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When Long-Term Talent Commitments Become Consequential: Employee Engagement and Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty

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Abstract: This study examines whether long-term talent commitments within the employment relationship are translated into employee engagement and, through that process, support workplace resilience under uncertainty. A quantitative multi-source survey design was employed across 18 organizations operating in diverse industries. Employees reported sustainable talent management and employee engagement, while supervisors assessed workplace resilience in the focal work context. After screening, 300 usable matched responses were retained and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling with bootstrapping. The findings indicate that sustainable talent management is positively associated with employee engagement, and employee engagement is positively associated with workplace resilience. The indirect effect is also significant, suggesting that long-term organizational commitments are more likely to sustain continuity and cooperative functioning under strain when employees translate them into active involvement in everyday work. These findings show that formal talent arrangements do not become meaningful in the employment relationship simply by being present; they matter when they are experienced as credible, enduring, and enacted commitments. The paper contributes to employee relations research by showing how continuity-oriented organizational commitments gain practical significance through employee engagement. For practice, the findings highlight the importance of visible follow-through on developmental commitments, fair continuity during change, and workplace routines that support employee voice and participation.

Keywords: Sustainable Talent Management, Employee Engagement, Workplace Resilience, Employment Relationship, Uncertainty, Employee Participation

INTRODUCTION

Under persistent uncertainty, the employment relationship is tested not only by changing organizational demands but also by whether continuity, involvement, and cooperative functioning can be sustained in everyday work. When workplaces operate under strain, the central issue is not simply whether organizations respond to changing demands, but whether

employees remain willing to contribute, coordinate, and stay involved despite disruption. In this sense, resilience is closely tied to the continuity of work relationships and to employees' ongoing participation in collective functioning rather than to formal structures alone (Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Weick, 1993).

Within this context, sustainable talent management can be understood not merely as a set of talent practices, but as a long-term organizational commitment within the employment relationship. Rather than focusing narrowly on attraction, retention, or succession planning, this perspective emphasizes continuity, development, and mutual investment between the organization and its employees. Such a view becomes especially important under uncertainty, where employees are more likely to remain involved when organizational commitments are experienced as durable, fair, and future-oriented rather than selective or short-term. Sustainable talent management therefore matters less as a formal toolkit and more as a signal of whether the organization is prepared to sustain the relationship over time (Cachón-Rodríguez et al., 2022; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Ferreiro-Seoane et al., 2021; Hendrawan et al., 2024; Pawirosumarto, 2026).

Yet organizations may adopt talent programmes that appear similar on paper while employees respond to them very differently in practice. The key empirical problem is not only whether sustainable talent management is formally present, but whether employees experience it as a credible commitment within the employment relationship. Credibility depends not only on what organizations communicate, but also on whether developmental support, long-term orientation, and continuity intentions are followed through in visible and consistent ways. When such signals are not reinforced in everyday practice, employees may interpret talent commitments as symbolic rather than enduring. This helps explain why apparently similar talent arrangements do not always support the same level of continuity, participation, or cooperative functioning under pressure (Menezes et al., 2025; Sinisterra et al., 2024).

Employee engagement provides an important lens for understanding this process. Engagement is not only a psychological state of enthusiasm or energy, but also a relational enactment expressed through involvement, participation, and discretionary contribution in day-to-day work (Kahn, 1990). In workplace settings marked by strain, engaged employees are more likely to support coordination, contribute beyond formal minimums, and remain actively involved in the ongoing work relationship. Under uncertainty, continuity depends not only on what organizations provide, but also on whether employees reciprocate those commitments through sustained involvement and cooperative effort. Prior research also links engagement with voice, effort, and support for organizational adaptation, making it a useful lens for understanding how long-term organizational commitments gain traction in everyday practice (Albrecht et al., 2015; Fasih et al., 2025; Rees et al., 2013; Sinisterra et al., 2024; Umair et al., 2024).

Against this background, this study introduces workplace resilience under uncertainty as the continuity of coordinated work and cooperative functioning during challenging periods. The emphasis is not on resilience as a broad strategic trait, but on whether work can continue effectively when pressure intensifies and routines are disrupted. From an employee relations perspective, workplace resilience depends on whether employees remain involved, responsive, and able to sustain collective functioning under strain. It therefore reflects continuity in the lived employment relationship, not simply the formal existence of organizational systems (Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Weick, 1993).

Accordingly, this study addresses two focused questions: whether long-term talent commitments are associated with employee engagement, and whether employee engagement helps translate those commitments into workplace resilience under uncertainty. The paper argues that long-term talent commitments do not support continuity at work by design alone; they matter when employees experience them as credible commitments and respond through

active involvement in everyday work. By examining these relationships, the study contributes to employee relations research by showing how sustainable talent management becomes meaningful through mutuality, credible commitments, and employee participation under strain. It thus offers a grounded explanation of why long-term organizational commitments matter for sustained cooperation and workplace continuity under uncertainty.

Theoretical Background

Sustainable Talent Management

Sustainable talent management departs from conventional perspectives that treat talent practices as best-practice bundles designed primarily to maximize short-term performance. Traditional approaches typically emphasize attraction, retention, and succession planning, often privileging high-potential groups and framing talent as a scarce asset to be secured strategically (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). Although such approaches remain useful for staffing and capability planning, they offer only a partial explanation of how organizations sustain employee contribution under persistent uncertainty, because they tend to privilege formal talent arrangements over the longer-term employment relationship through which those arrangements acquire meaning in practice.

In this study, sustainable talent management is understood as a long-term employment commitment system that signals continuity, development, and mutual investment between the organization and its employees. This perspective shifts attention away from talent management as a narrow retention toolkit and toward the broader relational conditions through which organizations sustain employee involvement over time and across disruption. Development signals that employees are worth investing in for the future, continuity signals that the relationship is intended to endure beyond immediate performance pressures, and mutual investment reflects a reciprocal logic in which organizational commitment is more likely to be met with engagement, adaptability, and discretionary contribution (Al-Taie & Khattak, 2024; Ferrón Vílchez et al., 2024; McManus et al., 2025; Tsaousiotis et al., 2025).

This interpretation is also consistent with sustainability-oriented HRM scholarship, which increasingly treats responsible people systems as enablers of enduring employment relationships rather than isolated practice add-ons (Pawirosumarto, 2026). From this perspective, the central issue is not simply whether talent practices are formally present, but whether they are experienced as credible commitments that provide relational stability under changing conditions. Credibility matters because employees are unlikely to treat talent investments as meaningful if developmental support, long-term orientation, and continuity intentions are inconsistent, weakly enacted, or unevenly followed through. Sustainable talent management is therefore more likely to support sustained participation when employees interpret talent signals as reliable, fair, and enduring rather than symbolic or fragmented. When such credibility is absent, formally similar talent systems may fail to generate the same level of employee involvement, even when they appear comparable on paper (Hu et al., 2025; Mohammadi & Mohammadian, 2025; Seraj et al., 2025).

Employee Engagement as a Relational Process

Employee engagement is often described as the extent to which employees invest cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy in their work roles. Early work, however, framed engagement less as a static internal condition and more as meaningful involvement in role performance, emphasizing the conditions under which individuals bring their full selves to work (Kahn, 1990). Building on this view, engagement is understood here not simply as an internal attitude, but as enacted involvement in everyday work through which employees participate, contribute, and remain connected to the ongoing employment relationship.

In this study, employee engagement is treated as a relational process expressed through active participation, discretionary contribution, and cooperative effort in day-to-day work. It reflects whether employees remain willing to invest themselves in collective functioning by contributing beyond formal minimums, coordinating with others, and adapting to changing demands as work conditions evolve. In this sense, engagement is not only about how employees feel, but also about how they enact involvement in the workplace through voice, collaboration, responsiveness, and ongoing contribution. Such involvement is especially important under uncertainty, where formal systems alone are often insufficient and organizations depend on employees' continued willingness to remain engaged in the work relationship under strain (Kwon & Kim, 2025; Presbitero et al., 2025).

This framing is important because it positions employee engagement as the relational process through which organizational commitments gain traction in practice. Rather than being treated as a passive outcome of supportive management, engagement helps explain how formal employment arrangements are translated into sustained cooperation, information sharing, adaptive contribution, and coordinated effort in everyday work. In this way, engagement links sustainable talent management to the lived employment relationship by showing whether long-term organizational commitments are reciprocated through active employee involvement rather than remaining symbolic or procedural arrangements alone (Abualigah et al., 2025; Ramdeja & Rungruang, 2025).

Strategic Resilience in Employment Contexts

Workplace resilience under uncertainty is understood here as a people-enabled outcome reflected in the capacity to sustain coordinated functioning, continuity of work processes, and productive performance during challenging conditions. This view moves beyond narrow interpretations of resilience as merely the ability to recover after disruption. In workplace settings, resilience is better understood as the capacity to maintain coordinated and productive work while uncertainty is still unfolding, not only after shocks have occurred (Weick, 1993).

Importantly, workplace resilience under uncertainty is not treated here as a broad synonym for organizational effectiveness, nor as a generic concept detached from employment relations. It also differs from individual adaptive performance. Organizational effectiveness may describe performance under relatively stable conditions, whereas workplace resilience refers more specifically to the continuity of coordinated work and cooperative functioning under ongoing strain. Likewise, adaptive performance captures how individuals adjust their behavior, but workplace resilience concerns the maintenance of collective functioning made possible through sustained employee contribution, coordination, and work-system stability. In this sense, workplace resilience is not simply recovery after disruption, but endurance during disruption.

From this perspective, workplace resilience depends on relational stability and adaptive capacity. Stability does not imply rigidity, but the continuity of trust, role clarity, and mutual expectations that allows employees to remain involved as tasks and structures evolve (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Adaptive capacity reflects employees' willingness to adjust behavior, share knowledge, and support change beyond formal role requirements (Kim & Yoon, 2025; Malik et al., 2024). These conditions are inherently relational because they emerge through sustained interactions between management and employees rather than through formal systems alone.

Accordingly, workplace resilience under uncertainty is not treated as a fixed strategic trait, but as an employment-based outcome realized through sustained coordination, adaptive effort, and the continuity of everyday work relationships. In this way, resilience links long-term organizational commitments and employee involvement to the preservation of cooperation and productive functioning under pressure (Retno Widowati & Damdam Damiyana, 2025)

Hypotheses Development

Sustainable Talent Management and Employee Engagement

Sustainable talent management is expected to foster employee engagement because it signals long-term organizational commitment, continuity, and mutual investment within the employment relationship. From a social exchange perspective, employees are more likely to reciprocate organizational support with stronger involvement, discretionary contribution, and cooperative effort when they interpret organizational commitments as credible, fair, and enduring (Kieserling, 2019). In this sense, sustainable talent management matters not simply because it offers supportive practices, but because it communicates that employees are regarded as valued long-term contributors rather than expendable resources.

Talent arrangements that emphasize development, continuity, and mutual investment are more likely to strengthen employee engagement because they reinforce the perception that the organization is prepared to sustain the relationship over time. Such signals become especially important under uncertainty, where employees are more likely to remain actively involved when organizational commitments appear dependable and future-oriented rather than symbolic or inconsistent. This logic is consistent with Kahn's (1990) view of engagement as meaningful involvement in role performance. Prior research also suggests that development-oriented and sustainability-oriented talent practices are associated with higher employee engagement because they reinforce trust, relational stability, and employees' sense that organizational support is serious rather than merely rhetorical (Lu et al., 2023; Umair et al., 2024).

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: *Sustainable talent management is positively related to employee engagement.*

Employee Engagement and Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty

Employee engagement is expected to support workplace resilience under uncertainty because it helps sustain cooperative effort, coordinated action, and continuity of work during challenging conditions. Sensemaking theory suggests that organizations do not endure disruption simply because individuals adjust in isolation, but because employees collectively interpret changing conditions and coordinate their responses in ways that preserve ongoing work (Weick, 1993). In this context, engagement matters because it reflects employees' willingness to remain involved, contributive, and responsive even when routines are disrupted and work demands intensify.

Engaged employees are more likely to invest sustained effort in problem-solving, share knowledge, support coordination, and adapt their behavior in ways that help maintain collective functioning under pressure. These forms of enacted involvement are especially important for workplace resilience because they enable work to continue productively while uncertainty is still unfolding, rather than only after disruption has passed. Prior research similarly associates engagement with adaptive capacity, continuity of contribution, and organizational endurance during periods of strain (Dickson, 2025; Georgescu et al., 2024; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). In this sense, engagement supports workplace resilience not merely by improving individual performance, but by helping preserve cooperation, responsiveness, and productive continuity in the work system.

Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: *Employee engagement is positively related to workplace resilience under*

The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

Sustainable talent management is expected to influence workplace resilience under uncertainty primarily through employee engagement. Although sustainable talent management may signal developmental continuity, long-term support, and mutual investment, these features do not shape workplace functioning by formal presence alone. Their value depends on whether

employees experience them as credible commitments and reciprocate through sustained involvement, cooperative effort, and discretionary contribution in everyday work. In this sense, employee engagement provides the relational pathway through which long-term organizational commitments are translated into continuity of coordinated work under strain.

This mediation logic is central to the present study. The argument is not simply that sustainable talent management relates to engagement and that engagement, in turn, relates to workplace resilience. Rather, the core proposition is that employee engagement helps explain how long-term talent commitments become meaningful in practice by supporting active involvement, coordinated contribution, and cooperative functioning during challenging conditions. The indirect path therefore captures how organizational commitments are carried into the lived employment relationship rather than remaining symbolic arrangements on paper.

This reasoning is consistent with prior research that positions people-management systems as antecedents of engagement and engagement as an important link between employment arrangements and downstream outcomes (Saks, 2022). Prior studies also show that engagement mediates the effects of HRM systems on employee behavior and broader organizational outcomes (Alfes et al., 2013). In the talent management literature, engagement has likewise been identified as an important pathway through which talent-related commitments shape work-related outcomes (Abdullahi et al., 2022; Peretz, 2024; Sinisterra et al., 2024). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: *Employee engagement mediates the relationship between sustainable talent management and workplace resilience under uncertainty.*

Conceptual Framework

Building on the preceding discussion, this study adopts a relational framework to explain how sustainable talent management is linked to workplace resilience under uncertainty through employee engagement. Rather than assuming that long-term talent commitments shape workplace functioning by formal presence alone, the framework emphasizes that their significance depends on whether employees experience them as credible commitments within the employment relationship and respond through active involvement in everyday work. In this framework, sustainable talent management represents long-term organizational commitment, employee engagement reflects enacted involvement and cooperative contribution, and workplace resilience under uncertainty refers to the continuity of coordinated work and functioning during challenging conditions. **Figure 1** presents the proposed relationships among the study constructs.



H3 denotes the mediated relationship (sustainable talent management → employee engagement → workplace resilience under uncertainty); therefore, it is not displayed as a separate direct arrow in the figure.

Figure 1. Sustainable Talent Management, Employee Engagement, and Strategic Resilience

METHOD

Sample and Data Collection

This study employed a quantitative multi-source survey design to examine the relationships among sustainable talent management, employee engagement, and workplace resilience under uncertainty in a multi-industry employment setting. Sustainable talent management and employee engagement were assessed through employee self-reports, whereas

workplace resilience under uncertainty was evaluated through immediate-supervisor ratings. Data were collected between June and December 2025.

Participants were drawn from 18 organizations across diverse industries that agreed to facilitate data collection. Employees completed the employee survey, and their immediate supervisors provided corresponding evaluations of workplace resilience in the focal work context. Immediate supervisors were selected as informants because they were well positioned to observe continuity of work processes, coordination patterns, and adaptive functioning in the employee's day-to-day work setting. In this study, workplace resilience under uncertainty therefore refers to a supervisor-observed outcome in the focal work context rather than to a broad firm-level indicator or a purely individual performance judgment. This source separation was also intended to reduce same-source inflation by collecting the predictor and mediator from employees and the outcome from supervisors.

A non-identifying matching code was used to link employee and supervisor responses while preserving confidentiality. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Respondents were informed of the academic purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the use of aggregated reporting only. Responses with substantial missing data or patterns indicating inattentive responding were excluded. After screening, 300 usable employee responses were retained, nested under 72 supervisors across 18 organizations, with each supervisor evaluating between three and six employees. Although the data were drawn from a hierarchical organizational context, the analytical model was specified at the matched employee–supervisor dyadic level in order to examine how employee-perceived sustainable talent management and engagement relate to supervisor-rated workplace resilience within the focal work context.

Measures

All constructs were measured using established multi-item scales adapted from prior management and employment relations research. Each construct was operationalized with four reflective indicators. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Sustainable talent management and employee engagement were assessed through employee self-reports, whereas workplace resilience under uncertainty was assessed through supervisor ratings using organizational- or unit-referent items.

Scale adaptation prioritized semantic equivalence and contextual fit. Item wording was kept as close as possible to the original sources, with minor refinements to fit the employment context and maintain consistent referents across constructs. The instrument was pretested for clarity and interpretability, resulting in minor wording adjustments without altering substantive meaning. Table 1 presents the measurement items and their sources. For workplace resilience under uncertainty, the selected items were intended to capture continuity of coordinated functioning, continuity of work processes, and maintained performance under challenging conditions as observed in the focal employee's immediate work context. Thus, the measure was designed to reflect supervisor-observed workplace resilience in the work setting rather than broad organizational effectiveness in a general sense.

Table 1. Variables, Measurement Codes, Indicators, and Sources

Variable	Code	Measurement Indicator	Source
Sustainable Talent Management (STM)	STM1	The organization invests in my long-term development.	(Ferreiro-Seoane et al., 2021; Saleh & Atan, 2021)
	STM2	Talent management practices emphasize continuous learning and growth.	
	STM3	Employees are viewed as long-term partners of the organization.	

	STM4	The organization is committed to maintaining stable employment relationships.	
Employee Engagement (EE)	EE1	I feel enthusiastic about my work.	(Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2006; Shuck et al., 2017)
	EE2	I am highly involved in my daily work activities.	
	EE3	I willingly put extra effort into my work when needed.	
	EE4	I actively participate in improving work processes.	
Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty (WR)	WR1	The organization continues to function effectively during challenging periods.	(Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011)
	WR2	The organization adapts quickly to unexpected changes.	
	WR3	Employees work together effectively under pressure.	
	WR4	The organization maintains performance despite external disruptions.	

Source: *Authors' own compilation based on prior studies.*

Research Integrity and Common Method Bias Mitigation

Several procedural steps were used to strengthen research integrity and reduce the risk of common method bias. First, source separation was implemented by collecting sustainable talent management and employee engagement from employees and workplace resilience under uncertainty from supervisors. This design was intended not to eliminate all sources of bias, but to reduce same-source inflation by separating the measurement of the predictor and mediator from that of the outcome. Second, confidentiality protections were emphasized through voluntary participation, anonymity, and the exclusion of personally identifiable data, thereby reducing evaluation apprehension and social desirability pressures. Third, the survey instrument presented constructs in separate sections with neutral instructions to support more independent responding.

In addition to these procedural controls, a full collinearity assessment was conducted as a conservative statistical check for method-related inflation and multicollinearity. Full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) values were evaluated against recommended thresholds, with values below 3.3 indicating low concern. Taken together, the procedural safeguards and statistical checks provide greater confidence that the estimated relationships reflect the study model rather than being driven primarily by measurement artefacts, while recognizing that no single procedure can remove method bias entirely.

Data Analysis

The hypothesized relationships were tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS. PLS-SEM was selected because the study focuses on theory-informed explanatory analysis and mediation testing rather than strict covariance-based theory confirmation (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2017). The model was estimated at the matched employee–supervisor level, linking employee-reported sustainable talent management and engagement to supervisor-rated workplace resilience under uncertainty in the focal work context. Although the data were drawn from a nested organizational setting, the analysis was intended to examine theoretically grounded associations and indirect relationships rather than establish definitive causality, and the hierarchical context is acknowledged as a limitation of the design.

Following established guidelines, the analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the measurement model was assessed in terms of internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), outer loadings, and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio. Second, the

structural model was evaluated by estimating the hypothesized direct relationships, testing the indirect effect through bootstrapping, and reporting explanatory and predictive indicators consistent with current PLS-SEM practice (Hair et al., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model

The measurement model was first assessed to establish the reliability and validity of the study constructs. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). As reported in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.824 to 0.853, while CR values ranged from 0.884 to 0.900. These values exceed commonly accepted thresholds, indicating satisfactory internal consistency across employee engagement, workplace resilience under uncertainty, and sustainable talent management.

Convergent validity was assessed using standardized outer loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). All indicators loaded satisfactorily on their intended constructs, with loadings ranging from 0.772 to 0.876. In addition, AVE values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50 for all constructs, namely 0.655 for employee engagement, 0.687 for workplace resilience under uncertainty, and 0.692 for sustainable talent management. Together, these results indicate that the indicators capture their respective latent constructs adequately and consistently.

Discriminant validity was examined using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio. As shown in Table 2, all heterotrait-monotrait values remained below recommended cut-off levels, with the highest value at 0.812, supporting the empirical distinctiveness of the three constructs. This suggests that employee engagement, workplace resilience under uncertainty, and sustainable talent management, while related, are not empirically redundant. Multicollinearity was also assessed, and all variance inflation factor values remained below conservative thresholds, indicating no problematic collinearity. Overall, the measurement model demonstrates acceptable reliability and validity and provides a sufficiently robust basis for evaluating the structural relationships.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Loading	CR	AVE	HTMT (Max)
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.836	0.884	0.655	0.772
	EE2	0.799			
	EE3	0.797			
	EE4	0.804			
Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty	WR1	0.775	0.898	0.687	0.812
	WR2	0.881			
	WR3	0.844			
	WR4	0.811			
Sustainable Talent Management	STM1	0.772	0.900	0.692	0.731
	STM2	0.800			
	STM3	0.874			
	STM4	0.876			

Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; HTMT (Max) indicates the highest heterotrait-monotrait ratio involving the focal construct.

Structural model and hypothesis testing

The structural model was assessed using PLS-SEM with bootstrapping based on 5,000 subsamples. The results support the hypothesized relationships among sustainable talent management, employee engagement, and workplace resilience under uncertainty.

First, sustainable talent management showed a positive and statistically significant relationship with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.624$, $t = 9.694$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. This suggests that sustainable talent management is associated with the relational conditions that encourage employees to become more actively involved in their work.

Second, employee engagement was positively and significantly related to workplace resilience under uncertainty (β = 0.817, t = 21.330, p < 0.001), supporting H2. This indicates that employee engagement is associated with the cooperative effort, adaptive contribution, and continuity of functioning that help sustain work under challenging conditions.

Third, the indirect effect of sustainable talent management on workplace resilience under uncertainty through employee engagement was positive and statistically significant (β = 0.510, t = 7.736, p < 0.001), supporting H3. This finding is consistent with the view that long-term talent commitments gain traction when they are translated into active employee involvement rather than remaining formal arrangements alone.

The model also demonstrated meaningful explanatory power. Sustainable talent management explained 39.0% of the variance in employee engagement (R^2 = 0.390), while employee engagement explained 66.7% of the variance in workplace resilience under uncertainty (R^2 = 0.667). The structural model results are summarized in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Structural Model Results

Hypo-thesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Sustainable Talent Management → Employee Engagement	0.624	9.694	< 0.001	Supported
H2	Employee Engagement → Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty	0.817	21.330	< 0.001	Supported
H3	Sustainable Talent Management → Employee Engagement → Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty	0.510	7.736	< 0.001	Supported

Note: Results are based on bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples.

Explanatory Power, Effect Sizes, and Predictive Relevance (R^2, f^2, Q^2)

Beyond hypothesis testing, the model showed meaningful explanatory power. As reported in **Table 4**, sustainable talent management explained 39.0% of the variance in employee engagement (R^2 = 0.390; adjusted R^2 = 0.384), while employee engagement explained 66.7% of the variance in workplace resilience under uncertainty (R^2 = 0.667; adjusted R^2 = 0.664). This pattern indicates that the model has substantial explanatory relevance, particularly for the outcome construct.

The effect sizes also indicate substantive importance. As shown in Table 5, sustainable talent management had a large effect on employee engagement (f^2 = 0.639), whereas employee engagement had a very large effect on workplace resilience under uncertainty (f^2 = 2.004). This suggests that employee engagement is not only statistically significant but also substantively important in relation to continuity of functioning under challenging conditions.

Predictive relevance was assessed using the Stone-Geisser Q^2 criterion. As presented in Table 4, the Q^2 values were 0.397 for employee engagement and 0.660 for workplace resilience under uncertainty, both above zero, indicating predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs. Overall, the combined pattern of R^2, f^2, and Q^2 values suggests that the model has meaningful explanatory and predictive capability.

Table 4. Model Explanatory Power (R^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Endogenous construct	R^2	R^2 adjusted	Q^2
Employee Engagement	0.390	0.384	0.397
Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty	0.667	0.664	0.660

Table 5. Effect Sizes (f^2)

Path	f^2
Sustainable Talent Management → Employee Engagement	0.639
Employee Engagement → Workplace Resilience Under Uncertainty	2.004

Discussion

Interpreting the findings

This study examined whether long-term talent commitments become meaningful in the employment relationship through employee engagement and, in turn, support workplace resilience under uncertainty. The findings show that sustainable talent management was positively associated with employee engagement, employee engagement was positively associated with workplace resilience under uncertainty, and the indirect effect was also significant. Taken together, these results suggest that long-term talent commitments do not support continuity of work simply by being formally present. Their relevance depends on whether employees translate them into active involvement, discretionary contribution, and cooperative effort in everyday work.

This pattern helps explain why organizations with apparently similar talent arrangements may differ in their ability to sustain coordinated functioning under comparable strain. Talent programmes may appear well designed on paper, yet they are unlikely to support continuity in practice if employees do not experience them as credible commitments within the employment relationship. In this sense, the findings suggest that sustainable talent management matters less as a formal policy package than as a basis for reciprocal involvement. When employees interpret long-term organizational commitments as dependable and worth reciprocating, they are more likely to remain engaged in ways that sustain coordination, responsiveness, and contribution under pressure.

The findings are also consistent with Kahn's (1990) view of engagement as enacted involvement in role performance. In the present study, engagement appears important not simply because it reflects a positive employee state, but because it is expressed through active participation in ongoing work. This is especially relevant under uncertainty, where workplace continuity depends not only on organizational provisions but also on whether employees remain willing to contribute beyond formal minimum requirements. The results therefore suggest that workplace resilience under uncertainty is supported through the continuity of the employment relationship, particularly when long-term commitments are carried into everyday work through employee involvement.

Theoretical implications

The findings have several implications for employee relations research. First, they suggest that sustainable talent management is better understood not simply as a bundle of talent practices, but as a long-term organizational commitment within the employment relationship. This matters because the findings shift attention away from the formal presence of talent arrangements and toward whether those arrangements are experienced by employees as credible, enduring, and worth reciprocating. In this sense, sustainable talent management appears to matter less as a technical policy package than as a relational signal of continuity, development, and mutual investment (Attar et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025; Kieserling, 2019; Liang & Li, 2025; Pawirosumarto, 2026; Peretz, 2024).

Second, the study adds to the literature by clarifying employee engagement as enacted involvement in the employment relationship rather than only as a positive employee attitude. The findings suggest that engagement is important because it reflects how employees carry organizational commitments into everyday work through participation, effort, voice, and

cooperative contribution. This is especially relevant under uncertainty, where the continuity of work depends not only on formal organizational provisions but also on whether employees remain willing to contribute beyond minimum role requirements. In this respect, the study helps explain why similar talent arrangements may be associated with different workplace outcomes when employee involvement differs across contexts.

Third, the study supports a more employment-based understanding of workplace resilience under uncertainty. Rather than treating resilience as a broad strategic trait or only as post-disruption recovery, the findings suggest that it is closely tied to continuity of coordinated work, cooperation, and maintained functioning during challenging conditions. This framing connects workplace resilience more directly to ongoing work relationships, collective responsiveness, and continuity under strain (Al Zaabi et al., 2025; Bernard et al., 2026; Jehanzeb et al., 2026; Jiang et al., 2024; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Parent-Rocheleau et al., 2024; Weick, 1993),

Taken together, these implications suggest that long-term organizational commitments are more likely to matter when they are recognized by employees as credible and are carried into everyday work through active involvement. The study therefore contributes to employee relations research by showing how continuity in workplace functioning is supported not by formal systems alone, but through the reciprocal relationship between organizational commitment and employee participation under uncertainty.

Practical implications for HR leaders and organizations

The findings offer practical implications at three levels. First, for HR leaders, sustainable talent management should not be evaluated only by the formal presence of talent programmes. Development initiatives, continuity arrangements, and talent policies are unlikely to matter in practice unless employees interpret them as credible, fair, and future-oriented commitments. In practical terms, this means that HR leaders should pay attention to the consistency, visibility, and follow-through of long-term talent commitments rather than relying on programme design alone.

Second, for line managers, employee engagement should be treated as something that is enabled through everyday work relationships rather than assumed to arise automatically. Engagement becomes meaningful when employees are willing to contribute beyond minimum role requirements through voice, collaboration, knowledge sharing, and adaptive effort. Managers can support this by creating regular voice opportunities, encouraging cross-functional problem-solving, and following through visibly on developmental commitments so that long-term organizational support is carried into day-to-day work.

Third, for organizations more broadly, workplace resilience under uncertainty cannot be sustained through formal systems or structural controls alone. It depends on employment arrangements that preserve cooperation, trust, and coordinated contribution under pressure. This means that organizations should design talent systems that support both adaptability and continuity, allowing employees to experience change without reading it as a withdrawal of organizational commitment. It also means ensuring that resilience does not become work intensification. Sustainable workplace functioning under strain depends on workload fairness, recovery opportunities, and psychologically safe voice so that continuity can be maintained without eroding job quality.

Boundary conditions and future research

Several boundary conditions should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, although the study employed a multi-source design in which sustainable talent management and employee engagement were reported by employees and workplace resilience under uncertainty was reported by supervisors, the data were collected within a single time window.

The design reduces same-source inflation, but it does not remove all sources of bias or support definitive causal inference. Future research could extend the model using longitudinal or multi-wave designs to examine whether the observed relationships remain stable over time and across different phases of workplace disruption.

Second, the mixed-industry setting broadens the relevance of the findings, but it also introduces contextual heterogeneity in work structures, coordination demands, and managerial arrangements. The observed relationships may therefore vary across settings marked by different levels of volatility, employment stability, or interdependence. Future research could examine whether the links among sustainable talent management, employee engagement, and workplace resilience under uncertainty differ across industries, organizational forms, or institutional environments.

Third, the data were drawn from a nested organizational context, with employees matched to immediate supervisors across multiple organizations. Although the model was specified at the matched employee-supervisor level, this structure suggests the value of future cross-level research. In particular, subsequent studies could examine more explicitly how employee engagement is carried into team- or unit-level continuity outcomes and whether these relationships differ across supervisory or organizational contexts.

Future research could also engage more directly with boundary conditions that are especially relevant to employee relations, such as justice perceptions, job insecurity, voice climate, workplace control, hybrid or remote work arrangements, and union or nonunion settings. These conditions may shape whether long-term organizational commitments are interpreted as credible and whether employees remain willing to reciprocate through active involvement under strain.

Taken together, these boundary conditions do not weaken the present findings, but they do clarify the contexts in which they should be interpreted. They also point to a broader research agenda on how long-term organizational commitments are translated into employee involvement and continuity of cooperative work across time, contexts, and levels of analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that sustainable talent management is more likely to support workplace resilience under uncertainty when it is translated into employee engagement in everyday work. Long-term talent commitments do not matter simply because they exist as formal arrangements. They matter when employees experience them as credible, fair, and enduring commitments and respond through active involvement, cooperation, and contribution under strain.

The findings also suggest that employee engagement is important because it helps carry long-term organizational commitments into the lived employment relationship. In this way, continuity of workplace functioning depends not only on organizational provisions, but also on whether employees remain willing to participate, coordinate, and contribute beyond minimum role requirements during challenging conditions.

Overall, the study helps explain why similar talent arrangements may be associated with different workplace outcomes under uncertainty. It suggests that the value of sustainable talent management lies less in formal policy presence alone than in its capacity to sustain employee involvement, cooperative functioning, and continuity of work when pressure intensifies.

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