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MOTIVATION AND CAREER GUIDANCE AS DRIVERS OF GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study analyses the effect of personalising training pathways and tutorial support on job placement processes within social and employment guidance programmes. Using a structural equation model based on partial least squares (PLS-SEM), the relationships between personalisation, support, motivation and commitment, satisfaction with the training experience and employability were examined, considering job placement as a training construct. Design/methodology/approach: A structural equation model based on partial least squares (PLS-SEM) was applied to examine the relationships between personalisation, tutorial support, motivation, engagement, satisfaction, and employability, treating employment insertion as a formative construct. Findings: The results show that personalisation and support have a significant impact on motivation and commitment, which in turn increase satisfaction with the process. Satisfaction is confirmed as a relevant predictor of job placement, suggesting that transitions to employment depend not only on technical skills but also on the subjective experience of support and meaning. Research limitations/implications: The study uses a relatively small, non-experimental sample, which limits the ability to generalise findings. Future research could include longitudinal designs and mixed methods to deepen understanding of motivational and psychosocial mediation mechanisms. Practical implications: Training and employment programmes should prioritise personalised pathways, continuous support, and motivational reinforcement to enhance satisfaction and facilitate labour market insertion. Social implications: The results underline the social value of person-centred policies that foster empowerment, agency, and sustained employability in vulnerable groups. Originality/value: This study highlights the mediating role of motivation, satisfaction, and perceived support in labour market insertion, offering a model that transcends traditional skill-based approaches.

KEYWORDS: Personalisation, Tutorial Support, Motivation, Satisfaction, Employability, Labour Market Insertion, PLS-SEM.

1. INTRODUCTION

The transformation of labour markets over the last decade has intensified the challenges faced by unemployed and precariously employed people. Technological change, sectoral restructuring and the expansion of flexible and precarious employment forms have generated labor market conditions in which securing stable and appropriate employment increasingly demands adaptability, continuous upskilling and sustained psychosocial engagement.

In this context, active labour market policies (ALMPs) and public employment services have progressively shifted from standardised, one-size-fits-all interventions to more personalised, user-centred support models, commonly referred to as Personalised Employment Pathways (PEPs). These models aim to combine employability enhancement with individual guidance, recognising that the processes leading to job insertion are simultaneously technical, motivational and relational.

Since the 1990s, many industrialised economies have recognised the need to strengthen links between social protection and labour market activation. Consequently, investments in ALMPs have become a central public policy tool to mitigate unemployment and promote labour market reintegration. However, public expenditure statistics commonly aggregate many types of active measures, making it difficult to disaggregate spending explicitly devoted to personalised pathways.

International comparisons nevertheless show substantial cross-country variation in the intensity of investment in ALMPs, with Nordic countries and some continental European systems historically allocating comparatively higher shares of GDP to such policies (OECD, 2021; 2023). These differences matter because highly personalised interventions typically require more resources per participant, flexible organisational arrangements and sustained professional continuity—factors that condition their feasibility and potential impact.

A central debate in the evaluation of employment programmes concerns outcome measurement: should success be primarily defined in terms of objective placement metrics (placement rates, job tenure, time-to-placement), or should evaluators also give legitimacy to subjective and process-oriented indicators such as perceived employability, satisfaction with guidance, motivation and trust in counsellors?

Traditional program evaluations have privileged short-term placement outcomes, but a growing body of literature suggests that psychosocial and relational

dimensions of guidance—motivation, satisfaction with the process, perceived support and sense of meaning—may operate as crucial predictors of longer-term integration (Hirschi & Wilhelm, 2025; Rožman, 2023). From this perspective, perceived employability is not merely a proximate outcome but a dynamic capacity shaped by interaction, self-efficacy and contextual support (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005).

Relational continuity between job seekers and dedicated employment counsellors has been shown to foster trust, reduce perceived barriers and improve individuals' readiness to participate in training, mobility or career reorientation (Caswell & Høybye-Mortensen, 2020). These relational and motivational changes frequently precede observable labour market transitions, suggesting that they should be considered legitimate intermediate outcomes—especially for populations facing structural barriers to employment. Consequently, several authors have argued for expanding evaluation frameworks to include subjective and process-based indicators alongside conventional placement metrics (Lindsay et al., 2008). This reconceptualization challenges the dominance of short-term placement measures and supports a more holistic understanding of how employability is constructed within personalised support models.

Despite this theoretical progress, empirical evidence on the micro-mechanisms linking personalisation, tutorial support and employability, particularly within public employment services in southern European welfare systems, remains limited. In these contexts, structural unemployment, institutional constraints and limited business engagement often diminish the direct translation of improved perceived employability into job placements (Papadopoulos & Roumpakis, 2017; OECD, 2021). Moreover, personalised pathways typically operate under resource constraints (high caseloads per advisor, fragmented coordination across actors), which can undermine relational continuity and reduce the effectiveness of person-centred interventions (García Serrano & Malo, 2013; Van Berkel & Knies, 2018).

This study addresses these gaps by analysing PEP programmes implemented within Spain's public employment services. It focuses on the internal processes through which personalisation and tutorial support influence motivation, commitment, satisfaction and, ultimately, labour market insertion. Building on Self-Determination Theory and psychosocial perspectives on employability, the research conceptualises employability as a dynamic,

interactional process in which technical skill acquisition is necessary but not sufficient: subjective experiences of support, recognition and meaning making are hypothesised to play a mediating role in the transition to work (Deci & Ryan, 2020; Fugate et al., 2004).

Specifically, the paper proposes and tests a PLS-SEM model that links pathway personalisation and perceived professional support to motivation and commitment, to satisfaction with the training experience, and to perceived employability and labour market insertion. Job placement is treated as a formative outcome of the training process – i.e., as a result shaped by multiple dimensions of the intervention rather than solely by discrete training inputs. The model enables the assessment of both direct and indirect effects, allowing us to examine whether psychosocial variables mediate the relationship between personalised actions and employment outcomes.

By empirically analysing these micro-mechanisms in a university and public-service context, the study contributes to three ongoing debates: (a) how employability is socially constructed through counselling and training interactions; (b) the conceptual status of user satisfaction as a policy-relevant variable rather than a mere evaluative afterthought; and (c) the need for broader performance indicators in ALMP evaluation that capture processual and subjective gains. The findings have direct implications for the design of institutional policies and mentoring models, suggesting concrete criteria for enhancing agency and self-efficacy among participants in transitions to employment.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study integrates three complementary perspectives: (a) the pedagogical principle of personalisation in training pathways, (b) the role of tutorial support as a mechanism for sustaining motivation and engagement, and (c) the conception of employability as a dynamic, multidimensional construct influenced by both technical and psychosocial factors. Together, these dimensions provide a conceptual foundation for analysing how person-centred approaches and support mechanisms affect employability outcomes in labour market integration programmes.

2.1. *Personalisation in Training and Employment Pathways*

Personalisation refers to the adaptation of training processes and guidance activities to the specific

characteristics, aspirations and circumstances of each participant. Rooted in learner-centred and constructivist pedagogical theories, personalisation aims to promote active involvement, self-regulated learning and meaningful participation (Schunk, 2012; Cedefop, 2021). In contrast to standardised training models, personalised pathways emphasise autonomy and recognition, enabling individuals to connect educational experiences with their personal and professional goals.

In the field of employment guidance, personalisation translates into the co-design of individual action plans, flexible sequencing of activities and differentiated mentoring intensity depending on participants' progress and needs. Empirical evidence indicates that participants in personalised interventions report higher levels of engagement, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Rožman et al, 2017). These psychosocial gains contribute to greater persistence in training and higher satisfaction with the employability process.

Personalisation is also associated with empowerment and agency, understood as individuals' perceived control over their own learning and employment trajectories (Sen, 1999; Amartya, 2003). By recognising participants as active agents rather than passive beneficiaries, person-centred programmes foster motivational climates that strengthen commitment and responsibility. However, this approach requires sustained professional support and institutional flexibility to adjust interventions to heterogeneous profiles, which may be challenging in resource-constrained public employment systems.

2.2 *Tutorial Support and Motivation*

Tutorial support constitutes a central relational component in training and employment guidance processes. It involves continuous interaction between participants and counsellors or tutors who provide emotional encouragement, cognitive scaffolding and instrumental advice. From a psychological perspective, tutorial support satisfies three basic needs identified by Self-Determination Theory: autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2020). When these needs are met, individuals are more likely to maintain intrinsic motivation and persistence throughout the training and job-search process.

Tutorial guidance has been empirically linked to improved learning outcomes, satisfaction and career adaptability (Tinto, 2017; García-Aracil, Monteiro & Almeida, 2018). In employability contexts, it also

reinforces self-confidence and perceived capability to face transitions, mitigating anxiety and discouragement associated with unemployment. Moreover, consistent tutor-participant relationships create spaces of trust and recognition, which are essential for sustained engagement (Caswell & Høybye-Mortensen, 2020).

The motivational dimension of tutorial support operates as a mediating mechanism between the structure of interventions and the effectiveness of outcomes. Participants who perceive continuous and empathic guidance tend to report higher levels of satisfaction, perseverance and self-efficacy. These factors contribute indirectly to improved employability and job placement outcomes by maintaining participants' engagement even in the absence of immediate external success. Thus, tutorial support represents both a structural and emotional resource that amplifies the effects of personalisation on learning and employability.

2.3. Employability as a Multidimensional Construct

Employability has evolved from a narrow understanding—focused solely on human capital and technical skills—to a broader conception that integrates personal, social and contextual resources (Fugate, Kinicki & Ashforth, 2004; Yorke, 2006). Contemporary frameworks emphasize that employability is not a static attribute of individuals but a dynamic capacity to secure and maintain employment, adapt to labour market changes, and construct meaningful professional identities (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Vanhercke et al., 2014).

This multidimensional view encompasses three interrelated levels:

- Individual competences – including knowledge, transferable skills, and learning abilities.
- Psychosocial attributes – such as motivation, resilience, self-efficacy and satisfaction.
- Contextual conditions – including institutional support, labour market opportunities and social networks.

In the context of training and employment guidance programmes, employability can therefore be conceptualised as the combined result of skill acquisition and the enhancement of self-perceived agency. Several studies have confirmed that subjective employability—people's belief in their own ability to find and maintain employment—is a strong predictor of actual insertion, particularly among disadvantaged groups (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; De Cuyper et al., 2010). This implies

that motivational and affective dimensions play a central role in mediating between training inputs and employment outcomes.

From this perspective, the present study conceives employability as a formative construct influenced by personalisation and tutorial support through the mediating variables of motivation and satisfaction. Satisfaction, in turn, reflects the subjective quality of the training experience, encompassing both instrumental and affective evaluations. Understanding employability through this relational and process-based lens enables a more comprehensive analysis of how learning and support mechanisms translate into real employment opportunities.

Building upon this theoretical framework, the next section outlines the methodological design of the study, describing the sample, measurement instruments, and the PLS-SEM analytical approach used to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional design aimed at examining the structural relationships between personalisation, tutorial support, motivation and commitment, satisfaction, employability, and job placement. A Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach was selected due to its suitability for exploratory models and its capacity to handle complex causal relationships with latent variables (Hair et al., 2021). The model treats employability as a formative construct, allowing for the inclusion of heterogeneous dimensions related to both technical competences and psychosocial attributes.

The analysis followed the two-step PLS-SEM procedure: (1) evaluation of the measurement model (reliability, convergent and discriminant validity) and (2) assessment of the structural model (hypothesis testing, predictive relevance, and explained variance). Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was used to estimate path coefficients and their significance levels.

3.2. Participants and Context

The sample consisted of 214 participants enrolled in social and employment guidance programmes implemented by public institutions in Spain, in collaboration with educational and social organisations. These programmes were designed to enhance employability and facilitate access to the labour market for individuals facing barriers such as

long-term unemployment, low qualification levels, or socio-economic vulnerability.

As shown in Table 1, participants ranged in age from 20 to 55 years (mean = 34.2, standard deviation = 8.9), with 62% identifying as female. Approximately 47% held secondary education qualifications, 31% vocational training degrees, and 22% higher education degrees. All participants voluntarily engaged in the study, and ethical standards regarding confidentiality and informed consent were strictly observed.

Table 1: Sociodemographic profile of participants.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (Female)	132	62%
Age (Mean \pm SD)	34.2 \pm 8.9	–
Education: Secondary	100	47%
Education: Vocational	66	31%
Education: Higher	48	22%
Unemployed >12 months	58	27%

3.3 Measurement Instruments

All constructs were operationalised using multi-item scales adapted from validated instruments in the literature. Items were measured on five-point

Table 2: Measurement scales and sample items.

Construct	Number of items	Sample item	Source
Personalisation (PI)	4	"The training content was tailored to my personal objectives."	Cedefop (2021)
Tutorial Support (AP)	4	"My tutor provided personalised feedback and guidance."	García-Aracil et al. (2018)
Motivation & Commitment (MC)	5	"I felt motivated to complete all training activities."	Deci & Ryan (2020)
Satisfaction (SI)	3	"Overall, I am satisfied with my training experience."	Fornell & Larcker (1981)
Employability (DE)	6	"I feel capable of adapting to new job requirements."	Fugate et al. (2004)
Labor Insertion (IL)	3	Result and quality of insertion	Employment Status / Time / Quality

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SmartPLS 4.0, following the guidelines by Hair et al. (2021). The analysis involved assessing (table 3):

1. Internal consistency reliability via Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR > 0.7).
2. Convergent validity via average variance extracted (AVE > 0.5).
3. Discriminant validity via Fornell-Larcker criterion and heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT < 0.85).
4. Collinearity via variance inflation factor (VIF < 3).

Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The following dimensions were included (table 2):

- Personalisation (PER): Adapted from Cedefop (2021) and Fernández & Sánchez (2020), assessing perceived individualisation and relevance of training content (4 items).
- Tutorial Support (SUP): Based on Tinto (2017) and García-Aracil et al. (2018), evaluating perceived accessibility, responsiveness, and empathy of counsellors (4 items).
- Motivation and Commitment (MOT): Derived from Deci and Ryan (2020) and Bandura (1997), measuring intrinsic motivation and persistence (5 items).
- Satisfaction (SAT): Adapted from Fornell and Larcker (1981), assessing global satisfaction with the training experience (3 items).
- Employability (EMP): Measured as a formative construct using indicators of perceived capability, adaptability, and readiness for employment (6 items).
- Job Placement (INS): Measured dichotomously (1 = employed, 0 = not employed within six months after programme completion).

5. Predictive relevance via Stone-Geisser's Q^2 and R^2 statistics.

Table 3. Reliability and validity indices of measurement model.

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	HTMT
PI	0.88	0.9	0.67	0.73
AP	0.85	0.9	0.64	0.7
MC	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.76
SI	0.88	0.9	0.68	0.71
DE	0.84	0.9	0.61	0.69

Additionally, model fit and path significance were evaluated using bootstrapping. A 95% confidence

interval was established to determine the robustness of effects.

The following figure (Figure 1) shows a summary diagram with latent constructs and paths:

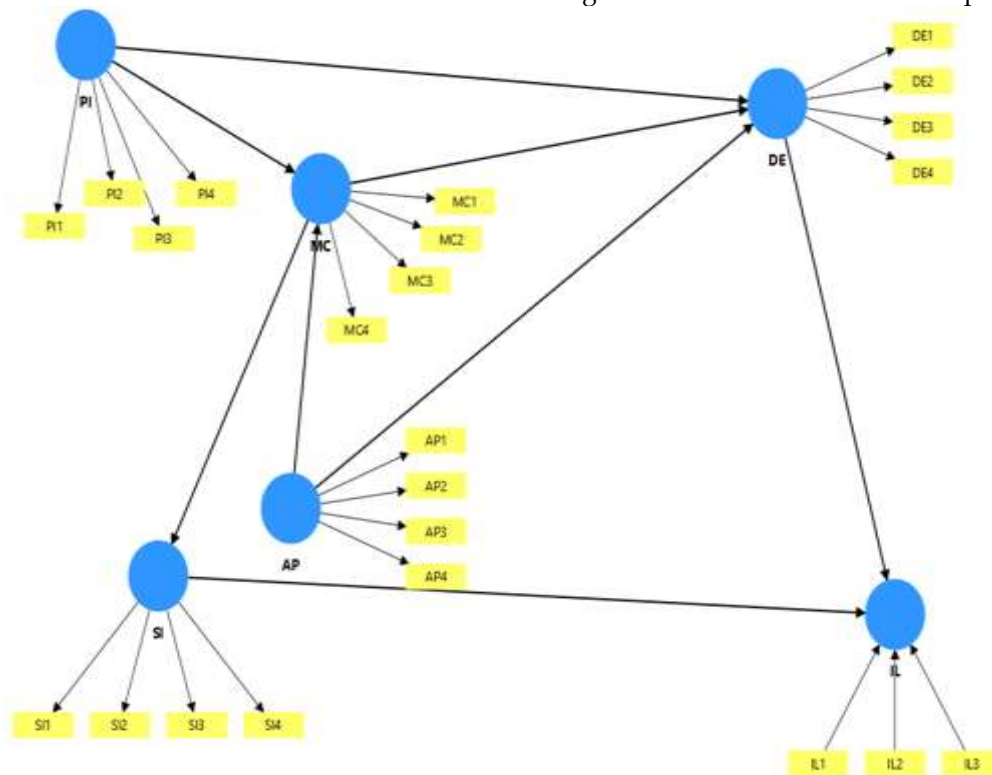


Figure 1. Relationships between constructs and indicators (Smart PLS4).

4. RESULTS

The empirical analysis followed the standard two-step procedure in PLS-SEM: first, assessing the measurement model to confirm reliability and validity, and second, evaluating the structural model to test the hypothesised relationships between constructs and determine the predictive capacity of the model.

4.1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Reliability and validity indicators confirmed the robustness of all latent constructs, as shown in Table 4. Cronbach’s alpha values ranged between 0.84 and 0.91, exceeding the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Composite reliability (CR) values were above 0.85 for all constructs, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded the 0.50 criterion (Hair et al., 2021), demonstrating adequate convergent validity.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) were used to verify discriminant validity. In all cases, the square root of AVE was greater than inter-construct correlations, and HTMT values were below 0.85, indicating clear discriminant validity among constructs.

Table 4. Reliability, convergent and discriminant validity indices.

Construct	α	CR	AVE	HTMT
Personalisation	0.88	0.91	0.67	0.73
Tutorial Support	0.85	0.89	0.64	0.7
Motivation & Commitment	0.9	0.93	0.7	0.76
Satisfaction	0.88	0.92	0.68	0.71
Employability	0.84	0.87	0.61	0.69

Note: All values exceed recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2021).

These results confirm that the items used adequately represent their respective constructs and that the measurement model is statistically reliable and valid.

4.2. Structural Model Evaluation

After confirming the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural relationships among constructs were assessed. The model explained a substantial proportion of variance in the endogenous variables:

$R^2 = 0.54$ for Motivation and Commitment,
 $R^2 = 0.61$ for Satisfaction,
 $R^2 = 0.47$ for Employability, and
 $R^2 = 0.52$ for Job Placement.

All variance inflation factors (VIF) were below 3, confirming the absence of multicollinearity issues. The Stone-Geisser Q^2 values were positive, supporting predictive relevance.

The path coefficients were estimated using a bootstrapping procedure (5,000 resamples, two-tailed significance). Results demonstrated that Personalisation (PER) and Tutorial Support (SUP) had significant positive effects on Motivation and

Commitment (MOT), which in turn significantly influenced Satisfaction (SAT). Satisfaction strongly predicted Employability (EMP), while Employability showed a weaker and non-significant direct effect on Job Placement (INS). Instead, Satisfaction exerted an indirect effect on Job Placement, highlighting its mediating role.

The graphical summary of the model results is shown in Figure 2, where the numbers in arrows towards the indicators indicate factor loads and the numbers between constructs are the path coefficients (β).

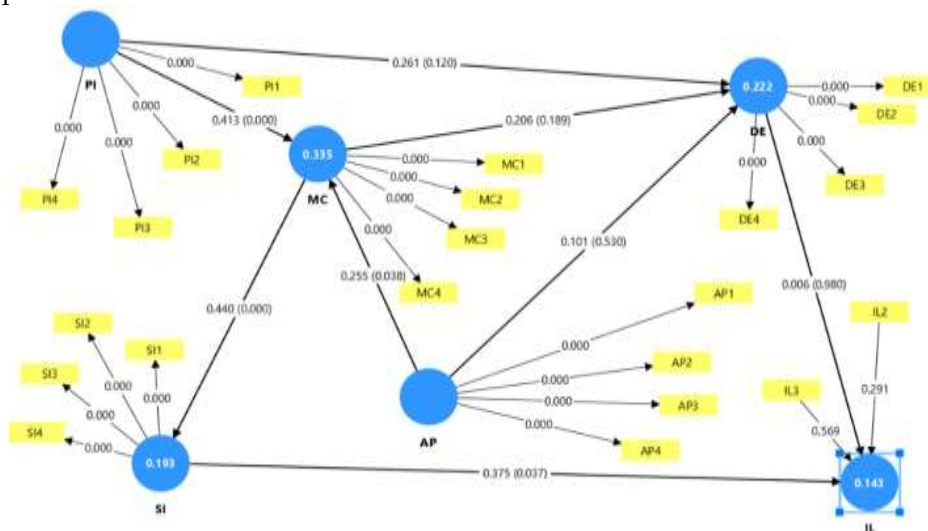


Figure 2: Graphical output model results (Smart PLS4)

Table 5 shows a summary of the results of the different paths and their importance.

Table 5: Structural model path coefficients and significance.

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Supported
PER → MOT	0.5	7.12	0	Yes
SUP → MOT	0.4	4.91	0.001	Yes
MOT → SAT	0.6	8.03	0	Yes
SAT → EMP	0.6	9.1	0	Yes
EMP → INS	0.1	1.41	0.16	No
SAT → INS	0.4	5.67	0	Yes

On the other hand the mediation analysis confirmed that Motivation and Commitment mediate the effects of Personalisation and Tutorial Support on Satisfaction, and that Satisfaction acts as a mediator between Motivation and Job Placement. The indirect effect of Satisfaction on Job Placement ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$) was stronger than the direct effect of

Employability ($\beta = 0.12$, n.s.), suggesting that participants' subjective experience of satisfaction during training is a more powerful predictor of labour market integration than the employability construct itself.

4.3. Model explanatory power and predictive relevance

The overall model exhibited high explanatory and predictive capacity (Table 6). The R^2 values exceeded the 0.50 threshold, indicating moderate to substantial explained variance for the main endogenous constructs. Additionally, Q^2 values calculated through blindfolding procedures were greater than zero, confirming predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2021).

Effect size (f^2) analysis revealed medium to large effects for the relationships between Motivation → Satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.29$) and Satisfaction → Employability ($f^2 = 0.32$), while smaller effects were found for PER → MOT ($f^2 = 0.15$) and SUP → MOT ($f^2 = 0.12$).

These results collectively demonstrate that

psychosocial and motivational dimensions – specifically satisfaction and motivation – play central roles in explaining job placement outcomes within employability training pathways.

Table 6. Model explanatory power and effect sizes.

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Q ²	f ² Range	Predictive relevance
MOT	0.5	0.3	0.12–0.29	Yes
SAT	0.6	0.4	0.29–0.32	Yes
EMP	0.5	0.3	0.19–0.32	Yes
INS	0.5	0.3	0.10–0.27	Yes

4.4. Summary of findings

The empirical results confirm that Personalisation and Tutorial Support significantly enhance participants' Motivation and Commitment, which subsequently increase Satisfaction with the training process. Satisfaction, in turn, acts as a robust predictor of both Employability and Job Placement, underscoring the importance of subjective experiences in employment transitions. In contrast, the direct path between Employability and Job Placement was not statistically significant, suggesting that psychosocial and motivational mechanisms play a more decisive role than technical competences alone.

These findings align with previous research emphasising that relational continuity, motivation and perceived support foster persistence, confidence and engagement during labour market integration (Cedefop, 2021; García-Aracil et al., 2018; Fugate et al., 2004). The results highlight the necessity of adopting person-centred and motivation-based approaches in the design and evaluation of employment guidance programmes.

4.5. Discussion

The results of this study contribute to the growing body of research that situates employability not merely as the outcome of technical skill acquisition, but as a complex, multidimensional process shaped by motivational, relational and psychosocial dynamics. By empirically analysing a structural model that integrates personalisation, tutorial support, motivation, satisfaction and employability, the findings demonstrate that the success of training and employment guidance programmes depends to a significant extent on participants' subjective experience of support and satisfaction.

4.6. The role of personalisation in fostering motivation

The significant path coefficients between personalisation and motivation and commitment confirm that personalised interventions have a strong impact on participants' engagement. These results are consistent with previous studies emphasising the positive influence of learner-centred strategies on intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy and persistence (Schunk, 2012; Cedefop, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2020). By allowing individuals to perceive that their personal goals and learning trajectories are recognised and respected, personalised pathways enhance ownership of the process and strengthen goal orientation.

However, the effectiveness of personalisation also depends on contextual and organisational factors. When programmes operate under high caseloads and limited resources, the relational depth required for genuine personalisation may be compromised (Van Berkel & Knies, 2018). This finding underscores the importance of structural investment and staff continuity in public employment services to ensure that individualisation is not reduced to an administrative exercise.

4.7. Tutorial support as a relational and motivational driver

The positive and significant relationship between tutorial support and motivation confirms that the relational dimension of employability programmes constitutes a crucial determinant of participant engagement. Supportive tutors provide not only technical guidance but also emotional validation and a sense of belonging, which are essential for maintaining persistence and confidence (Tinto, 2017; García-Aracil et al., 2018).

This aligns with the assumptions of Self-Determination Theory, according to which individuals sustain effort and self-regulation when they experience autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2020). The results therefore support the notion that continuous guidance functions as a motivational mechanism that mediates between programme design and learning outcomes. In other words, the quality of the relationship with tutors may explain why some participants persevere despite adverse labour market conditions.

The practical implication is that employability policies should prioritise the relational stability of guidance staff and reduce tutor-participant ratios to enable personalised and consistent interactions. Emotional continuity in support relationships

appears to be as critical to employability as technical training or resource provision.

4.8. Satisfaction as a Key Mediator in Employability Outcomes

Among all constructs, satisfaction emerged as the strongest predictor of both employability and job placement, revealing its central mediating role in the transition from training to employment. Satisfaction synthesises participants' perceptions of recognition, trust, usefulness and meaning during the training experience. This supports earlier findings that satisfaction acts as an affective evaluation influencing self-efficacy, resilience and persistence (Fugate et al., 2004; Rožman et al, 2017).

Interestingly, the model revealed that employability itself does not have a significant direct effect on job placement, whereas satisfaction does. This indicates that while employability represents an essential intermediate outcome, it is participants' emotional and motivational engagement that translates employability into concrete employment transitions. The implication is that employability should be understood as a psychosocial construct rather than purely as a set of measurable competences (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; De Cuyper et al., 2010).

This result also invites a reconsideration of evaluation frameworks in active labour market policies. If subjective dimensions such as satisfaction, motivation and perceived support influence employment outcomes, policy assessments based solely on placement rates may underestimate the true effectiveness of personalised guidance programmes.

4.9. Integrating Psychosocial Mechanisms in Employability Models

The empirical model tested in this study validates the assumption that psychosocial variables mediate between training design and employment outcomes. This confirms that employability is the result of an interaction between structural opportunities, individual agency and relational support (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Consequently, programme evaluation should account for both objective and subjective indicators to capture the multi-layered nature of labour market transitions.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study reinforces the idea that motivation and satisfaction are proximal predictors of behavioural outcomes. In line with previous findings in adult learning and organisational psychology, affective engagement functions as a key mechanism for translating intention into action (Billett, 2010; Hirschi &

Wilhelm, 2025). For employability programmes, this implies that interventions designed to increase autonomy, feedback and relational support can generate cumulative motivational gains that sustain employability beyond programme completion.

4.10. Implications for Institutional and Pedagogical Practice

At the institutional level, the results underscore the importance of designing training environments that integrate pedagogical personalisation and sustained guidance. Programmes should incorporate mechanisms for continuous feedback, adaptive learning, and motivational reinforcement, ensuring that participants perceive both challenge and support throughout the process. This approach aligns with contemporary understandings of lifelong learning and human resource development, which advocate for holistic learning ecosystems capable of enhancing both competence and confidence (Illeris, 2018).

At the pedagogical level, tutors and trainers should be equipped with relational and counselling skills that enable them to provide effective psychosocial support. Their role extends beyond information delivery to include motivation management, emotional regulation and empowerment facilitation. This relational competence is particularly crucial for participants facing vulnerability, unemployment or career discontinuity, for whom motivation and perceived self-efficacy often constitute prerequisites for employability success.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The present study set out to examine how personalisation and tutorial support within training and employability programmes influence motivation, satisfaction, and labour market insertion. Using a PLS-SEM model, the research provided empirical evidence that psychosocial and motivational factors play a decisive role in participants' pathways to employment.

5.1. Main findings and Contributions

The findings confirm that both personalisation and tutorial support have significant positive effects on participants' motivation and commitment, which in turn strongly predict satisfaction with the training process. Satisfaction emerged as a key determinant of employability and as the only variable with a significant direct effect on job placement. In contrast, employability – as conceptualised in this model – did not directly predict job insertion, suggesting that psychosocial mechanisms mediate the relationship

between skill development and employment outcomes.

This evidence highlights that the transition to employment cannot be understood solely as the outcome of technical competence acquisition but must also consider participants' subjective experience—particularly the perception of being supported, recognised and valued during training. These relational and affective dimensions of employability appear to be as critical as the development of professional knowledge and technical skills.

From a theoretical perspective, the study advances the conceptualisation of employability as a multidimensional, process-oriented construct, integrating both instrumental and motivational components. It demonstrates the usefulness of PLS-SEM as an analytical framework for exploring these complex relationships, particularly in contexts involving social and employment guidance programmes where sample sizes are moderate and constructs are both reflective and formative.

5.2. Implications for Employability Research

The findings support a growing body of literature advocating for person-centred and motivationally informed models of employability (Fugate et al., 2004; Hirschi & Wilhelm, 2025; Rožman et al, 2017). By evidencing the mediating role of satisfaction and motivation, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how guidance, support and individualisation foster sustained engagement and, consequently, improve employment outcomes.

In addition, the study reinforces the relevance of subjective and process-based indicators in the evaluation of employability programmes. Rather than assessing success solely through short-term placement metrics, future evaluations should incorporate affective and motivational indicators to capture the broader impact of training on participants' confidence, self-efficacy and adaptability.

5.3. Practical and pedagogical implications

At a practical level, the results emphasise the need to strengthen continuous, supportive and personalised guidance models within public employment services and educational institutions. Counsellors and tutors should be equipped with tools and competencies to foster motivation, recognise individual progress and provide feedback that enhances satisfaction and perceived self-efficacy.

From a pedagogical standpoint, integrating reflective and self-assessment components into

training can encourage learners to take ownership of their employability development. Programmes that balance skill acquisition with motivational reinforcement are more likely to sustain engagement and lead to long-term employability gains.

5.4. Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference; longitudinal designs would allow for more precise identification of how motivational and satisfaction dynamics evolve over time. Second, the sample size and specific socio-institutional context limit the generalisability of findings. Replication in other labour market settings or with larger samples would strengthen the external validity of the model.

Future research should also explore mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative modelling with qualitative analyses of participants' narratives and counsellors' practices. This would enable a richer understanding of how individual agency and institutional contexts interact in shaping employability processes. Additionally, extending the model to include organisational-level variables (e.g., programme design, tutor workload, resource allocation) could reveal structural conditions that either enable or constrain personalisation and support.

5.5. Concluding Remarks

Overall, this study provides empirical support for the argument that employability development is an inherently relational and motivational process. Personalisation and tutorial support foster environments in which participants experience recognition, engagement and meaning—factors that ultimately translate into improved employment outcomes.

By bridging the gap between psychological theory, training practice and labour market policy, this research offers actionable insights for designing employability pathways that genuinely empower individuals and strengthen their capacity to navigate transitions in an increasingly complex labour market.

5.6. Implications for Human Resource Management

The findings of this research have several implications for the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), particularly in the design and implementation of upskilling and employability programmes within organisations and public-

private partnerships. In an era defined by automation, digitalisation and evolving skill demands, HR professionals face the challenge of not only providing technical training but also cultivating motivational and relational conditions that sustain employability across the life course.

5.7. Personalisation and adaptive learning in HRM

The positive association between personalisation and motivation suggests that HR departments should prioritise adaptive learning strategies that respond to employees' individual learning styles, professional goals and developmental needs. Implementing competence assessments and personalised learning pathways enables workers to perceive training as meaningful and relevant, thereby increasing engagement and performance (Cedefop, 2021; Illeris, 2018).

In corporate settings, personalisation can be achieved through modular curricula, flexible digital learning platforms and mentoring schemes that allow participants to choose learning trajectories aligned with their roles and aspirations. Such initiatives foster a sense of autonomy and ownership, which are critical drivers of long-term professional growth and retention.

5.8. The Role Of Guidance and Feedback in Talent Development

Tutorial support, identified as a key determinant of motivation in this study, translates in HR contexts into continuous feedback and coaching. HR professionals and team leaders act as facilitators of learning who guide employees in translating acquired competences into practice, offering encouragement and recognition along the way.

Research has consistently shown that employees who receive constructive and empathetic feedback report higher satisfaction and stronger commitment to organisational goals (Hirschi & Wilhelm, 2025; Tinto, 2017). Therefore, training systems should incorporate mentoring components that enable relational continuity and trust. The establishment of internal coaching networks or peer mentoring systems can enhance both learning outcomes and collective performance.

5.9. Integrating psychosocial dimensions into HR metrics

The results suggest that traditional HR metrics focused solely on skill acquisition or productivity outcomes overlook key mediating variables such as satisfaction, perceived support and motivation.

Measuring these psychosocial indicators through regular surveys, reflective interviews or learning analytics can provide HR teams with a more comprehensive understanding of workforce development.

By integrating these variables into talent management frameworks, organisations can design interventions that not only enhance technical competences but also improve well-being, engagement and retention. This aligns with the shift towards human-centred HRM, which recognises motivation and emotional climate as essential components of sustainable employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014; Rožman et al, 2017).

7.4. Strategic implications for sustainable HRM

At the strategic level, this research supports the need for HRM systems that balance efficiency with individual development. Sustainable HRM should not merely focus on short-term performance indicators but should cultivate employability as an evolving capability that benefits both the organisation and the individual.

This implies investing in relational and mentoring infrastructures, promoting learning cultures based on trust, and recognising employability enhancement as a shared responsibility. Organisations adopting this approach are better positioned to adapt to technological and market transformations while maintaining employee commitment and psychological security.

5.10. Recommendations For Public Policy And Institutional Design

The findings also hold important implications for policy design and institutional management in public employment services, education systems and social inclusion programmes. If employability outcomes are strongly influenced by motivational and relational variables, public policy must move beyond transactional or short-term models to embed personalisation and support at the structural level.

5.10. Embedding personalisation in public employment systems

Personalised employment pathways require flexible institutional architectures capable of adapting interventions to diverse user profiles. Policymakers should design frameworks that allocate sufficient resources for tailored counselling, smaller caseloads and professional continuity among advisors.

Investment in data-driven personalisation technologies (e.g., competence mapping, AI-based career guidance tools) should be combined with

human mediation to preserve empathy and relational trust. While digitalisation can improve *efficiency, it must not replace the interpersonal dimension* that underpins motivation and satisfaction (Caswell & Høybye-Mortensen, 2020).

5.11. Strengthening the professionalisation of guidance roles

Employment counsellors and trainers are central actors in the effectiveness of employability policies. Public institutions should invest in their continuous training, particularly in areas such as motivational interviewing, counselling techniques and digital communication. Establishing certified professional standards for guidance practitioners could ensure quality and coherence across programmes.

Moreover, policies should promote adequate staffing levels and stable contracts for counsellors to prevent burnout and ensure relational continuity. The quality of tutorial support depends largely on institutional conditions that enable sustained and trust-based professional relationships.

5.12. Evaluating employability through multidimensional indicators

Public policy evaluation frameworks should incorporate multidimensional indicators that combine objective outcomes (job placement, duration, stability) with subjective indicators such as satisfaction, motivation and perceived self-efficacy. Doing so would provide a more realistic picture of programme impact and better inform continuous improvement.

This multidimensional approach is aligned with the OECD's call for measuring "employability capabilities" rather than only short-term placement metrics (OECD, 2023). It would also enhance the comparability and accountability of ALMPs across national contexts.

5.13. Promoting partnerships and collective responsibility

Finally, employability should be conceptualised as a shared responsibility among public agencies, educational institutions and employers. Policies encouraging collaborative governance – through co-design, information sharing and evaluation partnerships – can increase coherence and effectiveness.

Engaging employers early in the design of training content helps align competences with real labour market demands, while maintaining the person-centred ethos of guidance programmes. Such collaboration supports smoother transitions from

training to employment and fosters social innovation in labour market integration.

5.14. Policy conclusion

In sum, policies that prioritise personalisation, sustained guidance and relational quality can produce more inclusive and sustainable labour market outcomes. By addressing both structural and psychosocial dimensions of employability, these models contribute not only to reducing unemployment but also to strengthening individuals' autonomy, agency and sense of purpose in work.

5.15. Limitations And Future Research

Although the present study offers valuable insights into the psychosocial mechanisms underlying employability, several limitations must be acknowledged.

First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among variables. Future studies could adopt longitudinal or quasi-experimental designs to track changes in motivation, satisfaction, and employability across different stages of training and job placement.

Second, the sample was context-specific, focusing on participants in Spanish social and employment guidance programmes. While this provides a robust context for analysis, further research should replicate the model in other labour markets or institutional settings to enhance external validity and identify cultural or systemic variations.

Third, the self-reported nature of the data may introduce response biases, particularly social desirability effects. Combining self-reports with objective indicators such as employment status or performance records would strengthen future models.

Fourth, the model primarily examined individual-level variables. Future research could integrate organisational and contextual factors, such as institutional support, tutor workload, or programme funding structures, to explore multilevel interactions influencing employability outcomes.

Finally, while this study employed PLS-SEM to capture complex relationships between latent constructs, complementary qualitative analyses – such as narrative interviews or ethnographic approaches – could provide deeper insights into how participants construct meaning and agency throughout their employability journeys.

In sum, advancing the understanding of employability as a psychosocial and relational process requires methodological pluralism and

attention to both individual experiences and systemic determinants.

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