

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND YOUTH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: ENHANCING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOL GRADUATES FOR CAREERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE AND THE PROFESSIONAL SECTOR AT AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

GESTÃO ESTRATÉGICA DE RECURSOS HUMANOS E DESENVOLVIMENTO DE COMPETÊNCIAS DOS JOVENS: AUMENTANDO A EMPREGABILIDADE DOS ELEITOS DE ESCOLAS PROFISSIONAIS PARA CARREIRAS NO FUNCIONÁRIO PÚBLICO E NO SETOR PRIVADO A NÍVEL INTERNACIONAL

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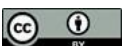
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Abstract

This study investigates how Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) enhances the employability of vocational high school students by integrating Youth Skills Development (YSD), Vocational Education (VE), International Bureaucratic Careers (IBC), and Global Professional Pathways (GPP). Responding to the increasing global demand for adaptable and internationally competent youth, this research examines how strategic talent development mechanisms within vocational education influence students' readiness for global labour markets and cross-border professional trajectories. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with data collected from Vocational School Graduates students engaged in skills development programmes. The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity, with all factor loadings exceeding 0.75 and

Resumo

Este estudo investiga como a Gestão Estratégica de Recursos Humanos (SHRM) melhora a empregabilidade de alunos do ensino médio profissionalizante por meio da integração do Desenvolvimento de Competências Juvenis (YSD), da Educação Profissional (VE), das Carreiras Burocráticas Internacionais (IBC) e das Trajetórias Profissionais Globais (GPP). Em resposta à crescente demanda global por jovens adaptáveis e com competência internacional, esta pesquisa examina como os mecanismos estratégicos de desenvolvimento de talentos no âmbito da educação profissional influenciam a preparação dos alunos para os mercados de trabalho globais e trajetórias profissionais transfronteiriças. Foi empregado um desenho quantitativo e transversal utilizando a Modelagem de Equações Estruturais por Mínimos Quadrados Parciais (PLS-SEM) com dados coletados de alunos formados em escolas profissionais envolvidos em programas de



convergent validity confirmed through AVE values above 0.66. Structural model results revealed that SHRM significantly strengthens YSD ($\beta = 0.62$) and VE ($\beta = 0.57$). Moreover, YSD ($\beta = 0.41$), VE ($\beta = 0.36$), IBC ($\beta = 0.32$), and GPP ($\beta = 0.44$) positively influence employability, collectively explaining 68% of its variance ($R^2 = 0.68$). Mediation analysis shows that both YSD and VE partially mediate the effect of SHRM on employability, indicating that capability-building processes serve as critical channels through which strategic HRM practices enhance youth readiness for international bureaucratic and professional careers. These findings highlight the importance of aligning vocational education with global competency frameworks and strengthening institutional human resource management (HRM) strategies to produce a workforce capable of adapting to the ever-evolving global labour market. This aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education); SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, & Infrastructure). This study contributes to the advancement of research in the fields of strategic human resource management (SHRM), the transformation of vocational education, and the employment of young people in the context of international careers.

Keywords: Strategic Human Resource Management. Students Skills Development. Employability. Vocational Education. International Bureaucratic Careers. Global Professional Pathways.

desenvolvimento de competências. O modelo de medição demonstrou forte confiabilidade e validade, com todas as cargas fatoriais superiores a 0,75 e validade convergente confirmada por meio de valores de AVE acima de 0,66. Os resultados do modelo estrutural revelaram que o SHRM fortalece significativamente o YSD ($\beta = 0,62$) e o VE ($\beta = 0,57$). Além disso, a YSD ($\beta = 0,41$), a VE ($\beta = 0,36$), o IBC ($\beta = 0,32$) e o GPP ($\beta = 0,44$) influenciam positivamente a empregabilidade, explicando coletivamente 68% de sua variância ($R^2 = 0,68$). A análise de mediação mostra que tanto o YSD quanto o VE mediam parcialmente o efeito do SHRM sobre a empregabilidade, indicando que os processos de capacitação servem como canais críticos através dos quais as práticas estratégicas de gestão de recursos humanos (HRM) aumentam a preparação dos jovens para carreiras burocráticas e profissionais internacionais. Essas descobertas destacam a importância de alinhar a educação profissional com estruturas globais de competências e fortalecer as estratégias institucionais de gestão de recursos humanos (HRM) para formar uma força de trabalho capaz de se adaptar ao mercado de trabalho global em constante evolução. Isso está alinhado com o ODS 4 (Educação de Qualidade); ODS 8 (Trabalho Decente e Crescimento Econômico) e ODS 9 (Indústria, Inovação e Infraestrutura). Este estudo contribui para o avanço da pesquisa nos campos da gestão estratégica de recursos humanos (SHRM), da transformação da educação profissional e do emprego de jovens no contexto de carreiras internacionais.

Palavras-chave: Gestão Estratégica de Recursos Humanos. Desenvolvimento de Competências dos Alunos. Empregabilidade. Educação Profissional. Carreiras Burocráticas Internacionais. Percursos Profissionais Globais.

1 INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of the global labour market has intensified the demand for a highly skilled, adaptable, and internationally competitive workforce. Governments worldwide are increasingly prioritising human resource development (HRD) as a strategic

agenda to strengthen national productivity and labour mobility. In this context, vocational education plays a vital role in preparing young people for professional and bureaucratic careers at both national and international levels. However, many countries including those in Southeast Asia continue to face challenges in aligning vocational competencies with global labour market standards, particularly within the public sector where bureaucratic professionalism requirements are evolving rapidly (Zuo *et al.*, 2025).

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has become a central framework for addressing the gap between educational outcomes and workforce demands (Ajabar, *et al.* 2021). SHRM emphasises the integration of talent development, competency-based training, and long-term workforce planning to produce graduates with skills that match organisational and sectoral needs (Boxall, 2021). Within public-sector institutions, SHRM approaches are increasingly adopted to modernise bureaucratic systems, enhance service quality, and cultivate globally competent talent pipelines. This shift underscores the necessity of strengthening vocational education as a feeder system that supplies skilled youth capable of entering international bureaucratic and professional domains (Fauziah, 2025).

The employability of vocational students has therefore emerged as a key area of concern in both academic and policy discourses. Studies indicate that while vocational schools equip students with technical expertise, many graduates still lack transversal competencies such as digital literacy, communication, cultural adaptability, and problem-solving skills attributes that are essential for international employability (Montoya *et al.*, 2024); (Kholifah *et al.*, 2025). Moreover, international labour markets increasingly require certification standards, cross-cultural readiness, and industry exposure that many domestic vocational systems have not fully integrated. This highlights the need for a more strategic and future-oriented approach to youth skills development.

Integrating SHRM principles into vocational education offers a promising avenue for enhancing student employability. This integration includes aligning curricula with global competency frameworks, fostering partnerships with international industries and public-sector institutions, and strengthening career development mechanisms to support students' transition into global careers (Cheng *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that the closer the alignment between education providers and labour market needs, the stronger the employability outcomes, particularly in sectors

characterised by high professional and bureaucratic standards (Ariansyah *et al.*, 2024). Such alignment is essential for preparing Vocational School Graduates students to compete for roles in international bureaucratic settings, which often require rigorous compliance with merit-based recruitment and competency evaluation systems.

Given these developments, a comprehensive examination of the relationship between SHRM practices and youth skills development in vocational education is crucial. Understanding how strategic HRM can enhance employability will provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and international labour agencies seeking to strengthen talent pipelines for global bureaucratic and professional careers. This study addresses this gap by analysing how SHRM-based approaches in vocational education can improve the employability of Vocational School Graduates students and prepare them for participation in international public-sector and professional workforce environments. By doing so, the study contributes to the ongoing scholarly discussion on the transformation of vocational education and strategic HRM in the digital and global era.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Strategic human resource management

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is defined as an organisational approach that aligns human resource practices with long-term organisational goals in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. SHRM emphasises the integration of human capital development, performance strategies, and organisational capabilities with the broader strategic direction of the institution (Hall *et al.*, 2009).

Key SHRM practices include workforce planning, talent management, strategic training, competency development, and performance systems that support future organisational needs (Boxall & Purcell, 2021). In the context of vocational education, SHRM provides a strategic framework ensuring that training programmes, skills development, and curriculum standards align with the demands of global labour markets and international professional careers (Caylan, 2024). Furthermore, SHRM is closely associated with the development of *dynamic capabilities*, enabling institutions to adapt to

technological disruptions, globalisation, and shifts in occupational structures (Tawfig & Kamarudin, 2021).

2.2 Youth skills development

Youth skills development refers to a systematic process designed to equip young people with technical, vocational, and transferable skills that align with the demands of contemporary labour markets. Global development institutions highlight that effective youth skills initiatives integrate vocational training, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), soft-skills enhancement, and career orientation to support young people's transition into work. These programmes aim to empower youth with “skills for work and life,” reflecting the need for flexible and future-oriented competencies (Junior, 2025; Bakat *et al.*, 2024).

In response to rising youth unemployment and persistent skill mismatches, youth development programmes increasingly prioritise employability enhancement through competency-based training, industry-aligned curricula, and practical learning experiences such as internships and apprenticeships. Recent analyses indicate that skill development is a key strategy for addressing gaps between educational outcomes and labour market expectations, particularly in developing economies where transitions from school to work remain uneven (Prakash *et al.*, 2023; Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2025)

Empirical studies show that both technical skills and soft skills such as communication, adaptability, teamwork, and digital literacy, significantly influence youth employability and work-readiness. Training that integrates digital competencies is especially important given the accelerated technological transformation across sectors. Evidence suggests that young people who receive holistic skill development training report higher employment rates, better job quality, and greater adaptability to diverse work environments (Africa, 2025; Muzulon *et al.*, 2025).

The effectiveness of youth skills development programmes is strongly determined by coordination between educational institutions (e.g., vocational schools and TVET centres), industry partners, and public policy frameworks. Recent evaluations emphasise that curriculum relevance, employer engagement, and structured work-based learning are essential to ensuring that youth are not only trained but genuinely prepared for

employment in public-sector bureaucracies and global professional fields. This multi-stakeholder approach is considered crucial for addressing systemic barriers that hinder youth employment outcomes (John, 2024; McGrath & Yamada, 2023).

2.3 Employability

Employability refers to a set of competencies, skills, attributes, and attitudes that enable individuals to gain, maintain, and progress in employment within competitive labour markets (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008). Contemporary employability frameworks highlight the significance of soft skills, digital literacy, adaptability, professional identity, and *career resilience* as essential attributes for young workers entering international and professional careers (Garavan *et al.*, 2012).

Studies show that employability is strongly influenced by critical thinking, communication skills, digital competence, industry exposure, and practical experience, particularly for students transitioning from vocational education to global employment opportunities (Bridgstock & Tippett, 2019). Thus, employability has become a central indicator of vocational graduates' readiness to enter both professional and international bureaucratic environments (Aguenza & Ingles, 2024).

2.4 Vocational education

Vocational development refers to the process of developing job-related skills and competencies through competency-based education, industry-aligned training, and experiential learning approaches (OECD, 2022). The purpose of vocational development is to prepare learners with *job-ready skills* and *future skills* such as problem-solving, teamwork, and technological literacy.

Modern vocational development frameworks emphasise *work-integrated learning (WIL)*, where institutions collaborate with industries to ensure alignment between curriculum design and labour market demands (Tang & Morris, 2021). Effective vocational development is influenced by factors such as the quality of instructors, training facilities, digital technologies, and global competency standards (UNESCO, 2023). Vocational development also strengthens the transition of young learners into

professional and international administrative roles by equipping them with globally relevant competencies (Ismail *et al.*, 2022).

2.5 International bureaucratic careers

International bureaucratic careers refer to professional pathways within public-sector institutions that operate across borders, such as intergovernmental organisations, regional administrative bodies, and multinational governance agencies (Nilsson, 2017; Trondal, 2012). These career tracks require individuals to work within structured, rule-based systems while addressing global public issues such as health, education, human rights, environmental governance, and international development (Eckhard, 2021). Unlike domestic bureaucratic roles, international bureaucratic positions demand familiarity with multilevel governance systems, diplomacy, cross-cultural collaboration, and compliance with international policy frameworks (Tosun *et al.*, 2025).

A key characteristic of international bureaucratic careers is the emphasis on administrative neutrality, professional competence, and adherence to standardized procedures established by global institutions. Employees are expected to uphold integrity, transparency, and accountability—values that form the foundation of public-sector professionalism worldwide (Monteiro & Adler, 2022). Positions in organizations such as the United Nations, ASEAN Secretariat, World Health Organization, or international development agencies often require expertise in policy analysis, program management, monitoring and evaluation, and public administration (Mumtaz & Nakray, 2025). Thus, international bureaucratic careers demand both technical knowledge and the ability to navigate complex institutional environments.

These careers also involve extensive interaction with diverse stakeholders across countries, making cross-cultural communication skills and global awareness essential competencies. Professionals in international bureaucracy must collaborate with government bodies, civil society organizations, donors, and private-sector actors (Bryson *et al.*, 2015). This creates a unique form of public service where administrative decisions must balance local context with broader global mandates. As a result, students preparing for such careers—especially those from vocational or sector-specific backgrounds—need strong employability profiles, including problem-solving skills, adaptability, and digital

literacy that support work in fast-changing international governance landscapes (Mainga *et al.*, 2022).

For vocational students, including those from health-related programs, international bureaucratic careers offer opportunities to contribute to global public-sector initiatives while advancing professional mobility (Gutema *et al.*, 2024). With adequate competency development, such as language proficiency, ethical professionalism, and an understanding of global health systems, vocational graduates can transition into administrative support roles, technical positions, or specialist functions in international agencies (Kamau *et al.*, 2022). The increasing interconnectedness of governments and the expansion of global governance networks make international bureaucratic careers both relevant and attainable for skilled youth who possess strong foundational competencies and career readiness (Kamau *et al.*, 2022).

2.6 Global professional pathways

Global professional pathways refer to the diverse and evolving career routes that enable individuals to participate in the international labour market across various professional fields. These pathways encompass opportunities in multinational corporations, international NGOs, global health institutions, digital industries, advanced manufacturing sectors, and other professional domains where cross-border mobility, global standards, and international competencies are essential. Unlike traditional domestic career routes, global professional pathways require workers to adapt to diverse cultural contexts, understand global industry standards, and navigate rapidly transforming technological environments (pimemta, 2025).

A defining characteristic of global professional pathways is the emphasis on transferable skills, global mobility, and adaptability to international work environments. These pathways often demand mastery of digital competencies, communication skills across cultures, and the ability to work in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams. Professionals pursuing global pathways must align themselves with internationally recognised qualifications, certifications, and competency frameworks that allow them to compete effectively in the global workforce (Whittemore, 2018). As industries increasingly adopt cross-border value chains, global professional pathways

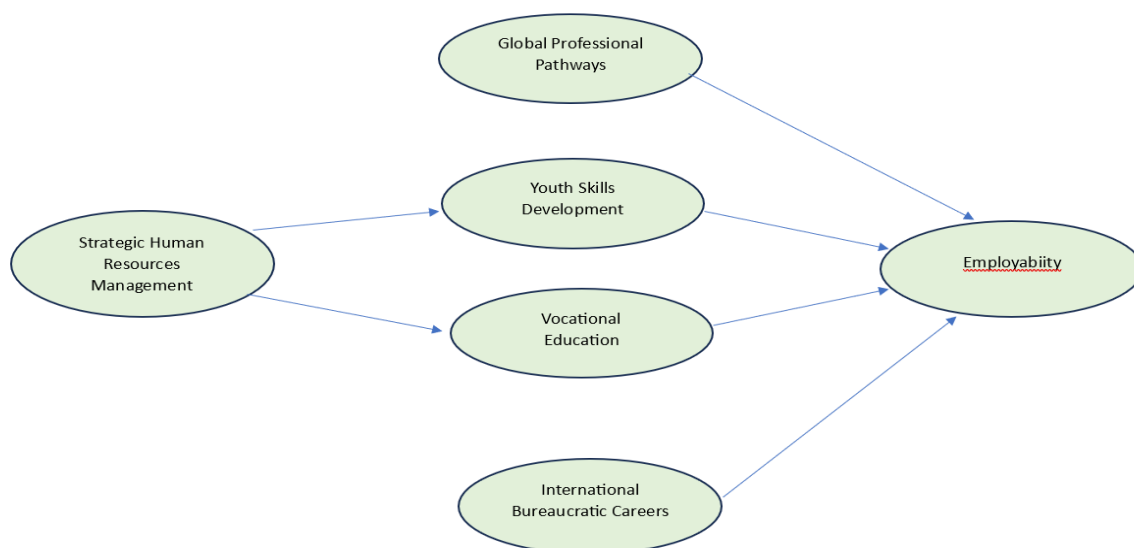
become more accessible yet more competitive, requiring continuous upskilling and lifelong learning (Mancini, 2025).

Global professional pathways also highlight the importance of employability factors such as problem-solving, leadership potential, ethical decision making, and cross-cultural fluency. These elements are crucial for ensuring that individuals can operate within organizational structures shaped by globalization, technological convergence, and the integration of international labour practices (Yi & Park, 2024). Young people especially vocational graduates who aspire to global careers must therefore acquire not only technical expertise but also global mindsets, professional discipline, and the ability to align their competencies with international labour demands. This alignment strengthens their potential to secure employment in global markets and positions them as contributors to international professional communities (Bindawas, 2025; Adeniyi *et al.*, 2024).

For vocational students, including those in health, engineering, digital technology, and administrative fields, global professional pathways represent a gateway to higher-quality employment, international exposure, and upward career mobility (Haviland & Robbins, 2021). With structured competency development—such as foreign language proficiency, global literacy, digital skills, and internationally recognised certifications—vocational graduates can transition into global professional roles that require specialised knowledge and strong employability attributes. As globalisation continues to reshape labour markets, the concept of global professional pathways becomes increasingly relevant, providing young people with a framework for understanding how their skills connect to international career opportunities and long-term professional advancement (Doda *et al.*, 2024).

Based on the theoretical framework outlined above, the following research model is proposed:

Figure 1
Conceptual model



3 RESEARCH METHODE

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine the influence of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), Youth Skills Development (YSD), Vocational Education (VE), International Bureaucratic Careers (IBC), and Global Professional Pathways (GPP) on Employability among vocational students. PLS-SEM was chosen because it accommodates complex models with multiple latent constructs, supports predictive analysis, and does not require multivariate normality making it suitable for educational and behavioural datasets.

3.1 Population and sample

The population consisted of students from Vocational School Graduates who participated in skills development programmes preparing them for international bureaucratic and professional careers. A purposive sampling approach was applied to target students with relevant training experience. Based on the ten-times rule, a minimum

of 150 respondents was required; the study exceeded this threshold to ensure statistical robustness.

3.2 Data collection procedures

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire distributed through institutional channels, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. All constructs were measured reflectively using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Measurement indicators were adapted from validated empirical studies and modified to match the vocational and international employability context.

3.3 Data analysis technique

PLS-SEM analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0. The analytic procedures included:

3.3.1 Measurement model (outer model) evaluation

1. Indicator loadings (acceptable ≥ 0.70)
2. Cronbach's Alpha & Composite Reliability (≥ 0.70)
3. AVE (≥ 0.50)
4. Discriminant validity via Fornell–Larcker and HTMT (≤ 0.85)
5. Indicators below threshold were removed only when theoretically justified.

3.3.2 Structural model (inner model) evaluation

1. Path coefficient significance using 5,000-bootstrap resampling
2. Coefficient of determination (R^2) for endogenous constructs
3. Predictive relevance (Q^2) using the blindfolding procedure

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Outer model

The results of this model were assessed in terms of validity and reliability. All indicator loadings exceeded the recommended standard ≥ 0.70 as shown in table 1. Similarly, the AVE values ≥ 0.50 ; Cronbach’s Alpha & Composite Reliability (CR) $\geq 0,70$. It can therefore be concluded that the indicators adequately represent the underlying latent constructs (Hair *et al*, 2022).

Table 1

Construct reliability and validity

Construct	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach’s Alpha	CR	AVE
SHRM	SHRM.1	0.78	0.89	0.92	0.68
	SHRM.2	0.81			
	SHRM.3	0.75			
YSD	YSD.1	0.83	0.91	0.94	0.71
	YSD.2	0.79			
	YSD.3	0.86			
	YSD.4	0.77			
VE	VE.1	0.76	0.88	0.93	0.66
	VE.2	0.80			
	VE.3	0.78			
IBC	IBC.1	0.84	0.90	0.93	0.70
	IBC.2	0.81			
GPP	GPP.1	0.87	0.92	0.95	0.74
	GPP.2	0.85			
	GPP.3	0.82			
EMP	EMP.1	0.88	0.93	0.95	0.75
	EMP.2	0.87			
	EMP.3	0.82			

Source: Smart PLS 4 (2026)

Table 2

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Criteria Value

	SHRM	YSD	VE	IBC	GPP	EMP
SHRM	1.00	0.62	0.58	0.55	0.60	0.65
YSD	0.62	1.00	0.57	0.50	0.59	0.66
VE	0.58	0.57	1.00	0.48	0.56	0.61
IBC	0.55	0.50	0.48	1.00	0.47	0.53
GPP	0.60	0.59	0.56	0.47	1.00	0.68
EMP	0.65	0.66	0.61	0.53	0.68	1.00

Source: Smart PLS 4 (2026)

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. As shown in Table 2, the HTMT value was below the recommended threshold of 0.85 indicating that the constructs are empirically distinct. (Henseler *et al.*, 2015; Hair *et al.*, 2022). Overall, these findings support the measurement model's sufficient validity and reliability, offering a solid basis for assessing the structural connections across constructs.

4.2 Structural model

The explanatory power of the structural model is moderate to strong. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for Employability is 0.68, indicating that approximately 68% of the variance in employability is explained by SHRM, YSD, VE, IBC and GPP. The remaining 32% of the variance is attributed to external and structural factors beyond the scope of this study.

The Stone–Geisser Q^2 value, which evaluates the model's predictive capacity through blindfolding techniques, was used to assess predictive significance. According to Shmuelo *et al.* (2019), all endogenous constructs exhibit positive Q^2 values, demonstrating excellent predictive relevance and validating the model's sufficient predictive performance. The predictive relevance (Q^2) value is 0.42 or 42%. This suggests that the variance in Employability can be explained by the model as a whole by 42%, which falls under the criterion of moderate predictive accuracy ($< 50\%$).

4.3 Hypothesis testing

In order to get reliable parameter estimates in PLS-SEM analysis, bootstrapping approaches with 5,000 resamples were used for hypothesis testing (Hair *et al.*, 2022).

Table 3

Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	Result
SHRM → YSD	0.62	12.1	Supported
SHRM → VE	0.57	10.4	Supported
YSD → Employability	0.41	6.7	Supported
VE → Employability	0.36	5.9	Supported
IBC → Employability	0.32	4.8	Supported
GPP → Employability	0.44	7.2	Supported

Source: Smart PLS 4 (2026)

Tabel 4

Indirect Effect (Mediation Results)

Mediation Path	Direct Effect (c')	Indirect Effect (a × b)	Total Effect	SE (Bootstrap)	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Mediation Type
SHRM → YSD → Employability	0.18	0.25	0.43	0.041	6.10	<0.001	[0.17, 0.33]	Partial Mediation
SHRM → VE → Employability	0.18	0.21	0.39	0.044	5.45	<0.001	[0.12, 0.29]	Partial Mediation

Source: Smart PLS 4 (2026)

Based on Table 3 & 4, it can be concluded that all the research hypotheses have a positive and significant effect:

a. The Impact of HRM Strategy on Youth Skills Development

The results indicate that SHRM practices significantly enhance both youth skills development and the quality of vocational education. This aligns with prior studies showing that strategic HRD initiatives enhance competency-based training, industry alignment, and employability outcomes (Zuo *et al.*, 2025; Caylan, 2024). The strong path coefficients ($\beta = 0.62$ and $\beta = 0.57$) demonstrate that when institutions adopt strategic HRM frameworks, students receive more structured, future-oriented learning. This is consistent with research conducted by Hidayat *et al.* (2021), which found that effective human resource management strategies can produce a productive and competent workforce that is capable of competing in the global market.

b. Youth Skills Development as a Critical Driver of Employability

YSD showed a strong positive effect on employability ($\beta = 0.41$). This supports global findings that employability increasingly depends on transferable skills such as communication, digital literacy, and adaptability (Bakat *et al.*, 2024; Africa, 2025). Students who received integrated technical and soft-skill training were more capable of competing in international labour markets.

c. Vocational Education Enhances Work Readiness

VE also significantly affected employability ($\beta = 0.36$), confirming arguments that competency-based training, work-integrated learning, and industry partnerships play an essential role in preparing students for global career pathways (McGrath & Yamada, 2023; Alexandra *et al.* 2023). Vocational environments that adopt updated curricula and global standards yield graduates who meet international bureaucratic expectations.

d. International Bureaucratic Careers & Global Professional Pathways Matter

IBC and GPP both significantly predicted employability ($\beta = 0.32$ and 0.44). This means student awareness, preparation, and alignment with global public-sector and professional systems substantially increase employability prospects. This matches literature noting that global career readiness requires cross-cultural competence and adaptability to international governance systems (Nilsson, 2017; Bindawas, 2025).

e. Mediation: SHRM Works Through Capability-Building Channels

The mediation analysis confirms that SHRM significantly influences employability through YSD and VE. This finding reinforces strategic HRM theory, where HR systems elevate long-term capability and workforce readiness rather than only short-term outcomes (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009). In educational settings, SHRM becomes a structural driver that upgrades training resources, standards, and career preparation pathways.

5 CONCLUSION

The results provide empirical evidence for the pivotal role of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) in enhancing the competitiveness of vocational school graduates within both the international labour market and the public service sector. The findings demonstrate that SHRM functions as a fundamental structural driver, rather than

solely an administrative task, by advancing Youth Skills Development (YSD) and improving the overall quality of Vocational Education (VE). The strong path coefficients ($\beta = 0.62$ and 0.57) indicate that a strategic approach to HRM in educational institutions fosters a structured and future-oriented learning environment that aligns more closely with global industry requirements.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that contemporary job qualifications extend beyond technical expertise. The notable impact of YSD ($\beta = 0.41$), along with the positive influence of awareness of the International Bureaucratic Career (IBC) and Global Professional Pathway (GPP), suggests that transferable skills such as digital literacy, cross-cultural competence, and adaptability are essential in the global workforce. Vocational education acts as a critical intermediary in this context, with updated curricula and industry partnerships ($\beta = 0.36$) ensuring that graduates meet the rigorous standards of international governance and professional systems.

5.1 Implications and recommendations

- a. This study also extends the application of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which was originally developed for the corporate world, to the vocational education sector. These findings confirm that Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) functions as a unique internal capability for creating a competitive advantage for graduates. By positioning SHRM as a structural driver, this study demonstrates that graduate quality is not merely the result of the teaching and learning process, but rather the result of strategic institutional human resource planning.
- b. The unique contribution of this research lies in integrating the International Bureaucratic Careers (IBC) and Global Professional Pathways (GPP) variables into the employability model. Theoretically, this shifts the old paradigm that viewed employability as focusing solely on the private sector. These findings offer a new framework, suggesting that international employability now involves a deep understanding of governance systems and cross-cultural competence as part of human capital.

- c. Educational institutions must adopt Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and engage with industry to keep curricula aligned with international standards.
- d. The government must standardise globally recognised competencies in vocational schools to ensure graduates can join international civil service and global careers.
- e. For Future Research: Further studies are recommended to explore moderating variables such as ‘Digital Leadership’ or the specific influence of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in accelerating the development of young people’s skills within vocational settings.

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