (ex-)militares, e em 486 ex-militares que responderam à pesquisa por questionário. Para o segundo objetivo, os resultados foram obtidos em políticas implementadas por Exércitos que não o português e em 16 entrevistas semiestruturadas a participantes de sete países com experiência na área. Os resultados sugerem que o comportamento de saída dos militares é dificultado por fatores inibidores que impedem e/ou adiam a sua realização, bem como informam os profissionais sobre as medidas a tomar para melhorar o sistema de retenção militar. Além disso, o Exército Português deve explorar e abraçar, em vez de menosprezar, as eficiências e vantagens obtidas através do trabalho presencial não permanente.

Para o futuro próximo, o Exército ainda tem um longo caminho a percorrer para ter militares suficientes para satisfazer as suas necessidades, seja através do recrutamento ou da retenção. Dois vetores de desenvolvimento satisfazem estas necessidades. Pelo reforço dos fatores endógenos inibidores de saída (e.g., estabilidade laboral), contribuindo assim para melhor esclarecer a lacuna intenção-comportamento da teoria do comportamento planeado, e pela melhoria nas opções de trabalho militar, o Exército Português deverá permitir regimes de trabalho flexíveis para alinhar a oferta com as organizações civis que competem por recursos humanos. Devido à natureza transversal de um dos Estudos, nenhuma afirmação causal pode ser feita. Por este estudo se focar no contexto militar, de futuro, as políticas de recursos humanos que realmente retenham mais e melhor devem ser exploradas em futuras pesquisas longitudinais.

Palavras-chave: Teoria do Comportamento Planeado, Saída Voluntária, Lacuna entre a Intenção e o Comportamento, Fatores Inibidores, Regimes de Trabalho Flexíveis, Militares, Gestão.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Explanation
ADF	Australian Defense Force
AIC	Akaike's information criterion
ATCB	Attitude Toward the Color Blue
AVF	All-Volunteer Force
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BIC	Bayesian information criterion
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CR	Composite Reliability
DoD	Department of Defense
EU	European Union
FWA	Flexible Work Arrangements
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLEPS	General Law on Employment in Public Sectors
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MRQ	Main Research Question
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NZ	New Zealand
NZDF	NZ Defence Force
PAF	Portuguese Armed Forces
PSP	Permanent Staff Personnel
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
RQ	Research Question
SAF	Suitability, Acceptability, and Feasibility
SAFE	Suitability, Acceptability, Feasibility, and Evaluation

SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
SSCR	Systematic Scanning and Clustering Review
TIS	Turnover Intention Scale
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Index
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
UCP	Under Contract Personnel
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
WFH	Work From Home
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter I – General Introduction

Chapter I – General Introduction¹

1.1. Background

The Armed Forces are an irreplaceable pillar of a nation, being increasingly important not only as guarantors of national sovereignty and a mainstay of democracy but also as facilitators of their government's foreign policy by participating in military operations not involving warfare, combat, or threat, such as deterrence, peacekeeping, disaster response, and humanitarian aid. Military capability is, therefore, multi-dimensional, where human, physical, and conceptual components (material and non-material aspects) prevail (Hoehne, 2016) to achieve specific objectives and carry out various missions and operations. The standard structure of the Armed Forces comprises at least three branches: the Land Forces (Army), the Air Force, and the Sea Force (Navy). Each branch has its identity, ethos, values, standards, and *modus operandi*. Furthermore, its human resources (HR) are divided into military and civilian personnel. Typically, military personnel consist of at least Commissioned Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers / Enlisted personnel.

Human resource management (HRM) practices impact the human, social, and environmental contexts of both employees and organizations (Rothenberg et al., 2015). HRM can be considered a set of activities and responsibilities related to personnel aimed at the optimal deployment of employees to contribute to the organization's performance (Buijs & Olsthoorn, 2023). Some of the most significant differences between HRM in military and non-military organizations are more phases in recruitment process (the military process includes application, selection, psycho-technical tests, psychological and medical evaluations, physical tests, and interviews), recruitment only for entry-level positions (the lowest rank of each military category) and not for any other level, promotions that begin within the system and occur rank by rank (Patrichi, 2015), but also take care of their post-active personnel – military organizations have a special duty of caregiving to former employees or veterans (Buijs & Olsthoorn, 2023). As such, the more complex the job requirements are, the more important the process of recruiting future candidates is (Yu & Cable, 2014). Therefore, one of the primary goals for HRM structures

¹ The title of the thesis, “Nomological Network of Turnover in the Portuguese Military Context” was approved by the FEP Scientific Council. However, as the investigation progressed, the better-suited title would be “Voluntary Turnover and Flexible Work Arrangements in the Portuguese Military Context”. However, changing the original title was not possible due to time constraints.

and Armed Forces leaders is to maintain all necessary personnel, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to meet operational needs and fulfill required capabilities without significant deficits in force categories and military specialties (Sminchise, 2016).

Over the past few decades, European North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states have enjoyed a stable and secure environment marked by the absence of war and confrontation. This situation allowed most countries to give less priority to defense issues. However, conflicts on or near its borders have recently jeopardized European security, prompting a resurgence of security and defense concerns. Russia's war against Ukraine, the Hamas/Hezbollah/Iran-Israel conflict, the instability in the Sahel, as well as the United States of America (US) increasing institutional and diplomatic distance from European Allies (media think-tankers and opinion makers consider that the latter should assume more responsibility for self-defense), have alerted European leaders that their Armed Forces are not ready for war (Besch & Westgaard, 2024), not even to defend their borders. Given these circumstances, NATO's European Allies need to be able to respond quickly and appropriately to new developments, both within and outside their borders, and maintain deterrence (Bruusgaard, 2024), which aims to convince possible aggressors that losses resulting from an attack outweigh the potential benefits. European leaders are responding by increasing their defense budgets, purchasing new weapon systems, and ramping up defense industrial production capacity (Besch & Westgaard, 2024). However, the current battlefield shows that the challenges of the European Armed Forces' workforce cannot be ignored. Reuters reported that NATO would need between 35 and 50 extra brigades (a brigade comprising between 3,000 and 7,000 troops) to fully implement its new plans to defend against any attack on the alliance's territory from Russia (Siebold, 2024).

In 2014, according to the Wales Summit Declaration, NATO Heads of State and Government agreed to commit 2% of their national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defense spending, aiming to ensure the Alliance's continued military readiness. In the same vein, NATO Allies have agreed that at least 20% of defense expenditure should be devoted to investment (acquisition and deployment) in modern capabilities. According to a NATO press release (2025a), it is estimated that by 2025, all Allies will meet the preferred target, compared to 2014, when only the US, Greece, and the United Kingdom (UK) met/exceeded the target. Furthermore, only one Ally (Belgium) will not meet the

20% investment dedicated target, compared to 23 Allies in 2014 (only Luxembourg, the UK, Türkiye, Sweden, Estonia, Norway, the US, and France met/exceeded the target).

At the 2025 NATO Summit in The Hague, Allies agreed to more than double their defense spending target from 2% of GDP to 5% by 2035, the most decisive move from the Alliance in over a decade. They also reaffirmed their ironclad commitment to collective defense as enshrined in Article 5 (NATO, 2025b).

The European Union (EU) has presented a new and unprecedented European Defense Industrial Strategy (European Commission, 2024) in response to the resurgence of conventional high-intensity conflict in Europe, aiming to make the EU safer and more resilient. The Strategy outlines new actions, among others, to invest better, more effectively, together at the European level, and to strengthen the European defense industry, making it more responsive and innovative. The Strategy also states that, by 2030, EU countries should jointly purchase at least 40% of their defense equipment, spend at least half of their defense procurement budget on European products, and trade at least 35% of defense goods between EU countries.

Focusing on military HR, Europe's Armed Forces have struggled to meet their recruitment goals and make military service attractive enough to retain their troops (Besch & Westgaard, 2024) in recent years. A recent UK parliamentary report (House of Commons, 2024) by the Defense Committee, entitled "Ready for War", said that the Armed Forces have capability shortfalls and stockpile shortages, are consistently overstretched, and are losing personnel faster than they can recruit. Furthermore, according to NATO's press release (2025a), from 2014 until 2023, Belgium (-30%), the UK (-18%), Italy (-7%), Spain (-4%), the US (-3%), and Portugal (-2%), were the countries that most reduced Armed Forces manpower. The press release estimates that, in 2025, just three Allies will not increase their workforce (Belgium, Canada, and Italy) compared to 2024 (France, the UK, and the US have no estimates for 2025), a sign of the current concerns.

To worsen the context, the EU's Statistics Office (Eurostat, 2023) estimates that the European countries could see their population shrink by 6 percent (27.3 million people) by 2100, with the most significant decline occurring among those aged 20-64, during which soldiers provide military service (Bello, 2024). Thus, the European Armed Forces are also struggling to find potential applicants as the continent's population is aging and

shrinking. This might imply that the quality of recruits accepted may not meet the rigorous standards that have been imposed for decades.

According to some authors (Battistelli, 1997; Bingley & Lyk-Jensen, 2024; Moskos & Wood, 1988), the motivations for voluntary service in the Armed Forces can be grouped into: institutional motivation – value-laden and related to a commitment to beliefs and causes beyond the individual’s self-interest (how organizational values, norms, and practices create and sustain a personal sense of obligation, loyalty, and sense of duty); occupational motivation – grounded in the market, related to supply and demand along with employee rights and benefits, and containing a strong component of self-interest (viewing military occupation similarly to a civilian job); and self-benefit – associated with a desire for adventure or something different from the traditional and regular. Currently, these motivations are in crisis, as evidenced by the low recruitment and retention rates among NATO Allies. The efforts of European countries to strengthen their Armed Forces in the face of the increased threat from Russia have found young Europeans unwilling to join the Armed Forces (Carbonaro, 2024). Recruitment and retention challenges are complex and multifaceted (Spoehr, 2022), stemming from a combination of political, economic, and social factors.

To address the changing security environment, Norway, Sweden, and the Netherlands introduced conscription for women in 2015, 2018, and 2020, respectively (Persson & Sundevall, 2019). Moreover, some countries, such as Sweden (2018), Lithuania (2015), and Latvia (2023), have reintroduced conscription in recent years, and Croatia is also reintroducing it (2025). The list grows considerably longer if States debating the (re)activation of draft models are included (Strand, 2024). Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Norway, and Türkiye have conscription models with varying aspects (Austria, Cyprus, and Switzerland also have, but they are not NATO members). However, intention does not always result in the desired behavior (Holtom et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 2001), and increased recruitment does not necessarily imply increased retention; that is, even with growing inflows, if the outflows are greater, the final number of employees will be smaller.

1.2. Context

Does the military have specific, narrowly described tasks, or should the military do everything (Brooks, 2016)? Military organizations represent a culture relatively isolated from society (Soeters et al., 2006). Military life begins with the application process,

followed by admission tests. Once this phase is successfully overcome, incorporation takes place, which involves onboarding training in specific schools or academies to develop a military identity, emphasizing the personal sacrifices made in the name of public service. Many of these sacrifices do not apply to civilians and include subordination to the national interest/common good, obeying orders, uncertainty, deference to the hierarchical structure, permanent availability in the temporal dimension [any time / no fixed duration], and the geographical dimension [any location], as well as fighting in defense of the Motherland, if necessary, with one's own life (Batista & Oliveira, 2023). Most military personnel are recruited in their youth and trained by the organization to acquire military and occupational skills. They are “grown from within” (Goldenberg et al., 2019, p. 29).

In recent years, the Portuguese Armed Forces have faced bold organizational challenges. In 1992, they initiated a voluntary constitutional opening for the entry of female military personnel. In September 2004, the conscription of male soldiers was abolished in peacetime, with recruitment now being exclusively voluntary under the slogan of professionalization. However, this last decision resulted in changes: structural – reduction in the Portuguese Armed Forces, in recruitment – reduction in the target population, in retention – competing with job alternatives, institutional – cultural change, social – withdrawal from society, and financial – budget reduction (Bachman et al., 2000; Boene, 2009). The mission of the Portuguese Armed Forces is defined in the Portuguese Republic Constitution (Portuguese Constitutional Law n.º 1/2005) as:

“[...] the military defense of the Republic [...] to satisfy the international commitments of the Portuguese State in the military sphere and participate in humanitarian and peace missions [...] collaborate in civil protection missions, in tasks related to satisfying basic needs and improving the quality of life of populations [...]”.

Military members during their careers face legal restrictions on when and where they work, the amount of salary they receive, what they may say and do (both in and out of uniform), and the terms and conditions under which they can leave military service. Military personnel typically work in barracks or bases, wear uniforms, and usually are armed on duty, which makes them, in a highly visible way, distinct from most other employees. Military organizations are often described as “greedy institutions” because

they require a significant amount from their personnel. During active duty, personnel are on a permanent, 24-hour call with somewhat idiosyncratic working shifts; their leave is subject to cancellation, and they can be ordered to far-off places on short notice (Druckman et al., 1997; Soeters et al., 2006).

However, military organizations have two faces (Soeters et al., 2010). One deals with “cold” peacetime and routine conditions, resembling “conventional” organizations, yet ready for any operational need. The other operates in “hot” conditions during crises, such as fires or floods, peace operations, or outright war.

According to Lang (1965), there are three characteristics of military organizations: (i) communal life – military life and personal life tend to overlap, as military personnel live during large parts of their working lives in military housing facilities, which are separated from ordinary life; (ii) hierarchy – military organizations are bureaucracies “par excellence” because they are pyramids with a clear “coercive” power coming from the top that is accepted by all and made visible on the uniforms; and (iii) discipline – compliance with the rules, the acceptance of authority and orders, and overt punishment in cases of disobedience.

A combat-ready military is built on attracting, motivating, and retaining sufficiently qualified personnel with the appropriate skills (Grigorov, 2020) and those with critical military experience. However, this condition still needs to be fully realized. After years of neglect, rebuilding Europe’s defense, technological, and industrial base requires many ingredients and highlights the need to attract and retain military human capital (Fiott, 2024). Skilled applicants can be difficult and expensive to recruit, train, and retain – particularly for military organizations (Ahn et al., 2023). Recruitment is closely tied to retention, and vice versa. Organizations need to recruit because they cannot retain all their personnel, and they must retain them to avoid constantly recruiting new personnel. On the other hand, it is not enough to recruit if the organizations cannot retain; long-term retention requires recruitment to replace those who leave involuntarily.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, retention was the military’s Achilles’ heel. Retention increased during the pandemic but subsequently declined, primarily due to the hiring boom and subsequent wage increases. In addition to a drop in retention, there is a decline in recruitment, primarily due to factors both within and outside the Armed Forces.

Taylor and Collins (2000, p. 306) define recruitment as “*the set of activities undertaken by the organization for the primary purpose of identifying a desirable group*

of applicants, attracting them into its employee ranks, and retaining them at least for the short term". The NATO military policy states that recruiting can best be described as:

"The steps taken to attract sufficient men and women of the right quality to meet the Army's personnel requirements. Selection is the process that is carried out to ensure that those who are accepted into the Army have the potential to be good soldiers and are capable of being trained to carry out their chosen trade"

(NATO, 2007, p. 2G-3).

Military recruitment is based on two systems, conscription and voluntarism, which can coexist. In contrast to the all-volunteer force (AVF), conscription is the involuntary removal of individuals from civilian society, compelling young men and sometimes women to serve in the active-duty Armed Forces for a specified duration (Tarabar & Hall, 2016). In other words, it is the mandatory enlistment of people in their national Armed Forces for a specific period. Conscription is usually unpopular among those "*invited*" to serve and their families. Still, it also has profound economic implications, such as removing human capital from the civilian labor market (Ross, 1994). Since the end of the Cold War, and significantly since the Global War on Terrorism in 2001, Western countries have reduced the size of their defense forces, abolishing conscription in favor of an AVF (Bingley & Lyk-Jensen, 2024). The AVF system's military force is composed solely of volunteers, without resorting to a military draft. Therefore, recruiting the right quality and quantity remains a continual challenge due to the decreasing eligible and willing population, as well as competition with the civilian labor market, colleges, and other organizations (Hogue & Miller, 2020).

Professional Armed Forces are rigid and systematic in selecting, training, and developing their personnel, which is a costly and time-consuming process. Therefore, the Armed Forces have a strong interest in recruiting individuals who are most likely to succeed and least likely to drop out or fail to meet their goals (Leuprecht, 2020).

With low unemployment rates (Eurostat, 2024) and a highly competitive labor market across Europe, it is a significant challenge to convince young people to enlist in the Armed Forces for less money than they can earn in the private sector – there are naturally many more alternatives for them (Vergun, 2023) – and for military personnel considering leaving the Armed Forces, which also affects retention rates. This pragmatism is well supported by scientific evidence, which suggests a strong correlation

between unemployment and higher recruitment and retention rates (Asch, 2019; Bäckström, 2019; Knapp et al., 2018). Given this reality, the Armed Forces, in times of crisis, absorb citizens that the civilian market cannot accommodate, and they struggle to recruit the most capable or talented individuals (Bäckström, 2022; Woodruff et al., 2024) in prosperous periods.

Recruiting people is essential for a military organization, but retaining them until the end of their contract is equally necessary. There are two crucial concepts to analyze regarding the relationship between the organization and its employees: retention/permanence and turnover. These concepts help organizations understand the workforce's satisfaction, evaluate the strength of their organizational culture, optimize their teams, and create a healthy work environment.

Retention refers to an organization's ability to retain its employees (Cascio, 2014). It focuses on "*how long*" an employee stays within the organization and "*how*" to increase this duration (Singh, 2019). In military organizations, retention (or lack thereof) can occur during the initial training or throughout a career. In the first case, if retention does not happen, it is costly and has no return on investment. In the second instance, there are generally two main reasons for failure to retain: the attractiveness of alternatives outside the organization and the dissatisfaction with the circumstances within it (NATO, 2007). Retaining military personnel is crucial to the military's overall organizational well-being. Military personnel retention is essential for maintaining morale and Unit readiness while reducing costs associated with recruiting, training, and replacing the workforce (Sminchise, 2016).

Permanence is considered a multifaceted condition (Hurtado et al., 2024) that involves a soldier's desire and action to remain in the military organization from the first day until the maximum time legally possible, thereby avoiding interruption of their military career.

There are differences between the concepts of retention and permanence. The first is directly related to military organizational capacities/variables that guarantee the permanence of military personnel, giving the impression that it is something imposed by the organization, forcing soldiers to stay. The second is oriented towards the variables associated with military personnel, as chosen by the military. Throughout the thesis, as the analysis will be done from the organization's point of view, we will adopt the concept of retention.

Turnover is defined as a conscious and intentional decision by an employee to leave (Tett & Meyer, 1993) or terminate the employment relationship with the organization (Dress & Shaw, 2001), with this decision having a direct and indirect influence on the organization's sustainability and performance. So, it is a dynamic concept related to the movement of employees across the borders of a social system (Price, 1977). To some extent, this concept is experienced in all organizations (Meyer & Allen, 1997), and the military is no exception. Concomitantly, military turnover occurs when a soldier ceases his employment relationship with the military organization (Hosek & Totten, 2002). Turnover refers to the number of employees who leave an organization over a specific period, whether voluntarily (by the employee's own choice) or involuntarily (due to reasons beyond the employee's control). It focuses on "*how many*" employees are leaving the organization and "*why*" they are leaving (Holtom et al., 2005). Turnover can pose a significant cost disadvantage to an organization (Mobley, 1982). The direct costs of turnover include the separation of the previous employee, as well as the hiring and training of new employees. Conversely, turnover's indirect costs encompass group productivity degradation, intellectual capital loss, diminished organizational memory, decreased morale among remaining employees, reduced social capital, and loss of tacit knowledge (Spain et al., 2023).

Currently, turnover is a primary focus of HRM. It has been used as an indicator of organizational performance since March and Simon's proposal (1958) due to the relevant data it provides for decision support (Surji, 2013) in defining strategies. To explain the turnover phenomenon, a set of theories comprises an interrelated system of laws, concepts, and hypotheses defined by a nomological network (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Although there are many studies on turnover in organizational sciences, doubts persist regarding its nomological network, specifically regarding antecedents, indicators, moderators, mediators, probability, timing of implementation, and consequences (Sümer & van de Ven, 2007). Therefore, understanding the nomological network of military turnover is crucial for the Armed Forces, as it is currently considered its central issue (Kraak et al., 2022). The lack of military personnel, primarily due to voluntary turnover, renders the Armed Forces unsustainable, compromising their functional, technical, and operational capabilities to fulfill their missions (Ribeiro, 2019).

For Morrell and colleagues (2001), turnover investigations and theories have two origins: economic and psychological. The first focuses on the market, job demand/supply,

job opportunities, perception of alternatives, and rewards. It allows the construction of theories and models based on quantifiable variables, but does not foresee non-economic factors in the explanation. The second focuses on the individual and affection, identification with the organization, job satisfaction, organizational climate, organizational commitment, and the community surrounding them. Although it has limitations in the quantitative part, developing policies and strategies to improve the understanding of the turnover nomological network is recommended.

However, for Torrington and colleagues (2009), turnover is associated with internal and external factors in the organization. The internal ones are linked to the position or function (such as salary, opportunities, leadership, routine, employee involvement, and personality conflicts) and can be addressed if identified early. External ones cannot be altered directly by the organization (legislation, competition, development opportunities).

At the same time, the theorization of turnover has been presented in the literature through two approaches (Campion, 1991): the most frequent approach treats it as an individual motivational behavior or choice, or one influenced by external factors. The other approach, which is less frequently discussed in the literature, focuses on the consequences of turnover for the organization or other employees, which can be evaluated by the favorable or unfavorable effects that result. The most relevant theories/models of the behavioral approach or motivational choice are:

Organizational balance (March & Simon, 1958) introduces a motivational analysis by identifying the main antecedents of turnover, namely those that result from the employee's perception of the desirability of alternatives (it only stays in the organization if the incentives to remain correspond to/exceed their expectations/contributions) and the ease of movement to an alternative. As studies progressed, "convenience" was replaced by job satisfaction (Jackofsky & Peters, 1983), and "ease of movement" was replaced by the number of perceived alternative work opportunities (Lee & Mitchell, 1994).

In 1977, a construct was presented that links job (dis)satisfaction to turnover (Mobley). According to this, dissatisfaction leads to thoughts of abandonment, which leads to assessing the expected utility and cost of the job search. With this assessment, the intention to seek a new job may occur. If the intention appears, the search for alternative employment can begin. Once the alternatives have been identified, the individual performs a final assessment, comparing the prospective and current jobs. If the

alternative is more favorable, the intention to leave the organization may arise, resulting in turnover.

Subsequently, the model integrated by Mobley and colleagues (1979) was presented, with demographic and personal factors (age, sex, marital status, education level, length of service, and family responsibilities), job satisfaction, organizational factors, work environment (salary, promotions, leadership, relationships with peers and working hours), role responsibilities, external factors (economic conditions and expectations of finding alternative employment), level of responsibility, turnover intention in predicting and understanding turnover, organizational commitment, and involvement.

It was then noted that when unmet expectations lead to job dissatisfaction and a lack of organizational commitment, influencing turnover intentions (Steers & Mowday, 1981), which is closely related to turnover, and the associated costs of unexpected or planned employee loss. Other authors corroborate this by stating that the individual intends to leave the organization before the turnover occurs (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

The labor activity model (Mobley, 1982) argues that turnover is related to the level of economic activity (unemployment rate).

The organizational demography model (Pfeffer, 1983) focuses on the cohesion and homogeneity of social units. It assumes that demographic heterogeneity increases discomfort among employees, as it limits communication, social integration, and the development of cohesion. It assumes that a high degree of heterogeneity in the organization increases turnover.

Hulin and colleagues (1985) presented a new position in which different employees (temporary and permanent) may have different experiences in terms of satisfaction levels and alternative employment opportunities.

The Attraction-Selection-Attrition psychological model (Schneider, 1987) posits that the attraction-selection-attrition processes lead to organizations becoming more homogeneous.

Griffeth and colleagues' meta-analysis (2000) suggests that turnover intention is the best predictor of effective turnover. Based on demographic predictors, job satisfaction, organizational factors (related to the role), and work involvement (external to the organization).

The theory of (Job) Embeddedness (Mitchell et al., 2001) is a method for discovering and identifying the reason(s) for people to remain in the organization and, on the other hand, predicting the turnover intention, with two perspectives (Lee et al., 2014): internal (relating to the organization) and external (relating to the community that the employee is part of). These perspectives integrate three dimensions: bond – degree of connection (social/psychological/financial links); suitability/adjustment – degree of similarity/compatibility between the employee and the position/organization/community; and sacrifice – material/psychological costs of the loss that the employee incurs if they leave the organization.

Eight Motivational Forces and Voluntary Turnover (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004). As a result of the literature review relating to attitude and turnover, the following eight distinct motivational forces that cause voluntary turnover are suggested: (i) affective (feelings of psychological comfort/discomfort of the employee-organization, which lead to maintenance/leave); (ii) calculating (rational calculation of the probability of achieving personal objectives while maintaining oneself); (iii) contractual (employee-organization psychological contract); (iv) behavioral (balance of explicit/psychological costs with leave/maintenance); (v) alternative (other options to the current job, leading to consideration of leaving/maintenance); (vi) normative (attempt to act according to expectations); (vii) moral/ethics (coherence between behavior/values); and (viii) constituent (relationships with colleagues/hierarchical structure).

In general, the models agree on variables intrinsic to the employee (such as satisfaction and commitment) but differ in extrinsic ones. Notwithstanding, this study aims to assess the relevance of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), particularly the gap between intention and turnover behavior within the military context. By exploring TPB, this research provides information and insights into the behavior of military personnel and offers guidelines for examining the factors that inhibit the voluntary turnover process.

Favorable or unfavorable effects can be assessed to determine the consequences of turnover for the organization. Most of the time, it is considered unfavorable/worrying. The turnover of employees, regardless of the modality, causes a substantial explicit capital cost, considering downtime, production incapacity, the recruitment process, and the integration time of the new employee (Porter, 2011). It is an implicit cost, such as demotivation, reduced morale, the performance of other elements (Gawali, 2009), and the organization's reputation. Nevertheless, turnover can be considered normal, positive,

favorable, or fundamental for the growth of an organization (Dalton & Todor, 1979). If a low-performing employee leaves, the impact is favorable because it offers new opportunities, such as promoting others, recruiting employees with more skills, increasing diversity, restructuring the organization, adjusting the budget/strategic plan, and transmitting signs of good management, trust, and sustainability to other employees (Surji, 2013).

In the Armed Forces, as in other organizations, some turnover is inevitable and desirable, as it allows the most talented employees to remain while the less talented ones leave, and enables new employees to enter. Recruiting and retaining the correct number of robust personnel is vital for the continuing success of the Armed Forces, but the target is not being met (more personnel are leaving than entering, and the number of departing before the end of their agreed term is creeping upwards), which seriously threatens the readiness and operational capability of the Armed Forces.

Every generation is shaped by distinct events, factors, and trends, resulting in varied worldviews, values, opinions, behaviors, and attitudes toward military life (Dascalu et al., 2024). Generation Z (people born between 1997 and 2012) includes the military personnel who, in recent years, have joined or may join the Armed Forces shortly, and are different from previous generations (Millennials, X, or Baby Boomers) because they grew up surrounded by technology and social media, shaping the way they use information, communicate and interact with each other (Dimock, 2019), in addition to being more fragile, unfocused, socially aware, creative and tolerant (Chalakova, 2023).

Besides all this, Generation Z has low trust in institutions and increasingly deviates from traditional life and career paths (Vergun, 2023). Young people have fewer family members who have served in the Armed Forces, lack familiarity with military missions, and are no longer exposed to military service; many do not even know someone working in the Armed Forces (Obis, 2023). They are overwhelmingly against wars, opposed to increased spending on the military, more individualistic, and less patriotic than those serving in the military. Additionally, the ideological distance between society at large and military forces has widened in recent years (Carbonaro, 2024).

According to Nelms (2024), Work Institute's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the emerging workforce exhibits new preferences and expectations. They are more demanding, focused on work-life balance, prefer alternative work arrangements, seek specific types of work, value organizational culture, are more concerned about their health

and families, evaluate the behaviors and capabilities of their managers/superiors and teams, or the people they work with the most, and behave in very individual ways.

In conjunction with other factors, some authors suggest that this has led to differences in what motivates professional choices, as well as in expectations about what education or employment should provide (Dascalu et al., 2024). Given generational differences, knowing how to communicate and value what motivates them is necessary. Age differences in a team, such as a platoon, company, or battalion, can lead to complex relationships (Chalakova, 2023). As employees' processes, commitment, and outcomes have become complex, diffuse, or diverse, organizations must adopt a functional and operational simplicity that encourages innovation, viability, well-being, and mental health benefits (Onyekwelu et al., 2022).

A labor shortage means that all labor is generally more expensive. On the other hand, demographic trends, including population aging, population decline, migration, and urbanization, have important implications for military service and sustainable development (Meidutė-Kavaliauskienė et al., 2020). Therefore, a smaller population reduces the eligible target audience (Vergun, 2023). Furthermore, skilled labor and specialized knowledge (particularly those with civilian counterparts) become significantly harder to retain in economies with stagnant population growth. Retention failures may allow organizations to revitalize the workforce; however, they can bring significant unexpected interruptions to performance and incur costs associated with attracting, selecting, recruiting, and training new productive soldiers. Another factor that could worsen the situation is that, by 2025, the "*Millennial generation*" will occupy 75% of the global workforce. This generation is most likely to change jobs, with estimates suggesting that 91% expect to spend no longer than three years with one employer (Velocity Global, 2021). Retaining employees has long been arduous (Tenakwah, 2021); however, the Work Institute's (2020) retention report indicates that 78% of global turnover could have been avoided. A myriad of factors influence most turnover decisions, and each turnover decision may be driven by a unique set of internal and external drivers (Hughes et al., 2020).

Previous research has examined variables that are related to employee turnover intention. The evidence underscores that turnover intention strongly predicts actual turnover (Batista & Oliveira, 2023). Military retention is a significant concern because higher-ranking service members are selected only from among those with lower ranks,

with no possibility of lateral entry for senior military leaders. The military cannot recruit senior leaders from other industries or the Armed Forces (Asch, 2019). Therefore, whenever the military fails to retain enough troops to fill leadership positions, more soldiers must be recruited and trained to meet the nation's needs (Hogue & Miller, 2020).

Military turnover is inevitable, but the majority of reasons why personnel quit their jobs can be mitigated through education and training opportunities, clear career paths, flexible work options, competitive pay and benefits, and by reducing the number of military personnel assigned to positions that are not strictly military in nature.

Organizations must understand the antecedents, reasons, and consequences of employee leave to make effective decisions that reduce voluntary turnover. However, organizations must also identify the internal factors that attract employees to join or stay (at least identical to competitors) and the external factors that influence the intention to enter or remain.

1.3. Statement of Problem

Organizations and institutions are formed and exist to carry out a specific mission (Čurčija & Ćutić, 2023). Despite the needs, opportunities, and potential of the military sector, there is a lack of research into its HR challenges, particularly regarding the retention of military personnel, considering their voluntary turnover. Employee turnover, as previously mentioned, refers to the situation in which employees leave an organization. The turnover can be involuntary (e.g., retirement) or voluntary (e.g., resignation), and the latter can be functional (leaving of low-performing employees) or dysfunctional (leaving of high-performing employees). In our study, we will focus on voluntary and dysfunctional turnover.

Only modest research explores this topic, as it is a sensitive, embarrassing, and compromising subject for the Armed Forces and their respective countries. This study aims to fill some of these gaps by rigorously and directly addressing the topic from innovative and bold perspectives, with the potential to inform successful managerial interventions. The recent conflicts in and around Europe underscore the importance of this issue, not only because of its relevance but also because they demonstrate that technological evolution is fundamental; however, the human factor remains the key and most crucial element on the battlefield. Changing jobs is a common aspect of professional career development. It is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that involves altering routines and patterns. However, the path to successful change is often fraught with

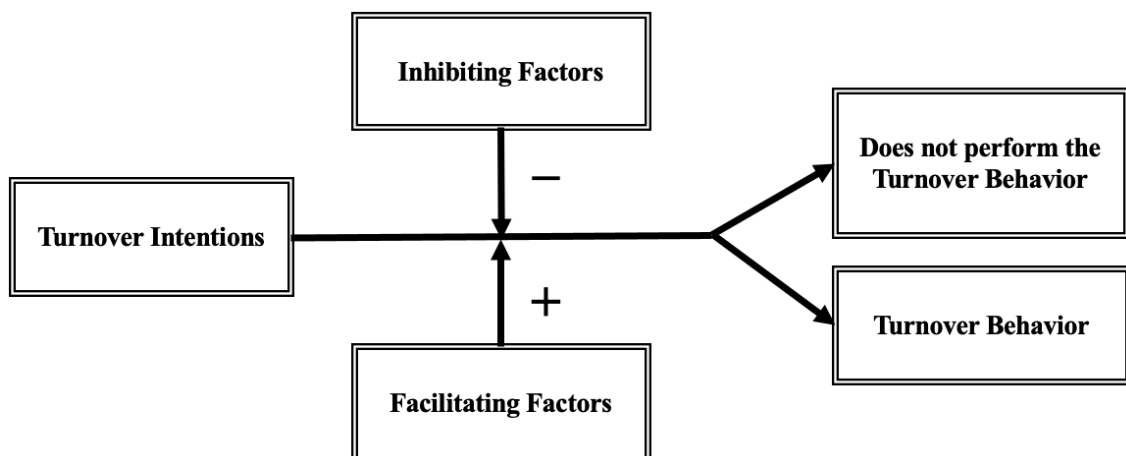
obstacles and challenges that interact and can impede progress, ranging from individual characteristics to environmental conditions. By understanding these factors, employees can equip themselves with the knowledge and tools to overcome these obstacles/barriers and achieve change. However, employers can reinforce them so that employees' intentions do not turn into change.

The literature pays much attention to the antecedents, reasons, and consequences of employee turnover in the labor market as a whole (Climek et al., 2024; Gundlach et al., 2024; Gyensare et al., 2015; Han, 2022; Heavey et al., 2013; Senayah & Biney-Aidoo, 2024), including in the military context (Chang et al., 2024; Murnieks et al., 2011; Sümer & Mete, 2020); nevertheless, it neglects the factors that inhibit or facilitate such behavior.

The factors that prevent, stop, or decrease the likelihood of a turnover intention becoming an actual voluntary turnover behavior should be identified and examined, filling this gap in the literature (i.e., what prevents an intention from becoming a reality). Inhibiting factors can widen the gap between expectations and reality (Amam et al., 2020). The ability to inhibit planned behavior is crucial for preventing it from occurring. For example, when a soldier intends to leave the Armed Forces, the military organization needs to reinforce endogenous factors (materialized in inhibitory factors) so that the soldier values them and somehow reduces the intention to leave.

In contrast, the facilitating factors of voluntary turnover behavior increase the likelihood that the turnover intention will become actual/real behavior. Therefore, the Armed Forces must seek to mitigate the factors that facilitate the exit, as they reinforce the intention to leave if no action is taken. The original conjugation is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Inhibiting/Facilitating Factors



In recent years, researchers have consistently paid attention to the concepts of non-presential work in a non-military context to balance professional obligations with personal commitments, improve organizational performance (Garg & Rani, 2014), increase personnel effectiveness and interpersonal relationships, reduce work pressures, and minimize the work-family conflict (Russell et al., 2009). This has led to a growing emphasis on flexible work. The basis for this interest is that FWA allows organizations to adapt their workforce to changes in the work environment, especially as new drivers of change (digitalization, climate change, and demographic shift) become more salient (Eurofound, 2024). Amirul and Shaari in their systematic scanning and clustering review (SSCR) of FWA, suggested that the FWA strategy is still under research, so they recommended that future research should place a greater emphasis on the FWA strategy since it is crucial “to making decisions, conducting the right operations, and developing a strategic action plan is vital for FWA” (2021, p. 35).

The Atkinson’s (1984) “flexible organizations” model suggested that organizations seek three kinds of flexibility: (i) Functional flexibility – it is desired that employees can be redistributed quickly and smoothly between functions, activities, and tasks, so allows employees to move between jobs in the short and medium term; (ii) Numerical flexibility – it allows that headcount can be quickly and easily increased or decreased in line with short term changes; (iii) Financial flexibility – it aims to ensure that pay and other employment costs reflect the state of supply and demand in the external labor market, particularly between skilled and unskilled employees, and, on the other hand, pay flexibility, through a shift to new pay and remuneration systems that facilitate either numerical or functional flexibility, such as assessment-based pay systems in place of rate-for-the-job systems. As a result of COVID-19, Atkinson’s (1984) “flexible organizations” model presents a gap, as it does not respond to recent aspirations for work flexibility, which is a mutually beneficial arrangement between employee-employer in which both agree and focus on when (dynamic time) and/or where (dynamic location) the work is done (Kelly & Moen, 2007). Therefore, it allows workforce allocation according to time and location needs. Nevertheless, “have/give flexibility” does not mean “be flexible” (Jonsson, 2006). The first is more related to employers, and the second is to the employees. FWA results in greater job satisfaction, which paves the way for reducing turnover intentions (Mogaladi & Bester, 2020).

Therefore, the step to balance or reduce the gap between the conditions given by the civilian market and the Armed Forces is essential so that the latter can convince young people to choose military life. Many changes can be adopted without jeopardizing the fulfillment of the mission or the readiness and operability of the Armed Forces, including adjustments to salary conditions, work and support infrastructures, or the introduction of new work regimes. The latter has been little studied in the national context.

The study of military personnel retention is relevant not only because of the military organization's mission but also because the military context is characterized by idiosyncrasies that must be kept in mind, as research on the job satisfaction of military personnel has traditionally shown lower levels than that of civilian personnel (Gargallo-Castel & Marzo-Navarro, 2024). Among other reasons, the demands placed on military personnel include risking their lives for their country, irregular working hours due to permanent availability, unpredictable work tasks, frequent relocations, and long absences from home (which generate tension between work and family commitments), as well as the possibility of encountering contexts of war and conflict (Alvinus et al., 2017).

Current challenges to military recruiting stem from a combination of factors, including a declining propensity to serve, reliance on low-propensity recruits, complex motivational dynamics, economic and educational influences, sociopolitical attitudes, and shifting demographics (Woodruff et al., 2024). Furthermore, the lack or inability to value endogenous factors, such as organizational relationships, can influence military personnel's intention to leave. This influence can be achieved through inhibiting factors, which generally reduce the soldiers' willingness to leave.

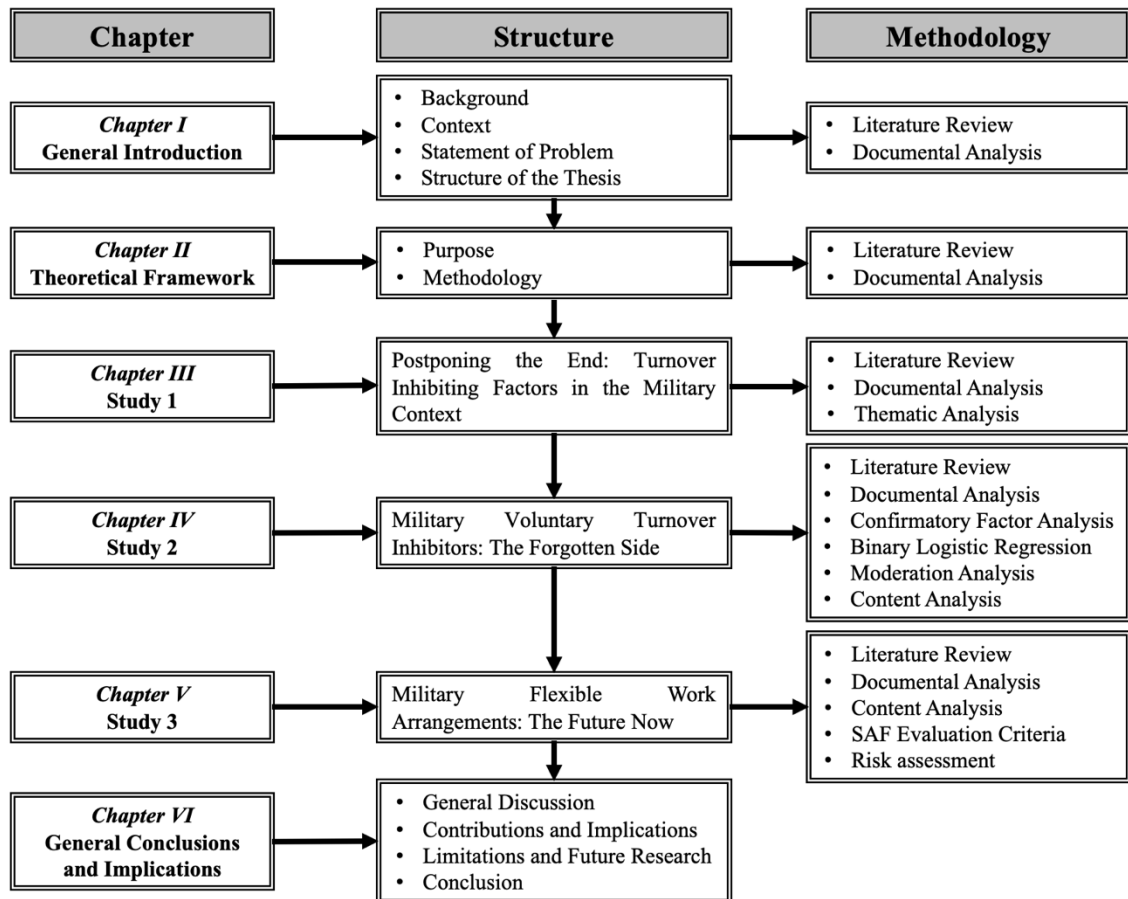
Thus, we will fill two gaps in the literature: we identify and clarify the dynamics of the inhibiting factors in the relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior. Furthermore, we contribute to the understanding of the FWA and the possibility of the Portuguese Army adopting it, either fully or partially, for all or some military personnel. Finally, we propose a roadmap for their implementation (HR strategy/policy).

Therefore, the thesis expands theoretical boundaries, informs practical applications, and introduces substantial value for advancing the theory and practice of organizational management.

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

Figure 2 illustrates the structure of the thesis, comprised of six chapters: General Introduction, Theoretical Framework, Studies 1, 2, and 3, and General Conclusions and Implications.

Figure 2 – Thesis' Structure



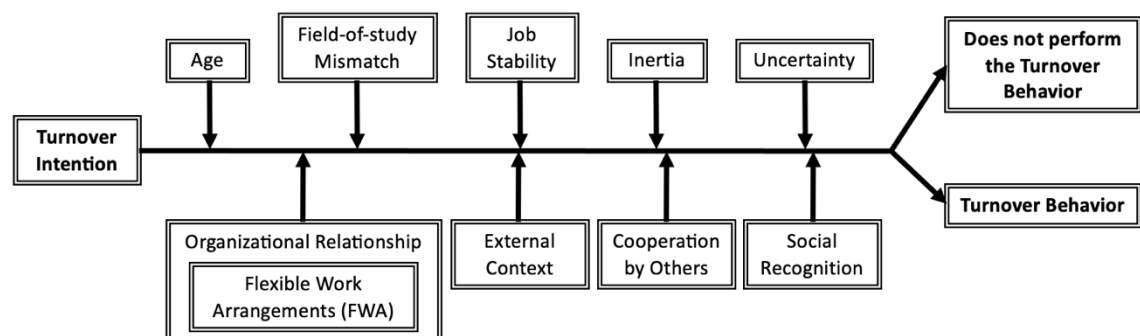
Chapter II – Theoretical Framework

Chapter II – Theoretical Framework

2.1. Background

Considering the turnover nomological network in the Portuguese military context, we define “Military Voluntary Turnover” as the research topic of this thesis and adopt two perspectives that derive from two gaps in the literature. The first is the scant knowledge about policies that influence military personnel retention. As such, we seek to identify factors that inhibit soldiers from leaving, even if they desire to do so. The second gap is the limited knowledge about labor flexibility in the Armed Forces, so we aim to clarify the effectiveness of labor flexibility policies in the military context. Based on the TPB, Figure 3 illustrates the thesis’s conceptual model, which comprises the factors inhibiting the leave of military personnel and the reinforcement of organizational relationships through the FWA, as suggested by military personnel and Uru and colleagues (2022). Furthermore, according to Moen et al. (2014), when employees have more control over their work schedules and flexibility, turnover behavior is reported to be lower.

Figure 3 – Thesis’ Conceptual Model



This thesis aims to enhance the understanding of HRM policies in the military context and the field of military voluntary turnover research. To fill the first gap, we explore voluntary turnover through a holistic lens provided mainly by the TPB (Ajzen, 1991). We also turn to the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977), intermediate linkages model (Mobley, 1977) and his expanded model (1982), social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; more recently developed as social cognitive theory), transtheoretical model (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997), also known as the stages of change model, temporal self-regulation theory (Hall & Fong, 2007), multi-process action control (Rhodes, 2017), and the theory of behavioral control (Lim & Weissmann, 2021). However, the TPB was explored in-depth because it best suited the study’s objective, and

it is characterized by simplicity, parsimony, and robustness (Kautonen et al., 2015). To fill the second gap, we relied on the TPB and employed a theoretical framework – or more accurately – a strategic decision-making framework termed Suitability, Acceptability, and Feasibility evaluation criteria, summarized by the acronym SAF (Johnson et al., 2005) – it is a structured three-pronged model for evaluating and selecting strategic options within an organization; and Risk assessment – is generally considered a systematic process or methodological framework to identifying, analyzing, and evaluating the risk (of adopting FWA by the Portuguese Army).

The relationship between the SAF evaluation criteria, Risk assessment, and the TPB is that the former concepts represent practical planning tools whose outcomes can influence the cognitive constructs of the latter, which in turn, predict an individual's intention to act. SAF evaluation criteria and Risk assessment are inputs to the psychological process described by the TPB. The objective and rational analysis yielded by the SAF evaluation criteria and Risk assessment essentially provide the information that determines how favorable the Attitude is (the set of beliefs about the likely consequences of the behavior), how strong the Subjective Norm is (the evaluation of normative beliefs, i.e., the importance that the individual attributes to the perceptions, approval, or disapproval of those who are important to him/her about the behavior to be performed), and how high is the level of Perceived Behavioral Control (the individual's belief about the probability of easiness/difficulty behavior performance) for the people whose behavior is required for the strategic success (Li et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2025) of the military organization. Strategic success, in this context, lies in the military organization's ability to achieve its main long-term objectives (e.g., operational readiness or mission effectiveness) by effectively managing its human capital, particularly by ensuring the required military personnel remain in service (retention).

These references helped fill the gaps previously highlighted and provided a better understanding of soldiers' behaviors and the factors influencing their decision to leave.

Previous studies only present the reasons, beliefs, or antecedents of turnover intention to leave the Armed Forces. Likewise, to the best of our knowledge, no study has considered the factors that inhibit military turnover. In Study 1 (Postponing the End: Turnover Inhibiting Factors in the Military Context) and Study 2 (Military Voluntary Turnover Inhibitors: The Forgotten Side), we will ground our theoretical rationale on the TPB, focusing on identifying the drivers that inhibit voluntary turnover behavior in

inclined abstainers [those who have/had positive intentions to leave, but do not perform the behavior, so they stay (until the maximum limit)] and suggest which inhibiting factors prevent or hinder military personnel from leaving. Depending on the temporal context analyzed, some may have a greater or lesser influence.

One way to retain more military personnel is to meet their ambitions and expectations, without jeopardizing the organization's mission and essence. In this regard, themes such as well-being, soldiers' control over time, work-life balance, prioritizing personal commitments alongside work responsibilities, job satisfaction, reducing stress levels, and work flexibility necessarily arise. Therefore, one way to achieve this is for the Armed Forces to make the in-person commitment of soldiers more flexible without compromising the organization's operational capacity.

Military personnel repeatedly expressed the need for a better balance between military and personal life, more time for family and personal life, and therefore a more flexible schedule, in line with other authors (Oskarsson et al., 2020; Pace et al., 2025). In the context of a decreasing military personnel – that is expected to be reversed – and given the limited literature on this area, it is essential to explore this possibility and contribute to an increase in recruitment and a more sustainable retention of military personnel in the Armed Forces. Prior research supports the benefits of FWA through the lens of the social exchange theory (Kotey & Sharma, 2019). The theory posits that FWA signals an organization's willingness to invest in employees' well-being, which could motivate employees to reciprocate and provide benefits to the organization (Tsen et al., 2022), such as reduced risk of employee turnover (Kröll & Nüesch, 2017) and lower absenteeism (Peretz et al., 2018). The latter researchers emphasize the impact of cultural values and organizational variables on the adoption of FWA (this emphasis makes the study of FWA in the military context even more pertinent). However, some studies using the border theory [suggest that FWA create adverse employee outcomes, which arise from the transition of roles between work and family spheres in response to their everyday environment (Tsen et al., 2022)], demonstrate that not all FWA were effective in reducing the risk of employee turnover (Clark et al., 2017), namely due to work-family conflicts (Allen et al., 2013). FWA should cater to the needs of military personnel and meet the demands placed upon them. Using the ecological systems theory, Hill and colleagues (2008) systemically addressed the inputs and outputs of workplace flexibility. They

concluded that four main systemic variables can impact FWA: demographics, home/family, workplace, and community.

Public organizations pursue innovations to resolve unprecedented managerial challenges (currently, the new generation ambition is to balance work and life issues). Failure to do so might lead to several negative consequences, such as low employee commitment, low job satisfaction, and high turnover of employees (Kwon et al., 2021). To improve the new generation ambitions, FWA have been increasingly adopted to allow employees to have flexible work hours and/or locations. However, work is not a local or temporal thing; it is something the employees do.

FWA are related to the TPB by acting as a powerful set of environmental, contextual, and inhibiting factors that directly influence an individual's intention to leave the organization (Leiva et al., 2025). Study 3 (Military Flexible Work Arrangements: The Future Now) thus emerges to fill this gap in the literature by analyzing, identifying, examining, and evaluating FWA, in general, and the policies implemented in six NATO Armies to identify advantages and challenges in adopting FWA and suggest possible solutions. It will identify factors that contribute negatively to the voluntary turnover of military personnel. It will also highlight the conditions to adopt FWA, proposing a framework/roadmap that should be followed for its implementation and to achieve the desired success. The findings can be extrapolated to other contexts, including a framework that serves as an accurate roadmap for policy implementation.

The previously discussed research gaps remain unaddressed in the literature, presenting a significant research opportunity. This study will contribute to and extend the existing literature by shedding light on these gaps and providing new insights.

2.2. Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Design

The analysis and interpretation of the studies were conducted from theoretical and HRM perspectives and were developed sequentially. Three studies were carried out using a multimethod approach. Qualitative research was employed in Studies 1 and 3, while Study 2 employed mixed-methods research, with quantitative analysis being combined with qualitative inputs.

The purpose of the thesis is to find alternatives to mitigate the lack of success that the Armed Forces are experiencing in recruitment and retention through innovative policies that motivate active service soldiers. The identified research gaps led to the main research question (MRQ): *“In terms of voluntary turnover, how should the Armed Forces*

leverage their soldiers and reduce the need for recruitment? The MRQ then led to a set of research sub-questions that were answered by three interconnected and sequenced studies, as shown in Table I.

Table I – *Thesis Aims and Study's Research Questions*

Research Objective	Research Question (RQ)	Study	Chapter in the Thesis
To explore the intention-behavior gap to identify and improve the understanding of the factors that contribute more to inhibiting intentions in the voluntary turnover process.	RQ1: How does the theory of planned behavior contribute to a better understanding of the inhibiting factors of military personnel's voluntary turnover process? RQ2: What are the factors that most contribute to inhibiting military personnel in the voluntary turnover process?	1	III
To examine which inhibiting factors moderate the military personnel's behavior of leaving.	RQ: Do the inhibiting factors negatively moderate the positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior?	2	IV
To analyze FWA and suggest how they can be adopted in the Portuguese Army.	RQ1: What are the advantages and challenges for the Portuguese Army in adopting FWA for its military personnel? RQ2: What FWA can be adopted by the Portuguese Army for its military personnel? RQ3: What are the required conditions for the Portuguese Army to adopt FWA?	3	V

Building on these RQ, the three studies focused on a set of constructs to develop the hypotheses presented in Table II.

Table II – *Studies' constructs/hypotheses*

Study	Chapter in the Thesis	Constructs / Hypotheses
1	III	Inhibiting factors of military personnel in the voluntary turnover process.
2	IV	Hypothesis 1: Positive turnover intention influences turnover behavior. Hypothesis 2: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the field-of-study mismatch among Permanent Staff Personnel (PSP).

Study	Chapter in the Thesis	Constructs / Hypotheses
		Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by age among PSP. Hypothesis 4a: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the cooperation of friends/family with other Under Contract Personnel (UCP). Hypothesis 4b: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the cooperation of coworkers with other UCP. Hypothesis 5: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by job stability. Hypothesis 6a: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by organizational identification. Hypothesis 6b: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by job identification. Hypothesis 6c: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by employee loyalty. Hypothesis 7: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by inertia. Hypothesis 8: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by uncertainty. Hypothesis 9: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by social recognition. Hypothesis 10: The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the external context.
3	V	FWA in the Army.

The three studies are based on TPB, particularly the gap between intention and turnover behavior within the military voluntary turnover context. The TPB intends to explain, predict, and understand the causes of the behavior that are not under the individual's complete volitional control or the involuntary behaviors, which are influenced by other beliefs in predicting behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Sheeran et al., 2003). The TPB establishes that the behavior effectiveness is determined by the intention (how much an individual is willing to try and how much energy he/she is willing to invest to realize the behavior) to perform it, originates in the attitudes (behavior-result link that is expected to produce) towards the act, the subjective norms (importance that the individual attributes to the perceptions, approval, or disapproval of those who are important to

him/her in the behavior to be performed) related to the performance, and the perceived behavior control [individual's belief about the probability of easy/difficult behavior performance (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen & Madden, 1986)]. So, TPB postulates that an individual has a greater intention to perform a given behavior when he/she has a positive attitude towards it, believes it is socially accepted, and feels that he/she can control his/her behavioral performance. However, the individual does not always have real control, given the existence of factors that inhibit behaviors – this is the gap we will focus on and fill.

Study 1 uses a case study as a research strategy. The following methods were applied: a literature review [is a systematic way of collecting and synthesizing previous research (Tranfiel et al., 2003), in other words, it is comprehensive summary of prior research], documental analysis [is understood as a systematic review or evaluation of printed or electronic documents (Bowen, 2009)], 73 semi-structured interviews [allows the participant to be interviewed individually, with both predetermined/emergent questions. Interviews may be conducted in person, by phone, or virtually, and have the benefit of visually identifying the interviewee's nonverbal response(s) and subsequently clarifying the intended question or topic in greater detail and depth to elicit more information and request further clarification (Singleton & Straits, 2009). Interviews can be costly, time-intensive, and therefore relatively impractical for large samples. In interviews, respondents feel more pressure to provide correct answers and, as a result, do not use their retrieval and judgment abilities (Gooch, 2015)] with academic experts, HR managers responsible for the retention/turnover in the Branches, military personnel, and ex-military personnel, and 24 participants in four focus groups [allows several participants to be interviewed at once], both based on the convenience sampling model [process of collecting data from a research population that is available and effortlessly reachable to the researcher (Rahi, 2017)]. All participants were selected voluntarily based on their knowledge and familiarity with the theory, organization, or behavior that added value to the research. The data were categorized through thematic analysis [qualitative data analysis focusing on identifying, organizing, interpreting, and reporting themes/categories (King & Brooks, 2018)] and examined to better understand the factors that most contribute to inhibiting the intentions of military personnel in the voluntary turnover process. Initially, transcripts were read repeatedly to familiarize the researcher with the data. After this, transcripts were summarized, critical discussion points were

compared, and initial categories were generated. These were then grouped to search for coherent sub-categories, reviewed, and applied to the transcripts to find the categories (King & Brooks, 2018). The results obtained were exposed to military HRM to verify their applicability to the context.

Study 2 is an observational, quantitative, cross-sectional study that also features a qualitative approach. Some authors advocate using mixed methods to reduce the potential for measurement and non-response error and better tailor the study methods to the intended sample (Dillman et al., 2014; Singleton & Straits, 2009). Hypotheses to verify the moderators' influences in the turnover intention and behavior relationship were tested using Model 1 of the macro-PROCESS, version 4.2 (Hayes, 2013). A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between turnover intention and behavior. All hypotheses were tested with SPSS, version 29 for Macintosh. The data were collected through a survey administered in Portuguese via a questionnaire built on the Google Forms platform, using the *translate–translate back–compare* method (Behling & Law, 2000), and considering the target audience's cultural, situational, and language characteristics. Six military psychologists/sociologists reviewed the survey for clarity, readability, and terminology. A pilot test (Creswell, 2005) was conducted with 40 Portuguese military personnel. The feedback from the pilot test was incorporated into the final version of the survey. Participants were invited via e-mail, which contained an explanation of the study's objective and a survey link. The questionnaire (anonymous and confidential) has a brief description of the survey and informed consent (only with approval would it proceed). A convenience sampling of 486 ex-military personnel (245 left involuntarily) from the Portuguese Army was obtained for the study. Exclusion criteria included military personnel: (i) who left the organization more than six months ago [to limit response bias and due to the time limit that military e-mail is active after leaving the organization]; (ii) who did not accept informed consent; or (iii) who did not complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into four sections, with the first referring to military personnel's demographic characteristics and a question about why they left the organization, involuntary (legal imposition, medical, disciplinary, or other issue – behavior performed for reasons beyond your control) or voluntary (by your own free will – behavior performed by your initiative) turnover. The second part measured turnover intention using the short version of the turnover intention scale (TIS-6), developed by Roodt (2004) and published by Bothma and Roodt (2013). The third part

of the survey measured the inhibiting factors proposed by the Batista and Oliveira (2023) framework. The fourth part of the study consisted of an open-ended question regarding the inhibiting factors and their influence on the decision-making process of staying or leaving the organization. Building on the fourth part of the survey, a content analysis was conducted to balance qualitative and quantitative findings. Content analysis is a research method used to identify the presence of specific words, patterns, themes, trends, or concepts within a dataset. It can be qualitative (focusing on the interpretation of themes) or quantitative (measuring the frequency of certain elements) – allowing for detailed interpretation or statistical comparisons. Furthermore, it is a method designed to identify and interpret meaning in recorded forms of communication by isolating small pieces of the data that represent salient concepts and then applying or creating a framework to organize the pieces in a way that can be used to describe or explain a phenomenon (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991), shorting text into groups of related categories to identify similarities and differences, patterns, and associations, both on the surface [manifest (e.g., frequency counts – the number of instances a certain word appears) – the nature of truth is believed to be objective, observable, and measurable] and implied within [latent (pattern/projective) – seeks to identify a construct or concept within the text using specific words or phrases for substantiation, or to provide a more organized structure to the text being described (e.g., interpreting what is hidden deep within the text)]. Content analysis rests on the assumption that texts are a rich data source with great potential to reveal valuable information about particular phenomena (Kondracki et al., 2002). Content analysis was conducted through the following steps: (i) definition of the goal for the analysis [identify comments concerning the factors that prevent soldiers from leaving the Portuguese Army based on Batista and Oliveira's (2023) framework]; (ii) decision about the methodological approach (latent and manifest content analysis); (iii) coding process: to create and use codes (identifying keywords related to each code) to organize, categorize, interpret, and understand the data [codes, categories, and themes were created *a priori* based on Batista and Oliveira's (2023) framework and a residual code (others) – through a directed and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)], (iv) analysis of patterns, relationships, or trends; (v) measure the number of times the inhibiting factors appears; and (vi) interpret the findings and draw conclusions based on the data.

Study 3 is also based on TPB, alongside with SAF evaluation criteria and Risk assessment, and uses a literature review [about FWA], document analysis [FWA implemented in most developed Armed Forces – the best practices used were fundamental to reflect and better understand their applicability and scope], and 16 semi-structured interviews, based on convenience sampling [which included experts, Army HR managers, and military personnel from seven countries – specific interview guides were created for each group, following an open-ended question with more particular/directed questions]. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. After this, transcripts were summarized and organized into repeated ideas and topics, and SAF questions were used to organize key discussion points. A rational and fact-based analysis of FWA identifies the most likely successful options. The data was analyzed through:

- Content analysis – with the following steps: (i) definition of the goal for the analysis – identified comments concerning the FWA; (ii) decision about the methodological approach – latent and manifest content analysis; (iii) coding process: to create and use codes (identifying keywords related to each code) to organize, categorize, interpret, and understand the data [codes, categories, and themes were created *a priori* based the question made (e.g. advantages and challenges for the adopting FWA in the Army, and conditions to adopt) – through a directed and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)], (iv) analysis of patterns, relationships, or trends; (v) interpretation of the findings; and finally, (vi) the content analysis interpretation findings were then submitted by the theoretical framework SAF evaluation criteria and risk management process.

- SAF evaluation criteria (Johnson et al., 2005) theoretical framework, applied with the help of military HRM and Commanders of Units from the Portuguese Army. Suitability – the rationale for developing a particular FWA and whether this FWA supports the organizational aims – Will FWA attainment accomplish the desired effect? Acceptability – determines whether an FWA meets stakeholders’ expectations – Does the importance of the effect desired justify the effects/consequences of FWA? Feasibility – availability of resources, skills, and competencies (practicality) to deliver the particular FWA – Can the FWA be accomplished by the means available?

- Risk assessment [risk is a possible undesirable condition that might result from activities with imperfectly predictable consequences (Hansson, 2005; Kinouchi, 2018). According to Yarger, risk is “an assessment of the balance among what is known,

assumed, and unknown, as well as the correspondence between what is to be achieved, the concepts envisioned, and resources available (2006, p. 63)] is a measure of the probability of occurrence [frequency (unlikely/seldom/occasional/likely/frequent)] and their consequences [magnitude/severity (from negligible/marginal/critical/catastrophic)] using the risk management matrix. The Risk assessment process is composed of five steps (VanVactor, 2007): (i) identification of hazards [that may be encountered during the execution]; (ii) an assessment of those hazards [the direct impact of each hazard – low risk/moderate risk/high risk/extremely high risk]; (iii) a development of controls to aid with decision-making [to mitigate, eliminate or prevent of unnecessary risks – risk decision]; (iv) an implementation of controls; and finally, (v) supervision and evaluation of safe execution. A rigorous assessment of risk should answer the following three questions (Kaplan & Garrick, 1981): (i) What are the possible hazards?; (ii) How likely is each hazard to happen?; (iii) If a hazard does happen, what are the possible consequences? In our study, each FWA can be classified as invalid, valid, or valid with reserves – the latter presupposes the development and implementation of control(s). An FWA clearly labeled as unsuitable, infeasible, or unacceptable is invalid.

The four evaluation criteria (Suitability, Acceptability, Feasibility, and Evaluation), summarized by the acronym SAFE (Whittington et al., 2020), an update of SAF evaluation criteria (Johnson et al., 2005) were not used because the intention was not to select the best FWA, nor to quantify the weight of each criteria, but rather to verify whether it can be implemented in the Portuguese Army. The evaluation of the phased plan for FWA adoption was subjected to the following steps: (i) the phased plans adopted by other Armies or suggested by experts were compared to eliminate repetition; (ii) phases grouped the suggested topics; (iii) the initial plan was submitted to HRM military experts for revision, and changes were made (e.g., ordering and refinement); (iv) the final plan was submitted for consideration again, and received the agreement of all participants.

This brief explanation only introduces the methods and techniques employed in this thesis. A detailed and specific description will be presented within each Study (Chapters III, IV, and V).

Chapter III – Postponing the end: Turnover inhibiting factors in the military context

Chapter III – Postponing the end: Turnover inhibiting factors in the military context

3.1. Introduction

The current economic and social situation is diffuse, diverse, and complex. It results from drastic technological transformations combined with challenges caused by demographic changes. These changes affect the organizational environment and the employees' voluntary turnover behavior.

The literature on turnover behavior can be divided into two major phases. The first suggested turnover was the result of two simultaneous equilibrium forces: perceived desirability (job attitude/satisfaction and affective commitment) and perceived ease (job availability/opportunities/alternatives) of leaving an organization (March & Simon, 1958; Mobley, 1977; Price, 1977). This conceptualization proposed that turnover intention is a robust and reliable predictor of turnover behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The second phase arises when researchers demonstrate that many employees leave their organizations for reasons other than those initially reported, and many others remain despite feeling dissatisfied and intending to leave (Holtom et al., 2008; Mitchell et al., 2001), suggesting that not all intentions are translated into action. This inconsistency between having an intention and not turning it into action is referred to as the “*intention-behavior gap*” (Sheeran, 2002). To identify what lies behind this inconsistency, Sheeran (2002) suggested a two-by-two matrix, indicating that individuals who intend to perform the behavior but do not perform it (*inclined abstainers*) are responsible for the gap.

A considerable number of behavioral theories and models have been used to investigate the most immediate and significant predictor of a person's behavior: their intention to perform it. For instance, the intermediate linkages model (Mobley, 1977) and his expanded model (Mobley, 1982); social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; more recently developed as social cognitive theory); transtheoretical model (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997; also known as the stages of change model); and temporal self-regulation theory (Hall & Fong, 2007). Notwithstanding, this study aims to assess the relevance of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), particularly the gap between intention and turnover behavior within the military context. The TPB aims to explain human behavior in different environments and emphasizes that it is planned and intentional (Ajzen, 1991). It was chosen for this study as it is characterized by simplicity, parsimony, and robustness

(Kautonen et al., 2015). By exploring TPB, this research provides information and insights into the behavior of military personnel and offers guidelines for examining the factors that inhibit the voluntary turnover process.

The intention-behavior gap and the fact that, in general, only half of the intentions are translated into the desired behavioral action demonstrate the significance of the gap (Sheeran & Webb, 2016). TPB also suggests that the general relationship between intention and behavior may be moderated (Ajzen, 2002). Previous research has emphasized the need for further studies examining inhibiting factors to gain a more detailed understanding of the cognitive foundation underlying behavioral decisions (Ajzen, 2020; Ajzen & Albarracin, 2007). Moreover, previous studies have only presented the reasons, beliefs, or antecedents of turnover intention to leave the Armed Forces. Likewise, to the best of our knowledge, no study has considered the factors that inhibit military turnover. The present research aims to explore the intention-behavior gap, identifying and improving the understanding of factors that contribute to inhibiting intentions in the voluntary turnover process. Identifying the factors that influence the stability of behavioral intentions sheds light on the ways and means by which it may be possible to reinforce changes in intention. This makes it relevant to the HR literature and has practical implications that are also relevant. We also redirect the conceptual lens from why people leave to why, although people intend to leave, they stay. We argue that the Armed Forces offer an ideal setting for studying this effect. In Portugal, it is an understudied context from a behavioral employment perspective. The military turnover index from 2014 to 2019 recorded a sharp reduction (23%) in its military personnel, which led the Portuguese Ministry of National Defense (Ministério da Defesa Nacional, 2019) to implement an action plan for the professionalization of military service, thereby raising the study's practical relevance. The article is organized into seven sections. The first section provides background information, the second sets the context, the third presents the literature review and state of the art, the fourth describes the methodological approach followed, and the fifth presents the findings, which are then discussed in the subsequent sections. The last emphasizes the article's main points.

3.2. Context – Portuguese Armed Forces (PAF)

Since the beginning of their military career, recruits enter a forced “separation” from civilian life to make way for a strong identification with a military organization (Godfrey

et al., 2012). The civilian is thus incorporated and inscribed with cultural values, including discipline, loyalty, and a commitment to duty (Cooper et al., 2016).

The Armed Forces have undergone profound changes, primarily due to the Cold War, 9/11, and technological advancements. Some Armed Forces have been moving from the conscription system to a more professional and flexible system based on high-skilled personnel and cutting-edge technology, better suited to face all threats (symmetric and asymmetric). In recent years, the PAF has undergone several reorganizations. The first occurred in 1976, following the profound changes introduced by the Portuguese Constitution, and a second reorganization took place in 1982, resulting in complete subordination to democratic political power. After 1992, when women were allowed to join, and in 2004, with the end of conscription for men, recruitment began to develop primarily among volunteers. More recently, the “Defense 2020” reform limited the number of troops. The PAF are exclusively composed of Portuguese citizens. Its fundamental mission is to ensure the Republic’s military (self-)defense and carry out all the military tasks required to guarantee its population’s sovereignty, national independence, and freedom/security against any aggression or external threats. The rights and duties of Portuguese citizens are outlined in the Portuguese Constitution. However, there are restrictions (e.g., military condition) for military personnel, which stand out in particular. This condition results in subordination to the national interest, permanent availability in the temporal dimension [any time/no fixed duration], and the geographical dimension [any location] to fight in defense of the Motherland, if necessary, with the sacrifice of their own life. Labor requirements differ significantly from those of non-military organizations.

The PAF are organized into a General Staff of the Armed Forces and Branches (Navy, Army, and Air Force) to carry out their duties. HR are divided into military and civilian personnel. Military personnel are recruited in the Branches and classified into three categories: Officers, Sergeants, and Privates. Nowadays, these categories are subdivided into Permanent Staff, which represents the organization’s backbone and guarantees the stability and transmission of knowledge, traditions, and values; and Under Contract, which includes military personnel serving for a limited period, after which they return to civilian life. As a maximum military service period, the Permanent Staff foresees the age limit associated with rank and, cumulatively, a pre-established period of military service to be rendered. These personnel must remain on active duty for a minimum time.

If they request to be discharged before, they must pay financial compensation. If they leave after, this situation entails penalties. Under Contract, they can either join the Permanent Staff or reach the maximum time in active duty allowed by law; they can enjoy a set of incentives for re-entry into civilian life. If they leave earlier, they will not benefit from the incentives, and in some cases, they may also be required to pay monetary compensation.

Military turnover was not a concern during Mandatory Military Service when young men were subject to the obligation of serving. However, with the end of conscription, turnover began to gain relevance with the introduction of a new service provision model based on volunteering. Moreover, voluntary turnover leads to the problem of refilling the positions left vacant, a serious concern that mainly affects the UCP. Currently, the PAF relies highly on its recruitment and retention systems.

3.3. Literature Review

3.3.1. Turnover

Turnover is a dynamic concept related to the movement of employees across the boundaries of a social system (Price, 1977). This movement results from an employee's conscious and intentional decision to leave/end the employment relationship with the organization (Dress & Shaw, 2001). With globalization, turnover has become a persistent issue in organizations, regardless of their size/typology. It is penalizing and highly costly for organizations when they undertake lengthy recruitment processes, invest in training (Holt et al., 2007), and the employee leaves before the intended time (Peterson, 2005). However, turnover is also costly for workers, as they give up a career or interpersonal connections at their previous place of employment (Holtom et al., 2008).

Furthermore, workers also bear financial, transactional, and psychological costs (Allen et al., 2005). The human capital of the Armed Forces is embodied in its personnel, which is the primary element for achieving mission success. Concomitantly with other organizations, it is the most valuable resource and an essential asset (Croy & Duggan, 2005) due to its scarcity, intangibility, and difficulty in replication (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Given the labor shortage and reduced employed assets, retaining skilled employees is a strategic priority. The military environment is unique because employment is more than just a job/occupational choice. Service in the military involves a much-prescribed environment that influences individuals' lifestyles far beyond the boundaries of work

(Alpass et al., 1997). Unmatched physical and psychological demands are placed on military personnel to replicate or approach a conflict situation, usually under challenging conditions. These requirements compel those who cannot deal with them to leave the organization (Mafini & Dubihlela, 2013).

In addition to financial resources, military organizations invest much of their time recruiting, classifying, selecting, integrating, and giving qualified training with their preconditions [physical, medical tests, and cognitive and psychological interviews], which are rare in other organizations (Allen et al., 2010). This process makes the Armed Forces an attractive resource, as it is an organization that leverages recruiting skilled personnel, unlike others that bear the burden of investing in training and experience. Military organizations' rewards/benefits are limited and will never be as attractive as those customized by civilian organizations (Coughlan et al., 2014) because the former are mandated by law, while the latter utilize the organization's internal capabilities. The primary difference between turnover in military and non-military organizations lies in organizational commitment, a sense of patriotism, and pride in military service, which serve as a buffer, making voluntary separations from service less likely (Lytell & Drasgow, 2009; Mafini & Dubihlela, 2013).

Military turnover can be harmful, dysfunctional, inevitable, and costly to any country's defense agencies (Campion, 1991). Human behavior is the product of many interrelated factors, and it is natural that, given the complexity underlying the military voluntary turnover, it is tough to systematically summarize the reasons for turnover, what is known about them, and how they interact. It is also pertinent to point out that, in the event of military separation, they leave the organization and the profession of arms. Although individuals may find work similar to that they performed in the military, their active affiliation with the military is often lost (Heilmann et al., 2009).

3.3.2. Theory of Planned Behavior

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) revolutionized the understanding of attitude-behavior relationship by introducing the mediating role of intention when they developed the theory of reasoned action, that intended to explain, predict, and understand the causes of the behavior under the individual's complete volitional control (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) and establish that the behavior effectiveness is determined by the intention to perform it, originated in the attitudes towards the act and the subjective norms related to the performance (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The intention is assumed to capture the

individual's motivation factors influencing behavior. Represents how much an individual is willing to try and how much energy he/she is willing to invest to realize the behavior. The attitudes begin with assessing a set of beliefs about the likely consequences of the behavior, such as the predisposition to react in a (un)favorable way to an object/person/event – it is thus characterized as the behavior-result link that is expected to produce (Ajzen, 1985). Subjective norms refer to the evaluation of normative beliefs, which is the importance that the individual attributes to the perceptions, approval, or disapproval of those who are important to him/her in the behavior to be performed – it focuses on the perceived influence or social strength (Ajzen, 1985). To expand the model to behaviors that are not under the individual's complete volitional control or to involuntary/thoughtless behaviors, which are influenced by other beliefs in predicting behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Sheeran et al., 2003), TPB added the perceived behavior control – defined as an individual's belief about the probability of easy/difficult behavior performance (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). It assumes it relates to predicted impediments/obstacles (Ajzen, 1991), which may influence the behavioral performance.

On the other hand, perceived behavioral control can indicate actual behavioral control and contribute to predicting behavior if it is real (Ajzen, 1991). The crucial factor determining if the formed intention is translated into behavior is the actual behavior control, as a moderator (Ajzen, 2020) – the ability of people to have complete control over their behavior. If there are barriers or inhibitors to intention, the behavior is unlikely to occur. On the opposite side, the TPB has also been questioned for: not predicting variables related to the moral obligation (Kurland, 1995) and self-identity (Sparks & Guthrie, 1998), not giving importance to the role of emotions beyond the expected results (Sutton, 1994), having limitations in predicting change, and for its explanatory static nature, which does not help to understand the behavior's effect on cognition and future behavior (Sutton, 2010).

In short, TPB postulates that an individual has a greater intention to perform a given behavior when he/she has a positive attitude towards it, believes it is socially accepted, and feels that he/she can control his/her behavioral performance. The intention is more likely to translate into real behavior when the individual has actual control over it (Ajzen, 2002). However, the individual does not always have real control, given the existence of factors that inhibit behaviors. Within this background, the first research question (RQ1)

is as follows: *How does the TPB contribute to a better understanding of the inhibiting factors of the military personnel's voluntary turnover process?*

3.3.3. Intention-behavior gap

Turnover intentions explain only 15-20% of the turnover variance; even the most comprehensive turnover models leave the majority of variance unexplained (Griffeth et al., 2000). These findings suggest that although there is a consensus about the positive relationship between quit intention and actual quitting, and concerning the strength of this relationship, alarming discrepancies exist (Cohen et al., 2016), suggesting that behavioral prediction is not always straightforward. Other factors may be essential predictors/moderators influencing the relationship – this supports and reinforces the purpose of our research.

Several theoretical frameworks have attempted to explain the intention-behavior gap, including the temporal self-regulation theory (Hall & Fong, 2007), the multi-process action control model (Rhodes, 2017), and the theory of behavioral control (Lim & Weissmann, 2021). In our research to identify and explore the inhibiting voluntary turnover factors in the military context, we use the dichotomization, endogenous, and exogenous categories because they are more comprehensive and realistic (Price, 2001). The intention-behavior gap encompasses both cognitive and behavioral dimensions, involving thinking, planning, and the desire to leave a job, as well as the actual turnover action itself (Cohen et al., 2016). The gap remains poorly understood, despite its theoretical/practical significance for researchers/managers (Carrington et al., 2010). In addition, research explaining the gap using the TPB model is currently lacking, and it remains unclear what factors weaken the relationship between intention and behavior. Against this background, the “*inclined abstainer*” is the main focus of the present research. Given that the intention-behavior gap in military voluntary turnover has yet to be formally explored, this seems a worthy line of inquiry. In most cases, expressing intentions is easier than quitting; therefore, expressing intentions may predict turnover more accurately in some instances (Allen et al., 2005). In this vein, Vardaman et al. (2015) suggest that key contextual factors likely explain when turnover intentions are more/less likely to translate into a turnover.

In previous studies, several events have been identified as preventing the execution of an intention, including forgetting to act (Einstein et al., 2003), missing opportunities to act (Dholakia & Bagozzi, 2006), and failing to engage in preparatory behaviors

(Carvalho et al., 2015). Also, some potential factors emerge from the intended and actual turnover relationship (Cho & Lewis, 2012): financial/psychological costs, self-monitoring, locus of control, proactive personality, risk aversion (Allen et al., 2005), shocks (Holtom et al., 2005), and network structure (Vardaman et al., 2015). In contrast, the TPB grouped the inhibitors of the behavior in two dimensions (Ajzen, 2002, 2020; Kidwell & Jewell, 2003), although it presents them only as an example without demonstrating their reasons: internal (e.g., knowledge, intelligence, emotions, skills, and physical stamina) and external factors (e.g., legal barriers, availability, and time), influences that act as a barrier to behavioral performance (Kidwell & Jewell, 2010). Lewin (1997) assumes that the realization or non-realization of a given behavior does not depend on the presence/absence of a single factor but on the combination of several. Against this background, a second research question (RQ2) was formulated: *What are the factors that most contribute to inhibiting the military personnel in the voluntary turnover process?*

3.4. Method

3.4.1. Research Design

This article used a case study as a research strategy to allow a more detailed understanding and to retain the holistic phenomenon of real-life context (Yin, 1989), thus answering the research questions. For the data collection, the following methods were applied: a literature review [comprehensive summary of previous research], documental analysis [review of printed documents], semi-structured interviews [allows the participant to be interviewed individually, with both predetermined/emergent questions], and focus groups [enable several participants to be interviewed at once], the last two in Portuguese. Data were categorized through thematic analysis [qualitative data analysis focusing on identifying, organizing, interpreting, and reporting themes/categories (King & Brooks, 2018)].

3.4.2. Participants

The interviewed participants [N = 73] were selected using convenience sampling. All of them were voluntary and selected based on their knowledge and familiarity with the theory used/organization/behavior, which added value to the investigation. They were previously contacted by e-mail and later divided into three groups: academic experts [N = 18] – who had already investigated the theme; HR managers responsible for the

retention/turnover in the Branches [N = 6] – who had more than two years in the field and with updated knowledge of the voluntary turnover reality; military personnel [N = 26] – who are in the PAF, as such, know the factors that inhibit their decision; ex-military personnel [N = 23] – who recently left the PAF and also know the factors that inhibited their decision. Twenty-one interviewees were women, and 52 were men, with an average age of 39, varying from 20 to 65 years. Participants of the focus groups (composed of five to seven) were military personnel on active duty from different categories, forms of service provision, and Branches [N = 24], six women and 18 men, with an average age of 27, ranging from 20 to 50 years.

3.4.3. Data Collection

The data were collected in three phases: during the literature review, through interviews, and focus groups. The first phase, dedicated to researching the keywords' bibliographies, spanned from March 2019 to December 2021. In the second phase, the interview participants were selected for their quality and representativeness to gather diverse opinions with insightful, informed, and relevant views on voluntary military turnover (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012).

The targets outlined for the participants in the interviews were: academic experts – theoretical questions to approach the voluntary turnover, the theories related, its framework and influences for the context; HR managers – to understand the phenomenon of military voluntary turnover, its main background and how inhibiting factors contribute to this process; (ex-)military – to understand the factors that inhibit/ed them from performing the behavior. For each group, specific interview guides were developed following an open-ended question to more particular and directed questions (Appendix 1 and 2). The data were collected individually through 73 interviews (comprising 28 face-to-face interviews, with an average duration of 65 minutes, varying from 40 to 75 minutes, and 45 internet interviews conducted via Skype, with an average duration of 50 minutes, ranging from 30 to 75 minutes). This phase took place from May 2020 to August 2021. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. The framework for the four focus groups was built in the third phase (Appendix 3). The focus groups began by presenting the subject/rules, and subsequently, the factors identified in the previous phase were discussed. The data were collected on four different occasions. The focus groups were in person and with other participants [average duration of 65 minutes, varying from 50 to 80 minutes]. This phase started in June 2020 and ended in August 2021.

3.4.4. Data Analysis

Building on the thematic analysis approach, the data were examined to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that most contribute to inhibiting the intentions of military personnel in the voluntary turnover process. Braun and Clarke's (2006) best practice guidelines and King and Brooks' (2018) suggestions for thematic analysis were followed. Initially, transcripts were read and reviewed to familiarize with the data. Following this, transcripts were summarized, key discussion points were compared, and initial factors were generated. These were then grouped to identify coherent sub-categories, which were reviewed and applied to the transcripts to establish the categories (King & Brooks, 2018). The thematic analysis of the transcripts highlighted nine main factors, which were then grouped into four sub-categories, and ultimately, these were grouped into two categories. Each factor is described by a series of quotation extracts from the transcripts to substantiate the identified categories. The participants' contributions were abbreviated as follows: sex [female = F, male = M]; function [academic experts = A, HR managers = H, military personnel = M, ex-military personnel = E], and age.

3.5. Results

In order to understand the target population of the study, Sheeran's matrix (2002) was used and adapted to the context, incorporating contributions from academic experts.

Figure 4 – Decomposition of the Intention-Behavior Relationship

		Intention	
		Intend to act	Does not intend to act
Subsequent Behavior	Act	Inclined actor (voluntary turnover) <i>Want to leave and goes</i>	Disinclined actor (involuntary turnover) <i>Do not want leave, but goes</i>
	Does not act	Inclined abstainer <i>Intends to leave, but remains</i>	Disinclined abstainer <i>Does not want to leave and remains</i>

In addition, definitions and measures for the actors were suggested:

Inclined actor – “those who have positive intentions to leave and complete the action, so they go” and “with facilitating factors, he/she will likely leave.” Measure: “identify the factors that facilitate them to leave.”

Disinclined actor – “those who do not have intentions to leave, but they go” and “something compels them to go, such as age, active-duty limit, disease, or death.”

Measure: nothing left to do except to be sure that *“in the future, they will be good messengers of the organization and military career.”*

Disinclined abstainer – *“the individuals who intend to stay, so they remain for as long as possible.”* Measure: *“identify the factors that make them want to stay.”*

Inclined abstainer – our research focuses on *“those who have positive intentions to leave, but do not perform the behavior, so they stay.”* Measure: *“identify the factors that hinder their leave and therefore prevent/compel them to stay.”*

This article aims to explore the intention-behavior gap and to identify and improve the understanding of the factors that most contribute to inhibiting the intentions of military personnel in the voluntary turnover process. To that end, two RQ were formulated. Regarding RQ1: *How does the TPB contribute to a better understanding of the inhibiting factors of the military personnel’s voluntary turnover process?*

Findings highlight the following key aspects: As a result of the law and training, military personnel have a set of increased duties, which inevitably distinguish them from other non-military personnel. According to nine academic experts and in line with Lytell and Drasgow (2009), *“this inequality raises apprehension in the applicability of general HR theories to the military context and should be carefully adapted.”*

There was a consensus to justify and classify the voluntary turnover process as planned behavior because it *“involves planning and several procedural steps that culminate in the decision-making process”* and *“the turnover behavior is not under the complete volitional control of the individuals.”* Cumulatively, the HR managers added that given the distinct reality that they integrate *“when characterizing the voluntary turnover process, the military personnel should be grouped and analyzed by forms of service provision. Otherwise, the results will not be conclusive.”*

While TPB can provide a valuable contribution to a better understanding of voluntary turnover, *“the intention, the intention-behavior gap, and behavior must be dissected, contextualized, and adapted to the context”* FA50. This finding stems from general participants’ unanimity when stated that: *“last few years, the reasons for the military personnel to leave are numerous, which leads to a strong intention to leave, but in most cases, the action is not carried out, which indicates that other factors affect the direction and/or the strength of this relationship, something foreseen, but not detailed in the TPB”* MA55, a fact that is in agreement with Amireault and colleagues (2008).

Furthermore, *“a large number of military personnel have a strong intention to leave, but inhibiting factors prevent them from doing so. These factors mitigated, overcame, or changed the initial turnover intentions”* MH47, *“by not only considering various beliefs/determinants that precede the formation of intentions but also control factors responsible for creating the intention-behavior gap. TPB provides a good framework and the necessary background for examining and understanding the turnover behavior”* FA54.

By contrast, the *“TPB postulates that the perceived/actual behavior control moderates the intention-behavior gap, without the necessary details and constructs of their differences, even admitting that under certain conditions they are the same”* FA58. In addition, *“although there are other behavioral theories, the TPB is the one that suitably fits the current subject, but it is necessary to clarify what is occurring between turnover intention-behavior or integrate different conceptual models to help overcome some of the problems related, and thus better understand the behavior”* MA56.

Subsequently, all HR managers agreed that *“if beyond the turnover intention, the factors that influence the turnover behavior are understood, better-targeted strategies can be established.”* Finally, HR managers referred that *“the military recruitment system is well-defined in the Ministry of National Defense and the Branches, but the retention system can be improved because the activity is spread over several departments, with shared responsibilities making it difficult to implement plans.”*

Regarding RQ2: *What are the factors that most contribute to inhibiting the military personnel in the voluntary turnover process?*

We want to stress that the key inhibiting factors for those not leaving the Armed Forces emerge from the data, which was divided into three groups: PSP, UCP, and both personnel.

The contributions of each factor to understanding the voluntary turnover gap are discussed below.

Field-of-study mismatch – The preponderance of this factor was identified among those with a specific military qualification (horizontal mismatch), *“my background is fighting arms, and I cannot perform it in civilian employment”* MM47. This group of military personnel argues that their base formation and strictly military qualifications are not desired in the civilian market, *“my qualifications have no demand outside”* FM45. The factor focuses on the imperfect matching or discrepancy between the qualifications

attained (characteristics) of military personnel and the qualification requirements of jobs (Desjardins & Rubenson, 2011) outside the Portuguese Army. Researchers evaluating how people are affected by educational attainment have suggested that some people may suffer in the labor market from a qualifications/skills mismatch, learning qualifications/skills that contemporary employers value less (Handel, 2003). For some combat positions, service members learn qualifications that are little used (misalignment) in civilian jobs, although there is a vertical match.

Age – The elder military personnel essentially expressed this factor. They saw old age as an impediment to leave due to difficulties in finding a new job, “*with my age, I cannot find a better job*” MM58, not having the desire to start a new professional challenge “*I am no longer old enough to start a new career*” MM55, or even be close to the end of the professional career “*I look forward to my retirement*” MM57. As one ages, workers value the conditions for retirement and are less willing to invest time in activities that have a long and uncertain payback period (Fung et al., 2001), such as starting a venture or developing new activities (Hatak et al., 2015). Ng and Feldman (2009) suggested that older workers are less likely than younger adults to voluntarily turnover. Since “*individuals age, there are underlying changes in their emotional experiences, preferred social relationships, and self-concepts*”, making them more likely to experience positive emotions at work, but “*less likely to feel confident about getting comparable jobs in the external labor market*” (Ng & Feldman, 2009, p. 285).

Cooperation by others – involves an employee’s perceptions of what family, friends, or co-workers expect him/her to do concerning the job, “*it would be a disappointment for my family*” MM22, or the feeling others had about the military career he/she had, “*being in the military is a pride for my friends*” MM25. On the other hand, their relationship with others is “*my friends are my comrades in arms*” MM21. Heilmann et al. (2009) examined the influences of the work-family conflict on military retention decisions, concluding that family members’ general satisfaction with military life improves members’ willingness to remain.

Job stability – This factor was mentioned by all participants, which suggests that the Armed Forces are an organization that protects and preserves its human capital. Still, more importantly, military personnel are not afraid of losing their jobs during the service period, “*I know where and when, and what to expect*” MM43. However, a comparison was also made with the outside labor market: “*here, I have a contractual relationship,*

outside I do not know” (MM45). In reinforcement, the benefits were listed “*military health support, for me and my family, gives me confidence, particularly when I am on international missions*” MM40. Issues related to financial stability were also evidenced “*here, the salary may not be much, but it is certain. On the 21st of every month, I have the salary in my bank account*” FM24. Many labor markets, where the military is included, are regulated, and much of the regulation provides various degrees of job security to workers (Fu et al., 2017). Origo and Pagani (2009) empirically tested the joint effect exerted by the (objective) type of contract and the (subjective) perceived job satisfaction. They suggested that the type of contract, by itself, cannot fully explain the effect on job satisfaction, as it is similar for both permanent/non-permanent workers.

Inertia – Polites and Karahanna (2012) define inertia as the attachment to and persistence of existing behavioral patterns, even when better alternatives or incentives exist to change. This factor is directly linked to accommodation “*I currently have no alternatives to consider leaving*” FM44, conformity “*I am comfortable with my professional situation [...] it is still too early to leave*” MM47, propensity to resist change “*my salary is sufficient for my expenses*” MM22, habits/routines “*I am already organized for my professional life, I do not want to change my status quo*” MM45. In some situations, participants are reluctant to leave because this decision requires an action that they are unwilling to take: “*If I leave now, I will not achieve all the benefits*” FM20.

Uncertainty – The perception of an individual’s inability to predict something accurately (Milliken, 1987) seems to be a good definition of the uncertainty that the military feels about the possible consequences of their decisions, as expressed in the statement, “*I am afraid I will regret it in the future*” (MM20). This uncertainty is typically related to the process and expected outcomes of the change and its implications for the military’s life and its prospects “*I am afraid I will not find suitable employment or a similar job*” FM44, which leads to a feeling of lack of control (Bordia et al., 2004), such as “*I am afraid of instability*” FM24.

Organizational Relationship – Participants mentioned feelings attached to the worker-organization relationship that results from the aggregation of the following categories: (i) organization identification – describes the feeling of partial overlap between the self, group and internalization of the organization’s core values and central identity features (van Dick et al., 2004), such as “*the organization has great significance for me*” MM45, “*I feel integrated into the military family, and I identify with*

organizational values and culture” MM40. According to social identity theory, this may ward off the desire to quit the organization (Haslam & Ellemers, 2005). (ii) job identification – is based on the importance that is attributed to the job (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), the satisfaction that is derived from the job, and the psychological attachment, the employees’ feeling towards the job *“I cannot find another job that gives me the same experience/adventure”* MM20. Consequently, employees with stronger job identification should be more likely to tie their future to the organization in which their job is embedded (Hatak et al., 2015), *“I liked the military discipline”* FE34, *“I feel good about serving my country, [...] participating in the defense and representing my country”* MM45. By contrast, the possibility of changing function/local of service was shared: *“I have the opportunity to work in diverse areas, some of them unique/exclusive, like driving a tank”* MM22. (iii) employee loyalty – is the product of various factors that bind the individual to the organization, thus making exit costly. Something very evident in the statements made: *“I want to respect my contract because something better is going to happen”* FM20, *“it was the option I made, so I will stick to it until the end”* MM22 or *“I have a feeling of obligation to the people/organization I work for”* FM45.

External Context – A set of situations that prevent the military’s personnel from voluntary turnover behavior, namely, occasional impediments, lack of job alternatives, or legal barriers. Most of the participants were in a function/activity/mission that prevented them from leaving, *“I cannot leave right now, presently I am on an international mission”* MM22, *“I am attending a certified and expensive course”* MM24, *“only if I stay, I can achieve a bigger goal”* FM23. In a moment of few alternatives, *“in the job market, there are no opportunities available that I like”* FM22, *“I did not receive a proposal abroad that would allow me to leave”* MM24, or *“I am afraid of unemployment”* MM24. Due to financial issues, *“leaving now would seriously undermine me financially”* MM20, loss of benefits/incentives, *“if I leave, I no longer enjoy the incentives that are provided for me”* FM21. Permanent Staff personnel also mentioned the legal barriers, *“the specific and particular rules and norms are an obstacle to leave”* MM47.

Social Recognition – We are all aware of the pride and appreciation we receive for our work, *“if I leave, I will not be so socially recognized”* MM43, it gives us the feeling of being acknowledged by others *“my family and friends admire me for being soldier”* MM58 and that likely encourages them to work even harder (Stocker et al., 2010). Cardoso and colleagues (2009) highlighted the prominent place occupied by the Armed

Forces in modern nation-states, considering it a pole of national sovereignty expression. The participants agreed that “*as I am part of the organization, I have social status and indirect benefits*” FM23 or “*the organization has social prestige*” FE31.

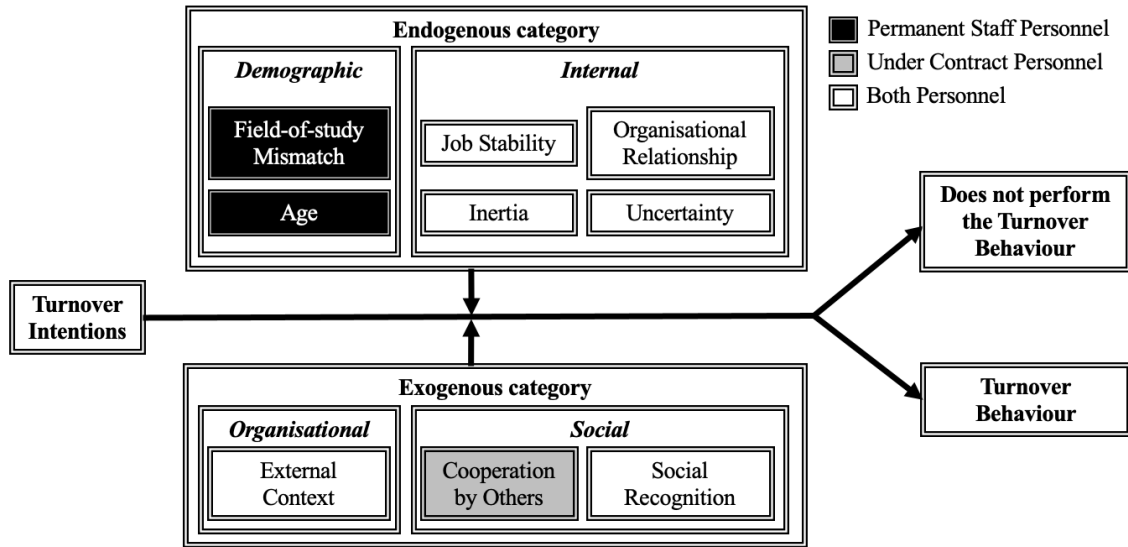
3.6. Discussion

Key findings show that, despite a general awareness and understanding of inhibiting factors, particularly amongst military personnel, there appears to be a significant theoretical and practical knowledge gap concerning HR managers, namely, how they approach and manage turnover. On the other hand, we can suggest that, given the specificity of the military environment, the intention of turnover often arises as soon as one enters the organization. However, the turnover behavior is based on a decision-making process, making it more rational and less emotional, which gives relevance to post-intention over pre-intention. Bearing in mind that turnover is not entirely under the volitional control of individuals, the results obtained suggest that the TPB can provide a valuable contribution to understanding the intention-behavior gap and the inhibitors of the voluntary turnover process.

However, integrating different conceptual models can help overcome some of the problems related to understanding turnover behavior. There is evidence that the TPB is insufficient to address the intention-behavior gap (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2014; Sheeran, 2002) because it does not provide enough detail. So, it can be suggested that the TPB model is appropriate for understanding the gap. Still, it needs to be clarified better, and the role of perceived/actual behavior control should be explored. Proof of that is the lack of evolution that those concepts have received. Our research proposes that the intention-behavior gap must be analyzed from two perspectives: endogenous and exogenous to the individual.

Regarding RQ2, to assess the factors, a double assessment was conducted: the first with (ex-)military personnel to gather data on the factors that inhibit the process, and the second with academic experts and HR managers to validate the data obtained in the first step. Figure 5 summarizes the factors identified in this study that impede military voluntary turnover.

Figure 5 – Decomposition Breakdown of the Turnover Influences



If we try to frame the factors identified in non-military contexts, there is low applicability in field-of-study mismatch (horizontal) – rare civilian qualifications are unique to a single organization (Desjardins & Rubenson, 2011; Handel, 2003), cooperation by others – few civilian organizations require such intense teamwork (in the extreme, life itself), characterized by the close union that leads to support the actions of others and induces them with the need to help each other, and external context – few civilian organizations are immune to the external environment, in times of recession it is common for organizations to reduce costs, among others in personnel.

The range of potential endogenous/exogenous factors is not conclusive. Still, factors discussed in previous research are acknowledged here because they are absent and, as such, do not explain the diversity of response between different individuals. It was not within the aim of this article to confirm the predictive value of these factors. The model shows factors that moderate the intention to leave and its failure.

Finally, the findings suggest that although slight differences exist between branches, the macrostructure remains the same in terms of frequency and justification for certain factors.

3.7. Implications for the Human Resource Management praxis

As a result of the study, we can verify that turnover intention is not the only predictor of turnover behavior. As such, for the organization to lower its turnover rate, it must promote initiatives that reinforce both endogenous/exogenous factors, impacting the individual and her/his relationship with the organization. Given the approach taken in the present

study, it is believed that a solid basis for reflection and an investigative framework was established to examine a specific context, rather than attempting to develop a parsimonious and generalized theory (Hom et al., 2017). Finally, the retention system is an area where organizations must prioritize and focus their most specialized HR. As a corollary to the article, we found that most researchers attempt to investigate the causes of turnover but overlook the factors that inhibit turnover behavior from occurring.

3.8. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Although based on rich and reliable contributions, the current study is limited to the bibliography found/analyzed and the (numerous) contributions of participants who accepted the challenge of participating in this research. The major strength of this study was the multi-stakeholder sample, comprising four different group perspectives, which created broader and more nuanced results than would have been the case if all participants shared the same field of expertise and experience. We acknowledge that we did not develop definitive and universal answers to the theme. Though we believe we have presented a comprehensive view of the intention-behavior gap in the Portuguese military context, we still consider that specific applications may be extended to non-military contexts. We propose further research to examine the contributions now identified through a quantitative approach.

3.9. Conclusions

This study explored the intention-behavior gap to identify and improve the understanding of the factors that contribute the most to inhibiting the intentions of military personnel in the voluntary turnover process. A significant amount of time has been spent investigating the causes of employee turnover – identifying the reasons for terminations so that they can be addressed and turnover reduced.

However, this approach seems limited, as it only examines one side of the problem (the termination side) and overlooks the reasons why others stay (namely, the factors that prevent/inhibit them from leaving). From the data collection, it was possible to observe two phenomena: military personnel who, although intending to leave, remain due to their loyalty or ties with the organization, and those who stay because they have no other option. In this context, the Armed Forces must reinforce the “right” reasons to stay, which are following the objectives of the Institution.

On the other hand, awareness campaigns, endomarketing plans, and gamification strategies should be implemented to reduce the intention and the facilitating factors, while concomitantly enhancing the inhibiting factors. Such preventative measures are suggested to be effective and help establish a better connection to the organization. This research provides the first and only comprehensive examination of the factors that impede voluntary turnover. Therefore, it is of both theoretical and practical importance because its results have been collected from those targeted, namely, the perception of military personnel who have lived or are currently living the situation.

Given the specific context under study, only a few factors identified in the literature were deemed eligible, necessitating the exclusion of those that do not adapt, those that are conceptually repeated, or those that do not translate into added value. Moreover, there was a need to include factors of vital interest to the context. Counteracting turnover intentions is a prerogative for organizations that invest significant resources in recruitment and onboarding processes, such as those in the military (Holt et al., 2007). Some studies have employed the TPB in the context of voluntary turnover, but have focused primarily on the Time 1 (intention formation stage) of the Vardaman et al. (2015) conceptualization. In our research, we have addressed and filled the gap in Time 2 (behavioral decision stage) within an organization experiencing a significant exodus of individuals.

For other non-military contexts, we present our decomposition breakdown of the turnover influences, from which we propose excluding the following factors: field-of-study mismatch (horizontal), cooperation by others, and external context. Still, we strongly advise using the following factors: age, job stability, inertia, uncertainty, organizational relationship, and social recognition.

Chapter IV – Military Voluntary Turnover Inhibitors: The Forgotten Side

Chapter IV – Military Voluntary Turnover Inhibitors: The Forgotten Side

4.1. Introduction

Financial, material, and human capital are the elementary prerequisites for any organization. Among these resources, human capital stands out, as it drives the others, determines their utilization (Maruta, 2012), and can create added value and achieve the organization's goals. Military organizations are no exception and consider human capital their main driver and center of gravity. Military organizations are characterized by a specific environment in which individual activity is regulated by specific, absolute, transparent, and rigid rules/norms (Maurer, 2023). The issues of power, compliance, “spirit du corps”, responsibility, and rank are central, and intense feelings of discipline and loyalty are instilled (Affandi et al., 2019). Military organizations are characterized by a strict chain of command, a robust sense of tradition, and a hierarchical structure that ranges from the most senior to the lowest commander on the battlefield (Teixeira et al., 2024).

Currently, the Armed Forces face a significant problem with high turnover rates. There are two ways to exit the Portuguese Army: voluntarily – when military personnel decide to leave on their initiative, it is not planned by the organization, although some influence can be exerted to avoid the undesirable costs that it entails; or involuntarily – when military personnel leave the military organization for reasons beyond their control (medical releases, disciplinary reasons, mandatory retirement, and limit of years of contract).

The turnover has severe impacts at the organizational level. Some negative impacts are tangible – recruitment, selection, training, and integration costs. Other intangible factors – include loss of tacit knowledge (organizational memory), social capital, declining morale and productivity, and turnover contagion. These costs/impacts decisively influence the organization's survivability/functionality.

Additionally, military organizations have stronger motives to retain their HR than other organizations. One primary reason is that candidates are unable to join military organizations at a senior level. All military personnel (including leaders) start at the lower ranks and build careers, i.e., only recruiting at the lowest rank and filling all vacancies at higher ranks by internal promotions. Suppose a 40-year-old Major leaves the Portuguese

Army. In that case, it takes 20 years to train someone up to the same level, and there is no short-term solution on the market due to the weight of the organizational culture, its internal procedures, and the recognition of other members.

According to Vardaman and colleagues (2015), two stages have been identified when analyzing turnover intention: intention growth and behavioral decision. These two stages do not occur in a temporal sequence, suggesting that not all intentions are translated into actions (Papies, 2017). This phenomenon is known as the “*intention-behavior gap*” (Sheeran, 2002). This condition leads us to believe that although military personnel have several reasons to leave, they continue to serve the organization because there are even inhibiting factors that prevent them from doing so (Batista & Oliveira, 2023).

Military literature has focused on the antecedents and consequences of turnover while neglecting the reasons why turnover intentions do not translate into turnover behavior. To our knowledge, no studies have yet examined, tested, and validated this phenomenon. Therefore, it is crucial to understand military personnel, including how they think, act, interact, and react within the organization, as well as the barriers that prevent them from leaving.

This study is structured as follows: it introduces the public-target organization, reviews the relevant literature, and formulates the hypotheses. Subsequently, we describe the methodology and data used. Then, we analyzed and discussed the results obtained. Finally, we summarize the main findings and the implications for future research.

4.2. Context – Portuguese Army

In 2004, Portugal transitioned to an exclusively volunteer force in peacetime. This measure made the Portuguese Army reliant on its recruitment system and on the willingness of young citizens to join it. As a result of this change, the Portuguese Army has experienced a significant and sustained reduction in the number of military personnel over the years (NATO, 2025a), which is of great concern to the leadership. This reduction resulted from voluntary turnover, including early contract termination, non-renewal of contracts, and military discharge. On the other hand, military recruitment involves a bottom-up approach, in which military personnel must be recruited at the bottom to reach the highest ranks in each category.

4.3. Literature Review

4.3.1. Military Turnover

Nowadays, retaining military personnel for extended periods and reducing voluntary employee turnover rates are significant challenges for military organizations, particularly when countries are involved in conflicts on or near their borders. Russia's war against Ukraine, the Hamas/Hezbollah/Iran-Israel conflict, the instability in the Sahel, as well as the United States of America's increasing institutional and diplomatic distance from European Allies (media think-tankers and opinion makers consider that the latter should assume more responsibility for self-defense), has alerted European leaders that their Armed Forces are not ready for war (Besch & Westgaard, 2024), not even to defend their borders.

Voluntary turnover refers to the termination of an individual's membership in an organization, typically following receipt of monetary compensation for their participation in that organization (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). In this sense, turnover intention is a conscious, deliberate, rational, and systematic decision that individuals make to leave a job/organization based on their personal situation, circumstances, or alternative opportunities (perceived/real). The intention indicates the likelihood of performing a given behavior at a specific time. Nevertheless, the intention alone is not the meaning of its realization, and some factors inhibit the individual from carrying it out (Batista & Oliveira, 2023).

In the present case, the factors that prevent an exit outweigh the intention to leave and the facilitating factors, resulting in the individual's continued presence in the organization. Military life is physically and psychologically demanding, with odd leadership styles, forcing those who cannot cope with these strenuous requirements to leave (Mafini & Dubihlela, 2013).

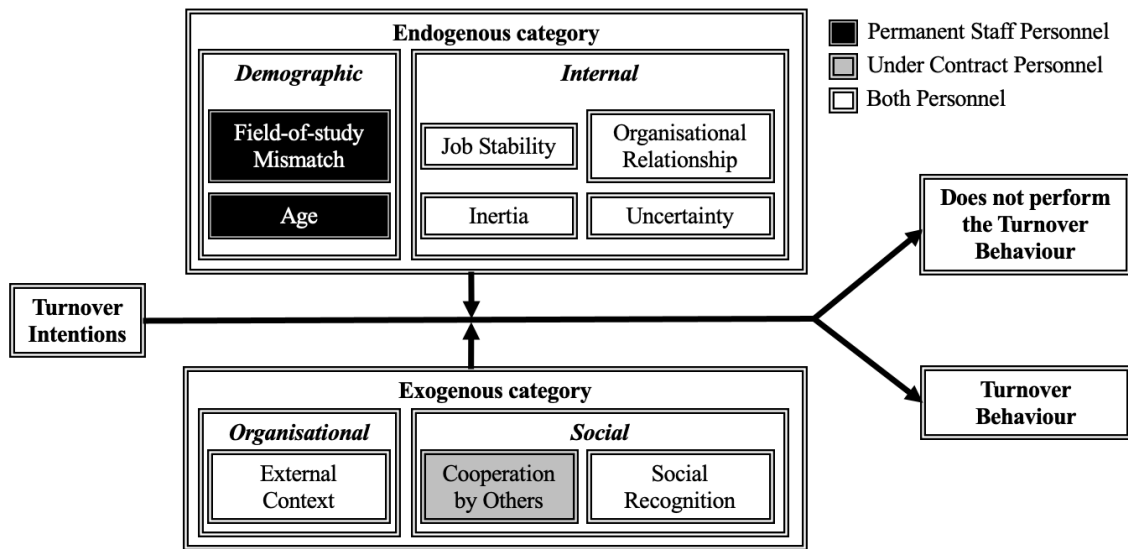
Military turnover is characterized by a scenario in which military personnel leave/withdraw their services from military organizations (Hosek & Totten, 2002). This phenomenon can have many negative consequences, including reduced staffing, which may compromise operational effectiveness and national security (Hosek & Totten, 2002). Additionally, increased workload and demands on the remaining personnel can lead to frustration, burnout, and higher attrition (Stroth, 2010), as well as unfavorable recruitment and promotion outcomes. In the face of this undesirable scenario, it is crucial to understand the factors that deter military personnel from leaving their service.

4.3.2. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

As the empirical research on the *intention-behavior gap* in the military turnover context was limited, Batista and Oliveira (2023) presented a framework (Figure 6) based on the TPB, in which they propose a way to analyze and understand the gap, focusing on turnover behavior-inhibiting factors' identification. Special emphasis is given to the *inclined abstainers* (Sheeran, 2002), who express a positive intention to leave but do not act, as they are valuable informants for understanding the gap between intention and action. Furthermore, the authors proposed a framework that summarizes the factors inhibiting voluntary turnover and moderating the intention to leave, as well as the success or failure of this intention.

The model groups nine inhibiting factors into four subcategories and two categories. The endogenous category aggregates factors whose origin we seek in the individual. The demographic subcategory distinguishes individual characteristics and groups them by similarities, namely through factors that cannot be changed, but that identify, characterize, and categorize them, influencing their behavior. The internal subcategory encompasses the perception of internal/psychological factors that can either limit/expose the individual when facing the challenges and adversities that behavior can present. In addition to influencing turnover behavior, factors can change over time. The exogenous category aggregates factors that are influenced by forces external to the individual, which limit/prevent him/her from moving toward the decision to leave. The organizational subcategory translates the feelings associated with events that occur outside the organization. The social subcategory stems from the social context, which affects the individual when his/her decision is made. Its factors could originate from people close to the individual (such as family, friends, coworkers, superiors, subordinates, or peers) or society in general.

Figure 6 – Batista and Oliveira’s (2023) Decomposition Breakdown of the Turnover Influences



It is, therefore, essential to evaluate the proposed framework empirically. To do it, we identified a group of military personnel that included (Batista & Oliveira, 2023): *inclined abstainers* (who, despite intending to leave, did not leave voluntarily) but also *inclined actors* (those who have positive intentions to leave and complete the action so they go), *disinclined actors* (those who do not have intentions to leave, but they go), and *disinclined abstainers* (the individuals who intend to stay, so they remain for as long as possible).

To that end, we first aim to verify whether military personnel’s turnover intention is an antecedent/predictor of their turnover behavior, i.e., whether the intention is positively related to the actual turnover behavior. So, we formulate the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *Positive turnover intention influences turnover behavior.*

Secondly, the support of the Armed Forces to the population gave more credibility to the military organization (Kalkman, 2020), leading to greater organizational identification and social recognition for military personnel. Therefore, verifying each factor’s contribution is vital to avoid turnover behavior performance. Assuming each inhibiting factor acts as a negative moderator between turnover intention and inaction toward the behavior.

Field-of-study Mismatch – according to Verhaest et al. (2017), the mismatch between a personnel field-of-study and the job can be vertical (over-/undereducated) and

horizontal [mismatch between a worker's field-of-study (schooling received) and the job content], which leads to an imbalance between demand-supply. In the present study, we focus on the imperfect matching between the field-of-study attainments of military personnel and the required skills for the desired jobs. The target audience is PSP (Officers/Sergeants – both with higher education), indicating a horizontal mismatch. Based on Weiss's model (1971), supported by Dolton and Kidd (2008), which suggests that occupational-specific capital leads to less mobility, we formulate the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the field-of-study mismatch among PSP.*

Age – a crucial element of HRM is the retention policy, especially for older employees who are the guardians of valuable expertise and knowledge (Delfgaauw, 2007). In their meta-analysis, Ng and Feldman (2010) found that younger employees are more likely to leave their jobs. These changes in employee mobility patterns have led to a strong relationship between age and turnover, as older workers are more likely to experience positive emotions at work and value familiar social relationships. However, they are less likely to feel confident about getting comparable jobs in the external labor market, suggesting that older adults are less likely than younger adults to voluntarily turnover (Ng & Feldman, 2009).

Hypothesis 3: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by age among PSP.*

Cooperation by Others – translates the impact of feeling and the connection with others (Mossholder et al., 2005). It is the employee's perception of support from family, friends, and coworkers concerning their military employment. The systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) suggests that employee career decisions are influenced not only by the employee's attitudes, beliefs, and values but also by those of family and friends. Thus, family and friends can affect an employee's decision to continue collaborating with their organization by encouraging the employee to remain (Huffman et al., 2013). A military member's interactions with coworkers may have substantial implications for their well-being (Frenkel & Yu, 2011), organizational behaviors (Chiu et al., 2015), job performance, organizational attachment, and turnover/withdrawal intentions. Support from others can compensate for the lack of motivation, thus mitigating turnover.

Hypothesis 4a: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the cooperation of friends/family with other UCP.*

Hypothesis 4b: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the cooperation of coworkers with other UCP.*

Job Stability – refers to the maintenance or duration of jobs. Therefore, it is usually desirable for workers and organizations. Workers typically strive for job stability, one of the most crucial factors in achieving job satisfaction (European Commission, 2001). Most organizations aim to minimize high turnover and prefer stable employment relationships to recoup their investment in human capital and reduce the costs associated with workforce screening and selection (Origo & Pagani, 2009). The steadiness of work is aligned with job security, which occurs when the worker pursues job security provisions, characterized by a lack of worry/fear of job loss/status, or a lack of perceived threat (Gallie et al., 2017). Therefore, we suggest that providing job stability constitutes an inhibiting factor in leaving, negatively affecting turnover intentions and reducing turnover behavior in military organizations.

Hypothesis 5: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by job stability.*

Organizational Relationship – an individual relationship with the organization. It is based on three factors: (i) *organizational identification* – which is viewed as a desirable attachment made by individuals to their organizations (Luo et al., 2023). On the other hand, it is achieved when the military's socio-emotional needs, such as being valued, recognized, respected, and cared for, are satisfied (Frenkel & Yu, 2011). As military personnel identify with the organization, its values, norms, interests, and goals are incorporated and aligned in its self-definition (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). (ii) *job identification* – refers to the extent to which individuals perceive themselves to be part of the job they undertake (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), which implies that employees with stronger job identification will be more willing to tie their future to the organization in which their job is embedded; (iii) *employee loyalty* – it is positive orientation feeling of the employees related to the future direction and development of the organization, which has an impact on current operations (Antoncic & Antoncic, 2011).

Hypothesis 6a: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by organizational identification.*

Hypothesis 6b: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by job identification.*

Hypothesis 6c: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by employee loyalty.*

Inertia – a personal tendency to continue as before or to maintain the *status quo* – posits that people will maintain an existing action even in the face of a superior action (Samuelson & Zeckhauser, 1988). This tendency means people will stay in their current jobs, even if better opportunities are available. Inertia has three main antecedents: (i) *bother* – this is the belief that the hassles of changing jobs are more than any small benefits that might be gained; and Ahmad (2018) suggested the other two: (ii) *investment* – is the belief that any investments that have been made in the current job/organization, such as time, money, or training, would be lost if the membership in the organization were discontinued, (iii) *lack of alternatives* – is the belief that there are no better jobs available, or that the current job is the best option available. Inertia can also be broken into three components (Li et al., 2016): *affective* – occurs when an individual continues in the organization because it would be stressful to change because they enjoy or feel comfortable being part of the organization, or because they have otherwise developed a strong emotional attachment to the organization; *behavior* – implies staying in the organization simply because that is what the individual has always done; *cognitive* – means that an individual consciously stays in the organization, even though he/she is aware that it might not necessarily be the best option.

Hypothesis 7: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by inertia.*

Uncertainty – inability to predict if or when a new and better job will be found (Mantler et al., 2005). It is a subjective experience that reflects the discrepancy between the preferred level of certainty and perceptions regarding current employment opportunities (Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995). The factors materialize in anxiety (Miller & Monge, 1985), the risk of unemployment, loss of seniority, income, and other rights, as well as fear of the unknown or a lack of information to predict the consequences of the decision to leave. Ending employment is an inherent part of the organizational experience (Benedict, 2020), which drives employees to pursue other opportunities – a search that can be uncertain, potentially preventing military personnel from leaving.

Hypothesis 8: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by uncertainty.*

Social Recognition – a non-monetary reward materialized in esteem, respect, consideration, and being valued and considered (Elstad & Vabø, 2021) by hierarchical superiors, peers, subordinates, friends, family, and society in general. It is one of the most effective and straightforward strategies for engaging employees and enhancing workplace relationships.

Hypothesis 9: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by social recognition.*

External Context – represents a set of factors out of an employee's control. Typically, employees have little or no control over external contextual forces. These external elements can distort the expectations of exchange between the worker and the organization, altering the possibility of leaving the workplace, such as a lack of job opportunities, occasional impediments, legal barriers, financial issues, loss of benefits or incentives, family obligations, relocation costs, or other exit factors.

Hypothesis 10: *The positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior is negatively moderated by the external context.*

4.4. Method

The observational study design used was cross-sectional, meaning that the participants' opinions were measured at a single point in time. This study employed a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2005) to investigate the relationship between turnover intention and behavior (using binary logistic regression) and the moderating role of inhibiting factors (Model 1 of the macro-PROCESS, version 4.2). A supplementary qualitative approach (content analysis) was used to explore the moderating role of inhibiting factors further. The use of mixed methods reduced the potential for measurement and non-response error, and better tailors the study methods to the intended sample (Dillman et al., 2014; Singleton & Straits, 2009).

4.4.1. Sample

The invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 4,815 potential participants via e-mail, of whom 1,561 responded. Of these, 11 did not accept the informed consent, and 1,064 were military personnel [if we intend to analyze this sample, we would have to wait six years for UCP and 47 for PSP to determine whether the intention to leave had become

real (voluntary turnover) or not (involuntary turnover)]. A convenience sample of 486 ex-military personnel [245 involuntarily turnover – they performed the behavior for reasons beyond their control, such as legal imposition (limit of contract years or mandatory retirement), medical releases, and disciplinary reasons; and 241 voluntarily turnover – they performed the behavior by their own initiative] from the Portuguese Army was selected for this study (with ex-military, we can easily classify them combining how they left with the intention to leave).

Exclusion criteria included military personnel: (i) who left the organization [military personnel who were still in the organization were not included, because although they might have intended to leave, this behavior could still become real and as such they would no longer be *inclined abstainers*, but rather as *Inclined Actors*, and thus the results would be adulterated] more than six months ago [to limit response bias and due to the time limit that military e-mail is active after leaving the organization]; (ii) who did not accept informed consent; or (iii) who did not complete the questionnaire.

The collaborating organization for this study is one of the most respected and identifiable organizations in Portugal and was chosen for having authorized and shared the survey link.

The age of the total participants ($N = 486$) ranged from 19 to 60, with a mean of 34.86 and a standard deviation of 11.14. Additionally, 14.4% of the participants were female. Most of them were singles (57%), had a bachelor's or higher level of education, were lower rank, and were at the beginning of their careers. The participants who left voluntarily ranged from 19 to 54, with a mean of 34.22 and a standard deviation of 10.92. Notably, 10.0% of the participants were female.

4.4.2. Data Collection and Ethical Issues

The Portuguese Army authorized the questionnaire and sent it officially via e-mail. Data were collected through a survey by questionnaire built into the Google® Forms platform (Appendix 4). Considering the target audience's cultural, situational, and language characteristics, the survey was administered in Portuguese after applying the necessary *translation-back translation-comparison* technique (Behling & Law, 2000). Six military psychologists/sociologists reviewed the study for clarity, readability, and terminology. A pilot test (Creswell, 2005) was conducted with 40 Portuguese military personnel to adapt the scales to the context. The feedback from the pilot test was incorporated into the final version of the survey by specifying the target organization (e.g., the *Army* has given me

a lot of things in my life), adopting military terminology (e.g., *comrades* instead of *coworkers*), and changing the items to the past tense (e.g., *has given* instead of *give*).

Data were collected from September to December 2023. The e-mail contained an explanation of the study's objective and a survey link. The questionnaire (anonymous/confidential) had a brief description of the survey and informed consent (only upon the participant's approval would the survey proceed). Participation was entirely voluntary, with no compensation offered, and the results were shared with participants.

4.4.3. Analytical Procedures

A significant portion of behavioral decision-making requires dichotomously framing the determinants of outcomes. The first hypothesis related to the relationship between turnover intention and behavior was tested using a binary logistic regression, and the other hypotheses aimed to verify the moderators' influences in the turnover intention and behavior relationship were tested using Model 1 of the macro-PROCESS, version 4.2 (Hayes, 2013), both on SPSS version 29, for MacBook. Binary logistic regression is a regression analysis in which the response/outcome variable is a binary or dichotomous, two-category variable (Fritz & Berger, 2015) that can only take on two different values or degrees. In logistic regression, the sample size is fundamental (Hair et al., 2019); therefore, we followed the suggestion of Hosmer and Lemeshow (2000), with a minimum sample size of 400 cases. Moderation analysis determines whether the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables are subject to a moderating variable (Hayes, 2013).

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the model structure. The CFA helps identify the factor structure that the phenomenon follows or describes. Thus, CFA was employed to confirm that the data aligned with the hypothesized measurement model, as informed by theory and prior research (Hair et al., 2019). According to Thompson (2004), CFA can be used to test the fit of a factor model, considering the number of factors, which questions reflect these factors, and the correlations between them. Statistics considered for our CFA analysis included the X^2 and the model fit indices, such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Akaike's information criterion (AIC), Bayesian information criterion (BIC), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The factor loads presented in the CFA model were sufficient

to build a parsimonious theoretical model, as shown in Appendix 5, which confirms the theoretical model with the values presented in Table III. Therefore, participants of our study were able to successfully distinguish the key constructs of our study from one another (Conway & Lance, 2010).

Table III – Summary of CFA model fit indices

X^2	df	p	CFI	TLI	AIC	BIC	RMSEA	SRMR
3935.498	2783	.000	.959	.956	4531,498	4647,468	.029	.0523

CFI & TLI values > .95, RMSEA values < .05, and SRMR values < .10 indicate “good fit” of the model to the data. AIC & BIC values follow the “smaller is better” criterion.

The normality and outliers were assessed (there were no records of outliers). Significance levels were set at $p < .05$.

A content analysis was conducted to balance qualitative and quantitative findings. Content analysis is a research method used to identify the presence of specific words, patterns, themes, trends, or concepts within a dataset. It can be qualitative (focusing on the interpretation of themes) or quantitative (measuring the frequency of certain elements) – allowing for detailed interpretation or statistical comparisons. Furthermore, it is a method designed to identify and interpret meaning in recorded forms of communication by isolating small pieces of the data that represent salient concepts and then applying or creating a framework to organize the pieces in a way that can be used to describe or explain a phenomenon (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991), shorting text into groups of related categories to identify similarities and differences, patterns, and associations, both on the surface [manifest (e.g., frequency counts – the number of instances a particular word appears) – the nature of truth is believed to be objective, observable, and measurable] and implied within [latent (pattern/projective) – seeks to identify a construct or concept within the text using specific words or phrases for substantiation, or to provide a more organized structure to the text being described (e.g., interpreting what is hidden deep within the text)]. Content analysis rests on the assumption that texts are a rich data source with great potential to reveal valuable information about particular phenomena (Kondracki et al., 2002). Content analysis was conducted through the following steps: (i) definition of the goal for the analysis [identify comments concerning the factors that prevent soldiers from leaving the Portuguese Army based on Batista and Oliveira’s (2023) framework]; (ii) defenition about the methodological approach (latent and manifest content analysis); (iii) coding process: to create and use codes (identifying keywords related to each code) to

organize, categorize, interpret, and understand the data [codes, categories, and themes were created *a priori* based on Batista and Oliveira's (2023) framework and a residual code (others) – through a directed and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)]; (iv) analysis of patterns, relationships, or trends; (v) measured the number of times the inhibiting factors appears; and (vi) interpretation of the findings and draw conclusions based on the data.

4.4.4. Measures

The questionnaire was divided into four sections.

The first referred to military personnel's demographic characteristics (Table IV) and a dichotomous question that qualified the turnover behavior [*Was your turnover from the organization involuntary (legal imposition, medical, disciplinary, or other issue – behavior performed for reasons beyond your control) or voluntary (by your own free will – behavior performed by your initiative)?*]

The second part measured turnover intention using the short version of the TIS-6, developed by Roodt (2004) and published by Bothma and Roodt (2013). The six items were assessed on a five-point Likert scale. The midpoint of the scale is 18. A total score below 18 indicates the intention to stay, while a total score above 18 indicates the intention to leave the organization (Nashwan et al., 2021; Németh et al., 2024). The TIS-6 was chosen because it is a reliable and valid measure of turnover intention in a military context. The validity of the TIS-6 was verified in several studies conducted in a military context (Hettigoda & Hamersley, 2019; Mogaladi & Bester, 2020); a sample item is: *Before leaving the Portuguese Army, how often did you consider leaving your job?*

The third part of the survey measured the inhibiting factors proposed by Batista and Oliveira (2023). The criteria for selecting the scales were that they should make theoretical sense, be manageable to administer, and be comprehensible to respondents. Some of the items were reverse-scored, as suggested by the scale developers.

Field-of-study mismatch – was measured using the Allen and van der Velden (2001) scale, further refined by Salas-Velasco (2021), e.g., *Before leaving the Army, if you were looking for a job outside the Army, which area of professional training did you feel was the most appropriate?*

Age – was measured in years as a metric variable.

Cooperation by others – was measured using two scales: (i) *friends/family support* was measured using the family-to-work enhancement scale (Graves et al., 2007), e.g.,

Before leaving the Army, my family or personal environment gave me the energy to carry out my work. (ii) *coworker support* was measured using a 6-item scale adapted from Mossholder et al. (2005), e.g., *Before I left the Army, my comrades were genuinely concerned about my well-being.*

Job Stability – was measured based on previous research (Pruneda, 2017), with suggestions from experts and military psychologists/sociologists, e.g., *Before leaving the Army, with no legal restrictions, I could keep my job for another six months.*

Organizational relationship – was measured using three subscales: (i) *organizational identification* – was measured using the scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1995) in military research, e.g., *When someone criticized the Army, it felt like a personal criticism*; (ii) *job identification* – was measured using the scale suggested by Luhtanen and Crocker (1992) further refined by Sargent (2013), e.g., *Before leaving the Army, my job generally had little impact on my self-esteem (reverse-scored)*; (iii) *employee loyalty* – was measured using the scale suggested by Dutta and Dhir (2021), which is operationalized by the sense of ownership (affective component), trust (the cognitive component), and willingness to stay (the behavioral component), e.g., *Whenever I had the opportunity to talk about the Army in social gatherings, I conveyed a positive image.*

Inertia – was measured using an adaptation of the scale developed by Polites and Karahanna (2012) after Li et al. (2016) updated it, e.g., *Before leaving, I thought about continuing to work in the Army simply because it was what I had always done.*

Uncertainty – was measured using the Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale-Short form (IUS-12), developed by Carleton et al. (2007). The scale measures *Prospective Anxiety*, which is future-related fear or anxiety, and *Inhibitory Anxiety*, which is uncertainty inhibiting action or experience, e.g., *Unexpected situations disturb me a lot.*

Social Recognition – was measured using the scale developed by Helm et al. (2013) and adapted to the study context, e.g., *Before leaving the Army, I sometimes felt that my work was not recognized despite my efforts (reverse-scored).*

External Context – was measured using a 4-item scale formulation by us, based on previous research (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014) and experts' suggestions, e.g., *I did not leave the Army before because it was not the ideal time.*

A **Marker Variable** was included, as suggested by Simmering and colleagues (2015), to assess the presence/magnitude of common-method variance and to limit

response bias. The marker variable, attitude toward the color blue (ATCB), has no theoretical basis for correlation with our substantive constructs. The items used a Likert scale anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree), e.g., *I prefer blue to all other colors*.

The fourth part of the study consisted of an open-ended question regarding the inhibiting factors and their influence on the decision-making process of staying or leaving the organization [*Do you have any comments you would like to add concerning the factors that prevent soldiers from leaving the Portuguese Army?*].

4.5. Results

All participants answered all the questions (no missing cases). The normality test for the variables revealed a non-normal distribution ($p < .001$). There is discriminant validity since the constructs are unrelated (e.g., ATCB has practically no relationship with focal contacts, thereby alleviating the problem of common method variance). Furthermore, there is convergent validity for certain constructs (e.g., *job identification* and *employee loyalty*), as shown in Appendix 6. The VIF values were within the acceptable range, alleviating concerns about multicollinearity (Field, 2013).

Table IV presents the demographic characteristics of all participants who left the organization more than six months ago, accepted the informed consent, completed the questionnaire, and voluntarily left the Portuguese Army.

Table IV – Demographic and Turnover Behavior Results

Variables	Options	Total (N = 486)		Total left Voluntarily (N = 241)	
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Gender	Male	416	84.98	215	89.2
	Female	70	14.4	26	10.8
	Other/I prefer not to answer	3	0.62	0	0
Marital Status	Single	277	57	137	56.8
	Domestic partnership	53	10.9	23	9.5
	Married	141	29	78	32.4
	Divorced/Separated	12	2.5	2	.8
	Widow(er)	3	.6	1	.4
Level of Education (European Qualifications Framework)	Level 2	25	5.1	7	2.9
	Level 3	73	15	34	14.1
	Level 4	56	11.5	24	10
	Level 5	12	2.4	7	2.9
	Level 6	204	42	112	46.5
	Level 7	116	23.9	57	23.7

Variables	Options	Total (N = 486)		Total left Voluntarily (N = 241)	
		f	%	f	%
Military Category	Officers	141	29	67	27.8
	Sergeants	131	27	55	22.8
	Enlisted	214	44	119	49.4
Form of Service Provision	PSP	259	53.3	122	50.6
	UCP	227	46.7	119	49.4
Length of Service	Initial formation	3	.6	3	1.2
	Short (<10 years – PSP / <2 years – UCP)	263	54.1	139	57.7
	Medium (between 10-20 years – PSP / between 2-4 years – UCP)	90	18.5	36	14.9
	Long (>20 years – PSP / >4 years – UCP)	130	26.7	63	26.1
Turnover Behavior	Involuntarily	245	50.4	--	--
	Voluntarily	241	49.6	--	--

Table V presents the reliability and validity tests. All the constructs present a Composite Reliability (CR) > .862 and Cronbach's α > .786, and the average variance extracted (AVE) > .558, meeting the required discriminant validity of all constructs.

Table V – Scales Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's α (> .7)	CR (> .6)	AVE (> .5)
Turnover Intention	.858	.895	.590
Cooperation by Family/Friends	.902	.921	.594
Cooperation by Coworkers	.970	.975	.869
Job Stability	.786	.862	.611
Organizational Identification	.953	.964	.841
Job Identification	.837	.891	.673
Employee Loyalty	.944	.951	.600
Inertia	.952	.959	.722
Uncertainty	.928	.938	.558
Social Recognition	.853	.901	.694
External Context	.839	.892	.676
ATCB	.869	.920	.793

The binary logistic regression results are presented in Table VI. A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of turnover intention on the likelihood that participants left the Portuguese Army involuntarily or voluntarily. The

binary logistic regression model was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 65.9722, p < .001$. The model explained 17% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in turnover behavior and correctly classified 68.1% of the cases. Increasing turnover intention was associated with a higher likelihood of turnover behavior (2.21 times more likely). Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported.

Table VI – Binary Logistic Regression Results

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Exp (B)</i>	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Turnover Intention	.794	.105	57.171	1	<.001	2.212	1.800	2.717
Constant	-.025	.097	.065	1	.799	.976		

Table VII presents the moderation effects in the relationship between turnover intention and behavior. Hypothesis 3 (age), 4b (cooperation by coworkers), 5 (job stability), 6a (organizational identification), 6b (job identification), and 9 (social recognition) moderate the relationship in a statistically significant manner. However, hypotheses 2 (field-of-study mismatch), 4a (cooperation by family and friends), 6c (employee loyalty), 7 (inertia), 8 (uncertainty), and 10 (external context) do not moderate the relationship in a statistically significant way.

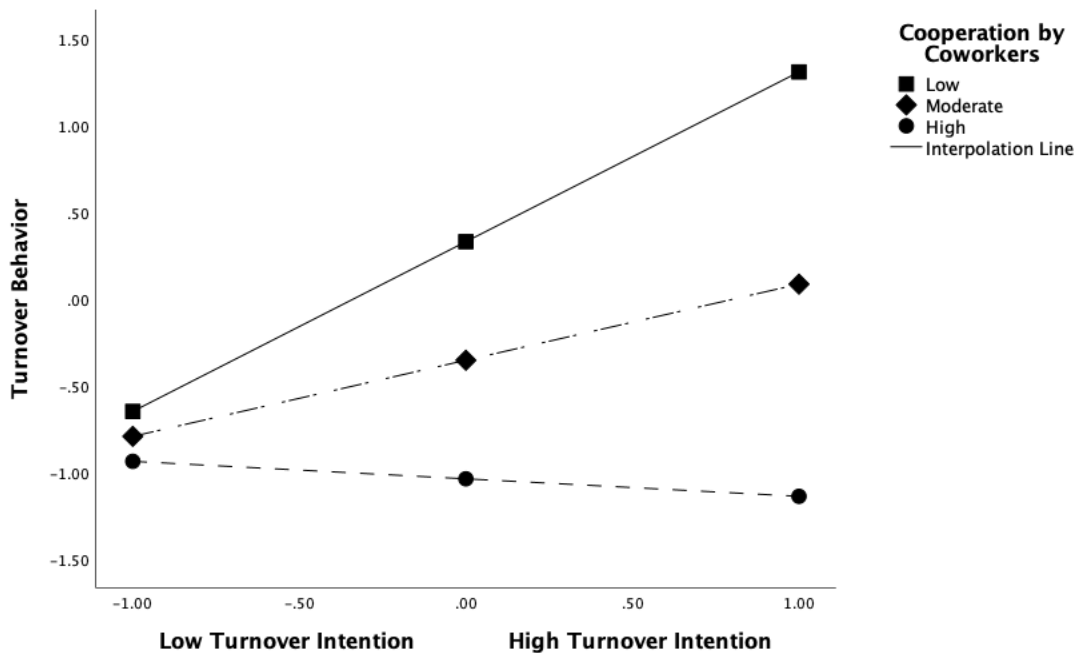
Table VII – Moderating Variables

Factors	Hypothesis	<i>Coeff (Int_1)</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>	IC 95%		Observation
						LIIC	LSIC	
Field-of-study Mismatch (Salas-Velasco, 2021)	H2	.0927	.869	1.0662	.2863	-.0777	.2631	Not Supported
Age (chronological)	H3	-.0350	.0086	-4.0547	.0001	-.0520	-.0181	Supported
Cooperation by Others	H4a Family and friends (Graves et al., 2007)	.0003	.1010	.0025	.9980	-.1978	.1983	Not Supported
	H4b Coworkers (Mossholder et al., 2005)	-.5398	.1389	-3.8864	.0001	-.8120	-.2676	Supported
Job Stability (Pruneda, 2017)	H5	-.4958	.1372.	-3.6130	.0003	-.7648	-.2268	Supported
Organizational Relationship	H6a Organizational Identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1995)	-.6159	.1320.	-4.6655	.0000	-.8746	-.3572	Supported

Factors	Hypothesis	Coeff (Int_1)	SE	Z	p	IC 95%		Observation
						LIIC	LSIC	
	H6b Job Identification (Sargent, 2013)	-.4762	.1555	-3.0557	.0022	-.7800	-.1704	Supported
	H6c Employee Loyalty (Dutta & Dhir, 2021),	.0927	.1036	.8945	.3711	-.1104	.2958	Not Supported
Inertia (Li et al., 2016)	H7	.1783	.1147	1.5539	.1202	-.0466	.4031	Not Supported
Uncertainty (Carleton et al., 2007)	H8	-.1273	.1077	-1.1828	.2369	-.3384	.0837	Not Supported
Social Recognition (Helm et al., 2013)	H9	-.3750	.1208	-3.1052	.0019	-.6117	-.1383	Supported
External Context (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014)	H10	-.1389	.1049	-1.3237	.1856	-.3445	.0668	Not Supported

As an example, Figure 7 illustrates the moderating effect of cooperation by coworkers in the relationship between turnover intention and behavior.

Figure 7 – Moderation Graph



We found that, for military personnel with low levels of cooperation, the turnover intention effect is statistically significant at $p = 0.000$. Moreover, its partial correlation of $r = 0.9787$ indicates a significant effect. The results for military personnel with moderate levels of cooperation by coworkers, $r = 0.4389$, $p = 0.022$, are roughly similar to those of

military personnel with low levels of cooperation from coworkers. For military personnel with high levels of cooperation with coworkers, the part correlation of $r = -0.1009$, $p = 0.022$, is not substantial.

Table VIII summarizes the quantitative content analysis results (frequency count of mentions), including the results for measuring the number of times the inhibiting factors and other elements appear. The results of the qualitative content analysis will be presented during the discussion.

Table VIII – Categories and Quantify System

Categories	Subcategories	Agree (f)	Disagree (f)	No mention of the factor (f)
Question: <i>Do you have any comments you would like to add concerning the factors that prevent soldiers from leaving the Portuguese Army?</i>				
Field-of-study Mismatch		22	76	388
Age		253	44	189
Cooperation by Others	Family and friends	10	86	390
	Coworkers	112	13	361
Job Stability		223	17	246
Organizational Relationship	Organizational Identification	149	57	280
	Job Identification	187	43	256
	Employee Loyalty	54	63	369
Inertia		23	79	384
Uncertainty		12	57	417
Social Recognition		83	33	370
External Context		12	45	429
Others		56	79	351

4.6. Discussion

Turnover intention was a significant predictor of turnover behavior, and a positive relationship was observed between turnover intention and actual turnover behavior. The increased turnover intention was associated with a 2,21 times increased likelihood of turnover behavior, ascertaining the effect of turnover intention on the probability that participants leave the Portuguese Army voluntarily. Females (10.0%) had a lower propensity for turnover behavior. These results align with the existing literature (Batista

& Oliveira, 2023; Griffeth et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2014; Mitchell et al., 2001; Mobley et al., 1979; Steers & Mowday, 1981; Tett & Meyer, 1993).

The moderation results demonstrated that certain factors negatively and significantly influenced the turnover intention-behavior relationship, with $p < .05$ (e.g., age). Others had a negative and insignificant influence on the turnover intention-behavior relationship, with a $p > .05$. (e.g., uncertainty). Moreover, others had a positive and insignificant influence on the turnover intention-behavior relationship, with a $p > .05$ (e.g., field-of-study mismatch).

The PSP with a field-of-study specific to military employment (infantry or cavalry) are less likely to leave the Army as they feel that the field-of-study is not valued and is in low demand in the civilian market; however, in other non-specific areas, this does not happen (e.g., medicine, engineering, or pharmacy). Its occurrence would constitute an economic loss for society, given the investment in training these soldiers. The mismatch only occurs if the labor supply competencies (the types of skills brought by the military) and the labor demand competencies (the skills demanded by civilian employers) differ. The non-confirmation may also be due to the fact that, in the post-COVID-19 period, more military personnel have been requested for public functions outside the military organization. As a result, it was found that, in general, the military of the Portuguese Army did not recognize this incompatibility when they stated: *“If I were from infantry, it would have been difficult to find alternatives, but my specialty is in great demand in the civilian market”*, which is in agreement with Salas-Velasco (2021). The minimum age to be in the Portuguese Army is 17 years. The maximum is 44 years under the UCP regime (depending on the pre-established period of military service to be rendered) and 65 years under PSP (depending on the age limit associated with rank and, cumulatively, a pre-established period of military service to be rendered). The age-turnover relationship is not consensual. The results suggested that it has a significant influence. The results align with the literature (Fung et al., 2001; Hatak et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2009), which suggests a negative relationship between age and turnover behavior. Additionally, the testimonies obtained from the participants support these findings, with one participant stating, *“If I were 30 years old, I would have left earlier”*. In line with previous studies (Le et al., 2023), we suggest that external resource support has a significant impact on the retention of military personnel, particularly in terms of co-workers. Although family and friends’ support are essential, this subfactor was not supported. As a result of the end of

conscription, fewer young people have family members who served in the Armed Forces. Hence, they are unfamiliar with military missions, are no longer exposed to military service, and do not even know anyone who works in the Armed Forces (Obis, 2023). This is supported by the responses obtained, such as *“My comrades were always a support in difficult times, unlike my current colleagues”* or *“My mother sometimes asked me what I do in the Army, she wanted me to leave”*. The participants valued the degree of security of their contractual relationship with the Armed Forces, perhaps due to bad experiences after leaving. The results suggest that this factor is one of the main reasons military personnel choose to pursue a career in the military organization. This aligns with the literature (Fu et al., 2017) when dealing with jobs with clear, accessible, and transparent regulations. This fact is reinforced by statements such as, *“Currently, I do not know when they will pay me, or even if I am still working tomorrow”*, or *“In the Army, I knew when I received my salary”*. The relationship between military personnel and the Portuguese Army depends on the degree to which individual and organizational needs are complementary. The study results support this notion. That is, individuals increase their sentiment toward an organization to the extent that they fulfill their own needs. At the same time, they behave in support of the organization, as predicted by Blau’s social exchange theory (1964). We believe employee loyalty was not supported due to the break in the relationship, as participants are no longer in the organization. However, identification with the organization and the job was supported, which suggests a strong connection to the institution. Fact corroborated by statements like *“Despite the constraints of rigid schedules and constant availability for work, I identified with the organization”* or *“I liked what I did in the Army”*. Some military personnel who stayed until the last day only left because they were forced to, as they would have preferred to stay. However, many others left early, as verified by the positive but insignificant influence of inertia on the turnover intention-behavior link. Although inertia is a characteristic of some employees, for the participants in this study, inertia was not an inhibiting factor. For example, one participant stated, *“The military life is not compatible with conformity. Military life is about moving forward and not stopping”*, or *“The day-to-day life of a soldier is too dynamic to keep looking at yesterday”*. DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) suggest that one of the most challenging aspects of organizational change experienced by employees is the uncertainty associated with the process and outcomes of change. We believe that uncertainty is an obstacle to exiting during times of recession.

However, in times of prosperity, as experienced during data collection (post-COVID-19), this level is lower due to the numerous employment opportunities available (Claveria & Sorić, 2023). This aligns with the testimony, *“At the time I thought about leaving the military organization, I had many job offers, which allowed me to choose”*. Military organizations enjoy a positive image in society (Shields, 2020) due to the decline of antimilitarism and the rise of new threats, including terrorism. These factors are likely to give the military establishment today an assurance of its social importance and to give its personnel a strong sense of esteem. This trend is reinforced by the support given to the population during the COVID-19 pandemic (Gibson-Fall, 2021) and citizens’ perceptions of the Armed Forces’ importance due to recent conflicts, such as those involving Hamas/Hezbollah/Iran-Israel, Russia and Ukraine, or in the Sahel. The results indicate that social recognition acts as a moderator, negatively and significantly influencing this relationship. This aligns with statements such as, *“When I was in uniform, I felt that people looked at me with pride”*. In our study, participants believed that the external context outside the Portuguese Army was not a barrier to their decision to leave the Portuguese Army. This factor is closely linked to the current economic and social situation. This was mainly due to the contrast between the initial post-COVID-19 (with regression and uncertainty) and the current post-COVID-19, characterized by economic prosperity (Claveria & Sorić, 2023). As stated by the participants, *“Now in civilian labor, I have more job alternatives than when I left the Army”* or *“Before leaving the Army, I already had a contract with a company”*.

Through the frequency count of mentions shown in Table VIII, we can reinforce the results of the qualitative analysis, since both results (agreement vs disagreement with the factors inhibiting exit) are in tune [e.g., the field-of-study mismatch factor is not supported as a moderator in the relationship between turnover intention and behavior, a result that is in line (quantitatively and percentage-wise) with responses to the open-ended question]. Furthermore, in their responses to the open-ended question, ex-military personnel repeatedly expressed the need for a better balance between military and personal life, more time for family and personal life, and therefore a more flexible schedule.

4.7. Implications for Human Resource Management praxis

In this article, we tested the military personnel turnover-inhibiting factors framework suggested by Batista and Oliveira (2023).

The findings demonstrated the impact of turnover intention on the likelihood that participants left the Portuguese Army voluntarily and suggested that certain factors can enhance the retention ratio, thereby reducing the need for new personnel recruitment. Other factors are associated with the economic and social context. In times of recession, they could be inhibiting factors, but in times of prosperity, they play no significant role. The organizations (military and non-military) must focus on attracting, developing, involving, empowering, and retaining their personnel. Therefore, organizations should focus on endogenous factors (e.g., organizational or job identification), specifically the inhibition of turnover, and reinforce them rather than merely trying to counteract exogenous factors (e.g., employment rates or external context).

In the Armed Forces, job stability (e.g., through transparent HR policies), interpersonal relationships (e.g., designing and allocating tasks that require cooperation between coworkers), and social recognition must be sustained and, if possible, reinforced (e.g., by promoting and delivering more actions aimed at society's well-being). In addition, strictly military positions must be prioritized when assigning a position to military personnel, rather than non-strictly military positions. The non-strictly military positions must be assigned to civilians, reservists, volunteers, or outsourced.

4.8. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Although the current study primarily aims to investigate military organizations, its findings may also resonate and apply to other organizations, such as police forces or services, given some similarities in mission and hierarchical structure between them and military organizations.

This research is not without limitations. Firstly, the low response rate. The number of ex-military personnel who accepted to participate in the questionnaire was only 10.09% of the initial participants invited via e-mail (the invitation to participate in the survey was sent to 4,815 potential participants, of which 1,561 responded, and of these, 11 did not accept the informed consent, 1,064 were military personnel, and 486 ex-military personnel (245 involuntarily turnover). Secondly, to analyze the military personnel who are still part of the organization, we would have to conduct a longitudinal study to verify whether the intention to leave has become real behavior or not. However, this option would lead us to wait six years for UCP and 47 for PSP, which would make it difficult to conclude the study. Thirdly, the use of the cross-sectional quantitative approach has two significant limitations: it is unsuitable for studying temporal dynamics

(e.g., it does not consider the economic and social evolution or the changes in new laws approved in the meantime), and it does not include certain groups (e.g., new incomers), which are essential in studies such as turnover. Fourthly, a recall bias (Bell et al., 2019) may have biased responses, given the differences in the accuracy of study participants' recollections about their experience when they left the organization (however, the external validity is still plausible because the retrospective self-reports were collected no later than six months post-exit).

For further research, it would be valuable to identify internal programs in organizations that aim to reinforce some of the factors tested here or other factors that can inhibit workers from leaving organizations, as well as evaluating alternatives to placing military personnel in positions that are not strictly military, such as artificial intelligence, robots, civilians, reservists, volunteers, or outsourcing. On the other hand, there should be an investigation into alternatives for rigid work (e.g., FWA) – a suggestion that some responders expressed when answering the open-ended question.

4.9. Conclusions

The sustainability and success of military organizations depend on their ability to recruit and retain talent while eliciting commitment, effort, and dedication from their personnel. By minimizing voluntary employee turnover, organizations can improve staff retention. This study presents a model that highlights factors often overlooked or devalued by organizations. Therefore, we examined factors that influence the relationship between turnover intention and behavior. Once the inhibiting factors are identified, tested, and supported, reflection should be made to suggest ways to reinforce them through specific interventions.

Battlefield success depends on effective leadership, technological superiority, unit cohesion, and military education. Despite the importance of military-specific knowledge in the most critical areas, all soldiers must have a broader range of skills to perform their duties fully and aspire to achieve excellence. To this end, military personnel must be supported and encouraged to attend extra-military programs to complement their education. Experienced military personnel may find their age an obstacle to leaving the military, while younger personnel feel more empowered to find the job of their dreams. This can only be overcome if they are satisfied with the work within the organization.

Consequently, it is essential to identify the ambitions and desires of employees and strike a balance between these and the organization's needs and rules. Emotional support

provided by friends, family, and coworkers can have a profoundly positive impact on the workplace. Therefore, one way to enhance family support for military personnel is to promote work-life balance policies and strengthen employee relationships. A stable job is typically defined as a position with a consistent schedule and salary that can be held for an extended period (St-Denis, 2024). Maintaining such stability is crucial for military organizations. When personnel join the military and stay for some time, they inevitably become identified with the organization (Holmberg & Alvinus, 2019). They either like it when assigned a new role or ask for a better-fitting role. Loyalty is one of the Army's values, instilled and demanded by the military culture. Based on the study's findings, it can be suggested that employee inertia does not contribute to their retention. However, while inertia can be beneficial, it must be mitigated to motivate employees. Given the dynamism of the Armed Forces' mission, the military organization is incompatible with individuals who lack initiative or the desire to maintain the temporal or spatial *status quo*. Uncertainty depends on two variables: the certainty of what one has and the uncertainty of what one might find after deciding to leave. In the military, stable employment is appreciated in opposition to the uncertainty of the civilian world. This can lead to an imbalance, as people often weigh the uncertainty of the outside world more heavily than the certainty of their current job. However, this always depends on the socioeconomic situation when making decisions. Social recognition is one of the most influential non-monetary forms of payment. When employees feel their work is valued, they are more likely to stay with an organization and be invested in it. External context is tricky because it is not constant; reasons that disfavor it now can change and become a facilitator of exit, such as better job alternatives with higher performance indices of the national economy.

HR experts must understand the factors influencing employee retention and take appropriate steps to address them. This includes communicating effectively with employees, meeting their needs, and reinforcing the emotional salary, which can be achieved through enhancing work-life policies, offering flexible or hybrid work, or redeploying employees to less attractive positions (not strictly military).

Chapter V – Military Flexible Work Arrangements: The Future Now

Chapter V – Military Flexible Work Arrangements: The Future Now

5.1. Introduction

Starting in 2019, the world experienced an unexpected and unprecedented pandemic, presenting significant challenges/opportunities. At that time, to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, many organizations followed the guidelines of health organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), implementing self-isolation and stay-at-home policies to protect their employees. The Armed Forces were no exception and had to rapidly adapt to limit disruption to their routine activities/operations. These measures have led many military personnel who are not expressly needed in the workplace to work from home (WFH). The soldiers' adaptability, flexibility, resilience, and the information and communication technology (ICT) available were undoubtedly the necessary allies for success in remote work. The Portuguese Army and its military personnel faced many of the same concerns as other civilian organizations, with the added burden of maintaining combat readiness and fulfilling the mission. Nevertheless, while many organizations are seeking to preserve the benefits of this approach in a post-pandemic world, the Portuguese Army has reverted to previously established institutional processes and ingrained cultural norms, which include a return to the traditional workplace for all military personnel, regardless of the nature of their tasks.

The Army is a 24/7 organization that must always be ready to mobilize with little or no notice to move, typically in highly unpredictable situations that require flexible/rapid responses (Wadsworth & Southwell, 2011). The military profession encompasses a range of cultural peculiarities, including the risk of injury/death, frequent Homeland displacements, deployments on (inter)national missions/operations, and long and unpredictable working hours, thereby inducing strain on families.

The culture, as portrayed in most military organizations, demands the need to redefine work and life expectations, considering aspects such as flexibility in terms of location and work hours whenever possible, compatibility with family life, employee development, enjoyment, and interests (Reynolds, 2019). Previous research (Choi, 2020; Shifrin & Michel, 2022) on the impact of flexible work on employees' subjective well-being has generally shown positive results but has also highlighted specific challenges from employee and leadership perspectives. Additionally, research has shown that organizations offering FWA are more attractive to job applicants than those that do not

(Thompson et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is a widespread consensus that, in the future, flexible/remote work will be the norm rather than the exception (Chung & Lippe, 2020). Although it will not be a “one-size-fits-all” solution, traditional work, mainly manual labor, will remain, and offices will not disappear completely (Vyas, 2022).

The call for the discussion about which and how different workplace models stimulate growth in labor efficiency continues, mainly because there is a gap in identifying alternative forms of hybrid workplaces in various labor conditions that would be expedient (Ključnikov et al., 2023), among others, in the adoption of FWA by the Armed Forces. To address the aforementioned gap, this article examines FWA. It suggests how they can be adopted in the Portuguese Army, utilizing literature references, interviews, and the current progress in the Australian, German, UK, New Zealand (NZ), USA, and Spanish Armies. According to the division suggested by Koeszegi and colleagues (2014), we allocated the military personnel into three areas: Combat Units (land units with combat or combat support tasks), Support Units (agencies/combat service support that do not directly support combat units, but with administrative functions or deal with service/supply), and Training Centers (academies/schools with training/improvement of the military personnel tasks).

5.2. Portuguese Army

Portugal is a full member of the United Nations, NATO, the EU, and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries. The Portuguese Army's conscription system ended in 2004, and women have had voluntary access since 1992. Its fundamental mission is to ensure the Republic's military (self-)defense and carry out all the military tasks required to guarantee its population's sovereignty, national independence, and freedom/security against any aggression or external threats. The Portuguese military personnel are under the military condition that requires them to be conditioned/subordinated to the (Portuguese) national interest and the duty of permanent availability in the temporal/geographical dimension (Batista & Oliveira, 2023). Among many challenges currently faced by the Portuguese Army, the shortage of personnel is the most pressing.

Portuguese Army military personnel worked exclusively under a rigid work regime; exceptions occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic or under exceptional circumstances, which were ordinarily temporary and informal.

5.3. Literature Review

Military motivation is intrinsic, predominantly value-based (Şerban, 2024). Therefore, military leadership and HRM work together to have a more substantial impact in motivating their soldiers. Leroy et al. (2018) proposed seven options (*independence, enactment, supplementary fit, synergistic fit, complementary fit, perceptual filters, and dynamic fit*) for how leadership and HRM may co-determine employee motivation and performance (Dagher et al., 2024). One measure of motivation and performance improvement that has gained popularity is flexible work, now regarded as a credible alternative to traditional office working, where employees are expected to achieve the ideal result regardless of the process (Fadhila & Wicaksana, 2020).

This new way of working, starting with remote work, emerged in the 1970s because of environmental/productivity/cost concerns when Nilles first explored it (1975).

Amirul and Shaari (2021) analyzed 6.5 million documents through an SSCR to provide an overview of FWA's research trends over the last decades. They exposed fifteen scopes of study in FWA, but did not identify any military documents. Furthermore, they provided insight into the advantages and disadvantages pertinent to FWA. According to Eurofound (2024), the current trend is toward greater flexibility in relation to the place of work rather than flexible working hours.

The current growing demand for flexible work and other balanced work-life initiatives has been influenced by an assortment of factors, namely family structures and social roles changes, inter-generational differences in work values, an increasingly knowledgeable and expert workforce, more significant numbers of dual-earner couples and sole parents, and the rapid expansion of work systems and ICT allowing work portability (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). The approach to flexible work has changed recently, no longer asking "*Why should a position be flexible?*" to "*Why not?*" However, it does not mean that all types of FWA will be possible for every position. A bus driver cannot WFH because the bus must run. Nevertheless, nothing prevents them from negotiating another FWA with the employer. The military is another occupation that society often considers ineligible for FWA.

5.3.1. FWA in military settings

The primary role of a military organization is to be operational and ready for any emergency; therefore, it is essential to conduct military HR planning to provide the necessary personnel with adequate competencies (Abdessameud et al, 2022). Providing

the *right* (required) number of the *right* (qualified) personnel at the *right* (specified) time at the minimum cost is the goal for any workforce planning system (Wang, 2005). According to Wadsworth and Southwell (2011), service members' control over how much, when, and where work is performed appears to be similar to that of civilians. However, there are differences. Access is limited, and command approval is required for all absences. The military organization is essentially a fully functioning community, but framed by the military condition, with snipers, doctors, teachers, drivers, and cooks, among others. Hence, individuals have various occupational opportunities equivalent to civilian work.

Nonetheless, unlike civilian personnel, the military's principal occupation is warfighting; however, soldiers differ in their level of direct combat involvement. Many have careers focused on supporting the mission, namely those who prepare to serve and return from combat. Due to their permanent availability commitment, in comparison with other professions, military personnel work longer hours, which can jeopardize their efforts to balance work/non-work-related responsibilities. As such, the military workplace is defined by organizational needs, and, if possible, these needs are combined with individual needs.

Workplace flexibility is a tool the military may use to support its operations, maximize the effectiveness and efficiency, improve the recruitment and retention of military personnel, and fulfill its obligation to support military families (Karin & Onachila, 2013).

After the WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (WHO, 2020), most countries worldwide mobilized their military assets and capacities to face this threat, although not exclusively (Kalkman, 2020). Like most civilian organizations, a significant part of the military performed its duties outside the traditional workplace. Despite the numerous new tasks assigned, the Army's mission remained unchanged during this period. Consequently, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the rethinking of the physical work space (Iqbal et al., 2021), and the Armed Forces are no exception.

The Portuguese Army has its own distinct culture, language, and operational methods, rooted in values such as availability, discipline, honor, loyalty, and courage. Therefore, given the difference between other organizations and even internal ones, adopting certain types of work requires previous analysis and evaluation. Except during

the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all Portuguese Army service members work exclusively from offices/worksites. Alternatives are rare, only due to health/social issues or occasionally, informal arrangements between the Soldier-Commander. Factors that reinforce the pertinence and originality of the present study.

In Portugal, the military condition imposes a unique legal and social framework on military personnel, in which they are exclusively at the service of the Republic and the Portuguese national community (Lopes & Loureiro, 2020), but also permanent availability in the temporal dimension [any time/no fixed duration], and the geographical dimension [any location] to fight in defense of the Motherland, if necessary, with the sacrifice of their own life (Law n.º 11/89, of June 1). These characteristics seem incompatible with the FWA, but other Armies have already adopted them (contradicting the well-known justification that the military profession has a specific nature), and even the Portuguese Army adopted them during the COVID-19 lockdown, under the umbrella of “working from home”. During this period, military personnel were required to work remotely, as long as they were performing services considered non-essential and in compatible roles (which explains why not all military personnel can adopt the FWA – it depends on the nature of their position or the moment), without compromising the fulfillment of the Portuguese Army’s mission. Furthermore, the Military Statute establishes as a prerequisite for the development of a military career the “existence of regulatory mechanisms that ensure management flexibility, harmonizing the needs of the Armed Forces with individual aptitudes and interests, and that guarantee the permanent motivation of military personnel” (Decree-Law n.º 90/2015, of May 29). Therefore, it is possible to infer that the adoption of FWA by the Portuguese Army is legal, particularly if they adopt those already provided by law [however, we suggest a legal clarification, as happens in other countries (e.g., UK). However, such a topic is not the focus of the present study].

Flexible work is entrenched in Portuguese legislation. The work regimes of public sector workers are regulated by the General Law on Employment in the Public Sector (GLEPS; Law n.º 35/2014, of June 20, and subsequent updates) and, regarding organization and working hours, by the Labor Code (Law n.º 7/2009, of February 12). According to the GLEPS, working hours are the “determination of the start and end times of the normal daily work period, or their respective limits, as well as rest breaks”. Depending on the activities performed, services may adopt the following work schedules:

(i) schedule flexibility [allowing workers to manage their own work schedules, choosing their own start and end times]; (ii) schedule rigid; (iii) schedule staggered [while maintaining the normal daily work period unchanged, it allows for the establishment of different fixed start and end times, without the possibility of choice]; (iv) continuous schedule [uninterrupted work, except for a rest period never exceeding thirty minutes]; (v) half-day work or part-time working [the work is performed for a period equivalent to half the typical working day or in “a normal weekly working period shorter than that practiced full-time in a comparable situation”]; and (vi) shift work [any teamwork organization in which workers successively occupy the same jobs at a specific pace, including rotational, continuous, or discontinuous work, and may perform work at different times within a given period of days or weeks.]. The GLEPS also defines: (i) teleworking [is the provision of work carried out with legal subordination, usually outside the company and through the use of ICT, can be full-time or hybrid]; (ii) individual adaptability schemes [the regular working hours can be defined in average terms, proposed by the employer and agreed upon with the employee]; and (iii) individual time banks [the daily working hours can be increased by up to four hours or up to sixty hours per week, subject to a limit of two hundred hours per year. These increases must be compensated by an equivalent reduction in working time, an increase in vacation time, or cash payment].

With this background, the first RQ1 arises: *What are the advantages and challenges for the Portuguese Army in adopting FWA for its military personnel?*

The Portuguese Army and its Allies faced similar challenges regarding military workforce shortages. Still, some of them have generated more progressive work options that can be leveraged to modernize the way Portuguese Army personnel are employed.

In 2012, the Australian Defense Force (ADF) implemented FWA despite “cultural and structural obstacles” (Cathcart et al., 2014, p. 55). The results were mixed: most requests were granted, but the “informal/occasional/ad-hoc” initiatives remained. The search for a better work-life balance was the most significant factor in this decision. Furthermore, some service members feared that accepting an FWA might negatively impact their careers (Cathcart et al., 2014). The Australian Government (2023) has reinforced the implementation of the FWA, providing a clear set of frameworks, principles, and guidelines. The ADF also introduced the “Total Workforce Model” which

comprises a spectrum of service categories, including the option for flexible service arrangements.

The Bundeswehr (2023) has established modern working models and offers family-friendly working hours to improve family life and service compatibility. Military personnel have two options for requesting FWA: (i) Reach an agreement with their military leader on how many days per week and which days they are allowed to WFH; the Bundeswehr is responsible for providing hardware/software, and the agreement is based on a written contract between the military personnel and leader; (ii) Work from wherever the soldier wants/needs to work. This option must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Army leader. For the future, it is planned to offer more flexibility in terms of location and hours whenever possible.

To meet potential applicants' expectations, changes in the working environment, and the genuine desire shown by military personnel, the UK Ministry of Defence (2023) initially introduced a flexible working policy (without affecting the pay/conditions: remote working, variable start/finishing times, and compressed working hours) and later modernized it by offering a flexible service (limited in length and with a reduction in pay: part-time working, and restricted separation) to help recruit and retain talented personnel in an increasingly competitive employment market. Similarly, while the Army will consider requests for flexible service, it is not a right (UK Army, 2023).

The NZ Defence Force (NZDF) supports flexible working models, when possible (organizational needs are to take precedence over members' needs), considered on a case-by-case basis to demonstrate reciprocity and give practical support. The impacts sought are improved retention, morale, and the ability to deliver outputs. Military personnel can apply for flexible working, as outlined in Defence Force Order 3, which concerns FWA (NZDF, 2021). In 2020 (outside of the COVID-19 lockdown), one-fifth of the NZ Army worked flexibly, and 76.8% stated they were fully effective in working flexibly or from home.

The Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 1035.01 "Telework and Remote Work" (US DoD, 2024) establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes procedures for implementing DoD telework and remote work programs. It also defines the types of teleworking: routine or situational.

The *Guía de Aplicación de Medidas de Conciliación* (Ministerio de Defensa, 2024) compiles the current regulations, among others, relating to the Spanish Armed Forces'

flexible working hours. According to the Ley Orgánica 9/2011, Article 22 “*Disponibilidad, horarios, permisos y licencias*”, the Spanish military personnel’s working hours are generally the same as those of the personnel serving the General Administration of the State. However, the schedule is adapted to operational needs, considering permanent availability and the rules/criteria for reconciling professional, personal, and family life. Furthermore, Article 3 of *La Orden 253/2015* defines that service needs will prevail, among other things, over reductions in working hours. In addition, Article 5 of *La Orden DEF/1363/2016* establishes that the duration of the general working day is 37.5 hours of effective work per week, with the distribution of working hours during the day. If the established requirements are met, all active or reserve military personnel (regardless of the type of Unit) occupying a role within the Ministry of Defense’s structure may be covered by the available FWA, except for personnel who provide service under a special dedication regime. Two types of FWA are available in the Spanish Armed Forces: *Reducción de Jornada* (reduction in working hours) and *Flexibilidad horaria* (time flexibility).

Against this background, the second research questions were formulated:

RQ2: *What FWA can be adopted by the Portuguese Army for its military personnel?*

Amirul and Shaari, in their SSCR of FWA, suggested that the FWA strategy is still under research, so they recommended that future research should place a greater emphasis on the FWA strategy since it is crucial “to making decisions, conducting the right operations, and developing a strategic action plan is vital for FWA” (2021, p. 35). They also considered that a solid plan will help the organization lay the groundwork for long-term growth and success in FWA, which is critically needed. Hence, RQ3 arises:

RQ3: *What are the required conditions for the Portuguese Army to adopt FWA?*

5.4. Method

5.4.1. Participants

The interviewees [N = 16] were selected using convenience sampling. All of them were voluntary and selected based on their knowledge and familiarity with the work environment under study, which brought added value to the investigation, but also for their representativeness, status, and knowledge degree in the field to collect cultural diversity and opinions with insightful, informed, and relevant views of different FWA. They were divided into three groups: experts [N = 6] who had already worked on or

researched FWA – theoretical questions to approach the FWA, the theories related, its framework and influences for the context; Armies HR managers [N = 4] from different Armies – to understand the applicability, (dis)advantages, and challenges of the FWA; and military personnel [N = 6] who had already served in rigid/flexible work in other Armies – to understand options about the theme under study. Five participants were women, and eleven were men, with an average age of 47 (ranging from 39 to 55).

The participants who carried out the SAF evaluation criteria and risk management process were military HRM [N = 3] and Commanders of Units [N = 5], all from the Portuguese Army. One participant was a woman, and seven were men, with an average age of 49 (ranging from 47 to 55).

The participants who evaluated the phased plan for FWA adoption were military experts from the Portuguese Army [N = 3], all of whom were men with an average age of 52 (ranging from 49 to 54).

5.4.2. Data Collection

The data was collected through a literature review [about FWA], document analysis [FWA implemented in most developed Armed Forces – The best practices used were fundamental to reflect and better understand their applicability and scope], and interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. Specific interview guides were developed for each group (Appendices 7, 8, and 9), following an open-ended question with more specific and directed questions. The interview-based data were collected in person or through Zoom. Interviews lasted an average of 35 minutes, with a range of 25 to 40 minutes. This data collection phase took place from October 2023 to November 2024.

5.4.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted actively, utilizing mental schemas, theories, and lenses to interpret and understand the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Initially, transcripts were read repeatedly to become familiar with the data. After this, transcripts were summarized, key discussion points were compared, and initial options were generated. These were then grouped to identify coherent categories, which were reviewed and applied to the transcripts to yield the results. Data was explored following best practice guidelines for content analysis to understand FWA and its implementation.

Content analysis is a research method used to identify the presence of specific words, patterns, themes, trends, or concepts within a dataset. It can be qualitative

(focusing on the interpretation of themes). Furthermore, it is a method designed to identify and interpret meaning in recorded forms of communication by isolating small pieces of the data that represent salient concepts and then applying or creating a framework to organize the pieces in a way that can be used to describe or explain a phenomenon (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991), shorting text into groups of related categories to identify similarities and differences, patterns, and associations, both on the surface [manifest (e.g., frequency counts – the number of instances a certain word appears) – the nature of truth is believed to be objective, observable, and measurable] and implied within [latent (pattern/projective) – seeks to identify a construct or concept within the text using specific words or phrases for substantiation, or to provide a more organized structure to the text being described (e.g., interpreting what is hidden deep within the text)]. Content analysis rests on the assumption that texts are a rich data source with great potential to reveal valuable information about particular phenomena (Kondracki et al., 2002). Content analysis was conducted through the following steps: (i) definition of the goal for the analysis – identified comments concerning the FWA; (ii) decision about the methodological approach (latent and manifest content analysis); (iii) coding process: to create and use codes (identifying keywords related to each code) to organize, categorize, interpret, and understand the data [codes, categories, and themes were created *a priori* based the question made (e.g. advantages and challenges for the adopting FWA, FWA in the Army, conditions to adopt FWA) – through a directed and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)]; (iv) analysis of patterns, relationships, or trends; (v) interpretation of the findings (Figures 10, 11, and 12 in Appendix 10 illustrate the coding tree generated through content analysis); and finally, (vi) the content analysis interpretation findings were then submitted by the theoretical framework SAF evaluation criteria (Johnson et al., 2005) and Risk management process [an organization's method to identify, analyze, evaluate, and treat risks to eliminate, reduce, or control the risk (Anton & Nucu, 2020)]. Both were applied with the help of military HRM and Commanders of Units from the Portuguese Army.

Suitability – by adopting the FWA, the desired effect will be achieved – Can military personnel achieve their ambition (e.g., work-family balance) without jeopardizing the organization's mission and within legal procedures?

Acceptability – considers whether the FWA will gain crucial support from the people it needs to or will lead to opposition or criticism (the FWA meets stakeholders' expectations) – Do the effects/consequences of FWA on stakeholders justify its adoption?

Feasibility – is concerned with determining if the FWA was adopted successfully using the organization's resources (availability of resources, skills, and competencies) – Can the FWA be accomplished by the means available?

The implementation of an FWA is in every way the same as that of a strategy, which requires an (implementation) plan, the definition of an end state and the resources needed or available to achieve it, in other words, considering three components: ends (what you want to achieve / objectives), ways (how to achieve it: measures/actions), means (evaluate the available resources to achieve it). Feasibility is materialized by the relationship between the means and ways; acceptability is achieved through the relationship between the ends and means; and suitability is established by the relationship between the ways and ends (Leonhard, 1993). The intention of using the SAF evaluation criteria (Johnson et al., 2005) was not to select the best FWA or to quantify the weight of each criterion, but rather to verify whether they can be implemented in the Portuguese Army. The FWA can be classified as invalid, valid, or valid with reserves; the latter presupposes the development and implementation of control(s). An FWA that is clearly labeled as unsuitable, infeasible, or unacceptable is not valid; in other words, the failure to comply with one of the criteria implies a detriment or lack of need for analysis of the others and, consequently, the declaration of the FWA as invalid.

The evaluation of the phased plan for FWA adoption included the following steps: (i) the phased plans adopted by other Armies or suggested by experts were compared to eliminate repetition; (ii) phases grouped the suggested topics; (iii) the initial plan was submitted to HRM military experts for revision, and changes were made (e.g., ordering and refinement); (iv) the final plan was submitted for consideration again, and received the agreement of all participants.

The participants' contributions were abbreviated as follows: function [academic experts = E, Armies' HR managers = H, military personnel = M] and Army nationality [Australia = A, Germany = G, NZ = N, Portugal = P, UK = K, US = U, Spain = S].

5.5. Results

Society still harbors biases about who and what a soldier should be, and it expects military personnel to be available 24/7 to defend sovereignty or assist in emergencies, as they are

highly trained and capable forces. These expectations are further amplified in the Portuguese Army's culture of "service before everything", "always present", and "never fail". Furthermore, a stigma is associated with flexible work, often referred to as "half soldiers" or "weekend warriors" (Karin & Onachila, 2013). Nevertheless, military personnel are just like any other people, meaning they have families and personal lives. As such, they seek an ideal balance between advancing their careers and spending time with their families (Bundeswehr, 2023).

To better understand the subject, we relied on the literature and the participants' testimonies on which topics to fit into the context and their meaning:

Workplace – where an employee performs their job/task for their employer.

Rigid work – requires the employee to work with a rigid schedule (traditional 9 am – 5 pm time frame) and workplace (presential work) available/assigned/imposed by their employer.

Flexible work – is a mutually beneficial arrangement between employee and employer in which both agree and focus on when (dynamic time) and/or where (dynamic location) the work is done rather than how it is done (Kelly & Moen, 2007).

FWA – alternative work methods that offer employees customized options for temporal/spatial workday boundaries (Greenberg & Landry, 2011), that provide additional energy and time to manage various professional/personal responsibilities, as well as support employees' safety and health (Shifrin & Michel, 2022). FWA is any arrangement agreed upon that differs from working conditions to meet the employee's needs, ensuring that work requirements can be met. This may take many forms and is often tailored to individual needs in balance with the organization's needs. Some arrangements are made with formal policy, while others are more informal/idiosyncratic and individually negotiated. As mentioned, FWA predominantly entails two separate yet interconnected dimensions: control over work hours (temporality) and work location (Shifrin & Michel, 2022).

Temporality – it can occur without changing work commitments and payment (the employee delivers the same output). The employee can choose to work when they have "the most focus and energy, or perhaps the least household demands" (Carlson et al., 2024, p. 23):

(i) *Schedule flexibility (flex time or flexible work schedules)* – the start/end times of the workday are flexible, rather than adhering to the traditional 9-to-5 time frame; however, the total working time remains the same.

(ii) *Compressed working* – allows work to occur in different timeframes (e.g., instead of working 40 hours over five days, the employee works the same hours in four or fewer days). An employee who travels long distances on the weekends to see family may start late on Monday, finish early on Friday, and make up the hours by working longer days from Tuesday to Thursday.

Location – it usually incorporates dynamic time:

(i) *Teleworking* – performed outside the traditional workplace where the employer is based (at home/from a third place) – alternative social surroundings where the work can be performed using ICT. The adoption of ICT is fundamental to enabling telework, increasing the possibility of performing any work task remotely. The adoption of ICT systems by the employer ensures work continuity through the sharing of information among the team, employee-employer, and other stakeholders (Maurer et al., 2022). The US DoD (2024, p. 10) defines telework as “an alternative workplace arrangement under which an employee or service member performs the duties and responsibilities of the assigned position and other authorized activities from an approved alternative worksite but is required to report to the agency’s worksite on a regular and recurring basis”.

(ii) *Remote working* – defined by the US DoD (2024, p. 23) as an alternative work arrangement in which a service member works from an approved alternative worksite (within/outside the locality pay area) of an agency worksite and is not expected to return to an agency worksite regularly during each pay period.

(iii) *Hybrid working (hybrid teleworking)* – combines physical (traditional workplace) and remote work (including at a military location that is closer to where the soldier lives) to merge the best parts of each (Hopkins & Bardoel, 2023), so combines the advantages of remote and in-person work, providing coexisting benefits, referred to as the hybridity situation (Malhotra & Reay, 2019). Hybrid workspaces are understood as flex places, with employees working through ICT, splitting their time across different locations (Maddox-Daines, 2023). A hybrid system, also known as a blended system, typically arises when there is a need to balance two types of demands equitably to prevent any conflict (Iqbal et al., 2021). The hybrid system is an initiative introduced to cater to the specific needs of a system or organization’s active parties. If a worker is in a situation

with unique requirements, a hybrid arrangement should solve the challenges of location, distance, cost, availability, and management. In the package of remote work, essential elements include maintaining organizational culture and identity, greater flexibility at work, a balance between life and work, reduced labor costs, improved worker satisfaction, informal networking, increased in-person collaboration, and enhanced environmental experiences (Maddox-Daines, 2023). This way, an organization can attract talent and ensure a pleasing workplace (Choi, 2020). Hybridity is an offshoot of technological advancements (Iqbal et al., 2021).

Others – Some researchers consider special (un)paid leave, career intermissions or breaks, job/work sharing, commissioned outcomes, results-only work environment, or phased retirement (Cheese, 2020; Lyonette, 2015) as flexible work. Nevertheless, these arrangements are associated with a break/removal from work or other forms of work that are not appropriate for the environment under study, so we will not examine them. Likewise, Portuguese law and other Armies have different types of work that were not considered here, because they are similar/variant (e.g., *schedule flexibility* and *schedule staggered*, or *compressed working* and *continuous schedule*, or *individual adaptability schemes*), or do not fit into the scope of the present study (e.g., *schedule rigid*) or for violating military duties (Decree-Law n.º 90/2015, of May 29), particularly availability [e.g. *banking hours (annualized hours)* or *shift work*].

Regarding RQ1: *What are the advantages and challenges for the Portuguese Army in adopting FWA for its military personnel?*

According to previous literature reviews (Herrera et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020), the primary positive impacts of remote work include increased productivity and performance within the organization, job autonomy, and flexibility in commuting. There are also possible adverse effects on remote workers, including social-professional isolation, difficulty separating WFH life, perceived threats to professional advancement, long working hours in an “always-on” culture, increased emotional exhaustion, limited supervision from the senior managers, lack of structure, more significant cognitive stress/overload, and musculoskeletal health problems. After questioning the participants and treating the collected information, we can suggest that if the Portuguese Army provides FWA, the following **advantages/benefits** should be expected:

Recruitment/Retention – given the younger generation’s turn away from military “things”, FWA are considered an incentive for a broad spectrum of society and

“encourages military personnel to stay” MU, thus corresponding to their expectations and ambitions, as well as a contribution to reducing *“gender inequalities and promoting equality”* HU. With FWA, it is possible to *“keep talented, trained, and capable people”* ES. In this regard, it is worth noting that the most expensive recruitment is often replacing someone who could have been retained. The Portuguese Army must *“offer FWA available in the civil labor market, to be more competitive and improve diversity and inclusion in the workplace”* HG. With this offer, it becomes a *“modern employer which attracts the young generation and personnel with key qualifications rare on the job market”* HU.

Well-being: (i) *“reduces the work-life conflict”* MK by *“allowing soldiers to reconcile personal, family, and professional life”* HS, resulting in better *“work/non-work-related balance”* MG as well *“mitigates the absenteeism, employee turnover, and enhanced retention of skilled personnel”* EK; (ii) increases non-work time – providing a more *“efficient use of time, with a drastic reduction of duty travel”* (home-work-home) MA; (iii) control over work hours – *“gives more control over scheduling personal responsibilities during the workday due to standard work”* MK; (iv) improves *“morale and job satisfaction”* MN and military personnel engagement, due to the way of working is more *“autonomous and empowering”* EP; (v) increases *“motivation and loyalty”* MA.

Flexibility (allows military personnel to make choices to organize core aspects of their professional lives) – characterized by a *“balance employee-employer preferences, permits to work more effectively and in an adjusted way”* (dealing with personal matters during regular office hours) EP, *“improves the organizational productivity and performance”* EA, and *“it favors the mobility of personnel who know that they will be able to take advantage of these measures”* MS. In addition, it is part of the *“organization’s value proposition”* HU and allows adaptability in different environments.

Cost-cutting – for *“the military personnel (duty travel, clothes, and food)”* MS for *“the Army (infrastructure investment/maintenance)”* MN, and *“for the environmental footprint”* MA.

Increased work tools – using more ICT provides the military personnel with more *“digital skills”* MK and *“forces the Army to purchase/adopt up-to-date digital platforms and hardware”* HS.

Decreased workforce needs – if combined with other investments, it allows a *“decrease in the number of military personnel (installation of surveillance cameras and sensors that allow military personnel on duty not to carry out the work in-person)”* MU.

The challenge in the Portuguese Army is how to meet the institution's needs (operational outcomes come first) while still meeting the needs of military personnel. Nevertheless, other **challenges** should be considered:

Coordination between personnel – due to the mix of work-personal life, *“it is necessary to desynchronize meetings, schedules, and availability with personal/family matters”* HG, but also that *“the military personnel are self-motivated and well-organized”* MG. On the other hand, *“combining, especially in small Units, the needs of service and training with those of family conciliation”* MS.

Organizational culture – is substantially more challenging to cultivate, resulting in a less direct link to the organization's culture and structure. The weight of *“history/traditions/organizational culture must be balanced against the current employees' ambitions and competitors' offerings without ever jeopardizing the fulfillment of the mission”* MG. Critical allies for success are *“strong leadership, trust, and sensible controls focused on results to change the mindset and maintain face-to-face contact (even if not permanent)”* MA. It can have *“resistance to change from traditional military culture, ensuring fairness in applying FWA policies, and balancing operational needs with personal requests”* HK.

Connectivity between personnel – to avoid a possible *“danger anonymization, which means that people become isolated”* MG, *“lack of inclusion, teamwork, and relationships, it is necessary to have robust communication channels and hold regular meetings”* ES, the *“exemption from duty and service could affect the morale of other personnel by requiring them to perform more duties”* MS and *“potential impacts on team cohesion and communication in managing remote soldiers, and difficulty in maintaining operational readiness”* MK. The frequency or number of days that *“military personnel need to go to Unit/Bases has to be defined in advance, with scheduling of meetings and exercises with others to build connections with superiors/peers/subordinates”* MN.

Communication security – Digital platforms, network access, voice/video teleconference applications, and virtual private networks are required to work, which results in *“serious security concerns with sensitive military digital data, including the potential for misuse/theft/leaks/hacks”* MS. To mitigate this, *“strict cybersecurity measures and internal organizational policies need to be implemented”* MG. Security practices should, quite simply, strive to support everyone who works, wherever they are – updating practices for the digital age goes a long way.

Health – if it is an advantage to “prevent disease/sickness and decrease absenteeism, by eating healthier or by reducing the pressure level” MK. On the other hand, it is characterized by causing health issues through increased levels of “stress, anxiety, work intensity, longer working hours, distractions, decreased social interactions, and an inability to disconnect from work” MS. Supervision and permanent contact are the “key elements to avoid negative aspects on a mental/social point of view” MG.

Military personnel management – create an “equitable work environment for everyone” EU and “allow military personnel displaced from their preferred location/residence perform their duties, through a closer Portuguese Army base, for some period” MK.

Regulations and procedures – develop “new policies that regulate social issues (work accidents), performance-based criteria for success (evaluation)” MS or “salary benefits, to support connection and energy costs” ES or “to fight the stigma, issue when the flexibility is only offered to a specific group of people, such as women or couples with children” EU.

Table IX summarizes the content analysis of the responses to RQ1, and Figures 10 and 11 in Appendix 10 show the coding tree used in the content analysis.

Table IX – Content Analysis Results

Themes	Categories
Advantages	Recruitment/Retention; Well-being; Flexibility; Cost-cutting; Increased work tools; Decreased manpower needs
Challenges	Coordination between personnel; Organizational culture; Connectivity between personnel; Communication security; Health; Military personnel management; Regulations and procedures

Regarding RQ2: *What FWA can be adopted by the Portuguese Army for its military personnel?*

The current Russia-Ukraine and Hamas/Hezbollah-Israel conflicts demonstrate that boots on the ground remain the way to conquer/maintain territory, which undoubtedly requires the physical presence of the military. However, another phenomenon is evident: the massive use and operational success of unmanned aircraft systems (drones) that do not require the pilot to be in the first line of combat. This leads us to consider that currently, the Combat Units and their Support Units in a war still cannot perform their tasks permanently in a non-presential manner. This fact will only be overcome when the “robotization of the battlefield is successfully implemented” MS. Furthermore, cohesion

is commonly considered a crucial factor contributing to the effectiveness and resilience of individuals and groups in battle (Stewart, 1991). Additionally, these Units must work permanently as a whole (together) to strengthen tactical agility and technical proficiency, as well as increase their operational readiness (Batista, 2025). This reality renders all FWA options unsuitable for Combat Units and their Support Units during combat or training phases, as their adoption compromises the organization's mission.

On the other hand, given the need to prepare and certify individuals and groups, including uniformed troops, Combat Units, and their Support Units, exercises, activities, and training cycles are conducted in person during peacetime. However, Combat Units and their Support Units are not required to be in person at all times during administrative periods or the planning phase, as their activities are already planned and approved, allowing for less rigid schedules, as long as they are the same for all members of the Unit, for short periods. On the other hand, the non-presential work of these Units during these periods allows for stress-test critical mission command capabilities that are often overlooked despite being vital to 21st-century armed conflict (Fitzgerald & Long, 2021). Therefore, all FWA are suitable, except for *remote working*, as they compromise the organization's mission and cohesion by not providing regular in-person Unit presence. Regarding the acceptability, the effects/consequences of FWA adoption meet the stakeholders' expectations if implemented throughout the Unit. In this sequence, to assess the FWA feasibility, it is necessary to know if all the Unit's military personnel have the resources needed and are permanently contactable, thus making FWA feasible (*schedule flexibility* and *compressed working*), since they only change schedules, and others are feasible with reserves (*telework* and *hybrid work*). After conducting the Risk assessment process, we must develop and implement controls for the FWA classified as valid with reserves to reduce the level of severity or frequency (e.g., ensure that all military personnel are permanently contactable and have a computer, the necessary software, internet connection, virtual private network, mobile phone, mobile network, and other means available).

Support Units do not directly Support Combat Units (non-deployable headquarters staff); however, if physical presence is mandatory, all FWA are unsuitable as their adoption compromises the organization's mission. On the other hand, if physical presence is not required, all FWA are suitable and acceptable for limited periods. Regarding feasibility, it is necessary to determine if all military personnel have the necessary

resources and are contactable, thus making FWA feasible (*schedule flexibility* and *compressed working*), as they only impact the temporal aspect of presence. Others are feasible with reserves (*telework*, *remote working*, and *hybrid work*), as they do not require a fixed location. Applying the Risk assessment process to the feasible with reserves FWA, some control measures must be implemented to lower the level of severity and frequency [e.g., occupational health and safety telemedicine must be carried out regularly to assess the psychological (social isolation) and physical state of the military personnel, or establish transparent and regular communication].

Military training often requires physical contact between soldiers or equipment to enter harm's way and perform physically and mentally demanding tasks at the highest possible levels of proficiency; as such, in these specific periods, there is a need for the military to be in-person, so all FWA are unsuitable as their adoption compromises the organization's mission. On the other hand, if physical presence is not needed, all FWA are suitable and acceptable for limited periods of time, except for *remote working* (the "*presence of the trainer will always be necessary, even if it is punctual, particularly during practical phases or evaluation periods*" EP). Regarding feasibility, it is necessary to determine if all military personnel have the necessary resources and are permanently contactable, thus making FWA feasible (*schedule flexibility* and *compressed working*), as they only impact the temporal aspect of presence. Others are feasible with reserves (*telework* and *hybrid work*). After conducting the Risk assessment process, we must develop and implement control(s) for the FWA classified as valid with reserves to reduce the level of severity or frequency (e.g., implement and monitor cybersecurity best practices and a virtual support system, or track screen time to monitor the remote military personnel).

When implementing the FWA, the Portuguese Army must ensure that "*mission fulfillment is permanently assured*" HP, that "*the cohesion of Combat Units is not compromised*" MP, as well as that "*there is an improvement in technology, connectivity, and a strong commitment to training on remote work*" MG, "*provide modern IT equipment and digitize organizational processes with the support of artificial intelligence*" MS. So, to achieve this, "*different possibilities should be analyzed, balancing the needs of the service and training with the need for conciliation, to develop regulations by the reality of military Units and their personnel*" MS. An "*entirely teleworking workforce currently seems impossible, given the benefits of collaboration,*

innovation, and social connection that in-person working provides” EP. However, as far as possible, if it is partially remote, it allows military personnel to strike a balance between remote and in-person work. As part of hybrid work, and like other Armies, the Portuguese Army may provide non-fixed schedules, such as *compressed working* or *schedule flexibility*, or allow employees to work from home or a third place, depending on the variables analyzed above.

Table X summarizes the results from the SAF evaluation criteria theoretical framework (Johnson et al., 2005) and Risk assessment for all types of Units and during the different periods.

Concerning RQ3: *What are the required conditions for the Portuguese Army to adopt FWA?*

Implementing a new policy is always multidimensional, so every aspect of military operations should be considered. The successful adoption of a formal flexible work policy must be preceded by a preparation phase for military personnel and the organization to avoid feelings of inequality/tension. While it is not a simple problem to solve, it is not impossible, and several Armies have already implemented legislation and/or are much further ahead in the creation of policy. A phased implementation plan is crucial to ensure the successful adoption of FWA (Amirul & Shaari, 2021). Therefore, building on the findings of the interviews, we recommend adopting the FWA implementation plan shown in Figure 8, based on Figure 12 in Appendix 10, which illustrates the coding tree generated through content analysis.

However, the availability of new labor policies must be monitored in accordance with the service’s needs. In the event of a national emergency or in situations that compromise the participation in deployed national forces or other missions abroad, as well as in operational activities, FWA may be suspended/canceled.

A formal flexible work policy preparation phase must occur to: 1. Understand the specific needs of personnel (obtain inputs from military personnel to ensure that FWA meets their needs/ambitions/expectations) and the operational implications [first assessment]; 2. Establish realistic/reasonable goals; 3. Perform benchmarks with other Armies that have already implemented FWA; 4. Define positions/roles/specific tasks or projects that can be done under FWA (operational capability cannot be compromised); 5. Evaluate the impact on organizational culture, mission, values, military personnel, teams, and relevant stakeholders; 6. Assess the time/effort/costs required for the new policy to

be successfully implemented; 7. Ensure that FWA is straightforward and follows legal guidelines; 8. Define how personnel evaluation will be done, with clear performance goals (concrete/measurable objectives) and adapted to the core general competencies; 9. Define how FWA works (involving all leadership); 10. Define training to ensure that all military personnel (namely leaders on managing flexible teams effectively) have the knowledge and skills to make the arrangement work; 11. Define inclusive/transparent/fair guidance/criteria: procedures to apply (application can be made for any reason, but the operational capability will come first), eligibility (minimum service and operational readiness), duration (when/for how long/conditions for change/suspension/end), and approval (who makes the assessment/final decision); 12. Estimate implementation timeline (in an organization with no experience in FWA, any new policy might take more time and effort than anticipated); 13. Identify/analyze any risk (Risk assessment) and implement mitigation procedures (impairing operational readiness/effectiveness, incurring additional costs, and issuing safety/technology/operational/organizational concerns are examples that prevent FWA from further implementation).

Figure 8 – Phase Plan for FWA Implementation

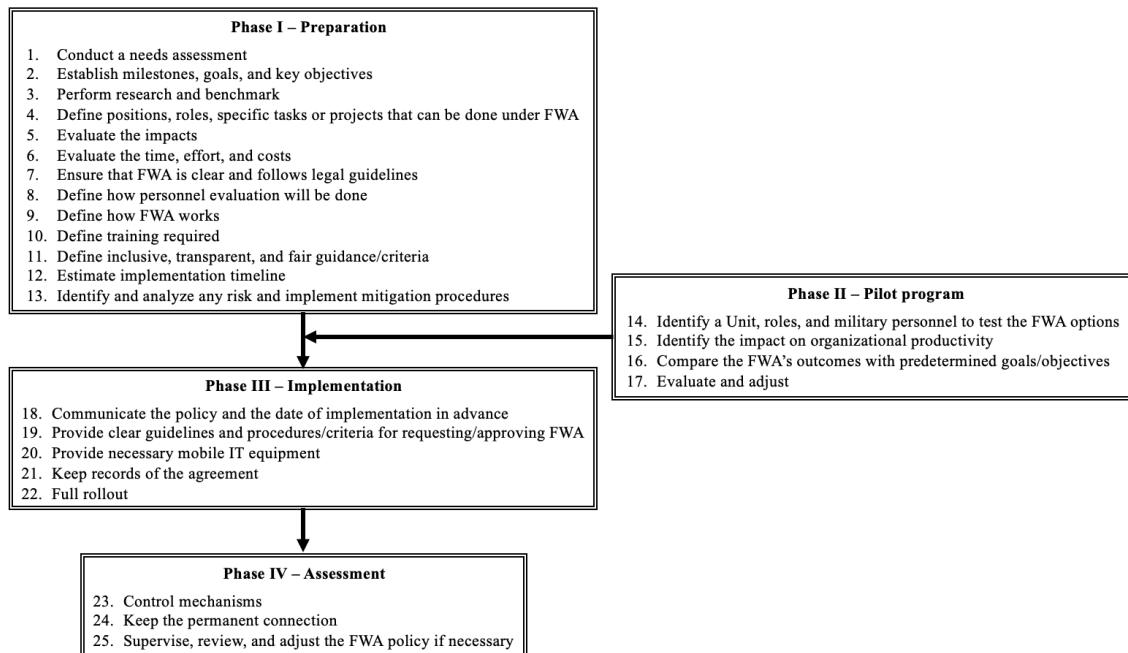


Table X – *Content Analysis, SAF evaluation criteria, and Risk assessment results*

Type of Unit	Periods	SAF evaluation criteria and Risk assessment	FWA				
			Schedule flexibility	Compressed working	Telework	Remote working	Hybrid work
Combat Units	In Combat / Training phases	Suitability	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable
		Acceptability	--	--	--	--	--
		Feasibility	--	--	--	--	--
		Risk assessment	--	--	--	--	--
	In the Administrative / Planning phases	Suitability	suitable	suitable	suitable	unsuitable	suitable
		Acceptability	acceptable	acceptable	acceptable	--	acceptable
		Feasibility	feasible	feasible	feasible with reserves	--	feasible with reserves
		Risk assessment	--	--	control measures	--	control measures
Support Units	Physical presence is mandatory	Suitability	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable
		Acceptability	--	--	--	--	--
		Feasibility	--	--	--	--	--
		Risk assessment	--	--	--	--	--
	Physical presence is not required	Suitability	suitable	suitable	suitable	suitable	suitable
		Acceptability	acceptable	acceptable	acceptable	acceptable	acceptable
		Feasibility	feasible	feasible	feasible with reserves	feasible with reserves	feasible with reserves
		Risk assessment	--	--	control measures	control measures	control measures
Training Centers	Physical presence is mandatory	Suitability	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable	unsuitable
		Acceptability	--	--	--	--	--
		Feasibility	--	--	--	--	--
		Risk assessment	--	--	--	--	--
	Physical presence is not required	Suitability	suitable	suitable	suitable	unsuitable	suitable
		Acceptability	acceptable	acceptable	acceptable	--	acceptable
		Feasibility	feasible	feasible	feasible with reserves	--	feasible with reserves
		Risk assessment	--	--	control measures	--	control measures

Then, it is highly recommended that a pilot program be carried out (for a trial period – start with small-scale trials in specific Units to evaluate the impact of FWA) to: *14.* Identify a Unit/roles/military personnel to test the FWA options; *15.* Determine the effect on organizational productivity and ensure service members' efficiency is continuously monitored/tested; *16.* Compare the FWA's outcomes with predetermined goals and objectives to determine whether the arrangement was successful; *17.* Evaluate/adjust (collecting data and feedback from the pilot program to refine policies).

The implementation of the formal FWA phase is as follows: *18.* Communicate the policy/date of implementation in advance; *19.* Provide clear guidelines, procedures, and criteria for requesting/approving FWA; *20.* Provide necessary mobile IT equipment, SharePoint repository, training tools, and frequently asked questions; *21.* Keep records of the agreement; *22.* Full rollout (gradually expanding FWA options across the organization based on lessons learned, ensuring that support systems are in place to facilitate the transition).

Finally, the assessment phase is to *23.* Constantly track/manage the FWA control mechanisms; *24.* Maintain a permanent connection through daily/weekly meetings to ensure FWA success for military personnel/team/Unit/Service; *25.* Supervise, review, and adjust the FWA policy, if necessary.

5.6. Discussion

Unlike many civilian organizations, the Armed Forces cannot only allow all its soldiers to work in a non-traditional way. Operational/functional reasons, as well as the complete fulfillment of the mission, prevent such a desire.

Nevertheless, nowadays, the approach to military life is significantly different from what it was in the past. Like other Armies, the Portuguese Army must rethink its approach to managing its military workforce to keep pace with its soldiers' ambitions and compete in an increasingly demanding and modern employment market, a challenge outlined in its military statute (Decree-Law n.º 90/2015, of May 29).

The changing character of conflicts and labor competition demands that the Armies re-appraise what it means to be a military professional and be able to continuously adapt to changing demands (Hawkshaw & O'Neil, 2020). In the civilian world, most leaders sign forms digitally, meet with their teams through digital platforms, train employees through YouTube, and perform myriad other tasks without setting foot on their assigned duty station. Therefore, a holistic and multi-pronged approach is needed in the Portuguese

Army to face the new era of work. Good practices and lessons identified/learned in civilian labor and in other Armies, with due adaptation, should be adopted or at least considered.

Adopting some FWA will bring challenges in terms of culture, coordination, communication, and management, but also many advantages, including increased recruitment/retention, improved military personnel well-being, enhanced management flexibility, and cost reduction. The implementation of FWA is not uniform; some Armies have bolder policies, others follow the path, and others are at a standstill. For the latter, this article suggests a theoretical and practical body to become modern, attractive, and concerned with their military personnel without losing focus on readiness/mission.

Whenever operational readiness allows, the Army should permit FWA, providing more opportunities for its soldiers to adapt to new circumstances/commitments in both their service and personal lives. This way, the organization retains valuable knowledge, skills, and experience, thereby preserving its operational capability. The adoption's challenges must be mitigated by defining and implementing a phased plan, with details, transparency, and viability, as exemplified by the one now suggested.

As the main theoretical contribution of this study, we argue that adopting FWA, in a military context, necessitates a contingency approach that considers the organizational culture, employees, the types of work (core business/administrative/training), and the context in which the organization operates. However, not all FWA can be applied in the military context, primarily due to military conditions (e.g., permanent availability) and operational capability (e.g., crises, calamities, or war) taking precedence. Furthermore, even when addressing the military context, the FWA adopted by the Armies under study varied. Omodi and K'Obonyo's (2018) critical literature review on flexible work schedules suggested that despite the organization's offering flexible work schedules, *"employee take-up may be low due to concerns that using work-life practices will result in reduced advancement opportunities or perceptions of the employee as being less committed to the organization"* (p. 2069). This viewpoint now seems mitigated by the implementation plan we suggested, which constitutes our practical contribution. The feelings mentioned by the authors may be mitigated through synchronization (*best fit*) between the military leadership and its HRM, allowing them to mutually and effectively influence the behavior of the military. This synchronization can be achieved by combining two options proposed by Leroy and colleagues (2018): Leadership-HRM must

be united in the FWA implementation, sending stronger signals and clear messages to employees, thus influencing their adherence (*Synergistic fit*; Figure 8 – Phase I/III) and facing possible adjustments/evolution, both must maintain interactions demonstrating alignment and coherence (*Dynamic fit*; Figure 8 – Phase IV).

According to Wang (2005), effective military HR workforce planning means there will continue to be sufficient people [recruitment and retention] with the required competencies [education and training] to deliver the capability output [operational result] required by the Government at an affordable cost. As suggested by Kaufman (2015), among other critical success factors for organizational change, necessary for the effective adoption of strategic HR models, are leadership commitment and a carefully planned and managed implementation, through a detailed and viable plan. In response to RQ3, we attempted to fill this gap/need by providing a roadmap for implementing the plan. Komarudin et al. (2016, p. 1805) reinforce that “*current manpower planning approaches focus on satisfying future personnel needs*”, a fact that aligns with the objectives of the present study. Nevertheless, it also responds to Amirul and Shaari’s (2021, p. 35) suggestion, who recommended that it is critically needed in future research to develop a strategic action plan for the long-term growth and success of the FWA.

5.7. Implications for Human Resource Management praxis

Technological advancements, innovation, new skills, and mindsets, as well as the need for adaptation to a new reality, are the key ingredients of organizational updating processes, which necessarily lead to the transformation of the workforce and the workplace ecosystem. To stay ahead of competitors, organizations must invest in mobile cybersecurity technology, wellness initiatives, accessible HR tools, remote collaboration tools, and workforce training programs for professional upskilling and development. For this to happen, organizations must develop guidelines/policies to ensure everyone is on the same page. The Portuguese Army, like other organizations, can and should provide FWA to some military personnel when possible. This change brings social, environmental, and economic-financial benefits, but it focuses on personnel motivation/attraction. The modification has significant implications for HR professionals who must manage the transformation across the entire organization, encompassing recruitment policies, employment agreements, technology policies and infrastructure, occupational health, fairness/equal access, and performance management.

For the better adoption of FWA, control measures must be implemented to address the identified risks (e.g., ensuring that all military personnel have access to a computer, the necessary software, an internet connection, a virtual private network, a webcam, a microphone, speakers, a mobile phone, a mobile network, and other necessary equipment). To achieve this, we recommend Figure 8 as a practical roadmap for implementing FWA. The roadmap is not a panacea but is instead a comprehensive starting point to help management implement FWA in the Army.

The partial modification or flexibility of the standard period or location of service and the provision of service using telematic means, when authorized, does not imply prejudice to the duty of permanent availability, in particular, and cannot compromise the appointment to duty rosters, participation in deployed national forces or other missions abroad, operational activities in the field, in conflict or crises, operational and technical training activities.

Legislative/policy clarification that allows Portuguese Army members to apply for FWA alone will not be sufficient for success. A change in organizational culture and in the leadership is required. Accepting and using formal FWA will take time, but the first step is to design a viable policy/concept.

5.8. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Although based on rich and reliable contributions, the current study is limited to the bibliography analyzed and the participants' contributions. The study's primary strength is its multi-stakeholder sample, which comprises the perspectives of different groups from various nationalities, thereby creating broader and more nuanced results that would not have been possible if all participants shared the same field of expertise, experience, or nationality. That was a comprehensive view of the application of FWA in the military context. The main limitations we identified were: (i) the analysis of legislation that rules military personnel from Armies that have not adopted the FWA, as this could bring more perspectives that limit its adoption; (ii) the fact that the study focused on the Portuguese Army and, as such, excluded the analysis of other FWA that are not covered by the Portuguese legal framework (if analyzed in this study, they would be unsuitable).

Nevertheless, we still consider that specific applications may be extended to non-military contexts; therefore, we propose analyzing the impact of artificial intelligence/robotization on future military work and its impact on the adoption of FWA.

5.9. Conclusion

Like any controversial subject, there will always be people who support it and those who oppose it. The Portuguese Army, to be a modern employer that attracts and retains its most valuable asset, needs to provide and implement a formal FWA policy. Nowadays, it is no longer a “perk” but a basic expectation of employees/military personnel (as stated in the interviews). Although the Portuguese Army employs some FWA on a limited and informal basis, it is essential that the law clearly provides for this possibility, and the concept should be expanded to encompass diversity, applicability, and dissemination.

Other Armies already have policies, demonstrating that FWA is possible and has considerable advantages. The Portuguese Army can draw inspiration from its more progressive Allies in developing greater flexibility in how it employs its members, giving them options to achieve a satisfying work-life balance at every stage of their life and career. For such policies to be effective, it is necessary to adjust the culture in the organization to normalize the use of FWA and recognize the benefits to both military personnel and the organization in a synergistic/holistic approach, thereby fostering resilience, attractiveness, and adaptability in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment. Therefore, work regimes specific to the organizational structure must be redesigned to anticipate and respond spontaneously to the needs and expectations of military personnel as critical stakeholders, their families, potential candidates, and the pressures of the macro environment.

An entirely remote workforce seems improbable, given the drawbacks presented and the benefits of collaboration, innovation, and social connection that in-person working provides. Even if it is a limited number, the Portuguese Army should be committed to providing a contemporary and flexible work environment, offering some appointments in no presential work to allow the military personnel to have geographic flexibility at the times they need it most for their career and family, facilitate greater career satisfaction and enable soldiers to contribute more over the long term through retention ultimately, and not least, to attract the younger generation to join the organization. This possibility requires special attention to security concerns, threats, and cyber risks. In parallel, tools should be developed to have a repository on SharePoint with training tools for supervisors and employees, frequently asked questions, and applicable guidance, which clear expectations, provide supervisory tips, and offer advice on how to

use specific/measurable/achievable/relevant/timely objectives and provide collaboration platform training, as well as hosting virtual team building and remote learning days.

The art of hybrid work primarily comes down to leveraging the advantages it creates and addressing its challenges promptly. It is characterized as a way of working through which the Portuguese Army can adapt to changes in the world, workplaces, and people's aspirations. Notwithstanding, the default service must continue to be a total commitment engagement involving full-time, unlimited service and liability for duty (24/7, 365 days a year). The applicability of the FWA should be assessed in terms of service needs. In the event of a national emergency, the soldier may be recalled to full-time service as required. The FWA must be planned, time-limited, approved, controlled, and cannot be guaranteed for everyone who requests it. The mechanism means it can only be approved where it can be managed. In this era of rapid change in the workplace, HR professionals can play a pivotal role if they seize the opportunities.

Given the Portuguese Army's ability to adapt, it is imperative to have a 21st-century workplace for its workforce and capitalize on it.

Chapter VI – General Conclusions and Implications

Chapter VI – General Conclusions and Implications

This Chapter presents a synthesis of the thesis and reflections on the research process. Additionally, it provides theoretical and practical contributions to the military context and other areas. Thesis limitations are addressed, and recommendations for future work are made. Finally, the main conclusions of the thesis are highlighted.

The MRQ underlying the present thesis:

“In terms of voluntary turnover, how should the Armed Forces leverage their soldiers and reduce the need for recruitment?”

The thesis addresses this question in two vectors: first, by detailing the gap between intention and behavior in light of the TPB, identifying endogenous and exogenous factors that inhibit turnover. Second, by analyzing an HRM policy, FWA, that expands military labor options to align military labor offers with civilian organizations, which compete for the same human resources.

One of the main contributions of the thesis is that, for the current context and the near future, the Armed Forces still have a long way to go to have enough military personnel to meet their needs, whether through recruitment or retention.

6.1. General Discussion

People represent an organization’s most valuable asset, which is even more significant in military organizations, where individuals sacrifice their lives to protect the lives of others. This fact is also evident because, no matter how technologically advanced an organization is, if it does not have people capable of utilizing it to its maximum potential, the results will be good at best (Dobre, 2023). The first impact of the digital revolution was organizational downsizing, which weakened employee loyalty and trust in management and organizations (Rynes & Cable, 2003). The second impact occurred when there was a need for job candidates; employers unexpectedly found themselves attracting the best candidates from a smaller pool, while simultaneously having to retain the others within the organization. This paradox has reached its peak in recent times in the Armed Forces, as they have a limited capacity to attract and even less capacity to retain personnel, resulting in high turnover rates. If the literature has paid attention to recruitment, the retention and turnover phenomena have received less consideration and contributions.

In this view, “Military Voluntary Turnover” was defined as the research topic for the present thesis. The thesis focused on the military context. From the theoretical point

of view, the objectives were to fill the following gaps in the literature: (i) to increase the understanding of the military voluntary turnover phenomenon, by answering the question: If many military personnel intend to leave the organization but do not materialize this intention into behavior, what prevents them from leaving? By answering this question, additional theoretical insights are added to the prevalent trend in the turnover literature, which is more focused on the antecedents, reasons, and consequences of turnover; and (ii) to explore and verify advantages and challenges, but also limitations and constraints in the adoption of new HRM policies, namely FWA by military organizations, which, to our knowledge, is unprecedented in some way and may serve as a reference for other HR policies in the military or non-military context; since this is a suggestion of many ex-military personnel, as mentioned by several participants in Study 2.

From a practical perspective, we suggested that military organizations should prioritize internal factors and either mitigate or leverage external factors, depending on the situation. On the other hand, we seek to find alternatives to traditional military work and mitigate the hardship that the Armed Forces face in recruitment and retention. To this end, we brought innovative policies to the discussion that motivate active-duty military personnel, identifying advantages and challenges in implementing FWA, suggesting positions permissible for its adoption through a SAF evaluation and Risk assessment. Finally, we propose a roadmap for its implementation.

In the literature, few studies have addressed the factors that inhibit military personnel from leaving the Armed Forces, a gap that we fill. The literature has paid more attention to the antecedents, reasons, and consequences of employees leaving organizations, including those in the military. To address the MRQ, using the first and second studies (Chapters III and IV), we fill this gap through a combined qualitative and quantitative approach based on the TPB.

Thus, in Study 1, we formulated the following RQ:

RQ1: *How does the TPB contribute to a better understanding of the inhibiting factors of the military personnel's voluntary turnover process?*

RQ2: *What are the factors that most contribute to inhibiting the military personnel in the voluntary turnover process?*

Concerning RQ1, we detail Sheeran's matrix (2002) in the military context by explaining and defining each quadrant and suggesting measures that the organization can implement for each group. Due to mission, laws, and training, military personnel have

more duties than non-military personnel, distinguishing them in this regard. This distinction raises concerns about applying general HR theories to the military, which need adaptation. Voluntary turnover in the military context was seen as planned behavior involving several procedural steps, not entirely under individual control (Batista & Oliveira, 2023). HR managers emphasized that an analysis of turnover by service provision forms was needed for conclusive results. The TPB helped understand voluntary turnover, but it must be contextualized. Many military personnel intend to leave, but various inhibiting factors often prevent them from doing so. These factors must be considered to understand the intention-behavior gap. While TPB suits the topic, understanding what occurs between turnover intention and behavior requires clarifying details or integrating different models. Understanding the factors that influence turnover behavior enables the development of more targeted strategies. HR managers noted that although the military recruitment system is well-defined, the retention system needs improvement due to shared responsibilities across departments.

Regarding RQ2, we identified nine inhibiting factors organized into four subcategories and two categories that prevent Portuguese military personnel from leaving. Particular emphasis was given to the *inclined abstainers* (Sheeran, 2002), who expressed a positive intention to leave but did not act, as they were valuable informants in understanding the gap between turnover intention and turnover behavior. The endogenous category encompasses factors originating within the individual. The demographic subcategory includes immutable characteristics that identify and categorize individuals, influencing their behavior. In other words, it distinguishes the individual characteristics. It groups them by similarities, namely through factors that cannot be changed, but that identify, characterize, and categorize them and influence their behavior (e.g., age). The internal subcategory covers internal/psychological factors that can either limit or expose individuals when facing challenges, barriers, or obstacles to behavior enactment, which can affect turnover behavior and may change over time (e.g., uncertainty). The exogenous category comprises factors influenced by external forces that limit, prevent, or hinder the individual's decision to leave the Portuguese Army. The organizational subcategory relates to feelings about external organizational events – what happens outside the organization (e.g., external context). The social subcategory stems from the social context, influencing the individual's decision-making through interactions with family, friends, coworkers, superiors, subordinates, peers, or society itself.

Furthermore, we proposed a framework of the factors that inhibit voluntary turnover and moderate the relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior.

In Chapter IV, we examined the framework proposed in the previous Chapter (III) through a cross-sectional quantitative approach, reinforced with a qualitative approach. We tested 13 hypotheses regarding the relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior. Besides analyzing the main effects, we tested whether this relationship was negatively moderated by the field-of-study mismatch, age, cooperation by others (friends and family or coworkers), job stability, the quality of organizational relationship (organizational identification, job identification, and employee loyalty), inertia, uncertainty, social recognition, and external context. We found that not all moderators proposed by Batista and Oliveira (2023) influence the positive relationship between turnover intention and turnover behavior [e.g., field-of-study mismatch, cooperation by others (friends or family), organizational relationship (employee loyalty), inertia, uncertainty, and external context)]. One possible explanation for this is the temporal lag between the formulation of the framework (Study 1) and the time of data collection (Study 2), which resulted in a completely different socioeconomic situation. In fact, Study 1 was conducted in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, while Study 2 took place in a period of relatively better socioeconomic conditions. It is possible that the lack of support for some of the turnover-inhibiting factors suggested in Study 1, but not found in Study 2, is due to the different social and economic contexts in which participants were experiencing at those two moments.

Chapters III and IV enable us to gain a deeper understanding of why most military personnel remain in the Army despite initially intending to leave. HR experts should understand the factors influencing employee retention and how to minimize the need for recruitment of new personnel. Additionally, organizations must focus on attracting, developing, involving, empowering, and retaining their workforce. Furthermore, they must pay attention to endogenous factors, namely turnover inhibition, and, if possible, reinforce them rather than only trying to counteract exogenous factors.

Another gap in the literature was that few studies addressed the adoption of FWA by the Armed Forces. To address this gap, we analyzed FWA and suggested how it can be adopted in the Portuguese Army (Chapter V – Study 3). Findings were based on policies implemented in six NATO Armies and 16 semi-structured interviews with experts and military personnel. Results indicated that the Portuguese Army should

explore and embrace, rather than belittle, the efficiencies and advantages of non-permanent presential work. Combat Unit jobs cannot be done entirely flexibly; some Support Unit and Training Center jobs can be performed this way. Due to cultural concerns and operational readiness, it is not recommended that military jobs be conducted exclusively in a remote way/model. Furthermore, the advantages and challenges were presented, along with how FWA can be adopted and supported through a phased implementation plan. The RQ were:

RQ1: *What are the advantages and challenges for the Portuguese Army in adopting FWA for its military personnel?*

RQ2: *What FWA can be adopted by the Portuguese Army for its military personnel?*

RQ3: *What are the required conditions for the Portuguese Army to adopt FWA?*

Regarding RQ1, we explored and verified the limitations and constraints that military organizations face when adopting FWA. From the outset, we found that meeting the expectations and ambitions of the military, namely Generation Z, the military organization will increase the attraction and, consequently, the recruitment of new members and retain the current military personnel for longer but also improve well-being by mitigating and allowing flexibility in conflicts between professional and personal life, on the other hand, it reduces expenses, increases the military's digital tools and, reduces the need for so much workforce. FWA has been touted among various organizational practices as key to helping employees manage work and nonwork responsibilities (Allen et al., 2013). Nevertheless, essential challenges will arise. Leadership, management, coordination, and connection between the military will be among the key priorities, as will the preservation of organizational culture and security in communications necessary for the full implementation of FWA, along with the health and well-being of military personnel and the development of new regulations and procedures. Once the advantages and challenges have been identified, we can emphasize that they will be transversal to the Armed Forces that have not yet implemented the FWA. However, some of these principles will also have applicability in non-military organizations, including recruitment/retention, employee well-being and flexibility, cost reduction, and management and coordination challenges, which will also need to be considered.

Regarding RQ2, we suggested that the current battlefield still requires the physical presence of the military, so Combat and Support Units in war cannot operate entirely remotely. Nevertheless, the physical presence of military personnel is unnecessary when

robotics or autonomous systems are used on the Battlefield (Fang et al., 2023; Paul, 2023). However, some military positions can be flexible during peacetime, administrative, or planning periods. Support Units not directly involved in combat can carry out their functions flexibly without permanent face-to-face interaction. Military training often demands physical contact and proximity to perform demanding tasks proficiently. Therefore, specific training periods must be conducted in person, although some training can be done remotely. The contributions in this area are primarily for military organizations, although there are lessons to be learned when non-military organizations apply the logic used in their operations.

About RQ3, we proposed a plan that outlines all the conditions an organization should follow to achieve a successful policy. The plan includes a preparation phase, a pilot program phase, an implementation phase, and an assessment phase. We believe this plan will be beneficial for both military and non-military organizations in implementing new policies in HR and other areas.

Study 3 filled a gap in the literature by exploring and verifying the limitations and constraints that prevent military organizations from adopting FWA.

After completing Study 3 and based on the data already presented in Chapter I, we can also suggest a plan for implementing new policies and complement Atkinson's (1984) "flexible organizations" model, adding "work" to the concept of Flexibility. Figure 9 illustrates the differences between military and non-military organizations.

Figure 9 – Thesis Flexibility in Non-military and Military Organizations

Flexibility	Non-military organizations	Military organizations
Functional	Desirable but limited – need employee agreement.	In essence, it has always been implemented.
Numerical	Desirable but limited – needs to be in line with labor law.	Cannot be implemented.
Financial	Possible to implement.	Cannot be implemented.
Work	Possible to implement.	It is possible to implement, but with some limitations.

A summary of the three Studies, including their purpose, theoretical framework, methodology, and main findings, is presented in Table XI.

Table XI – Summary of the Three Studies

	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
Purpose	Explore the intention behavior gap to identify and improve the understanding of the factors that contribute more to inhibiting intentions in the voluntary turnover process.	Examine which inhibiting factors moderate the military personnel's behavior of leaving.	Analyze FWA and suggest how they can be adopted in the Portuguese Army.
Theoretical Framework	TPB	TPB	TPB, SAF evaluation criteria and Risk assessment
Methodology	• Literature review • Documental analysis • Thematic analysis	• Literature review • Documental analysis • Confirmatory factor analysis • Binary logistic regression • Moderation analysis • Content analysis	• Literature review • Documental analysis • Content analysis
Main Findings	Voluntary turnover is hampered by demographic, internal, social, and organizational factors such as older age, the guarantee of job stability, the cooperation by others to stay, and limitations in the external context, some of which have applicability in non-military organizations.	The positive link between turnover intention and turnover behavior. This relationship is negatively moderated by age, cooperation by others (coworkers), job stability, organizational relationship (organizational identification and job identification), and social recognition.	Military organizations should explore and embrace, rather than belittle, the efficiencies and advantages gained through non-permanent presential work and should follow a phased plan implementation to achieve success.

6.2. Contributions and Implications

Based on the TPB, Figure 3 (p. 22) illustrates the thesis's conceptual model, which comprises the factors inhibiting the leave of military personnel and the reinforcement of organizational relationships through the FWA, as suggested in literature (Oskarsson et al., 2020; Pace et al., 2025; Uru et al., 2022) and by military personnel (during the questionnaire of the Study 2). The thesis's conceptual model provides the necessary detail to address the intention-behavior gap, something requested by some researchers (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2014; Sheeran, 2002), and to our knowledge, has never been researched before. The inhibiting factors are not permanent or have the same influence over time or context. On the other hand, FWA strengthen the relationship between military personnel and organization, and allows military organizations to align their work regimes with those of civilian organizations. However, due to operational issues, not all FWA can be adopted by the military organizations, and some of them need control measures to minimize the risk (reduce the level of severity or frequency). Furthermore, FWA are perceived as an organizational investment in employee welfare, motivating employees to reciprocate with greater organizational loyalty and performance, ultimately reducing turnover risks (Jiejing et al., 2024). However, a set of challenges must be taken into account and monitored on an ongoing basis (e.g., organizational culture).

The results of the thesis contributes to enriching the TPB (better understanding the intention-behavior gap), to question the ongoing validity of some theoretical principles of the theoretical frameworks used (recession vs. prosperity time), to support theories that suggest the adoption of FWA in organizations, and to complement them with a roadmap for their effective implementation, thereby bringing the gap between conceptual advocacy and practical application.

6.2.1. Theoretical Contributions and Implications

To expand the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) to behaviors not under the individual's complete volitional control or involuntary/thoughtless behaviors, Ajzen (1991) added the perceived behavior control and suggested the TPB. Later, Ajzen (2020) indicated that the crucial factor determining if the formed intention is translated into the behavior is the actual behavior control (the ability of people to have complete control over their behavior) as a moderator, so if there are barriers or inhibitors to intention, it is likely that the behavior will not take place. However, there is evidence that the TPB is insufficient to address the intention-behavior gap (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2014;

Sheeran, 2002) because it does not provide enough detail, which is why these concepts were studied, detailed, and clarified in the present thesis.

The theoretical contribution of Study 1 was to provide detailed and refined insights into the TPB path in the intention-behavior gap, which must be analyzed from two perspectives: endogenous and exogenous to the individual. Additionally, we decomposed the intention-behavior relationship using Sheeran's matrix (2002). We detailed it for our target population, suggesting clear definitions and measures to be taken for each group population.

The main theoretical contribution of Study 2 lies in the findings of the first empirical test (to our knowledge) of Batista and Oliveira's framework (2023). We tested the model through an observational, quantitative, cross-sectional study, combined with a qualitative approach (content analysis), to deepen the findings. The relationship between turnover intention and behavior was examined using a binary logistic regression, and the influences of moderators on the turnover intention-behavior relationship were investigated using Model 1 of the macro-PROCESS (Hayes, 2013). Another contribution drawn from the results was that some inhibiting factors are associated with the economic and social context, i.e., in times of recession, they may act as inhibiting factors (e.g., uncertainty). However, in times of prosperity, they do not play a significant role.

The theoretical contribution of Study 3 was that the Armed Forces could not adopt all HR policies like non-military organizations due to their operational mission, leadership, occupational specialties, labor or service availability, and support to the population (e.g., natural accidents/events) and the military's contractual bond, what is in coherence/line/agreement with the theories of others (Dexter, 2020; Horn, 2014; Pease et al., 2016; Robbert et al., 1997). In our study, we detailed the FWA and found that in the military context, it is not available to all positions and cannot be guaranteed indefinitely. Therefore, each type of position should be analyzed to determine whether the FWA can be applied. Non-military organizations may offer more FWA; however, during the "cold" period – peacetime or routine conditions resembling those of "conventional" organizations (Soeters et al., 2010) – military organizations may also offer some FWA policies.

The overall theoretical contribution of the thesis is an in-depth examination of the intention-behavior gap in the TPB, highlighting that endogenous factors inhibiting turnover must be reinforced. In contrast, exogenous factors should be mitigated,

depending on the social and economic context. Additionally, it was found that FWA can be made available in the Army, not only to increase military work options but also to align the labor supply with civilian organizations that compete for the same human resources.

6.2.2. Practical Contributions and Implications

The practical contribution of Studies 1 and 2 was a framework that suggested restraining turnover intention and behavior through nine inhibiting factors, which were grouped into four subcategories and two categories. For non-military contexts, we proposed not to include the following factors: field-of-study mismatch (horizontal), cooperation by others, and external context. The factors do not align with these organizations, as hiring considers candidates' skills and competencies; cooperation is not as essential among coworkers and others as it is in military organizations. Nevertheless, we strongly advise considering the following factors: age, job stability, inertia, uncertainty, organizational relationship, and social recognition, as these factors have meaning in both contexts.

As for the practical contributions of Study 2, actions were suggested for military organizations to take, namely support and encourage military personnel to attend extra-military programs to complement their education; motivate and satisfy young soldiers with the work within the organization; identify the soldiers' ambitions and desires and find a balance between these and the organization's needs and rules; promote work-life balance policies and strengthen employee relationships; strengthen the relationship between military personnel and the military organization, through organizational identification job identification, and employee loyalty; define individual objectives, strengthen the link with the organization, and rewarding and recognizing employees; value and emphasize the employment; reinforce the social recognition. The factors influencing employee retention must be understood, and appropriate steps must be taken to address them through effective communication with employees, meeting their needs, reinforcing the moral wage, enhancing work-life balance policies, and providing hybrid work. To retain military personnel, it is necessary to reduce their intention to turnover and reinforce the factors that inhibit their turnover behavior.

The practical contribution of Study 3 is the development of a concrete roadmap for implementing new HR policies, specifically FWA. The roadmap can serve as a reference for other non-military organizations, with necessary adaptations to the policy to be implemented.

The overall practical contribution of the thesis is the identification of factors inhibiting turnover, along with recommendations for strengthening or mitigating them, as well as an in-depth evaluation of HR policy strategies (SAF) and Risk assessment. Finally, concrete proposals were made for implementing new HR policies, which, with appropriate adaptations, can be applied to other HR policies in various organizations.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite this study's valuable contributions to voluntary military turnover, the current research results are subject to improvement, pointing to future research directions.

In global terms, the limitations of the thesis are: (i) Cronbach and Meehl (1955) defined a nomological network as a set of theories comprised of an interrelated system of laws, concepts, and hypotheses. The literature suggested that doubts persist in the turnover nomological network, namely antecedents, indicators, moderators, mediators, probability, time of implementation, and consequences (Sümer & van de Ven, 2007); however, to fill the identified gaps, the present thesis only focused on moderators (inhibiting factors); (ii) while the databases selected are well-known and have broad coverage of the topics under study in this thesis, it is always possible that we missed some relevant studies; (iii) the articles elaboration did not take into account periods of recession and prosperity, leading to changes in results.

In specific terms, in Studies 1 and 2, the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire were conducted in Portuguese culture and context, which may have influenced the results, making them context-specific, which is in line with other studies on turnover (Ma & Trigo, 2012; Qin, 2021), which suggested that turnover intentions vary significantly across countries due to social context. Secondly, the use of the cross-sectional quantitative approach, a type of research method that involves collecting data at a specific point in time from a group of people (Wang & Cheng, 2020). So, this approach has two significant limitations: it is unsuitable for studying temporal dynamics (e.g., it does not consider the socioeconomic evolution or the changes in new laws approved in the meantime), and it does not include certain groups (e.g., new incomers), which are essential in studies such as turnover. Thirdly, a recall bias (Bell et al., 2019) may have influenced responses, given the differences in the accuracy of study participants' recollections about their experiences when they left the organization. In Study 3, we focused solely on six NATO Armies, for which we found information in open sources; however, if we had analyzed other Armies, we believe more comprehensive contributions

could have been suggested. The results were also influenced by the participants who were available for the interviews; others were contacted but did not demonstrate sufficient availability to participate in the study. From another perspective, incorporating artificial intelligence and robots could help develop other FWA types that can be adopted by the Army in the near future, covering both physical and cognitive tasks, saving time, and enhancing labor dynamism and productivity.

We acknowledge that we did not develop definitive and universal answers about military turnover. Though we have presented a comprehensive view of the voluntary turnover intention behavior gap, we still consider that specific applications may be extended to non-military contexts, which would benefit from additional research. From an organizational perspective, future research should consider identifying and examining other measures that can initially contribute to retaining and recruiting more effectively. From an individual perspective, it should also aim to increase the desire to remain in the organization. So, for future research avenues, we outline: (i) analyze military turnover through all nomological network; (ii) analyze the inhibiting factors of the military turnover through a longitudinal study; (iii) explore HR policies that retain more and better, with transparency and the involvement of the employees; (iv) the literature demonstrates and justifies the existence of a relationship between pay satisfaction and intention to leave (Raza et al., 2017; Saeed et al., 2023), but nothing was mentioned about the military context, and it adds that the effect of pay satisfaction on intention to leave has not received much attention. So, the dynamics underlying pay satisfaction *versus* leave require further investigation; (v) studies that analyze and suggest better communication between organizations and their employees and between organizations and potential applicants will be welcome; (vi) based on Duncan (1976) and path-dependency and path-breaking theory (Sydow et al., 2009), it is assumed that organizations must implement dual structures to facilitate the long-term success of new policies, among others, in the flexible work field. Flexibility must be combined with innovation and new knowledge, as well as stability and efficiency, to exploit existing competencies, thereby allowing organizations to change and adapt to environmental dynamics. This ambidextrous situation deserves more military study to assess its impacts and implications. (vii) Military manpower is a central issue, especially for countries that have abolished conscription and fully embraced an all-volunteer force. Unlike other military concerns, workforce challenges in the European Armed Forces remain bothersome and understudied within the academy

community. So, to contribute to the hitherto scarce literature on current workforce challenges in the European context, explicitly fragile recruitment and inefficient military personnel retention, and to increase the operational functions, we suggest studies regarding the military manpower challenges in the European countries' Armed Forces, namely how artificial intelligence, robots, reservists, civilian servants, outsourcing, and civilian volunteers can replace soldiers who perform non-strictly military functions.

6.4. Conclusion

Findings showed that the Armed Forces, like other organizations, must better understand the factors that influence and reinforce military personnel retention and, whenever possible, create conditions to develop other factors that can contribute to retention.

We started by discussing the difference between *retention* and *permanence*. From our point of view, the first is directly related to military organizational capacities or variables that guarantee the permanence of military personnel, and it gives the feeling of being something imposed by the organization, forcing soldiers to stay. The second is oriented towards the variables associated with military personnel, as chosen by the military. Without this clarification, the first word *retention* seems like the organization is forcing the military personnel to stay, when in reality, the organization wants the military to remain in the organization of their own free will.

Secondly, we discussed the extent to which TPB contributes to a better understanding of the inhibiting factors of military personnel in the voluntary turnover process. We showed that turnover intention is not the only predictor of turnover behavior. To lower their turnover rates, organizations must promote initiatives reinforcing the endogenous (e.g., specific HR policies for young soldiers, reinforcing work-family stability, providing adequate position to increase the identification with the job and with the organization, what causes military loyalty with the Armed Forces / decrease the uncertainty, with transparent HR policies) and exogenous (that advance when the external context is favorable and mitigate when is unfavorable with appropriate HR measures / reinforce the cooperation between military personnel and promote activities with family and friends to increase the military personnel feelings with the organization / participate and organize high-visibility events to support the population so that they recognize the organization and its soldiers) factors impacting the individual and their relationship with the organization. Our framework provides a valuable basis for action and research in the

military context, as it addresses the shortcomings of broader, alternative frameworks on retention.

Third, we leave our decomposition breakdown of the turnover influences, from which we propose not to include the following factors in a non-military context: (i) field-of-study mismatch – we believed that in non-military organizations, the horizontal field-of-study mismatch is not significant as they hire employees for a specific function and with the necessary training, this does not happen in military organizations that train young soldiers in specifically military areas, many of which have no parallel in the civilian world, fact also suggested by Dexter (2020) and stated by Pease and colleagues (2016) that the specialized military training received in the military does not necessarily translate to the civilian world; (ii) cooperation by others – camaraderie and support connections between colleagues are not standard in non-military organizations, the same applies to support connections of family and friends, what is in line with Ahern et al. (2015); (iii) external context – non-military organizations, particularly private ones, have greater flexibility in HRM than military organizations (Buijs & Olsthoorn, 2023), as they can hire and fire more quickly and, therefore, have a greater capacity to adapt to events caused outside of the organization. Still, we strongly advise using the following factors: (i) age – HR policies aimed at each age group are essential, and generations are characterized by valuing these policies differently, which, if specific, served to retain employees from each age group; (ii) job stability – regardless of age group, employees knowing they have job stability means they are not constantly looking for alternatives; (iii) inertia – recognize the inertia of some employees is half the way to get the most out of them; (iv) uncertainty – avoid surprise in professional events and happenings is a safety net for employees; (v) organizational relationship – possibly the most crucial factor when it comes to realizing the employee's relationship with the organization, with the job and consequently their loyalty, if fully completed we believe they will be a significant contribution to any organization; and (vi) social recognition – together with financial salary and emotional salary, it constitutes a factor with high motivational standards. The framework can serve as a reference to delve deeper into this issue in other contexts.

Fourth, we focused on FWA, which constitutes a fascinating work policy, as in tandem with allowing institutional objectives to be achieved, it satisfies the new generation's expectations by increasing the well-being of the military, mitigating work-family conflicts, and reducing the costs associated with work, thus improving employee

retention in the organization. FWA's full implementation is contingent upon the Armed Forces, given their mission and the requirement for soldiers to be permanently available. However, if physical presence is not required, Support Units and Training Centers can perform these tasks in this manner. A phased plan for HRM to implement FWA, detailing the various phases and iterations required for FWA success in the Armed Forces, was also suggested.

The thesis comprises three separate Studies, each of which has been submitted to an international peer-reviewed journal. The parts of the thesis that were submitted were:

- Study 1 has been published in the *Organizational Development Journal*.
- Study 2 has been submitted to the *Organization Development Journal* and is currently undergoing peer review.
- Study 3 has been submitted to the *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies* and is currently undergoing peer review.

HR experts must understand the factors influencing employee retention and take appropriate steps to address them. These steps will include communicating effectively with employees (Kalogiannidis, 2020), meeting their needs and expectations (Tanoamchard, 2023), and reinforcing the emotional salary (Aviles-Peralta, 2024), which can be achieved through enhancing work-life policies and hybrid work, as well as implementing awareness campaigns, endomarketing plans, and gamification strategies to reduce the intention and facilitating factors and concomitantly enhance the inhibiting factors, but also replace the military personnel in non-strictly military position by others.

Ultimately, this thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge in both academic and managerial fields, as well as to the practical application of theoretical concepts in the military context. This research will spark more investigation, and we hope that future research will be proposed to deepen the understanding of this topic within management.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Script – Study 1

Local, data e hora da entrevista:

Nome:

Data de nascimento:

Escolaridade:

Cargo/Função:

Tipo de Público-alvo:

Tempo de serviço nas Forças Armadas (apenas para ex-militares):

Bom dia,

Antes demais, permita-me agradecer a sua disponibilidade para me conceder esta entrevista.

Estou convicto de que os seus conhecimentos sobre a temática irão enriquecer sobremaneira o estudo que estou a realizar.

Relativamente ao estudo, permita-me que efetue um pequeno enquadramento:

“Partilhar a notícia de jornal: <https://rr.sapo.pt/2019/07/18/pais/a-situacao-e-insustentavel-alerta-chefe-das-forcas-armadas/noticia/158310/>”

Nos últimos anos, as Forças Armadas portuguesas (FA) têm registado uma redução significativa nos seus efetivos militares, sendo a principal razão o *turnover* voluntário. Esta diminuição está a conduzir as FA para uma situação insustentável, comprometendo as suas capacidades funcionais, técnicas e operacionais e consequentemente o cumprimento das missões que lhes são atribuídas. Segundo a literatura, um dos preditores do *turnover* voluntário é a intenção de *turnover*, no entanto, nem sem a intenção se torna em comportamento, o que nos leva a acreditar que existem fatores que inibem esse comportamento.

Perante esta lacuna, escolhi o seguinte tema: Adiar o fim: Fatores inibidores do *turnover* voluntário no contexto militar

Com o intuito de preencher essa lacuna, proponho-me a compreender melhor a saída antecipada de militares das FA, nomeadamente a lacuna entre a intenção e o comportamento de saída e a influência dos fatores inibidores no processo de *turnover* voluntário.

Para tal, formulei os seguintes objetivos para esta entrevista:

- Perceber a aplicabilidade da Teoria do Comportamento Planeado (TCP) no processo de *turnover* voluntário dos militares das FA.
- Identificar as componentes e respetivos fatores que inibem o comportamento dos mais dos militares das FA, no processo de *turnover* voluntário;

Relativamente à entrevista propriamente dita, solicitava-lhe que procedesse à leitura do consentimento informado, o qual expõe o enquadramento da presente entrevista, nomeadamente que:

- Os dados recolhidos nesta entrevista têm como intuito apenas o presente estudo, não sendo facultados ou divulgados a outras pessoas que não estejam diretamente envolvidas. Mantendo-se assim o seu anonimato e a sua privacidade;
- Para otimizar o tempo, seja autorizado a efetuar o registo áudio da entrevista;
- A qualquer momento pode interromper ou recusar a entrevista, bem como no final da mesma pode rever a informação partilhada e/ou retificar e/ou acrescentar alguma declaração;
- Em caso de dúvida, necessidade de informação adicional ou reclamação, poderá interromper a entrevista ou mesmo após esta pode contactar-me para fazer qualquer tipo de alteração;
- Após a transcrição da entrevista, esta ser-lhe-á enviada em versão editável, para que possa confirmar e/ou se assim o entender efetuar alguma correção;
- Após a validação da transcrição, o registo áudio será destruído;

Questiono se relativamente ao consentimento informado, tem alguma dúvida? Caso não tenha nenhuma questão, solicito-lhe que assine o consentimento informado.

Antes de iniciar a entrevista propriamente dita, pergunto se tem alguma dúvida ou questão até ao momento?

Assim se me permitir, iniciamos a entrevista [iniciar o registo áudio da entrevista]:

A literatura sugere que os indivíduos tomam decisões comportamentais de forma não exclusivamente racionais, socorrendo-se por norma, de toda a informação disponível, bem como da sua perceção relativamente:

- Às consequências que irão resultar desse comportamento;
- À aprovação e/ou aceitação de terceiros (família, amigos e colegas);

- À (facilidade ou) dificuldade e ao controlo (ter ou não capacidade) de efetivar o comportamento.

[Questão 1 (Q1)]: Neste contexto, gostaria de saber a sua opinião, relativamente ao processo de *turnover* voluntário. Acha que este processo, por envolver um planeamento para a efetivação do comportamento e por passar por várias etapas, desde os antecedentes, à intenção, até à tomada de decisão efetiva de abandonar as FA, pode ser justificado e classificado como um comportamento planeado dos militares das FA

[Q2]: A literatura sugere a TCP como a teoria mais adequada e robusta para avaliar o *turnover*. Relativamente ao *turnover* militar, concorda que a TCP é a melhor para avaliar o CCP dos militares das FA, no processo de *turnover* voluntário? Pode desenvolver a sua opinião?

[Q3]: Sugere alguma outra teoria para avaliar o CCP dos militares das FA, no processo de *turnover* voluntário?

[Q4]: Como vê a possibilidade do CCP estar relacionado com a (facilidade ou) dificuldade e com o controlo percebido (ter ou não capacidade) de adotar esse comportamento?

[Q5]: Como visualiza a aplicação do CCP, nomeadamente nestas duas áreas (facilidade/dificuldade e controlo percebido) aos militares das FA, no processo de *turnover* voluntário?

[Q6]: A literatura sugere que a facilidade/dificuldade e o controlo percebido têm por base a componente individual/demográfica (intrínseca ao indivíduo), a componente interna (psicológica – inerente ao indivíduo) e externa (depende da situação, do ambiente social ou do contexto). Na sua opinião, a facilidade/dificuldade está relacionada com a componente individual/demográfica e a componente interna, e o controlo percebido está relacionado com a componente externa, ou todas as componentes podem influenciar a facilidade/dificuldade e o controlo percebido?

[Q6a]: E no caso dos militares das FA a sua opinião mantém-se?

[Q7]: O que o leva a escolher essa opção?

[Q8]: Como visualiza a sua aplicabilidade aos militares das FA, no processo de *turnover* voluntário?

[Q9]: Na sua opinião, a componente individual/demográfica dos militares influencia a intenção do comportamento?

[Q10]: Quais são os fatores da componente individual/demográfica que podem influenciar a intenção do comportamento dos militares das FA, no processo de *turnover* voluntário? Pedia-lhe para desenvolver a sua aplicabilidade ao contexto em estudo?

[Q10a]: [Caso o entrevistado não tenha identificado os fatores da componente individual/demográfica recolhidos na revisão da literatura (a educação, o estado civil, o estatuto no emprego, a idade e o género)]. Questionar sobre essas possibilidades individualmente e, se necessário, explicar o que cada uma quer dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q10b]: [Caso o entrevistado não tenha identificado o tempo de serviço nas FA]. Questionar sobre esta possibilidade e, se necessário, explicar o que quer dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q10c]: [Caso tenham sido sugeridas outras opções em anteriores entrevistas]. Confrontar o atual entrevistado com essas possibilidades e, se necessário, explicar o que querem dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q10d]: Ocorre-lhe mais algum fator individual/demográfico que possa influenciar a intenção do comportamento de *turnover* voluntário dos militares das FA?

[Q11]: Na sua opinião, a componente interna (psicológica) dos militares influencia a intenção do comportamento?

[Q12]: Quais os fatores da componente interna dos militares das FA que influenciam a intenção do comportamento de *turnover* voluntário? Pedia-lhe para desenvolver a aplicabilidade desses fatores ao contexto em estudo?

[Q12a]: [Caso o entrevistado não tenha identificado os fatores da componente interna recolhidos da revisão da literatura (autocontrolo, aversão ao risco, competências, confiança, conhecimento/informação disponível, consciência, desejo, determinação, experiência, expectativas, forças de vontade, hábitos de *turnover*, impulso, integração laboral/*Engagement*, empenhamento, motivação, preferências e traços de personalidade (Conscienciosidade, Abertura para a experiência, Neuroticismo ou Instabilidade Emocional, Extroversão e Amabilidade))]. Questionar sobre essas possibilidades individualmente e, se necessário, explicar o que querem dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q12b]: [Caso o entrevistado não tenha identificado a disciplina, as emoções, a ética (utilitarista, egoísta, ético, deontologia e relativismo), a identidade/identificação/afetividade organizacional, o *Job embeddedness*, a obrigação moral (senso do dever) e a resiliência]. Questionar sobre estas possibilidades e, se necessário, explicar o que querem dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q12c]: [Caso tenham sido sugeridas outras opções em anteriores entrevistas]. Confrontar o atual entrevistado com essas possibilidades e, se necessário, explicar o que querem dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q12d]: Ocorre-lhe mais algum fator interno que possa influenciar a intenção do comportamento de *turnover* voluntário dos militares das FA?

[Q13]: Passando para os fatores da componente externa, na sua opinião, a componente externa aos militares influencia a intenção do comportamento?

[Q13]: Quais são os fatores da componente externa aos militares das FA que influenciam a intenção do comportamento no processo de *turnover* voluntário? Pedia-lhe para desenvolver a aplicabilidade desses fatores ao contexto em estudo?

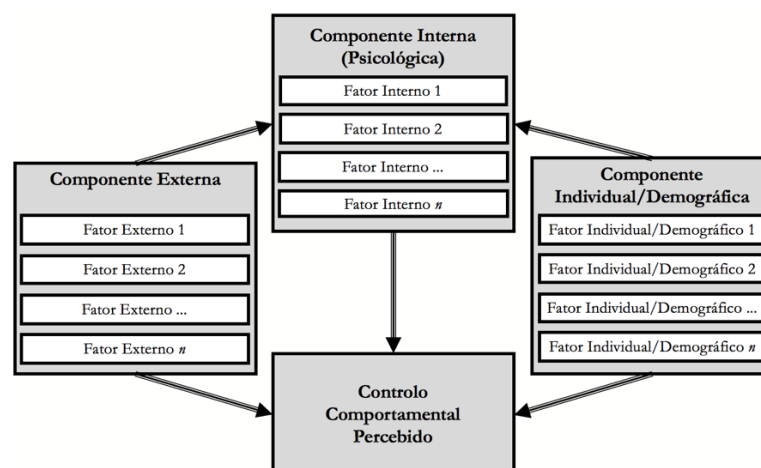
[Q14a]: [Caso o entrevistado não tenha identificado os fatores da componente externa recolhidos da revisão da literatura (alternativas laborais/desemprego, autonomia laboral, barreiras, condições facilitadoras ou inibidores, conjuntura, dependência/aceitação de terceiros, dependência financeira, disponibilidade, norma social, oportunidade, sobrecarga de trabalho, tempo e outros fatores não motivacionais incontrolláveis de indivíduo)]. Questionar sobre essas possibilidades individualmente e, se necessário, explicar o que querem dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q14b]: [Caso o entrevistado não tenha identificado os constrangimentos institucionais, a estabilidade laboral, as condições de trabalho, distância do local de prestação de serviço à residência habitual e Reconhecimento]. Questionar sobre estas possibilidades e, se necessário, explicar o que querem dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q14c]: [Caso tenham sido sugeridas outras opções em anteriores entrevistas. Confrontar o atual entrevistado com essas possibilidades e se necessário explicar o que querem dizer para o presente estudo].

[Q14d]: Ocorre-lhe mais algum fator externo que possa influenciar a intenção do comportamento de *turnover* voluntário dos militares das FA?

Mostar a figura ao entrevistado.



[Q15]: Concorda com a diferenciação da “componente individual/demográfica” da “componente interna”? Porquê?

[Q16]: Concorda com as influências das componentes expostas na figura, nomeadamente: a “componente individual/demográfica” influenciar a “componente interna” e o “CCP”, a “componente interna” influenciar o “CCP” e a “componente externa” influenciar o “CCP”? Porquê?

[Q17]: [Caso o entrevistado não concorde com as influências expostas na figura, solicitar que partilhe a sua sequência].

[Q18]: Questiono se pretende acrescentar ou perguntar algo mais sobre o conteúdo da entrevista ou sobre o tema do estudo?

[Desligar o registo áudio]: A entrevista chegou ao fim, quero agradecer a sua disponibilidade e os contributos que partilhou para o desenvolvimento deste estudo, tão importante para a gestão de recursos humanos das FA. Tal como já tinha informado, irei efetuar a transcrição da entrevista para posteriormente a enviar em ficheiro editável para a sua validação.

Obrigado.

Appendix 2 – Interview’s Informed Consent – Study 1

Eu, abaixo-assinado, declaro que aceito participar na entrevista conduzida por João Carlos Alves Batista, relativa ao estudo da rede nómologica do processo de *turnover* voluntário dos militares das Forças Armadas portuguesas. Entrevista esta, que tem como objetivo perceber a aplicabilidade da teoria do comportamento planeado no processo de *turnover* voluntário e os fatores inibidores à saída dos militares das Forças Armadas portuguesas nesse processo.

A entrevista tem por base a informação que me foi fornecida e clarificada, bem como a consulta prévia do Guião da Entrevista.

O uso da informação que partilho é apenas para este estudo e não será facultado a outras pessoas que não estejam diretamente envolvidas. Os dados serão recolhidos através de registo de áudio, para o qual autorizo a utilização do telemóvel, sendo a gravação posteriormente destruída.

Após a recolha dos dados terei direito a rever a informação partilhada, podendo retificar alguma declaração.

A decisão de participar no estudo é voluntária, ficando deste modo salvaguardado o meu direito à recusa, tanto neste momento como em qualquer outro, ao longo do processo de pesquisa. A minha privacidade será salvaguardada ao longo do estudo, bem como o meu anonimato.

Em caso de dúvida, necessidade de informação adicional ou reclamação, poderei contactar o autor, cuja identificação e contacto já me foram fornecidos.

Data: ____/____/____.

Assinatura do entrevistador

Assinatura do entrevistado

Appendix 3 – Focus Group’s Script – Study 1

Local, data e hora do Focus Group:

Nome de cada:

Datas de nascimento de cada:

Escolaridade de cada de cada:

Cargo/Função de cada:

Bom dia,

Antes demais, permitam-me agradecer a vossa disponibilidade para podermos nos reunir. Estou convicto de que os vossos contributos sobre a temática irão enriquecer sobremaneira o estudo que estou a realizar.

Relativamente ao estudo, permita-me que efetue um pequeno enquadramento:

“Partilhar a notícia de jornal: <https://rr.sapo.pt/2019/07/18/pais/a-situacao-e-insustentavel-alerta-chefe-das-forcas-armadas/noticia/158310/>”

Nos últimos anos, as Forças Armadas portuguesas (FA) têm registado uma redução significativa nos seus efetivos militares, sendo a principal razão o *turnover* voluntário. Esta diminuição está a conduzir as FA para uma situação insustentável, comprometendo as suas capacidades funcionais, técnicas e operacionais e consequentemente o cumprimento das missões que lhes são atribuídas. Segundo a literatura, um dos preditores do *turnover* voluntário é a intenção de *turnover*, no entanto, nem sem a intenção se torna em comportamento, o que nos leva a acreditar que existem fatores que inibem esse comportamento.

Perante esta lacuna, escolhi o seguinte tema: Adiar o fim: Fatores inibidores do *turnover* voluntário no contexto militar

Com o intuito de preencher essa lacuna, proponho-me a compreender melhor a saída antecipada de militares das FA, nomeadamente os fatores inibidores no processo de *turnover* voluntário.

Para tal, formulei o seguinte objetivo para o Focus Group: Identificar os fatores que inibem o comportamento dos mais dos militares das FA, no processo de *turnover* voluntário;

Assim vamos dar início ao Focus Group [iniciar o registo áudio]:

[Q1]: Na vossa opinião, quais os fatores que podem influenciar a intenção dos militares das FA no processo de *turnover* voluntário?

[Q2]: [Caso não tenham identificado os fatores recolhidos na revisão da literatura nas entrevistas questionar]. Questionar sobre essas possibilidades individualmente e, se necessário, explicar o que cada uma quer dizer para o presente estudo.

[Q3]: Ocorre-vos mais algum fator que possa influenciar a intenção de *turnover* voluntário dos militares das FA?

[Q4]: Questiono se pretendem acrescentar ou perguntar algo mais sobre o conteúdo do Focus Group ou sobre o tema do estudo?

[Desligar o registo áudio]: O Focus Group chegou ao fim, quero agradecer a vossa disponibilidade e os contributos que partilharam para o desenvolvimento deste estudo, tão importante para a gestão de recursos humanos das FA.

Obrigado.

Appendix 4 – Questionnaire – Study 2

Inibidores da saída voluntária dos militares do Exército Português

Exmo./a. Sr./a.,

Em anteriores estudos sobre a saída voluntária, a intenção de sair apresenta-se como um elemento-chave, sendo considerada como o antecedente mais próximo da saída da organização. No entanto, permanece uma lacuna entre a intenção e o comportamento propriamente dito que carece de explicação, uma vez que nem sempre a intenção resulta em ação.

O objetivo do presente estudo é compreender os fatores que moderam a relação entre a intenção de saída e a saída efetiva dos militares do Exército Português. Para alcançar o objetivo, solicita-se que partilhe a sua opinião através do preenchimento do presente questionário, assinalando a opção que melhor corresponde à sua opinião.

A sua participação é anónima e voluntária, podendo desistir em qualquer momento. Toda a informação recolhida será tratada de forma confidencial e destina-se exclusivamente ao tratamento estatístico no âmbito da investigação em curso. A duração aproximada para responder a todas as questões do questionário é de 15 minutos. Para esclarecimento de eventuais dúvidas, informação adicional ou para receber os resultados deste estudo, poderá entrar em contacto através do e-mail: batista.jca@exercito.pt.

Desde já se agradece a V/disponibilidade.

Consentimento Informado

Foi-me explicada a natureza e os objetivos do estudo e fui informado/a sobre a possibilidade de esclarecer todos os aspetos.

Foi-me garantida a possibilidade de desistir de participar no estudo, sempre que o entenda, bem como que o presente questionário não recolhe qualquer dado pessoal, e que não permite identificar o inquirido/a, permanecendo assim as respostas anónimas.

Compreendi a informação que me foi fornecida, concordo em participar no estudo “Inibidores da saída voluntários dos militares do Exército Português” e autorizo que os dados do questionário sejam utilizados para fins de investigação.

Concordo e pretendo prosseguir para participar no estudo?

Sim	Não
-----	-----

Nesta secção pretende-se recolher alguns dados demográficos.

1. Género

Masculino	Feminino	Outro/Prefiro não dizer
-----------	----------	-------------------------

2. Idade, à data da saída do Exército Português

3. Estado civil, à data da saída do Exército Português

Solteiro/a	União de facto	Casado/a	Divorciado/a	Viúvo/a
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4. Nível de educação (Quadro Nacional de Qualificações/*European Qualifications Framework*), à data da saída do Exército Português

Nível 2 (9.º ano)	Nível 3 (12.º ano)	Nível 4 (12.º ano com estágio profissional)	Nível 5 (Pós-secundário)	Nível 6 (Bacharel/Licenciatura)	Nível 7 (Mestrado)	Nível 8 (Doutoramento)
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5. Categoria Militar, à data da saída do Exército Português

Oficial	Sargento	Praça
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6. Formas de Prestação de Serviço, à data da saída do Exército Português

Quadro Permanente (QP)	Regime Contrato (RC)
------------------------	----------------------

7. Tempo de Serviço, à data da saída do Exército Português

Formação Inicial	Curto (até 10 anos de serviço no QP e até 2 anos em RV/RC)	Médio (entre 10 e 20 anos no QP e entre 2 e 4 anos em RV/RC)	Longo (+ 20 anos no QP e + 4 anos em RV/RC)
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8. A sua saída do Exército Português foi ...?

Involuntária (imposição legal, questão médica, disciplinar ou outra).	Voluntária (por sua própria vontade).
---	---------------------------------------

Nesta secção, leia cada uma das questões atentamente e escolha a opção que melhor representa a sua resposta, usando a escala fornecida para cada uma:

9. Antes de sair do Exército Português, com que frequência pensou deixá-lo?

1	2	3	4	5
Nunca	Às vezes	Algumas vezes	Muitas vezes	Sempre

10. Antes de sair do Exército, se procurasse um trabalho fora do Exército, qual a área de formação profissional que sentia ser a mais adequada?

1	2	3	4	5
Apenas a sua área funcional/especialidade ou arma/serviço	A sua área ou numa similar	Nenhuma área em específico	Numa área diferente da sua	Numa área completamente diferente da sua

11. Antes de sair do Exército, pensava que com a minha idade que tinha não conseguiria encontrar um trabalho melhor.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

12. Antes de sair do Exército, a minha família ou esfera pessoal dava-me energia para realizar o meu trabalho.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

13. Antes de sair do Exército, os meus camaradas preocupavam-se verdadeiramente com o meu bem-estar.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

14. Antes de sair do Exército, não havendo restrições legais, podia manter o meu trabalho por mais 6 meses.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

15. Quando alguém criticava o Exército, sentia-a como uma crítica pessoal.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

16. Antes de sair do Exército, em geral, o meu trabalho tinha pouco impacto na minha autoestima. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

17. Sempre que tinha a oportunidade de falar sobre o Exército em encontros sociais, transmitia uma imagem positiva.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

18. Antes de sair do Exército, eu ansiava sempre por um novo dia de trabalho.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

19. Antes de sair, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército simplesmente porque era o que eu sempre fiz.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

20. Antes de sair do Exército, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército simplesmente porque seria uma fonte de stress deixá-lo.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

21. Antes de sair do Exército, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército apesar de saber que financeiramente não era vantajoso.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

22. Situações inesperadas perturbam-me muito.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

23. A incerteza impede-me de desfrutar da vida em pleno.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

24. Antes de sair do Exército, às vezes sentia que o meu trabalho não era reconhecido, apesar do meu esforço. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

25. Antes de sair do Exército, pensava que se o deixasse, iria facilmente arranjar um trabalho similar ou melhor. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

26. Prefiro a cor azul a outras cores.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

27. Antes de sair do Exército, quão satisfatório foi o seu trabalho atendendo às suas necessidades pessoais?

1	2	3	4	5
Muito satisfatório	Parcialmente satisfatório	Moderado	Parcialmente insatisfatório	Totalmente insatisfatório

28. Antes de sair do Exército, pensava que com a minha idade não seria contratado/a por outra organização.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

29. Antes de sair do Exército, sentia-me bem por causa da minha vida familiar e pessoal.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

30. Antes de sair do Exército, os meus camaradas estavam dispostos a sacrificarem-se para me ajudarem a realizar o meu trabalho da melhor forma.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

31. O meu trabalho no Exército era estável.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

32. Antes de sair do Exército, interessava-me o que os outros pensavam sobre o Exército.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

33. O meu trabalho refletia quem eu sou.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

34. Eu promovia sempre a marca Exército.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

35. Eu valorizava sempre as missões, atividades e tarefas do Exército quando falava com outras pessoas.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

36. Antes de sair, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército simplesmente porque fazia parte da minha rotina.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

37. Antes de sair, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército porque me sentia confortável no trabalho.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

38. Antes de sair, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército apesar de saber que pessoalmente não era o melhor para mim.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

39. Antes de sair do Exército, sentia-me frustrado/a por não ter a informação toda relacionada com a minha pessoa.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

40. Na altura de agir, a incerteza paralisa-me.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

41. Às vezes tentava, em vão, ver o meu desempenho ser reconhecido. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

42. As barreiras legais dificultaram a minha saída do Exército.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

43. Gosto da cor azul.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

44. Antes de sair do Exército, com que frequência ficava frustrado/a quando não teve a oportunidade de atingir os seus objetivos profissionais relacionados com o seu trabalho?

1	2	3	4	5
Nunca	Às vezes	Algumas vezes	Muitas vezes	Sempre

45. Antes de sair do Exército, pensava que já não tinha idade para começar uma nova carreira.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

46. Antes de sair do Exército, a minha vida familiar ajudava-me a relaxar e a estar preparado/a para o dia seguinte de trabalho.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

47. Antes de sair do Exército, mesmo que fizesse tudo da melhor forma, os meus camaradas não iriam notar. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

48. Antes de sair do Exército, pensava que, desde que legalmente possível, eu poderia manter o meu trabalho durante o tempo que desejasse.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

49. Quando falava sobre o Exército, normalmente usava "nós" em vez de "eles".

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

50. O meu trabalho no Exército não refletia o tipo de pessoa que eu era. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

51. Sentia-me integrado/a no Exército.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

52. O Exército deu-me muitas coisas na vida.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

53. Antes de sair, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército simplesmente porque o fiz no passado.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

54. Antes de sair, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército porque gostava daquilo que fazia.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

55. Antes de sair, eu pensava em continuar a trabalhar no Exército apesar de saber que profissionalmente não era o melhor para mim.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

56. Devemos olhar para o futuro para evitar surpresas.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

57. Quando não tenho a certeza, não consigo "funcionar" muito bem.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

58. Antes de sair do Exército, eu julgava que merecia mais respeito. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

59. Não saí antes do Exército porque não era a altura ideal.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

60. Gosto de roupas azuis.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

61. Antes de sair do Exército, com que frequência desejava ter outro trabalho que melhor se adaptasse às suas necessidades pessoais?

1	2	3	4	5
Nunca	Às vezes	Algumas vezes	Muitas vezes	Sempre

62. Antes de sair do Exército, a minha forma de resolver os problemas em casa ajudava-me a solucionar os problemas no trabalho.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

63. Os meus camaradas preocupavam-se com a minha satisfação no trabalho.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

64. Antes de sair do Exército, sentia-me seguro/a com a estabilidade do meu trabalho desde que cumprisse com as minhas obrigações.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

65. Os sucessos do Exército eram os meus sucessos.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

66. Em geral, pertencer ao Exército era uma parte importante da minha própria imagem.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

67. Eu pensava frequentemente em deixar o Exército. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

68. Se tivesse de voltar a escolher, eu escolheria novamente o Exército.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

69. Um pequeno acontecimento não previsto pode deitar tudo a perder mesmo com um bom planeamento.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

70. Perante uma pequena dúvida, já não consigo agir.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

71. Às vezes sentia falta de ser reconhecido/a e aceite pelos outros, antes de sair do Exército. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

72. Não saí antes do Exército porque era a única maneira de atingir um objetivo superior.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

73. Antes de sair do Exército, qual era a probabilidade de aceitar outro trabalho com o mesmo nível salarial caso lhe tivesse sido oferecido?

1	2	3	4	5
Altamente improvável	Parcialmente improvável	Moderado	Parcialmente provável	Altamente provável

74. As competências que usava em casa ajudavam-me a resolver problemas práticos no trabalho.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

75. Os meus camaradas demonstravam pouca preocupação comigo. (invertida)

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

76. Quando alguém elogiava o Exército, sentia-o como um elogio pessoal.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

77. Antes de sair do Exército, era pouco provável que procurasse outro trabalho.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

78. Antes de sair do Exército, não tinha a certeza se os meus camaradas me dariam o apoio necessário se eu precisasse no meu local de trabalho.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

79. Gosto de saber sempre o que o futuro me reserva.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

80. Tenho de me afastar de todas as situações incertas.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

81. Antes de sair do Exército, com que frequência ansiava por um novo dia de trabalho?

1	2	3	4	5
Sempre	Muitas vezes	Algumas vezes	Às vezes	Nunca

82. Falar com alguém em casa ajudava-me a resolver os problemas no trabalho.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

83. Os meus camaradas preocupavam-se com a minha opinião.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

84. A Cadeia de Comando preocupava-se em resolver diferendos pessoais militares até onde for possível.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

85. Eu confiava no que os meus camaradas diziam.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

86. Detesto ser apanhado/a de surpresa.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

87. Antes de sair do Exército, a minha família e amigos apoiavam-me de forma a superar as dificuldades no trabalho.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

88. Tenho a certeza de que os meus camaradas faziam o trabalho conforme os requisitos.

1	2	3	4	5
Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Nem discordo nem concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente

89. Deveria ser capaz de organizar tudo com antecedência.

1	2	3	4	5
nada característico em mim	pouco característico em mim	indiferente	característico em mim	totalmente característico de mim

90. Durante os últimos 6 meses em que prestei serviço no Exército, avaliava as melhorias que a minha vida pessoal trouxe para o meu trabalho.

1	2	3	4
Raramente	Poucas vezes	Algumas vezes	Na maioria das vezes

Nesta secção, responda livremente à questão:

91. Tem algum comentário que gostasse de fazer relativamente aos fatores que impedem a saída dos militares do Exército Português?

Appendix 5 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis – Study 2

Variable		Component										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Turnover Intention	TI1	-0,498										
	TI2	-0,477										
	TI3	-0,481										
	TI4	-0,462										
	TI5	-0,305										
	TI6	-0,487										
Cooperation by Family/Friends	CF1					0,757						
	CF2					0,656						
	CF3					0,804						
	CF4					0,755						
	CF5					0,773						
	CF6					0,771						
	CF7					0,799						
	CF8					0,629						
Cooperation by Coworkers	CW1				0,797							
	CW2				0,755							
	CW3				0,740							
	CW4				0,782							
	CW5				0,797							
	CW6				0,787							
Job Stability	JS1									0,744		
	JS2									0,817		
	JS3									0,688		
	JS4									0,816		

Variable		Component										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Organizational Identification	OI1						0,811					
	OI2						0,820					
	OI3						0,834					
	OI4						0,736					
	OI5						0,841					
Job Identification	JI1											0,614
	JI2											0,574
	JI3											0,570
	JI4											0,454
Employee Loyalty	EL1	0,747										
	EL2	0,722										
	EL3	0,755										
	EL4	0,744										
	EL5	0,735										
	EL6	0,674										
	EL7	0,626										
	EL8	0,664										
	EL9	0,555										
	EL10	0,599										
	EL11	0,650										
	EL12	0,706										
	EL13	0,654										
Inertia	BI1		0,809									
	BI2		0,839									
	BI3		0,827									
	AI1		0,723									
	AI2		0,752									
	AI3		0,747									

Variable	Component										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	CI1	0,775									
	CI2	0,822									
	CI3	0,820									
Uncertainty	PA1		0,740								
	PA2		0,696								
	PA3		0,726								
	PA4		0,735								
	PA5		0,721								
	PA6		0,718								
	PA7		0,682								
	IA1		0,736								
	IA2		0,797								
	IA3		0,773								
	IA4		0,784								
	IA5		0,725								
Social Recognition	SR1						0,719				
	SR2						0,733				
	SR3						0,595				
	SR4						0,653				
External Context	EC1							0,712			
	EC2							0,810			
	EC3							0,816			
	EC4							0,787			
ATCB	Az1									0,836	
	Az2									0,924	
	Az3									0,882	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
Rotation converged in 7 iterations

Appendix 6 – Correlation between Constructs – Study 2

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Turnover Intention (1)	1											
Cooperation by Family/Friends (2)	-.260**	1										
Cooperation by Coworkers (3)	-.664**	.281**	1									
Job Stability (4)	.152**	.075	-.038	1								
Organizational Identification (5)	-.547**	.276**	.562**	.024	1							
Job Identification (6)	-.708**	.243**	.666**	-.004	.605**	1						
Employee Loyalty (7)	-.780**	.372**	.608**	-.034	.572**	.642**	1					
Inertia (8)	-.567**	.275**	.423**	.023	.368**	.440**	.576**	1				
Uncertainty (9)	.230**	.042	-.137**	.143**	-.054	-.165**	-.129**	-.043	1			
Social Recognition (10)	-.635**	.176**	.575**	-.126**	.362**	.537**	.544**	.297**	-.233**	1		
External Context (11)	.230**	-.044	-.172**	.003	-.133**	-.183**	-.179**	.000	.325**	-.182**	1	
Marker Variable – ATCB (12)	.77	-.029	-.040	.055	-.030	-.043	-.054	-.001	.086	-.009	.093*	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Appendix 7 – Experts Interview Script – Study 3

My name is João Carlos Alves Batista, Lieutenant Colonel from the Portuguese Army, and I am currently conducting a study on implementing flexible work arrangements (FWA) in the Portuguese Army.

For the purpose of developing my investigation and for study purposes only, I would like to gain a better understanding of the FWA.

Considering this, I will be very pleased if you agree to comment on the following questions:

1. Which FWA can be adopted by the Army for regular military personnel? In what conditions or modalities/systems?
2. Can all military personnel apply for it? Considering that in Combat Units (land units – have only combat or combat support tasks), Support Units (agencies/combat support service – have purely administrative functions and deal with service/supply), and Training Centers (academies/schools – responsible for the training/improvement of the military personnel).
3. What advantages, disadvantages, and challenges can the Army expect when adopting FWA?
4. What recommendations could you give to an Army that wishes to implement FWA?
5. What phased plan do you suggest for the Army to implement FWA?

Appendix 8 – Army Human Resource Managers Interview Script – Study 3

My name is João Carlos Alves Batista, Lieutenant Colonel from the Portuguese Army, and I am currently conducting a study on implementing flexible work arrangements (FWA) in the Portuguese Army.

For the purpose of developing my investigation and for study purposes only, I would like to analyze examples of other countries' Armies.

Considering this, I will be very pleased if you agree to comment on the following questions:

1. Is the [*country*] Army using FWA for regular military personnel? In what conditions or modalities/systems?
2. Can all military personnel apply for it if the [*country*] Army has FWA? Considering that in Combat Units (land units – have only combat or combat support tasks), Support Units (agencies/combat support service – have purely administrative functions and deal with service/supply), and Training Centers (academies/schools – responsible for the training/improvement of the military personnel).
3. What advantages, disadvantages, and challenges did the [*country*] Army face when adopting FWA?
4. What recommendations could you give to an Army that wishes to implement FWA for the first time?
5. What phased plan did the [*country*] Army implement to introduce FWA?

Appendix 9 – Military Personnel in Active-duty Interview Script – Study 3

My name is João Carlos Alves Batista, Lieutenant Colonel from the Portuguese Army, and I am currently conducting a study on implementing flexible work arrangements (FWA) in the Portuguese Army.

For the purpose of developing my investigation and for study purposes only, I would like to gain a better understanding of the FWA.

Considering this, I will be very pleased if you agree to comment on the following questions:

1. Which FWA could the Army make available? In what conditions or modalities/systems?
2. Which FWA would you like to apply?
3. Can all military personnel apply? Considering that in Combat Units (land units – have only combat or combat support tasks), Support Units (agencies/combat support service – have purely administrative functions and deal with service/supply), and Training Centers (academies/schools – responsible for the training/improvement of the military personnel).
4. What advantages, disadvantages, and challenges can be expected with FWA at the personal and Army levels?

Appendix 10 – Coding Tree – Study 3

Figure 10 – FWA Advantages Coding Tree

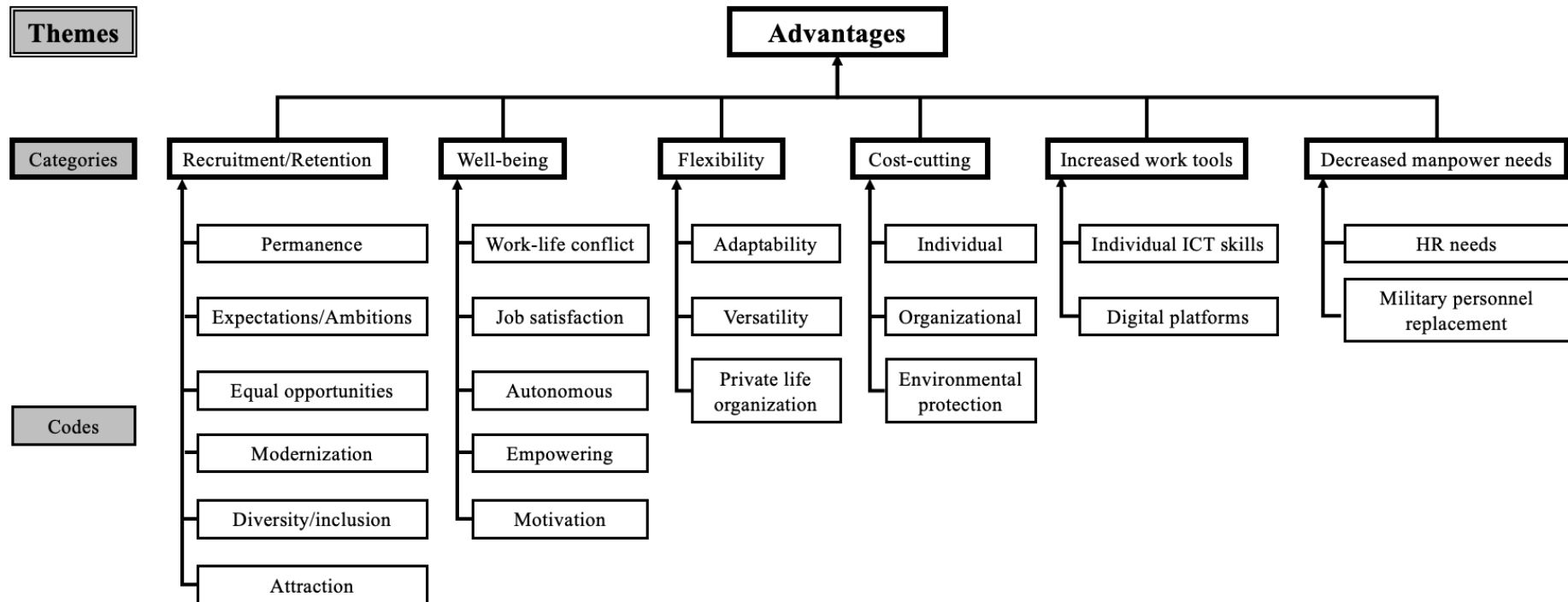


Figure 11 – FWA Challenges Coding Tree

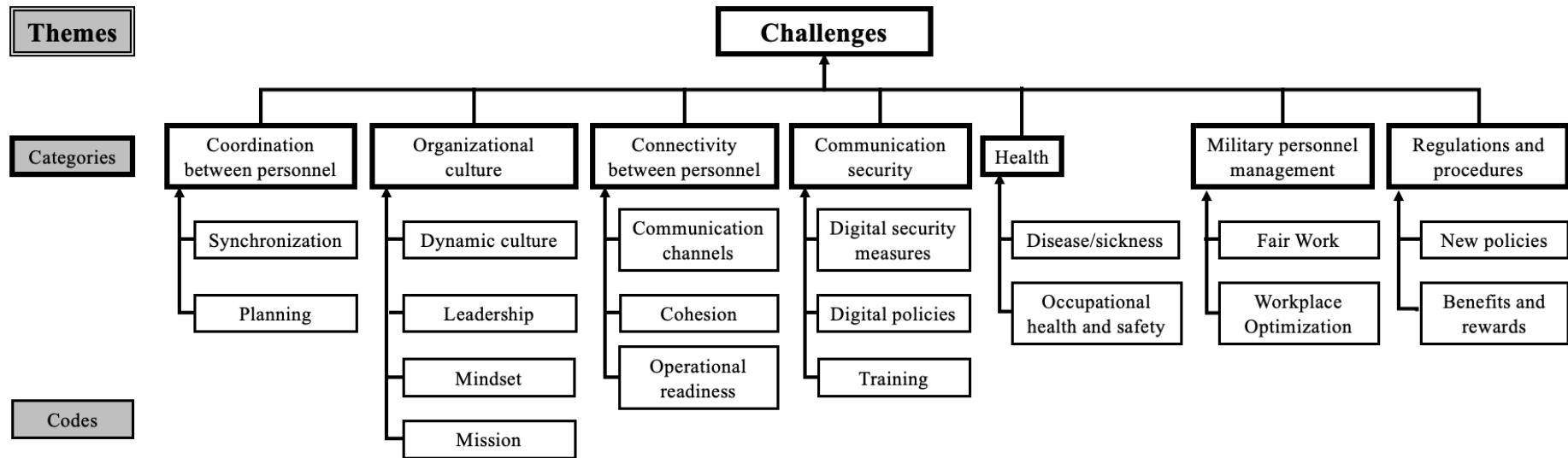


Figure 12 – Phase Plan for FWA Implementation Coding Tree

