

The Amor of Skill: Shaping Professional Commitment through Individual Employability Person-Job-Fit and Workability in the Military Context

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Abstract

The professional commitment of military personnel has a vital role in the fight against terrorism, banditry, insurgents, security challenges across nations, career success, progress, and national development. We investigated the moderating role of individual employability in the relationships between person-job-fit, workability, and military personnel's professional commitment. The aim is to understand how individual employability influences the strength and nature of these relationships within the unique context of the military with a sample of five hundred and four (504) Nigerian soldiers. We adopted a quantitative approach and collected data from military personnel through self-report questionnaires such as the Professional Commitment Scale, the Workability Scale, the Person-Job-Fit Scale, and the Individual Employability Scale. Our five tested hypotheses through multiple regression and Hayes PROCESS Macro indicated that person-job-fit, workability, and individual employability positively predicted professional commitment. Individual employability moderated the associations of person-job-fit, workability, and the professional commitment of soldiers. Our study's implication shows that individual employability, person-job-fit, and workability are paramount in achieving the professional commitment of soldiers for effective combat and warfare against insurgency in Nigeria. Also, these findings highlight the import of considering individual employability as a noteworthy element in understanding the linkages between person-job-fit, workability, and professional commitment within the military context. The implications of these findings for military organisations and personnel management practises are being discussed, emphasising the significance of promoting individual employability to enhance professional commitment through person-job-fit and workability among military personnel. Further research avenues and limitations of the study are also outlined.

Keywords: *Individual Employability, Military Personnel, Organisational Behavior and Development, Person-Job-Fit, Professional Commitment, Workability.*

INTRODUCTION

In many jobs, such as the military, professionalism is crucial. Again, this is because it requires high respect, commitment, and discipline (Odo et al., 2021). Professionalism is essential in the military, as it enables soldiers to act ethically and be answerable for their proceedings, lexis, and thoughts (Ujoatuonu et al., 2022). Besides, this ensures that military personnel have the necessary skills to complete their assigned roles and that the military effectively performs its undertakings (Evetts, 2013). Professionalism includes excellent literacy, high ethical standards, and practical skills connected to the military (Ujoatuonu et al.,

2023), proper work motivation and morale (Horowitz & Stam, 2014), and good colleague relationships (Carnes, 2015). Despite this, Nigerian citizens no longer trust their military due to a compromise in the discharge of their duties and doubts about their degree of professionalism (Ibeh et al., 2019).

Furthermore, being part of the military requires strict discipline and obedience (Ujoatuonu et al., 2020a). Nigerian military seems not to have identified with their professional and moral responsibilities, and that might have influenced mastering the technical expertise of warfare (Ibeh et al., 2019), enhancing relationships between themselves and the public (Alabi et al., 2018), and being aware of their role in furthering goals and objectives (Ujoatuonu et al., 2023). Adherence to professional standards leads to the proper functioning of the military, resulting in victories in various missions (McCormick, 2017). Nigeria has shown a growing concern for military professionalism in response to several incidents. These include Operation Python Dance in Abia State, mistreatment of civilians at roadblocks, cheating in proficiency and enlistment tests, defence management's political affiliations and membership, increased corruption in the military, and sexual misconduct (Ogbole, 2021). The need for professionalism in the Nigerian military has been widely debated in light of these occurrences (Ibeh et al., 2019). Professional soldiers should possess integrity, honesty, competency, accountability, and self-regulation (Ujoatuonu et al., 2022). Furthermore, they must demonstrate the five values of the US military: trust, expertise, honourable service, esprit de corps, and stewardship (Brown et al., 2017). It is important to remember that while military professionalism can address insecurity and terrorism, it must be combined with comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of these issues, such as socio-economic disparities, individual employability, political instability, person-job-fit, and ideological extremism.

Person-job-fit is crucial for predicting professional commitment from studies (e.g., Bagraim, 2003; Odo et al., 2021; Ujoatuonu et al., 2022). It refers to the alignment between an individual's skills, abilities, and values with the requirements and characteristics of their job (Brkick et al., 2002). In essence, it is the extent to which employees feel that their current job suits them, meets their goals and needs, and is a good fit for their abilities, skills, and talents (Cai et al., 2018). Studies (e.g., Linden et al., 2019; Odo et al., 2021) have shown that person-job-fit is particularly important for military personnel, who may face challenges adapting to new environments and committing to their roles. The ability of soldiers to fit into their working environment is closely tied to their capacity for career adaptation (Ujoatuonu et al., 2020a) and organisational commitment (Ujoatuonu et al., 2022). Similarly, this is especially true given the frequent relocations required in response to security issues. Few research (e.g., Cai et al., 2018; Lim et al., 2019) have consistently found that person-job-fit is linked with positive work-related attitudes, including job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and vocational identity. Conversely, a poor person-job-fit can lead to adverse work outcomes, such as turnover and low job performance (Van Wijk & Meintjes, 2017). Besides, person-job-fit is vital in defence organisations, particularly those facing insecurity challenges and conflict (Odo et al., 2021; Ujoatuonu et al., 2020a). It affects employees' motivation, personality, and mental health (Van Wijk & Meintjes, 2017), job grit, involvement, and satisfaction (Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2020), effort-reward imbalance, career behaviour, and workability (Thanapop et al., 2023), and performance, while also potentially aiding career adaptation and professional commitment.

Workability is an essential factor affecting military personnel's commitment to their profession (Kirkendall et al., 2020; Misnan et al., 2023; Ujoatuonu et al., 2023). According to Thanapop et al. (2023), workability is the ability of an individual to meet the demands of their

job while considering their physical, mental, and social well-being. Selander et al. (2023) state that workability refers to how employees rate their current ability to work under their job's physical, mental, and interpersonal demands. Misnan et al. (2023) define perceived work ability as the worker's functional capacity in their current job, considering the job's challenges or demands and their available resources. Military personnel who feel capable are more likely to experience fulfilment and commitment to their profession (Ujoatuonu et al., 2022).

According to Ilmarinen (2001), personal resources like a person's health, education, competence, skills, values, attitudes, and motivation significantly impact their work adaptability. These personal resources are related to the work situation, where different organisational factors, such as demands, work content, work community, and leadership, influence the employee's work ability (Thanapop et al., 2023). Suppose military personnel's resources do not match their work resources or situation. In that case, they may face challenges adapting to their job (Lopes et al., 2017). Soldiers who feel that the demands of their job are too much for them to bear will possibly perceive low workability, which in turn might affect their ability to adapt (Ujoatuonu et al., 2023).

Workability is crucial to military retention, as it directly impacts the operational effectiveness of military units (Lopes et al., 2017). High levels of workability can enhance job performance, reduce job-related stress, and increase overall satisfaction (Misnan et al., 2023), thereby reducing the likelihood of personnel leaving the military prematurely (Lopes et al., 2017). Conversely, low workability can increase attrition rates as individuals struggle with physical demands, mental health issues, or job dissatisfaction. Poor workability due to injuries, health issues, or job-related stress can decrease operational readiness and compromise mission success (Van Wijk et al., 2017).

When personnel perceive that their physical and mental well-being is valued, they are likelier to develop a sense of loyalty, identification, and commitment to the military institution (Ujoatuonu et al., 2023). Workability also extends to balancing military duties and personal life. A wholesome work-life balance is paramount for upholding a commitment to the military profession (Van Wijk et al., 2017). Organisations prioritising work-life balance and supporting family and personal needs will likely enhance workability and professional military commitment (Lopes et al., 2017).

Previous studies (e.g., Kalyal et al., 2010; Nielsen et al., 2016; Van der Heijden et al., 2016) have highlighted the need for a moderating variable such as perceived individual employability to establish the causal effect on the relationship between the independent variables (person-job-fit and workability) and the dependent variable (professional commitment). Individual employability refers to an employee's contribution, awareness of their prospects, skills, value in an organization, access to professional networks, and confidence in their experience, skills, and ability to be retained during downsizing, economic, political, and organisational change (Kalyal et al., 2010). It also refers to their ability to get a similar job elsewhere if necessary (Lee & Kim, 2020). Perceived individual employability involves the degree of employees' possession of resources, skills, and other attributes needed to find and stay in a career that suits them (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

According to Moreira (2020), perceived individual employability is a person's concept of their ability to identify and realize career opportunities when needed. Overall, perceived individual employability is broadly conceptualized as the ability to obtain, perform, and maintain a job (Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2020). McArdle et al. (2007) identified three critical

components of perceived individual employability: career identity, social capital, and adaptability. In times of turbulence, the perception of being employable becomes essential to an individual since the situation's perception can affect an individual's behaviour, reactions, and thoughts (Pawłowska, 2023).

In Nigeria, soldiers' employability is determined by ethnicity, political affiliation, geographical region, and political affiliation (through policies by the government in power) (Ogbole, 2021). Wrongly enlisted soldiers might find it hard to adapt and stay committed to the challenges and demands of military tasks (Alabi et al., 2018). Similarly, Ibeh et al. (2019) observed that military personnel's relationship with Nigerian defence management and politicians or political parties in power now ascertain the exemplary soldier, assignment, and whom to include in conflict, drawdown, growth, and combat scenes. Similarly, this has negatively impacted the fight against resurgences, armed banditry, Boko Haram, and Fulani Herdsmen due to the loss of suitable people to the right jobs (Ujoatuonu et al., 2020). Perceived soldiers' employability and enlistment into the military is a crucial goal for military personnel in managing their career and defence organisations to foster workforce commitment, values, and positive attitudes (Fugate et al., 2004).

Individuals who are not employable will not professionally commit to a defence vocation when enlisted in a military career (Gerekan et al., 2023). Similarly, this is because facing threats or security challenges will affect their energy and spirit, behaviour, reaction, thriving at work, and thoughts, leading to poor containment (Ujoatuonu et al., 2023). When military personnel are not employable, they cannot adapt to the challenges of their job if they are finally enlisted (Odo et al., 2021). Pawłowska (2023) has proven that employability skills, resilience, knowledge, resources, and abilities are essential in helping people adapt and stay committed to their work changes and improve career opportunities and commitment in the workplace.

It should also be noted that Nigerian military personnel should know what their job entails before enlistment (Ibeh et al., 2019). However, their perceived ability to work in defence may enhance their professional commitment after enlistment (Ogbole, 2021). Based on these postulations, employability skills, person-job-fit (resources), and abilities may positively correlate with professional commitment. This study explores whether individual employability strengthens or weakens the relationships between person-job fit and professional commitment, as well as between workability and professional commitment. By examining the moderating role of individual employability, this research aims to shed light on how employability influences individuals' level of professional commitment.

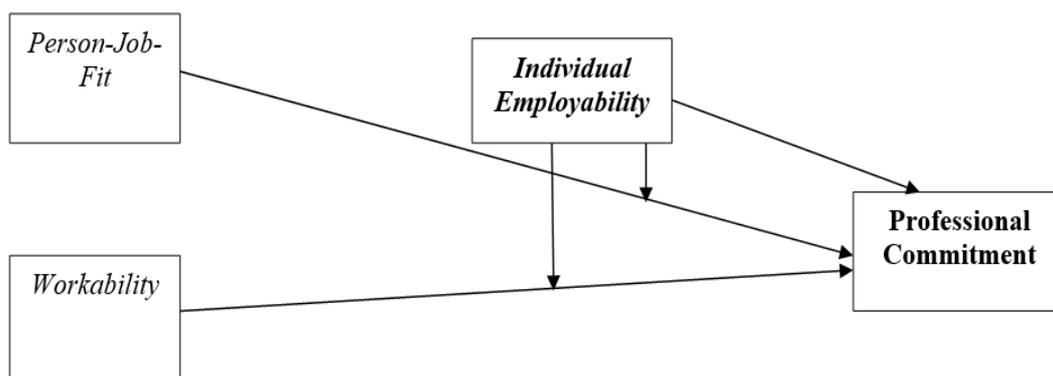


Figure 1: Hypothetical Model for the Study

In view of the available literature, statement of problem, and purpose of study, the following hypotheses will be tested:

- 1) Person-job-fit will significantly predict professional commitment among military personnel.
- 2) Workability will significantly predict professional commitment among military personnel.
- 3) Perceived individual employability will significantly predict professional commitment among military personnel.
- 4) Perceived individual employability will significantly moderate the relationship between person-job-fit and professional commitment among military personnel.
- 5) Perceived individual employability will significantly moderate the relationship between workability and professional commitment among military personnel.

METHOD

Participants

The participants in this study comprised 504 Nigerian combatant army personnel, conveniently and purposefully sampled from Mokola Military Barracks located in Oyo State, Lafenwa Barracks located in Abeokuta, Odogbo Barracks located in Ibadan, and Letmauk Barracks located in Ibadan all from Nigeria, West Africa. We employed a convenient sampling technique with the sole intention of sampling combatant personnel who were present and willing to participate at the time of distributing the copies of the questionnaire. At the same time, the researchers adopted the homogenous purposive sampling method because all the participants were combatants within the military base. That is military personnel that have experienced combat. Also, we obtained institutional ethical approval from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Participants informed consent was sought by asking them to mark in a box remarking that they assented to partake in the study. The participant's ages ranged from 18 to 60 years ($M = 48.0$; $SD = 0.96$). The educational qualifications ranged from a Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE) or equivalent to a Master of Science Degree (MSc).

The ranks of the participants ranged from Recruits to Lieutenant Colonel (LC). Terminating the rank at the lieutenant colonel level is because the next rank, a colonel, is tough and challenging to meet since such a senior ranking officer. Participants provided information on relevant demographic factors such as age, marital status, number of children, and educational qualifications. Other demographic variables such as ethnicity, religion, and gender were not sampled because, in the Nigerian military, they assume there is nothing like gender. Therefore, all genders are the same. As for ethnicity and religion, the training institute asked the researchers and their assistants to remove them before distribution. The justification is that people believe ethnicity and religion cause the country's security issues. In addition, the defence ministry aims to reunite Nigerian soldiers who are now split along that line.

Instruments

The researchers used four instruments: the Professional Commitment Scale, the Workability Scale, the Person-Job-Fit Scale, and the Individual Employability Scale.

Professional Commitment Questionnaire

The Professional Commitment Questionnaire was developed by Bagraim (2003) to measure an employee's effort, loyalty, value, pride, inspiration, gain, faith and care at work. The scale has three factors: affection, continuance and normative, and each factor has six items. It is an eighteen-item questionnaire on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Sample items include, "Changing professions now would be difficult for me." However, the scale indicated that items out of the eighteen, five are reversed scored. Bagraim (2003) reported a Cronbach alpha of .75 (professional commitment affective), .87 (professional commitment continuance), and .73 (commitment affective normative). While a composite Cronbach alpha score of .95 (Bagraim, 2003). We conducted a pilot study to validate the Professional Commitment Questionnaire by Bagraim (2003) for the present study on a sample of 115 soldiers. The items yielded high internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha of .90.

Perceived Ability to Work Scale

The perceived Ability to Work Scale is a measure that consists of 4 items developed by Ilmarinen and Rantanen (1999). The items are designed to measure physical, mental, and interpersonal demands and employees' current ability to work. The questionnaire is measured on a ten-point Likert scale ranging from 1=completely unable to work at all, 4=not certain, 7=relatively certain, and 10=work ability is currently at its lifetime best. Sample items include; "How many points would you give your current ability to work?" Ilmarinen and Rantanen (1999) obtained an internal consistency of .96. We conducted a pilot study to validate the Perceived Work Ability Scale by Rothwell and Arnold (2005) for the present study on a sample of 115 soldiers. The items yielded acceptable internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha (α) of .91.

Person-Job-Fit Scale

The Global Self-Report Measure of Person-Job Fit consists of nine items developed by Brkich et al. (2002) to measure how an employee's current job matches their goals, needs, abilities, skills, talents, competencies, and motivation. The scale is calculated on a seven-point Likert-scale reply design varying from 1=strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Sample items include; "My current job is me." "I am able to use my skills, talents, and competencies in my current job." Brkich et al. (2002) obtained an internal consistency of .92. We conducted a pilot study to validate the Person-Job-Fit Scale by Brkich et al. (2002) for the present research on a sample of 115 soldiers, and the items yielded acceptable internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha (α) of .89.

Perceived Individual Employability Scale

The perceived Individual Employability Scale was measured with the Self-Perceived Employability Scale, which consists of a sixteen-item measure developed by Rothwell and Arnold (2005) to assess people's employability as workers. This scale also measures employees' confidence in retaining their job during downsizing, personal networks with the organisation, awareness of opportunities with the organisation, skills transferable from their current position to another outside the present organisation, ability to retain and make them employable, if they are respected in the organisation. The items on the measure are calculated on a five-point Likert scale answer design ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Sample questions include; "I could easily retrain to make myself more employable elsewhere." Rothwell and Arnold obtained an internal consistency of 0.83. We conducted a pilot study to validate the Perceived Individual Employability Scale (i.e., Self-Perceived

Employability Scale by Rothwell and Arnold, 2005) for the present research on a sample of 115 soldiers, and the items yielded acceptable internal consistency reliability, Cronbach's alpha (α) of .93.

Procedures

The researchers sampled participants in the current study from Mokola Military Barracks located in Oyo State, Lafenwa Barracks situated in Abeokuta, Odogbo Barracks located in Ibadan, and Letmauk Barracks located in Ibadan, all from Nigeria, West Africa. In addition, we obtained institutional ethical approval from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria, before proceeding to the field. Then, we introduced ourselves to the commandant of each Barracks and sought permission to administer the copies questionnaires to the soldiers. The commandant addressed the soldiers and requested their maximum cooperation, and the nature of the study was explained to the participants in writing and orally. After that, 95% of the participants available volunteered to participate in the study. Only individuals who provided voluntary, informed consent to participate received the copies of questionnaire. They were guaranteed the confidentiality of their answers since the questionnaire was not required for personal information; hence, we requested them to fill out the copies of the questionnaire with utmost sincerity. The Barracks assigned officers to distribute and collect the completed copies of questionnaires. The researchers and the officers assigned gave the participants ten minutes to complete the copies of the questionnaires during break periods or after morning debriefings. The participants' management assigned officers to distribute and collect the completed copies of the questionnaires. Finally, we retrieved the finished copies of the instruments from the respondents with gratitude and appreciation expressed verbally to the participants for completing the the questionnaires. The compositions of the questionnaires returned and used for data analysis showed a return rate of 87.5%.

Design/Data Analysis

The study adopted a cross-sectional design because (a) the process and finances involved in conducting military studies are enormous, and (b) Nigerian military personnel do not have combatant reserve personnel, which might affect or influence casualty and longitudinal studies. Therefore, we conducted Pearson's correlation analysis among the study's demographic and dependent variables, while Hayes regression-based process was applied for hypotheses testing.

RESULTS

Table 1: Correlations of demographic variables and statistics among the study variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.AGE	39.50	.34	-								
2.Marital status	1.08	.87	.52**	-							
3.Years of service	.62	.48	.40**	.52**	-						
4. No of Children	1.10	1.47	.31**	.49**	.57**	-					
5.EduQua	2.39	1.54	.33**	.36**	.30**	.23**	-				
6.Person job fit	42.40	16.65	.12**	.28**	.20**	.23**	-.04	-			
7.Workability	26.63	14.21	.12**	.27**	.22**	.23**	-.01	.67**	-		
8.Individual Empl	55.83	19.59	.14**	.32**	.23**	.23**	-.04	.76**	.70**	-	
9.Professional Comt.	31.99	12.72	.14**	.29**	.17**	.22**	-.01	.72**	.62**	.79**	-

Note: N = 504, ** = p < .05 (two-tailed), **** = p < .01 (two-tailed). M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, EduQ= Educational qualifications, Individual Empl =Individual Employability, Professional Comt = Professional Commitment.

The correlation Table, as indicated in Table 1, shows that age ($r = .14, p < .01$), marital status ($r = .29, p < .01$), years of service ($r = .17, p < .01$), and number of children ($r = .22, p < .01$), which were added as controls to help checkmate the criterion variables, correlate with professional commitment respectively. Meanwhile, educational qualification did not correlate with professional commitment. Among the criterion variables, individual employability ($r = .72, p < .01$), workability ($r = .62, p < .01$), and individual employability ($r = .79, p < .01$) as well correlate positively with professional commitment.

Table 2: Hayes PROCESS Macro results for moderating role of individual employability in the associations of person job fit, and professional commitment among Nigerian military personnel

Variables	β	SE	T	95%CL			
				LLCI	ULCI	ΔR^2	ΔF
Person job fit (PJF)	.20	.03	5.89**	.13	.26		
Individual employability (IE)	.38	.03	13.58**	.33	.44		
PJF X IE	.00	.00	3.06**	.00	.01	.66	311.83**

Note: * = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, β = Regression Coefficient; SE = Standard Error; t = population t value; p= Probability Level; LLCI and ULCI = Lower and Upper Limit Confident Interval; ΔR^2 Adjusted R square

In Table 2, the result indicated that a person's job fit positively predicts professional commitment ($\beta = .20, p < .01$), indicating that for every unit rise in person-job fit, professional commitment increases by .20unit. Individual employability positively predicts professional commitment ($\beta = .38, p < .01$), indicating that for every unit rise in individual employability, professional commitment increases by .38 unit. The interaction effect between person-job fit and individual employability on professional commitment was significant ($\beta = .00, p < .01$), indicating that individual employability moderated the relationship between a person's job fit and professional commitment. The slope of the interaction (See figure 1) indicated that a person's job fit significantly relates to professional commitment for those low individual employability ($\beta = -20.91, p < .01$) moderate in individual employability ($\beta = -.91, p < .01$), and those high in individual employability ($\beta = 20.09, p < .01$). The R^2 for the model was .66, indicating that the variables above explained 66% variance in professional commitment among Nigerian military personnel.

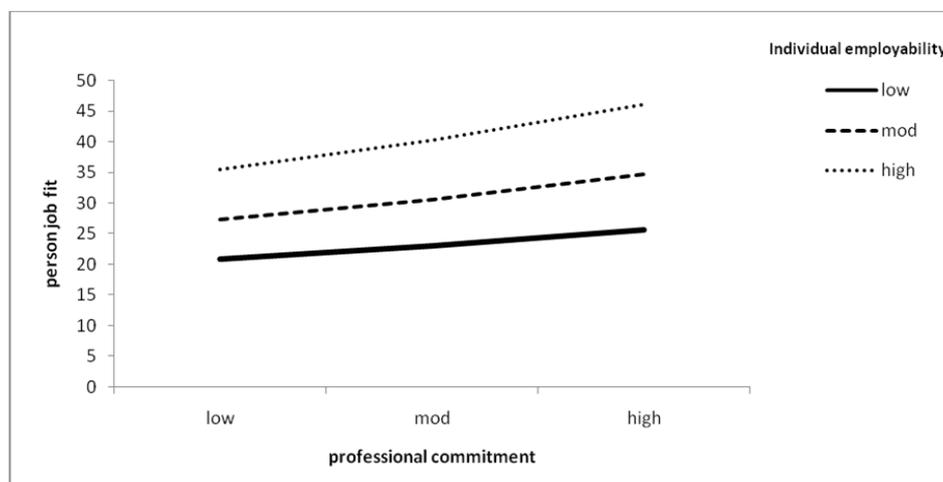


Figure 2: Interaction slope showing moderating role of individual employability in the associations of person job fit, and professional commitment among Nigerian military personnel

Table 3: Hayes PROCESS Macro results for moderating role of individual employability in the associations of workability and professional commitment among Nigerian military personnel

Variables	β	SE	T	95%CL			
				LLCI	ULCI	ΔR^2	ΔF
Workability	.19	.04	4.60**	.11	.27		
Individual employability (IE)	.43	.03	16.77**	.38	.48		
Workability X IE	.01	.00	3.23**	.00	.01	.65	298.01**

Note: * = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$, β = Regression Coefficient; SE = Standard Error; t = population t value; p = Probability Level; LLCI and ULCI = Lower and Upper Limit Confident Interval; ΔR^2 Adjusted R square

In Table 2, the result shows that workability positively predicts professional commitment ($\beta = .19, p < .01$), indicating that for every unit rise in workability, professional commitment increases by .19unit. Individual employability positively predicts professional commitment ($\beta = .43, p < .01$), indicating that for every unit that increases individual employability, professional commitment increases by .43unit.

The interaction effect between workability and individual employability on professional commitment yielded a significant impact ($\beta = .01, p < .01$), indicating that individual employability moderated the relationship between workability and professional commitment.

The slope of the interaction (See figure 2) stated that workability relates with professional commitment for those low in individual employability ($\beta = -20.91, p < .01$), moderate in individual employability ($\beta = -.91, p < .01$), and high in individual employability ($\beta = 24.09, p < .01$). The R^2 for the model was .65, indicating that the variables were implicated for 65% variance in professional commitment among Nigerian military personnel.

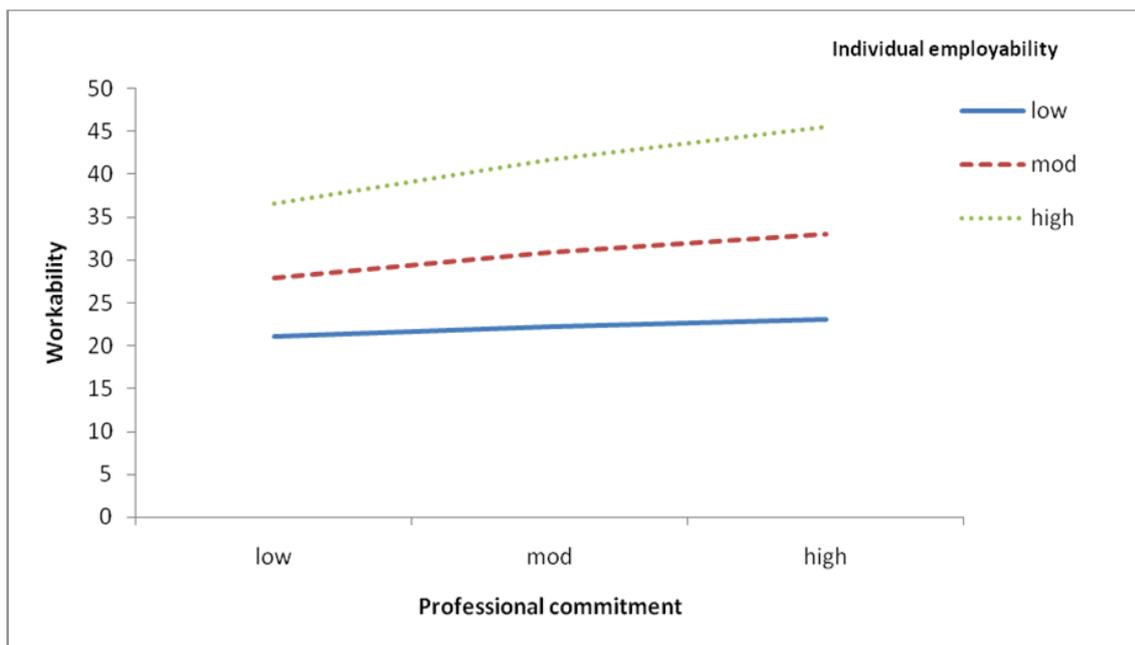


Figure 3: Interaction slope showing moderating role of individual employability in the associations of workability and professional commitment among Nigerian military personnel

DISCUSSION

We investigated the moderating role of individual employability in the relationships between person-job-fit, workability, and military personnel's professional commitment. According to the study's first hypothesis, a person's fit for their job would determine their level of commitment in the military. The first hypothesis was confirmed as the study's results showed that a person's fit for their job positively correlated with their level of professional commitment. Besides, this could be attributed to military personnel feeling that their skills, personality, and values align with the demands of their job, leading to increased dedication to their career. This finding is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Cai et al., 2018; Gerekan et al., 2023; Nielsen et al., 2016; Sylva et al., 2019) that found a relationship between person-job-fit and employee engagement, proactive personality, proactive career behavior, and professional commitment among non-military individuals. Ujoatuonu and colleagues (2020) also found that person-job-fit predicted career adaptation in military context.

It was theorised that the ability to work effectively would predict military personnel's commitment to their profession. The study confirmed this hypothesis, demonstrating that workability significantly predicted professional commitment among soldiers. This prediction is based on evaluating a soldier's capacity to meet the demands of their military role and their dedication to their profession. The findings of this study are consistent with prior research (e.g., Lopes et al., 2017; Misnan et al., 2023; Selender et al., 2023; Thanapop et al., 2023), which has also identified workability as a predictor of various aspects of psychosocial work-related-health such as organizational with professional commitment, effort-reward imbalance, and employee performance.

The study hypothesized that the perception of an individual's employability would affect military personnel's commitment to their profession. The third hypothesis was confirmed as the research showed that a soldier's perceived employability impacted their professional commitment. The study revealed that a soldier's perceived employability is crucial in determining their confidence, future career goals, and decisions. Besides, this might be because soldiers who perceive themselves as employable are likely to be more resilient and adaptable to various careers, which leads to increased professional commitment. The study's findings are consistent with previous research that has shown a link between employability and unemployment, organizational commitment, and human and social capital among non-military individuals (McArdle et al., 2007; Pawlowska, 2023; Widodo & Chandrawaty, 2020).

The study explored the relationship between person-job-fit and professional commitment among military personnel, with the theory that perceived individual employability would moderate this relationship. The study's results supported this theory, showing that perceived individual employability significantly influenced the connection between person-job-fit and professional commitment among soldiers. The study investigated how a soldier's confidence in their employability impacted their commitment to the military based on how well their skills and characteristics matched their job. Soldiers with a firm fit between their job and their skills were likelier to be committed to their military careers. However, this relationship was moderated by their perception of their employability within the military. Again, this means that their belief in their future job prospects could affect the strength and nature of their personal and professional commitment. The complexity of this relationship sheds light on why some soldiers may be more committed to their military career than others, depending on their beliefs about their future within the military. These findings are consistent with prior research, such as Moreira et al. (2020), which identified workability as a predictor of various aspects of

psychosocial work-related health, including organizational commitment, effort-reward imbalance, and employee performance, with perceived internal employability and affective commitment as mediators. The study found that soldiers' perceived individual employability affects their commitment to their military profession. Furthermore, this means that the belief in their employability impacts how strongly their workability influences their commitment. For instance, soldiers with high perceived individual employability are likelier to commit to their military career if they believe they are employable in military defense roles. On the other hand, soldiers with low perceived individual employability may feel more trapped or obligated to stay in the military, even if they have high workability. This study's findings are consistent with previous research that showed how perceived individual and internal employability affects job insecurity, individual creativity, and career commitment in non-military employees. Likewise, this showed that perceived individual and internal employability moderated and mediated job insecurity, individual creativity, and affective with career commitment among non-military employees.

Implications of the Study

The relationship between a soldier's suitability for their job and their commitment to their military career holds significant importance for personnel management and military organizations. When a soldier's skills, values, abilities, and characteristics are well-matched with the demands of their military role, several positive outcomes and implications arise. Soldiers who experience an excellent person-job fit are likelier to remain dedicated to their military career and feel engaged, satisfied, and motivated in their roles. Also, this can lead to increased responsibility and dedication. A strong person-job-fit often results in higher job satisfaction, reducing the likelihood of burnout or job-related stress and increasing the probability of continued commitment to military careers. Furthermore, soldiers with the skills and attributes necessary for their military roles are likelier to perform their duties effectively, leading to higher job performance and mission success. Similarly, this, in turn, strengthens their professional commitment. Military organizations also benefit from soldiers committed to their careers as they are more likely to reenlist and continue their service, improving retention rates and reducing the need for constant recruitment and training of new personnel. Additionally, soldiers who fit well within their units and teams tend to contribute positively to group cohesion and teamwork, improving the overall effectiveness of military units and missions.

The relationship between soldier's ability to fulfil their duties effectively and their loyalty to their profession is a crucial field of military research and management study. For example, physically fit, mentally resilient, and socially connected soldiers are more likely to perform their duties effectively, contributing to the overall success of military operations. When soldiers feel competent in their roles, they are more devoted to achieving mission objectives, leading to higher job satisfaction and an increased likelihood of staying in the military for extended periods. Again, this, in turn, positively impacts retention rates, reducing the need for frequent recruitment and training of new personnel. Soldiers with high workability also positively influence their peers, fostering team unity and morale and creating a shared commitment to the mission and the organization. Additionally, good workability equips soldiers to deal with the stresses and challenges of military service, leading to increased loyalty to the profession. Professional commitment also motivates soldiers to seek out professional development opportunities, which can lead to a more competent and effective military force. Leaders who understand the importance of workability in predicting professional commitment

can create an environment that promotes their subordinates' physical and mental well-being, increasing loyalty and dedication. The perception of a soldier's employability significantly impacts their level of professional commitment. This belief refers to the soldier's confidence in securing and maintaining employment within the military. When soldiers perceive themselves as highly employable, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and remain committed to their profession. This commitment can lead to lower turnover rates and contribute to organisational stability.

In addition, soldiers with a strong belief in their employability are motivated to continually improve their skills and qualifications, which benefits the military by ensuring soldiers are well-prepared and adaptable to changing demands. A belief in individual employability positively influences a unit's dynamics, leading to increased engagement, collaboration and support among colleagues. Individuals with high employability are often open to leadership opportunities and responsibilities, which can lead to developing a capable and motivated leadership cadre within the military. A military organisation fostering a culture where soldiers perceive high individual employability can enhance its reputation as an attractive and supportive employer, contributing to recruiting high-quality candidates and retaining experienced personnel.

The relationship between individual employability, person-job-fit, and professional commitment is a complex and multifaceted topic among Nigerian soldiers, with several implications and consequences for both the soldiers and the military organisation. For example, soldiers who perceive a high level of individual employability will likely experience increased job satisfaction. Again, this is because they believe they have options beyond their current military service. Such satisfaction can positively influence their commitment to military duties and may lead to higher retention rates among soldiers. However, it could result in a potential loss of talent if the military cannot provide sufficient incentives to retain skilled personnel. Similarly, soldiers who perceive a good person-job-fit are more likely to be motivated and perform better in their roles, leading to a highly committed and effective military force combined with a high level of individual employability.

Besides, to enhance individual employability and person-job-fit, the military may need to invest in training and development programs that equip soldiers with skills relevant to their military service and potential civilian careers. In addition, this could lead to a more versatile and adaptable workforce. Soldiers nearing the end of their service may benefit from a strong perception of individual employability, easing the transition to civilian life. Correspondingly, a military workforce with high individual employability and person-job-fit may have a more positive organisational culture. Soldiers are more likely to be engaged and committed, positively impacting leadership, teamwork, and overall military effectiveness. However, the military must balance encouraging soldiers' perceptions of employability and ensuring their commitment to the military mission. Overemphasis on employability may lead to a decline in professional commitment if soldiers believe their military service is merely a stepping stone to civilian employment such as political office.

Understanding the correlation between perceived individual employability (PIE), workability, and professional commitment is critical for Nigerian soldiers. This perception can significantly impact their dedication to their military careers. When soldiers believe they have a high level of individual employability, they become more engaged in their work. They feel their current military role values their skills and experiences and is transferable to civilian employment, leading to increased work engagement and overall job performance.

A positive perception of individual employability can motivate soldiers to develop their skills and knowledge, participate in training programs, and take on additional responsibilities, ultimately enhancing their workability and job performance. However, a high PIE may lead to increased turnover if soldiers perceive better opportunities outside the military. Again, this could result in losing experienced personnel and associated recruitment and training costs to replace them. Hence, balancing individual employability with military requirements is essential. Military leadership must ensure that soldiers' skills and abilities align with the demands of their roles. A disparity between a soldier's perceived employability and workability within the military can result in decreased commitment and effectiveness. For Nigerian soldiers, a high perception of individual employability may encourage them to plan their transition to civilian life after military service. However, effective leadership and mentorship can help shape soldiers' perceptions of employability and workability, fostering commitment. A strong perception of individual employability can enhance soldiers' psychological well-being and reduce stress and anxiety related to job security, potentially leading to increased professional commitment. The military may need to allocate resources to enhance soldiers' employability and workability, including career development opportunities, counselling services, and assistance with post-military transition.

Limitations and Recommendations

Exploring the connection between perceived individual employability, person-job-fit, workability, and professional commitment among Nigerian soldiers presents challenges due to various constraints. Research in this field typically relies on cross-sectional data, which provides a snapshot of information simultaneously. However, more than this approach may be required for identifying causality or detecting changes in perceptions and outcomes over time. Furthermore, findings from studies focusing on Nigerian soldiers may not be generalisable to other military or civilian workforces due to cultural, organisational, and operational differences. Additionally, self-reported measures may not accurately reflect soldiers' genuine attitudes and behaviours. Soldiers may be inclined to provide socially desirable responses when completing questionnaires and surveys, leading to response bias. Longitudinal studies are essential for establishing causal relationships and monitoring changes over time. However, conducting such studies in a military context can be challenging and resource-intensive. Exterior elements such as government policies and global events can also impact soldiers' perceived employability and job prospects, further complicating the analysis. The military context is complex and diverse, with various job roles, ranks, and responsibilities. It is challenging to capture the nuances of person-job-fit and workability across different military positions. Conducting research involving soldiers requires strict adherence to ethical guidelines, which can limit the scope of data collection and the types of questions that can be asked. Resource constraints may also restrict the scope and scale of the research project. Access to military personnel for research purposes in Nigeria was limited due to security concerns, particularly in specific regions or during conflicts. Acknowledging these limitations when designing and interpreting studies in this complex context can help mitigate potential problems and enhance the reliability of research involving soldiers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To take advantage of the positive implications of person-job-fit in predicting professional commitment, military organizations can conduct regular assessments to ensure that soldiers are in roles that align with their skills and interests.

They can also provide career counseling and guidance to help soldiers find roles that suit them, offer training and development programs to enhance the fit between soldiers and their jobs, monitor job satisfaction and commitment levels, and take action to address issues when the fit is poor. Recognizing the importance of person-job-fit in predicting professional commitment can lead to a more satisfied, engaged, and effective military workforce. As a result, military organisations should consider evaluating and addressing soldiers' views on employability to retain dedicated personnel.

Ultimately, the positive correlation between a soldier's workability and professional commitment significantly affects the military's effectiveness and success. By ensuring that soldiers are adequately prepared for their duties, the military can strengthen its overall performance and achieve its objectives. Soldiers committed to their profession are more likely to dedicate themselves to mission success, and a strong belief in their employability can be a driving force behind their commitment to performing their duties effectively.

This belief can also contribute to soldiers' mental health and resilience, as they feel more secure in their careers and are better equipped to cope with the stresses and challenges of military service. Recognising and nurturing soldiers' belief in their employability can be valuable to military leadership and personnel management. This concept has wide-ranging implications for the individual and the military organisation, leading to increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover, improved unit dynamics, and a more adaptable and effective military force. Ultimately, this supports the organisation's mission and objectives.

Individual employability can serve as both an asset and a challenge in the context of Nigerian soldiers' person-job-fit and professional commitment. Military leadership should consider strategies to develop soldiers' skills and increase their confidence in their employability while maintaining their dedication to military service. Balancing these factors is crucial for maintaining a motivated and effective military force.

In summary, the perceived individual employability of Nigerian soldiers can significantly impact their workability and professional commitment. Striking a balance and supporting soldiers to develop their skills and plan for their future can contribute to a dedicated and influential military force.

Ethics Statement

Before sharing any photos or data that could identify individuals in this article, we obtained informed written consent from the employee(s) and legal guardian/next of kin of any minors involved. All study participants provided their informed consent as well. Additionally, we received ethical approval from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka's research ethics review committee (UNN/EC/010-SC/4002-JA.05).

Data Availability Statement

Upon request, the authors have committed to providing the raw data that supports their findings.

Author Contributions

Each author has made a significant and valuable contribution to this manuscript.

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