

Gender Parity and Quality of Life in Greek Military Personnel

Foteini Athanasiadou^{1,2}, Ioannis Kouroutzis², Aristotelis Koinis², Dimitra Anagnostopoulou², Pavlos Sarafis², Maria Malliarou²

¹ Interdisciplinary Center for Mental Health of the Armed Forces, Penteli, Athens, Greece.

² Laboratory of Education and Research in Trauma Care and Patient Safety, Department of Nursing, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece.

Abstract

Gender equality is a fundamental principle of modern democratic societies and is linked both to the guarantee of equal rights and opportunities and to broader dimensions of social well-being and quality of life. In this context, it is particularly interesting to examine gender equality in organizational environments characterized by a strong hierarchical structure, strict operating rules, and historically male-dominated traits, such as the Armed Forces. This paper theoretically examines the relationship between gender equality and quality of life within the Greek Armed Forces, focusing both on the institutional and social dimensions of equality and on the impact that gender attitudes, organizational cultures, and professional roles may have on the daily experiences of officers. The analysis is structured around four main themes: first, the conceptual and theoretical approach to gender equality; second, the specific characteristics of the Armed Forces as a unique work and institutional environment; third, the concept of quality of life and the factors that influence it in the military context; and fourth, the Greek dimension of the issue. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that gender equality is not only a legal or ethical requirement but also an important factor in improving the quality of life, professional well-being, and cohesion of personnel in the Greek Armed Forces.

Keywords

gender equality, quality of life, Greek Armed Forces, organizational culture, military personnel, professional roles, well-being

Corresponding Author: Foteini Athanasiadou, Interdisciplinary Center for Mental Health of the Armed Forces, Penteli, Athens, Greece, Fathana3@gmail.com

Introduction

Gender equality is a central pillar around which modern democratic societies are organized. Its value is rooted in the principle of equal treatment, while it ensures fair access to social roles and opportunities [1]. However, this concept, -which goes beyond the mere formal recognition of rights-, acquires substantive meaning only when men and women enjoy real opportunities to participate in social and professional life. In fact, equality remains an ongoing challenge, as long as restrictions stemming from stereotypes or entrenched structural inequalities persist [2]. In this light, the need for substantive equality transforms the issue. From a mere legal obligation, it becomes a dynamic public policy goal that must permeate every aspect of organized society [3].

In this context, the significance of this principle becomes even more apparent when the analysis focuses on strictly defined professional environments. In such settings, as Reis and Menezes [4] point out, institutional structures and informal norms play a decisive role in shaping the daily experience of personnel. The Armed Forces constitute a unique context, as their operation is based on strict hierarchy and discipline. Furthermore, according to Carreiras [5], this institution is characterized by clearly defined roles and a strong collective identity. Inevitably, then, military life has been intertwined since ancient times with archetypes of masculine power, forging a culture in which physical strength has been completely equated with operational capability. This historical link between the military sphere and the male presence [6] created a strong organizational foundation. Today, the integration of women represents the next stage in this journey, shifting the focus from mere numerical participation to the pursuit of substantive equality in practice. As Reis and Menezes [4] emphasize, this process remains a dynamic challenge that directly affects the quality of professional life.

The significance of this finding lies in the fact that it defines gender equality as a lived reality that extends beyond the narrow confines of women's quantitative representation in the armed forces. In reality, the crux of the matter lies in their lived experience of daily life and the actual career advancement opportunities available to them. At the same time, the recognition they receive—as well as the extent to which military culture accepts them as equal members—is of crucial importance [7]. It is clear, moreover, that as long as gender stereotypes remain strong, roles are inevitably assigned in ways that can by no means be considered neutral. In practice, this means that even where equality is institutionally enshrined, women in their day-to-day professional lives often encounter informal barriers and prejudices that hinder their work [8].

Precisely because the aforementioned constraints undermine personal and professional fulfillment, it becomes clear that the discussion of gender equality is closely linked to quality of life. This connection is crucial, as a sense of justice, the possibility of autonomy, and meaningful access to opportunities significantly influence how an individual evaluates their life as a whole [9]. When social and professional conditions broaden an individual's range of choices, their subjective well-being

is enhanced, as the degree of control they exercise over their life increases [10]. Conversely, the persistence of inequalities that hinder development or participation tends to undermine overall quality of life [11]. Ultimately, the empirical evidence points to a clear conclusion: higher levels of equality do not represent a static state, but rather translate into more positive evaluations of life and an overall improvement in social well-being [12].

However, while quality of life is a complex equation for every worker, in the military environment this concept takes on an even more complex character. In this context, as Ware and Gandek [13] emphasize, the standard of living is determined by general psychosocial factors in combination with the specific demands of the profession. Specifically, working conditions and the assumption of responsibility, as well as discipline and the obligation to respond immediately to duties at all times, can affect both the physical and mental dimensions of well-being [13]. For this reason, quality of life is approached as a multidimensional field, which includes, on the one hand, functionality and general health, and, on the other hand, is complemented by mental well-being and social participation [14]. This holistic approach is particularly useful for studying specific occupational populations, such as members of the Armed Forces [15]. It is precisely this theoretical foundation that provides the necessary framework for analyzing the specific characteristics of the domestic military context.

The Greek case is of particular interest because it combines the institutional enshrinement of equality with the persistence of organizational characteristics linked to more traditional conceptions of gender roles. The presence of women in the Greek Armed Forces has increased, but questions remain regarding true equality in career advancement, the assumption of positions of responsibility, and the lived experience of daily military life [8]. This issue concerns the very functioning of the military organization, because an environment that perpetuates unequal conditions is likely to undermine professional experience and negatively affect the quality of life of its personnel [20].

Based on the above, this study examines the relationship between gender equality and quality of life in the Hellenic Armed Forces. It begins with the question of whether standards of equality vary according to the demographic and social characteristics of officers and their perceived quality of life. In this context, the analysis proceeds step by step from a theoretical approach to gender equality, stereotypes, and professional roles, to the specific environment of the Armed Forces, the concept of quality of life, and, finally, the Greek dimension of the issue. Next, the research methodology is presented, followed by a discussion of the main conclusions and their implications.

Gender Equality, Gender Stereotypes and Professional Roles

Gender equality, as mentioned in the introduction, is a fundamental principle of every modern democracy. In practice, this means that all rights and opportunities—as well as the corresponding obligations—are guaranteed for all individuals, without gender serving as a criterion for differentiation [1]. According to the EIGE, gender equality is also linked to the need to recognize and take into account the experiences of both genders equally in social life. This recognition forms the very basis for meaningful participation, as well as for taking on responsibilities and empowering individuals in every aspect of daily life. However, the concept is not as simple as it seems at first glance. Gender equality is not limited to a mechanical equating of the two genders or to treating them in exactly the same way in every situation. The essence lies in the elimination of gender as a factor that imposes restrictions or exclusions, as well as the denial of access to rights, social roles, career paths, and opportunities for personal development [1].

In this context, it is useful to distinguish between the terms “gender equality” and “gender equity.” Gender equality refers to the desired outcome—that is, a social and institutional situation in which both genders enjoy equal value and equal opportunities for participation. In contrast, the concept of equal treatment or gender equity refers more to the means and processes through which this state can be achieved, even when differentiated interventions are required to eliminate existing inequalities [16]. In other words, equality concerns the desired outcome, while equity concerns the fair manner in which that outcome is pursued. This means that in some cases, equal treatment alone is not sufficient, because special or temporary measures may be required to compensate for historical and social disadvantages and to make true equality possible [16].

Even more central is the concept of substantive gender equality, which shifts the discussion from formal guarantees to people’s actual lived experiences [2]. This need arises from the fact that formal equality is usually limited to the recognition that everyone is equal before the law. Substantive equality examines whether this legal guarantee actually translates into equal opportunities by linking participation and advancement to commensurate representation and recognition in social and professional life. In more detailed terms, formal equality corresponds to the *de jure* level, while substantive equality focuses on the *de facto* outcome of social and institutional relationships [2]. In practice, this means that substantive equality is not limited to the proclamation of rights, but examines whether social structures, organizational practices, and cultural perceptions allow individuals to actually exercise those rights.

This distinction is particularly important because modern societies often exhibit a high degree of formal equality while simultaneously maintaining mechanisms that produce indirect or less visible forms of inequality. Thus, equality may be legally enshrined, but in practice it may be hindered by gender stereotypes, by unequal expectations regarding social roles, or

even by institutional logics that historically favor one gender at the expense of the other [17]. Substantive equality, therefore, requires not only an adjustment of the rules but also a reexamination of the very social structures that present men as the implicit standard of comparison and normality [2]. This observation highlights a deeper need: the reexamination of the very social structures that present men as the unspoken standard of comparison and normality [2]. In this light, gender equality ceases to be a static legal concept and becomes a dynamic process that gains real substance through the transformation of everyday relationships and organizational structures.

Gender stereotypes are one of the primary mechanisms through which gender inequalities are reproduced. These are entrenched perceptions that attribute distinct abilities and social functions to the two genders, presenting them as characteristics rooted in nature itself or in social expectations [17]. Through this process, the sexes are confined to predetermined roles, which limits their recognition as equal individuals with multiple potentials. These stereotypes are the product of gendered socialization from childhood onward, through the family, school, the media, and the broader social environment [17].

These gender roles directly influence work and professional evaluation. Men are more often associated with traits of leadership and decisiveness, while women are associated with caregiving and supportive roles, which often leads to doubts about their suitability for leadership positions [18]. These perceptions go beyond mere opinion, as they determine how opportunities are allocated, responsibilities are assigned, and individuals’ professional potential is evaluated. At this point, so-called “gender norms” function as informal rules that dictate what behavior is considered acceptable or expected for each gender [18].

Consequently, stereotypes function as factors that structure power relations within institutions, transcending the role of a mere cultural relic. Work reflects a society’s broader perceptions of who is considered suitable for leadership, who for crisis management, who for discipline, and who for a supportive role. Thus, professional roles often reflect an unequal symbolic valuation of the sexes, even when there is no explicit discrimination at the institutional level [4]. Through this process, both horizontal segregation of professions and vertical segregation—that is, the difficulties women face in accessing positions of power and decision-making—are reproduced, a phenomenon often described by the term “glass ceiling” [4].

The historical association of certain professions with masculine identity reinforces this process. Especially in fields associated with authority, control, and strategic leadership, masculine traits are often taken for granted as qualifications, while women are expected to prove their suitability to a greater extent [6]. In this way, unequal evaluation stems from symbolic expectations about what “suits” each gender, often sidelining actual performance or qualifications. For this reason, the same trait may be evaluated as assertiveness when exhibited by a man, but as aggression when exhibited by a woman [4]. These symbolic expectations become even more pronounced in fields where male presence has historically been the sole norm, shaping closed cultures and leadership models that hinder equal integration.

Gender Equality in the Military Environment

The Armed Forces constitute a unique organizational setting that differs significantly from most other professional contexts. Their distinctiveness stems, first and foremost, from their purpose, which is linked to national defense and the state's operational readiness [5]. Because of this critical mission, the military organization is structured around strict principles of hierarchy and discipline, which ensure control and collective cohesion. In this sense, the military transcends the boundaries of a mere workplace and approaches the characteristics of a "total institution." This is because military life regulates both the professional activities and the daily behavior of its members [5].

Hierarchy is a central feature of military organization because it ensures a clear division of responsibilities, rapid decision-making, and a unified chain of command. In contrast to other work environments, where flexibility or horizontal collaboration may be more pronounced, in the military the chain of command is fundamental to the organization's functioning [5]. Discipline, consequently, is an essential prerequisite for effectiveness, as operational action requires coordination, internal cohesion, and trust in the leadership.

At the same time, the military context is characterized by a deep collective identity, which redefines the role of the individual. Within this framework, the officer transcends the status of an individual professional and becomes an integral part of a body that shares a common mission and a strong symbolic significance [7]. This dynamic is aptly described by the term *esprit de corps*—a deeply rooted sense of camaraderie and solidarity that constitutes the structural core of military identity [7]. Although the sense of belonging acts as a catalyst for the cohesion of the unit, at the same time it tends to overshadow individual expression, as alignment with the collective code of values becomes the top priority.

Furthermore, operational readiness creates a framework of heightened demands. The nature of military service, which requires constant availability and the assumption of responsibility in hazardous conditions, creates a model of professional life that is clearly different from that of other organizations [6]. For this very reason, the military organization can also be described as an "institution of absolute commitment," since the demands of service comprehensively influence the officer's way of life [7].

The historical development of the military role has also been linked to masculine behavioral norms. Traits such as physical endurance and emotional control have long been key components of the image of the "ideal soldier" [19]. Thus, military identity was constructed both institutionally and symbolically through standards of masculinity that served as criteria for professional normativity. This finding explains why gender carries particular weight within the military environment. It concerns not only the composition of the personnel but the very organizational definition of the role itself.

The position of women in modern armed forces has changed significantly compared to the past. The historical development of military organization has been closely linked to male pres-

ence, given that the military was long viewed as a strongly male-dominated sphere, both in its operational structures and in the collective imagination [6]. However, social changes and evolving attitudes toward equality have gradually contributed to increasing women's participation in the military sector.

The integration of women into the armed forces of many Western countries is a complex process of institutional adaptation that has evolved gradually, requiring organizational negotiations and a shift in social attitudes [5]. In its initial form, women's participation was often limited to administrative or medical roles, while the expansion of their responsibilities was the result of a long process of integration [5]. Over time, opportunities for participation expanded, a development that gradually transformed the composition of the military personnel.

Despite this significant progress, the numerical increase in the number of women does not necessarily guarantee full acceptance or equal advancement. The international literature emphasizes that integration often faces obstacles stemming from gender stereotypes and prejudices regarding women's suitability for leadership roles [4]. Thus, women's career advancement is hindered by the so-called "glass ceiling"—that is, those informal mechanisms that impede their access to the upper echelons of the hierarchy [4].

In the case of Greece, women's participation in the Armed Forces is now institutionally established. Nevertheless, the transition from formal entry to substantive equality remains a complex challenge [8]. The critical issue, therefore, shifts from the right of access to the quality of the professional experience, seeking conditions of equal evaluation and organizational recognition. It is precisely this pursuit that highlights the importance of organizational culture, as the unwritten rules and internal values of the institution are what ultimately determine the scope and substance of equality in practice.

Organizational culture is a key factor in understanding how gender operates in the military environment. This culture encompasses not only formal rules and institutional procedures but also the set of informal values, expectations, and behavioral norms that determine what is ultimately considered normal, desirable, and worthy of evaluation within the organization [5]. In the military, these informal rules carry particular weight because they operate within a framework of discipline and collective identity.

In this specific environment, perceptions of various traits—such as leadership, endurance, and composure, as well as operational competence—have historically been shaped by references to standards of masculinity. This means that the "typical" military personnel has often been conceptualized as a man, while the presence of women is interpreted as an exception or as a test of the organizational framework [19]. Thus, the organization's entrenched culture treats the genders distinctly, reinforcing the perception that certain characteristics and roles belong more to men.

Women who join the military are not always evaluated based solely on professional criteria. They are often subject to constant scrutiny or indirect testing, during which they are called upon to prove that they can meet the demands of the role without deviating from the organization's expectations

[4]. In this context, the “double bind” often arises, as a woman may be considered insufficiently assertive if she appears gentle, but criticized as overly harsh if she adopts a stricter stance [4]. These barriers often manifest in a subtle way, avoiding open confrontation. Pressure on women is exerted primarily through harsher criticism that calls their competence into question, while at the same time their participation in informal communication networks is hindered.

Examining the Greek case, the organizational culture of the Armed Forces is influenced by broader societal perceptions of gender, as well as by the institutional history of the military itself [7]. This implies that gender hierarchies often persist as informal criteria for evaluation and acceptance, regardless of whether they are provided for by the official institutional framework. Indeed, the presence of women may be viewed through the lens of veiled paternalism—that is, through a seemingly protective stance that ultimately limits women’s professional autonomy and access to critical roles [8]. These invisible cultural factors shape the ground on which specific obstacles take root, transforming daily work into a constant struggle with complex challenges.

Quality of Life in Military Personnel

The concept of quality of life occupies a central place in contemporary scientific discourse, precisely because it allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the human condition than a simple recording of biological or economic indicators would provide. According to the World Health Organization, quality of life refers to the way in which an individual perceives their place in life, in relation to their cultural context and value system, as well as their goals in conjunction with their expectations and experiences [21]. This definition highlights that quality of life is shaped through the ongoing interaction between external circumstances and the individual’s own subjective assessment.

This approach is important because it shifts the discussion away from a narrow conception that equates a good life solely with the absence of illness. Instead, quality of life is understood as a broad framework that encompasses physical and mental health, the level of functioning in daily life, as well as satisfaction with social relationships [22]. Therefore, it is a multidimensional concept that allows the human experience to be examined not as a static state, but as a complex result of the interaction between the body, the mind, social relationships, and the environment.

This multidimensional approach is particularly important in terms of measurement. The SF-36, one of the most widely used tools for assessing quality of life, is based precisely on the idea that well-being cannot be reduced to a single indicator. It must be approached through specific dimensions, such as physical functioning, pain, vitality, mental health, and social functioning [13]. This approach highlights that quality of life is closely linked to an individual’s ability to cope with the demands of daily life, maintain functional relationships, and experience a satisfactory degree of internal and external balance.

In the Greek literature, the use and adaptation of the SF-36 confirm that quality of life can be reliably assessed in the domestic population as well. This concept encompasses the overall picture of daily functioning, without being limited exclusively to clinical cases [14]. Furthermore, the Greek validation of the instrument shows that the assessment of quality of life serves as an essential bridge between general well-being and the specific requirements posed by a particular professional context [15]. Specifically, the analysis by Anagnostopoulos et al. [15] of the Greek population confirmed the construct validity of the tool, highlighting the importance of three secondary factors: physical health, general well-being, and mental health. In this way, quality of life is transformed from a theoretical construct into a functional framework for understanding how executives experience their work and daily lives.

The quality of life of military personnel is influenced by a set of factors directly linked to the nature of the profession. The military organization demands discipline, availability, and constant readiness for duty—elements that place a burden on the daily lives of service members [5]. These demands extend beyond narrow professional boundaries and impact one’s lifestyle, family balance, and the management of personal time. Consequently, well-being in the military context depends on how the organization structures obligations and expectations, beyond the individual’s general state of health.

Of particular importance are role demands and the frequent conflict between work and family life. The need for constant availability, transfers, and the possibility of being removed from one’s familiar environment create conditions that undermine the stability of daily life [20]. According to Pace et al. [20], work-family conflict acts as a central stressor, as an individual’s energy resources are depleted in the effort to fulfill demanding military roles. When the demands of service exceed the usual boundaries of an employment relationship, the officer experiences reduced control over their personal time. This pressure is directly linked to an increased “need for recovery,” as the lack of time to mentally disconnect from work negatively affects an individual’s psychological well-being and sense of functionality.

At the same time, quality of life is also influenced by less visible organizational factors. Informal pressure to constantly prove one’s competence, the sense of being under constant evaluation, and the difficulty in accessing support networks create a demanding internal environment [4]. Although these phenomena may not constitute formal institutional discrimination, they create a climate of increased psychological strain. This situation affects the sense of security and inner balance that every executive seeks within the organization.

Other important factors include the level of responsibility and prospects for advancement. Assuming a managerial role often comes with prestige, but at the same time increases accountability requirements and the psychological burden of day-to-day operations [7]. When career advancement is not experienced as a transparent process, professional experience becomes even more burdensome, as the individual feels judged within an unstable framework. Thus, the quality of life of military personnel is shaped by a web of physical

and organizational pressures, a fact that highlights the need to examine how the dimension of gender equality intervenes in this context.

The link between gender equality and quality of life is one of the most critical theoretical pillars of this study. This relationship is based on the assumption that equality transcends the boundaries of a legal or symbolic value, as it tangibly influences an individual's autonomy and daily experience [9]. When individuals perceive that they have equal opportunities for participation and fair access to opportunities, their sense of control over their lives is strengthened and, consequently, their subjective well-being.

This connection becomes clearer when examined through the lens of life satisfaction. The ability to make meaningful choices and the experience of a just social order, where individuals are not constrained by predetermined roles, are associated with more positive evaluations of daily life [10]. Conversely, inequalities and limited pathways for advancement have a decisive impact on how individuals perceive themselves within their social and professional environments, beyond their objective status [11].

In terms of social findings, it is often argued that higher levels of gender equality lead to increased collective well-being [12]. By examining international indicators, Audette et al. [12] demonstrated that promoting equality functions as a "public good," improving the level of happiness for an organization's entire population, regardless of gender. However, this relationship is not always strictly linear, as some studies indicate that the changes brought about by greater equality are not experienced uniformly by all individuals [23]. It is precisely this complexity that makes the targeted study of specific professional contexts—where traditional structures remain strong—even more important.

In the military environment, this connection forms the culmination of our theoretical analysis. Gender equality ceases to be approached as an abstract concept and becomes a functional determinant of everyday well-being [5]. It is interesting to note that the statistical analysis refutes the notion that equality benefits women exclusively; on the contrary, men also experience gains in life satisfaction when the environment is less gender-unequal, as they are freed from oppressive patriarchal norms [12]. Essentially, ensuring equality in professional relationships acts as a mechanism for relieving the pressures described above, thereby enhancing employees' satisfaction. In this way, the theoretical link between gender justice and quality of life completes our conceptual framework, allowing us to move on to an examination of the Greek reality and the specific characteristics of the domestic military environment.

Gender Equality and Quality of Life in the Greek Armed Forces

The institutional integration of women into the Greek Armed Forces is a formal condition that falls short of immediately achieving substantive equality. The distinction between formal and lived equality is crucial here, as it allows us to examine the extent to which the legal and regulatory enshrinement

of rights translates into a comprehensive and equitable professional experience [8]. The central question concerns the extent to which the day-to-day functioning of the institution ensures the full recognition of women as equal officers, beyond the mere institutional possibility of their participation.

The reality of the Greek military is shaped by a broader social and cultural context in which the perpetuation of gender roles remains prevalent. Traditional military virtues are often associated with strong gendered connotations, placing constant pressure on women to prove their operational competence [7]. This pressure to constantly prove their qualifications is evident as early as the candidate selection processes for military academies. There, the application of common standards in athletic tests—such as the use of the men's shot put weight of 7.275 kg—leads to failure rates among women as high as 79%, highlighting how a seemingly "neutral" regulation can create indirect discrimination [8]. Similarly, the increase in the minimum height requirement to 1.65, despite objections from the Greek Ombudsman, underscores the insistence on body types that primarily conform to the male ideal [8].

At this point, the Greek case clearly highlights the gap between law and practice. Equality policy, as developed at the national level, seeks to promote equal participation of both genders in all areas of social and professional life [3]. However, applying this principle within an institution with a strong historical, hierarchical, and male-centered tradition proves to be more complex. Organizational attitudes often change more slowly than institutional texts, creating a context in which equality remains partly contested as an experience, even when it has already been recognized as a principle.

Interpreting this discrepancy requires viewing equality not only as a legal category but as a field of social and institutional power relations [17]. Within this framework, women in the Greek Armed Forces may encounter restrictions that are not always visible as formal exclusions but operate through informal evaluation standards, gendered expectations, and different conditions for recognition. Such biases often fuel reservations about women's presence in combat roles or at the highest levels of the hierarchy, citing concerns about operational cohesion, despite the fact that women successfully serve in demanding specialties such as pilots or aircraft technicians [8]. Therefore, gender equality in the Greek military context is a matter of organizational culture and everyday practices.

This takes on particular significance when linked to positions of responsibility. Assuming administrative or staff roles is directly related to the organization's recognition of women as legitimate leaders. When career advancement is hindered by informal barriers, the lived experience of equality is limited, and the message conveyed by the institution remains contradictory. From this perspective, an analysis of equality within the Greek military context inevitably leads to the need to examine how these conditions also affect the very quality of life of the officers themselves.

Quality of life in the Hellenic Armed Forces is influenced by a combination of factors that blend the general demands of a military career with the specific organizational and social conditions of Greek society. Military service extends beyond

fixed working hours, as it requires high availability and constant readiness for official travel or transfers [7]. These factors collectively influence the daily lives of officers, as they place a strain on both physical functioning and mental well-being.

The concept of quality of life, as reflected in the Greek version of the SF-36, includes dimensions related to physical and social functioning, vitality, and mental health [14]. This means that the stress experienced by officers requires a comprehensive assessment. The organizational demands of the Hellenic Armed Forces may simultaneously affect officers' physical endurance, sense of fatigue, ability to participate socially, and emotional resilience.

Positions of responsibility and career advancement play a significant role. Assuming managerial or executive duties can offer prestige and recognition, while at the same time intensifying the pressure and psychological burden associated with managing staff within a strictly hierarchical framework [15]. In fact, when the organization's expectations are high and the need for continuous competence is intense, professional life can act as a factor that undermines daily well-being.

At the same time, family obligations constitute another critical factor. Job transfers, limited predictability of work schedules, demands for availability, and the difficulty of balancing work life with family care directly impact the subjective experience of quality of life [8]. This factor takes on particular significance in the Greek context, where social expectations regarding caregiving and family obligations continue to be strongly gendered. According to Laourdeki [8], female service members typically assume the primary role of raising children and managing daily household responsibilities, a fact that makes balancing these roles particularly challenging due to the demanding nature of their duties. Thus, the demands of a military career interact with an individual's gender and role within family life, creating varied pressures on service members.

Relevant international research on the armed forces has also highlighted the importance of work-family conflict, the need for recovery from fatigue, and the psychological pressure created by the multiple demands of the role [20]. The concept of the need for recovery emerges here as central, as family demands dramatically influence career decisions, particularly after the birth of a child or in cases of single-parent families [8,20]. Although these findings do not fully correspond to the Greek context, they offer a useful interpretive framework for understanding that the quality of life of military personnel is influenced by a web of demands that go beyond the narrow concept of health. Since quality of life in the Hellenic Armed Forces is influenced by organizational, family, and psychosocial variables, it becomes necessary to examine how, within this context, the dimension of gender equality functions in particular.

Discussion

With a focus on the Greek military context, this study was carried out as a narrative literature review with the goal of investigating the connection between gender equality and quality

of life in the Armed Forces. Using combinations of the terms gender equality, gender stereotypes, quality of life, armed forces, military people, women in the military, and organizational culture, a literature search was conducted using the electronic databases Google Scholar, Scopus, and PubMed. The reference lists of pertinent articles were used to find further sources. Academic books, government reports, peer-reviewed articles, and institutional publications in both Greek and English were taken into consideration. The selected literature was critically reviewed and synthesized to identify the main themes and evidence regarding gender equality and its impact on the quality of life of military personnel, with particular attention to the Greek Armed Forces [4].

The current evaluation of the literature emphasises how gender equality is a key issue affecting military personnel's quality of life. The studied literature shows that equal access to military service does not always guarantee equal possibilities for professional growth or equal treatment within military organisations, despite the fact that women's participation in the Armed Forces has increased significantly. Career advancement, leadership possibilities, and daily professional experiences are still influenced by organisational culture, traditional gender stereotypes, and the hierarchical structure of military institutions [4,5,8].

The results also imply that psychological well-being, social functioning, job satisfaction, and the capacity to manage work and family obligations are all aspects of military quality of life that go beyond physical health. The arduous character of military service, including transfers, operational preparedness, and the obligations associated with military careers, further influences these dimensions in the Greek Armed Forces [7,14,20].

Overall, the research that is now available supports the idea that advancing gender equality benefits military personnel's well-being as well as organisational success and job satisfaction. Both the general performance of the Hellenic Armed Forces and the quality of life of military personnel may be enhanced by strengthening inclusive policies, lowering gender-related barriers, and cultivating an organisational culture based on equal chances [4,8,20].

Conclusion

The present literature review highlights the close relationship between gender equality and quality of life within the Armed Forces. The available evidence indicates that promoting equal opportunities, reducing gender-related barriers, and fostering an inclusive organizational culture contribute to both the well-being of military personnel and the effectiveness of military organizations. Although important progress has been achieved, challenges related to gender stereotypes and organizational practices remain. Continued efforts to strengthen gender equality policies and future empirical research, particularly within the Greek military context, may further support the development of a more inclusive and effective military environment.

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