The Future-self Effect: How Veteran Welfare Shapes Organizational Commitment among Serving Military Personnel

Mark Peter Jatau, Daniel Eseme Gberevbie and Ugochukwu David Abasilim
Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership and Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

mark.peterpgs@stu.cu.edu.ng
daniel.gberevbie@covenantuniversity.edu.ng
ugochukwu.abasilim@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

Abstract: This paper introduces and develops the future-self effect as a conceptual mechanism through which serving military personnel interpret the welfare experiences of retired veterans. It serves as an anticipatory signal about their own organizational futures. This study employs qualitative data gathered from serving personnel across the Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force. The paper employs thematic analysis informed by constructivist grounded theory procedures to examine how observations of veteran welfare inform organizational commitment, trust in leadership, morale and career intentions. The study is situated within an interpretivist epistemological stance and adopts a qualitative case study design. The researcher, a serving military officer, occupies an insider position and the paper addresses the attendant methodological implications through reflexive practice and structured analytical procedures. The findings reveal five interconnected themes (1) The awareness serving personnel have of veteran welfare conditions. (2) The construction of veterans as future-selves through which serving members project and evaluate their own anticipated post-service lives. (3) The interpretive process by which welfare signals generate or erode institutional trust. (4) The consequent effects on motivation, morale and commitment. (5) The emergence of adaptive career strategies as anticipatory responses to perceived neglect. Theoretically, the paper integrates the possible selves theory, the social learning theory, the social identity theory and the organizational commitment theory to explain these processes. The paper argues that veteran welfare is an ongoing organizational signal with real-time implications for serving personnel's psychological contracts, institutional attachment and retention. The future-self effect extends beyond the military context and holds implications for police forces, academia, healthcare and other hierarchical professions characterized by long tenure, deferred rewards and strong occupational identity.

Keywords: Future-self effect, Organizational commitment, Psychological contract, Veteran welfare, Institutional trust, Nigerian Armed Forces

1. Introduction

Organizations routinely communicate their values to members through formal policy statements and leadership pronouncements. Crucially, they do so through the lived experiences of those who have passed through their ranks. In hierarchical institutions such as the military, police services, healthcare systems or even academic institutions, the observable condition of retired or former members constitutes a form of institutional autobiography. This becomes an unmediated account of what membership eventually yields. How serving members interpret and internalize that autobiography has remained insufficiently examined in the organizational behavior and human resource management literature.

The existing literature on veteran welfare attends mostly to the post-service outcomes of veterans such as employment transitions, mental health, housing and social reintegration (Dandeker et al, 2006; Hoge et al, 2004). A parallel body of work on organizational commitment in the military examines predictors and consequences of attachment among serving personnel (Griffith 2008; Soeters et al, 2006). These two streams, however, rarely speak to each other. This omission is particularly consequential in security institutions where long-term sacrifice is exchanged for deferred institutional rewards. Yet, the question of whether and how veterans' observable welfare conditions inform the organizational attitudes of currently serving personnel has not been considered.

The objectives of this paper are to develop and theorize the future-self effect as an emerging conceptual framework. Then secondly, to ground that framework in empirical qualitative data gathered from Nigerian serving military personnel. The paper contributes to organizational behavior scholarship by introducing the future-self effect as a conceptual mechanism that links post-employment welfare signals to present-tense organizational attitudes. It links several theories (which we shall discuss shortly) to demonstrate that contract evaluation occurs in response to direct organizational treatment, as well as, and perhaps even more so, through the observed treatment of former members.

2. Literature Review

Organizational Commitment and Military Service

Meyer and Allen (1991) theorize organizational commitment as the degree of psychological attachment an individual maintains toward an employing organization. Their three-component model distinguishes affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (cost-based calculation) and normative commitment (sense of obligation). Griffith (2008) extends this framework to military contexts. His study noted that commitment in armed forces settings is complicated by the unique nature of the employment relationship. This is due to the expectation of risk in laying one's life, which by the way, is the totalizing character of military life. Notwithstanding Griffith's (2008) work, like much of the military commitment literature, it tends to focus on contemporary organizational conditions, such as mission meaningfulness and working conditions as drivers of commitment. The anticipatory dimension, in which expected future organizational treatment influences present commitment, receives scant attention.

Psychological Contract and Perceived Organizational Support

The psychological contract, or the set of implicit, subjective expectations that employees hold about the terms of their exchange with the organization, offers an important way to understand organizational commitment (Rousseau 1989, 1995). When the organization is perceived to have honored its side of the contract, commitment and performance are reinforced. However, when the contract is violated or when promises are seen to have been broken, it erodes trust and disengagement follows (Morrison and Robinson, 1997). Perceived organizational support (POS), as popularized by Eisenberger et al (1986), is a related construct that refers to the degree to which employees believe the organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing. Critically, both schools of thought tend to focus on the individual's direct experience of organizational treatment (see Abasilim et al, 2019). Less attention has been paid to the possibility that contract evaluations may be made from what the organization does to comparable others, particularly former members whose post-service experiences constitute a preview of what membership ultimately delivers.

Organizational Signaling and Meaning-Making

Organizations communicate through multiple channels and most times, not all of them are intentional. Organizational signaling was originally developed in economic contexts from Spence's (1973) doctoral thesis. It has been applied in HR and management research to understand how organizations convey information about their values, priorities and trustworthiness and how these influence recruitment (Abasilim et al, 2019; Abasilim 2024; Cable and Turban, 2003). The treatment of departing or retired members is, in this sense, a crucial signal because it is reflective of institutional behavior after the leverage of active membership has expired. Serving members who observe that veterans are poorly supported will rationally infer that the organization's commitments are instrumental and time-limited.

Veteran Welfare and Post-Employment Obligations

The literature on veteran welfare has grown substantially since the early 2000s. This is driven in part by the post-9/11 return of large numbers of service members from protracted conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (Hoge et al, 2004; Dandeker et al, 2006). This body of work documents the challenges veterans face in employment transitions, mental health management, physical rehabilitation, housing and social reintegration. Studies situated in the Nigerian context are comparatively scarce, though emerging work has begun to document the inadequacy of resettlement provisions and the economic vulnerability of retired Nigerian military personnel (Chidozie et al, 2025; Chukwu 2021; Gberevbie 2010; Jatau et al, 2026; Ojo 2021, 2026). What remains absent from this literature, however, is an analysis of the feedback effects of veteran welfare on currently serving personnel's organizational attitudes.

Military Organizational Culture and Identity

Military organizations are characterized by strong occupational cultures that inform identity, values and social world (Hockey 1986; Janowitz 1960). Service members typically internalize a military identity that persists beyond formal service. This is a process that Goffman (1961) describes as the "total institution" character of military life (cited in Soeters et al, 2006, p. 250). This cultural intensity means that the observable fate of veterans carries particular symbolic weight, particularly for those still in active service. Across these bodies of literature, a yawning gap is observable. Specifically, no existing framework accounts for the process by which serving personnel observe veteran welfare, construct veterans as future-selves and use those observations to evaluate the implicit long-term commitments of the institution. This paper develops the future-self effect to fill that gap.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Future-self effect draws on several theoretical traditions that, as a whole, account for the observational, social, identity and attitudinal dimensions of the process.

Possible Selves Theory

The theory of possible selves posits that individuals maintain cognitive representations of their current selves, as well as of selves they expect, hope for or even fear becoming (Markus and Nurius, 1986). These possible selves, therefore, serve as incentives and guides for present behavior. It enables individuals to evaluate current situations in light of anticipated futures. In the military context, veterans constitute credible possible selves that are observable instantiations of a future toward which serving members are moving. The quality of veteran welfare informs the valence of that possible self. Therefore, a veteran living comfortably and with dignity constitutes a hoped-for possible self. However, a veteran struggling with poverty, housing insecurity or neglected health conditions constitutes a feared one.

Social Learning Theory

Individuals learn from observing others, particularly those perceived as similar to themselves (Bandura and Walters, 1977; Bandura 1986). The process of adjusting one's behavior and expectations based on observed consequences experienced by others is a central thrust of this framework. Serving personnel occupy an observational position vis-à-vis veterans. They watch what happens when full military service is completed and draw inferences about what will happen to them. Where veteran welfare realities are negative, vicarious punishment is experienced. Moreover, where the outcomes are positive, vicarious reinforcement operates. This observational learning process influences serving members' dispositions including their commitment and motivational investment.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) proposes that individuals derive part of their self-concept from membership in social groups and that perceived group status affects self-esteem and group-related behavior. Military service constitutes a crucial social identity that is maintained in part by the sense that the institution reciprocates the sacrifices that membership entails. When serving personnel observe that veterans are treated poorly, the positive distinctiveness of military identity is undermined.

Organizational Commitment Theory

Organizational commitment is the attitudinal outcome dimension within which this study's future-self effect operates (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The future-self effect engages continuance commitment, i.e., the calculative assessment of whether organizational membership is worth sustaining. As well as the affective commitment/the emotional bond to the institution. Negative veteran welfare signals increase the perceived costs of long-term institutional attachment (which reduces affective commitment). On the other hand, heightened awareness of what full service yields (increases continuance commitment that is usually driven by fear rather than loyalty). Normative commitment, the sense of obligation to remain, may be partially insulated from veteran welfare signals by contractual obligations, but the data suggest (as we shall soon discuss) that it, too, is affected when perceived institutional betrayal is severe.

Analytical Trajectory of The Future-Self Effect Thesis

The four theories operate in sequence within the future-self effect thesis. Social learning theory accounts for how serving personnel acquire knowledge of veteran welfare through observation and indirect experience. The possible selves theory explains the cognitive mechanism through which veterans are constructed as personally relevant future selves. Social identity theory illuminates the group-level dimension of this process. It explains why the institution's treatment of veterans is experienced as a statement about the institution's valuation of the entire military identity group. Organizational commitment theory provides the attitudinal dynamics in which these perceptions register as changes in commitment, trust, motivation, morale and career intentions.

4. Study's Methodology

Epistemological Positioning and Research Design

This study adopts an interpretivist epistemology that is rooted in the conviction that social phenomena are produced through the meanings that actors attach to their experiences and interactions (Creswell 2013). The

study adopts a qualitative case study design (Yin 2014). This design is appropriate here because the phenomenon of interest is located within a specific institutional and cultural context that the case study preserves.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 15 serving military personnel across different career stages and service branches, such as the Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force. Interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes each. Some questions asked include: How would you describe the welfare conditions you are experiencing and those of veterans? How do welfare conditions or their absence affect the morale of your unit or your colleagues? Thematic analysis, informed by constructivist grounded theory procedures such as open coding, focused coding, constant comparison and memo-writing (Charmaz 2006) was applied to the data. Saturation was achieved at interviewee 13.

It is important to clarify that this study is not a formal grounded theory study aimed at generating a substantive theory that meets all the canons of that methodology. Grounded theory's analytic procedures are employed in this study to ensure that themes are grounded in the data, that analysis moves from description toward conceptual abstraction and that theoretical development is disciplined by rigorous iterative engagement with the empirical material (Bryant and Charmaz, 2010).

Insider Positionality and Reflexivity

The lead and second coauthor are serving and retired military officers, respectively. This positionality carries both methodological advantages and risks that require reflexive attention (Njeri 2021, p. 392). On the upside, insider status facilitated access to participants who might otherwise have been guarded in the presence of an external researcher. Moreover, it enabled the researchers to understand the operational vocabulary and cultural nuances of military life without extensive prior familiarity. Importantly, it enabled a depth of contextual sensitivity in the interpretation of data that would have been difficult to achieve from outside the institution (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Mercer 2007).

These notwithstanding, insider research carries genuine risks of confirmation bias, over-identification with participants and the analytical foreclosure that comes from assuming shared meaning. The researchers maintained a reflexive journal throughout the study in order to manage this risk. We equally employed member-checking practices and subjected emerging themes to interrogation against the full data corpus. The theoretical framework was introduced after initial coding was completed. This ensured that conceptual development remained grounded in the data and not in prior theoretical commitments.

5. Findings and Analysis

Thematic analysis of the interview data yielded five themes. These themes are presented as analytically distinct and mutually reinforcing dimensions of a single underlying process of the future-self effect.

General Awareness of Veteran Welfare Conditions

Participants demonstrated a detailed and often visceral awareness of the welfare conditions experienced by retired veterans. This awareness was derived from direct observation in the barracks environment, personal and family connections to veterans and institutional interactions at resettlement facilities such as the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Center (NAFRC). An interviewee said,

> *We see those who have retired and attend training at the NAFRC, Oshodi. First of all, after 35 years of service, they are given 6 months of skill acquisition training. Meanwhile, at retirement, the average person is about 53 years old. At that age, your risk appetite is likely small- (SP01).*

SP01's account is instructive because the awareness is already evaluative and comparative. The juxtaposition of 35 years of service against 6 months of resettlement training encodes a perception of institutional imbalance. That is, a disproportionality between what was given and what is returned. The observation that a 53-year-old retiree has limited risk appetite constitutes an implicit theory of age-dependent vulnerability that the institution in the participant's perception has failed to account for. Another interviewee said,

> *We see some of them around the barracks, some years after retirement. For some, it is because they don't have a house to go to. They never built one and the retirement package is not enough to build one from scratch to completion. Some of them are eventually forced to leave the barracks after a while- (SP02).*

The barracks/the institutional home becomes a refuge and an indictment. Veterans remain in the barracks after retirement due to necessity. This spatial observation is an organizational signal of considerable communicative force.

Veterans as Future Selves: The Anticipatory Mirror

Across interviews, participants described veterans as representations of their own anticipated futures. The metaphor of the 'mirror' used here appeared in the data and captures the psychological mechanism at work. An interviewee said,

> *Our veterans are like our mirror. It is exactly what I am expecting, I am seeing in the veterans of today. If it will be any different, only time will tell. Many times, I see them and think of my own self and my family. And I ask myself: does the system have any plans for me? If I die while in the frontlines, what will be the hope for my wife and 2 kids? It is demoralizing- (SP02).*

SP02's account is analytically dense in that the mirror metaphor encodes the essential dynamic of the future-self effect. Veterans are identified with serving as reflective surfaces in which the participant sees a version of their own possible future. The shift from third-person observation (veterans) to first-person self-interrogation (does the system have any plans for me?) enacts in real time the cognitive movement from external observation to internal self-projection that possible selves theory describes.

Furthermore, SP05's account elaborates the temporal dimension of this anticipatory identification, "It [referring to veterans' living conditions] tells me I should not expect anything different. But we came in with the hope that maybe someday the system will make things better than they are. But currently, as it is, it is not too good." (SP05). The phrase 'I should not expect anything different' reveals the predictive function of the veteran-as-future-self construct. Veterans are treated as a reliable indicator of what membership will eventually deliver.

Another interviewee's account brings an urgency that intensifies the future-self projection, "The few veterans that we see and admire are mostly those who ended up as service chiefs because of the perks of their office, even upon retirement. Unfortunately, as a non-commissioned officer, that is not a dream you can have." (SP09). This observation introduces another dimension to the future-self construction, where the futures available for self-projection are hierarchically differentiated. Senior veterans who attained the highest ranks are observed to live in material comfort, while junior veterans are observed to struggle. For a non-commissioned officer like SP09, the comfortable post-service possible self is not simply uncertain but institutionally foreclosed. The institution thus communicates that it may fail its members, and even more, that it will fail them according to rank.

The Institution Speaks Through Its Veterans: Organizational Signals and Meaning-Making

Participants interpreted veterans' conditions as communications from the institution or as signals, in the organizational sense, of what the military values and what it does not. An interviewee noted, "If they do better obviously I will be more trusting of the institution. But if not, then of course I will have reservations and will hardly encourage anyone close to me to join the job." (SP05).

The institution's credibility is assessed by its post-service behavior, which by definition occurs after the leverage of active membership has expired. This is consistent with signaling theory's insight that the most credible signals are those that are costly to fake (Spence 1973). An institution's treatment of former members who can no longer contribute to operational results is a signal of precisely this character.

A dissenting voice in the data offers an important analytic counterpoint. As a commander with access to foreign mission earnings, SP08 occupies a materially differentiated position that moderates the impact of veteran welfare signals, he noted:

> *The system is trying, may not be doing everything, but at least the basics are there. Some soldiers during their time in service had the opportunity to attend foreign courses where they were paid estacodes and the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), or other missions where they were paid in foreign currency. When they return home, we encourage many of them to buy land and start something small-(SP08).*

SP08's does not contradict the existence of the future-self effect. What the data does is that it illustrates the conditions under which its negative valence is attenuated. For those who have accessed institutional pathways to independent wealth-building, such as via foreign missions or even foreign currency allowances, the anticipated possible self is more favorable and the institution's welfare signals are read more charitably. SP08 is

thus an analytical limit case in which the future-self effect operates differentially based on the individual's position within the institution's reward architecture.

Commitment, Trust, Morale and the Calculus of Remaining

Across interviews, the interpretive processes described in Themes 2 and 3 translated into specific attitudinal and intentional outcomes. Most prominently, in relation to institutional trust, commitment, morale and career intentions. An interviewee said, "I know that eventually this will be my own fate too. If I have a better option, I will leave." (SP01)

This statement is paradigmatic of a specific form of attitudinal collapse because the loss of affective commitment occurs through the anticipation of future mistreatment. The conditional framing 'if I had a better option' also reveals that continued service is experienced as a constrained choice rather than a valued commitment. This is precisely the profile of continuance commitment that Meyer and Allen (1991) describe as the most brittle form of organizational attachment. Whereby employees stay not out of loyalty or obligation but for lack of alternatives.

An interviewee said "In fact, I can't have my child become a service personnel" (SP02). This refusal to countenance a successor generation's entry into military service is an extreme but revealing expression of organizational disidentification. This intergenerational refusal is emblematic of a total withdrawal of the implicit endorsement that organizational members provide to recruitment and succession. This is a form of reputational withdrawal with direct HR implications that disrupts what Soeters et al (2006, p. 249) called "endo-recruitment," which is a common practice of recruiting new employees from family members of military personnel (serving/retired).

Adaptive Strategies and Retirement Anxiety

In response to the anticipated welfare shortfall that veteran observations highlight, several participants described adaptive strategies they adopted while still serving. These are often intended to hedge against the institution's perceived failure to provide for retirement. An interviewee said "You find officers doing business while in service to survive and as a safety net that prepares them for retirement. So that when they retire, the business has become strong enough to stand on its own" (SP09).

The parallel entrepreneurial activity described by SP09 is an adaptive response to anticipated institutional failure and an index of diminished institutional reliance. The organization that produces full commitment is one to which members delegate their material futures. However, the organization that produces parallel business activity is one whose members have concluded that such delegation is imprudent. This has direct implications for engagement, productivity and institutional performance.

Developing the Future-Self Effect as a Conceptual Framework

The findings support the development of the future-self effect as a theoretically coherent conceptual mechanism with identifiable empirical grounding. The Effect operates through a four-stage process, namely:

- observation of veteran welfare conditions, which is enabled by the institutional proximity of military barracks life and the social networks connecting serving and retired personnel;
- self-projection, through which veterans are cognitively constructed as personally relevant possible futures;
- signal interpretation, through which welfare conditions are read as communications about the institution's long-term commitments; and
- attitudinal adjustment, through which serving personnel revise their commitment, trust, morale and career intentions accordingly.

The conceptual conditions for its operation include a long tenure, deferred rewards, strong occupational identity, observable former members and an institutional welfare apparatus.

Transferability Beyond the Military

While this study is grounded in the Nigerian military context, the future-self effect is not institutionally specific to the armed forces. In police organizations, officers observe retired colleagues' welfare conditions and draw inferences about what institutional membership ultimately delivers. In academia, junior scholars observe the fates of emeritus professors and recently retired colleagues. In healthcare, junior nurses and physicians observe the conditions of those who have completed long service careers. They form perceptions/judgments about

whether the institution cares for its people beyond their productive years. In public service, the visible conditions of pensioners and former civil servants constitute an ongoing organizational communication about institutional values and reciprocity.

The future-self effect therefore offers organizational behavior and HRM scholarship a generalizable conceptual tool for understanding how post-employment welfare conditions feed back through the medium of currently serving members' perceptions into present organizational commitment, trust and retention. The managerial implication is that investment in veteran or retiree welfare is a present-tense investment in the commitment and morale of those still serving.

6. Conclusion

This paper has introduced and developed the future-self effect as a conceptual mechanism that links the observable welfare conditions of retired veterans to the organizational commitment, trust, morale and career intentions of currently serving military personnel. The study uses data gathered from serving personnel across the Nigerian Army, Navy and Air Force and theorized through an integrative framework that draws insights from possible selves theory, social learning theory, social identity theory and organizational commitment theory. The future-self effect offers an original contribution to organizational behavior scholarship. Future research might empirically test the future self effect and examine how the US Transition Assistance Program attenuates the effect.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the anonymous peer reviewers for their feedback and the Covenant University Center for Research, Innovation and Discovery (CUCRID) for paying for the article fees.

Ethical Declaration: The study was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration for qualitative research. Although there was no formal institutional review board (IRB) approval, verbal informed consent was sought, participation was voluntary and interviewees were told that they could withdraw at any time without consequences. Interviewees were also informed that the study was strictly for academic purposes.

AI Declaration: The authors declare that Grammarly was used to enhance grammatical flow and consistency in English style.

References

Abasilim, U. D. Gberevbie, D. E. and Osibanjo, O. A. (2019) Leadership styles and employees' commitment: Empirical evidence from Nigeria, *Sage Open,* Vol 9, No. 3, 2158244019866287.

Abasilim, U. D. (2024) Exploring the Concept of Leadership, *Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol 31, No 1, pp 7-32.

Bandura, A. and Walters, R. H. (1977) Social learning theory, Vol 1, pp 33-52, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-hall.

Bandura, A. (1986) *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory,* Prentice-Hall.

Bryant, A. and Charmaz, K. (eds.) (2010) *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory: Paperback edition*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Cable, D.M. and Turban, D.B. (2003) The value of organizational reputation in the recruitment context: A brand-equity perspective, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol 33, No. 11, pp 2244-2266.

Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Chidozie, F. Osimen, G. U. Bhadmus, J. and Newo, O. (2025) Sustainable development goals implementation in a post-colonial African state: any future for the African continental free trade area? *Sustainable Development*, Vol 33, No. 1, 1479-1490.

Creswell, J. W. (2013) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches (3rd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, SAGE.

Dandeker, C., Wessely, S., Iversen, A. and Ross, J. (2006) What's in a name? Defining and caring for "Veterans" the United Kingdom in international perspective", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol 32, No. 2, pp 161-177.

Dwyer, S. C. and Buckle, J. L. (2009) The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol 8, No. 1, pp 54–63.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S. and Sowa, D. (1986) Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol 71, No. 3, pp 500-507.

Gberevbie, D. E. (2010) Strategies for employee recruitment, retention and performance: Dimension of the Federal civil service of Nigeria, *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol 4, No 8, pp 1447-14456.

Griffith, J. (2008) "Institutional motives for serving in the US Army National Guard: Implications for recruitment, retention, and readiness. *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol 34, No. 2, pp 230-258.

Hockey, J. (1986) *Squaddies: Portrait of a Subculture*, Exeter, Exeter University Press.

Hoge, C.W., Castro, C.A., Messer, S.C., McGurk, D., Cotting, D.I. and Koffman, R.L. (2004) Combat duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, mental health problems, and barriers to care. *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol 35, No. 1, pp 13-22.

Jatau, M. P., Chidozie, F. and Lenshie, N. E. (2026) When Violence Targets Meaning: Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), Cultural Harm, and Human Security in Southeast Nigeria, *Society*, 1-15.

Janowitz, M. (1960) *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait,* Free Press.

Markus, H. and Nurius, P. (1986) Possible Selves, *American Psychologist*, Vol 41, No. 9. Pp 954–969.

Mercer, J. (2007) The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas, *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol 33, No. 1, pp 1–17.

Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. (1991) A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment. *Human resource management review*, Vol 1, No. 1, pp 61-89.

Morrison, E.W. and Robinson, S.L., 1997. When employees feel betrayed: A model of how psychological contract violation develops. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol 22, No. 1, pp 226-256.

Njeri, S 2021. Race, positionality and the researcher. In Mac Ginty, R., Brett, R. and Vogel, B (eds.) *The companion to peace and conflict fieldwork*, pp 381-394, Springer.

Ojo, S. (2021) Investigating Entrepreneurship Among Nigerian Retired Military Veterans. In S. Ojo (ed.), *Global perspectives on military entrepreneurship and innovation*, pp 119-147, IGI Global.

Ojo, S. (2026) The Nature of Military Entrepreneurship in the Armed Forces of Nigeria, *The Military Ecosystem and Entrepreneurship in Nigeria: Economic Growth and Security Developments*, pp 17-26.

Rousseau, D.M. (1989) Psychological and implied contracts in organizations, *Employee responsibilities and rights journal*, Vol 2, No. 2, pp 121-139.

Rousseau, D. M. (1995) *Psychological and Organizational Contracts: Understanding Written and Unwritten Agreements,* SAGE, Thousand Oaks.

Soeters, J. L., Winslow, D. J. and Weibull, A. (2006) Military culture. In G. Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, pp 237–254, Springer.

Spence, Michael (1973) "Job Market Signaling" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics,* Vol 87, No. 3, pp 355–374.

Tajfel, H. and Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, pp 33–47, Brooks/Cole.

Yin, R. K. (2014) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (5th ed.), Thousand Oaks,* SAGE.