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Job satisfaction and organizational commitment: Analysis by rank in the Armed Forces

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Abstract

Purpose – This study examines the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among military personnel. It focuses on how this relationship differs among commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and other ranks within the military hierarchy.

Theoretical framework – The study draws on the human resource management literature on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the military context.

Design/methodology/approach – This quantitative, cross-sectional study is based on the most recent wave of data from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). The sample includes military personnel segmented by rank. Statistical analyses explore the strength and variation of the satisfaction–commitment link.

Findings – A positive relationship was found between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among military personnel. However, the strength of this relationship varies depending on the hierarchical level, suggesting that rank affects how satisfaction translates into commitment.

Practical & social implications of research – The findings provide valuable guidance for policymakers and individuals involved in talent management decisions within the armed forces. Practical recommendations emphasize the importance of implementing rank-sensitive human resource strategies to strengthen the commitment of military personnel and, ultimately, improve individual performance and organizational cohesion.

Originality/value – This study contributes to the limited literature on human resource management in the military by examining the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment while explicitly considering hierarchical differences among military personnel. This provides a more nuanced understanding of employee attitudes in the armed forces.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, armed forces, ISSP, ranks.

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1 Introduction

Today, there is a broad consensus that people are a fundamental and key source of competitive advantage for organizations in all sectors. Regardless of their size, the effectiveness and success of these organizations depend largely on the commitment and quality of their human capital. Committed employees are an essential strategic resource and driver of long-term sustainability. According to Resource-Based Theory (Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993), having the right human resources and being able to integrate them effectively are crucial for generating sustainable competitive advantages.

Employee satisfaction and commitment are fundamental to retaining employees and sustaining a competitive advantage over time. Job satisfaction is a necessary precursor to commitment (Saha, 2016). Satisfied employees are more likely to develop long-term relationships with their organization. They also influence their colleagues' performance and motivation, facilitating the achievement of organizational objectives (Meyer et al., 2004; Stinglhamber et al., 2015).

Over the past few decades, many countries' armed forces have transitioned from compulsory military service models to professionalized armed forces (Brotto, 1986; Fors Brandebo et al., 2019; Gargallo-Castel & Marzo-Navarro, 2024; Holmberg, 2015). This shift poses significant personnel management challenges, requiring more sophisticated approaches to attract and retain talent. The concern for retention is shared by armies in different countries, as recent studies show (Beršnak et al., 2024; Gillberg et al., 2025).

The military context has unique characteristics that must be studied and considered in any analysis (Redmond et al., 2015; Holmberg & Alvinius, 2019). These demands include irregular work hours, unpredictable tasks, frequent relocations, and long absences from home, which can create tension between work and family commitments. In contexts of war and conflict, individuals may even risk their lives for their country (Alvinius et al., 2017; Makhathini & Van Dyk, 2018). As Alpass et al. (1997) point out, military service takes place in an environment that influences individuals' lifestyles beyond the workplace. Traditionally, research on job satisfaction levels shows that they are lower among military personnel than among civilian personnel (Blair & Phillips, 1983; Fredland & Little, 1983). At the same time, a high level of commitment among soldiers is essential to prevent turnover of specialized personnel, ensuring the proper functioning of the military and the security of nations (Alves Batista, 2025; Beršnak et al., 2024; Gillberg et al., 2025; Makhathini & Van Dyk, 2018).

Gargallo-Castel and Marzo-Navarro (2024) demonstrate that there are differences in job satisfaction levels among the various ranks of the Armed Forces. However, no analysis has yet examined how these differences extend to the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Additionally, there is a lack of research delving into a detailed analysis of this relationship that takes into account possible differences stemming from military rank. The presence of distinct groups can lead to problems in human resource management if their specific characteristics are not considered (Lasierra, 2019). As Robie et al. (1998) point out, job levels or categories can act as potential confounders in studies of work attitudes. Therefore, a detailed analysis of the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment is particularly relevant.

The main objective of this study is to provide empirical evidence to analyze the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the armed forces, examining differences among groups.

Throughout this study, we followed the guidelines of the University of Zaragoza's Code of Good Research Practice (Universidad de Zaragoza, 2018).

2 Background and approach

Because they are more difficult to imitate, intangible resources constitute a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Human capital is one such asset, and employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment strengthen it. Thus, talent retention is linked to the intangible effect of workforce commitment. Without job satisfaction, organizational commitment is unlikely to exist. According to Pérez-Pérez et al. (2017), resources and capabilities theory can help explain the relationship between these variables. In a military context, studies such as those by Natarajan and Nagar (2011) and Lopes et al. (2015) employ the aforementioned theory to analyze job satisfaction.

Locke (1976, p. 1300) defines job satisfaction as "[…] a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences", Newstrom (2011, p. 218) defines it as "[…] a set of favorable or unfavorable feelings and emotions with which employees view their work". Beyond previous studies that have focused

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on defining and clarifying the nature of the construct and developing measurement instruments ranging from multi-item scales validated in specific military contexts (Zainollah & Sembiring, 2025) to single items with high international comparability (Mueller et al., 2009), current interest is focused on unraveling the potential effects of satisfaction, including achieving greater organizational commitment among employees.

Organizational commitment is defined as the degree to which an individual identifies with and is involved in an organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday, 1998; Pepple & Ambilichu, 2024).

Unlike job satisfaction, which relates specifically to aspects of work, commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to the organization as a whole (Mowday et al., 1979; Kooij et al., 2010). Commitment encompasses emotional attachment based on identification with and desire to remain a member of the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Porter et al. (1974, p. 604) and Mowday et al. (1979, p. 226) summarize this concept as characterized by three factors: "[…] a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership". Employees contribute their talents to further the organization's interests.

Furthermore, commitment is a multidimensional construct that can be analyzed in terms of three components: affective, continuance, and normative (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Affective commitment is defined as an emotional bond and involvement with one's employer based on positive work experiences (Rhoades et al., 2001). Continuance commitment reflects the intention to remain with the organization based on the perceived costs – both economic and social – of leaving it (Becker, 1960; Farrell & Rusbult, 1981). Normative commitment reflects the employee's perceived obligation to continue belonging to the organization and is linked to a relationship of reciprocity.

Employee engagement is considered a key factor in influencing behavior, improving performance, and consequently, organizational results (Baird et al., 2019; Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004; Sungu et al., 2020; Van Gelderen & Bik, 2016). Numerous studies have highlighted the benefits for organizations, as engagement has been associated with greater intention to stay, lower absenteeism, lower turnover, and other positive outcomes (Dipietro et al., 2019; Griffeth et al., 2000; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1996; Somers, 1995).

Various theories exist regarding the relationship between satisfaction and commitment. These theories range from a bidirectional relationship to no relationship at all between the two variables (Vandenberg & Lance, 1992; Xu et al., 2023). For instance, Mottaz (1987) identifies a bidirectional relationship, yet concludes that job satisfaction exerts a stronger influence on commitment. Most studies have presented job satisfaction as an important antecedent or prior mediator of organizational commitment (Currivan, 1999; Testa, 2001; Frenkel et al., 2013; Tarigan & Ariani, 2015; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Saha, 2016; Fu & Deshpande, 2014; Pepple & Ambilichu, 2024). Social exchange theory, proposed by Blau (1964), also helps explain the direction of this relationship. According to this theory, an employee who is more satisfied with their job will want to express gratitude toward the organization that employs them, and commitment is a behavior that allows the employee to demonstrate this gratitude. For these reasons, the current literature shows greater consensus on the role of job satisfaction as an antecedent of employee commitment.

Further examination of this relationship reveals that differences in attitudes toward work are based on job level or category, personal characteristics, and organizational traits (Alonso, 2008; Robie et al., 1998). Kumar and Giri (2009) found significant differences in job satisfaction and organizational commitment among junior, mid-level, and senior employees in various public and private organizations. Natarajan and Nagar (2011) distinguished three occupational categories (executives, technicians, and administrative staff) and identified differences in work attitudes between technical staff and managerial and administrative personnel. The former demonstrated greater affective and normative commitment, as well as higher intrinsic job satisfaction. Similarly, Lu et al. (2016) found a higher level of commitment among supervisory staff than among front-line staff. Thus, a relationship is observed between hierarchical position and the level of organizational commitment due to a greater degree of identification with and involvement in the organization (Bai et al., 2006; Silva, 2006).

The military profession has several distinctive aspects, including separation from family, frequent rotations, dangerous and difficult conditions, low pay, and long work hours (Fredland & Little, 1983; Makhathini & Van Dyk, 2018). These characteristics can negatively affect this group's attitude toward work.

In this context, the organization's objectives are closely linked to having highly motivated, satisfied, and committed members (Topa & Moriano, 2012). Therefore, retaining talent in the armed forces is a priority for modern militaries (Beršnak et al., 2024; Gillberg et al., 2025). However, despite having been extensively studied in various disciplines, in both the public and private sectors, the concepts of employee satisfaction and commitment have been little researched in the armed forces sector (Boselie et al., 2021; Boselie & Van der Heijden, 2024; Breaugh et al., 2018; Pepple & Ambilichu, 2024).

Although previous studies have primarily focused on analyzing job satisfaction among military personnel, fewer have examined its relationship with organizational commitment (Gargallo-Castel & Marzo-Navarro, 2024; Makhathini & Van Dyk, 2018).

Regarding military personnel retention specifically, Beršnak et al. (2024) propose a theoretical model in which job satisfaction is a key determinant of continued service in the armed forces. Regarding commitment, an initial qualitative analysis by Alvinius et al. (2017) suggests that in the armed forces, commitment can be understood as a process of strong identification. Organizational commitment among soldiers is crucial for national security because it affects combat readiness and support for a command's objectives during deployments (Shinga & Van Dyk, 2015). Gade et al. (2003) demonstrate that affective and continuance commitments positively impact the performance of military personnel, suggesting a causal relationship. Gillberg et al. (2025), from a longitudinal perspective, found that affective commitment acts as the primary mechanism for retaining military personnel in a sample of noncommissioned officers in the Swedish Armed Forces. It is capable of counteracting unfavorable extrinsic factors, such as low salaries or limited career opportunities, and of serving as a protective factor against the intention to leave.

However, the reviewed studies focus solely on the relationship between job satisfaction and specific aspects related to commitment without providing a comprehensive view of the construct. In general, and in the military context specifically, a relationship has been observed between higher levels of job satisfaction and a lower probability of leaving, as well as a higher probability of staying or intending to stay (Kocher & Thomas, 1994; Lakhani, 1991; Sánchez et al., 2004).

In this context, Sánchez et al. (2004) suggest that soldiers who are more satisfied with their jobs are more committed to the military organization. However, the military is known for its hierarchical structure (Makhathini & Van Dyk, 2018), so the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment may differ depending on an individual's rank. Exposure to military culture and its organizational structure, including the system of ranks and grades (Redmond et al., 2015), may explain changes in the determinants of commitment.

Some studies have focused on analyzing lower-level employees (Siegel, 2013; Topa & Moriano, 2012; Topa et al., 2009; Österberg & Rydstedt, 2018; Makhathini & Van Dyk, 2018; Fors Brandebo et al., 2019). Others have focused on employees at higher levels of the hierarchy (Lopes et al., 2015; Nystedt et al., 1999; Rashid & Sultan, 2013; Alvinius et al., 2017). However, no studies were found that incorporate a detailed analysis of the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the military according to rank.

In light of the above, particularly within the Spanish Armed Forces, leadership has traditionally been structured around principles of hierarchical command. However, some lines of research argue that this approach neglects strength-based leadership training. The results of research conducted by Díez et al. (2025) show that certain elements of strength-based leadership are present in various command practices. This type of leadership is relevant because it impacts the team's commitment to organizational objectives (Ding & Yu, 2022a). Strength-based leadership fosters trust and a positive work environment. This strengthens relationships among colleagues and optimizes group performance (Ding & Yu, 2022b). Finally, interest in talent management policies, which include the study of organizational commitment, is particularly timely, given that military enlistment is largely voluntary. Therefore, the armed forces must find ways to attract and retain personnel, as they may leave the organization if they find their work unsatisfying or meaningless (Fors Brandebo et al., 2019). For all the reasons outlined above, developing and maintaining job satisfaction, as well as achieving high levels of commitment among all members, poses a significant challenge in the military context.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and commitment within the military context. In this regard, authors such as Calderón et al. (2025) emphasize that hierarchy influences leadership behaviors and members' self-perception within the military institution. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze these variables by rank. The following questions will be addressed: What are the relationships between job satisfaction and organizational commitment? Do these relationships differ depending on the employee's rank? The following hypotheses will be tested:

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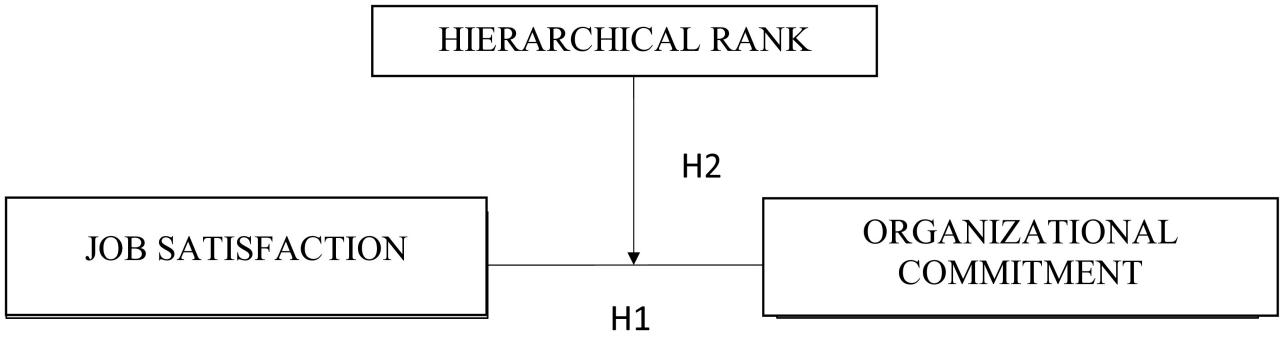


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Hierarchical Rank as a Moderator in the Satisfaction-Commitment Relationship
Source: Authors' own work

H1: "Job satisfaction will have a positive effect on organizational commitment";

H2: "The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment will vary by rank among military personnel" (Figure 1).

3 Method

This study adopts a postpositivist epistemological perspective (Sherratt & Leicht, 2020). This perspective recognizes real constructs, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, that can be measured using standardized instruments. However, it also acknowledges the limitations of all social measurement. From an ontological standpoint, a rationalist position is adopted since these phenomena have a real basis but our understanding of them is necessarily mediated by the theoretical frameworks and measurement instruments employed. This position justifies using secondary data from an international survey conducted by the prestigious International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), which ensures consistency in data collection procedures and allows for the comparability of results. The study design is quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional.

To test the proposed hypotheses, the relationship between job satisfaction and the level of organizational commitment among military personnel is analyzed, as well as possible differences in the degree of impact according to hierarchical levels.

The data come from the "Work Orientations" database of the International Social Survey Programme (2015), which provides standardized information on "attitudes toward work" and labor and socioeconomic aspects across countries. This information was collected in 2015 through a survey of individuals aged 18 to 93.

In line with the study objectives, data from a total of 120 workers were selected. This information corresponds to individuals engaged in paid work at the time of the survey whose occupations were related to the military according to the ISCO-08 (International Standard Classification of Occupations) classification system. More specifically, these individuals were coded as 110 (armed forces officers), 210 (armed forces noncommissioned officers), or 310 (other members of the armed forces). The sample comes from various countries that participated in the 2015 wave of the ISSP and had personnel identified as military under these codes, giving the sample an international character. The sample size (n = 120) reflects the total number of identifiable military personnel in this secondary data source. Consequently, the composition of the sample reflects the scope and coverage characteristics of the 2015 ISSP survey.

As might be expected in this sector, the sample is predominantly male (85.8%). The predominant age group is 18 to 35 years old (53.1%), compared to 11.3% who are over 50 years old. Most respondents are married or in a relationship (57.3%). In terms of rank, 32.5% of the sample are officers, 26.7% are noncommissioned officers, and 40.8% hold lower-ranking positions.

The items used to analyze employees' job satisfaction are derived from the ISSP question, "How satisfied are you with your job?" The question is rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating complete dissatisfaction and 7 indicating complete satisfaction. While single-item measures have limitations compared to multi-item scales used in recent military studies (Zainollah & Sembiring, 2025), they allow for cross-country comparability and have been widely used in literature based on large, standardized international surveys with secondary data (Mueller et al., 2009). The items used to determine

employees' organizational commitment were drawn from three ISSP items with 5-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 27.0.

4 Results and discussion

A regression analysis was conducted to analyze whether respondents' satisfaction levels translate into commitment to their employer. In this analysis, commitment was the dependent variable and job satisfaction was the independent variable.

Commitment has been defined as a multidimensional concept. As discussed above (Gade et al., 2003; Meyer & Allen, 1997), considering various commitment-related variables together provides a better understanding of an employee's relationship with their organization. The first step is to determine the dimensional structure underlying the set of three items representing commitment, which could reflect affective and continuance commitment (Gade et al., 2003). The 2015 ISSP does not include specific items on normative commitment; therefore, this dimension cannot be analyzed in the present study. To determine the underlying dimensional structure, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation was conducted. The results, presented in Table 1, show a single component explaining 60.252% of the variance whose dimension corresponds to organizational commitment.

Table 1
Results of the principal component analysis: organizational commitment

	PC1
I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help the firm or organization I work for succeed.	0.824
I am proud to be working for my firm or organization.	0.777
I would turn down another job that offered quite a bit more pay in order to stay with this organization.	0.725
Eigenvalue	1.808
% Factor variance	60.252

Next, a regression analysis is performed on the two variables under study. As shown in Table 2, the results indicate that satisfaction levels do indeed influence employee commitment to their organization, with an explanatory power of 38.8%. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is confirmed, as are the results of previous research in other contexts (Martínez-Sánchez et al., 2018; Pérez-Pérez et al., 2017). The present results highlight the positive relationship between the satisfaction of military personnel and their commitment to the organization.

As in the case of the total sample, these results raise the question of whether there are differences in the effect of job satisfaction on commitment in each of the three subsamples. To address this question, regressions were performed for each of the three subsamples, using overall satisfaction as the independent variable and organizational commitment as the dependent variable.

First, the underlying dimensional structure of the set of commitment variables is determined for each subsample. Three principal component analyses with varimax rotation were conducted to do this. As shown in Table 3, only a single component that groups the three items related to commitment was identified in all three cases analyzed.

Next, regressions are performed between the two variables under investigation. As would be expected based on a review of the existing literature, the results in Table 4 show that the level of satisfaction achieved determines military personnel's commitment to their employing organization.

The positive effect of satisfaction on commitment is consistent across the three subsamples analyzed. However, the explanatory power and impact vary significantly across groups. These results are consistent with those of Gargallo-Castel and Marzo-Navarro (2024), who demonstrated significant differences in job satisfaction levels among various ranks in the armed forces. The present study builds on this line of research by showing that differences between ranks are observed not only in satisfaction levels, but also in the relationship between satisfaction and commitment.

Table 2
Regression results: dependent variable "commitment"

	Standardized beta coefficient	t-value	Significance
Constant		-8.186	0.000
Job satisfaction	0.628	8.456	0.000
R^2 = 0.394; adjusted R^2 = 0.388			

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Table 3
Results of the principal component analysis: organizational commitment in three subsamples

	Officers	Non-commissioned officers	Enlisted personnel
	Commitment	Commitment	Commitment
I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help the firm or organization I work for succeed.	0.819	0.803	0.843
I am proud to be working for my firm or organization.	0.742	0.819	0.816
I would turn down another job that offered quite a bit more pay in order to stay with this organization.	0.775	0.543	0.787
Eigenvalue	1,822	1,610	1,996
% Factor variance	60,723	53,673	66,531

Table 4
Regression results: dependent variable "commitment" in three subsamples

	Officers			Non-commissioned officers			Enlisted personnel		
	Standardized beta coefficient	t-value	Significance	Standardized beta coefficient	t-value	Significance	Standardized beta coefficient	t-value	Significance
Constant		-2.357	0.024		-5.231	0.000		-7.050	0.000
Job satisfaction	0.376**	2.397	0.022	0.708***	5.404	0.000	0.751***	7.373	0.000
	R^2 = 0.141; adjusted R^2 = 0.11			R^2 = 0.502; adjusted R^2 = 0.485			R^2 = 0.564; adjusted R^2 = 0.554		

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1.

While satisfaction explains about half of the variance in commitment among noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel (adjusted R^2 = 0.485 and 0.554, respectively), its explanatory power drops to 11% among officers (adjusted R^2 = 0.110). This lower explanatory power regarding commitment in officers may be due to their higher degree of vocational identification with their military careers, which makes their commitment more normative and identity-based and less dependent on immediate job satisfaction (Allen, 2003; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Other factors, such as a sense of mission, institutional values (Alvinius et al., 2017), opportunities for development and promotion, and long-term career incentives (DiRenzo et al., 2022), may underlie these results. In contrast, job satisfaction explains 48.5% and 55% of the commitment felt by noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel, respectively. For enlisted personnel, the positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment contrasts with Makhathini and Van Dyk's (2018) findings. They found little evidence of the effect of job satisfaction on commitment among South African National Defense Force (SANDF) soldiers. This discrepancy could be explained by differences in cultural context, military professionalization models, or sample profiles. In this case, the sample was limited to enlisted personnel in the South African context.

The results support Hypothesis 2, which predicts differences in the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among the various hierarchical levels examined. These differences suggest that the determinants of organizational commitment are not uniform across ranks, reinforcing the need for human resources policies tailored to each rank.

These findings are consistent with recent contributions offering a "mixed picture" of commitment in a military context. For example, Díez et al. (2025) note the presence of strengths-based leadership in the command practices of the Spanish Armed Forces, albeit still in its early stages. Ramos-Villagrasa et al. (2025), on the other hand, warn that certain personality traits and a propensity for moral disengagement can erode work attitudes related to commitment.

5 Conclusions

Beyond humanistic concerns for health and psychosocial well-being, studying job satisfaction is important from a utilitarian perspective because of its influence on commitment. This is particularly significant in the current military context, where the transition to voluntary enlistment, the non-compulsory nature of military service, and high turnover rates necessitate efforts to retain personnel and ensure their continued commitment to the organization.

This study aimed to provide new empirical evidence in a military context to advance our understanding of the relationship between job satisfaction and commitment, as well as potential differences based on hierarchical rank.

Using a sample of military personnel, the obtained results provide deeper insight into the relationship between commitment and job satisfaction. These results enrich previous research on the subject and expand the evidence base in the military context, where the gradual transition toward professionalization creates new needs for human resources policies that improve commitment. Due to the lack of relevant, detailed research, this study helps to fill an existing gap in the literature.

Regarding military personnel commitment, the results reinforce research from other fields by confirming the impact of job satisfaction on commitment. The findings demonstrate that satisfaction is essential in determining the level of organizational commitment among military personnel.

Similarly, analyzing data by hierarchical level improves our understanding of the specific characteristics of the relationship between satisfaction and commitment at each rank. The results of this study show that the extent to which satisfaction influences commitment varies by job category and employee rank. These differences exist when adjusting the models while working with subsamples, which confirms the appropriateness of conducting a differentiated analysis across the various ranks studied.

For officers, satisfaction explains less of the variance than in the other ranks analyzed. This indicates that other factors should be addressed to improve their organizational commitment. However, organizational commitment among lower ranks, specifically noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel, is more strongly influenced by satisfaction. The results suggest that human resources policies should consider that the impact of satisfaction on commitment may differ among military personnel at different hierarchical levels. Therefore, personnel management policy must account for these particularities, and treating all categories uniformly would be inappropriate. Consequently, differentiated policies must be developed for each group.

In any case, the results should be interpreted with caution because the study has limitations. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw inferences about the causality of the relationships studied. Furthermore, the measures used are based on respondents' answers, which may introduce response bias. However, using a widely validated instrument such as the ISSP and ensuring the anonymity of responses helps mitigate potential issues with methodological variance and responses influenced by social desirability bias.

The ISSP database does not include items related to normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) or variables regarding personal or job characteristics, such as personality traits (including "light" and "dark" traits) and the propensity for moral disengagement. The latter has recently been demonstrated to predict work attitudes related to commitment, such as engagement (Ramos-Villagrasa et al., 2025). Also missing are variables related to aptitude, seniority, job difficulty and content, leadership, organizational climate, and work-family balance. The inclusion of these variables would have allowed for a more comprehensive analysis. As this is an international survey with a macro-level scope and multisectoral nature, the set of standardized questions does not include military-specific information, such as unit type (operational versus support) or command climate. This prevents the inclusion of these control variables in the estimated econometric model. Finally, although the sample size represents all identifiable military personnel in the 2015 ISSP wave, the size of the subgroups reduces the statistical power of the analyses.

To address the aforementioned limitations, several avenues for future research are proposed. First, it would be interesting to compare the results of this study with those of future studies using larger samples. Additionally, longitudinal studies would allow for a deeper exploration of the causal relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Furthermore, while this study focuses on hierarchical rank as a moderating variable, other sociodemographic characteristics of human capital may also influence these differences, such as tenure or gender (Gnatchenko & Theuerkauf, 2025; Diacone et al., 2026). The Military Observatory for Equality (2024), for example, notes a significantly higher presence of women in enlisted ranks than in command ranks. This suggests that future research should incorporate an intersectional analysis of rank and gender. This analysis would determine whether commitment sensitivity to satisfaction varies depending on the demographic profile of military personnel. Gargallo-Castel and Marzo-Navarro (2024) suggest that the formation of work attitudes in the professional military must consider differences in rank to explain why factors influencing job satisfaction carry varying weights depending on rank and potentially gender.

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It would also be interesting to compare operational and support units and incorporate potential moderating variables, such as gender, length of service, transformational leadership, organizational climate, and work-life balance, into analyses using multivariate analysis. Due to the limitations of the available ISSP items, it is necessary to design military-specific questionnaires that include the three dimensions of commitment identified by Meyer and Allen (1991), as well as other factors that would increase the explanatory power of the analysis and reduce residual variance.

The results of this study offer valuable practical insights into the most appropriate professional human resources management initiatives for the armed forces, providing guidance for policymakers and military leaders responsible for personnel management. As Allen (2003) notes, studying military organizations has enormous potential to lead scientific research on organizational commitment. At the same time, it offers military leaders specific insights to help them address people management challenges.

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