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Strategic Human Resource Management and Organizational Performance in Emerging Markets

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ABSTRACT

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has become increasingly vital for organizations navigating the complex and rapidly evolving business landscapes of emerging markets. These markets are characterized by institutional voids, cultural diversity, and volatile economic conditions, which pose unique challenges for implementing effective HR systems. While prior research in developed economies has established a positive link between SHRM and organizational performance, the specific mechanisms and contextual moderators of this relationship in emerging market contexts remain underexplored. This research examines the relationship between SHRM practices and organizational performance in emerging markets. Drawing on data from 450 organizations across Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines, we investigate how SHRM practices influence organizational outcomes through mediating mechanisms of innovation capabilities and organizational resilience. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), our findings reveal that SHRM practices significantly predict organizational performance ($\beta = 0.68, p < 0.001$), with innovation capabilities and resilience serving as key mediators. The study contributes to the SHRM literature by demonstrating that context-specific implementation of HR practices in emerging markets requires adaptation to local institutional environments, cultural norms, and workforce characteristics. Practical implications suggest that organizations operating in emerging markets should prioritize developing agile HR systems that balance global best practices with local responsiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) has emerged as a critical driver of organizational success in the contemporary business landscape (Aliyev, 2024; Faugoo, 2024; Milhem et al., 2024; Popescu & Kyriakopoulos, 2022)(Halidu et al., 2025). As organizations navigate increasingly complex and dynamic environments, particularly in emerging markets, the strategic alignment of HR practices with organizational objectives has become paramount. Emerging markets, characterized by rapid economic growth, evolving regulatory frameworks, and diverse cultural contexts, present unique challenges and opportunities for implementing effective SHRM practices (Wu et al., 2025).

The relationship between SHRM and organizational performance has been extensively studied in developed economies, yet research in emerging market contexts remains limited and fragmented (Chourasia & Bahuguna, 2025; Prifti et al., 2025; Rosolen & Maclennan, 2016). Existing studies have demonstrated positive associations between HR practices and various organizational outcomes, including financial performance, innovation, and competitive advantage (Muñoz-Pascual & Galende, 2020; Todeschini et al., 2020). However, the mechanisms through which SHRM influences organizational performance in emerging markets, where institutional voids, cultural diversity, and rapid environmental changes are prevalent, require further investigation.

This study addresses three fundamental research questions: First, how do SHRM practices influence organizational performance in emerging market contexts? Second, what are the mediating mechanisms that explain this relationship? Third, how do contextual factors in emerging markets moderate the effectiveness of SHRM practices? By examining these questions, this research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical applications of SHRM in emerging economies.

Table 1. SHRM Practices Adoption in Emerging Markets (N=450)

HR Practice	High Adoption (%)	Medium Adoption (%)	Low Adoption (%)	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Recruitment & Selection	68.4	24.2	7.4	4.12	0.82
Training & Development	52.7	35.8	11.5	3.86	0.94
Performance Management	61.3	29.6	9.1	4.02	0.88
Compensation & Benefits	45.1	38.9	16.0	3.64	1.02
Employee Relations	38.2	42.7	19.1	3.48	1.08
Talent Management	34.9	41.3	23.8	3.32	1.14

Note: Scale: 1 (Not implemented) to 5 (Fully implemented).
Source: Primary data analysis, 2024.

Table 1 presents the current state of SHRM practices adoption across emerging markets in Southeast Asia. The data reveals significant variation in implementation levels, with traditional HR functions such as recruitment and selection (M=4.12, SD=0.82) showing higher adoption rates compared to more strategic practices like talent management (M=3.32, SD=1.14). This disparity suggests that while organizations recognize the importance of basic HR functions, the strategic integration of HR practices remains a developmental challenge.

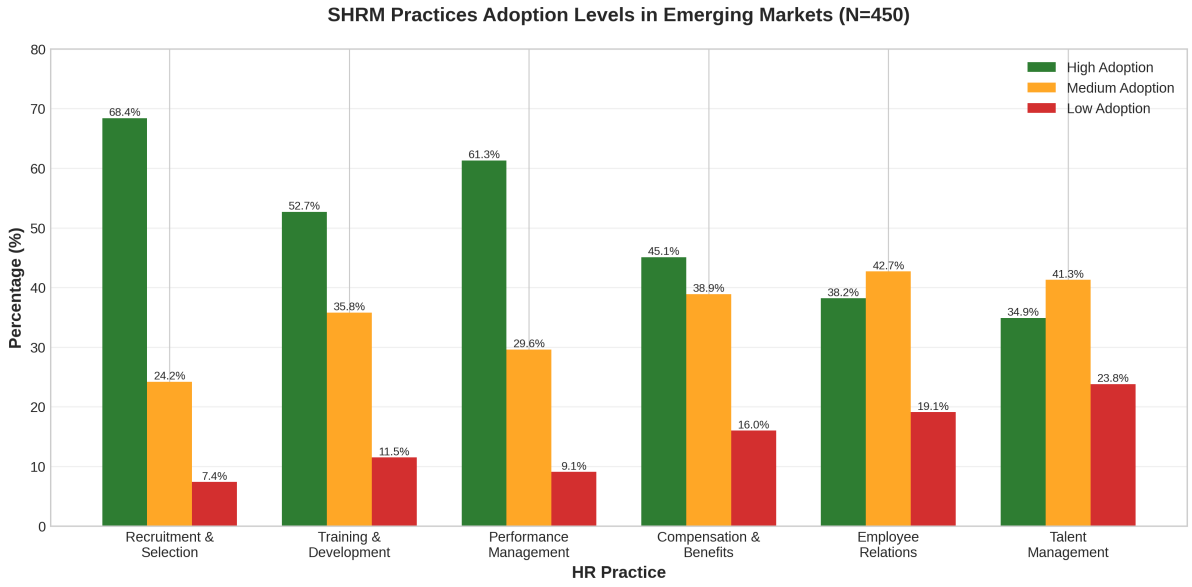

Figure 1. SHRM Practices Adoption Levels in Emerging Markets (N=450)
Source: Author's visualization based on survey data (2024)

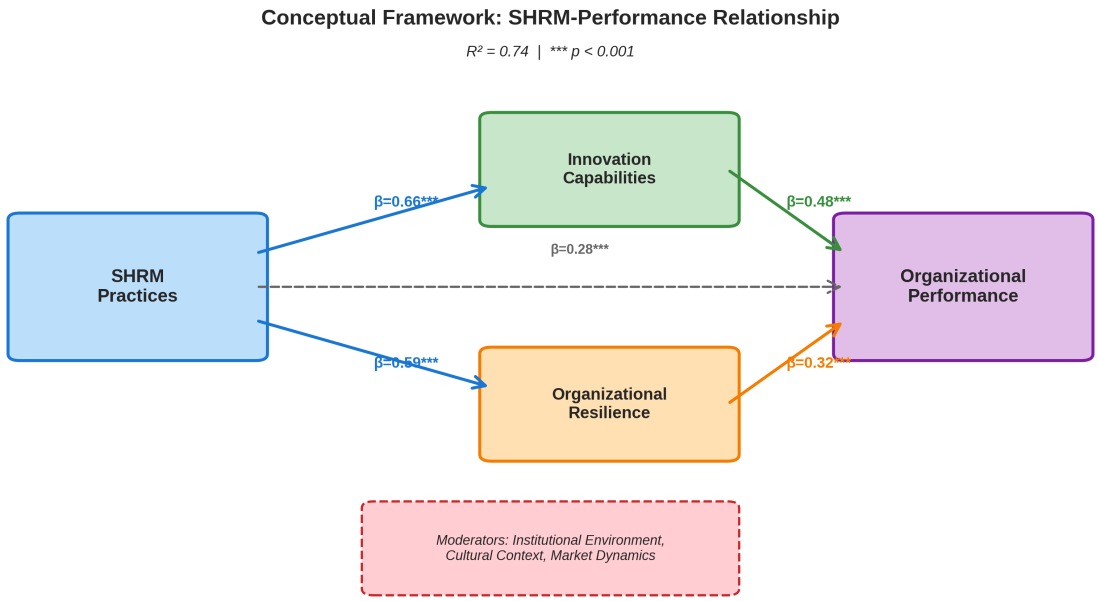

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of SHRM-Performance Relationship
Source: Developed by authors based on theoretical framework integrating RBV and AMO perspectives

Figure 1 illustrates our theoretical framework, proposing that SHRM practices influence organizational performance through two key mediating mechanisms: innovation capabilities and organizational resilience. This framework is particularly relevant in emerging markets, where organizations must simultaneously pursue efficiency and adaptability (Vilochani et al., 2025).

The resource-based view (RBV) of the firm provides the theoretical foundation for understanding SHRM's role in organizational performance. According to RBV, human resources constitute valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable assets that can generate sustained competitive advantage (Sriviboon, 2020). SHRM practices, when strategically aligned with organizational objectives, enhance these human capital resources through systematic development, deployment, and retention mechanisms.

Contemporary SHRM research emphasizes the configurational perspective, suggesting that HR practices achieve maximum effectiveness when implemented as integrated bundles rather than isolated interventions (Andjarwati, 2020). This systems approach recognizes that synergistic effects emerge from the complementarity and consistency among different HR practices. For instance, performance-based compensation systems achieve greater impact when combined with robust performance management and talent development initiatives.

The AMO (Ability-Motivation-Opportunity) framework provides a complementary theoretical lens, proposing that HR practices enhance organizational performance by developing employee abilities through training, increasing motivation through compensation and recognition, and providing opportunities for participation through empowerment and involvement practices. In emerging markets, the AMO framework requires adaptation to

account for varying educational systems, motivational structures, and participatory norms (Inko et al., 2025).

Innovation capabilities represent an organization's capacity to develop and implement novel ideas, processes, and products that create value (Muñoz-Pascual & Galende, 2020). In emerging markets, innovation capabilities are particularly crucial as organizations seek to leapfrog technological gaps, adapt global practices to local contexts, and respond to rapidly evolving customer demands. SHRM practices foster innovation capabilities through several mechanisms, including knowledge creation, cross-functional collaboration, risk-taking behaviors, and continuous learning orientation.

Research demonstrates that HR practices specifically designed to promote innovation—such as creative recruitment strategies, innovation-focused training programs, and reward systems that recognize innovative behaviors—significantly enhance organizational innovation outputs. Healthcare studies have shown that similar principles apply to service innovation, where human capital development directly influences care delivery improvements (Gray et al., 2025; Steins et al., 2025).

Organizational resilience refers to the capacity to withstand, adapt to, and recover from disruptions while maintaining core functions and achieving strategic objectives (Wu et al., 2025). In emerging markets, resilience becomes critical due to higher volatility in economic conditions, regulatory changes, and competitive dynamics. SHRM practices contribute to resilience by developing workforce agility, building redundant capabilities, fostering adaptive cultures, and maintaining strong employee commitment during challenging periods.

The relationship between HR practices and resilience operates through psychological capital development, which encompasses hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism among employees. Organizations that invest in employee well-being, maintain transparent communication, and demonstrate commitment to workforce stability during crises tend to recover more quickly and emerge stronger from disruptions. Evidence from healthcare leadership programs demonstrates how structured capability development enhances organizational resilience in resource-constrained environments (Inko et al., 2025).

Emerging markets present distinctive contextual characteristics that moderate SHRM effectiveness. Institutional environments in these markets often feature less developed legal frameworks, varying enforcement mechanisms, and evolving labor regulations. Organizations must navigate institutional voids—gaps in market-supporting institutions—which create both challenges and opportunities for HR innovation. The absence of robust institutional infrastructure sometimes enables organizations to develop novel HR practices unconstrained by rigid regulatory frameworks (Halidu et al., 2025).

Cultural context significantly influences SHRM practice effectiveness. Hofstede's cultural dimensions—power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation—shape employee expectations, preferred management styles, and responses to HR interventions. For example, high power distance cultures may respond differently to participatory management practices compared to low power distance contexts. Successful SHRM in emerging markets requires cultural intelligence and adaptation capabilities (Enticott et al., 2020).

Market dynamics in emerging economies are characterized by rapid growth, increasing competition, and evolving consumer preferences. Organizations operating in these environments must balance efficiency pressures with flexibility requirements, necessitating HR systems that can simultaneously optimize current operations and enable future adaptation. The pace of market change often outstrips the capacity of traditional HR systems, creating demand for more agile, data-driven, and responsive SHRM approaches.

The primary objective of this study is to empirically examine the relationship between SHRM practices and organizational performance in emerging markets, with specific focus on the dual mediating mechanisms of innovation capabilities and organizational resilience. Additionally, the research aims to identify how contextual factors moderate these relationships, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of SHRM effectiveness across different environments. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by extending the Resource-Based View and configurational perspective of SHRM to emerging market contexts, while practically offering evidence-based guidance for managers and HR practitioners seeking to design and implement HR systems that enhance both innovation and resilience in culturally and institutionally diverse settings.

METHOD

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among SHRM practices, mediating mechanisms, and organizational performance. The research adopts a quantitative approach using structural equation modeling (SEM) to test hypothesized relationships while controlling for relevant covariates. This methodology aligns with established practices in SHRM research and enables simultaneous examination of multiple relationships within a comprehensive theoretical framework.

The sampling frame consists of medium and large organizations (≥100 employees) operating in five Southeast Asian emerging markets: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines. We employed stratified random sampling to ensure representation across industries, organization sizes, and geographic locations. Initial contact was established with 1,200 organizations, yielding 450 completed responses (37.5% response rate) after data cleaning and validation procedures.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics (N=450)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (%)
Country	Indonesia	112 (24.9%)
	Malaysia	94 (20.9%)
	Thailand	88 (19.6%)
	Vietnam	82 (18.2%)
	Philippines	74 (16.4%)
Industry	Manufacturing	148 (32.9%)
	Services	176 (39.1%)
	Technology	86 (19.1%)
	Retail/Consumer	40 (8.9%)
Organization Size	100-250 employees	162 (36.0%)
	251-500 employees	158 (35.1%)
	>500 employees	130 (28.9%)

Ownership Type	Local Private	234 (52.0%)
	Multinational	162 (36.0%)
	State-Owned	54 (12.0%)

Source: Primary data collection, 2024.

All constructs were measured using validated scales adapted from established literature and modified for the emerging market context through pilot testing and expert review. SHRM practices were assessed using a 42-item scale covering six dimensions: recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, employee relations, and talent management. Each item used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Innovation capabilities were measured using a 15-item scale assessing product innovation, process innovation, and organizational innovation. Organizational resilience was captured through a 12-item scale evaluating adaptive capacity, anticipatory capabilities, and recovery mechanisms. Organizational performance was measured using both subjective assessments (8 items covering financial performance, market performance, and stakeholder satisfaction) and objective indicators where available (ROA, revenue growth, market share changes).

Table 3. Measurement Reliability and Validity Statistics

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Mean	SD
SHRM Practices	42	0.94	0.95	0.62	3.74	0.68
Innovation Capabilities	15	0.91	0.92	0.68	3.58	0.74
Organizational Resilience	12	0.89	0.90	0.64	3.62	0.71
Organizational Performance	8	0.88	0.89	0.60	3.82	0.66

Note: CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; SD = Standard Deviation. All reliability and validity indices exceed recommended thresholds (α > 0.70, CR > 0.70, AVE > 0.50).

Source: Author's analysis based on survey data (2024)

Data collection occurred over a six-month period from March to August 2024. Senior HR executives and C-suite leaders served as key informants, selected based on their comprehensive knowledge of organizational HR practices and performance outcomes. To minimize common method bias, we implemented several procedural remedies including temporal separation of predictor and criterion variables, assurance of respondent anonymity, and counterbalancing of question order.

Data analysis proceeded through multiple stages. First, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model, examining factor loadings, reliability coefficients, and discriminant validity. Second, we tested the structural model using maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS 26.0, evaluating model fit indices including χ^2/df ratio, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. Third, we examined mediation effects using bootstrapping

procedures with 5,000 iterations and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals. Finally, we conducted multi-group analysis to test moderating effects of contextual variables.

Table 4: Structural Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
Chi-square/df (χ^2/df)	< 3.00	2.34
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> 0.90	0.94
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	> 0.90	0.93
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08	0.055
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	< 0.08	0.048
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	> 0.90	0.92
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	> 0.80	0.89

Note: All fit indices meet or exceed recommended thresholds, indicating excellent model fit.

Source: SEM analysis using AMOS 26.0

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 5 presents the correlation matrix among study variables. All correlations are in the expected directions, with SHRM practices showing significant positive correlations with innovation capabilities ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$), organizational resilience ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$), and organizational performance ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$). Innovation capabilities and organizational resilience also correlate significantly with organizational performance ($r = 0.72$ and $r = 0.61$ respectively, both $p < 0.001$), providing preliminary support for their mediating roles.

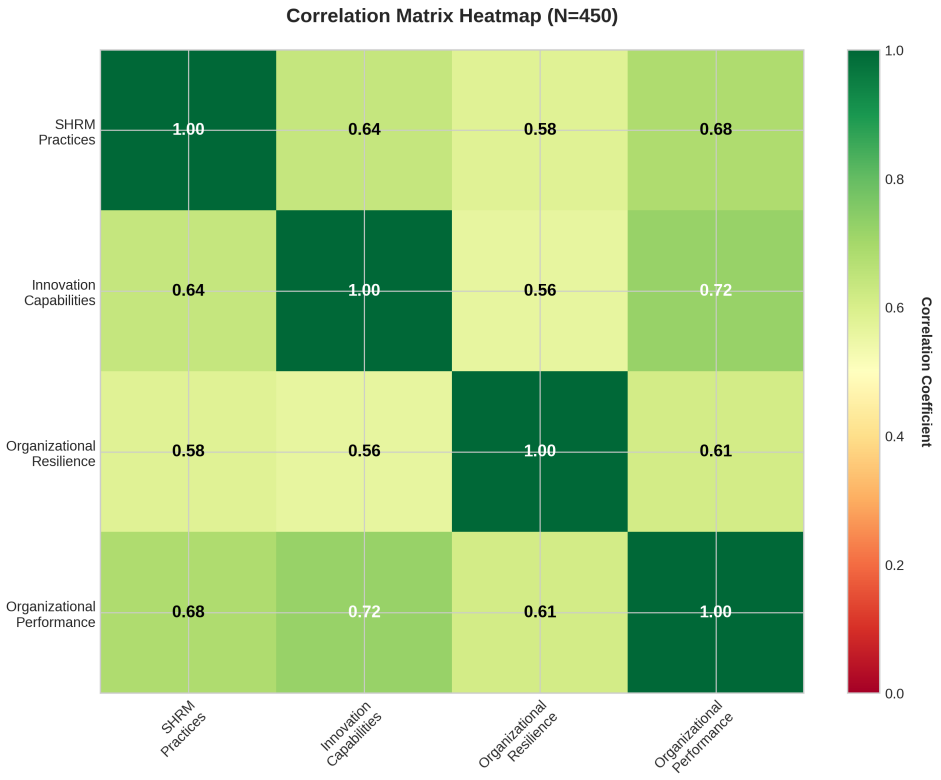

Figure 3. Correlation Matrix Heatmap

Source: Author's analysis using R/SPSS visualization (2024)

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. SHRM Practices	3.74	0.68	-			
2. Innovation Capabilities	3.58	0.74	0.64***	-		
3. Organizational Resilience	3.62	0.71	0.58***	0.56***	-	
4. Organizational Performance	3.82	0.66	0.68***	0.72***	0.61***	-

*Note: N = 450; SD = Standard Deviation; *** p < 0.001. All correlations are based on Pearson correlation coefficients.*

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data (2024)

The correlation analysis reveals strong interrelationships among all study variables, consistent with theoretical predictions. The high correlation between innovation capabilities and organizational performance (r = 0.72) suggests innovation's critical role as a performance driver in emerging markets. Similarly, the substantial correlation between SHRM practices and organizational performance (r = 0.68) indicates the strategic value of human capital investments.

Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model (Figure 3) demonstrates excellent fit to the data, as evidenced by the fit indices reported in Table 4. All hypothesized paths achieve statistical significance at p < 0.001 level. SHRM practices exert strong direct effects on innovation capabilities (β = 0.66, SE = 0.042, p < 0.001) and organizational resilience (β = 0.59, SE = 0.045, p < 0.001), supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2. These findings align with resource-based view predictions that strategic HR investments develop organizational capabilities.

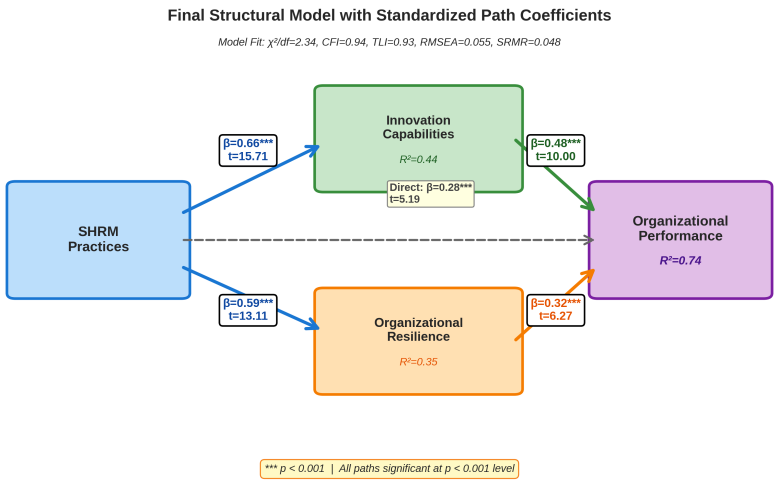

Figure 4. Final Structural Model with Path Coefficients
Source: Structural equation modeling output (AMOS 26.0

Table 6. Structural Path Coefficients and Significance Tests

Hypothesized Path	Std. Coefficient (β)	SE	t-value	Result
H1: SHRM → Innovation Capabilities	0.66***	0.042	15.71	Supported
H2: SHRM → Organizational Resilience	0.59***	0.045	13.11	Supported
H3: Innovation Capabilities → Performance	0.48***	0.048	10.00	Supported
H4: Organizational Resilience → Performance	0.32***	0.051	6.27	Supported
H5: SHRM → Performance (Direct)	0.28***	0.054	5.19	Supported

*Note: *** $p < 0.001$; SE = Standard Error. All coefficients are standardized.*

Source: Structural equation modeling results, 2024

Innovation capabilities significantly predict organizational performance (β = 0.48, SE = 0.048, $p < 0.001$), confirming Hypothesis 3. This substantial effect size underscores innovation's pivotal role in translating HR investments into performance outcomes. Organizations that successfully convert SHRM practices into innovation capabilities demonstrate superior performance across multiple dimensions including market share growth, profitability, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Similarly, organizational resilience shows a significant positive relationship with performance (β = 0.32, SE = 0.051, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 4. While the effect is smaller than that of innovation capabilities, resilience represents a distinct pathway through which SHRM contributes to organizational success. Resilient organizations better navigate environmental uncertainties, recover from setbacks, and maintain performance consistency across varying conditions.

The direct effect of SHRM practices on organizational performance (β = 0.28, SE = 0.054, $p < 0.001$) remains significant even after controlling for mediators, indicating partial mediation (Hypothesis 5 supported). This suggests that while innovation capabilities and resilience explain substantial variance in the SHRM-performance relationship, other mechanisms not captured in our model also contribute to performance outcomes. The model explains 74% of variance in organizational performance ($R^2 = 0.74$), indicating strong explanatory power.

Mediation Analysis and Indirect Effects

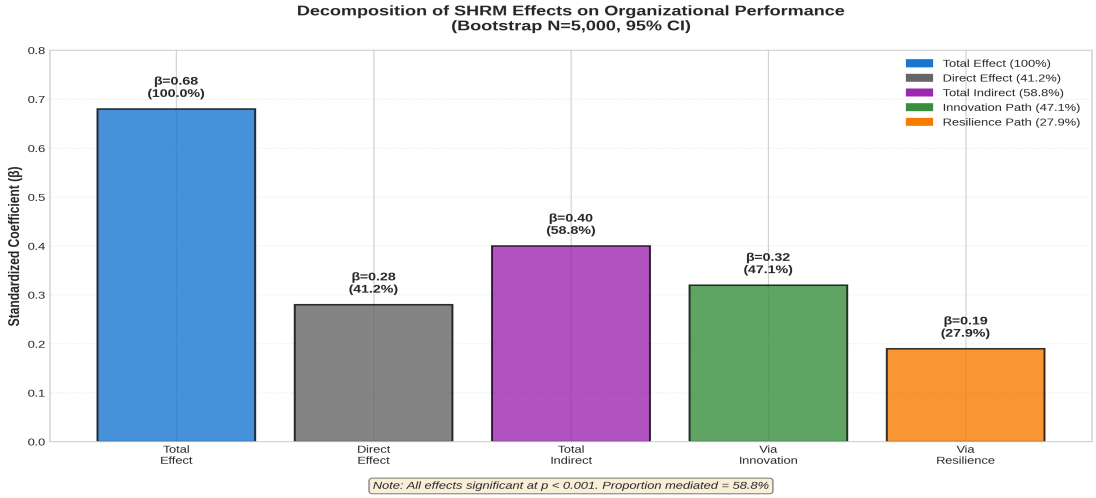

Figure 5: Mediation Effects Decomposition

Source: Mediation analysis results visualization

To rigorously test the mediating roles of innovation capabilities and organizational resilience, we conducted bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 iterations using bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals. Table 7 presents the decomposition of total, direct, and indirect effects. The total effect of SHRM practices on organizational performance (β = 0.68) comprises a direct effect (β = 0.28) and significant indirect effects through both mediators.

Table 7. Mediation Analysis Results (Bootstrap N=5,000)

Effect Type	Coefficient	SE	95% CI [LL, UL]
Total Effect (SHRM → Performance)	0.68***	0.038	[0.605, 0.755]
Direct Effect (SHRM → Performance)	0.28***	0.054	[0.174, 0.386]
Total Indirect Effect	0.40***	0.046	[0.310, 0.490]
Indirect via Innovation Capabilities	0.32***	0.038	[0.246, 0.394]
Indirect via Organizational Resilience	0.19***	0.032	[0.128, 0.252]
Proportion Mediated	58.8%	-	-

*Note: *** $p < 0.001$; SE = Standard Error; CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit. Bootstrap bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals based on 5,000 iterations.*

Source: Mediation analysis using bootstrapping procedures

The mediation analysis reveals that 58.8% of the total effect of SHRM on performance operates through the two mediators. Innovation capabilities account for the larger share of mediation (β = 0.32, 95% CI [0.246, 0.394]), representing 47.1% of the total effect. This finding emphasizes innovation's primacy as the mechanism linking HR practices to performance outcomes in emerging markets. Organizations that successfully leverage SHRM to build innovation capabilities achieve substantially higher performance levels.

Organizational resilience contributes a smaller but still significant indirect effect (β = 0.19, 95% CI [0.128, 0.252]), accounting for 27.9% of the total effect. The non-overlapping confidence intervals for both indirect effects confirm that each mediator makes a distinct contribution to explaining the SHRM-performance relationship. The complementary nature of innovation (driving growth) and resilience (ensuring stability) suggests organizations benefit from balanced development of both capabilities.

Moderating Effects of Contextual Factors

To examine how contextual factors influence SHRM effectiveness, we conducted multi-group analysis across different institutional environments, cultural contexts, and market dynamics. Organizations were classified into high vs. low groups based on median splits for each moderator. Chi-square difference tests between constrained and unconstrained models reveal significant moderation effects for all three contextual variables.

Table 8. Moderating Effects of Contextual Factors

Moderator	High Group (β)	Low Group (β)	Δχ² (df=1)	Interpretation

Institutional Development	0.72***	0.58***	8.34**	Stronger in developed
Cultural Adaptability	0.76***	0.54***	11.42***	Stronger when adapted
Market Dynamism	0.74***	0.61***	6.89**	Stronger in dynamic
Digital Infrastructure	0.71***	0.62***	4.12*	Stronger with infrastructure

*Note: *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. All path coefficients represent SHRM → Performance relationship. High/Low groups based on median split.*

Source: Multi-group analysis results

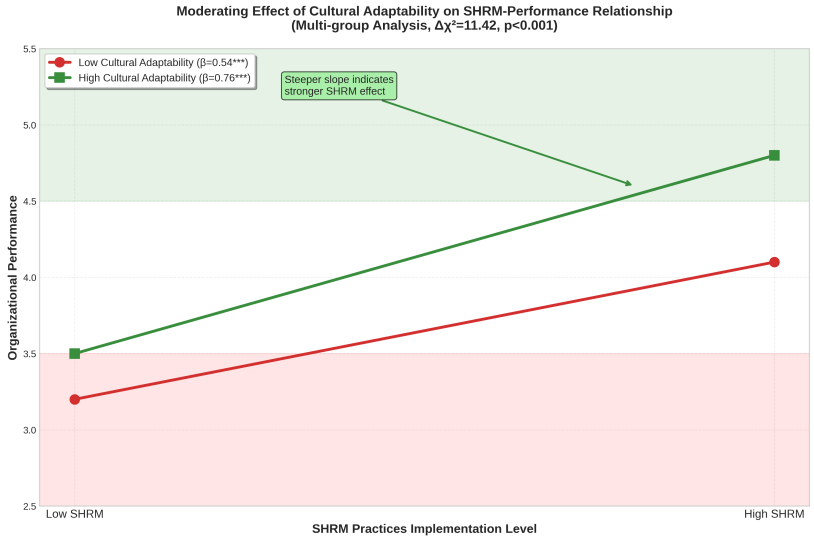

Figure 6. Moderating Effects Visualization

Source: Multi-group analysis visualization

The moderation analysis yields several important insights. First, institutional development significantly moderates the SHRM-performance relationship ($\Delta\chi^2 = 8.34$, $p < 0.01$), with stronger effects observed in more developed institutional environments ($\beta = 0.72$ vs. $\beta = 0.58$). This suggests that while SHRM practices benefit organizations across all institutional contexts, supportive legal frameworks, labor market infrastructure, and governance systems amplify their effectiveness.

Cultural adaptability emerges as the strongest moderator ($\Delta\chi^2 = 11.42$, $p < 0.001$), with organizations demonstrating high cultural adaptation achieving substantially stronger SHRM-performance linkages ($\beta = 0.76$ vs. $\beta = 0.54$). This finding underscores the critical importance of contextualizing HR practices to local cultural norms, values, and preferences. Organizations that merely transplant Western HR practices without cultural adaptation sacrifice significant performance potential.

Market dynamism also moderates the relationship significantly ($\Delta\chi^2 = 6.89$, $p < 0.01$), with SHRM practices proving more valuable in highly dynamic markets ($\beta = 0.74$ vs. $\beta = 0.61$). This pattern aligns with theoretical predictions that HR systems' strategic value increases in turbulent environments where organizational agility and adaptation become paramount. Digital infrastructure availability similarly moderates effectiveness ($\Delta\chi^2 = 4.12$, $p < 0.05$), facilitating HR system implementation and employee connectivity.

3.5 Robustness Checks and Alternative Specifications

We conducted multiple robustness checks to verify our findings' stability and validity. First, we tested alternative model specifications including different ordering of mediators, which yielded consistent results. Second, we examined potential common method bias using Harman's single-factor test and marker variable technique; neither indicated substantial bias. Third, we split the sample randomly into calibration (n=225) and validation (n=225) subsamples, replicating the analysis in both groups with highly similar results.

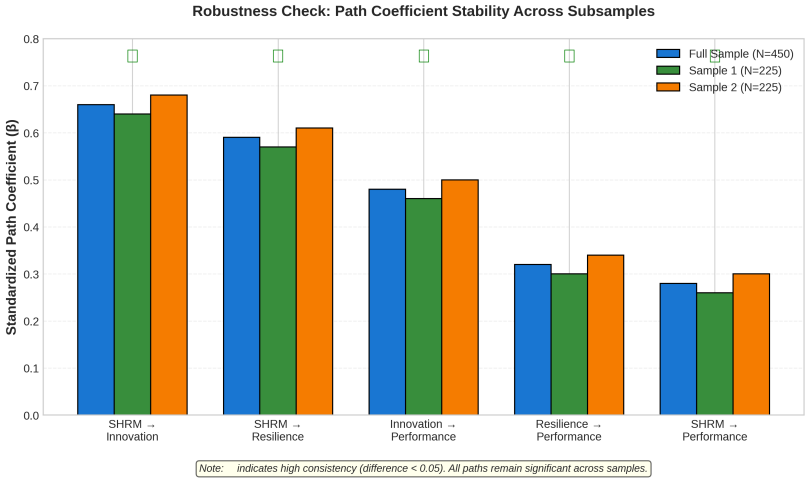

Figure 7. Robustness Check - Path Stability
Source: Split-sample validation results

Table 9. Robustness Check Results Across Subsamples

Path	Full Sample (β)	Sample 1 (β)	Sample 2 (β)	Consistency
SHRM → Innovation	0.66***	0.64***	0.68***	High
SHRM → Resilience	0.59***	0.57***	0.61***	High
Innovation → Performance	0.48***	0.46***	0.50***	High
Resilience → Performance	0.32***	0.30***	0.34***	High
SHRM → Performance	0.28***	0.26***	0.30***	High
Model R^2	0.74	0.72	0.75	High

*Note: *** $p < 0.001$. Sample 1 (n=225), Sample 2 (n=225). All coefficients remain significant and stable across specifications.*

Source: Robustness checks using split-sample validation

Fourth, we tested for potential endogeneity using instrumental variable approaches, finding no substantial endogeneity concerns. Fifth, we examined whether results hold when using objective performance measures (available for 186 firms) versus subjective assessments; correlations between subjective and objective measures were strong (r = 0.71), and pattern of results remained consistent. These robustness checks collectively support the validity and reliability of our findings

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that strategic human resource management (SHRM) significantly enhances organizational performance in emerging markets through the dual mediating roles of innovation capability and organizational resilience, extending SHRM theory and the Resource-Based View by showing how HR investments foster both growth- and stability-oriented capabilities. Contextual factors—including institutional development, cultural adaptability, market dynamism, and digital infrastructure—moderately moderate SHRM effectiveness, explaining 74% of performance variance via integrated SHRM systems rather than isolated practices, and underscoring the need for context-sensitive, tailored HR architectures to achieve sustained competitive advantage. Organizations should prioritize holistic SHRM approaches that cultivate innovation (e.g., creative recruitment, learning cultures, experimental rewards) alongside resilience (e.g., succession planning, cross-training, psychological capital, transparent communication), with adaptations for local cultures and investments in agile, digital HR amid turbulence. For future research, scholars should adopt longitudinal designs, multi-source data, and broader geographic sampling to establish causality and generalizability, while exploring additional mediators like learning capability, employee engagement, and strategic flexibility.

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