



# Mitigating Precarity to Boost Engagement among Nigeria's Casual Telecommunication Workers? Investigating Employee Resilience and Organisational Support as Possible Factors

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**Abstract.** This study explores the role of employee resilience and perceived organisational support (POS) in promoting engagement among casual workers in Nigeria's telecommunications sector—a key industry increasingly characterised by precarious employment and job insecurity. Grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) and Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theories, the research adopts a positivist paradigm and employs a quantitative cross-sectional design. Data were collected from 487 casual employees across major Nigerian cities and analysed using Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM). The findings reveal that POS has a significant positive effect on employee engagement, while resilience does not directly predict either engagement or POS. Moreover, POS does not mediate the relationship between resilience and engagement. These results suggest that while personal attributes such as resilience are valuable, organisational factors—particularly perceived support—play a more decisive role in sustaining engagement within insecure work environments. The study contributes to the limited body of research on casual labour in developing economies and underscores the importance of supportive HR practices, inclusive organisational cultures, and policy reforms aimed at improving the well-being and engagement of precarious workers in Nigeria's telecommunications industry.

**Keywords:** Conservation of Resources theory, Employee engagement, Job Demands–Resources theory, Nigeria, Perceived organisational support (POS), Precarious work, Resilience, Telecommunications sector.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Preamble

Work is changing quickly all over the world, but this may not always be for the better. According to Gahan and Turnbull (2025), while digital change and globalisation have redefined how we work and connect, they have also increased job insecurity for millions. In third world economies like Nigeria, evidence shows that the world of work is witnessing a growing group of workers dealing with unstable, short-term, and often poorly protected jobs (Chinda, Akah & Ogbonda, 2025). For the fast-paced, profit-focused world of telecommunications, which was once seen as a beacon of opportunity in Nigeria (Enahoro & Olawade, 2021), casual work has become a popular way of hiring (Jacob, Jezhi & Charity, 2024). Literature observes that the survival of workers stuck in the uncertain work arrangements of casualisation, involves more than just their compensation and benefits; it also takes a toll on their mental health (Olubukoye *et al.*, 2024).

This study therefore raises some important questions: In the face of their ongoing uncertainty, how do casual workers stay resilient and engaged? Can support from their organisation make a difference? By investigating these questions, the study aims to shed light on the often overlooked experiences of workers at the heart of Nigeria's telecommunications growth and to provide insights that apply to other industries and countries.

In investigating this issue, the study defines work engagement as a positive and energetic state marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption. These qualities are key drivers of individual and organisational performance as the emotional investment of engaged casual workers can keep them highly motivated and efficient to produce better customer service and dedicated to boost their collective contribution to the success of the organisation. The study also examines employee resilience as the individual ability of the casual worker to adapt quickly to challenges, maintain high levels of performance and morale, even under pressure and regardless of the setbacks, which can help their organisations to remain sustainable, agile and competitive in dynamic environments. Additionally, the study looks at perceived organisational support as how much employees feel appreciated and supported by their employer. This can be an essential resource that might mitigate and ensure that the casual workers are resilient and engaged.

### 1.2. Background and Rationale to the Study

The Nigerian telecommunications sector is germane to the country's journey towards digital innovation and economic growth, enabling digital connectivity, access to internet services, use of mobile technologies, and the erection of digital platforms essential for modern commerce, education, governance, and productivity in the country's vast rural and urban communities (Enahoro & Olawade, 2021; Nigeria Communications Commission [NCC], 2023). Yet, evidence suggests that the sector has become notorious for significant employment insecurity (Jacob *et al.*, 2024). Nonetheless, employment insecurity is not known to Nigerian telecommunications sector alone. Ikeije and Okpo (2023), observes that as organisations in the country became preoccupied with flexible work arrangements to cut costs and stay sustainable, casual work has become common. This practice involves short-term contracts, little job security, and limited access to work benefits such as work-life balance, health

insurance, pension etc. While it may provide some operational benefits for employers, it takes a heavy psychological toll on workers, who often feel expendable, unsupported, and at risk (Jacob *et al.*, 2024).

In this setting, employee resilience (i.e. the ability to adjust and thrive in tough situations) can be of significance. Prior evidence, shows that resilience helps workers stay engaged even when times are hard (Ferreira & Gomes, 2023). Yet, resilience alone may not be enough. Researchers increasingly point out that Perceived Organisational Support (POS) can also be vital (Ashfaq, Abid, Ilyas & Mansoor, 2023; Bergman & Nordstrom, 2022; Onuegbu & Onuoha, 2021). POS refers to employees' feelings that their organisations care about their well-being and appreciate their contributions. POS is key to maintaining engagement, especially in uncertain jobs (Ashfaq *et al.*, 2023). This support such as recognition from supervisors, provision of job tools, training opportunities, clear communication, guidance etc. can lessen the isolation caused by casual work and strengthen workers' sense of purpose and belonging (Shepherd, 2024; Bergman & Nordstrom, 2022).

While both resilience and organisational support have been examined in traditional job environments (Abdulmohdi, 2024; Long, Cooke & Mavondo, 2025; Meintjes & Hofmeyr, 2018; Zhou *et al.*, 2023), there is a lack of research focused on how these factors play out for casual workers in Africa, particularly in the telecommunications sector (Lee, Chong, & Ojo, 2024; Rugotwi, Mashavira, Chikove, Matenda & Sibanda, 2025). Most studies on employee engagement have concentrated on developed countries and formal jobs. They overlook the complex mental challenges faced by contract workers in developing areas like Nigeria, where job insecurity and little support are common (Gasic & Boyer, 2023; Hamid, Azizee, & Yu, 2025). Furthermore, few studies have considered how organisational support might affect the connection between resilience and engagement under casual working conditions. This leaves an important gap that this study aims to fill (Kozhakhmet, Moghavvemi, & Mazhiyeva, 2025; Okojie, Ismail, Begum, Ferdous, & Richard, 2022; Sihag & Dhoopar, 2023).

Despite being one of Nigeria's most profitable and technologically advanced sectors, the telecommunications industry has dealt with informal labour practices for over a decade (Anyim, Ufodiama, & Ideh, 2017; Fapohunda, 2012; James, James, & Oyetunde, 2013; Jacob *et al.*, 2024). Casual workers make up a large part of the workforce but often face uncertain job status, limited chances for professional growth, weak systems for addressing grievances, and little organisational inclusion (Akanbi, 2021; Sessou, Amagiya, Egole & Ajayi, 2013). For instance, in 2011, Airtel Nigeria laid off 3,000 outsourced customer service workers for protesting salary cuts. In 2012, MTN Nigeria was accused of paying "slave wages" after firing over 1,700 call-center contract workers (Fapohunda, 2012; James *et al.*, 2013). These work conditions can severely harm mental well-being and long-term engagement, leading to burnout, withdrawal, and lower productivity (Anyim *et al.*, 2017).

This study aims to fill the gaps in existing literature by examining how organisational support affects the relationship between employee resilience and engagement among casual workers in Nigeria's telecommunications industry. Through a model-based analysis, this research will shed light on how supportive workplaces can improve engagement for vulnerable yet essential parts of Nigeria's workforce.

### 1.3. Significance and Aim of the Study

This study breaks away from prior studies by providing empirical insights into the psychological aspects of casual employment in Nigeria's telecommunications sector, an important yet often overlooked area. As short-term contracts and limited job security become more common, it's essential to understand how employee resilience interacts with organisational support to affect engagement. The study addresses this gap and focuses on the real experiences of precarious workers.

For casual employees, the research emphasises the importance of personal resilience and organisational support in maintaining engagement. It shows that engagement isn't just about individual strength; it heavily depends on the support workers feel they receive from their organisations. This finding highlights the need for better working conditions and mental health support for temporary staff. From an organisational and HR viewpoint, the findings will assist managers in learning how to retain and motivate contract-based employees. By recognising organisational support as a key factor, the study provides practical ways to create inclusive and supportive workplace cultures that improve performance and decrease disengagement.

In terms of employment relations and policy, this study offers data-driven suggestions for enhancing Nigeria's regulatory framework for casual work. It points out the pressing need for policy changes that look beyond labor costs to consider the human effects of casualisation. For those involved in industrial relations, the study contributes to a fairer discussion on flexible work and its governance. The research also broadens academic scholarship by examining the relationship between resilience and engagement in a precarious African work context, thereby challenging the prevailing models created for Western formal labor markets. It fills significant theoretical gaps and invites further study on the psychological contract in informal and vulnerable employment situations.

More generally, the study has implications for Nigeria's socio-economic development. Improving the engagement of casual workers in a crucial sector like telecommunications helps promote organisational stability, service quality, and inclusive economic growth. A psychologically supported workforce is not only more productive but also more likely to contribute positively to national development. The central goal of this study is to explore how perceived organisational support affects the relationship between employee resilience and

engagement among casual workers in Nigeria's telecommunications industry. In doing so, it aims to provide practical insights that address the needs of practitioners, policymakers, scholars, and workers.

#### 1.4. Structure of the Paper

After this introduction, Section 2 provides a critical review of the literature and the theoretical framework for the study. Section 3 outlines the research methodology, covering design, sampling, instrumentation, and data analysis techniques. Section 4 presents and interprets the study's results. Section 5 discusses the implications for theory, practice, and policy, concluding with reflections on limitations and suggestions for future research.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

This section offers a thorough review of the existing literature on employee engagement, resilience, and perceived organisational support, followed by developing hypotheses based on identified gaps and theoretical insights.

### 2.1. Employee Engagement

Employee engagement means the enthusiasm and commitment employees have toward their work. Engaged employees are fully involved, dedicated, and emotionally connected to their tasks (Lee, Chong, & Ojo, 2024). They care about their work and feel motivated to go the extra mile for the company's success (Rugotwi, Mashavira, Chikove, Matenda, & Sibanda, 2025). They are interested in their roles and put in their best effort, contributing to organisational goals (Gasic & Berber, 2023). In casualised workplaces, employee engagement reflects the psychological commitment of employees who, despite job insecurity and denial of work benefits such as pension and health insurance, stay motivated and focused on organisational success (Hamid, Azizee, & Yu, 2025).

### 2.2. Employee Resilience

Employee resilience is the ability to bounce back from challenges and setbacks at work (Liang & Cao, 2021). It involves staying strong and maintaining a positive attitude even when facing difficulties or pressure. Resilient employees are adaptable. They adjust to new situations and challenges without losing their motivation (Bagire, Tauba, & Kyamulabi, 2023). They do not give up easily, even after encountering obstacles, and continue to move forward, overcoming challenges with determination (Long, Cooke, & Mavondo, 2025). In casualised work settings, employee resilience means maintaining motivation and adaptability despite job insecurity and limited work benefits and lack of support in terms of employer sponsored training (Ma, Yu, Zhang, & Hao, 2025).

### 2.3. Perceived Organisational Support (POS)

Imran, Elahi, Abid, Ashfaq, and Ilyas (2020) defines perceived organisational support (POS) as employees' belief that their company recognises and appreciates their services and, cares about their welfare. In particular, such appreciation and care by the organisation can come inform of work resources such as training, guidance, or encouragement, to help them succeed. POS means employees feel supported, knowing the company listens to their concerns and offers assistance when needed (Luthia & Sathiamoorthy, 2021). In casualised work settings, POS involves employees feeling valued even with job insecurity, as the organisation provides resources and support (i.e. feedback, recognition, open communication etc.) to help employees navigate challenges and remain engaged (Le *et al.*, 2022; Aryany-Pratiwi, Fatimah, & Kuku-Susilo, 2023).

### 2.4. Theoretical Foundation

The Conservation of Resources (COR) and Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) theories support this investigation as they both offer valuable insights into understanding the relationship between engagement, resilience, and organisational support in casualised work arrangements.

#### 2.4.1. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, as cited by Shih & Yeh, 2024), is premised on the assumption that employees make personal efforts to acquire, maintain, and protect resources they value. These resources can be tangible, like money or time, or intangible, such as social support, work benefits, and self-esteem. On the basis of the COR theory, stress (discomfort) occurs upon: (i) perceiving a threat to the resources, (ii) actual loss of the resources, or (iii) failure to attract or gain the expected resources. COR theory assumes that the loss of resources has a far greater debilitating effect on the individual compared to gaining them. To maintain their well-being, employees under COR theory are motivated to protect their resources (Shih & Yeh, 2024).

COR theory has been widely used to study workplace stress, burnout, and job-related well-being. It helps explore how resource loss in work environments, like lack of support, job insecurity, or poor work-life balance, can lead to burnout and disengagement (Jakada, 2025; Shih & Yeh, 2024). The theory shows how POS acts as a critical resource that can lessen the negative effects of stress, preventing the loss of important resources like motivation and energy. For example, a supportive organisational environment can help employees maintain their

psychological and emotional resources, keeping them engaged and resilient despite the demands of their roles (Pham, Ngoyen, Vo, & Nguyen, 2024).

The COR theory is relevant to this study because it explains how casualised workers, who often face high job demands and low job security, can deal with significant resource depletion that negatively affects their resilience and engagement. Yet, POS can emerge as a key resource that prevents such loss, helping employees stay motivated and engaged despite the uncertainty of their work. By highlighting the buffering role of POS, COR provides a clear theoretical basis for understanding the psychological dynamics in casualised work settings.

#### 2.4.2. Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) Theory

The Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) theory originated from the works of Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001, as cited by Hlado & Harvankova, 2024). The theory traces work-related stress and employee outcomes to two factors: job demands and job resources. According to the JD-R, the physical, emotional, or cognitive aspects of a job or work efforts such as workload, time pressure, or role ambiguity are the job demands. On the other hand, the supportive elements or “resources” or “tools” in the work environment that help employees meet their job demands to reach their goals and promote personal growth such as feedback, open communication, recognition, praise, benefits, social support, autonomy, and development opportunities are the job resources (Radic *et al.*, 2025).

The JD-R model therefore assumes that when demands of the job are higher than the job resources available to perform the job, employees are at a greater risk of burnout and disengagement. On the flip side, given high levels of job resources (or perceived organisational support), such as feedback, open communication, recognition, praise, benefits, social support, autonomy, feedback, and opportunities for development, the negative impacts of high demands are at a minimal, leading to increased engagement, overall well-being and the motivation to remain and contribute to organisational sustainability. Hence, extant studies show that on the basis of JD-R theory, job resources exist to buffer the effects of high job demands, motivating employees to stay engaged and contribute to the sustainability of the organisation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, as cited by Radic *et al.*, 2025).

The assumptions of the JD-R theory is significant to this study as it provides the basis to understand how job resources and job demands interact to influence the engagement of the casual worker. In casualised work settings, where employees often face high demands (i.e. job insecurity) but have limited resources (i.e. lack of feedback, open communication, recognition, praise, benefits, social support, autonomy, feedback, and opportunities for development), resilience and POS can be the critical individual and organisational resources to buffer or mitigate the negative effects of job demands. The JD-R theory therefore helps to explain how resilience and organisational support can both play important roles in promoting engagement, even in uncertain job conditions.

### 2.5. Review of Empirical Studies and Hypotheses Development

To highlight key insights and current state of knowledge in the study area, this section examines empirical studies related to employee resilience, engagement, and perceived organisational support (POS) among casual workers.

#### 2.5.1. Employee Resilience and Employee Engagement

Chen and Fellenz (2020) investigated how personal resources and personal demands influence work engagement among employees from 14 service industrial settings in China. Their findings showed that higher levels of personal resources, particularly self-esteem and self-efficacy, predicted greater engagement. In contrast, personal demands had a negative effect. They concluded that building personal resources is important for improving engagement in demanding work environments. This study is unique because it focuses on the service industry, which is often overlooked in engagement research. However, it did not consider external factors such as organisational support. This suggests that future studies should explore broader contextual factors affecting engagement.

Varnika (2022) studied resilience and work engagement among employees in India, specifically investigating the influence of resilience on engagement. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, using surveys and interviews. The results indicated that employees with high resilience displayed higher engagement levels, particularly when facing challenges like tight deadlines or heavier workloads. The study concluded that resilience is a protective factor against burnout and disengagement, leading to a more engaged workforce. Its key contribution is examining resilience within Indian work culture, although its reliance on self-reported data is a limitation since it can introduce biases. Future research could investigate the role of organisational culture in improving resilience.

Cabrera-Aguilar *et al.* (2023) focused on the resilience and stress of nurses as predictors of work engagement during high-pressure periods in healthcare. This cross-sectional study used a quantitative design and collected data through surveys from hospital staff. The findings indicated that resilience and self-efficacy significantly predicted work engagement, with stress acting as a mediator. This study is unique in linking resilience directly to engagement in the nursing sector, especially in stressful contexts. Its contribution lies in identifying the

importance of self-efficacy in predicting engagement. However, it could be critiqued for not considering organisational support, which may also mitigate stress.

Ibrahim and Hussein (2024) examined the relationship between resilience, work engagement, and job satisfaction among engineers in Nigeria. They used a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from engineering professionals. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between resilience and engagement, which was also linked to job satisfaction. The study highlighted the importance of fostering resilience to enhance both engagement and job satisfaction. Its contribution is significant since it focuses on engineers, a group less studied in resilience literature. However, it could improve by considering how organisational support may influence these outcomes in Nigerian work environments.

Arnawa, Suardhika, and Aristana (2024) investigated how resilience strengthens the influence of work-life balance and servant leadership on employee engagement in a regional research agency in Indonesia. They used a survey design and found that resilience boosted the positive effects of work-life balance and servant leadership on engagement. This study's contribution is in integrating multiple variables, work-life balance, leadership style, and resilience, to explain engagement. However, its limitation is focusing on a single organisation, which may hinder the generalisability of its findings.

### 2.5.2. Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Employee Engagement

Onuegbu and Onuoha (2021) examined organisational support practices and employee engagement within Nigeria's oil and gas sector. They used a cross-sectional survey design, collecting data from employees in the industry. The results indicated that POS significantly impacted employee engagement, with practices like regular feedback, recognition, and career development opportunities improving engagement. This study's contribution is its focus on Nigeria, a region often underrepresented in POS research. However, it could be critiqued for not considering other factors, such as work-life balance, which could affect the relationship between POS and engagement.

Nguyen and Tran (2021) studied the effect of POS on employee engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam, using a quantitative survey design. The outcome showed that POS strongly and positively affected employee engagement, particularly during the pandemic when employees faced uncertainty and stress. This study is unique in its focus on the pandemic context, where POS played a crucial role in maintaining engagement. However, the study relied on cross-sectional data. Consequently, future studies could explore the long-term effects of POS under uncertain work conditions.

Bergman and Nordstrom (2022) investigated the roles of POS, work engagement, and intention to stay among temporary agency workers. The study used a quantitative survey method, collecting data from temporary employees across various sectors. The findings confirmed that POS positively influenced both work engagement and the intention to stay. This suggests that organisations with supportive practices can retain temporary workers longer. Its key contribution is focusing on temporary workers, a group often overlooked in engagement research. However, it did not account for industry-specific factors that might influence POS's impact.

Ashfaq, Abid, Ilyas, and Mansoor (2023) examined the role of POS in work engagement among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. This multicenter, time-lagged, cross-sectional study revealed that POS significantly predicted work engagement. Healthcare workers who felt supported by their organisations reported higher engagement. The study's contribution is valuable, highlighting the importance of POS in crises. A potential critique is the limited generalisability of the findings to sectors outside healthcare.

Bonaiuto *et al.* (2022) explored psychosocial variables in the relationship between POS and work engagement. They used a survey design, collecting data from employees in various industries. The study found that POS positively influenced work engagement, with psychosocial factors like workplace climate and employee wellbeing mediating this relationship. The unique contribution of this study is its focus on psychosocial variables, adding depth to the understanding of the POS-engagement link. However, it does not consider individual differences among employees, such as personality traits, which could affect how POS influences engagement.

### 2.5.3. Resilience and Organisational Support

Meintjes and Hofmeyr (2018) investigated the impact of resilience and POS on employee engagement in a competitive sales environment. They used a survey design and found that both resilience and POS positively affected engagement. POS acted as a buffer against stress and burnout typical in high-pressure sales roles. This study's unique contribution is its focus on the sales environment, where resilience is vital for maintaining engagement. However, a limitation is the small sample size, which could limit the generalisability of the findings.

Zhou *et al.* (2023) examined the role of resilience, organisational support, and innovative behaviour on nurses' work engagement. They used a moderated mediation analysis and found that resilience and organisational support worked together to enhance work engagement, with innovative behaviour serving as a mediator. The study's contribution lies in its unique focus on innovative behaviour in the healthcare sector. A limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data, suggesting that longitudinal studies could provide more comprehensive insights.

Abdulmohdi (2024) investigated the relationships between nurses' resilience, burnout, POS, and social

support during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. This quantitative cross-sectional study revealed that POS and social support significantly reduced burnout and promoted resilience, which enhanced work engagement. The study's contribution is its focus on social support's impact in reducing burnout in high-stress healthcare settings. A limitation is that it did not explore how individual differences in resilience affect these outcomes.

Long, Cooke, and Mavondo (2025) explored the role of employee assistance programmes (EAPs) in fostering a resilient workforce during organisational change. They found that EAPs were crucial in promoting both resilience and work engagement, especially during significant changes. The study's key contribution is its focus on EAPs as an essential resource for supporting resilience. A limitation is its reliance on self-reported data, which may lead to biased results.

#### 2.5.4. Perceived Organisational Support as a Mediator

Al-Omar *et al.* (2019) examined the impact of POS and resilience on pharmacists' engagement in competitive and stressful workplaces in Saudi Arabia. The study found that POS moderated the relationship between resilience and engagement. Supportive organisational practices enhanced engagement in stressful environments. Its contribution lies in focusing on pharmacists, a group often overlooked in engagement research. However, its narrow focus on one profession may not generalise to other sectors.

Okojie *et al.* (2022) studied the mediating role of social support in the relationship between employee resilience and engagement. They revealed that social support enhanced the positive effects of resilience on engagement, with POS acting as a key moderator. This study's unique contribution is its focus on social support, adding depth to the understanding of resilience and engagement. A limitation is not considering other moderating factors like job autonomy.

Sihag and Dhoopar (2023) explored how POS moderates the relationship between organisational resilience and employee performance in Indian higher education institutions. They found that POS strengthened the positive impact of organisational resilience on employee performance, particularly during challenging times. This study's contribution is its focus on higher education institutions, a sector often neglected in resilience research. A limitation is that it focused only on faculty performance, ignoring non-teaching staff.

Kozhakhmet, Moghavvemi, and Mazhiyeva (2025) examined how university support, resilience, and proactive personality influence faculty wellbeing and performance in remote work settings. The study found that POS moderated the relationship between resilience and faculty performance, with proactive personality also playing a significant role. Its unique contribution is its focus on remote work, which is increasingly relevant in today's work environment. However, the study only focused on faculty, not considering other staff members.

#### 2.6. Gap in Literature

The reviewed studies underscore the importance of resilience and organisational support in fostering employee engagement across various work settings. However, we observed some gaps in extant literature that need attention. For instance, many of the studies focus on work settings outside Nigeria, limiting generalisability to other industries or regions. There is also a limited focus on the roles of organisational factors (i.e. culture, feedback, autonomy, benefits) and individual factors (i.e. resilience) in boosting engagement. Additionally, the interaction between job demands, resources, and resilience in promoting engagement remains largely neglected. Research on casualised (uncertain, insecure) work environments is limited, and the mediation and moderation pathways between resilience and engagement have not been fully addressed. These gaps provide the basis for broader, more inclusive investigation of POS as a possible mediator between resilience and engagement in casualised (uncertain, insecure) work settings.

#### 2.7. Hypothesis Development

Building on the insights from the literature review, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*i. H<sub>01</sub>: There is no positive relationship between employee resilience and employee engagement among casualised employees in Nigeria's telecommunications sector.*

*ii. H<sub>02</sub>: Employee resilience does not positively influence perceived POS among casualised employees in Nigeria's telecommunications sector.*

*iii. H<sub>03</sub>: POS does not positively influence employee engagement among casualised employees in Nigeria's telecommunications sector.*

*iv. H<sub>04</sub>: POS does not mediate between employee resilience and employee engagement among casualised employees in Nigeria's telecommunications sector.*

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the *study's blueprint in terms of philosophy*, research design, methods for collecting data, and techniques for analysis used to explore the relationships between *employee resilience*, *perceived organisational support (POS)*, and engagement in Nigeria's telecommunications industry.

### 3.1. Research Philosophy

The study is anchored on a positivist approach. This philosophy holds that social phenomena *can be measured and analysed* objectively with empirical data (Ali, 2024). This approach suited the research because it allowed for testing relationships between employee resilience, POS, and engagement using quantitative methods. It enabled the application of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) (Wolf, Harrington, Clark & Miller, 2013) to test theoretical models in *a casualised work setting*.

### 3.2. Setting

The research took place in Nigeria's telecommunications sector, focusing on casual *employees in major cities of Abuja, Lagos, Onitsha, Kano, Kaduna, and Port Harcourt*. The researcher chose these cities for their economic importance and significant telecommunications activities. The *telecoms* sector was selected *because it's increasingly depends on temporary contracts (i.e. casualised workers) as characterized by job insecurity, and limited benefits*. This context is relevant for studying the impact of POS and resilience on employee engagement *to understand how the need to keep HR overheads low can be balanced with worker support and attributes to ensure long term sustainability and retention of talents*.

### 3.3. Population and Sample

The study looked at *casualised employees in the Nigerian telecommunications sector, specifically those in customer service, network operations, and technical support roles across the cities of Abuja, Lagos, Onitsha, Kano, Kaduna, and Port Harcourt*. The researcher selected these *frontline workers for their direct experience with the challenges of temporary employment*. A sample size of 460 was chosen, following Wolf et al. (2013), to ensure adequate power for structural equation modeling (SEM) while considering factors such as model complexity, factor loadings, and potential missing data for reliable results.

### 3.4. Instrumentation

Demographic information, such as age, gender, and job tenure, was gathered using a structured questionnaire. This ensured that the findings applied to a diversified group within the sample. The structured questionnaire also collected data on employee resilience, POS, and work engagement. For resilience, the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) was used (Connor & Davidson, 2003). The CD-RISC is very reliable (Cronbach's alpha > 0.90) and has been validated in organisational research (Sharif-Nia et al., 2024).

POS was measured using the POS Scale adapted from Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986). This scale assesses how much employees feel their organisation values and supports them. Cronbach's alpha values usually range from 0.85 to 0.95, showing excellent reliability and successful application across various employee groups in settings like healthcare, education, and corporate environments in different countries and cultures, which supports its external validity (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Work engagement was measured using a modified version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). The UWES-9 demonstrates high reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.85) and strong construct validity across different populations and organisational contexts (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). A five-point Likert scale was used for all items, allowing participants to express different levels of agreement. The five-point scale is commonly used in organisational research due to its simplicity and reliability (Moffa et al., 2023). After adapting the CD-RISC, POS Scale, and UWES-9, their reliability and validity were further tested through a reliability test and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm that the scales accurately measured the intended concepts in Nigeria's telecommunications sector.

### 3.5. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection occurred in three phases. First, a pilot study with 30 employees from a different telecommunications firm tested the instruments for clarity and reliability. Feedback from this pilot study refined the survey, improving the wording and relevance of the questions. Data was collected in Abuja, Lagos, Onitsha, Kano, Kaduna, and Port Harcourt with 12 research assistants trained for the survey. To ensure a diverse and representative sample, a stratified random sampling method was used to target casualised employees from different telecom organisations in each city.

The main data collection involved face-to-face administration of the survey. Convenience sampling allowed the study to reach participants who were easily accessible and willing to participate. Given constraints such as time and budget, this method provided an effective way to gather data quickly. The survey was anonymous, and participants were assured their responses would be kept confidential. The data collection lasted six weeks, with follow-up reminders sent to boost the response rate. Afterward, the completed surveys were cleaned for completeness, removing any incomplete or duplicate responses before analysis.

### 3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis took place in two stages. First, *descriptive statistics summarised* the demographic characteristics of the sample, including standard deviations and frequency distributions. Second, mediation analysis was

performed using Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) in AMOS, testing the direct and indirect (mediation) pathway effects of employee resilience, POS and engagement. *To ensure the fitness of the model*, Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) within the CB-SEM framework validated the measurement model using fit indices like RMSEA, CFI, and TLI.

### 3.7. Ethical Procedure

The study followed *strict ethical guidelines*. This meant that informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were fully informed about the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time, and how their data would be used. *All responses were anonymised* to maintain confidentiality, and participants were assured their participation would not affect their job security. The data was securely stored, with access limited to the research team. *Voluntary participation was emphasised*, and no coercion was involved in recruitment. *Ethical guidelines allowed the study* to maintain high standards of integrity and participant protection (Plemons & Spiros, 2025).

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the sample. The age distribution shows that most participants were in the mid-career range. Specifically, 38.0% were 35-44 years old, and 33.3% were 25-34. Smaller percentages were aged 18-24 (6.6%), 45-54 (15.6%), or 55 and older (6.6%). The gender distribution was 44.6% male and 55.4% female, indicating a slightly higher representation of women among respondents. As Table 1 further shows, the largest group in terms of work experience had 1-3 years (45.2%). This was followed by 4-6 years (28.5%), 7-10 years (13.1%), and smaller percentages with under 1 year or over 10 years (6.6% each). Finally, job roles were well-represented across different functions. *Particularly*, 28.1% of respondents were in management, 26.5% in customer service, 22.4% in network operations, 22.4% in technical support, and 0.6% in other roles. Overall, the sample of 487 casualised workers *involved in the study* was diverse in age, gender, tenure, and job function, providing a broad basis for examining the *formulated hypotheses in the study*.

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 487).

Demographic Category	Frequency	Percent	Total (N = 487)
Age (years)			
18-24	32	6.6%	
25-34	162	33.3%	
35-44	185	38.0%	
45-54	76	15.6%	
55+	32	6.6%	
Total (N)	487	100.0%	487
Gender			
Male	217	44.6%	
Female	270	55.4%	
Total (N)	487	100.0%	487
Experience			
< 1 year	32	6.6%	
1-3 years	220	45.2%	
4-6 years	139	28.5%	
7-10 years	64	13.1%	
Above 10 years	32	6.6%	
Total (N)	487	100.0%	487
Job Role			
Customer Service	129	26.5%	
Network Operations	109	22.4%	
Technical Support	109	22.4%	
Management	137	28.1%	
Others	3	0.6%	
Total (N)	487	100.0%	487

### 4.2. Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses

The measurement properties of the resilience, POS, and engagement scales were assessed using factor analysis and reliability analysis. All three scales showed good internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha was 0.806 for the resilience scale, 0.800 for the POS scale, and 0.803 for the engagement scale. This indicates acceptable reliability for three-item measures. Exploratory factor analyses (EFA), using principal components, were performed as a prelude to the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) check. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures ranged from 0.557 to 0.590 (resilience KMO=0.590, POS KMO=0.557, engagement KMO=0.561), and Bartlett's tests of sphericity were significant for all three scales ( $\chi^2$ 's  $\approx$  598-620, df=3, p<0.001). This shows that the item correlations were suitable for factor analysis despite the marginal KMO values. A single factor was extracted for each scale. The one-factor solution explained 72.47% of the variance for resilience, 71.82% for POS,

and 72.18% for engagement. Table 2 shows the factor loadings and communalities for each item under this one-factor solution. All item loadings were high, above 0.79, and communalities were all above 0.63, which supports the idea that each scale is unidimensional.

**Table 2:** Factor loadings and communalities (PCA extraction) for the resilience, POS, and engagement scales (one-factor solutions).

Scale	Item	Factor Loading	Communality
Resilience	R1	0.810	0.657
	R2	0.931	0.867
	R4	0.807	0.651
POS	S2	0.796	0.633
	S3	0.937	0.878
	S4	0.802	0.643
	E2	0.806	0.649
Engagement	E3	0.938	0.879
	E4	0.798	0.637

Lastly, we assessed the overall measurement model along with the structural paths. The fit indices in Table 3 showed a poor model fit. The chi-square statistic was large and significant ( $\chi^2(24) = 390.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/df = 16.27$ ) was much higher than the usual cutoff values, such as below 2 or 3 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Other fit indices also fell below recommended thresholds: RMSEA = 0.177 (90% CI 0.162 to 0.193,  $p$ -close = .000), CFI = 0.833, TLI = 0.750, and GFI = 0.876 (AGFI = 0.768). These values do not meet the acceptable model fit criteria, like RMSEA being less than .08, and CFI/TLI being greater than .90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). This indicates that the specified model does not align well with the data. In summary, while each scale showed adequate reliability and a clear factor structure, the combined measurement and structural model did not fit well. Section 5.1 will address the implications of these pattern of results.

**Table 3:** Fit indices for the default measurement/structural model.

Fit Index	Value
$\chi^2$ (df = 24)	390.47 ( $p < .001$ )
$\chi^2/df$	16.27
GFI	0.876
AGFI	0.768
RMR	0.099
NFI	0.825
IFI	0.833
RFI	0.738
TLI	0.750
CFI	0.833
PCFI	0.556
RMSEA	0.177 (90% CI: 0.162–0.193)
PCLOSE	0.000

### 4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Structural equation modeling tested the hypothesised relationships. Table 4.4 shows the key path coefficients, standard errors, and significance levels for each of the hypothesised relationship. Hypothesis 1 ( $H_{01}$ ) stated that resilience does not positively predict employee engagement. The standardised path coefficient from resilience to engagement was  $\beta = 0.059$  ( $SE = 0.035$ ), but this effect was not statistically significant ( $C.R. = 1.680$ ,  $p = .093$ ). Therefore,  $H_{01}$  was supported; meaning that there was no significant direct effect of resilience on engagement in the model.

Hypothesis 2 ( $H_{02}$ ) formulated that resilience does not positively predict perceived organisational support (POS). The path coefficient from resilience to POS was  $\beta = -0.039$  ( $SE = 0.023$ ), which was also non-significant ( $C.R. = -1.678$ ,  $p = .093$ ). This result aligns with  $H_{02}$ , indicating that resilience did not significantly predict POS in this model.

Meanwhile, Hypothesis 3 ( $H_{03}$ ) predicted that POS does not positively predict engagement. The path from POS to engagement was  $\beta = 0.114$  ( $SE = 0.036$ ), and this (in contrast), was statistically significant ( $C.R. = 3.120$ ,  $p = .002$ ). This finding contradicts  $H_{03}$ , confirming that higher perceived organisational support predicted greater employee engagement among the sample.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 ( $H_{04}$ ) examined the formulation that POS does not mediate the relationship between resilience and engagement. Since neither the resilience→POS nor the resilience→engagement paths were significant, the indirect effect of resilience on engagement through POS was therefore not statistically proven. In other words, given no significant effect of resilience on POS or engagement, there was no evidence of a mediation effect. Thus,  $H_{04}$  was supported to indicate that POS does not mediate the relationship between resilience and engagement among the sample.

#### 4.4. Discussion of Findings

The results from the data analysis revealed mixed findings. For instance, concerning Hypothesis 1, the path analysis from resilience to engagement was non-significant, suggesting that resilience alone does not directly influence the engagement of casualised employees within Nigeria's telecommunications sector. This finding is not in tandem with previous assumptions about the straightforward effect of resilience on employee engagement. Nonetheless, Varnika (2022) found that resilience indirectly predicts engagement by serving as a buffer against stress. Similarly, Cabrera-Aguilar *et al.*'s (2023) study found that resilience and another individual factor called self-efficacy predict work engagement, but their effects were moderated by stress levels, suggesting that other factors like job demands and organisational culture might interact with resilience to influence engagement. These findings underscore the complexity of the resilience–engagement relationship, suggesting that factors beyond individual employee attributes might be necessary to foster engagement in precarious employment settings.

Concerning Hypothesis 2, the study found that resilience does not positively predict POS. In particular, the negative and non-significant path from resilience to POS indicates that factors other than employee resilience may shape employees' perceptions of organisational support. This finding is supported by Meintjes and Hofmeyr (2018), who reported the buffering role of POS in mitigating stress but did not consider resilience as a direct antecedent of POS. Additionally, Ashfaq *et al.*'s (2023) study of the healthcare sector showed that, while POS predicted engagement, employee resilience neither directly nor significantly predict POS. This suggests that organisational policies, leadership, and workplace culture may have a more profound effect on POS than individual employee attributes like resilience. Moreover, Bergman and Nordstrom's (2022) study reported that organisational practices, such as feedback and career development opportunities were strong predictors of POS, rather than employees' resilience levels.

However, concerning Hypothesis 3, the significant path from POS to engagement affirms the critical role of POS in boosting employee engagement levels, especially in precarious employment conditions. This finding conforms to Onuegbu and Onuoha's (2021) study, who found POS to be a significant predictor of employee engagement in Nigeria's oil and gas sector that is known for casual work arrangements. Similarly, Nguyen and Tran (2021), found that POS had a strong positive effect on employee engagement during times of uncertainty, reinforcing the idea that organisational support is vital for sustaining engagement during challenging times. Bergman and Nordstrom (2022) also found similar results where POS enhanced engagement of temporary agency workers, and their intention to stay dedicated to their organisations. These studies collectively affirm the importance of POS in driving engagement in work settings characterised by job insecurity and unstable working conditions across different sectors.

Finally, concerning Hypothesis 4, the non-significant direct paths from resilience to both POS and engagement attest to the outcome that there was no mediation effect. This finding challenges existing mediation model as proposed by Al-Omar *et al.* (2019), where POS was identified as a moderator but not a mediator. In their model, high levels of POS significantly moderated the relationship between resilience and engagement. In contrast, the current study suggests that given the contextual discrepancy of factors such as nature of the work environment, job demands and organisational culture, POS may not play a prominent role in explaining the resilience–engagement link. Meanwhile, a prior study by Sihag and Dhoopar (2023) found that POS was a more effective moderator rather than a mediator in boosting employee engagement and performance. Therefore, while POS remains crucial to engagement, our finding adds to the debate that POS' role in the resilience–engagement relationship may need further examination in different contexts and work environments.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusion and Practical Implications

For casual workers, our results point out that while employee personal attributes like resilience is important, such individual factors are not enough on its own to drive engagement. Consequently, the key to sustained employee engagement lies in seeking out and leveraging the support offered by their organisations. Particularly, casual workers should actively engage with their workplace culture by not being laid back but looking for opportunities for feedback, recognition, and professional growth. It is only a supportive work environment can help them not only maintain their resilience but also thrive, fostering greater job satisfaction and long-term engagement. Our findings shows that it is in the mutual interest of the organisation and casual workers, that they (casual workers) advocate for more inclusive policies that recognise their contributions and address their unique needs.

For management, especially in Nigeria's telecommunications sector, the results underscore the importance of creating a work environment that prioritises support for all employees, including those in casual positions. As a result, HR managers should focus on fostering a culture of regular feedback, recognition, and career development of both permanent and casual workers. This support not only enhances employee engagement but also drives long term sustainability of the organisation and reduces turnover of talents. By ensuring that casual employees feel valued and included, management can strengthen workforce stability and create a more motivated, cohesive and effective team. This approach ultimately benefits both the organisation and its employees, driving growth and success.

Management scholars can also draw significant insights from these findings. The study invites further investigation of the complex dynamics between resilience, POS, and engagement, particularly in precarious work environments. Future scholars should delve deeper into understanding how different forms of organisational support influence engagement across different sectors, especially in developing economies. There is a need for a broader examination of the factors that influence engagement in casualised workforces and how organisations can create environments that support the well-being of these workers. Research into these dynamics will enhance the academic understanding of employee engagement in a modern world of work that is visibly characterised by increasing levels of flexible work arrangements.

For Nigeria's industrial relations system, the study shows that the polity urgently needs policy reform measures to address the psychosocial needs of casualised workers. The findings indicate that a supportive work environment is sine qua non to boosting employee engagement and well-being, suggesting that current labour laws should be amended to offer greater protection for casual workers. Policymakers and worker unions must advocate for regulations that ensure casual workers are treated fairly and provided with the benefits that involve opportunities for their growth and support as their full-time counterparts. This could include access to perks, career development, job security, and proper feedback mechanisms.

Concerning theoretical implications, our results challenge existing models of the resilience-engagement relationship, particularly the role of POS as a mediator. While previous literature emphasised resilience as a direct predictor of engagement, this study went further to empirically show that POS plays a more invaluable role in fostering engagement among casualised employees. Future studies should explore additional moderating and mediating factors, such as job autonomy and work-life balance, to offer a fuller understanding of how different forms of organisational support and individual worker attributes intersect to boost the engagement of casual workers.

## 5.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to address each of the study's key findings:

## 5.3. Limitations and Uniqueness of the Study

1) Telecom companies in Nigeria should provide their casual workers with different forms of support through regular feedback, career growth opportunities, and job security. Offering training in emotional intelligence and stress management can also help their casual employees build their resilience.

2) Telecom companies should create supportive work environments with clear communication, recognition, and inclusive practices. This will help casual workers feel valued and enhance their sense of organisational support.

3) To boost engagement of their casual workers, telecom companies in Nigeria should focus on enabling a supportive work culture. This includes offering them career development programmes, recognising their achievements, and training their managers to provide constructive feedback and maintain open communication.

4) Telecom companies in Nigeria should take a well-rounded approach to their employee engagement by focusing on job autonomy, work-life balance, and leadership support, in addition to fostering POS. Exploring other factors that influence engagement, like leadership style and organisational culture may provide further insights.

The study is limited casualised employees that were drawn from Nigeria's telecommunications sector, limiting the generalisability of the findings to other sectors and regions. Additionally, the study relied mostly on data it generated from self-reported survey of the participants, which are prone to social desirability response biases. As a result, future studies should consider mixed methods or longitudinal designs to gather a more robust data.

Nevertheless, our study makes a unique contribution to employee engagement literature. While most research on employee engagement looks at full-time staff in developed countries, this study investigates how casual (temporary) workers in Nigeria's telecommunications sector remain resilient to stay engaged at work, especially when they feel supported by their organisations. By doing this, the study fills an important gap in knowledge that helps both researchers and business leaders understand how to keep workers motivated and productive, even when their jobs are neither secure nor without benefits.

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**APPENDICES**

**Resilience Scale Questions**

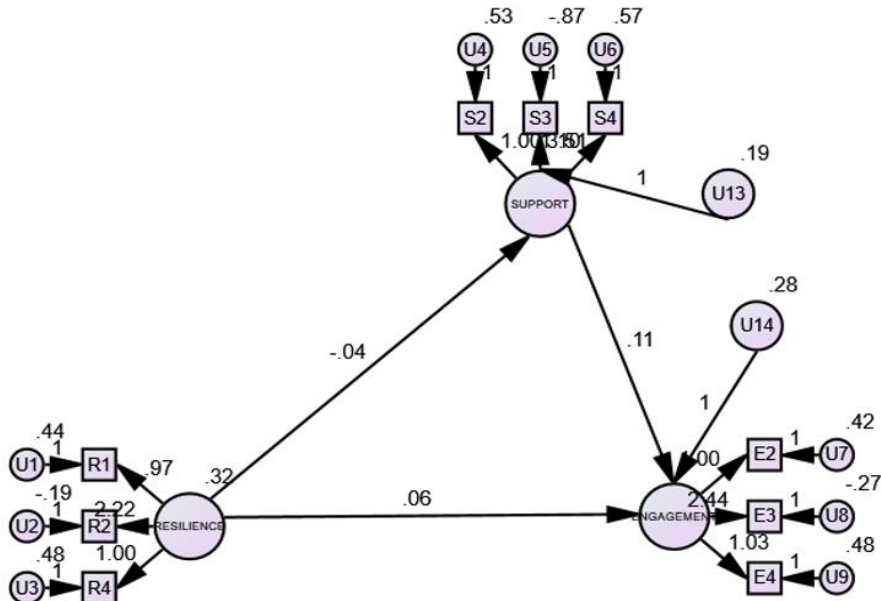
- R1: I am able to adapt to change at work.
- R2: At work, I can bounce back quickly after a stressful event.
- R4: I believe I can overcome challenges at work.

**POS Scale Questions**

- S2: My organisation cares about my well-being.
- S3: My organisation supports me in achieving my work goals.
- S4: I feel that my organisation appreciates my work.

**Engagement Scale Questions**

- E2: I am enthusiastic about my job.
- E3: I am deeply absorbed in my work.
- E4: I find my work challenging and exciting.



**Figure 1:** Path Diagram of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) for the study.