

Comparative Study

Parenting, Resilience, and Wellbeing: A Comparative Study of Children from Military and Civilian Families

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of parental military service on children's perceptions of parenting, resilience, and well-being, in comparison to children of civilian personnel. Utilizing purposive sampling, data were gathered from 182 students aged 14 to 18 from schools in Delhi and Porbandar affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Scales such as the Perception of Parents Scales (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997), Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Davidson & Connor, 2003), and PERMA Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016) were employed for data collection. The data was analyzed using SPSS, with a t-test comparing children of military and civilian personnel, and Pearson's correlation assessing the relationship between variables. Results showed that maternal autonomy support played a crucial role in enhancing positive emotions, fostering strong relationships, promoting a sense of meaning, encouraging accomplishment, and contributing to overall well-being. Children of military personnel exhibited higher loneliness and lower well-being scores, particularly in meaning and accomplishment, suggesting that frequent relocations, parental deployments, and instability in social environments may hinder their ability to form deep relationships and achieve personal goals. These findings highlight the significance of autonomy-supportive parenting and targeted support programs in addressing the challenges faced by military families.

Keywords: *Children of military personnel, Children of civilian personnel, Perceived parenting, Resilience, Well-being*

Children and saplings share a fundamental need for a nurturing environment to grow. Just as a sapling requires stable soil to anchor its roots, children need a solid foundation of love, care, and security to develop. Both are fragile at the start and need consistent attention to thrive. A sapling needs nutrients and protection to stand strong against the wind, as children require guidance to face life's challenges. Like a rose needing fertile soil to bloom and a cactus thriving in dry conditions, children, too, need the right environment to flourish—one that supports their unique growth and potential. The dandelion was chosen as the official symbol for the children of military personnel because, like them, it embodies resilience and adaptability. Often regarded as a weed, the dandelion has a remarkable ability to travel with the wind, taking root and flourishing in any environment it encounters.

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Similarly, military children, who constantly relocate, demonstrate the same capacity to adjust, thrive, and bloom wherever life plants them.

The well-being and development of children are deeply influenced by the involvement and support of their parents. It is widely acknowledged that a parent's active participation in their child's life—both in providing guidance and fostering emotional stability—plays a critical role in shaping their future. When parents engage autonomously in their children's growth, they help cultivate resilience, emotional intelligence, and life skills that enable children to navigate life's inevitable challenges. In this context, it is not just the quantity of time spent together that matters, but the quality of interactions that contribute significantly to a child's sense of security, self-worth, and coping mechanisms.

Parental involvement impacts various dimensions of a child's life, from their academic performance to their emotional regulation and social development. Children who receive consistent emotional support, encouragement, and guidance from their parents are more likely to develop high self-esteem and healthy coping strategies. This active engagement helps them understand the importance of effort and perseverance when faced with setbacks. Furthermore, the bond that parents share with their children becomes a crucial buffer against stress and adversity, promoting resilience, an essential life skill for overcoming difficulties.

However, a parent's occupation can greatly influence the level of involvement they can offer. For instance, military parents often face challenges that civilian parents may not encounter. Military service, with its frequent relocations, extended deployments, and the emotional toll of separation, often disrupts the stability children rely on for emotional growth. The absence of a parent during a deployment can create a void, leading to feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, or even resentment in children. Such disruptions can make it difficult for military parents to consistently support their children's day-to-day needs, potentially affecting their development.

Despite these challenges, the military environment offers unique opportunities to foster resilience. Children raised in military families tend to develop adaptability, independence, and problem-solving skills early on. The need to adjust to new schools and communities, and make new friends regularly can help children become more flexible and resourceful. Additionally, military children often learn valuable lessons about sacrifice, duty, and community that can build character and strength. Children of military personnel regularly travel to various stations, tend to adapt more easily to new social and academic settings, which helps develop resilience (Sharma and Nagle, 2018). In this way, although military life can pose difficulties, it also cultivates a set of coping strategies and emotional tools that many children in civilian households may not have the opportunity to develop. Several studies have indicated that children feel that travel broadens their understanding of different people and cultures (Hanna, 2020; Sriram & Sarkar, 2019; Zurlinden et al., 2019).

In comparison, children of civilian personnel navigate unique challenges, including financial instability arising from job fluctuations, occasional work-related stress that can affect family harmony, and limited access to comprehensive healthcare. While frequent relocations may not disrupt their lives, they may still face the strain of adjusting to new schools and environments. However, they often enjoy a more consistent and predictable home life, with parents present more regularly, unaffected by deployments. This stability fosters deeper

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family connections and a more grounded sense of security, allowing them to experience continuity in their education and emotional well-being.

Effects of Frequent Relocation

The frequent relocations experienced by children of military personnel can pose significant challenges to their emotional well-being and social lives. Constantly uprooted from one community to another, they often face a sense of instability and displacement. Each move requires them to adjust to new schools, different social environments, and unfamiliar educational systems, which can cause feelings of anxiety and stress. The ongoing process of leaving behind friends and familiar surroundings can lead to loneliness and difficulty in forming long-lasting relationships. Frequent relocation is considered the most stressful part of growing up in a military family, as reported by several military personnel's children (Sullivan, 2019). As they adapt to new places, these children may struggle to find a consistent sense of belonging, often leading to feelings of isolation and a fluctuating sense of self. A study identified that stressful experiences for young individuals included losing old friendships, adapting to new locations, and forming new social connections (Sriram and Sarkar, 2019).

Yet, amidst these challenges, there are positive aspects that shape their growth. Frequent relocations foster resilience, teaching military children to navigate change and uncertainty with adaptability and confidence. They learn to form new relationships quickly, cultivating social skills and emotional maturity as they interact with diverse peer groups. Additionally, their exposure to different cultures and environments broadens their worldviews, promoting a global perspective that many children do not experience. While the emotional toll of frequent moves is undeniable, these children often develop a strong sense of independence, resourcefulness, and the ability to thrive in a variety of situations, preparing them well for future challenges. School transitions can benefit children by fostering resilience, and mobility allows them to discover new interests and build fresh social networks (Ann Easterbrooks et al., 2013; Kelley et al., 2003).

Deployment and Reintegration

Parental deployment, especially in military families, deeply impacts both the deployed parent and the family's overall dynamics. For the parent on deployment, the separation can evoke intense emotions like guilt and stress, creating a feeling of disconnection from their children and spouse. The absence often results in a loss of daily involvement in family life, which disrupts established parenting routines and practices. Deployment-related stressors have been found to negatively affect parenting practices, including impaired problem-solving abilities, reduced encouragement for children, less involvement in child-centered activities, and increased use of coercive or harsh behaviors by parents (Gewirtz et al., 2011, 2016). Upon reintegration, the deployed parent may struggle to adjust to the changed dynamics, feeling out of sync with the family's evolving needs and routines. This transition often requires rebuilding trust and redefining parental roles, as both parents work to reconnect and recalibrate their approach to parenting. The safety of parents deployed in combat zones is a primary concern for military children (Huebner et al., 2007; Misra & Singh, 2014). Research has shown that deployment to a combat zone, as opposed to a non-combat zone, is associated with higher levels of stress and mental health challenges for family members (Faber et al., 2008; Kelley, 1994).

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The concept of "ambiguous loss" was introduced to explain how parental absence creates emotional confusion within families (Boss,2014), which was later applied in studies to explain how military families are especially affected by this due to frequent deployments, which causes both physical and emotional absence. This framework was applied in studies of adolescents in military families (Huebner,2007). A study of military adolescents in India found that while digital communication creates a "psychological presence" of absent parents, it also leads to ambiguity and confusion for many teenagers (Misra and Singh, 2014)

For children, the absence of a parent can have lasting effects on their emotional and psychological well-being. They may experience feelings of sadness, anxiety, or insecurity, which stem from the absence of the nurturing and guidance they had come to rely on. Over time, they may become accustomed to the changes in family structure, developing coping mechanisms that can range from emotional detachment to increased dependency. The deployed parent too struggles to connect with their children in ways that foster and sustain a strong emotional bond upon returning home (Bello-utu & Desocio, 2015)

Upon the parent's return, children may struggle to readjust to the presence of a figure they have had to adapt to living without. After being away for an extended period, a father may feel compelled to reassert control and reestablish family norms (Dayton et al., 2014; Walsh et al., 2014). In doing so, he may unintentionally undermine the other parent's efforts to maintain family order, and he might also struggle to resist his children's demands or feel guilty about the upcoming relocation (Adams et al., 1990; Mancini et al., 2020). The reestablishment of emotional bonds can be challenging, as the child's psyche has already adapted to a new rhythm without the deployed parent. This adjustment period requires patience, understanding, and open communication to ensure that the family can reforge those crucial connections and return to a sense of normalcy. The level of family cohesion influences how easily family members can adapt to changing roles (Riggs & Riggs, 2011).

The military subculture profoundly shapes the lives of children growing up in military families, influencing their worldview, values, and social interactions. From an early age, these children are exposed to a unique set of expectations, such as respect for authority, discipline, and adaptability, which become ingrained in their daily lives. The frequent moves, strict routines, and the transient nature of military life teach them resilience and flexibility, often making them more mature and independent than their peers. However, this subculture can also create feelings of isolation, as they are constantly adjusting to new environments, schools, and social groups. The shared experience of military life can foster a strong sense of camaraderie and loyalty, but it can also make it challenging for children to form lasting friendships, as they are frequently uprooted. Moreover, the heightened awareness of their parents' sacrifices and the risks of deployment can lead to emotional stress, fostering a complex relationship with their sense of identity. While military children often develop a deep sense of pride in their parent's service, they must continuously navigate the balance between belonging to the military community and managing the personal impact of a lifestyle filled with constant change.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parenting

Sharma and Nagle (2018) in their study "Personality and Resilience as Determinants of Psychological Health in Military Children" explored how military children cope with stress and exhibit resilience, demonstrating an enhanced ability to recover. Their resilience tends to

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increase because of their parents' repeated deployments. The research, involving 124 military children from Army Public Schools, used the Psychological Well-Being Scale, Brief Resilience Scale, and HEXACO-PI. The study highlighted that children exposed to multiple deployments may face psychological and emotional challenges, including severe grief from the loss of a parent serving in the military.

Lester & Flake (2013) in their study "Family systems and ecological perspectives on the impact of deployment on military families" analyzed deployment cycles noted that children face numerous challenges before deployment, yet the toughest part is often not the parent's absence, but the reintegration process after the deployment. Surprisingly, the challenges arise when the parent returns from war zones, and children must adjust to a new family dynamic, where they assume different roles and their emotional rhythms change. This forced adaptation can alter how children view themselves and their sense of identity.

Lester P. et al. (2013) in their study "Psychological Health of Military Children: Longitudinal Evaluation of a Family Centered Prevention Program to Enhance Family Resilience," gathered data from 280 families, with 505 children aged 3 to 17, through self-reports from their parents. The study found that these families reported higher levels of distress compared to the general population. The FOCUS program, a family resilience training initiative, was shown to effectively reduce anxiety in children. Increased participation in the program led to decreased stress levels and enhanced resilience.

Resilience

Dr. Nimisha Beri and Pooja (2022) in their study "Comparative Study of Resilience Among Children from Military and Non-Military Families" surveyed 304 secondary school students in Jalandhar, Punjab. The results revealed that while resilience levels were generally average across genders, children from military families displayed a higher degree of resilience compared to their peers in non-military households.

Easterbrooks et al. (2013) in their study "Resilience of Military Youth" emphasized that while military life can be challenging, it does not necessarily have a detrimental effect on children. Military children are often expected to behave well under pressure, and the rigorous nature of military life can foster resilience. The study also highlighted the importance of social support in helping children develop effective coping mechanisms, enabling them to grow with greater confidence. Programs aimed at increasing resilience in military children, particularly those impacted by the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, are highly successful.

Weber & Weber (2005) in their research "Geographic Relocation Frequency, Resilience, and Military Adolescent Behavior" examined the impact of frequent relocations on military youth. The study found that regular movement is linked to unusual behavior but can also be an indicator of improved parental awareness, helping to prevent problematic behaviors. The research suggests that frequent relocation is an essential factor in fostering resilience among military children.

Well-being

De Pedro et al. (2014) in their study "School Climate, Deployment, and Mental Health Among Students in Military-Connected Schools" discovered that military-connected children had poorer social, emotional, and psychological outcomes compared to their civilian counterparts. However, they also found that if intervention programs were implemented,

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military children could benefit from a more supportive social and emotional environment within public schools, potentially shielding them from adverse effects.

Chandra et al. (2010) in their study "Children on the Homefront: The Experience of Children from Military Families" analyzed the experiences of children with deployed parents through focus groups with Army Family school staff. The study found that children became angrier and more depressed during a parent's deployment, negatively affecting their academic performance and relationships with peers.

Amen et al. (2025) in a study "Minimizing the Impact of Deployment Separation on Military Children" examine the emotional and behavioral effects of parental deployment on children. The study covers the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment stages, utilizing surveys and interviews with military families to identify factors influencing children's adjustment. The authors highlight strategies such as open communication, family counseling, and community support. However, the study's limitation lies in its focus on a specific military cohort, limiting broader applicability across diverse military populations.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To assess the role of perceived parenting on resilience and well-being among the children of military and civilian personnels.

Objectives

1. To understand the relationship between the children's perceived parenting and resilience.
2. To understand the relationship between the children's perceived parenting and well-being.
3. To compare perceived parenting, resilience, and well-being between children of military and civilian personnels

Hypotheses

1. There will be a statistically significant relationship between children's perception of parenting and resilience.
2. There will be a statistically significant relationship between children's perception of parenting and well-being.
3. There will be a statistically significant difference in the perception of parenting between the children of military and civilian personnels.
4. There will be a statistically significant difference in resilience between the children of military and civilian personnels.
5. There will be a statistically significant difference in well-being between the children of military and civilian personnels.

Sample

This study employed purposive sampling, with a total sample of 182 children of military and civilian personnels currently enrolled in the Central Board of Secondary Education from class 9th through 12th. Data was collected through collaboration with the central government and military schools in Delhi and Porbandar, Gujarat.

Instruments

1. **Perception of Parents Scale (Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997):** This research examines parental influence through the lens of Self-Determination Theory, which differentiates between externally controlled behaviors and those driven by intrinsic motivation. The theory emphasizes intrinsic motivation as crucial for psychological well-being. The scale used in this study, completed by children, measures parental support for autonomy versus control in their interactions. With 22 items—11 for each parent—it generates separate subscales for autonomy support and involvement. This approach offers valuable insights into the parent-child dynamic, particularly regarding autonomy and self-regulation. The scale demonstrates reliable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70) and high test-retest reliability. Validity is confirmed through expert consensus for content validity, factor analysis for construct validity, and significant correlations with similar parenting measures for criterion validity. These strong reliability and validity findings ensure the scale's effectiveness in accurately assessing parenting behaviors.
2. **Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (Jonathan R.T. Davidson and Kathryn M. Connor, 2003):** A widely used self-report tool designed to assess an individual's resilience—their ability to recover from adversity, manage stress, and adapt to challenges. Comprising 25 items, the scale evaluates various resilience dimensions: Personal competence and Mastery, Adaptability to change, perceived social support, Positive acceptance of change, Ability to cope with stress. Respondents rate each item on a Likert scale based on their agreement with statements about adversity. The CD-RISC, used widely in research and clinical settings, examines both internal and external resilience resources. It demonstrates strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.80), high test-retest reliability, and validation through expert judgment, factor analysis, and correlations with other resilience measures. These factors confirm its effectiveness in assessing resilience across diverse populations, including military personnel and trauma survivors.
3. **PERMA Profiler (Butler and Kern, 2016):** It is a tool developed based on Dr. Martin Seligman's PERMA Model of well-being, which measures flourishing across five key dimensions: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. The tool is reliable, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients above 0.70 for each dimension, ensuring internal consistency. Test-retest reliability shows stability over time, with intraclass correlation coefficients exceeding 0.80. Its validity is supported by the alignment with the PERMA model, content validity, and significant correlations with established well-being measures (Pearson coefficients between 0.60 and 0.80). Strong links to psychological health and life satisfaction affirm its criterion validity, making the PERMA Profiler a robust tool for assessing well-being.

Procedure

This study used three reliable and valid scales: the Perception of Parents scale, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and the PERMA Profiler. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Data was collected from 91 participants, each from military and government schools in Delhi and Porbandar, Gujarat, with formal approval obtained from all relevant authorities.

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Statistical Analysis

After successful data collection, the dataset underwent meticulous analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Employing a range of statistical techniques, including Bivariate Pearson Correlations and Independent Sample T-tests, the researchers thoroughly scrutinized the relationships between variables, extracting nuanced insights.

RESULT

Table 1: Illustration of the correlation coefficient between perceived parenting and resilience. (N=182)

	Mothers' Involvement	Mothers' Autonomous Support	Fathers' Involvement	Fathers' Autonomous Support	Positive Acceptance	Trust	Personal Competence	Control	Spiritual Influence	Total
Mothers' Involvement	-									
Mothers' Autonomous Support	.130	-								
Fathers' Involvement	.188*	.243**	-							
Fathers' Autonomous Support	.061	.260**	.163*	-						
Positive Acceptance	.081	.065	.010	.138	-					
Trust	.008	.015	-.135	.105	.507**	-				
Personal Competence	.070	.115	-.126	.120	.582**	.631**	-			
Control	.035	.100	.013	.085	.503**	.455**	.560**	-		
Spiritual Influence	.060	.075	.096	.134	.196**	.161*	.254**	.247**	-	
Total	.065	.095	-.077	.151*	.767**	.817**	.889**	.713**	.388**	-

*. Significant at 0.05

** . Significant at 0.01

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Table 2: Illustration of the correlation coefficient between perceived parenting and well-being. (N=182)

	Mother's Involvement	Mother's Autonomous Support	Father's Involvement	Father's Autonomous Support	Positive Emotions	Engagement	Relationships	Meaning	Accomplishment	Negative Emotions	Health	Loneliness	PERMA Total
Mother's Involvement	-												
Mother's Autonomous Support	.130	-											
Father's involvement	.188*	.243**	-										
Father's Autonomous Support	.061	.260**	.163*	-									
Positive Emotions	.001	.327**	.244**	.062	-								
Engagement	-.017	-.111	.163*	.023	.377*	-							
Relationships	.014	.260**	.230**	.173*	.576*	.361**	-						
Meaning	.154*	.306**	.169*	.076	.609*	.400**	.552**	-					
Accomplishment	.155*	.176*	.197**	.122	.425*	.400**	.372**	.600**	-				
Negative Emotions	-.107	-.219**	-.174*	-.043	.411*	-.041	-.208**	.259**	-.056	-			
Health	-.020	-.031	.143	.095	.401*	.345**	.313**	.469**	.548**	-.128	-		
Loneliness	-.126	-.227**	-.140	-.153*	.300*	-.070	-.292**	.192**	-.112	.369**	.161*	-	
PERMA Total	.077	.284**	.277**	.123	.819*	.620**	.795**	.828**	.702**	-.283**	.535**	.283*	-

*. Significant at 0.05

** . Significant at 0.01

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Table 3: Illustration comparing mean scores and standard deviations of perceived parenting between children of civilian and military personnels. (N=182)

	Civilian Personnels (N=91)		Military Personnels (N=91)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Mothers' Involvement	2.93	.377	2.94	.367	-.159
Mothers' Autonomous Support	2.62	.398	2.51	.535	1.650
Fathers' Involvement	2.76	.473	2.76	.452	.536
Fathers' Autonomous Support	2.67	.444	2.62	.475	.779

Table 4: Illustration comparing mean scores and standard deviations of resilience between children of civilian and military personnels. (N=182)

	Civilian Personnels (N=91)		Military Personnels (N=91)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Positive Acceptance	13.47	3.588	13.14	3.604	.618
Trust	17.22	4.654	16.98	5.095	.334
Personal Competence	24.02	5.312	21.70	5.926	2.779
Control	7.98	2.357	7.65	2.782	.862
Spiritual Influence	5.45	1.951	5.38	2.091	.220
Total	68.14	13.399	64.86	15.323	1.540

Table 5: Illustration comparing mean scores and standard deviations of well-being between children of civilian and military personnels. (N=182)

	Civilian Personnels (N=91)		Military Personnels (N=91)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Positive Emotions	6.70	1.866	6.03	2.345	2.145
Engagement	6.79	1.700	6.67	1.517	.521
Relationships	6.46	2.370	5.79	2.481	1.843
Meaning	6.94	1.824	6.06	1.941	3.121
Accomplishment	6.79	1.829	6.22	1.711	2.176
Negative Emotions	5.02	2.064	5.00	2.422	.077
Health	6.51	2.115	6.34	2.310	.513
Loneliness	3.86	3.072	5.04	3.496	-2.433
PERMA Total	6.78	1.539	6.17	1.459	2.709

DISCUSSION

The first objective was to explore how a child's perception of parenting relates to resilience (Table 1). The findings reveal that fathers' autonomy support ($r = .151, p < .05$) has a significant impact on overall resilience. This aligns with previous research suggesting that autonomy-supportive parenting is crucial for fostering psychological well-being and effective coping strategies (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Fathers who support their children's independence help them become confident decision-makers, express themselves freely, and build self-efficacy. This supportive approach can enhance resilience by equipping children with the skills and confidence to face challenges.

One explanation for this connection is that autonomy-supportive parenting promotes intrinsic motivation and self-determination, key components of resilience (Ryan & Deci, 2017). When children feel their choices are respected and encouraged, they are more likely to develop healthy coping mechanisms and a strong sense of competence. Additionally, fathers who provide autonomy support can model problem-solving and emotional regulation, which children can apply in difficult situations.

The significant relationship between father involvement and resilience, as measured by the CD-RISC, highlights the crucial role fathers play in resilience development. While maternal support has often been the focus in resilience research, these findings emphasize the unique contribution of fathers in helping children manage stress and bounce back from adversity.

The second objective of this study was to examine the relationship between a child's perception of parenting and their overall well-being (Table 2). When mothers are actively involved in their children's lives, they play a crucial role in helping them find purpose and achieve personal goals. This study found that maternal involvement is significantly linked to a stronger sense of meaning ($r = .154, p < .05$) and accomplishment ($r = .155, p < .05$). Children with engaged mothers are more likely to feel supported in setting goals, staying motivated, and celebrating their achievements. A mother's presence provides encouragement and guidance, helping her child navigate life with confidence and a sense of direction.

Beyond direct involvement, the way a mother supports her child's independence also plays a key role in well-being. Maternal autonomy support was strongly associated with positive emotions ($r = .327, p < .01$), suggesting that children who feel encouraged to make their own choices experience greater happiness, optimism, and life satisfaction. A positive link with relationship quality ($r = .260, p < .01$) indicates that autonomy-supportive mothers help their children develop strong social connections, likely by fostering open communication and emotional expression.

A mother's encouragement of independence also helps children find meaning in life ($r = .306, p < .01$), as it allows them to explore their values, aspirations, and goals with confidence. Similarly, a sense of accomplishment ($r = .176, p < .05$) is more common among children with autonomy-supportive mothers, as they are more likely to develop perseverance, discipline, and a drive to succeed.

Overall, autonomy support was positively linked to well-being (PERMA, $r = .284, p < .01$), highlighting its broad impact on personal growth. At the same time, it was negatively associated with negative emotions ($r = -.219, p < .01$) and loneliness ($r = -.227, p < .01$), suggesting that children who are given both freedom and guidance are less likely to struggle

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with sadness, anxiety, or social isolation. By striking a balance between support and independence, mothers create an environment where children feel empowered, connected, and emotionally secure.

Father's involvement shows strong positive correlations with several well-being dimensions. It is significantly associated with positive emotions ($r = .244, p < .01$), indicating that children with involved fathers experience greater joy and optimism. A moderate correlation with engagement ($r = .163, p < .05$) suggests that paternal participation enhances children's ability to immerse themselves in meaningful activities. Father's involvement is also linked to better relationships ($r = .230, p < .01$) and a greater sense of meaning ($r = .169, p < .05$), implying that active fathers foster stronger social bonds and a sense of purpose in life.

Additionally, accomplishments ($r = .197, p < .01$) are positively correlated with fathers' involvement, highlighting the role of fathers in motivating perseverance and achievement. Notably, father's involvement is negatively correlated with negative emotions ($r = -.174, p < .05$), reinforcing its protective role against stress and anxiety. A strong overall correlation with well-being (PERMA, $r = .277, p < .01$) further underscores the significant influence of fatherly engagement on life satisfaction.

In contrast, father's autonomy support shows weaker and less consistent associations with well-being. While it significantly correlates with better relationships ($r = .173, p < .05$) and lower loneliness ($r = -.153, p < .05$), it does not show significant associations with positive emotions, engagement, meaning, accomplishments, or overall well-being. This suggests that while encouraging independence is beneficial, it lacks the broad psychological impact of direct paternal involvement.

The findings highlight that active paternal presence has a stronger influence on well-being than autonomy support alone. While granting independence is valuable, emotional availability, guidance, and shared experiences are more critical in fostering resilience, social connections, and long-term fulfillment. The negative correlation between fathers' involvement and negative emotions further suggests that fathers play a protective role in buffering emotional distress.

The Third objective was to compare perceived parenting, resilience, and well-being between children of military and civilian personnels. Table 3 indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in perceived parenting dimensions between children of civilian and military personnel. These results suggest that occupational background does not significantly impact how children perceive their parents' involvement or support in fostering autonomy.

One possible explanation for the lack of significant differences is that, despite the demanding nature of military life, military families may adopt adaptive strategies to maintain parental involvement. Previous research suggests that military families often implement structured routines, strong family cohesion, and intentional parenting strategies to ensure stability for their children (Riggs & Riggs, 2011). This may explain why fathers' involvement and autonomy support did not differ significantly from those of civilian fathers, despite the frequent relocations and deployments associated with military service.

The non-significant difference in mothers' involvement between the two groups indicates that mothers, regardless of their spouse's profession, play a consistent role in their children's

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lives. Research suggests that maternal involvement is often less affected by occupational constraints compared to paternal involvement, as mothers tend to be the primary caregivers in many families (Cabrera et al., 2018).

For mothers' autonomy support, although not statistically significant, the slight difference in mean scores suggests a potential trend where civilian mothers may offer slightly more autonomy support compared to military mothers. This could be due to differences in family dynamics, as military families often experience more structure and discipline, potentially influencing parenting styles. Military mothers might adopt more directive approaches to ensure their children adapt to frequent relocations and disruptions associated with military life.

Similarly, fathers' autonomy support did not show significant differences, reinforcing the idea that fathers, regardless of their occupation, provide relatively similar levels of autonomy support. However, military fathers may face unique challenges in balancing authority and emotional availability due to their demanding roles, potentially influencing their parenting style (Lucier-Greer et al., 2016).

When comparison was made between children of military and civilian personnels, Table 4 indicates that resilience levels are largely similar between children of civilian and military personnel, except perceived control, where civilian children reported significantly higher scores than their military counterparts. This difference may be attributed to the inherent instability associated with military life, including frequent relocations, changes in schools, and parental absences due to deployments (Huebner & Mancini, 2005). Such experiences might lead military children to feel a reduced sense of personal control over their circumstances compared to their civilian peers, who often experience more stability and consistency in their environment.

Despite this difference, the overall resilience score (CD-RISC) did not significantly differ between the two groups. This suggests that military children, while experiencing lower perceived control, may develop coping mechanisms that help them adapt to changing circumstances. Previous research has shown that military children often exhibit unique strengths, such as flexibility, independence, and adaptability, which contribute to their resilience (Park, 2011). These coping strategies may compensate for the lower perceived control, allowing them to maintain overall resilience levels comparable to their civilian counterparts.

The lack of significant differences in positive affect, trust in one's instincts, competence, and spiritual influence suggests that both groups have similar emotional regulation, decision-making confidence, self-perceived abilities, and reliance on spirituality as a source of support. These findings challenge common assumptions that military children face greater emotional distress due to their lifestyle and suggest that they may develop resilience through strong family support systems, peer relationships, and structured military community resources (Mmari et al., 2010).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that while military children may face unique challenges, they do not necessarily experience lower overall resilience. However, the lower perceived control suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing a sense of autonomy and stability in

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military children, such as consistent routines, open communication, and additional psychological support, may be beneficial in improving their well-being.

Future research could explore the long-term effects of military lifestyle on resilience and identify specific protective factors that help military children adapt. Additionally, qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into how children perceive and navigate the challenges associated with military family life.

When a comparison was made for well-being between the children of military and civilian personnels. Table 5 indicates that children of civilian personnel generally experience higher well-being than children of military personnel, with significant differences observed in positive emotions, meaning, accomplishment, loneliness, and overall, PERMA scores. One of the most striking findings is the difference in sense of meaning (M), with civilian children reporting significantly higher scores than military children. Meaning in life is often shaped by stable relationships, long-term goals, and consistent personal values (Steger et al., 2006). In contrast, the frequent relocations and parental deployments experienced by military children may disrupt their sense of purpose and identity development, making it harder for them to establish meaningful connections with people and places.

Similarly, children of civilian personnel reported significantly higher accomplishment (A) scores compared to military children. This may be because civilian children experience fewer disruptions in their education and extracurricular activities, allowing them to pursue and achieve long-term personal and academic goals. In contrast, military children may face challenges adjusting to new schools, differing curriculum standards, and limited time to build achievements in one consistent environment (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

Another important finding is that military children reported significantly higher loneliness (Lon) scores. This finding aligns with research suggesting that frequent relocations disrupt peer relationships and social networks, making it harder for military children to develop long-term friendships (Huebner & Mancini, 2005). While military communities often provide structured support systems, the transient nature of military life may still contribute to feelings of social isolation.

The overall PERMA score was significantly higher for civilian children, suggesting that their holistic well-being is greater than that of military children. These findings suggest that the stability and predictability of a civilian family environment may contribute to greater psychological flourishing among children. This supports previous research indicating that military children may experience greater stress, uncertainty, and emotional challenges, which can impact their long-term well-being (Park, 2011).

On the other hand, no significant differences were found in engagement (E), negative emotions (N), or health (H). This suggests that military and civilian children may be equally engaged in meaningful activities, experience similar levels of distress, and perceive their physical health similarly.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to understand the role of perceived parenting on resilience and well-being among children of military and civilian personnels. The data was collected using the purposive sampling technique with an equal number of participants from both military

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(N=91) and civilian (N=91) backgrounds. After thorough analysis, the following conclusions were drawn: Paternal autonomy support is significantly related to resilience in children, although much of resilience research has centered on maternal support, these findings highlight the important role fathers play in helping children cope with stress and recover from challenges. A strong connection was found between maternal involvement and feelings of purpose and achievement. Maternal autonomy support was positively linked to positive emotions, relationship quality, life meaning, and accomplishment, all of which contributed to enhanced overall well-being. In contrast, it was negatively associated with negative emotions and feelings of loneliness. The significant role of paternal involvement is emphasised in promoting children's well-being, with strong associations to positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Fathers who are actively engaged provide emotional security, motivation, and a sense of purpose, reinforcing their protective role against negative emotions and distress. In contrast, autonomy support alone shows weaker associations, suggesting that emotional availability and direct involvement have a greater impact on overall well-being than fostering independence alone. The comparison between military and civilian families reveals no significant differences in perceived parenting, suggesting that military families may adopt adaptive strategies to maintain parental involvement despite occupational demands. However, children of military personnel report lower perceived control, likely due to the instability of military life. Despite this, their overall resilience remains comparable to that of civilian children, highlighting their ability to develop coping mechanisms. Regarding well-being, children of civilian personnel report higher overall scores, particularly in positive emotions, meaning, accomplishment, and lower loneliness. These differences suggest that stability in relationships, education, and environment contributes to greater life satisfaction. While military children face unique challenges, targeted interventions to enhance their sense of control and stability may help bridge the well-being gap. Future research could explore long-term adaptation strategies and the specific protective factors that foster resilience in military families.

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Conflict of Interest

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