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UNDERSTANDING HOW WORK ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCES JOB SATISFACTION IN THE NIGERIAN PRIVATE SECTOR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction has remained a central idea in organizational psychology, largely because of its consistent link to how people behave at work. Despite growing research on its predictors, less is known about the psychological processes through which workplace conditions shape satisfaction, particularly in sub-Saharan African contexts. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organizational Support Theory (OST), this study examined how work environment and perceived organizational support (POS) relate to job satisfaction, and whether POS explains the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was used, with data collected from 710 employees across private-sector organizations in Nigeria. The study employed the validated Work Environment Scale, the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support, and the Job Satisfaction Survey. Hierarchical regression and bootstrapped mediation analysis were used to test the proposed relationships. The findings showed that the work environment and POS significantly and positively predicted job satisfaction. The results further revealed that POS directly ($\beta = .28$, $t = 5.05$, 95% CI [.1713, .3889]) and indirectly ($\beta = .86$, 95% BootCI [.7659, .9576]) significantly mediated the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction, suggesting that employees' perceptions of organizational support play an important role in how workplace conditions influence job satisfaction. The findings extend SET and OST by showing that, in a resource-constrained labour environment like Nigeria, workplace conditions are interpreted through a strong psychological lens, in which perceived support is the key pathway shaping employee satisfaction. Practical implications for human resource practices in the Nigerian private sector are also considered.

KEYWORDS: Work Environment, Job Satisfaction, Nigerian Private Sector, Organizational Support.

1. INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction has long been a central concept in organizational psychology because of its consistent relationship with important workplace outcomes such as employee retention, commitment, performance, and withdrawal behaviour (Judge et al., 2001; Judge et al., 2017). At its core, it reflects how employees evaluate their jobs and the conditions surrounding their work. These evaluations are not abstract; they often translate into whether individuals choose to stay in an organization, how much effort they contribute, and how engaged they remain over time. In that sense, job satisfaction serves both as an indicator of organizational functioning and as a stabilizing force within the workforce. When it is low, organizations often face increased turnover, which brings financial strain through repeated recruitment and training, as well as the loss of accumulated experience (Hom et al., 2017). Over time, reduced satisfaction can also weaken workplace morale and overall productivity.

More recent work has moved away from the idea that job satisfaction is driven by a single dominant factor such as pay (Judge et al., 2017). While remuneration remains important, research increasingly shows that employees also respond strongly to non-monetary aspects of their work environment. These include fairness, recognition, psychological safety, and supervision quality (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017). This shift is also reflected in broader organizational thinking, where employee well-being is increasingly viewed as central to sustainable performance rather than a secondary concern (World Health Organization, 2022). As a result, attention has turned toward understanding how workplace conditions shape satisfaction through employees' psychological interpretations of their environment.

Despite extensive research on job satisfaction, two gaps remain important. First, much of the existing evidence has been derived from Western organizational settings (Judge et al., 2017), raising questions about how well these findings apply across different cultural and economic contexts. In sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Nigeria, working conditions are shaped by job insecurity and resource constraints, alongside strong relational workplace norms rooted in collectivist cultural values (International Labour Organization, 2024; Opuala-Charles & Salau, 2023). These conditions influence how employees interpret organizational behaviour and support in ways that differ from Western assumptions. Second, although both work environment and perceived organizational support

(POS) have been widely established as significant predictors of job satisfaction, prior research has largely examined these variables in isolation (Roberts et al., 2023; Mabasa & Ngirande, 2015). While some studies have explored the mediating role of POS in the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction, evidence from non-Western settings remains relatively limited. As a result, less is known about whether these relationships operate similarly within contexts such as the Nigerian private sector.

This study addresses these gaps by arguing that the work environment influences job satisfaction not only directly, but also indirectly through perceived organizational support, which reflects how employees interpret organizational actions and intent. This mediation model is tested using data from private-sector employees across various industries, including banking, education, hospitality, education, fashion, catering, and emerging SMEs, in Nigeria. The study contributes by examining this mechanism in a non-Western context, positioning perceived organizational support as a key explanatory pathway, and offering context-sensitive insights for human resource practice in the Nigerian private sector.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Organizational Support Theory (OST), developed by Blau (1964) and Eisenberger et al. (1986), to explain how the work environment relates to job satisfaction. These theories suggest that workplace conditions matter less in a direct sense and more through how employees interpret them. Social Exchange Theory holds that workplace relationships operate through reciprocity. When employees experience support, fair treatment, or a positive work environment, they are likely to respond with more positive attitudes. However, this exchange is largely psychological. What matters is not only what the organization provides, but how employees interpret those actions (Matrafi, 2024). In this sense, the work environment functions as a signal rather than a direct driver of job satisfaction.

Organizational Support Theory explains how this interpretive process unfolds. It proposes that employees develop a general belief about how much the organization values their contribution and well-being, known as perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Conway, 2015). This perception is shaped by everyday cues, such as working conditions, supervision, and organizational practices (Kurtessis et al., 2017). When employees view these conditions positively, they are more likely

to feel valued by the organization. This strengthens perceived organizational support, which, in turn, contributes to job satisfaction by meeting socio-emotional needs such as belonging, respect, and recognition (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Fajri & Ayu, 2025). In this way, POS acts as the key mechanism linking the work environment to job satisfaction.

Social Exchange Theory explains why employees respond to supportive treatment, while Organizational Support Theory explains how that support is interpreted and internalized. Consistent with prior research, the work environment can therefore be seen as an antecedent of perceived organizational support, which, in turn, drives job satisfaction (Bendera et al., 2025; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Based on this logic, this study proposes that POS mediates the relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction. This framework is especially relevant in the Nigerian private sector, where workplace relationships often carry strong psychological weight (Opuala-Charles & Salau, 2023). In addition, job insecurity and resource constraints (ILO, 2024) heighten sensitivity to organizational signals, making perceptions of support particularly important in shaping employee attitudes.

The Nigerian labour market is an important context for understanding employees' perceptions of organizational support. Collectivist values and relatively high power distance are common in workplace relationships, with employees emphasizing interpersonal relationships and mutual obligations more than is generally believed in the Western contexts where perceived organizational support (POS) was first developed (Opuala-Charles & Salau, 2023). This means that organizational support can be expressed in mundane workplace interactions that occur in the workplace, such as a supervisor's flexibility during a family emergency, personal concern, or participation in the supervisor's network, rather than solely through formal organizational practices. Meanwhile, the economy continues to face difficulties, including currency instability and a significant informal sector, which makes employment a rare commodity (ILO, 2024). In this context, seemingly mundane organizational activities, such as timely pay, open communication, and job security, can be interpreted as strong signals of organizational commitment. In the private sector, perceived organizational support may therefore have a more psychological impact in the Nigerian context, thereby enhancing its influence on employee attitudes and behaviours.

1.2. Literature Review

Job satisfaction is one of those concepts that keeps showing up in organizational psychology because it connects so clearly to how people actually experience work. At a basic level, it reflects how employees feel about their jobs as a whole, shaped by factors such as their roles, supervision, colleagues, and working conditions (Judge et al., 2017; Locke, 1976). However, in practice, it is rarely driven by a single factor. It builds gradually from everyday work experiences and how employees interpret them over time.

Over the years, research has moved away from the view that job satisfaction is mainly about pay, recognizing it as a multidimensional construct shaped by cognitive, affective, and contextual factors (Spector, 1997; Judge et al., 2017). Salary still matters, of course, but it is no longer the main story (Popoola & Ashu, 2025). What stands out more now are the everyday work conditions, how people are treated, whether they feel respected, and whether the environment feels supportive or stressful (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In that sense, job satisfaction has become less about "what you earn" and more about "how the work feels to live through." Employees who feel safe, valued, and supported are generally more satisfied and more likely to stay committed to their organization.

A consistent finding in the literature is that both the work environment and perceived organizational support (POS) are central to understanding job satisfaction (Roberts et al., 2023; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Mabasa & Ngirande, 2015). Satisfied employees tend to show stronger commitment, better performance, and lower intention to leave, while dissatisfaction is linked to withdrawal, burnout, and weaker engagement. These outcomes are well documented across studies, but much of the evidence still comes from Western organizational settings, raising questions about how the same dynamics play out in different cultural and economic environments, such as Nigeria.

The work environment plays an important role in shaping employee attitudes, but its influence is usually not as direct as it first appears. It is not only about physical conditions such as space, equipment, and resources, but also about the social and psychological climate created by supervision, workload, autonomy, and relationships at work (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Parker et al., 2017). Employees tend to interpret these conditions rather than react to them, which means the meaning they attach to their environment becomes just as important as the environment itself (Conway, 2015). Studies consistently show that more favourable work

environments are associated with higher job satisfaction (Roberts et al., 2023). When employees perceive their workplace as fair, supportive, and well-organized, they are more likely to report positive attitudes toward their job (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Parker et al., 2017). Based on this, it is expected that:

H1: Work environment significantly and positively predicts job satisfaction.

Perceived organizational support refers to the belief employees form about how much the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). This belief does not come from a single event but is shaped through repeated experiences, including how supervisors behave, how fairly employees are treated, and how much recognition they receive (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kurtessis et al., 2017). Over time, these signals combine into a general sense of whether the organization is supportive. When employees feel supported, they are more likely to respond with positive attitudes, including higher job satisfaction (Mabasa & Ngirande, 2015). This aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which suggests that people tend to reciprocate positive treatment from their organization (Blau, 1964). In this case, feeling valued by the organization often translates into a stronger emotional attachment to and greater satisfaction with work. Therefore:

H2: Perceived organizational support significantly and positively predicts job satisfaction.

Evidence from other developing economies provides a useful comparative context, although research on the work environment-POS-job satisfaction pathway remains limited outside Western settings. In Ghana, Opoku and Boateng (2024) demonstrated that perceived organizational support strengthened the relationship between

employee engagement and job performance among medical staff, highlighting its importance as a psychological resource in resource-constrained settings. Similarly, Maan et al. (2020) found that POS positively influenced job satisfaction through psychological empowerment among Pakistani employees. These findings suggest that organizational support shapes important employee outcomes through psychological processes across emerging economies. However, evidence from the Nigerian private sector remains limited. The present study extends this literature by demonstrating the mediating role of POS in the relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction within this context.

The relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction is better understood when viewed through the lens of perceived organizational support. Rather than acting independently, the work environment often shapes how employees interpret the level of support they receive from their organization. In other words, employees do not just experience their environment directly; they interpret it as a signal of how much the organization cares about them (Kurtessis et al., 2017). When the work environment is positive, employees are more likely to feel valued, which strengthens perceived organizational support. This increased sense of support then leads to higher job satisfaction (Bendera et al, 2025). In this way, POS acts as the psychological link between workplace conditions and employee attitudes. Based on this reasoning, a mediation relationship is proposed:

H3: Perceived organizational support significantly mediates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction, such that the indirect effect through POS exceeds the direct effect.

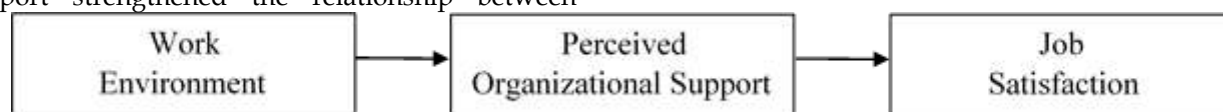


Figure 1. Proposed sequential mediation model: work environment predicts job satisfaction directly and indirectly through perceived organizational support.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Research Design

A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed to examine the predictive relationships among work environment, POS, and job satisfaction. This design was appropriate for testing the proposed mediation model and for capturing employees'

subjective workplace perceptions at a single point in time.

2.2. Participants and Procedure

The survey was distributed using purposive and snowball sampling techniques to employees working across different private-sector industries in Nigeria, including banking, education, hospitality, fashion, catering, and emerging small and medium-sized

enterprises (SMEs). Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before completion of the survey. A total of 749 responses were received. However, 39 responses were excluded because they contained substantial missing data, defined as item-level missingness exceeding 10%. This resulted in a final sample of 710 employees for analysis.

As shown in Table 1, the sample was predominantly female (62.3%; $n = 442$), and the majority of participants were below 30 years of age (59.3%; $n = 421$), with a mean age of 30.04 years. Most

respondents held a bachelor's degree (79.4%; $n = 564$), while marital status was relatively evenly distributed, with 51.5% ($n = 366$) reporting being married. The sample reflects the demographic profile of Nigeria's formal private-sector workforce, which is increasingly characterized by a younger, more educated labour force. Seven participants did not report their age. These cases were retained because the proportion of missing data was minimal (less than 1%) and was unlikely to affect the overall pattern of results.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants ($N = 710$).

Variable	Classification	n	%
Gender	Male	268	37.7
	Female	442	62.3
Age ($M = 30.04$)	< 30 years	421	59.3
	≥ 30 years	282	39.7
Marital Status	Not currently married	344	48.5
	Married	366	51.5
Educational Level	SSCE	28	3.9
	Bachelor's Degree	564	79.4
	Master's Degree	118	16.7

2.3 Measures

Work Environment

The quality of the work environment was assessed using the 10-item Work Environment Scale (Rossberg et al., 2004), a well-validated instrument that measures employees' perceptions of both the physical and psychosocial aspects of their workplace, including interpersonal quality, role clarity, and overall organizational climate. Items were rated on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), with higher composite scores indicating more favourable perceived environments. Internal consistency in the present sample was good ($\alpha = .82$).

Perceived Organizational Support

POS was measured using the widely adopted eight-item short form of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), which captures employees' global perception of how much their organization values their efforts and cares about their welfare. The five-point response format mirrored that of the WES. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability in this study ($\alpha = .94$), consistent with prior reports across diverse samples (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Job Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1997), which evaluates

satisfaction across multiple facets of the work experience, including pay, supervision, coworker relationships, and the nature of the work itself. Responses were captured on the same five-point format, with higher scores reflecting greater overall satisfaction. Alpha reliability in the present sample was acceptable ($\alpha = .77$).

2.4. Data Analysis

Preliminary analyses included inspection of descriptive statistics, bivariate Pearson correlations, and diagnostics for multicollinearity (tolerance and VIF values). H1 and H2 were tested using hierarchical multiple regression. Demographic control variables (gender, age) were entered in Step 1; work environment in Step 2; and POS in Step 3. This sequential approach enabled assessment of unique variance explained at each step beyond prior predictors. H3 was tested using Hayes' (2018) PROCESS macro (Model 4) with 5,000 bootstrap samples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Mediation was inferred when the indirect effect CI excluded zero. All analyses were conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics v.30.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Bivariate Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations among all study variables.

Among demographic indicators, gender showed a small negative correlation with job satisfaction ($r = -.12, p < .01$), while age was positively associated with satisfaction ($r = .10, p < .01$); marital status and education were unrelated to satisfaction and were therefore excluded as controls in regression analyses.

The main variables showed strong interrelationships. Work environment was positively associated with both POS ($r = .80, p < .01$) and job satisfaction ($r = .73, p < .01$), providing preliminary support for H1. POS was strongly associated with job

satisfaction ($r = .83, p < .01$), supporting H2. The particularly strong work environment-POS correlation offers early evidence for the proposed mediation pathway.

Given these strong correlations, multicollinearity was assessed at each regression step. Tolerance values ranged from .921 to .999 and VIF values from 1.001 to 1.086, all within the conservative threshold of $VIF < 5$ (Field, 2018), confirming that multicollinearity did not threaten the interpretability of the regression findings.

Table 2. Pearson Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Study Variables.

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Gender	—						
2	Age	-.03	—					
3	Marital Status	.06	.24**	—				
4	Education	-.02	.08*	.13**	—			
5	Work Environment	-.04	.08*	.04	.05	—		
6	Perceived Org. Support	-.11**	.17**	.09*	.12**	.80**	—	
7	Job Satisfaction	-.12**	.10**	-.01	.07	.73**	.83**	—
	M	1.62	2.68	1.63	2.64	30.37	22.96	36.75
	SD	0.49	0.64	0.65	1.18	3.94	3.51	6.28

Note. ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$ (two-tailed). POS = Perceived Organizational Support.

3.2. Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Table 3 presents the results of the three-step hierarchical regression. In Step 1, the demographic model was statistically significant [$F(2, 699) = 8.68, p < .01$], but it explained only 2% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .02$). gender ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$) emerged as a small negative predictor and age ($\beta = .09, p < .05$) as a small positive predictor, confirming their inclusion as covariates.

Step 2 introduced work environment, producing a substantial and significant improvement in model fit ($\Delta R^2 = .51, p < .01$). The final Step 2 model explained 53% of variance [$F(3, 698) = 236.76, p < .01$], with work environment emerging as a strong

independent predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = .72, p < .01$), providing strong support for H1. At this step, gender remained significant ($\beta = -.09, p < .01$) while age was no longer significant ($\beta = .04, p > .05$).

Step 3 added POS, yielding a further significant improvement ($\Delta R^2 = .17, p < .01$), with the full model explaining 70% of variance [$F(4, 697) = 399.69, p < .01$]. POS was the strongest predictor ($\beta = .69, p < .01$), supporting H2. Importantly, the effect of the work environment decreased from $\beta = .72$ in Step 2 to $\beta = .18$ in Step 3, a 75% reduction, providing preliminary evidence for the mediation proposed in H3. Gender and age were no longer significant (both $\beta = -.04, p > .05$), indicating that the main study variables subsumed their earlier effects.

Table 3. Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Job Satisfaction.

	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3	
Variable	β	t	β	t	β	t
Gender	-.12*	-3.24	-.09**	-3.51	-.04	-1.78
Age	.09*	2.51	.04	1.39	-.04	-1.64
Work Environment	—	—	.72**	27.48	.18**	5.05
Perceived Org. Support	—	—	—	—	.69**	19.47
R^2	.02**		.53**		.70**	
ΔR^2	.02**		.51**		.17**	
F	8.68**		236.76**		399.69**	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. POS = Perceived Organizational Support. β = standardized regression coefficient.

3.3. Mediation Analysis

Table 4 presents the mediation analysis results. The total effect of work environment on job satisfaction was positive and significant ($\beta = 1.14, t =$

27.48, 95% CI [1.06, 1.22]), confirming the baseline relationship. When the POS pathway was modeled, the direct effect of the work environment remained significant but substantially attenuated ($\beta = .28, t = 5.05, 95\% \text{ CI } [.17, .39]$), indicating that the work

environment continues to make an independent predictive contribution beyond POS.

Critically, the indirect effect of work environment on job satisfaction through POS was positive, significant, and substantially larger than the direct effect ($\beta = .86$, 95% BootCI [.77, .96]), with the confidence interval excluding zero, confirming significant mediation. The ratio of indirect to total

effect ($.86/1.14 = 75\%$) indicates that approximately three-quarters of the total effect of work environment on satisfaction is carried through POS. The pattern thus conforms to partial mediation: the environment influences satisfaction both directly and indirectly, but the indirect route via POS is the dominant pathway. H3 is supported.

Table 4. Mediation Analysis: Indirect Effect of Work Environment on Job Satisfaction through POS.

Path	Effect (β)	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect (c)	1.14	0.04	27.48	< .001	1.06	1.22
Direct effect (c')	0.28	0.06	5.05	< .001	0.17	0.39
Indirect effect (a x b)	0.86	0.05	—	—	0.77	0.96

Note. Bootstrapped 95% confidence interval (5,000 samples). LLCI/ULCI = lower/upper limit of confidence interval.

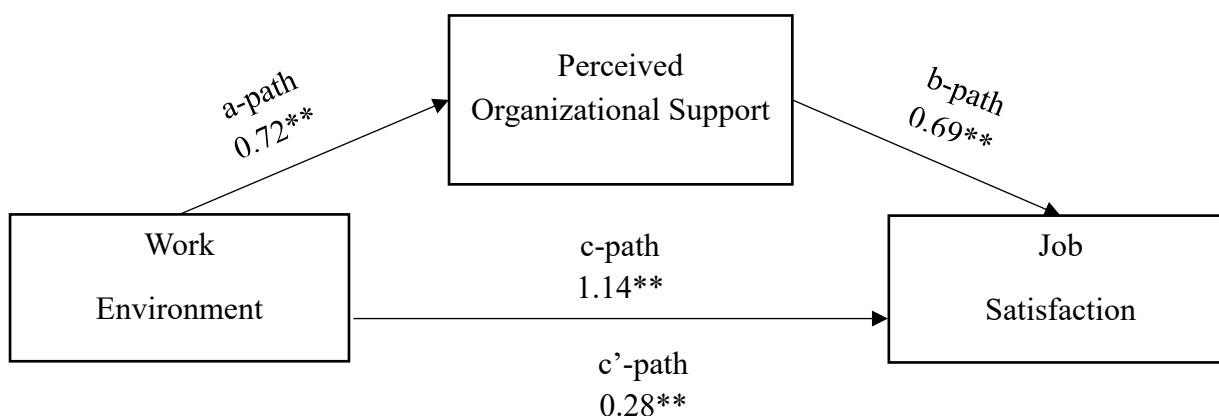


Figure 2. Mediation model with standardized path coefficients.

4. DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationships among work environment, perceived organizational support (POS), and job satisfaction among employees in the Nigerian private sector. It also tested whether POS mediates the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. Overall, all three hypotheses were supported, adding to existing research on the organizational factors associated with job satisfaction, particularly within a non-Western context.

The finding that the work environment significantly influences job satisfaction suggests that employees' experiences at work extend beyond simply carrying out assigned tasks. Employees who work in supportive, well-resourced, and psychologically healthy environments are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs. This supports earlier work showing that job satisfaction is shaped by both the physical and social conditions of the

workplace (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Parker et al., 2017). It also reflects Social Exchange Theory, which proposes that employees tend to respond positively when they perceive favourable treatment from their organization (Blau, 1964). In practice, this suggests that employees are not only responding to formal job structures but also to the overall quality of their work environment and how it is experienced day to day.

Another important finding was the strong positive relationship between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction. Employees who felt valued, recognized, and supported by their organization reported higher job satisfaction. This aligns with Organizational Support Theory, which argues that employees develop more positive attitudes when they believe the organization genuinely cares about their well-being and contributions (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kurtessis et al., 2017). These perceptions are often shaped by everyday organizational signals, such as fairness, supervisory behaviour, and recognition practices

(Conway, 2015). In addition, POS is closely linked to the fulfillment of socio-emotional needs such as belonging, esteem, and respect, which help explain its strong association with job satisfaction (Fajri & Ayu, 2025; Roberts et al., 2023; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The strength of this relationship in the present study highlights the importance employees place on feeling valued in the workplace.

The most theoretically important finding of the study was that POS partially mediated the relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. This suggests that the influence of the work environment operates not only through direct exposure to working conditions but also through employees' interpretations of those conditions. In particular, employees appear to use features of the work environment as signals of organizational care, which shape their perceptions of support and, in turn, their satisfaction. This is consistent with Organizational Support Theory, which identifies workplace conditions as key antecedents of POS (Kurtessis et al., 2017), and with earlier work emphasizing that employees interpret organizational practices as cues to their perceived value (Conway, 2015). It also aligns with broader research showing that work design and environmental conditions influence employee outcomes through psychological mechanisms rather than purely structural ones (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Parker et al., 2017). More recent studies further support this indirect pathway, suggesting that supportive environments translate into positive employee outcomes largely through perceived meaning and interpretation (Bendera et al., 2025; Fajri & Ayu, 2025). The partial mediation also indicates that other pathways beyond POS may still contribute to this relationship.

The mediated effect is important for the management of private sector organizations. Improving the physical work environment alone is unlikely to maximize job satisfaction unless employees feel that the improvements signal the organization cares about and supports them. Since the majority of the work environment's influence on job satisfaction was mediated by perceived organizational support (POS), managers should not only implement structural changes but also demonstrate supportive leadership behaviours. Line supervisors, in particular, have a great opportunity to enhance POS through open communication, acknowledging employee contributions, and addressing employee concerns promptly. These common interactions create positive cues of organizational care. For small and medium enterprises and hospitality companies, where

resources are limited, developing supportive supervisory relationships might be a more cost-effective approach to improving.

The findings highlight the importance of creating work environments that are not only structurally supportive but also psychologically meaningful to employees. When employees experience fairness, support, and positive organizational treatment, they are more likely to feel valued, thereby strengthening their job satisfaction. More importantly, the study clarifies the mechanism underlying this relationship by showing that perceived organizational support plays a central mediating role in how workplace conditions translate into job satisfaction.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the predictive influence of the work environment and perceived organizational support (POS) on job satisfaction among employees in the Nigerian private sector and further tested the mediating role of POS in the relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction. The findings show that both a favourable work environment and strong perceptions of organizational support are associated with higher job satisfaction. In particular, the results indicate that a positive work environment contributes to job satisfaction both directly and indirectly through perceived organizational support. Overall, the study highlights the importance of POS as a key psychological mechanism through which employees interpret and respond to their workplace experiences.

5.1. Theoretical Implication

The findings contribute to existing theory by reinforcing that the relationship between the work environment and job satisfaction is not purely direct but operates through psychological interpretations, particularly perceived organizational support. This strengthens organizational support theory by further showing that employees' perceptions of being valued act as a key mechanism through which workplace conditions translate into attitudinal outcomes. It also aligns with social exchange theory by highlighting that responses to the work environment depend on how employees interpret organizational actions as signals of care and investment.

Therefore, future research should place greater emphasis on mechanistic models rather than only direct relationships, with particular attention to how and why workplace conditions influence employee attitudes. In this sense, POS should be treated not only as an outcome but also as a central explanatory

pathway in organizational behaviour research, especially in contexts such as the Nigerian private sector, where workplace relationships carry heightened psychological meaning.

5.2. Practical Recommendations

The findings of the present study carry important implications for human resource management practice within the Nigerian private sector. The result suggests that:

1. Organizations seeking to improve employee job satisfaction should pay attention not only to the physical and psychosocial conditions of the work environment, but also to how employees interpret those conditions. A positive work environment is most effective when employees perceive it as a genuine sign that the organization values and supports them. This means that workplace improvements should go beyond structural changes alone and be reinforced through supportive supervision, fair organizational practices, recognition, and open communication. Organizations may achieve better outcomes when environmental improvements are accompanied by practices that strengthen employees' sense of being valued and cared for.

2. Organizations should invest more deliberately in known antecedents of POS, particularly supervisor support, organizational justice, and equitable HR practices, as these may play an important role in sustaining employee satisfaction within the Nigerian private sector.

3. Organizations should focus on developing

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Institutional Review Board Statement: Formal institutional ethical clearance was not required for this study due to its low risk, as it involved no vulnerable populations or clinical information. However, the study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and the protection of anonymity. These procedures are consistent with guidelines for proportionate ethical practice in low-risk organizational research.

Data Availability Statement: The data of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

AI Declaration: Grammarly was used to improve the grammar and clarity of the manuscript.

Abbreviations: The following abbreviations are used in this manuscript

POS - Perceived Organisational Support

OST - Organisation Support Theory

SET - Social Exchange Theory.

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frontline supervisors and on providing supportive leadership to enhance perceived organizational support. By educating supervisors on effective communication, acknowledging employee efforts, and promptly addressing employee concerns, daily interactions at work can become positive indicators that employees are appreciated, thereby improving job satisfaction.

4. Fair recognition and job security practices should be institutionalized in organizations. Clear promotion structures, frequent acknowledgment of staff efforts, open communication of organizational decisions, and straightforward career advancement opportunities can help strengthen employees' sense of being valued and supported, especially in the unpredictable Nigerian job market.

5.3. Limitations

The cross-sectional design of this study limits the extent to which causal conclusions can be drawn about the relationships among work environment, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction. In addition, because the sample was drawn exclusively from the Nigerian private sector, the findings may not generalize readily to public-sector organizations, other industries, or broader sub-Saharan African contexts. Future research could strengthen these findings by replicating the study across different organizational settings within Nigeria and other African contexts to enhance external validity and build a more culturally grounded understanding of organizational support processes..

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