

Digital Capability and Work-Life Balance: Women's Career Sustainability in Male-Dominated Construction Companies

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Abstrak

Transformasi digital yang berlangsung di industri konstruksi menghadirkan peluang sekaligus tantangan bagi organisasi di negara berkembang, terutama terkait inklusivitas tenaga kerja. Di tengah adopsi sistem digital seperti *Enterprise Resource Planning* (ERP) dan *Human Resource Information System* (HRIS) untuk meningkatkan efisiensi operasional, proses transformasi ini berlangsung dalam budaya organisasi yang maskulin dan secara historis mengesampingkan karyawan perempuan. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana digital capability dan work-life balance membentuk *women's career sustainability* pada PT XYZ, sebuah perusahaan konstruksi yang didominasi laki-laki dan sedang mengalami transformasi digital di Gresik, Jawa Timur. Menggunakan desain *single case study* kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan sepuluh informan perempuan pada level staf hingga manajerial yang dipilih melalui *purposive sampling*, dengan data yang dianalisis menggunakan *thematic analysis*. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi tiga tema utama. Pertama, *digital capability* dibangun secara mandiri tanpa dukungan pelatihan formal; namun, transformasi digital secara paradoks justru mengaburkan batas *work-life balance* melalui budaya *always-on*. Kedua, perempuan menghadapi *glass ceiling* halus dalam distribusi kepercayaan dan peluang karier, disertai ketidakamanan fisik dan psikologis di lapangan. Ketiga, kekuatan bertahan perempuan bersumber dari resiliensi personal, bukan dari kebijakan organisasi formal yang belum responsif gender. Temuan ini memperluas *Sustainable Career Theory* dengan mengintegrasikan paradoks adopsi digital dalam dinamika gender pada konteks negara berkembang.

Kata Kunci: *transformasi digital; digital capability; work-life balance; women's career sustainability; industri konstruksi.*

Abstract

Digital transformation in the construction industry presents both opportunities and challenges for organizations in developing countries, particularly regarding workforce inclusivity. Amid the adoption of digital systems such as *Enterprise Resource Planning* (ERP) and *Human Resource Information Systems* (HRIS) to improve operational efficiency, this transformation unfolds within a historically masculine organizational culture that has marginalized female employees. This study explores how digital capability and work-life balance shape women's career sustainability at PT XYZ, a male-dominated construction company undergoing digital transformation in Gresik, East Java. Using a qualitative single-case study design, this research involved ten female informants –ranging from staff to managerial levels –selected through purposive sampling, with data analyzed using thematic analysis. Three main themes emerged. First, digital capability was self-developed without formal training, yet digital transformation paradoxically blurred the boundaries between work and personal life through

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an “always-on” culture. Second, women faced a subtle glass ceiling in terms of trust and the distribution of career opportunities, alongside physical and psychological insecurity in the field. Third, women’s persistence stemmed from personal resilience rather than formal organizational policies, which remained unresponsive to gender issues. These findings expand upon Sustainable Career Theory by integrating the paradox of digital adoption into gender dynamics within the context of a developing country.

Keywords: *digital transformation; digital capability; work-life balance; women’s career sustainability; construction industry.*

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become an absolute necessity for the construction industry in developing countries, including Indonesia, amid increasing competitive pressures and the need for greater operational efficiency. Construction companies have begun integrating various digital systems into their daily operations, ranging from Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) to digital productivity tools such as spreadsheets and electronic communication systems (Al Salaheen et al., 2024; Tunji-Olayeni et al., 2024). Mastery of digital capabilities has thus become a new, unavoidable requirement for all employees (Audrin et al., 2024). However, this digital transformation process does not occur in a social vacuum. It interacts with pre-existing organizational structures, including a work culture that remains deeply rooted in masculine values within the historically male-dominated construction industry.

The interaction between digital transformation and this masculine organizational culture creates complex dynamics, particularly for female employees. Women account for only about 10 to 15 percent of the total workforce in the global construction sector, and their representation is even lower in technical and managerial positions (Al Salaheen et al., 2024). In Indonesia, according to the August 2024 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas), the construction sector recorded a 6.92 percentage point gap between the proportions of male and female workers, making it one of the sectors with the largest gender gaps in the national labor market (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024). Women in this sector often face multiple layers of pressure: a work culture steeped in masculine values, long and inflexible working hours, a lack of policies that support women, and social expectations that push them to prioritize domestic roles over professional careers (Yan et al., 2024). When the demands of digitalization are added to these existing pressures, rather than lightening the burden, digital transformation actually has the potential to complicate women’s efforts to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives (work-life balance) (Sahni et al., 2025; Suhardiman & Saragih, 2022). This accumulation of pressure ultimately influences women’s decisions to persevere, advance, or leave their careers in the construction industry—a concept known in the academic literature as career sustainability (De Vos et al., 2020; Müller et al., 2022).

This phenomenon was directly observed by the researcher during an internship at PT XYZ, a construction company located in Gresik City, East Java. As a company that has adopted HRIS and ERP systems developed by its internal IT division, female employees at PT XYZ who hold various strategic and technical positions—ranging from human resources (HR) managers and staff, information technology (IT) staff, project control, quality control engineers, warehouse and field (site) administrative staff, to supervisors and occupational safety managers, are required to master digital systems that are constantly evolving within a work environment that remains culturally male-dominated.

A number of previous studies have examined digital transformation and women's careers from various perspectives, but significant gaps remain regarding how the two interact in the context of conventional organizational transitions. Chathurangi et al. (2025) found that systemic barriers and limited career mobility are dominant factors affecting women's career sustainability in Sri Lanka's construction sector. O'Brien et al. (2023) revealed a persistent gap between formal gender equality policies and their implementation on the ground in male-dominated sectors. From a digital perspective, Audrin et al. (2024) emphasize that digital capability is now a critical requirement for sustaining one's career in the era of digital transformation. Specifically, Shabira & Er (2026) discuss in their research how role conflicts between work and family life influence the career decisions of women working in the information technology (IT/Digital) sector in Indonesia. Nevertheless, there is an important contextual difference that has not been widely discussed: the distinction between organizations that have been digitally-based from the outset and conventional organizations that are only now undergoing digital transformation. Previous studies have tended to focus on organizations that were already digital-native from the start, leaving a gap in our understanding of the career challenges faced by women in conventional sectors – such as construction – that are undergoing digital transformation driven by competitive pressures. This situation presents contextually distinct dynamics due to a direct clash between the demands of new digital systems (such as internal ERP and HRIS systems) and a highly masculine and conservative on-site work culture. Previous studies have tended to examine digital and gender aspects separately and were almost exclusively conducted outside the Indonesian context.

Addressing this research gap, this study aims to explore in depth how digital capability and work-life balance influence women's career sustainability at PT XYZ – a conventional construction company undergoing digital transformation within a male-dominated organizational culture. This research contributes to the understanding of how digital transformation in conventional organizations in developing countries interacts with deeply rooted gender dynamics – an issue that is becoming increasingly important as more traditional organizations are forced to adapt to the demands of digitalization. Specifically, this study seeks to answer two main questions: first, how do the digital capabilities of female employees at PT XYZ support the sustainability of their careers in a male-dominated work environment; and second, how does work-life balance shape female employees' decisions to remain and advance in their careers at PT XYZ.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single-case study design at PT XYZ, located in Gresik City, East Java. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study does not aim to statistically measure relationships between variables, but rather to explore the experiences, perceptions, and meanings shaped by female employees as they navigate digital transformation in a male-dominated work environment (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A single-case study design was chosen because PT XYZ possesses unique characteristics that make it an appropriate and relevant context for in-depth examination as a representative of a conventional organization undergoing digital transformation. The company simultaneously faces a strong masculine cultural dominance and an ongoing operational digitization process through the adoption of internal HRIS and ERP systems – a combination rarely studied in an integrated manner within a single study (Yin, 2018). The researcher had direct access to PT XYZ through a previous internship experience, which facilitated the data collection process and helped build initial trust with the informants. Nevertheless, the potential for familiarity bias was mitigated through the consistent application of researcher reflexivity and member checking throughout the analysis process.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves intentionally selecting informants based on criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The established criteria included: (1) being female and an active employee of PT XYZ; (2) holding a variety of positions to represent a diversity of experiences, including managers and human resources (HR) staff, information technology (IT) staff, project control staff, quality control engineers, warehouse and field (site) administrative staff, as well as supervisors and occupational safety managers; (3) having at least one year of service, thereby having sufficient experience with the dynamics of the organizational culture and the company's digital systems; and (4) being willing to participate voluntarily. The diversity of job positions was intentionally designed so that the collected data reflects a rich array of perspectives from various organizational functions, ranging from technical roles (Project Control, QC Engineer, IT), managerial roles (HRD Manager, Safety Manager), to administrative roles (Warehouse Admin, Site Admin), ensuring that the findings do not reflect the experience of just one group. This study involved ten female informants selected based on the principle of data saturation – the condition in which new informants no longer yield information that is substantively different from the data already collected (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The profiles of the study's informants are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Research Informant Profiles

Code	Position/Title	Length of Service	Digital Systems Used	Relevance to the Research
PW1	Manager HRD	>1 year	Internal HRIS (PT XYZ's HR system), email, spreadsheets	Longest tenure (7 years) – in-depth perspective on women's career development and changes in organizational culture over time
PW2	Staff HRD	>1 year	Internal HRIS, external BPJS system, email, spreadsheets, Canva	Day-to-day digital operational experience and its impact on HR staff's work-life balance
PW3	Staff IT	>1 year	ERP (development), Google Workspace, spreadsheets, email, AI tools	Highest digital capability – technical perspective as a developer and operator of internal systems
PW4	Project Control	>1 year	Microsoft Excel, Apps Script, Canva, PowerPoint, internal dashboard (Looker Studio)	Use of digital tools for project monitoring and control in a male-dominated environment
PW5	Quality Control Engineer	>1 year	Microsoft Excel, AutoCAD, email	The only female engineer – a unique perspective on the glass ceiling in field technical roles
PW6	Admin (Warehouse)	>1 year	Accurate (warehouse system), Google Drive, spreadsheets, email	Experience independently implementing new systems and coordinating with a predominantly male division
PW7	Admin Project (site)	>1 year	Client website (PT ABC), PT XYZ's internal system, email, spreadsheets	Work experience at an external site with a client-led gender-inclusive program
PW8	Admin	>1 year	Internal systems,	Work-Life Balance (WLB)

	Project (site)		spreadsheets, email, digital waybills	experience in the field – work-related stress outside of working hours and catcalling at the site
PW9	Manager Safety	>1 year	Internal dashboard, system email, Workspace	HSE JOS (external), Google
				A managerial position in a male-dominated division – perspectives on gender authority and safety policies
PW10	Supervisor Safety	>1 year	Google Workspace, client's HSE platform, Microsoft, email	Female supervisor in the Safety division – perspectives on gender authority, HSE policy implementation, and masculine culture in the field

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews. This technique was chosen because it allows researchers to use a prepared set of questions while also providing space to explore informants' responses in greater depth through follow-up questions that arise naturally during the conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The interviews were conducted in person, based on the informants' availability, with each session lasting between 30 and 60 minutes. All interview sessions were recorded with the informants' full consent to ensure accuracy during the transcription process. The interview guide included two layers of questions: core questions posed to all informants regarding their experiences with digital capability, work-life balance, and career sustainability; and specific questions tailored to the job positions of each group of informants to explore more contextual experiences.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the six stages outlined in Braun & Clarke (2006). The first stage is data familiarization, in which the researcher intensively rereads all transcripts to build a comprehensive initial understanding. The second stage is preliminary coding, involving the identification of meaningful data segments relevant to the research questions. The third stage is theme identification, which involves grouping codes with similar meanings into broader categories. The fourth stage is theme review to ensure consistency and relevance to the data as a whole. The fifth stage is the clear definition and naming of themes. The sixth stage is writing the report in the form of an analytical narrative supported by direct quotes from the interviews as empirical evidence. The analysis process is conducted iteratively, with the researcher moving back and forth between the data and the emerging themes to ensure that the findings are truly rooted in the informants' experiences.

Data validity is ensured through two techniques. First, source triangulation is performed by comparing information from informants in different positions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). If discrepancies are found between the statements of one informant and another, these are not ignored but rather used as material for deeper exploration. Second, member checking is conducted by returning a summary of the findings to the informants for confirmation of their accuracy, to ensure that the researcher's interpretation does not deviate from the informants' intentions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). From an ethical standpoint, all informants participated voluntarily after receiving an explanation of the research objectives and data confidentiality procedures (informed consent) at the beginning of the interview session. The company's identity was disguised as PT XYZ, and the informants' identities were replaced with codes PW1 through PW10 to maintain data confidentiality throughout the research process and reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a thematic analysis of 10 in-depth interview transcripts with female employees at PT XYZ, three main themes were identified that address both research questions. These themes reflect how the digital transformation process interacts with the complex realities faced by women as they pursue their careers in a male-dominated construction environment. The relationships among these themes are visualized in Figure 1 below.

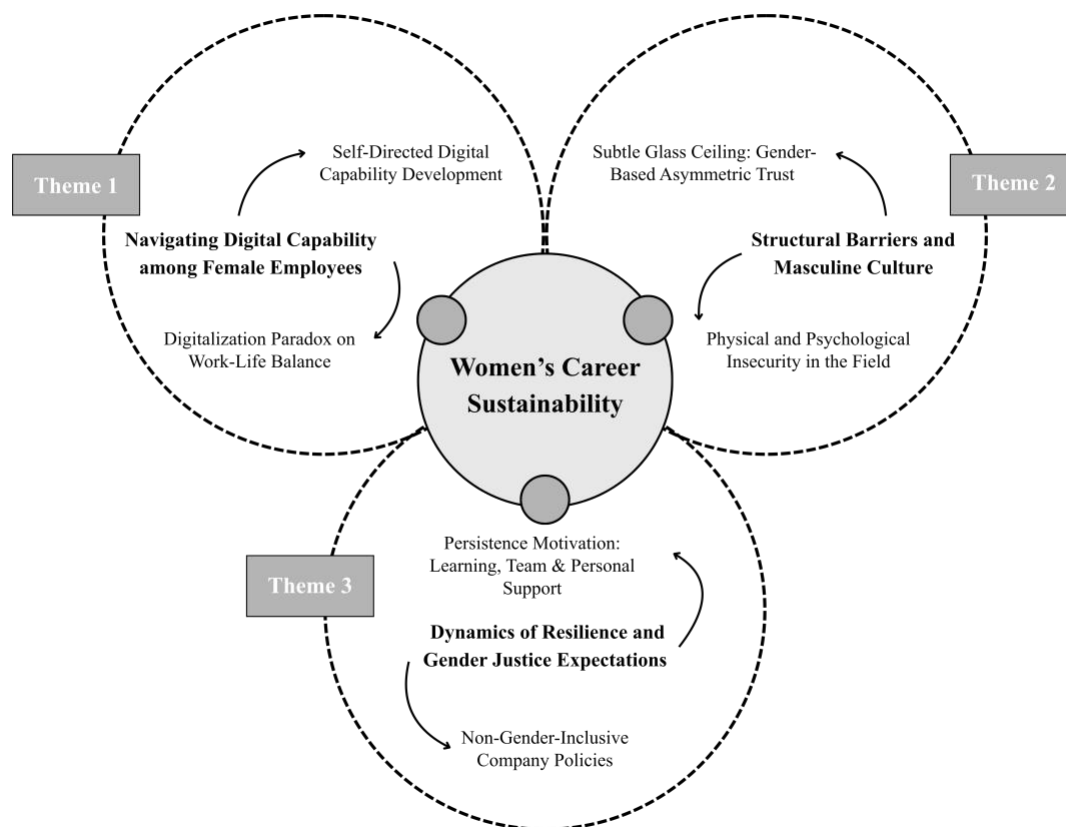


Figure 1. Thematic Map: Women's Career Sustainability

Navigating Female Employees' Digital Capabilities

This section outlines how female employees at PT XYZ build and apply their digital capabilities amid the rapid digital transformation taking place in a conventional organization. Field findings reveal complex dynamics: on the one hand, these female workers demonstrate high digital agency by independently mastering the company's systems. However, on the other hand, this mastery paradoxically introduces new pressures (digital stress) into their professional lives. This theme is broken down into two subthemes: the self-directed development of digital capabilities and the paradox of digitalization, which, on the one hand, accelerates work but, on the other, erodes work-life balance.

Self-Directed Development of Digital Capabilities

The first finding that emerged consistently from all informants is that digital capability at PT XYZ is developed through personal initiative, not through formal training programs facilitated by the company. All informants from various job positions stated that they learned the digital systems used either through self-study or peer learning among coworkers.

Informant PW9 (Safety Manager) explicitly stated:

"There's no training, so we're self-taught – it's like learning by doing."

A similar experience was shared by PW10 (Safety Supervisor), who had to explore various digital platforms on their own due to the lack of an introductory guide to the systems from the company:

"...because there really isn't any kind of introduction here regarding how to use them. So we mostly figure it out on our own, by searching online."

Even PW3 (an IT staff member), despite having a technical background, still relies on his own troubleshooting skills:

"If, for example, there's an error or something, I'll figure out how to troubleshoot it myself; that way, I can learn from it."

This situation confirms the findings (Audrin et al., 2024) which states that digital capability in the era of digital transformation is no longer merely the ability to operate devices, but rather an adaptive capacity that continues to evolve. However, the findings at PT XYZ indicate that this adaptive capacity is borne entirely by individuals without adequate institutional support. Female employees have a high level of digital agency, yet they are not supported by an equivalent level of organizational support. This aligns with the argument by Shabira & Er (2026) that women in male-dominated sectors tend to have to work harder to prove their digital competence in environments that are not yet fully inclusive.

However, what distinguishes the context at PT XYZ from the digital sectors studied Shabira & Er (2026) is that these demands for digital proficiency emerged suddenly within a construction work culture that was previously not technology-based, making the burden of digital adaptation in conventional sectors far heavier compared to companies that were born digital. Although they lacked formal training, these self-acquired digital skills actually became a crucial asset for women in maintaining their relevance and earning the trust of their superiors.

PW3 (IT Staff) noted that her digital skills were recognized from her very first day on the job:

"Alhamdulillah, I was immediately recognized and trusted to handle that project."

The Paradox of Digitalization and Work-Life Balance

On the flip side of the efficiency benefits offered by digitalization, research findings reveal a paradox experienced by female employees at PT XYZ: digital systems that are supposed to simplify daily work have, paradoxically, created an "always-on" culture. This ultimately blurs the line between work time and personal life. This phenomenon aligns with the perspective of Bisht et al. (2023) as outlined by regarding the negative impacts of post-digitalization, where increasingly strict technological surveillance actually undermines employees' work-life balance rather than providing freedom in the workplace. In the field of information systems, the reality faced by the informants indicates a technological invasion into personal space (techno-invasion) that triggers digital stress and excessive workloads (Suhardiman & Saragih, 2022). This pressure arises because the process of implementing technology in organizations focuses solely on the technical readiness of the applications to ensure they are up and running as soon as possible, while neglecting the mental and social readiness of the people involved – particularly the vulnerabilities faced by female workers in the field.

PW10 (Safety Supervisor) vividly describes this situation:

"This digitalization also somehow forces us to always be online. Whether we like it or not... it means we sometimes have to work outside of regular working hours."

The impact is most acutely felt by informants with heavy workloads and tight deadlines. PW8 (Project Site Administrator) shared her experience of bringing work home on her days off:

"I was supposed to do it on Saturday... but Saturday is my day off. So I had to take that work home. It's not balanced at all."

PW2 (HR Staff) even felt the impact in the form of reduced energy for social activities and personal development outside of work:

"Sometimes I feel like I have no energy left – I'm already exhausted before I even start."

This blurring of the boundaries between professional and personal spheres reinforces the argument by Sahni et al. (2025) that women consistently bear a heavier burden of work-life balance compared to men, especially when work demands increase due to an increasingly digital work environment. This paradox of digitalization is further exacerbated by infrastructure constraints faced by informants working in the field. PW8 (Project Site Administrator) revealed that limited signal coverage and power outages in the project area automatically halt all digital work operations, adding additional pressure outside of normal working hours.

Taken together, these findings answer the first research question: digital capability plays a crucial role in the career sustainability of women at PT XYZ, yet its role is paradoxical—on one hand, it enhances competence and recognition, while on the other, it increases workloads that erode work-life balance.

Structural Barriers and a Masculine Culture in the Construction Industry

Female employees at PT XYZ not only face digital demands but also encounter deeper barriers rooted in the masculine culture of the construction industry. These barriers manifest in two interrelated forms: subtle discrimination in the distribution of trust and career opportunities, and the physical and psychological insecurity experienced by women on construction sites.

The Subtle Glass Ceiling: Gender-Based Asymmetry in Trust

As an industry historically dominated by men, PT XYZ harbors cultural barriers that are not always immediately apparent but are felt by female employees in various aspects of their work. Discrimination does not manifest in explicit forms but operates subtly through the unequal distribution of trust, access to strategic assignments, and career development opportunities. These findings reflect the concept of the glass ceiling—an invisible barrier that limits women's career advancement, even when they possess competencies equal to or exceeding those of their male counterparts (Septiana & Haryanti, 2023). Previous research in the Indonesian context has also confirmed that the male-dominated work culture in the construction industry consistently serves as a major barrier for women to enter and advance in this industry (Rostiyanti et al., 2020).

PW10 (Safety Supervisor) describes this situation bluntly:

"More trust is placed in men... the mindset still persists that men are better able to do that than women. So, the level of trust required to treat women equally in terms of responsibility within the workplace here is still lacking."

The impact of this subtle glass ceiling is most evident in the limited career opportunities (opportunity gap) experienced by women in technical positions. PW5 (Quality Control Engineer), who is the only female engineer at PT XYZ, stated:

"Opportunities for women are pretty limited. I mean, it's not that there aren't any – it's just that they haven't been created yet."

PW1 (HR Manager) experienced a similar situation, taking years before she was finally trusted to hold a managerial position:

"To be honest, my career was stuck from 2018 to 2025. There was no such thing as career advancement."

These findings align with the study O'Brien et al. (2023), which reveals a persistent gap between formal gender equality policies and their implementation on the ground in male-dominated sectors. Women at PT XYZ experience what PW2 (HR Staff) described as administrative role stereotypes, where women's technical competencies tend to be sidelined:

"There are more men than women. So sometimes people tend to underestimate women... oh, well, since she's a woman, her role is just admin."

What distinguishes these findings from previous glass ceiling studies is the digital dimension: at PT XYZ, the glass ceiling not only limits access to technical field positions but also restricts women's access to strategic roles in the organization's digital transformation, making digitalization a new arena for the reproduction of gender inequality.

Women's Physical and Psychological Insecurity in the Field

In addition to structural and cultural barriers, women working in project areas face a more immediate form of vulnerability: physical and psychological insecurity resulting from *catcalling* and a lack of women-friendly facilities.

PW8 (Project Site Administrator) expressed the discomfort she feels every time she has to leave her workspace at the project site:

"There are some disturbances, like catcalling, from the men there. So that's what makes me feel a little uncomfortable there."

Meanwhile, PW5 (Quality Control Engineer) even acknowledged that repeated experiences of *catcalling* have tangibly limited her professional mobility:

"You have to be immune to catcalling... That's why, even now, I still don't dare to conduct inspections at the workshop alone; I always bring a colleague with me."

PW1 (HR Manager) added a managerial perspective on the urgency of this issue:

"Sexual harassment is a major risk... If anyone is being sexually harassed, please speak up."

The fear of conducting inspections independently experienced by PW5 (Quality Control Engineer) illustrates how verbal abuse in the workplace is not merely a psychological issue, but concretely limits women's professional mobility and work participation in operational areas. This experience demonstrates that barriers for women in the construction industry are not only structural and cultural in nature but also involve physical dimensions that have not yet been systematically addressed.

This discomfort is exacerbated by the lack of facilities that take women's specific needs into account. PW10 (Safety Supervisor) highlighted the issue of unsegregated restroom facilities:

"As for the restrooms, we still share them. And I think that's also pretty crucial because women's and men's needs are different."

The Dynamics of Resilience and Expectations of Gender Justice

Despite facing dual pressures from the paradox of technology and cultural marginalization, female employees at PT XYZ demonstrate remarkable professional resilience. This final section explores the fundamental factors that motivate these women to sustain and advance their careers in a male-dominated sector (career sustainability). This analysis captures two opposing sides: the resilience stemming from personal motivation and team solidarity, and the gaps in company policies that do not yet favor women.

Motivations for Perseverance: Learning, Team, and Personal Support

Amid the various pressures described above, female employees at PT XYZ continue to choose to persevere and grow. The research findings reveal that this resilience stems from three main pillars: internal motivation to grow, the quality of social relationships within the team, and support from their personal circles.

The quality of relationships among coworkers within a single division was the factor most frequently cited as a reason for staying. PW1 (HR Manager) stated:

"One of the reasons I've stayed here is that the team I've been part of is truly a super team. That's what keeps me here."

PW2 (HRD Staff) even explicitly stated that a positive team dynamic is a determining factor, even though financial compensation is not yet ideal:

"My division is fun, even though the pay is low."

The statements from these two informants demonstrate that solidarity among coworkers serves as an effective emotional buffer for women pursuing careers in challenging work environments. As shown by Pillay-Naidoo & Vermeulen (2023), solidarity among women in male-dominated workplaces functions not only as a source of psychological support but also as a motivational resource that fosters career resilience. Meanwhile, Greer & Kirk (2022) found in their systematic review that social support from coworkers is one of the most consistent factors in helping women overcome career transition barriers, including in environments that are not yet gender-inclusive.

In addition to team dynamics, the motivation to continue learning and developing oneself serves as a strong driving force for perseverance, particularly for informants who are still early in their careers. PW4 (Project Control) stated:

"I still feel I need a lot of experience and knowledge to prepare myself for the future."

Meanwhile, family support plays a crucial role for informants who are already married. PW9 (Safety Manager) revealed that her husband's encouragement was one of the factors that prevented her from resigning, even though she had once felt immense pressure:

"Thanks to the support from my husband and family, my education hasn't been in vain."

This finding answers the second research question: work-life balance shapes women's decisions to stay in their jobs in complex ways. Although work-life balance is often disrupted, women still choose to stay because of other values they find in their work, namely learning, team solidarity, and personal support. This aligns with the Sustainable Career Theory (De Vos et al., 2020), which emphasizes that career sustainability is not solely determined by objective job conditions but by individuals' perceptions of the dimensions of happiness, health, and productivity throughout their career journeys.

Company Policies Are Not Yet Gender-Inclusive

The final and perhaps most crucial finding of this study is the absence of gender-inclusive policies at PT XYZ. All informants consistently stated that the company does not yet have specific programs that support women's digital development or career advancement in a structured manner.

PW1 (HRD Manager) acknowledged this policy gap:

"There aren't any yet. So far, PT XYZ hasn't implemented any policies to support a balance in digitalization for women. Perhaps this serves as feedback for me, as an HR professional, to create specific policies..."

PW3 (IT Staff) confirmed that existing policies are limited to normative rights:

"As far as I know, it's just maternity leave... no, not yet [there aren't any other specific policies]."

PW2 (HR Staff) emphasized the absence of digital-oriented women's development programs:

"So far, there haven't been any specific programs here dedicated to women's development... There really haven't been any so far."

However, this study uncovered a very interesting field finding among informants assigned to external projects, which constitutes the main novelty of this study. The contrast experienced by informants at external project sites, such as PW7 (Project Site Admin), revealed that the client companies where they were assigned actually had a highly structured approach:

"At PT ABC (the client), there are, for example, events related to women... then we're asked about our concerns... like, 'Have you experienced catcalling or anything like that?'"

The support received by informants working at external sites was not only protective but also proactive. PT ABC actively organized activities that addressed women's needs in the workplace. From a sociotechnical perspective, these external interventions served as a psychological buffer that helped mitigate the digitalization paradox caused by the parent company's internal systems. This situation underscores the argument in Galdiero et al. (2024) that gender-inclusive HR policies actively create conditions that enable the structural sustainability of women's careers. And in this case, that support actually comes from the external partnership ecosystem, rather than from the parent company itself.

This finding expands upon the argument by De Vos et al. (2020) in Sustainable Career Theory: the sustainability of women's careers in sectors undergoing digital transformation depends not only on individual capabilities or internal company policies, but also on the surrounding ecosystem of external partnerships.

Overall, the findings on the second and third themes answer the second research question: work-life balance shapes women's decisions to remain in their jobs not through formal policies that support such balance, but rather through personal resilience and team solidarity, which serve as compensatory mechanisms for the absence of institutional support, while the ecosystem of external partnerships also acts as an additional buffer that mitigates this burden.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the roles of digital capability and work-life balance in women's career sustainability at PT XYZ, a conventional construction company undergoing digital transformation amid a male-dominated organizational culture in Gresik City, East Java. Using a qualitative single-case study approach with thematic analysis of 10 female informants, this study yielded three main findings.

First, women's digital capabilities at PT XYZ are developed independently without formal training support from the organization. Paradoxically, however, the digital transformation process actually blurs the boundaries of work-life balance through an "always-on" culture that demands connectivity outside of working hours. Second, women face dual barriers in the form of a subtle glass ceiling in the distribution of trust and career opportunities, as well as physical and psychological insecurity in fieldwork settings that have not been systematically mitigated. Third, women's resilience stems from personal strengths—including motivation to learn, team solidarity, and family support—rather than from the organization's formal policies, which remain gender-insensitive to this day.

Theoretically, the findings of this study contribute to the expansion of Sustainable Career Theory (De Vos et al., 2020) by demonstrating how the digital transformation process in conventional organizations in developing countries directly influences the dimensions of happiness and health in women's career sustainability. This study also enriches our understanding of the interaction between digital transformation management and gender

dynamics—an aspect that has received insufficient attention in the digital transformation literature, which generally focuses solely on technical and operational aspects rather than its social impacts on a diverse workforce.

This study offers several practical implications for construction companies undergoing digital transformation in Indonesia. First, organizations need to adopt a balanced approach between technological readiness and human resource readiness in every new system implementation. The study's findings indicate that the lack of formal digital training forces female employees to rely entirely on self-directed learning, thereby creating an uneven distribution of the digital workload and potentially widening the capability gap across divisions. To address this, companies are advised to establish structured buddy learning programs—specifically, informal digital mentoring systems that pair IT staff with staff from non-technical divisions to facilitate continuous knowledge transfer without the high costs of formal training.

Second, the digitalization paradox identified in this study underscores the urgency of formally establishing a Digital Wellbeing Policy. Companies need to institutionalize the “right to disconnect”—a policy that explicitly prohibits expectations of digital work-related communication responses outside of operating hours—to mitigate the “always-on” culture that disproportionately erodes female employees’ work-life balance. This recommendation aligns with evolving digital governance practices in developed countries and urgently needs to be formally adopted in Indonesia’s construction sector.

Third, the physical and psychological safety of female workers at field project sites must be addressed systematically, rather than being left as individual issues. Companies are advised to provide gender-responsive on-site facilities, including separate sanitation infrastructure, and to establish a harassment reporting mechanism that is confidential, easily accessible, and free from the risk of retaliation, so that female employees can file complaints without psychological barriers. The absence of such a system has proven to be a real structural barrier, as reflected in the experiences of informants who faced verbal harassment and limited professional mobility in the field, and it needs to be mitigated institutionally to ensure the sustainability of women’s careers.

Fourth, the contrast observed between PT XYZ and its client company (PT ABC) reveals a crucial insight: gender-inclusive practices are actually more advanced at the client level than at the parent company level itself. This finding indicates that change management in digital transformation within conventional industries must not be gender-blind. Companies need to explicitly embed gender-responsive considerations into their change management frameworks, recognizing that sustainable and impactful digital transformation is not merely a technical and operational matter, but also a fundamental human and organizational one.

This study has several limitations. First, the focus on a single company as a case study means that the findings cannot be directly generalized to other construction companies undergoing digital transformation with different characteristics. Second, this study only explores the experiences and perspectives of female employees, and thus does not include the viewpoints of male managers or organizational policymakers regarding digital transformation strategies. Third, the researcher’s position as a former intern at PT XYZ has the potential to influence interview dynamics and data interpretation; although this has been mitigated through researcher reflexivity and member checking, future research should involve external researchers for comparison.

Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the context to include several conventional organizations with varying levels of digital maturity, as well as to involve male managerial-level informants and policymakers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the interaction between digital transformation and women’s career sustainability.

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