

## Work-family conflict, perceived organisational support and organisational commitment among Portuguese freight drivers

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**Abstract:** This study evaluated the relationship between the perception of work-family conflict (WFC) and organisational commitment amongst a sample of Portuguese male freight drivers, as well as the role that the perception of organisational support (POS) can play in this relationship. A questionnaire survey was administered to 139 drivers who worked in a freight transport company (82 long-distance and 57 short-distance drivers). The results point out high levels of WFC, independent of the driver type. The WFC correlated negatively with the children's age, the number of hours worked weekly, continuance and affective commitment. However, in this sample, the WFC did not prove to be a predictor of affective and continuance organisational commitment, as these were only explained by the POS. In addition to including other freight transport companies in order to increase the sample size, in the future it is suggested to integrate the perspective of the drivers' spouses/partners in order to deepen the understanding of WFC in this occupational group. Despite its limitations, this study joins the few existing studies in the Portuguese context on WFC in professional drivers.

**Keywords:** psychosocial risks, work-family conflict, organisational commitment, perceived organisational support, professional freight drivers, transport sector.

## Conflito trabalho-família, percepção de suporte organizacional e compromisso organizacional entre motoristas de mercadorias portuguesas

**Resumo:** O presente estudo avaliou a relação entre a percepção do conflito trabalho-família (CTF) e do compromisso organizacional numa amostra de motoristas portuguesas do sexo masculino, bem como o papel que a percepção de suporte organizacional pode desempenhar nessa relação. Os dados foram recolhidos através de um questionário aplicado a 139 motoristas que trabalhavam numa empresa de transporte de mercadorias (82 motoristas de longa distância e 57 de curta distância). Os resultados indicam altos níveis de percepção CTF, independentemente do tipo de motorista. Além disso, o CTF correlacionou-se negativamente com a idade das crianças, o número de horas trabalhadas semanalmente e o compromisso organizacional (afetivo e calculativo). No entanto, nesta amostra, o CTF não se revelou um preditor do compromisso organizacional afetivo e do compromisso calculativo, tendo estes sido apenas explicados pela percepção de suporte organizacional. Além da inclusão de outras transportadoras de mercadorias de modo a aumentar o tamanho da amostra, no futuro, sugere-se a integração da perspectiva das(os) cônjuges/parceiras(os) dos motoristas de modo a aprofundar a compreensão do CTF neste grupo ocupacional. Não obstante as suas limitações, este estudo junta-se aos poucos estudos existentes em contexto português sobre o conflito trabalho-família em motoristas profissionais.

**Palavras-chave:** riscos psicossociais do trabalho, conflito trabalho-família, compromisso organizacional, percepção de suporte organizacional, motoristas de mercadorias, setor dos transportes.

## 1. Introduction

Over the years, the labour market demands have been growing considerably and the families have changed in the same direction (e.g. increase in dual career couples). With these changes occurring constantly, it is imperative to have a balance between work and family for the greater well-being of individuals. However, when participation in one sphere makes the participation in another sphere difficult, there is a conflict between the pressures arising from these two domains and making them mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). When work interferes with the family sphere, the emotional reaction of the workers to the organisation tends to decrease. Some authors (e.g. Ali & Baloch, 2009; Lambert et al., 2006) have found a negative association between work-family conflict (WFC) and organisational commitment. In this sense, in the study of the relationship between WFC and organisational commitment, the literature has found the moderating role that certain variables can have in this relation such as perceived organisational support (POS) (Casper et al., 2002; Mukanzi & Senaji, 2017). Based on these assumptions, the review of the literature presented in the following section will focus on the WFC and the relation established with the organisational commitment, ending with the role that the POS can play in this relation.

In the present study, the variables mentioned above will be evaluated in a specific working group – freight drivers. The system of freight transport plays a key role in the economy because it guarantees that all sorts of goods and merchandises reach the consumers in time. Freight drivers are fundamental in this process as they are responsible for the driving and handling of goods to their final destination (Masson & Monteiro, 2010). In general, these workers are subjected to very demanding working conditions (e.g. long working hours) (Masson & Monteiro, 2010) and some of these work characteristics have been identified as potentially interfering with their work-family relationship (Gill & Wijk, 2004) because the time that should be spent with family and on social activities is often spent in the work.

Despite the difficulties faced in this job, the empirical studies that evaluated the WFC concerning freight drivers are very rare. Also, research on the work-family relationship has privileged samples with women (Barnett, 2004), mixed samples (Shockley et al., 2017) or samples with professionals and managers (Muse & Pichler, 2011). Moreover, as far as we know, this study is one of the few in the Portuguese context that studies this phenomenon in male freight drivers. Thus, the present study will examine the role of POS in the relationship between WFC and organisational commitment in a sample of Portuguese freight drivers.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. The nature of the WFC

The role conflict perspective has its genesis in the hypothesis of resources scarcity initially proposed by Goode (1960). This hypothesis argues that either the work or the family competes for a person's limited time and energy and the performance of multiple roles eventually results in symptoms of stress and conflict given the inability of complying with all life role requirements. Additionally, the work-family conflict is characterised, according to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), by multiple natures: i) the conflict derived from time constraints (*time-based conflict*) which means that the time spent in a certain role (work) may make it impossible to participate in other activities (family); ii) the conflict derived from the excessive pressures (*strain-based conflict*) that are often placed on the

performance of a particular role (work) and can result in symptoms of stress and emotional depletion that will affect an individual role performance in another life domain (family) and iii) the conflict arising from the enactment of certain behaviours (*behaviour-based conflict*) required to perform a specific role which are considered inadequate or undesirable to perform other domain roles.

It can be said that the WFC has been extensively studied over time (e.g. DiRenzo et al., 2011; Hsu, 2011) and has been associated with individual, family and organisational consequences (Fiksanbaum, 2014). At the individual level, some studies have found association between WFC and some health problems in the individual such as cardiovascular disease (Berkman et al., 2010) or depression (Magnusson Hanson et al., 2014). On the other hand, WFC has also been associated with problems at the family level such as marital and/or parental conflicts and social problems (see for example, Fiksanbaum (2014) or Minnotte et al. (2015)). The findings of some studies have revealed that the WFC explains, for instance, organisational commitment levels (Nelson, 2012), turnover rates (Wang et al., 2017) and job satisfaction levels (Hsu, 2011). For example, in the study by Hughes and Bozionelos (2007), conducted with a male sample of bus drivers, the perceptions of work-life imbalance were associated with withdrawal work behaviours such as non-genuine sick absences.

Regarding the work characteristics, many empirical studies have shown (e.g., Adkins & Premeaux, 2012; Mauno et al., 2015) that the number of hours worked and the type of work schedules that are practiced correlate positively with WFC. Indeed, schedule incompatibility between work and family activities and the number of hours worked are strongly related to the decrease in family life satisfaction, in particular, and decrease in satisfaction in life, in general.

## 2.2. Freight drivers

The transport sector plays a key role in the current economy, whether through the transportation of basic necessities (e.g. food), the daily reduction in distances between regions, whether at work or leisure or the distribution of products, services and information, allowing the improvement in the quality of life of the populations. In statistical terms, in 2019, Portugal had about 218,600 workers in the transport and warehousing sector which represented only 4.44% of the Portuguese population employed in the previous year (PORDATA, 2020a). If we consider the high number of strikes and demonstrations that have taken place in Portugal, triggered by transport workers, we can perceive that the working conditions of these workers may not be the most favourable for the exercise of their profession. Salary increases, collective labour contract or regulation of loading and unloading operations are some of the demands that have triggered stoppages in the activity in this sector. In fact, in 2019, there were 41 strikes in the transport, storage and communications sector, which represented 27.90% of the strikes in Portugal that year (PORDATA, 2020b).

Focusing on freight drivers, in general, these workers are subjected to very demanding working conditions such as long working hours, irregular schedules, poor food diets, traffic accidents and even physical violence (assault) (Masson & Monteiro, 2010; Santos et al., 2019; Tüchsen et al., 2006). In this sense, the professional freight drivers are at the risk of developing sleep-related disorders owing to the long working hours and irregular schedules (Gill & Wijk, 2004), with sleep deprivation often being the cause of road traffic accidents (Anund et al., 2016; Gander et al., 2006). Still in terms of the health of

drivers, sometimes this profession has been associated with inappropriate habits and lifestyles like poor diet (e.g. Jacobson et al., 2007), psychoactive substance use (e.g. Giroto et al., 2014), mental disorders (e.g. Hilton et al., 2009) and sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS or HBV (e.g. Manjunath et al., 2002; Teles et al., 2008). Besides that, the freight drivers also develop physical problems arising from deficient work ergonomics as they are seated most of the time (e.g. Ahuja et al., 2005). On the other hand, some of the work characteristics associated with freight drivers have been identified as potentially interfering with their work-family relationship (Gill & Wijk, 2004) because the time that should be spent with family and on social activities is often spent in the work. For example, in the study by Masson and Monteiro (2010) carried out with 105 Brazilian drivers, mostly from long distances, drivers reported a significant interference of their work in family and social life, being away from their family and friends and losing important dates such as birthdays and Christmas. On the other hand, in the Portuguese context, Silva and Silva (2015) carried out a study with 154 public transport drivers. The authors found that drivers reported a low WFC, but that their children's age, hours worked and POS were significant predictors of this WFC. Often, the demanding working conditions that this profession entails for workers can lead to a lack of available labour for the existing offers on the labour market, which was highlighted by Human Resources Managers in the study by Oliveira (2019). In fact, according to Gnap et al. (2018), the shortage of freight drivers and the aging of current workers are the main threats to the EU logistics sector.

For the present study, we have considered two types of freight drivers: long-distance drivers and short-distance drivers. Long-distance drivers, according to the parameters of the European Union for freight driving, have to respect the legal regulation of nine daily driving hours that are divided into two periods of four-and-a-half hours with a break of forty-five minutes between the two periods (Goel & Kok, 2012). Regarding the short-distance drivers, there is no specific regulation concerning the number of driving hours beyond the weekly work schedule established by law which is 40 hours in Portugal (Law no. 7/2009, February 12). Empirically, the literature has shown that long-distance drivers have more sleep problems (e.g. Philip et al., 1999) and higher WFC (e.g. Masson & Monteiro, 2010). In contrast, in Danish context, Dahl et al. (2009) found that both long-distance drivers and short-distance drivers had increased risk of hospital treatment for diseases related to excess caloric intake and lack of exercise just like an increased risk of hospitalisation due to obesity and diabetes. The long-distance drivers differed from short-distance drivers only in one exception, presenting a significantly lower risk for alcohol-related diseases and a possibly higher risk for lung cancer. Most recently, in the North American context, Chandler et al. (2017) found different injuries to their work performance for both long-distance (e.g. securing/opening/closing/adjusting injuries) and short-distance drivers (e.g. lifting and cranking injuries).

In a study conducted in the North American context, Apostolopoulos et al. (2013) pointed out that governments, industries and healthcare providers have a huge challenge with the transport sector, namely how they will be able to keep this sector profitable and competitive while ensuring the health of drivers and the safety of the public.

### 2.3. Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment can be described by its distinctive nature (e.g. affective, continuance) and focus (e.g. the organisation, the profession) (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). According to the same authors, the organisational commitment construct has three

dimensions: i) *affective*, which reflects the employee's desire to stay in the organisation. It is related to the organisational attachment derived from the feelings of comfort and personal competence; ii) *calculative* or *continuance*, which means that the employees holding a continuance commitment need to remain in the organisation because they recognise the costs associated with leaving, for example, lack of alternative employment opportunities; and iii) *normative*, which is applied when an employee presents a normative commitment and he or she feels morally obligated to stay in the organisation because of an internalisation of a loyalty norm to the organisation or to the repayment of a favour that was received in the past.

In a meta-analysis by Meyer et al. (2002), the authors verified that certain variables appeared as antecedents of organisational commitment such as age, external locus of control, task self-efficacy, role conflict and perceived organisational support among others. On the other hand, in the same meta-analysis, the authors analysed variables that correlated with the organisational commitment and found positive correlations between the organisational commitment and overall job satisfaction and job involvement. Finally, the authors looked at the consequences of organisational commitment and found turnover and withdrawal cognition, absenteeism, job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour among others.

#### 2.4. WFC and organisational commitment

When there is a conflict between two spheres of the individual's life, namely work and family, commitment to the organisation tends to decrease. If we look at this conflict through the role theory, we realise that in fact the human being has several predefined roles to which he/she has to correspond daily. For example, a woman who works, is married and has children, has her rights and duties as a wife, mother, worker and, sometimes, daughter, especially when parents need support, which can trigger a role conflict. As Boles et al. (2003) argued, role ambiguity or role conflict between work-nonwork is negatively related to satisfaction with some organisational variables like job satisfaction. So, some studies have established a negative association between WFC and organisational commitment levels, as happened in the study of Ali and Baloch (2009) in Pakistani context or in the study of Hatam et al. (2016) in Iranian context. For example, Lambert et al. (2020) found that WFC was negatively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Chinese prison workers. Also, Qureshi et al. (2019) studied the relationship between four dimensions of the WFC (time-based, strain-based, behavior-based, and family-based WFC) and organizational commitment. The authors found that the family-based WFC reduced continuance commitment while the strain-based WFC reduced affective commitment. Also, other authors (e.g. Nart & Batur, 2014; Rehman & Waheed, 2012) have found this negative relationship between WFC and organisational commitment; the higher the WFC, the lower the organisational commitment.

#### 2.5. The moderator effect of POS

The present study also intends to contribute to the empirical literature that explores the role of POS on the relationship between WFC and organisational commitment. We start from the social exchange theory which defends that an individual practices a particular action because he/she expects the return by the other person/entity/organisation. In this sense, there arises the organisational support theory that supposes that "to meet socio-emotional needs and to determine the organisation's

readiness to reward increased work effort, employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being” – POS (Eisenberger et al., 2002, p. 565). So, the POS is linked to the beliefs held by employees that the organisation values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing. It means that when the employees feel that the organisation is truly concerned about their wellbeing, they develop an affective relationship regarding the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). From an organisational point of view, the WFC and organisational commitment might be related to the POS by employees. For example, in the North American context, the study of Fuller et al. (2003), based on the perspective of social identity theory, found a positive correlation between POS and organisational commitment. Also, Kapela and Pohl (2020) concluded that POS was positively associated with affective organizational commitment. Other authors (e.g. Arshadi, 2011; Colakoglu et al., 2010; Pattnaik et al., 2020) have verified the existence of a positive relationship between POS and organisational commitment.

Besides this direct relationship, the POS seems to play a fundamental role as moderator in the relationship between WFC and organisational commitment, namely affective and continuance commitment, as in the study of Mukanzi and Senaji (2017), carried out with employees working in banking institutions in Kenya. For example, Thompson et al. (1999) demonstrated in their study that employees who experienced a high POS benefited more from the family-friendly practices provided by the organisation, thus hold higher levels of organisational affective commitment, lower levels of WFC and even lower turnover rates as compared to the employees who experienced low POS. Also, other studies (e.g. Hsu, 2011; Zheng & Wu, 2018) showed this moderate role that POS has in the relationship between WFC and organisational commitment.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Model and hypotheses

Taking into account the literature review presented above, in this study, it was hypothesised that the WFC acted as predictor of organisational commitment, namely affective and continuance commitment. We chose to include in the study only these two types of commitment based on the results obtained in a previous phase of the study (which will be explained in the next point – *Context of the study*) and with a view to reducing the size of the questionnaire.

For explaining the affective commitment, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H1a.** There is a negative association between WFC and affective commitment.

In its turn, concerning the continuance commitment, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**H1b.** There is a negative association between WFC and continuance commitment.

On the other hand, with the objective of trying to understand the role of the POS in the relationship between WFC and organisational commitment, the following hypotheses were placed:

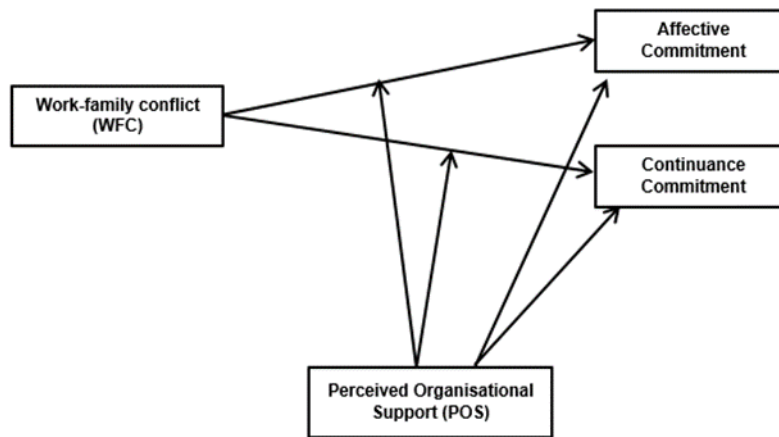
**H2a.** There is a positive association between POS and affective commitment.

**H2b.** There is a positive association between POS and continuance commitment.

**H2c.** POS moderates the relationship between WFC and affective commitment, such that more POS will reduce the negative relationship between WFC and affective commitment.

**H2d.** POS moderates the relationship between WFC and continuance commitment, such that more POS will reduce the negative relationship between WFC and continuance commitment.

Figure 1 depicts the explanatory model according to the hypotheses.



**Figure 1 – Explanatory model of hypotheses with proposed relationship between work-family conflict (WFC) and organisational commitment and perceived organisational support (POS) as moderator.**

### 3.2. Context of the study

The study was conducted in a Portuguese company of goods transportation as a result of a previous study which aimed to understand the underlying reasons of the high levels of turnover in the company. The results showed that the drivers consider family and social difficulties (e.g. lack of time to be with their children) as the principal reasons for leaving the company. The current study, therefore, aims to deepen the understanding of WFC concerning freight drivers including their relationship with organisational nature variables (organisational commitment, POS, working hours duration).

The present study had a *previous phase of organisational diagnosis* of the company in question which was motivated by the high turnover rates of drivers, especially short-distance drivers. At this stage, ex-drivers were interviewed by phone who reported difficulties in reconciling working hours with family life. This phase also involved observation of four drivers (three short-distance drivers during a full day of work and one long-distance driver during a week-long work) (more information on this topic will be given in the next section). Regarding the study, the questionnaire used in the data collection itself was developed based on the previous phase of the study.

#### 3.2.1. Previous phase of the study

In order to better contextualize the study carried out, this part provides a brief summary of the phase that preceded it. These participants were named by the organisation and were chosen according to their availability to be monitored by a member of the research team. An observation and interview guide was designed. The guide covered four sections: 1) familial information of each participant (e.g., age of the youngest child); 2) professional experience (e.g., reason why they do this job); 3) explored aspects related to the work-family interface (e.g., “How do you describe the articulation between

your work and your life outside work?"); and 4) possible information that might have emerged during the participant observation and which was not previously contemplated (e.g., comradeship between these professionals).

As a result of the observation of the short-distance drivers, it was found that although not officially, drivers work on an average of 12 hours a day, from 7:00am-7:00pm. As stated by some drivers, they have no more time left for family life (e.g. "*Most days when I arrive home, my daughters are finishing dinner or are already asleep*") or for handling daily life issues, such as going to the post office.

In what regards the long-distance drivers, the main factor of discontentment was the length of time spent away from home. On average, a long-distance driver spends four to five days a month at home, *i.e.*, about two months per year. Thus, the time to be spent with their children is very short (e.g. "*I hardly watched my oldest son growing up*"). As a consequence of these long absences, some professionals refer problems at the level of the education of their children and family management in general. On the other hand, long-distance drivers also mentioned that doing this job also means liking what is associated with it, such as driving, travelling and sometimes socializing with other drivers. The "esprit de corps" among peers was clearly visible at the service stations when they took mandatory stops and/or rest stops. Besides, from the long-distance drivers' point of view this job is still relatively well-paid.

### 3.3. Procedure

In collecting data, the drivers filled up a questionnaire addressed to the research team. The said material was sealed in an envelope in order to ensure the confidentiality of data. The short-distance drivers received the questionnaire and the envelope in the morning since they are daily in contact with the facilities and the department heads. The questionnaires were to be filled up during the day and delivered by the end of the day as well. Since the long-distance drivers might be away for one to two weeks, they were given the questionnaire and the envelope by the department heads. The drivers were to finish filling them up by the time they returned.

A total of 171 questionnaires were handed over to the drivers, 95 long-distance and 76 short-distance drivers. The final sample included 139 drivers; 82 of whom are long-distance drivers, while 57 are short-distance drivers. The answer rate for the former was 86% while the answer rate for the latter was 75%. The respondents in this study represent 90% long-distance drivers and 30% short-distance drivers working for the organisation at the time of gathering the data.

### 3.4. Sample

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characterisation of the respondents, the family and professional situation, bearing in mind the type of drivers and their total number. Nearly two-thirds of the drivers (64%) are aged 30-49, tending the long-distance drivers to be older than the short-distance ones. The majority of the participants are married or are living in consensual union and 64% attended second or third cycle of basic education. All the respondents are male.

The short-distance drivers ( $M = 60.2$ ,  $SD = 11.2$ ) reported working a higher number of hours per week as compared to the long-distance drivers ( $M = 47.1$ ,  $SD = 5.1$ ). It was also observed that 42% of them have children under the age of six. In addition, 59% reported that their spouses are employed and about half of them work full time.



**Table 1 – Socio-demographic, family and professional characterisation**

Variables	Short-Distance		Long-Distance		Total*	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age (years)						
20-29	17	30.4	10	12.0	27	19.4
30-39	16	28.6	26	31.3	42	30.2
40-49	17	30.4	30	36.1	47	33.8
50-59	5	8.9	15	18.1	20	14.4
60 or more	1	1.8	1	1.2	2	1.4
Marital status						
Single	8	14.3	11	13.3	19	13.7
Married/Consensual Union	44	78.6	62	74.7	106	76.3
Divorced	4	7.1	7	8.4	11	7.9
Widower	0	0	2	2.4	2	1.4
Working hours per week						
M (SD)**	60.2 (11.2)		47.1 (5.1)		52.45 (10.4)	
Number of children						
0	11	19.6	16	19.3	27	19.4
1	23	41.1	34	41.0	57	41.0
2	18	32.1	27	32.5	45	32.4
3	2	3.6	4	4.8	6	4.3
4	2	3.6	2	2.4	4	2.9
Age of youngest child (years)						
Under 6	24	57.1	17	26.2	41	41.7
6-15	12	28.6	22	33.8	34	31.2
Older than 15	6	14.3	26	40.0	32	27.2

\*Given the presence of missing data in certain variables, the obtained N may be different from the sample size (N=139).

\*\*M (Mean), SD (Standard Deviation).

### 3.5. Instruments

Data were gathered through a questionnaire. It included two parts: i) socio-demographic, professional and family information; and ii) the scales that evaluated the study variables (WFC, organisational commitment and POS).

The WFC was assessed through a 5-item scale developed by Netemeyer et al. (1996) (e.g. “*The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities*”). The scale was adapted to the Portuguese context by Brandão (2011) with the items answered in a *Likert*-type 5-point scale (1- “*Entirely disagree*” to 5- “*Entirely agree*”); the higher the score, the higher the perception of the conflict. In this study, the value of Cronbach's alpha was .94 while the WFC scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .87 in the present study.

The scale by Meyer and Allen (1997) was used to measure the organisational affective and continuance commitment. The affective commitment part comprised of six items (e.g. “*I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.*”) and the continuance commitment part comprised of seven items (e.g. “*I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.*”). Both measurements were answered in a *Likert*-type 7-point scale (1- “*Entirely disagree*” to 7- “*Entirely agree*”); the higher the scores, the higher the perceptions of affective commitment and continuance commitment. Nascimento et al. (2008) adapted both measurements to the Portuguese context having obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .91 for the two scales (affective commitment and continuance commitment). The present study obtained a Cronbach's alpha value of .77 regarding affective commitment and .87 regarding continuance commitment.

To measure the POS, the SPOS – Survey of Perceived Organizational Organisational Support (Eisenberg et al., 1986) – was used. This measurement, adapted by Pinheiro (2011), comprises of eight items (e.g. “*The organization really cares about my well-being*”) and was answered in a *Likert*-type scale (1- “*Entirely disagree*” to 7- “*Entirely agree*”). The higher the score, the higher the POS. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .92. In the present study, a Cronbach's alpha of .84 was obtained.

### 3.6. Control variables

In the study, the following variables were controlled: the driver type (short or long-distance), number of hours worked per week and age of the youngest child. On the one hand, as far as we know, empirical evidence that relates the driver type to WFC and/or commitment is scarce. On the other hand, the literature has been studying the relationship between both the number of hours worked per week and the age of the youngest child with WFC and/or commitment (see for example, Adkins and Premeaux (2012), Allen and Finkelstein (2014) or Lu et al. (2011)). In fact, the younger the youngest child or the more hours worked per week, the more WFC and less commitment.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Control variables

Before the hypotheses of the relationships that integrate Figure 1 were tested through regression models, descriptive analyses and bivariate correlations of the variables under study were performed. Therefore, the Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and the correlations between the different variables. While analysing it, it can be seen that the WFC correlates with all the variables under study. Specifically, WFC correlated negatively with the number of weekly working hours, age of the youngest children, affective commitment (confirming H1a), continuance commitment (confirming H1b) and perceived organisational support (POS). It can be noted also that POS correlated positively with affective (confirming H2a), continuance commitment (confirming H2b) and age of the youngest children and correlated negatively with WFC and number of working hours.

**Table 2 – Descriptive statistics and correlations within the measures in study**

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Number of working hours	52.5	10.4					
2. Age of the youngest children	10.9	8.3	-.32**				
3. Work Family Conflict (WFC)	4.0	0.8	-.17*	-.25*			
4. Affective commitment	5.0	1.2	-.18*	.26**	-.35**		
5. Continuance commitment	4.7	1.4	.11	-.03	-.22*	.26**	
6. Perceived organisational support (POS)	4.3	1.1	-.20*	.30**	-.32**	.64**	.29**

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

Before testing the regression model, a comparative analysis was also performed according to the type of driver given the differences found in the diagnostic phase preceding the present study. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables where the two groups of drivers (short and long-distance) were compared along with the result of the *t test* for independent samples. Regarding the commitment, the differences were observed between the two groups in terms of the affective dimension and the continuance dimension. Specifically, long-distance drivers have higher values in the affective dimension, while the short-distance drivers show higher values in the dimension

of continuance. In its turn, regarding the WFC, no statistically significant differences were found between the groups.

**Table 3 – Comparison of WFC, affective commitment, commitment continuance depending on the driver group**

Variables	Short-Distance (n=56)		Long-Distance (n=83)		t (137)
	M	SD	M	SD	
Work Family Conflict (WFC)	4.0	0.9	4.0	0.7	-.44
Affective commitment	4.7	1.3	5.2	1.2	-2.4*
Continuance commitment	5.2	1.4	4.5	1.4	3.2**

\* p < .05; \*\*p < .01

#### 4.2. Relationship between work-family, organisational support and commitment (affective and continuance)

Initially, data were tested on the essential assumptions underlying the fixed linear regression models (Cohen et al., 2003). Table 4 presents the results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis predicting continuance and affective commitment, specifically the regression coefficients for each variable (including control variables) and each hierarchical step. The model improves in each step, excluding the moderators' models. The best model (in both dimensions *Model 2*) explains 19% of variance on the continuance commitment and 49% of variance on the affective commitment.

**Table 4 – Results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses predicting continuance and affective commitment**

Independent variables	Continuance			Affective		
	Model 1 – Controls	Model 2 – Main effects	Model 3 – Interactions	Model 1 – Controls	Model 2 – Main effects	Model 3 – Interactions
	$\beta$	B	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
<b>(a) Control Variables</b>						
Professional category	-.75 $\tau$	-.80*	-.85*	.59 $\tau$	.45 $\tau$	.39
Younger child age	-0.1	-.03	-.02	<b>.03*</b>	.01	.01
Number of working hours	-.12	-.01	-.01	-.01	.01	.01
<b>(b) Main effects</b>						
POS		.49***	.02		.70***	.10
WFC		-.22	-.71		-0.6	-.68
<b>(c) Moderators</b>						
WFC*POS			.11			.14
Intercept	6.04	4.79**	6.95	4.47*	1.71***	4.46
R <sup>2</sup> (R <sup>2</sup> aj)	.04 (.01)	.19 (.14)	.20 (.14)	.14 (.11)	.49 (.46)	.50 (.46)
$\Delta R^2$	.04	.15***	.01	.14*	.35***	.01
F	F(3,86) = 1.30	F(2,84) = 7.75***	F(1,83) = .35	F(3,86) = 4.75*	F(2,84) = 28.27***	F(1,83) = 1.24

Type of driver: 0=short-distance; 1=long-distance.

\*p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01; \*\*\*\*p < .001.

As shown in Step 1 of Table 4, the model of the control variables is not significant regarding the variance of calculative commitment (R<sup>2</sup>aj = .04, n.s.) (F(3,86) = 1.30, n.s.).

The hierarchical regression allowed identifying professional category as a significant predictor of continuance commitment. Considering Step 2, the model is significant including control variables and the main effects and explains 19% of the variance of continuance commitment ( $R^2_{aj} = .19$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ) ( $F(1,83) = 47,75$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ). The  $R^2$  showed an increase of .15. The results show that POS predicts continuance commitment. It is therefore relevant to note that POS ( $\beta = .49$ ) is the most important factor in predicting continuance commitment.

Considering the variance of affective commitment, the model with the control variables and the main effects explained 49% of the variance of affective commitment ( $R^2_{aj} = .46$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ) ( $F(2,84) = 28.27$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ). The  $R^2$  showed an increase of .35. It is also relevant to note that POS ( $\beta = .70$ ) is the most important factor in predicting affective commitment. Results show that as POS increases, so does continuance and affective commitment.

In Step 3 of the same table, both models are not significant. Results show that interactions are not significant regarding the prediction of calculative and affective commitment, thus not confirming hypotheses H2c and H2d regarding the moderating role of the POS. Despite its significance, the interaction model on affective commitment doesn't have a unique significant predictor, therefore it is not relevant to interpret and discuss. In calculative and affective commitment, POS was the most relevant predictor explaining variance of both dimensions. In this study, some results sounded peculiar; WFC not having a significant effect on continuance or affective commitment. POS is the most relevant predictor in both dimensions ( $\beta = .49$ ;  $\beta = .70$ ).

## 5. Discussion

The present study has provided important contributions to the scarce literature that discusses the relationship of work-family conflict among Portuguese freight drivers. Besides the introduction of a new professional group (drivers), the study stands out by comparing two subgroups within this profession: short and long-distance drivers.

Concerning the control variables, the results obtained indicate that both groups of drivers experience a high WFC. On the one hand, these results support previous studies such as Masson and Monteiro (2010) that argue that long distances can have impacts on the family and social life of drivers. However, contrary to expectations, no differences were found between short-distance and long-distance drivers at the level of the perceptions of WFC. This can be explained by considering the situations faced by both groups: long-distance drivers experience prolonged absences from the family context (1-2 weeks), while the short-distance drivers extend their working hours. In both cases, these situations have prevented the drivers' opportunity to spend more time with their family, especially with their children (e.g. "*Practically, haven't seen my eldest son growing up.*"). It can therefore be said that an adequate management of working hours, with the participation of employers and workers, a better work-life balance is essential. At the level of time dedicated for work, it was found, as expected, that more time spent in work is associated with a bigger WFC. This result is in agreement with the studies of Adkins and Premeaux (2012) and Lee et al. (2017), which show that the WFC is an obstacle to achieving satisfactory family roles. These results confirm, even more, the significance of a correct management of time of work since the amount of time spent at work has an effect on time spent at non-work related activities. Regarding the influence of children's age, the results showed that age of the youngest child causes disruption in the work-life balance. Allen and Finkelstein (2014)

and AlAzzam et al. (2017) would agree with this result as they argued in the previous studies that the younger the children, the more their parents feel work-family conflict. In fact, as mentioned by Allen and Finkelstein (2014), the phase of the family cycle in which workers meet is important for the perception of work-family conflict. It means that when workers have children under 5 or 6 years, the WFC is bigger. This fact can be explained by the children's dependency when they are very young as well as the economic pressures faced by their parents. To help resolve this gap, organisations should consider the implementation of flexible practices in time management of the workers.

Still comparing the two types of drivers, long-distance drivers experienced greater affective commitment, while the short-distance drivers experienced greater continuance commitment. In this context, we hypothesize that this can be explained by understanding that long-distance drivers enjoy the advantages associated with their work. They are able to travel a lot, visit different countries, relationships that they build with their colleagues while traveling as well as the high remuneration, hence their affective commitment to the job. Something that can also be explained by the results found by Nóvoa (2014). The author found that Portuguese drivers tend to amplify their national identity even when traveling throughout Europe, for example, through the creation of bonds with other Portuguese drivers or the consumption of Portuguese products and TV. Meanwhile, short-distance drivers that have higher continuance commitment seem to remain in this profession because of the lack of a better alternative in the labour market as the monetary factors keep them in this profession.

In terms of the relationship between WFC and commitment, in the first phase with correlations, a negative relationship was identified between WFC and the two types of commitment (affective and continuance), i.e. the higher the WFC, the lower the organisational commitment, which corroborates the studies of Hatam et al. (2016) and Nart and Batur (2014). It can be explained by the family and work pressures to which the worker is subject because if a work causes conflict with the family or social life, the worker will not have the same attachment with the organisation as he would have in cases of good work-life balance. However, contrary to expectations, in the realisation of regression models, the WFC does not have a significant effect on continuance or affective commitment. These results are contrary to previous studies such as Mukanzi and Senaji (2017) and Zheng and Wu (2018) which may be explained by the fact that our sample is exclusively male as opposed to previous studies in which mixed samples were used.

Regarding the regression models, it was found that there is a positive association between two types of commitment (continuance and affective) and POS; the higher the POS, the greater the affective and the continuance commitment. Given that the continuance commitment is associated with the permanence in the organisation, the POS has a crucial role in that permanence because the greater the perceived support, the greater the willingness to remain in the organisation. Also, the affective commitment reflects the worker's desire to stay in the organisation, but it is also related to the organisational attachment. It makes sense that the greater the POS, the greater the attachment between worker and organisation (affective and continuance) and, consequently, the desire to permanence in this work. This result is in agreement with the studies of Colakoglu et al. (2010) and Fuller et al. (2003). Thus, these results demonstrate the importance of supervisor support in commitment to the organisation. In other words, a worker will be more committed to his/her organisation if the perception of the support they receive from their supervisor is greater. In fact, in the context of organizations' work-family

relationship management, the literature (e.g. Thompson et al., 1999) has highlighted the importance of a family-friendly culture, that is, an environment in which management helps the workers who are motivated towards a better work-family balance. As well as the importance of the role that managers can assume in such management, through formal or informal practices that they can adopt (e.g. Mills et al., 2014).

## 6. Conclusion

Thus, this study joins the wide literature which highlights the importance of a better work-life balance in order to avoid consequences for workers. At the organisational level, especially in very stressful professions like freight drivers, there is a need to come up with a better work and time management framework. Workers should play an active role in their own management process. While making decisions, they should also take into account their individual needs. In short, as seen earlier, the transport sector is vital for the survival of a modern society (e.g. securing the exchange of goods, transporting people), so the workers need optimal conditions for the exercise of their function (e.g. work-family balance, POS), thus ensuring the satisfaction of the population.

To finish, the most obvious limitation of this study is the small sample size. However, given its innovative nature of studying an exclusively male sample of drivers in relation to the work-family relationship, it would be a great contribution in the field of research to explore more areas of work-family conflict. Other variables, including seniority and commitment to the profession may be used, in the future, to deepen the understanding of this issue (high turnover and/or management of the work-family interface) in this occupational group. On the other hand, the fact that the management of the company was involved in the study may have conditioned the participants' responses. In any case, there was always a concern on the part of the research team to guarantee the confidentiality of the information collected from the participants in all phases of the study.

Future research may continue this line of study through other relevant factors and sources of information. Specifically, a similar study may be undertaken to emphasise the opinion of the spouses of the drivers and/or other members of the organisations such as management or Human Resources Officer. A similar study may as well be conducted in other countries in order to have an understanding of other cultural organisations and contexts. Indeed, the factors likely to influence the professional experience of truck drivers are diverse and multifaceted, with, for example, the investigation carried out by Williams et al. (2017), identified the relevance of topics such as: "stress from loneliness and loss of family life", "stress due to health-related issues and uncertainty from health-related support", "lack of respect from multiple parties", and "stressful impact of government regulations".

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## 8. Acknowledgments

The authors are deeply grateful to the transportation company as well as to all the professionals that participated in the study. They would also like to acknowledge the suggestions for improvement given by the reviewers to the initial version of the paper.