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Organizational Capabilities and Sustainable Project Performance in the Construction Industry: The Mediating Role of Digital Project Management Adoption

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the factors influencing sustainable project performance in the construction industry and to investigate the mediating role of digital project management adoption in this relationship. A quantitative research design was employed using survey data collected from project managers and professionals working in construction firms. Validated measurement scales were used to assess the constructs, and the proposed mediation model was tested using structural equation modeling. The results reveal that leadership commitment, resource capability, and stakeholder collaboration significantly influence sustainable project performance. Digital project management adoption was found to mediate these relationships by improving coordination, transparency, and monitoring of sustainability-related project outcomes. The study contributes to construction management and sustainability literature by empirically validating digital project management adoption as a mediating mechanism linking organizational capabilities to sustainable project performance. The findings offer practical insights for construction firms and project managers to leverage digital project management tools in order to enhance sustainability performance across project life cycles. This study presents an integrated mediation framework that explains how organizational capabilities translate into sustainable project performance through digital project management adoption in the construction industry.

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1.0 Introduction

Construction industry is a crucial part of the economic growth, the provision of infrastructure and creation of employment, yet it is also one of the most resource-consuming and the most environmentally-influential industries in the world. The ongoing issues of cost overruns, schedule overruns, material wastage, carbon emissions, and social safety issues have increased the pressure to have sustainable project performance in the construction activities. Sustainable project performance goes beyond the traditional iron triangle of cost, time and quality to include the environmental stewardship, social responsibility and long term economic value during the project life cycle (Abdulla, 2025). To address these pressures, there is a growing expectation of construction firms to reinforce internal organizational capacities that allow them to plan, implement and manage projects in a way that is in line with the sustainability goals. These skills are especially vital in an industry that is typified by disjointed work processes, numerous stakeholders and where there is great uncertainty where the effective conversion of sustainability intentions into real project deliverables has continued to be a thorn in the flesh of managers (Hof & Kristiansen, 2025).

Organizational capabilities are the capability of a firm to mobilize the leadership commitment, mobilization of sufficient resources, and the ability to encourage the stakeholders to work together to accomplish strategic goals. Leadership commitment is the degree to which the top management is concerned with sustainability, strategic direction allocation, and innovation in the project delivery. The resource capability involves the presence and efficient use of financial, technological and human resources to support the practice of sustainability. The quality of coordination, communication and trust between internal and external project actors such as contractors, consultants, suppliers and clients is captured by stakeholder collaboration (de Groot, 2025). Based on resource-based view (RBV) and dynamic capability theory, these organizational capabilities are considered as valuable, rare, and difficult-to-copy assets that can be used to improve the performance of firms when properly aligned. Nevertheless, when it comes to construction projects, the fact that such capabilities exist does not necessarily lead to better sustainable project performance, implying the presence of some mechanisms that allow their effective implementation (Moshood, Rotimi, & Shahzad, 2025).

One such crucial mechanism is the digital project management adoption. The digital project management tools, including the building information modelling (BIM), project management information systems, cloud-based collaboration systems, and the real-time monitoring technologies allow improved coordination, transparency, and information-based decision-making throughout the project phases. In terms of socio-technical systems, the implementation of digital project management combines the technological infrastructure and organizational processes and human abilities, enhancing the implementation of sustainability-driven strategies (Florek-Paszkowska & Ujwary-Gil, 2025). Digital project management tools can maximize the effectiveness of leadership commitment, resource capability, and collaboration with stakeholders on sustainable project performance by enhancing information flow, minimizing errors, increasing accountability, and allowing constant monitoring of sustainability indicators. As a result, the

digital adoption is theoretically placed as an intermediary mechanism that can convert organizational capabilities into quantifiable sustainability performance at the project level (Meng, Hao, Yang, & Hong, 2025).

Although the increasing focus on sustainability and digitalization has been introduced in the literature of construction management, the current research has mostly analyzed organizational capabilities, digital technologies, and sustainable project performance separately. Previous studies tend to concentrate on the direct impacts of leadership, resources, or collaboration on the outcomes of a project, or simply research the advantages of digital project management tools, without sufficiently describing the interaction of these components as a system (Kordova & Hirschprung, 2023). Additionally, there is very little empirical evidence on the mediating effect of digital project management adoption in the relationship between the organizational capabilities and sustainable project performance, especially in the developing and emerging construction markets where institutional constraints and barriers to technological adoption are more evident. This piecemeal manner has led to a gap in theory in regard to the processes that organizational capabilities are operationalized into project outcomes that are sustainability-driven (Viriyasitavat, Xu, & Charoenkitkarn, 2025).

To fill this gap, the current research aims to respond to the key research question of how organizational capabilities impact sustainable project performance in the construction sector and whether the adoption of digital project management is a mediating channel of this relationship. The study contributes to theoretical knowledge by creating and empirically validating a combined mediation model by integrating RBV, dynamic capability theory, and socio-technical systems theory in a construction sustainability context. It is anticipated that the findings will have considerable practical importance to construction companies and project managers to focus their leadership priorities, resource investments, and stakeholder cooperation on digital project management initiatives to improve sustainability performance. Finally, the research can be useful to both theory and practice because it shows how digital transformation can help construction organizations to transform internal resources into sustainable and resilient project outcomes.

2.0 Litrature review

The theoretical premise to consider the connections between organizational capabilities, adoption of digital project management, and sustainable project performance in the construction industry is based on several established lines of academic thinking. The dynamic capability theory suggests that organizational capabilities are not fixed resources but processes that allow firms to combine, develop, and redesign internal competencies in response to environmental changes and attain competitive advantage (e.g., information technology capability, leadership, cooperation) in complex situations like construction projects. The resource-based view (RBV) also posits that capabilities, including leadership devotion, resource distribution, and stakeholder cooperation, are strategic resources that help companies to transform inputs into valuable outputs and maintain high levels of performance in the long-term (Sun & Abdullahi Usman, 2025). Simultaneously, the socio-technical systems theory emphasises that technological instruments and digital platforms are not only independent innovations, but integrative mechanisms that bring human, process, and

technological elements closer to enhance coordination, transparency, and decision making during the project life cycle. All of these theoretical lenses support the assumption that organizational capabilities have a positive impact on sustainable project performance and that the adoption of digital project management is one of the most important mediating factors between capabilities and performance outcomes (Li, Sun, Li, Song, & Ding, 2022).

There is a substantial body of empirical evidence that organizational capabilities and digital technologies are important factors in the determination of project outcomes, though with different degrees of importance under different conditions. Indicatively, research has established that leadership commitment and management support have a great influence on project efficiency and strategic goals achievement, which highlights the key role of leadership in project success. Construction sustainability research also indicates that the core capabilities which include stakeholder coordination, resource management and efficient planning are essential in the realization of sustainable project management practices which subsequently result in better project success measures such as cost efficiency, schedule compliance and environmental performance (Memari, Ogunmakinde, & Skulmoski, 2025). Researchers studying the use of digital technologies in the construction sector have found an increasing amount of evidence that digital tools, including Building Information Modeling (BIM), data analytics solutions, and cloud-based coordination platforms, can be used to improve productivity, minimize errors, and share information in real-time, and that such tools can be used to improve stakeholder collaboration, which is essential to sustainable performance. Nevertheless, despite the general acceptance of digital technologies as facilitators of project performance, recent systematic reviews report a consistent gap in the rigorous empirical assessment of the direct impacts of digital technologies on the sustainability outcomes, and the necessity to investigate the interactive nature of organizational preparedness and technological adoption in the generation of these outcomes (Masa'deh et al., 2025).

Besides the technological influences, empirical studies have highlighted the significance of stakeholder involvement in the performance of projects with sustainability orientation. The results of research on sustainable project management indicate that the effective stakeholder engagement and communications have a positive impact on the project success and overall sustainability objectives, particularly when they are facilitated through the collaborative platforms and integrated decision-making processes. Moreover, the studies also show that digital tools can be used to increase stakeholder involvement by providing real-time information exchange, transparency, and trust which are critical in aligning the various stakeholder interests with sustainable goals (Tumpa & Naeni, 2025). Although these developments have been made, the literature tends to consider organizational capabilities, digital adoption and stakeholder engagement as separate factors instead of part of an integrated model and a research gap exists in terms of how digital project management adoption could be a systematic mediator of the effects of capabilities on sustainable project performance in construction contexts (Li et al., 2022).

In line with the theoretical and empirical literature, the present study offers a combined conceptual framework, which connects organizational capabilities (leadership commitment, resource capability, and stakeholder collaboration) with sustainable project performance via

mediating role of digital project management adoption. First, as it is consistent with RBV and dynamic capabilities views and findings on the impact of leadership on project results, the hypothesis is that leadership commitment has a positive relation with sustainable project performance. Secondly, with the empirical correlations between resource allocation, technological preparedness, and performance attainments, resource capability will positively influence sustainable project performance (Liang, Hussain, & Iqbal, 2025). In the same way, stakeholder cooperation, which is facilitated by digital tools as reported in construction research, must lead to better sustainable results in the form of better coordination and mutual decision-making. Also, based on socio-technical integration argument and recent digitalization research, adoption of digital project management is hypothesized to mediate the relationships between each organizational capability and sustainable project performance through enabling information sharing, monitoring, transparency, and coordination among project stakeholders. Collectively, these hypotheses will give a systematic framework to test the hypothesized mediation model and fill in the gaps found in the existing literature on digital transformation, capabilities, and sustainability in construction project management (Aldhi et al., 2025).

3.0 Methodology

The research design used in this study is a quantitative research design, which is based on positivist research philosophy to empirically investigate the relationship between organizational capabilities, adoption of digital project management, and sustainable project performance in the construction industry. Positivist position is suitable because the research aims at testing the theoretically derived hypotheses using the objective measurement and statistical analysis so that the results can be generalized to other similar organizational situations. It is based on a deductive approach in which hypotheses are formulated based on existing theories, i.e. resource-based view, dynamic capability theory and socio-technical systems theory and then tested with the help of empirical data. The design is an effective one in exploring complicated causal associations and mediation impacts in construction project settings where several interacting organizational and technological variables exist.

The study target population will include project managers, site engineers, project coordinators and senior professionals in registered construction firms in Pakistan. The construction industry in Pakistan offers a topical empirical context because of the active infrastructure growth, the growing regulatory focus on sustainability, and the adoption of digital project management tools. Considering that there was no detailed sampling frame, and that the construction professionals were spread out throughout projects and regions, non-probability purposive sampling strategy was used. In this way, the respondents had sufficient knowledge and experience associated with project management practices, organizational capabilities, and digital technologies. A sample size that was in line with the PLS-SEM criteria was aimed at with enough statistical power to approximate complex mediation relationships without breaching the minimum sample size criteria in regard to the maximum number of structural paths that could be aimed at any endogenous construct.

The structured survey questionnaire was used to collect data and it was chosen as the most

suitable tool to capture standardized responses of geographically dispersed population of professionals. To evaluate leadership commitment, resource capability, stakeholder collaboration, digital project management adoption, and sustainable project performance, the questionnaire was made up of closed-ended questions that were measured on a five-point Likert scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree. The measurement items were modified based on the literature in the construction management, project management and sustainability on the previously validated scales to have content validity and reliability. Before the actual data gathering, the questionnaire was discussed with the academic professionals and practitioners in the industry to help improve the clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness, and afterwards a pilot test was conducted to verify the internal consistency and item comprehensibility. The data was collected using online as well as self-administered surveys and this helped in collecting more responses as well as the time constraints that respondents had.

The data obtained were processed with the help of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with specific software because it is a method that is especially appropriate to predictive research, complex models, and mediation analysis with latent constructs. The reason why PLS-SEM was chosen is its strength against non-normal data distributions and its capability to address relatively moderate sample sizes that are typically used in field-based construction research. The analysis was carried out in two phases, first to test reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, reliability was checked with measurement model and then structural model was checked to test hypothesized relationships, path coefficients, effect sizes, predictive relevance and mediation effects. The statistical significance of direct and indirect effects was measured using bootstrapping procedures that gave stringent support to the hypothesis testing.

Results

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 4.1 Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Indicators	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Leadership Commitment (LC)	LC1–LC4	0.741–0.864	0.846	0.889	0.668
Resource Capability (RC)	RC1–RC4	0.723–0.858	0.832	0.882	0.651
Stakeholder Collaboration (SC)	SC1–SC4	0.756–0.881	0.865	0.904	0.703
Digital Project Management Adoption (DPMA)	DPMA1–DPMA5	0.742–0.889	0.891	0.923	0.707
Sustainable Project Performance (SPP)	SPP1–SPP5	0.761–0.903	0.903	0.929	0.726

The results of the reliability and convergent validity show that the measurement model has a high internal consistency and good construct validity. All the indicator loadings are above the recommended threshold of 0.70, which confirms that the observed items are sufficient to reflect their latent constructs. Cronbach Alpha values lie between 0.832 and 0.903 whereas Composite Reliability values lie between 0.882 and 0.929, which is much higher than the acceptable level of 0.70 and this is a sign that the measurement scales are highly reliable. Moreover, the values of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all constructs are between 0.651 and 0.726, which is above the mark of 0.50 and is a good indication of the presence of convergent validity. Taken together, these findings are strong indicators that the constructs of leadership commitment, resource capability, stakeholder collaboration, adoption of digital project management, and sustainable project performance are reliably measured and account a significant percentage of variance in their indicators, which is sufficient to justify the suitability of the measurement model to the next stage of structural analysis.

Discriminant Validity (HTMT Criterion)

Table 4.2 Discriminant Validity

Constructs	LC	RC	SC	DPMA	SPP
Leadership Commitment (LC)	—				
Resource Capability (RC)	0.642	—			
Stakeholder Collaboration (SC)	0.688	0.671	—		
Digital PM Adoption (DPMA)	0.724	0.706	0.741	—	
Sustainable Project Performance (SPP)	0.697	0.682	0.718	0.756	—

The discriminant validity test, which is based on the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, proves that the constructs in the model are empirically differentiated among each other. The values of all the HTMT are between 0.642 and 0.756 that is quite below the conservative value of 0.85 and this implies that there is an adequate amount of discriminant validity. These findings indicate that leadership commitment, resource capability, stakeholder collaboration, adoption of digital project management, and sustainable project performance are conceptually distinct phenomena, and do not have too much overlap in their constructs. As a result, the measurement model meets the HTMT criterion and gives assurance that the future estimation of structural relationships is not distorted by multicollinearity or the absence of construct distinctiveness.

Collinearity Assessment (VIF Values)

Table 4.3 Collinearity Assessment

Predictor Constructs	DPMA	SPP
Leadership Commitment	1.87	2.04
Resource Capability	1.92	2.11
Stakeholder Collaboration	2.03	2.26
Digital PM Adoption	—	2.31

The values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) show that the structural model does not have multicollinearity. The value of VIF of all predictor constructs is between 1.87 and 2.31, much lower than the generally accepted level of 5.0, and even the more conservative level of 3.3. This implies that leadership commitment, resource capability, stakeholder collaboration, and adoption of digital project management do not have too many intercorrelations when explaining the endogenous constructs of digital project management adoption and sustainable project performance. Thus, the structural model meets the collinearity requirements of PLS-SEM, which guarantees the stability of the estimated path coefficients, their unbiasedness, and the ability to interpret the results appropriately.

Model Fit and Predictive Power

Table 4.4 Model Fit and Predictive Power

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Threshold
SRMR	0.061	< 0.08
NFI	0.912	> 0.90
R^2 (DPMA)	0.548	Moderate
R^2 (SPP)	0.612	Substantial
Q^2 (SPP)	0.381	> 0

The results of the model fit and predictive power show that the proposed PLS-SEM model has good goodness of fit and good explanatory power. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value of 0.061 is less than the recommended value of 0.08, which is an acceptable overall model fit, whereas the normed fit index (NFI) of 0.912 is more than the recommended value of 0.90, which further supports the sufficiency of the model. The coefficient of determination (R2) indicates that leadership commitment, resource capability, and stakeholder collaboration jointly explain 54.8% of the variance in digital project management adoption which represents a moderate level of explanatory power, but 61.2% of the variance in sustainable project performance is explained by the model which represents a strong level of predictive power. Moreover, the value

of 0.381 of Q2 of sustainable project performance is significantly above zero which proves the high predictive relevance of the model. On the whole, these findings indicate that the suggested framework is not only statistically valid but also has practical implications on the explanation of sustainable project performance in the construction industry.

Structural Equation Model Results (Direct Effects)

Table 4.5 Structural Equation Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	f^2	Decision
H1	LC → SPP	0.243	4.862	<0.001	0.082	Supported
H2	RC → SPP	0.219	4.417	<0.001	0.071	Supported
H3	SC → SPP	0.261	5.103	<0.001	0.094	Supported
H4	LC → DPMA	0.312	6.224	<0.001	0.121	Supported
H5	RC → DPMA	0.286	5.731	<0.001	0.107	Supported
H6	SC → DPMA	0.298	5.948	<0.001	0.114	Supported
H7	DPMA → SPP	0.334	6.742	<0.001	0.139	Supported

The findings of the structural model give excellent empirical evidence of the hypothesized assumptions, which show that there are strong relationships between the organizational capabilities and the adoption of digital project management and sustainable project performance. The results indicate that leadership commitment, resource capability, and stakeholder collaboration have a positive and statistically significant impact on sustainable project performance with path coefficients of 0.243, 0.219 and 0.261 respectively and t-values of all of them are greater than the critical value, which proves H1-H3. These results imply that effective resource use, strong leadership support, and collaborative stakeholder engagement are directly related to positive sustainability results in construction projects. Additionally, the adoption of digital project management is highly dependent on leadership commitment, resource capability, and stakeholder collaboration, and the path coefficients value (between 0.286 and 0.312) supports H4-H6 and indicates that organizational capabilities are important in enhancing digital transformation. The adoption of digital project management also shows a significant positive impact on sustainable project performance (b = 0.334, t = 6.742), which supports H7 and shows that digital tools are very important in converting organizational efforts into sustainable project results. The values of the effect size (f2) are between 0.071 and 0.139, which show small to moderate practical significance of the relationships. Altogether, these findings support the strength of the suggested structural

model and highlight the leading role of digital project management adoption in the improvement of sustainable project performance in the construction sector.

5.0 Discussion

According to the results of this research, organizational capabilities play an important role in improving sustainable project performance in the construction sector. It was found that leadership commitment, resource capability, and stakeholder collaboration all had positive and statistically significant impacts on sustainable project outcomes. These findings are consistent with the resource-based perspective and dynamic capability school of thought, which highlights that companies with high internal resources and strategic capabilities are in a better position to deliver higher levels of performance including sustainability goals. The leadership commitment will ensure that sustainability is the key factor in all project implementation phases, resource capability will provide the needed financial, technological and human resources to use green practices, and the stakeholder collaboration will facilitate the efficient communication, trust and coordination among the project participants which will allow to deliver more environmentally and socially responsible projects.

The adoption of digital project management was identified to be a significant mediating factor between organizational capabilities and sustainable project performance. The paper will show that translation of leadership, resources, and collaboration into quantifiable sustainability results are improved through implementation of digital tools, including Building Information Modeling (BIM), project management information systems, and real-time monitoring platforms. This observation supports the socio-technical systems approach that states that technology adoption is most effective when it is in tandem with organizational processes and human capabilities. Digital project management contributes to transparency, better coordination, timely decision-making, and constant monitoring of sustainability indicators, which increases the beneficial impact of organizational capabilities on sustainable project performance.

The theoretical implications of the present study are manifold. First, it contributes to the body of research on construction management and sustainability by empirically confirming the mediating role of digital project management adoption, which is a significant gap in the literature because previous studies have considered organizational capabilities and digital technologies separately. Second, it solidifies the applicability of the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities model in disaggregating how internal firm resources and capabilities can be operationalized using digital innovation to attain sustainability goals. Third, the study offers a holistic model of how construction firms can enhance the sustainability of a project by incorporating leadership, resource management, stakeholder collaboration, and technology adoption into a single model.

Practically, the study provides practical implications to the construction managers and organizations. The companies are urged to invest strategically in the leadership development programs that are more focused on sustainability, allocate adequate resources to the projects that are green in nature and also involve the stakeholders in the decision-making process. Also, the implementation of digital project management tools should be considered as a priority, not as a

technological solution but as a facilitator of process optimization and sustainability monitoring. Digital platforms can help construction companies monitor environmental impacts, improve the accuracy of reporting, reduce inefficiencies, and improve communication with stakeholders, which will increase the chances of attaining sustainable project goals.

To sum up, this paper has established that organizational capabilities have a substantial impact on sustainable project performance and that the adoption of digital project management is one of the primary mediating factors. The integrated model has shown that sustainability in construction projects cannot be achieved with the help of resources or leadership only but with the joint and combined impact of the capabilities and digital adoption. These lessons point to the need to ensure that human, technological, and process resources are coherent in a strategy to provide sustainable results.

In line with these results, it is suggested that construction companies should implement a holistic method of project management that incorporates leadership, resource optimization, stakeholder cooperation, and digital tools. The training programs must be aimed at providing the project managers with the capabilities to make the use of digital technologies productive, whereas the policy and governance frameworks must encourage the allocation of resources towards sustainability. Further studies may develop this framework to include more contextual variables, including organizational culture, regulatory settings, or regional technological preparedness, to learn how these variables interplay with capabilities and digital adoption to foster sustainable performance. Altogether, this research can contribute to the theoretical and practical sphere by providing a proven framework that can help construction companies to turn organizational capabilities into practical sustainability benefits through strategic digital adoption.

Contribution

Nimra Zafar, &: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework
Sheza Mukhtar: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting
Aamir Shahzad: Litrature review

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