



Faculty of Economics and Business

**Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Job Performance among Women
in Leadership Roles in Manufacturing Firms: Digital Maturity as a
Moderator**

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Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Job Performance among Women in
Leadership Roles in Manufacturing Firms: Digital Maturity as a Moderator

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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ABSTRACT

In Malaysia's rapidly evolving industrial landscape, women leaders play a pivotal role in driving organizational performance and innovation. However, despite their growing representation in leadership positions, many continue to encounter challenges such as gender bias, limited career advancement, and work-family conflicts that can affect their emotional well-being and long-term job performance. These issues highlight the importance of emotional intelligence (EI), a critical leadership competency encompassing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. In the Malaysian context, women leaders' emotional intelligence is often tested as they balance organizational expectations with cultural and digital transitions in the workplace. Therefore, to bridge this gap, the present study investigates the influence of emotional intelligence on sustainable job performance, defined in this context as the combination of sustainable task performance and contextual performance, among women leaders in Malaysia's private manufacturing sector. It further explores the moderating role of digital maturity, conceptualized as a leader's readiness and adaptability in leveraging digital transformation to enhance sustainable job performance. Drawing upon social exchange theory, self-efficacy theory, and dynamic managerial capabilities theory, a quantitative research approach was employed, using survey data collected from 310 women holding managerial roles across four industrialized states: Selangor, Penang, Johor, and Sarawak. Data were analysed using PLS-SEM via SmartPLS 4.0. The findings revealed that emotional intelligence significantly enhances sustainable job performance, while digital maturity strengthens this relationship. Women leaders with higher levels of digital maturity demonstrated greater adaptability and resilience in managing digital transformation challenges, thereby achieving more sustainable performance outcomes. These results underscore that emotional intelligence and digital maturity are

complementary assets that jointly enable women leaders to sustain effectiveness in dynamic work environments. This study contributes to the literature on women's leadership, emotional intelligence, and digital transformation by offering empirical evidence from Malaysia's manufacturing context. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should invest in emotional intelligence development and digital maturity enhancement to empower women leaders in achieving sustainable performance. Policymakers and industry stakeholders are encouraged to implement supportive frameworks that promote women's leadership advancement in the digital era.

Keywords: Women Leaders; Emotional Intelligence; Sustainable Job Performance; Digital Maturity; Manufacturing Sector; Malaysia

***Kecerdasan Emosi dan Prestasi Kerja Lestari dalam Kalangan Wanita Berjawatan
Kepimpinan di Syarikat Pembuatan: Kematangan Digital sebagai Pemoderasi***

ABSTRAK

Dalam landskap perindustrian Malaysia yang berkembang pesat, pemimpin wanita memainkan peranan penting dalam memacu prestasi organisasi dan inovasi. Walau bagaimanapun, meskipun perwakilan mereka dalam kedudukan kepimpinan semakin meningkat, ramai masih berdepan dengan cabaran seperti bias jantina, peluang kemajuan kerjaya yang terhad, serta konflik antara kerja dan keluarga yang boleh menjejaskan kesejahteraan emosi dan prestasi kerja jangka panjang mereka. Isu-isu ini menekankan kepentingan kecerdasan emosi (EI), iaitu satu kecekapan kepimpinan penting yang merangkumi kesedaran diri, pengurusan diri, kesedaran sosial, dan pengurusan hubungan. Dalam konteks Malaysia, kecerdasan emosi pemimpin wanita sering diuji apabila mereka perlu mengimbangi jangkaan organisasi dengan perubahan budaya dan transformasi digital di tempat kerja. Oleh itu, bagi merapatkan jurang ini, kajian ini meneliti pengaruh kecerdasan emosi terhadap prestasi kerja lestari, yang ditakrifkan sebagai gabungan antara prestasi tugas lestari dan prestasi kontekstual, dalam kalangan pemimpin wanita di sektor pembuatan swasta di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga meneroka peranan pemoderasi kematangan digital, yang dikonseptualisasikan sebagai tahap kesiapsiagaan dan keupayaan penyesuaian pemimpin dalam memanfaatkan transformasi digital untuk meningkatkan prestasi kerja lestari. Berasaskan teori pertukaran sosial, teori kecekapan sendiri, dan teori keupayaan pengurusan dinamik, pendekatan penyelidikan kuantitatif telah digunakan melalui tinjauan soal selidik yang melibatkan 310 wanita yang memegang jawatan pengurusan di empat negeri perindustrian utama: Selangor, Pulau Pinang, Johor dan Sarawak. Data telah dianalisis menggunakan kaedah PLS-SEM melalui perisian SmartPLS 4.0. Dapatan kajian

menunjukkan bahawa kecerdasan emosi memberikan kesan positif dan signifikan terhadap prestasi kerja lestari, manakala kematangan digital memperkukuh hubungan tersebut. Pemimpin wanita dengan tahap kematangan digital yang tinggi menunjukkan keupayaan penyesuaian dan daya tahan yang lebih baik dalam mengurus cabaran transformasi digital, sekali gus mencapai hasil prestasi yang lebih lestari. Dapatan ini menegaskan bahawa kecerdasan emosi dan kematangan digital merupakan aset pelengkap yang bersama-sama membolehkan pemimpin wanita mengekalkan keberkesanan dalam persekitaran kerja yang dinamik. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada literatur mengenai kepimpinan wanita, kecerdasan emosi, dan transformasi digital dengan menawarkan bukti empirikal daripada konteks sektor pembuatan di Malaysia. Dari segi praktikal, hasil kajian mencadangkan agar organisasi melabur dalam pembangunan kecerdasan emosi dan peningkatan kematangan digital bagi memperkasakan pemimpin wanita dalam mencapai prestasi yang lestari. Pembuat dasar dan pihak berkepentingan industri juga digalakkan untuk melaksanakan rangka kerja sokongan yang dapat mempromosikan kemajuan kepimpinan wanita dalam era digital.

Kata kunci: *Pemimpin Wanita; Kecerdasan Emosi; Prestasi Kerja Lestari; Kematangan Digital; Sektor Pembuatan; Malaysia*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, there has been a notable surge in the exploration of leadership, propelled by the rapid pace and global interconnectedness characterizing today's world. Leadership, being a multifaceted and demanding endeavour, defies simple definition, encompassing a dedicated role that spans individuals, organizations, and societies. It navigates through a plethora of dynamics including service, trust-building, conflict resolution, followership, change management, and purpose alignment (Luedi, 2022). This complexity underscores the recognition of leadership as a nuanced social influence process, requiring an interdisciplinary approach as highlighted by Antonakis et al. (2019). Moreover, leadership entails making decisions and significant choices on behalf of management, which must be adhered to by every employee of the organization (Sani & Adisa, 2024). This responsibility places leaders in a position where their behaviours impact workplace experiences, effectiveness, and overall performance (Kosseck et al., 2023). Therefore, effective leadership emerges as pivotal for the prosperity of any organization, with leaders often perceived as visionaries and strategists tasked with upholding organizational stability and driving performance (Benmira & Agboola, 2021).

In the dynamic landscape of modern times, leadership paradigms are continually evolving, spanning from traditional models characterized by control, competition, and aggression to more contemporary approaches (Sułkowski et al., 2024). Amidst the rapid

evolution and innovation within the digital realm and the expanding reach of globalization, leaders must remain vigilant and adapt to emerging trends in order to ensure the competitiveness and survival of the organizations (Erhan et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2023). This necessitates a proactive approach towards understanding technological advancements and staying informed about shifts in organizational frameworks. Such awareness is imperative as it aligns organizations with the ongoing wave of digital transformation sweeping through the business world (Fu et al., 2023). Therefore, leaders must cultivate new skill sets to navigate this digital landscape and secure sustainable growth for their organizations. The advent of technology brings forth profound changes, including the digitalization of work and the workplace, underscoring the need for leaders to possess a fervent commitment to continual learning and personal development. Indeed, leadership is a multifaceted journey characterized by perpetual evolution, demanding a steadfast dedication to self-improvement and adaptability.

Given its pivotal role in determining the fate of organizations, leadership has become a paramount concern across various industries (Jermsittiparsert & Srihirun, 2019; Sriyakul et al., 2019; Hartinah et al., 2020; Akkaya, 2021; Khairy et al., 2023). Effective leadership hinges on embracing change with a positive mindset and deriving lessons from adversity. Leaders who emerge stronger from challenges demonstrate adaptability and resilience (Hougaard & Carter, 2022). According to Daniel Goleman (1998) has highlighted that while leadership styles may vary, successful leaders commonly exhibit high emotional intelligence. This trait has garnered attention for its profound influence on individual and organizational performance (Hasson, 2015; Garcia Zea et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence encompasses personal and social skills enabling individuals to understand, utilize, and manage emotions, fostering effective interactions and self-regulation (Lawani et al., 2021;

Antonopoulou, 2024). Its significance is particularly pronounced in the context of women's leadership, aiding in emotional regulation in the workplace (Jermsittiparsert, 2020; Asmamaw & Semela, 2023). In women leaders' perspectives, emotional intelligence tends to exhibit behaviours conducive to high performance, thereby enhancing individual and collective effectiveness (Duan et al., 2023).

In the present era, the number of women leaders excelling in various organizations has grown significantly (Infante & Darmawan, 2022; Isnaini et al., 2023; Bjegovic-Mikanovic et al., 2024). Women's leadership has become crucial for driving organizational change and fostering innovation. Many nations have actively promoted women into leadership roles, ensuring equal opportunities for education and career advancement. According to Eagly and Carli (2007), the most effective leadership emerges from selecting leaders from the widest talent pools, which necessarily includes women. Given the scarcity of exceptional leadership, it is imperative for organizations, societies, and nations to eliminate barriers that unjustly limit women's access to leadership roles. This shift has also influenced global labour force participation, with more women entering the workforce (Chen et al., 2023). Women are now ascending to leadership positions across various sectors, including government, industry, higher education, and non-profits, making substantial contributions (Ingle et al., 2023). Despite these advancements, women still face significant barriers in reaching top management positions and exerting their full leadership potential (Biswas et al., 2023). Gender stereotypes and biases continue to limit their influence in corporate management (Monteiro et al., 2022; García-Sánchez et al., 2023). However, by overcoming these obstacles, women in leadership positions can offer broader perspectives on sustainable performance and contribute significantly to organizational growth and development.

In Malaysia, the nation has demonstrated a strong commitment to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls). Women constitute nearly half of Malaysia's population, accounting for 48.6% of the country's 32.7 million people. According to Malaysia: Women in Top Managerial Position 2023 (2024), there has been a significant increase in the number of women in senior management, with the proportion of top managerial positions held by women rising from 31% in 2020 to 40% in 2023 (see Figure 1.1).

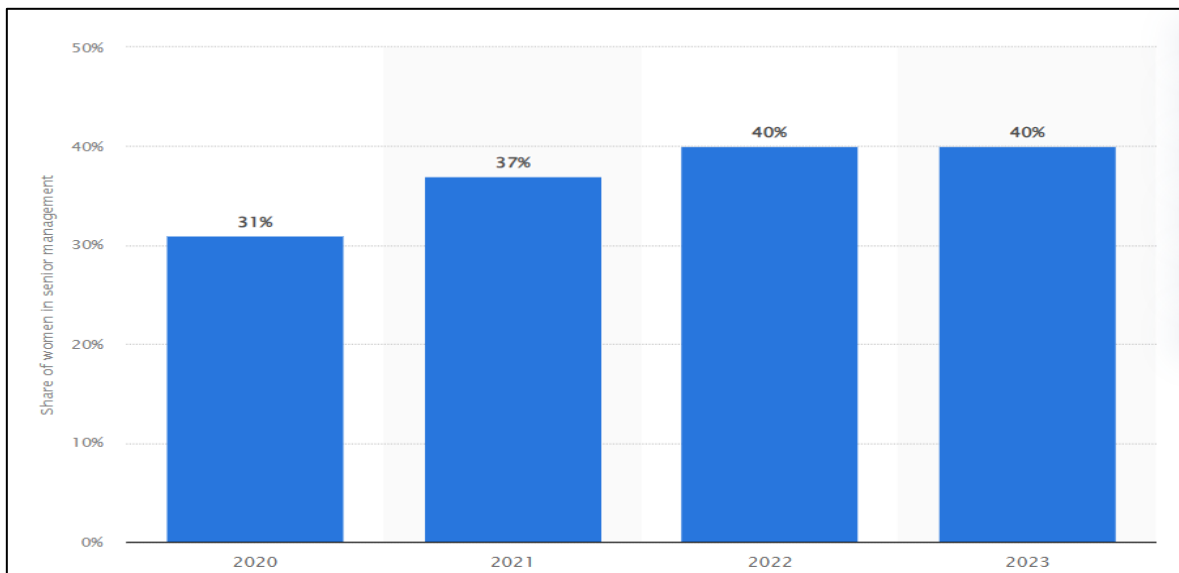


Figure 1.1: Share of women in managerial positions in Malaysia

This upward trend signifies meaningful progress toward gender diversity and inclusivity in corporate leadership roles. Women leaders are gradually gaining prominence in senior management positions, which represents a positive development for promoting sustainable job performance and gender-balanced decision-making in organizations. Furthermore, statistical evidence by Women in Top Managerial Position 2023 (see Figure 1.2) have highlighted that women comprise a substantial portion of Malaysia's private-sector employment, aligning with participation rates of other upper-middle-income countries. The

manufacturing industry, in particular, employs a significant number of women, reflecting their vital contribution to the nation’s economic development.

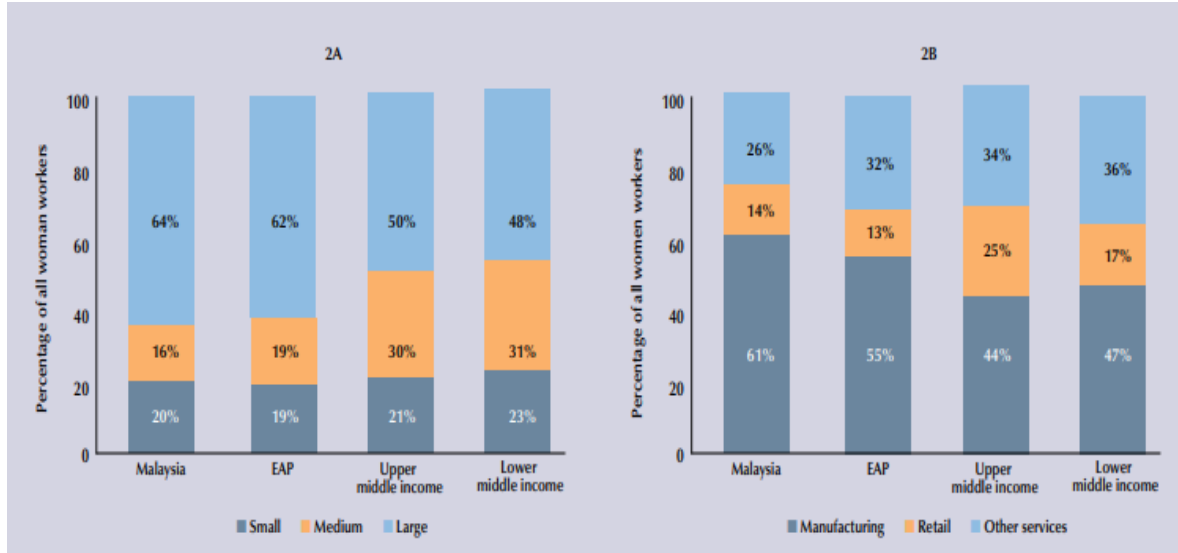


Figure 1.2: Percentage of women employees in Malaysia

On the other hand, leadership scholars have acknowledged the beginning of a new era marked by digitalization, as highlighted by Haleem et al. (2024). Past study by Brunner et al. (2023) has also highlighted the pivotal role of leaders in driving results through investments in digital tools and technologies. The adoption and effective utilization of digital technologies necessitate new organizational capabilities, as emphasized in prior studies that characterize digital transformation as an ongoing process requiring continuous organizational readiness (Aslanova & Kulichkina, 2020; He et al., 2023). In this dynamic landscape, women leaders play a crucial role in steering their organizations through the complexities of digitalization, ensuring that these new capabilities are effectively developed and integrated. Women leaders are tasked with recognizing the multifaceted implications of digitalization for their organizations (Musaigwa & Kalitanyi, 2024). However, the advent of digital transformation has presented women leaders with a myriad of challenges. These challenges include the necessity to recognize and adapt management processes and strategies

for digital environments, ensure the accuracy of control mechanisms, and promote clear communication in digital interactions. Inadequately addressing these issues can lead to performance problems and misunderstandings among women leaders (Kirchner et al., 2021; Makhanya et al., 2023). While it is vital for women leaders in various organizations to engage with the contemporary digital landscape to achieve sustainable task performance, the importance of human relationships should not be overlooked. Engagement and positivity are essential for enhancing employee self-efficacy, which plays a crucial role in their task-oriented behaviours and the attainment of organizational goals (Farhan et al., 2024). Given the disruptions caused by digital uncertainty and evolving leadership behaviours, the digital capabilities of women leaders are essential for maintaining effective job performance. Therefore, women leaders, in particular, must equip themselves with a digital mindset and emotional intelligence to help their organizations sustain development and individual job performance.

In the 21st century, the adaptability and control over work-home responsibilities have emerged as the important aspect of women's success in sustaining their job performance (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015; Arora & Jain, 2023). The ability of women leaders to balance and manage both work and family responsibilities have been highlighted as a pivotal factor influencing the achievement of women leaders (Zhang & Basha, 2023). This relationship between family dynamics and the sustainable performance of women leaders aligns with the findings by Vijayakumar (2022), who stated that psychological factors, including managerial competence and work-life commitment are the key determinants of success in sustaining job performance. In this context, emotional intelligence regarded as the secret weapon of women leaders that plays a central role in enabling them to navigate the complexities of work-home responsibilities, maintain professional competence, and achieve sustainable job performance

(Sunindijo & Maghrebi, 2020). Emotional intelligence in women is essential for understanding its multifaceted impact on their lives. It encompasses the ability to understand, manage, and express emotions effectively, plays a pivotal role in personal well-being, professional success, and interpersonal relationships. The emotional competence displayed by the high-performing women leaders is noticeably higher than the others. Women leaders with emotional intelligence can recognize the feelings of others, which influences their subordinates and builds trust (Miao et al., 2016). Subsequently, women leaders become more self-aware and sophisticated by realizing the value of emotional intelligence (Biwott, 2022). Women leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to experience less stress, forge healthier relationships, and navigate life's challenges more adeptly (Consten, 2023). Moreover, emotional intelligence contributes to mental health, as women who lack it may struggle with managing stress, regulating emotions, and coping with difficulties, potentially increasing their vulnerability to anxiety and depression (Cannavò et al., 2024). Conversely, women leaders who lack of emotional intelligence could encountered challenges such as interpersonal conflicts, heightened stress levels, communication difficulties, limited career opportunities, and reduced personal satisfaction (Ahmad et al., 2023; Soriano-Vázquez et al., 2023). These challenges are pivotal for promoting the holistic well-being and empowerment of women. Therefore, understanding emotional intelligence in women leaders contribute to comprehension of how gender dynamics, societal norms, and individual experiences shape emotional expression and regulation. This insight can guide endeavours aimed at advancing equality, well-being, and personal fulfilment for women in varied circumstances.

Besides, past studies have asserted that women leaders with strong emotional intelligence could generate sustainable development within the organizations through

continuous improvement, innovation, long-term success, and a sustained competitive edge (Iqbal, 2020; Iqbal et al., 2021). It was followed evidenced by Schlaegel et al. (2022) which stated that personal emotional intelligence competencies (e.g., self-awareness and self-management) and social-emotional intelligence competencies (e.g., social awareness and relationship management) have a major impact on leaders' sustainable job performance. Hence, emotional intelligence is a significant determinant of sustainable job performance (sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance).

In the present study, emotional intelligence, comprising self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management is examined for its impact on sustainable job performance, which includes both sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance. The study further investigates the moderating role of digital maturity in these relationships, acknowledging that the ability to integrate emotional and digital competencies has become increasingly essential in today's evolving work environments. By focusing on women who hold managerial roles and perform leadership functions within Malaysia's private manufacturing sector, this research provides a strong understanding of how emotional intelligence and digital maturity influence sustainable job performance among women in leadership roles.

1.1.1 The Malaysian Scenario

Starting from the 1970s, as the number of female graduates entering the workforce increased, the topic of women's leadership in Malaysia has become a subject of empirical research. Women in Malaysia are recognized as pivotal contributors to the country's economic and social progress (Khadri & Subramaniam, 2015; Stivens, 2023), with studies indicating that organizations with higher percentages of women in top management positions

tend to exhibit better performance, particularly in leadership styles and financial management. Consequently, women leaders have made significant strides in occupying leadership roles across various sectors of the country (Cho et al., 2015). Past study by Ngow and Taha (2023), it was discovered that Malaysia boasts a higher proportion of female business leaders compared to other regions in Asia. Notably, women constitute 28% of directors at major corporations in Malaysia, contrasting with figures of 18% in Japan and 20% in Hong Kong. Moreover, women hold 40% of senior management roles in Malaysia, surpassing the global average of 32%. However, the research also indicates a tendency for women leaders in Malaysia to exit their positions more frequently than their male counterparts, implying that attaining gender equality in leadership necessitates not just the advancement of women but also their retention in such roles.

In the culturally diverse and vibrant nation of Malaysia, the rise of women leaders signifies a crucial step towards gender equality and empowerment. Despite concerted efforts to enhance economic opportunities and leadership roles for women, significant disparities remain. Obstacles related to gender, deeply rooted in cultural and institutional structures, along with societal norms and ethnic dynamics, continue to hinder women's participation in decision-making roles (LeadWomen, 2023). However, amidst these challenges, the inspiring stories of Malaysian women who have broken through various sector barriers serve as a beacon for future generations, highlighting the importance of female representation in leadership positions. Consider Rafiza Ghazali, the insightful Group CEO of Cradle Fund Sdn Bhd, whose proficiency in finance and strategy has made her a linchpin in the nurturing of emerging startups. Under her leadership, Rafiza has guided innovation and growth within the startup ecosystem. Similarly, Sharala Axryd, the forward-thinking founder and CEO of the Center of Applied Data Science, stands as a lighthouse for women in STEM fields. As a

passionate proponent of data science, Sharala's efforts have significantly increased women's participation in STEM, leaving a lasting impact on the industry. These leaders, among others, embody the potential of women to lead and innovate, challenging traditional norms and sparking a new era of women empowerment in Malaysia. Their contributions not only drive the nation's progress but also set the stage for a more inclusive and diverse leadership in the future. Their stories echo powerfully, serving as strong reminders of the heights achievable when opportunities are seized, and potential is cultivated. Without a doubt, they are the pioneers of change, carving a path towards a more equitable future.

Malaysia has demonstrated significant progress in promoting gender diversity in key leadership roles, with 36.2% representation of women in senior management positions in mid-market firms in 2025, reflecting a slight decline from 39.6% in 2024 but still exceeding the global average of 34.0% (Grant Thornton Malaysia, 2025). In advocating for gender diversity, the Malaysian government emphasizes the importance of a balanced representation of competent individuals, irrespective of gender, recognizing that diverse perspectives contribute to more deliberative decisions. Women are encouraged to leverage their emotional intelligence and leadership capabilities to strengthen their roles in leadership positions, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic workforce. Efforts to promote gender diversity extend to supporting women's participation in the workforce through initiatives such as flexible work arrangements, childcare facilities, career comeback programs, and entrepreneurship initiatives (Sian, 2021; Ramos & Oguzhan, 2022). Past research data further indicated robust female representation across managerial roles, with women comprising 36.2% of senior management positions in 2025, surpassing regional peers like Indonesia and Singapore at 36.3% while trailing leaders such as the Philippines (43.0%) and Thailand (43.1%) (Grant Thornton Malaysia, 2025). In summary, Malaysia's remarkable

progress in achieving women in leadership positions surpasses global standards and indicates positive momentum toward greater gender equality.

1.2 Problem Statement

While significant progress has been made in certain areas where women have overtaken men (Goldin, 2014; Alon et al., 2022), women continue to face significant challenges that impact their job performance. In this study, the main problem is the sustainability of women leaders' job performance in Malaysia's private manufacturing organisations, such as their capacity to maintain consistently high task and contextual performance over time despite sector-specific pressures. Despite extensive research and development efforts, women are still underrepresented in these positions and face gender-specific barriers, such as glass ceiling and glass cliffs, that hinder their career advancement (Longman & Bray, 2024). At the organizational level, glass ceilings are a form of gender discrimination that limits women's professional growth (Kundu, 2024), this statement was further supported by past studies that have highlighted the systemic barriers such as the glass ceiling, workplace biases, and gender stereotypes create additional pressures for women leaders that affecting their ability to sustain high performance (Duchek et al., 2022; Tabassum & Nayak, 2024). These barriers often lead to higher stress levels, reduced job satisfaction, and burnout, particularly among women leaders who are also managing work-life responsibilities. Besides, local studies on Malaysian managers similarly link gender stereotyping, constrained support, and skills gaps to leadership strain that can undermine performance continuity (Vanessa, 2024; Zahari et al., 2024).

In Malaysia, while women's participation in leadership roles has improved over the past decade, challenges remain in sustaining performance, particularly within the private

manufacturing sector. According to the Grant Thornton (2025) Women in Business Report, the proportion of women in senior management positions in Malaysia decreased from 40.4% in 2023 to 39.6% in 2024 and is projected to further decline to 36.2% in 2025. Although women hold 57% of Chief Human Resource Officer roles and 36% of Chief Marketing Officer roles, only 16% occupy top strategic positions such as Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director. Similarly, women occupy 31.4% of board seats in Malaysia's top 100 public-listed companies as of 2024, compared to 16.6% in 2016 (Ainul, 2024). These figures indicate that while representation has increased in certain areas, women's participation in top decision-making roles may be declining, raising concerns about their ability to sustain high job performance and career longevity in competitive sectors.

In addition to this, the scope of the study which focused on the manufacturing industry, a traditionally male-dominated sector has also presented significant challenges for women leader striving to sustain their job performance. Women leaders are exacerbated by workplace conditions that demand long hours, adherence to strict production deadlines, and exposure to physically demanding environments (Scott et al., 2024). Past study further proven that change-management capability, resource adequacy, and leader attitudes toward digital transformation are decisive for performance outcomes, reinforcing the need to study leader-level enablers of sustained performance in this sector (Ahmed et al., 2024). These challenges are further compounded by Malaysia's manufacturing culture, where performance metrics often emphasize productivity and efficiency over relational or emotional competencies, creating additional strain for women leaders to maintain both task and contextual performance under pressure.

Furthermore, women leaders in manufacturing industry face persistent doubt in navigating digital transformation and managing technological complexities. Past studies by Bowen et al. (2018) and Aftab et al. (2022) have highlighted significant challenges faced by women leaders in managerial positions, including digital uncertainty, complexity, and inter-role conflict from specific workplace characteristics. These challenges are often perceived as a threat by women leaders, leading to resistance to change, eventually hindering leadership performance (Belwal & Belwal, 2023; Konuk et al., 2023; Belwal et al., 2024). However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how such digital transformation pressures specifically affect women leaders' sustainable job performance in Malaysian private manufacturing organizations. While international studies have documented similar challenges, contextualized data from Malaysia remain scarce, indicating a critical research gap.

Additionally, the advent of AI technologies has further intensified the demand for digital transformation, creating an environment where women leaders are expected to possess advanced technological skills and adaptability. However, many women leaders are still encountered obstacles in acquiring these skills, including insufficient institutional support and the pervasive perception of digitalization as a threat rather than an opportunity (Alateeg & Al-Ayed, 2024; Ajiva et al., 2024). Other than that, women in leadership roles are expected to excel not only in task-related performance but also in emotional engagement with their teams. Over the past three decades, there has been a significant shift in workplace dynamics known as the "affective revolution". This emotional labour adds to their workload, creating a dual burden that could result in diminished leadership effectiveness and sustainability over time (Amirian et al., 2023). Additionally, work-family conflict remains a critical issue, as women leaders struggle to balance professional and personal demands (Lott

& Wöhrmann, 2023). Past studies have highlighted that this imbalance contributes to heightened turnover intentions, lower productivity, and compromised well-being (Nasir et al., 2023; Prentice et al., 2024).

Taken together, these past findings have suggested that while women leaders in Malaysia are increasingly visible, they continue to face emotional, digital, and structural pressures that could undermine sustainable job performance, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Therefore, the current study identifies a critical need to understand how emotional intelligence and digital maturity interact to support or hinder women leaders' sustainable performance in this context. These challenges underscore the need to examine women leaders' job performance in the face of systemic barriers, emotional labour expectations, and technological advancements. Emotional intelligence has been recognized as a key factor in helping women leaders to manage these demands effectively and achieve an accomplishment in sustaining their job performance. Additionally, digital maturity plays the ability to adapt and lead during digital transformations which holds a moderating role in enhancing women leaders' performance amidst these challenges. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between women's emotional intelligence and their job performance, as well as investigate the moderating effect of digital maturity, specifically transformation management intensity, on sustaining women's job performance. The study posits that women's proficiency in digitalization is imperative to drive digital transformation in organizations, and women leaders with high transformation management intensity are expected to demonstrate high levels of sustainable task and contextual performance.

1.3 Research Objectives

The present study aims to meet the following objectives:

1.3.1 General Objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) and sustainable job performance (sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among women leaders. Besides, this study also intends to examine the moderating role of digital maturity, particularly in terms of transformation management intensity among emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance among women leaders.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- i. To investigate the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations.
- ii. To determine the relationship between self-management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations.
- iii. To study the relationship between social awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations.
- iv. To examine the relationship between relationship management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual

performance) within private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations.

- v. To explore digital maturity as the moderator, particularly in terms of transformation management intensity in the relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) towards sustainable job performance (sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations.

This study anticipates establishing an empirical relationship between the four independent variables (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) in a single framework from the perspective of women in leadership roles. In addition, digital maturity in terms of transformation management intensity is integrated into the proposed framework as a moderator and attempts to examine its moderating impact in strengthening the relationships between four independent variables and women's sustainable job performance. This study intends to provide a solid foundation of knowledge about the importance of emotional intelligence pertaining to women's job performance. All of this information serves as an added-value advantage to the relevant government departments or agencies to achieve a higher percentage of women participating in decision-making and holding top leadership positions.

1.4 Research Questions

This study attempts to provide solutions to the following research questions:

- i. Does self-awareness affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations?
- ii. Does self-management affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations?
- iii. Does social awareness affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations?
- iv. Does relationship management affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations?
- v. Does digital maturity (transformation management intensity) has a positive moderating impact in the relationship between self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, as well as relationship management towards sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance among women leaders within Malaysia private manufacturing organizations)?

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

This section defines the key terms used in this study. These terms include emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, digital maturity, transformation management intensity, sustainable task performance, and sustainable contextual performance. The definition of each term is described below:

- i. Emotional intelligence

It refers to the capability to recognize, understand, and regulate one's emotions and those of others (Goleman, 1995). In this study, EI is conceptualized according to Goleman's mixed-model framework and operationalized into four dimensions, which consists of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

ii. Self-awareness

It refers to the ability to recognize one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and values, and to understand their impact on others (Goleman, 1995). In this study, it represents a woman leader's understanding of her emotional states and their influence on decision-making and job performance.

iii. Self-management

It refers to the ability to regulate emotions, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain integrity and resilience under pressure (Goleman, 1995). In this study, it reflects a woman leader's capacity to maintain composure, optimism, and accountability when facing job-related stress and digital transformation challenges.

iv. Social awareness

It is the ability to perceive and understand others' emotions, organizational climate, and social networks (Goleman, 1995). In this study, it indicates a woman leader's sensitivity to workplace dynamics and empathy toward team members, contributing to a supportive and productive environment.

v. Relationship management

Relationship management involves the ability to build and maintain positive relationships, manage conflict, and inspire others toward shared goals (Goleman,

1995). In this study, it reflects a woman leader's interpersonal and communication competencies that enhance collaboration and team performance.

vi. Digital maturity

Digital maturity refers to the extent to which an individual or organization effectively integrates digital technologies into strategies, culture, and operations (Westerman et al., 2012; He et al., 2021). In this study, digital maturity is viewed as a leader's readiness and adaptability in leveraging digital transformation to enhance sustainable job performance.

vii. Transformation management intensity

Transformation management intensity describes the degree to which a leader actively drives, manages, and aligns digital transformation initiatives with organizational goals (Westerman et al., 2012; He et al., 2021). In this study, it represents the moderating dimension of digital maturity that influences women leaders' ability to sustain job performance.

viii. Sustainable job performance

Sustainable job performance refers to the consistent achievement of high-quality work outcomes over time while maintaining well-being, adaptability, and balance (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996; Koopmans et al., 2011; Haryanto, 2022). In this study, sustainable job performance integrates with traditional job performance frameworks emphasize on women leaders' long-term effectiveness in task and contextual domains.

ix. Sustainable task performance

Sustainable task performance refers to the ability to consistently perform core job duties effectively and efficiently over time (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996;

Koopmans et al., 2011; Haryanto, 2022). In this study, it reflects women leaders' capacity to sustain productivity, quality, and goal achievement despite workplace and digital challenges.

x. Sustainable contextual performance

Sustainable contextual performance refers to voluntary behaviors that support the organizational, social, and psychological environment over time (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996; Koopmans et al., 2011; Haryanto, 2022). In this study, it denotes women leaders' sustained contributions to teamwork, collaboration, and positive work climate beyond formal job requirements.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research highlights the increasing pace at which women are ascending to the highest leadership positions in organizations. In accordance with this, the issue of women's leadership has received much attention from researchers and practitioners as women are increasingly entering the labour force, causing a major shift in the proportion of women in the labour force. Malaysia implemented reforms with the Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance to enhance gender diversity on corporate boards, mandating that large companies include a minimum of 30% women on their board of directors and disclose their diversity policies, objectives, and strategies for meeting these objectives (Chen et al., 2022; Sunita & Jhunjunwala, 2023). Therefore, this study brings significant knowledge to the stakeholders and government agencies on the importance of involving women with vital emotional intelligence in leadership positions.

First, emotional intelligence has been widely studied by past researchers (i.e., Saha et al., 2023; D'Souza et al., 2023; Ain et al., 2024). Few past studies have explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance in other fields, such as

banking and services industry (Nasir et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the existing literature on women's emotional intelligence on the variable of sustainable job performance (e.g., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) in a single measure in the private manufacturing organization in Malaysia is absent. On top of that, the private sector lags behind in promoting women's participation in corporate leadership roles, according to the Women, Family, and Community Development Ministry. The Minister, Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri reported that the public sector has surpassed its goal of 30 percent, achieving 38.8 percent women participation in decision-making roles. However, this progress has not been mirrored in the private sector, over which the ministry has no control. Minister has also expressed hope that the private sector will strive to meet the common target for women's participation in leadership roles (Perimbanayaga, 2023). Therefore, this study can capture the views among women leaders where high emotional intelligence can enhance their sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance. In short, this study has proposed a framework for the knowledge of high emotional intelligence in improving and sustaining women's job performance, particularly based on a comprehensive review of existing literature and the measures of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) in a single framework. This allows the examination of its impact to examine its impact on sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance from women leaders' points of views in private organization across Malaysian manufacturing industry.

Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that women leaders have a significant role in understanding the intricate implications of digitalization for their organizations. Thus, it becomes essential to consider the impact of digital maturity, particularly in terms of

transformation management intensity, to address this challenge. Existing research suggests that women in managerial positions encounter digital uncertainty, complexity, and inter-role conflict due to organizational factors (Awan et al., 2021; Aftab et al., 2022). The implementation of digitalization often leads women leaders to perceive a loss of control and a threat to their leadership position, which can cause resistance to the digital transformation process. Therefore, in this study, the moderating role of digital maturity, specifically transformation management intensity, is deemed crucial in sustaining women's sustainable job performance. In summary, this study investigated the potential impact of digital maturity with the dimension of transformation management intensity, primarily serves as a moderating variable in enhancing the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance across private organization in Malaysian manufacturing industry.

Lastly, this study provides valuable practical implications to more women leaders in increasing their understanding of emotional intelligence, especially with the integration of digital maturity (transformation management intensity) as the moderator in enhancing their sustainable job performance. The findings of this study could be leveraged by industry stakeholders and government agencies to create management and career development strategies that increase women leaders' comprehension of the link between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance. Furthermore, incorporating digitalization programs may enable women leaders to demonstrate effective leadership and pave the way for more growth and promotion opportunities within the organization.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study aims to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance, focusing on task sustainable and sustainable contextual performance, among women leaders holding managerial positions within private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia. The dimensions of emotional intelligence examined in this study are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. In addition, this research aims to investigate the moderating effect of digital maturity, specifically transformation management intensity, on the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance). The research was conducted within private manufacturing firms in Malaysia, focusing on the states of Selangor, Penang, Johor and Sarawak. These states were selected due to their high levels of approved project investment in the manufacturing sector and the largest concentrations of private manufacturing organizations (Malaysian Investment Development Authority, 2023). Data was gathered from women leaders occupying managerial positions in these private manufacturing organizations within Malaysia. Statistic has indicated that women represent a substantial portion of the country's private sector employment, comparable to rates seen in other upper-middle-income nations (Amin & Zarka, 2021; Sinpeng et al., 2022). Moreover, women have constituted a majority of the workforce in manufacturing organizations in Malaysia, with their presence more pronounced in companies led by female top managers, where they comprise 45% of the workforce. Lastly, the insights garnered from this study hold valuable implications for industry stakeholders and government agencies, providing a foundation for shaping strategic initiatives aimed at fostering the management and career advancement of women leaders.

1.8 Organization of Chapters

This study comprises five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the study's background, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and definitions of key terms, including emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, digital maturity, transformation management intensity, sustainable task performance, and sustainable contextual performance. It also outlines the study's significance, scope, and organization of the chapters.

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth literature review, thoroughly analysing the key constructs of the current study. It offers detailed discussions on model definitions, the foundational theories supporting these constructs, relevant theoretical frameworks, existing gaps in the literature, the rationale for selecting the chosen framework, and the formulation of hypotheses.

Chapter 3 covers the research sites, research design, sample, data collection procedures, research questionnaire and measurements, pre-test of the questionnaire, data cleaning, multicollinearity test, and statistical analyses, including the use of Statistical Package for Social Science version 28.0 and SmartPLS 8.0.

Chapter 4 reports a series of statistical findings from the research study based on respondents' profiles, statistical overview, measurement model assessment, and structural model assessment.

Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the research findings, including both theoretical and practical implications, future research directions, and potential limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Although women have made notable progress in leadership representation worldwide, they continue to experience persistent vulnerabilities and barriers that limit their advancement and sustainable performance. Globally, women occupy only 32.2% of leadership positions (Pal et al., 2024), and in Malaysia, women's participation in senior management has slightly declined from 40.4% in 2023 to 39.6% in 2024 (Grant Thornton, 2025). Although Malaysia has achieved over the 30% barrier and does represent progress for women in managerial roles, however, women still remain underrepresented in executive and decision-making positions, particularly within the manufacturing sector (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024). These disparities are often attributed to gender stereotypes, emotional labour demands, and the dual pressures of professional and domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, as industries undergo rapid digital transformation, women leaders face the additional challenge of adapting to and effectively utilizing digital technologies to maintain performance and competitiveness. Digital adoption, when supported by emotional intelligence, can help women navigate technological complexity and enhance leadership effectiveness (Westerman et al., 2014; Kane et al., 2017).

The current study offers a comprehensive and integrated framework that combines emotional intelligence dimensions, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management as independent variables, to investigate their effect on sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) as dependent variables. Additionally, the study examines the moderating

impact of digital maturity, particularly in terms of transformation management intensity, on the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance. This focus is timely given the rising demand for digitally competent and emotionally intelligent leaders capable of balancing human and technological dimensions in leadership. The rationale for choosing these variables is based on the increasing empowerment of women in modern society, with more women assuming top leadership positions in organizations. As such, it is becoming more challenging for women leaders to effectively manage their emotions and handle employees with emotional intelligence. The study proposes that successful leadership involves effectively managing emotions and recognizing the emotional processes involved in managing employees, making emotional intelligence a critical requirement for effective leadership. High emotional intelligence is also linked to increased work commitment and better workplace performance, especially among women. Therefore, the extent of sustainable job performance among women leaders can be strengthened through integrating these variables.

This chapter presents the proposed research models that provide a theoretical basis for the variable choices, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, digital maturity (transformation management intensity), and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance, and sustainable contextual performance). This chapter explores the theories underpinned in the current research and presents the proposed theoretical framework. It offers a rationale for the chosen framework, provides an in-depth explanation of the variables, and explains the process behind formulating the hypotheses.

2.2 Women Leaders in Malaysia

In Malaysia, a committed cohort of women corporate leaders is spearheading the charge in advancing emotional intelligence, gender equality, and women's empowerment within the corporate sphere. One standout figure is Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, who epitomizes emotional intelligence in her leadership endeavours. Through her advocacy for women's rights, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS awareness, she exhibits a profound understanding of social issues and a remarkable ability to empathize with marginalized communities. Leveraging her familial connections and personal achievements, Marina adeptly navigates intricate socio-political landscapes with diplomacy and sensitivity. Her constant dedication to social justice and unwavering perspectives on various issues underscore her emotional maturity and ability to remain resilient when confronting challenges (Prestige Women, 2016). Other women leaders in Malaysia, such as Ng Wei Wei, the Executive Director and CEO of UOB Malaysia and the bank's first female CEO, exemplify emotional intelligence. According to Lee (2024), Ng Wei Wei demonstrates a strong sense of self-awareness by recognizing her strengths and areas for improvement. Her role as CEO enables her to inspire and mentor others, especially women in banking. She also exhibits effective self-management through her focus on long-term sustainability and strategic goals for UOB Malaysia, balancing her personal and professional responsibilities with a commitment to growth and work-life integration. Ng Wei Wei's strategic vision, personal development, and relationship management reflect her emotional intelligence. Leaders like her are pivotal in championing gender equality and women's empowerment, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive corporate landscape in Malaysia.

Furthermore, Malaysia is an emerging economy where many organizations continue to adhere to traditional male-dominated leadership structures, resulting in women's voices

and influence on boards being minimal, especially for those appointed solely for genealogical reasons (Wan Mohammad et al., 2023). Despite the progress made by women leaders in Malaysia, they still face several challenges that hinder their advancement. These challenges include cultural and societal norms that prioritize male leadership, limited access to resources and opportunities, and gender bias and discrimination (Heise et al., 2019). For instance, a survey by the Center for American Progress found that 56% of women in Malaysia believed that they faced gender discrimination in the workplace. Additionally, women leaders in Malaysia are often subjected to gender-based stereotypes and negative perceptions that undermine their credibility and leadership abilities. Currently, Malaysia's efforts to reinstate gender diversity have shown promise. Many countries worldwide face the challenge of transforming entrenched "old boy" networks, and the push for greater gender diversity is not just a matter of equity but also a demand for social justice for qualified women directors (Khan et al., 2024). Past studies have demonstrated that gender diversity enhances corporate sustainability disclosures, likely due to the diverse experiences and oversight capabilities that women leaders bring to organizational governance (Zahid et al., 2020a, 2020b; Wasiuzzaman & Mohammad, 2020).

Despite these prevalent challenges, there are women pioneer in Malaysia who are breaking barriers and setting new standards for women leadership, such as Siti Hurrairah Sulaiman. In 2023, Siti Hurrairah Sulaiman, a role model for women leaders, made history by becoming the first woman to serve as the country chair of Shell Malaysia. She urges women not to underestimate themselves, despite societal norms and expectations that often restrict their opportunities. Climbing the corporate ladder, she has held various leadership roles in project management, strategy, commercial services, and beyond. Siti Hurrairah Sulaiman has carved out a successful career path in an industry traditionally dominated by

men, breaking down gender stereotypes and laying the groundwork for others to follow. She acknowledges that women leaders often encounter challenges in achieving a healthy work-life balance, especially those with family responsibilities. Furthermore, she points out that many organizations lack the necessary support systems, such as family-friendly policies, which can assist women leaders in effectively managing their professional and personal responsibilities (Ming, 2024). Therefore, Siti Hurrairah Sulaiman sets a precedent for women leaders, showing that women's empowerment can be realized through determination, understanding, and the introduction of supportive policies and systems. She has demonstrated that with the right initiatives, it is feasible to establish a workplace where women feel supported and empowered to advance in their careers.

Just as Siti Hurrairah Sulaiman has shattered the glass ceiling in the corporate world, Professor Datuk Ts. Ir. Dr. Siti Hamisah Tapsir has made monumental strides in academia and public service, showcasing the multifaceted nature of women's leadership in Malaysia (*Professor Datuk Ts. Ir. Dr. Siti Hamisah Tapsir | Sime Darby Berhad*, n.d.). She has exemplified how emotional intelligence can amplify a leader's impact. Her empathetic and strategic approach to leadership has driven significant advancements in education and technology in Malaysia. By fostering collaboration, she successfully implemented the nation's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan. Her ability to navigate complex challenges with resilience and sensitivity underscores the essential role of emotional intelligence in leadership. Currently leading UCSI University, her journey inspires future women leaders to harness emotional intelligence for transformative change. Her legacy serves as a testament to the profound impact that compassionate and insightful leadership can have on shaping a nation's future.

In conclusion, the landscape of women leadership in Malaysia is a testament to the resilience, determination, and emotional intelligence of women who have risen to the top despite numerous challenges. These women leaders have demonstrated that women leaders can excel in leadership roles, contribute significantly to their organizations, and drive social change. However, the journey towards women's empowerment and gender equality in Malaysia is far from over. Persistent societal norms, gender bias, and restricted access to resources continue to impede the advancement of women leaders. Therefore, it is crucial to continue advocating for gender diversity, promoting supportive policies, and investing in the development of women leaders. As Malaysia navigates the complexities of the 21st century, the role of women leaders will be more critical than ever. Their unique perspectives and experiences have the potential to foster a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economy that benefits all members of society. Their stories of triumph serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration for all women leaders striving to make their mark in the world. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are more than mere slogans - they are terms of substantial significance, representing objectives that are vital for our shared prosperity. They carry the weight of actual lives and futures that hang in the balance (Investing in Women: Accelerating Progress — Malaysia Women and Girls Forum Secretariat, 2024).

2.3 Underlying Theories

The following section explains the underlying theories that govern this study that support the connection between self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and sustainable job performance, including sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance. These theoretical perspectives are the social exchange theory (SET), self-efficacy theory, and dynamic managerial capabilities (DMC) theory. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the variables discussed in the social

exchange theory (SET) of emotions, self-efficacy theory, and dynamic managerial capabilities (DMC) theory.

Table 2.1: Summary of Variables covered by Social Exchange Theory (SET), Self-Efficacy Theory and Dynamic Managerial Capabilities (DMC) Theory

Theories Variables	Social Exchange Theory (SET)	Self-Efficacy Theory	Dynamic Managerial Capabilities (DMC) Theory
Self-awareness	√		
Self-management	√		
Social awareness	√		
Relationship management	√		
Sustainable task performance		√	
Sustainable contextual performance		√	
Digital maturity			√

2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Emotions served as a cornerstone of human interactions, profoundly influencing our social relationships (Van Kleef, 2010). To dissect the intricate mechanisms underlying emotional exchanges, the social exchange theory (SET) emerged as a pivotal framework. The social exchange theory was a theoretical framework that extended its principles to the realm of emotional interactions (Lawler & Thye, 1999). Rooted in sociology and

psychology, the social exchange theory posited that human social interactions were fundamentally based on the principles of reciprocity, rewards, and costs (Wallenburg & Handfield, 2022). When applied to emotions, the social exchange theory suggested that emotional exchanges between individuals were similar to transactions where emotions were treated as valuable resources, and people engaged in these exchanges with the expectation of achieving certain outcomes (Ylistö & Husu, 2021).

The social exchange theory posits that emotional expression is not a spontaneous reaction, but a strategic tool used by individuals in social interactions to achieve specific goals (Scheer, 2021). It suggests that people expressed emotions with an expectation of certain responses or rewards. Socialization processes might lead women to express emotions more openly and empathetically, while men might be conditioned to suppress or limit their emotional expression (Kashi, 2024). Additionally, the theory introduces the concept of costs and rewards in emotional exchanges. Individuals constantly perform a cost-benefit analysis, considering the potential risks and benefits of expressing their emotions (Tsai & Kang, 2019). Costs might include vulnerability exposure, the effort required for emotional expression, and potential positive and negative consequences. Rewards could range from emotional support and validation to reciprocation of emotional expressions and other positive outcomes (Teoh, 2023). In summary, men and women might have different expectations of the rewards and costs involved in emotional exchanges.

On the other hand, the social exchange theory acknowledges the significant role of societal norms and cultural expectations in shaping emotional exchanges (Vanzella-Yang & Abrutyn, 2022). Different cultures and social contexts establish various rules and boundaries for emotional expression, leading individuals to adhere to these norms to effectively navigate

social interactions. Emotional regulation is a key aspect of the theory, with individuals often adjusting their emotions based on the anticipated outcomes of an exchange (Gabriel et al., 2020). This adjustment might involve consciously suppressing or amplifying emotions to meet social expectations and personal objectives (Hsu et al., 2023). This has led to an understanding that men and women might use different strategies to regulate emotions in social interactions. Women might prefer emotion-focused coping strategies. In contrast, men might tend to use problem-focused coping strategies or minimize emotional responses to maintain social status or avoid appearing vulnerable.

According to Jena (2022), the intersection of social exchange theory and emotional intelligence lay in their shared emphasis on the social dimension of emotions and the recognition that emotions were not isolated individual experiences but rather pivotal elements that both shape and were shaped by social interactions. Self-awareness, a core element of emotional intelligence, facilitated the recognition of one's emotional states and motivations, enabling informed decisions about when and how to express emotions in social exchanges, aligning with social exchange theory of emotions' concept of strategic emotional expression (Addimando, 2023). Self-management skills aligned with social exchange theory of emotions' emphasis on emotional regulation, a vital factor in successful social exchanges. Social awareness in emotional intelligence enhanced an individual's ability to perceive and empathize with others' emotions, mirroring social exchange theory of emotions' recognition of understanding others' emotions as essential in social exchanges. Subsequently, both social exchange theory of emotions and emotional intelligence acknowledged the impact of societal norms on emotional expression and social interactions, underscoring the importance of recognizing and adapting to these norms for effective emotional exchanges and relationship management (Khairy et al., 2023).

The synthesis of the social exchange theory and emotional intelligence offered a holistic perspective on how individuals navigated their emotions within the intricate realm of social relationships. The application of the social exchange theory to women leaders revealed the intricate emotional dynamics they faced in leadership roles. Women leaders strategically managed their emotions as valuable resources, all within the context of societal norms and power dynamics (Barriers et al., 2020; Chikwe et al., 2024). Understanding the social exchange theory framework in this context offered insights into the challenges and opportunities women leaders encountered, contributing to a deeper understanding of their leadership experiences and the potential for developing strategies to support their success. This interconnectedness provided valuable insights into how emotions influenced human interactions and how individuals could enhance their emotional intelligence to foster more positive and fulfilling relationships.

2.3.2 Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy, defined as the belief in one's capabilities to mobilize motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action necessary to meet situational demands (Wood & Bandura, 1989), has been extensively studied. Past studies by Bandura (1977a, 1997b) laid the foundation for self-efficacy theory, which broadly encompasses individuals' confidence in executing actions to manage a wide range of situations. Building upon this, Feng and Chen (2020) further defined self-efficacy as an individual's subjective judgment of their ability to accomplish specific goals in particular situations. This self-assessment significantly influences whether individuals engage in coping behaviours and their persistence despite setbacks. Importantly, self-efficacy serves as a crucial predictor of future behaviours and demonstrates significant explanatory power across diverse actions, suggesting that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in behaviours leading to

successful outcomes and to persist in the face of challenges and setbacks. Self-efficacy is cultivated through various experiences and influences, including performance experiences, vicarious experiences, imaginal experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bryan & Vitello-Cicciu, 2022). Traditionally, self-efficacy measures have focused on assessing individuals' beliefs in their ability to perform specific tasks within domains or situations (Poluektova et al., 2023), aiding in understanding individuals' confidence in narrowly defined contexts.

Furthermore, leaders' self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute courses of action required to achieve specific goals (Madawala et al., 2023). It can be categorized into two aspects: as a motivational tool for developing reliable goals and objectives towards new ventures, and as a directing apparatus enabling people to accomplish their objectives. This belief not only lays the foundation for goal setting and achievement but also significantly impacts a leader's overall performance. Self-efficacy strongly influences a leader's approach to tasks, motivation to engage in tasks, level of effort exerted, persistence when facing difficulties, and task performance (Schunk, 2023). Therefore, it is critical for leaders to enhance self-efficacy beliefs to improve their performance, especially considering the importance of self-efficacy in leadership, particularly in the context of women in leadership roles. The significance of self-efficacy is amplified when considering the challenges faced by women leaders. Despite advancements, women leaders continue to encounter significant barriers such as gender bias, lack of mentorship opportunities, and work-life balance challenges (Thelma & Ngulube, 2024). These issues, prevalent across various cultures, heavily influence perceptions of leadership abilities, complicating women's leadership journeys (Elkhwesky et al., 2023). Past studies have underscored that these obstacles can undermine women's self-efficacy, making it more

difficult for them to ascend to and thrive in leadership positions (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Triana, 2023), perpetuating gender disparities in leadership across sectors (Ruggs et al., 2023). To create an environment where women can fully realize their leadership potential, it is essential to implement strategies that enhance self-efficacy, empowering women to take on leadership roles with confidence. Addressing these barriers and fostering an environment that enhances women's self-efficacy is crucial not only for individual career advancement but also for overall organizational performance.

Conversely, the impact of self-efficacy on job performance has been extensively studied by past research (Ochoa Pacheco et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2024), which consistently confirming its positive and significant influence. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist in their efforts to achieve goals, leading to benefits for both individuals and organizations. The pivotal role of self-efficacy in shaping workplace outcomes highlights the importance of fostering self-belief, which can lead to enhanced performance and innovation within the workplace. Robust self-efficacy not only encourages individuals to embrace challenges and opportunities for learning but also fosters continuous improvement, significantly boosting job performance (Hamann et al., 2024). For women in leadership, especially in emotionally demanding roles, a strong sense of self-efficacy could enhance their confidence in managing tasks, people, and emotions effectively, which directly ties into both emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance. In conclusion, self-efficacy theory is crucial in comprehending the dynamics of women leaders sustaining job performance, particularly in conjunction with emotional intelligence. Self-efficacy serves as a cornerstone for individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to navigate challenges and achieve desired outcomes. For women leaders, self-efficacy is not only a means of personal empowerment but also a catalyst for organizational success (Ruggs et al., 2023). Past study

by Xue et al. (2024) has highlighted that organizations can create an environment conducive to unleashing their full leadership potential by addressing underlying factors that undermine women's self-efficacy which leads to sustained job performance and organizational outcomes. Therefore, self-efficacy among women leaders is not just a matter of equity and inclusion but a strategic imperative for fostering innovation, productivity, and overall organizational resilience in today's dynamic work landscape.

In this study, self-efficacy theory to women's emotional intelligence on sustainable job performance has highlighted a critical intersection of psychological and emotional competencies in leadership. Self-efficacy, defined as the belief in one's capabilities to achieve specific goals, complements emotional intelligence by reinforcing women's confidence in managing both personal and professional challenges (Wilkes, 2023). High self-efficacy amplified the positive effects of emotional intelligence, enabling women leaders to better navigate workplace dynamics, maintain resilience, and sustain high job performance (Davis, 2024). Therefore, both self-efficacy and emotional intelligence is essential for women leaders to achieve and sustain outstanding job performance, ultimately contributing to organizational success and gender equity in leadership roles. Emotional intelligence enhances self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management could increase women's belief in her ability to handle work challenges, sustain performance under pressure, and achieve long-term goals.

2.3.3 Dynamic Managerial Capabilities (DMC) Theory

Dynamic managerial capabilities theory, introduced by Adner and Helfat (2003), complements the coarse-grained dynamic capabilities perspective by focusing on how managers build, integrate, and reconfigure organizational resources and competences.

According to Kor and Mesko (2013), these capabilities can reshape the dominant logic of top managers and, consequently, the firm's overall dominant logic, thereby aiding in achieving evolutionary fit. Dynamic managerial capabilities provide a comprehensive understanding of managerial actions, strategic changes, and firm performance at the individual manager level (Holzmayer et al., 2020). Past study by Huebeck and Meckl (2023) has highlighted that this theory emphasizes the managerial impact on strategic change, extending previous theories by explicitly considering the role of individuals, their capabilities, social interactions, and agency in strategic decisions. Past study by Huebeck (2023) further distinguished dynamic managerial capabilities from organizational dynamic capabilities always involve some level of managerial intent, while the latter develop more automatically. Therefore, compared to dynamic capabilities, dynamic managerial capabilities bridge the external environment and individual-level management capabilities, offering greater flexibility in responding to market dynamics (George et al., 2022; Kirova, 2023).

The dynamic managerial capabilities theory emphasizes managers rather than the firm as a whole. Leaders are responsible for managing a firm's resources to drive and implement strategic changes (Helfat & Martin, 2015). These capabilities are especially important in dynamic environments, enabling firms to adjust their strategies to stay competitive. The theory suggests that managers' personal abilities affect strategic change by influencing decision-making. Past research by Kirova (2023) further illustrated that top managers' influence on strategy differs, resulting in varying outcomes. Besides, past study by Aberg and Torchia (2020) has also suggested that understanding dynamic managerial capabilities and how managers achieve change requires examining underlying managerial resources and processes. These capabilities at the top management level can facilitate a

firm's innovative output and explain organizational heterogeneity (Wang et al., 2023). Building on this perspective, the dynamic managerial capabilities theory rests on three fundamental elements: managerial cognition, managerial human capital, and managerial social capital (Adner & Helfat, 2003). Managerial cognition involves the mental frameworks and knowledge structures of managers, which include their understanding of future events, potential alternatives, and their outcomes, as well as the cognitive processes for acquiring and interpreting information. Managerial human capital encompasses the skills and expertise that managers gain through experience, education, and training. Firms with strong managerial human capital have top managers who are recognized industry experts, possessing both professional competence and creativity. Moreover, managerial social capital refers to the information and resources managers gain through their formal and informal network connections. Strong networks foster altruistic cooperation and good behaviours among top managers (Chen et al., 2023).

The three core underpinnings were evidenced by Greven et al. (2023), who demonstrated that these elements are interconnected and significantly influence organizational outcomes, including strategic change, digital transformation, and performance. These capabilities are crucial for achieving digital maturity, which depends on leadership capabilities in managing digital transformation. In digital transformation, women leaders demonstrate this theory by leveraging their unique leadership capabilities to drive technological change (Leso et al., 2024). Women's leadership often involves a collaborative approach, high emotional intelligence, and adaptive thinking, aligning with the requirements of dynamic managerial capabilities (Li et al., 2024). Their ability to integrate diverse perspectives and foster inclusive environments enhances managerial cognition, broadening the scope of information and insights in strategic decision-making. Continuous learning and

development among women leaders contribute to robust managerial human capital, equipping them with the skills necessary for effective digital strategies (Khuan, 2024). Strong networking and relationship-building skills characteristic of many women leaders enhance managerial social capital, facilitating access to crucial resources and support for digital initiatives. By harnessing these capabilities, women leaders drive digital transformation and promote a culture of innovation and resilience, ensuring sustained competitive advantage in a digital world (Al Akbar & Iskandar, 2024). The synergy of these managerial capabilities underpins successful digital transformation, leading organizations towards greater digital maturity.

In summary, the underlying theory of dynamic managerial capabilities provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how women leaders effectively leverage their unique leadership capabilities to drive digital transformation. By integrating managerial cognition, human capital, and social capital, these leaders are able to foresee technological trends, implement digital strategies, and navigate the complexities of digital change with agility and foresight. Their collaborative and inclusive approach fosters a diverse and innovative organizational culture, essential for achieving digital maturity. This synergy of dynamic managerial capabilities not only enhances strategic decision-making but also propels organizations towards greater adaptability and resilience in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Consequently, recognizing and supporting the development of dynamic managerial capabilities in women leaders is crucial for organizations seeking to thrive in the digital age.

2.4 Sustainable Job Performance

Job performance can be defined as the extent to which an individual effectively fulfills their assigned tasks, typically in alignment with organizational goals (Milkovich et al., 1994). It involves more than task completion, encompassing a subjective appraisal of abilities and competencies critical for achieving organizational goals (Cho et al., 2018). Factors such as job competency, efficiency, task precision, and goal achievement are commonly evaluated in job performance assessments (Johari et al., 2022). This concept has been widely studied in marketing, management, and psychology (Darmawan et al., 2020; Darvishmotevali & Ali, 2020; Mariani et al., 2022). According to Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996), job performance consists of two interrelated components: task performance, which reflects proficiency in job-specific technical activities, and contextual performance, which encompasses behaviors that support the social and psychological environment of the organization. This distinction marked a foundational shift in understanding job performance beyond narrow task metrics, thereby enabling the later evolution toward sustainable job performance. Building on this foundation, sustainable job performance has gained prominence as a framework that extends beyond traditional metrics. Sustainable job performance emphasizes an employee's long-term contribution not only to the organization's success but also to their personal growth, recognizing that employees are individuals with their own aspirations, rather than mere organizational resources (Jabeen et al., 2022). It provides a robust framework for assessing organizational success, focusing on environmental impact, stakeholder value creation, and social contributions.

In recent years, however, the notion of sustainable job performance has gained prominence (Ji et al., 2021). Sustainable development requires trade-offs among social, ecological, and environmental goals, where employees may think and speak up differently

to enhance their performance at individual and organizational levels (Iqbal, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Iqbal et al., 2020). Achieving sustainability requires actions with an unknown future, so risk-taking can lend support to sustainable performance. This shift underscores the growing recognition that achieving sustainable job performance not only involves balancing social, ecological, and environmental objectives but also necessitates integrating broader dimensions such as environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and long-term organizational success. Koopmans et al. (2011) further advanced this conceptualization by empirically validating job performance as a multidimensional construct encompassing task, contextual, adaptive, and counterproductive behaviours. Their framework highlights that sustainable job performance depends on an employee's ability to adapt, collaborate, and maintain consistent high-quality output over time while minimizing negative work behaviours. Job performance has evolved from a traditional focus on task completion and individual productivity to a comprehensive framework of sustainable performance (Murphy, 1989; Campbell et al., 1990; Chen & Lin, 2024). This approach has integrated aspects such as environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and long-term organizational success, reflecting a shift from isolated metrics to holistic sustainability measures (Spreitzer et al., 2012). In line with this, Haryanto (2022) emphasized that sustainable job performance incorporates not only continuous productivity but also the capacity for renewal, learning, and ethical responsibility, ensuring that performance outcomes are maintained without depleting individual or organizational resources. This integrative perspective connects the psychological, social, and environmental facets of work behaviour.

Sustainable job performance seeks to align these personal goals with the overarching objectives of the organization, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship that enhances both individual and organizational sustainability. It encompasses various aspects such as job

satisfaction, work-life balance, continuous learning, and career development, all of which contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of both the employee and the organization (Deshpande & Srivastava, 2023). This evolution aligns with modern business needs for resilience, adaptability, and responsible resource management, making sustainable job performance essential in today's organizational context. In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, this approach is increasingly relevant. Organizations need to adapt and innovate to survive and thrive (Holbeche, 2023). Therefore, understanding and promoting sustainable job performance is crucial for both researchers and practitioners in the field of human resource management. Sustainable job performance is one of the most prominent benchmark measures throughout industrial and organizational psychology research (Chin et al., 2023). Moreover, job performance has been identified as a significant organizational quality indicator, while sustainable job performance is crucial for achieving sustainable development in contemporary business (Klimovskikh et al., 2023).

In the dynamic and diverse world of today, women leaders need to be increasingly adaptive, versatile, and tolerant of ambiguity to function successfully in an environment that is constantly changing and diverse (Bieńkowska and Tworek, 2020). Women leaders possess certain key abilities that enable them to drive sustainable change. These abilities include an innovative and creative perspective, a leadership attitude, social awareness, and a keen ability to identify opportunities (Agarwal et al., 2020; Pierli et al., 2022). In this context, it is worth noting that emotional intelligence, a trait often attributed to women leaders, plays a significant role in these capacities and contributes to the overall effectiveness of leadership. Past studies have underscored the importance of emotional intelligence as a crucial factor in driving employee engagement and sustaining job performance within businesses (i.e., Selvi & Aiswarya, 2023; Amah, 2023; Nasir et al., 2023). Moreover, research has established a

positive relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance in industries that require emotional labour (Furnham et al., 2020). Sustainable job performance, as posited by Lodahl and Kejner (1965), is associated with increased employee effort and time devoted to completing tasks, which is also known as job participation. In general, sustained job performance is understood to be the anticipated organizational value of an individual's efforts (Motowidlo & Kell, 2012; Usman et al., 2023).

According to Rich et al. (2010) and Lu et al. (2023), sustainable job performance is the aggregated value generated for the company by the set of employee behaviours that directly and indirectly contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives and expectations as well as work targets set by the organization. Subsequently, past studies by have highlighted that sustainable job performance as work outcomes that are task-related, such as the quality and quantity of work, with work-related behaviours serving as a support to task-related performance (Johari & Yahya, 2018; Jaiswal & Prabhakaran, 2024). Past researchers have also stated that highly satisfied employees tend to exhibit sustained job performance and have lower turnover rates (Suttikun et al., 2018; Taweewattanakunanon & Darawong, 2022; Chen et al., 2023; Obum et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2023). This satisfaction-performance relationship is often mediated by factors such as increased organizational commitment and enhanced employee engagement (Panda et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2024). When employees are satisfied, they are more likely to be committed to their organization, leading to higher performance levels and lower turnover rates.

Moreover, individuals who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be engaged in their work, which can further enhance their sustainable job performance (Stirpe et al., 2022). This engagement can lead to a virtuous cycle where high-performance leads to

recognition and rewards, which in turn increases job satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2024). While sustainable job performance was initially limited to fundamental task activities, the concept has since been expanded to include contextual aspects that support task performance. According to Borman and Motowidlo (1997), job performance should be evaluated in terms of both task performance and contextual performance. This view is consistent with Van Scotter and Motowidlo's (1996) proposition that sustainable job performance emerges when employees consistently demonstrate high levels of both task and contextual contributions, reinforcing organizational effectiveness and long-term viability. Building on this dual perspective of job performance, the concept of sustainable performance has emerged, which incorporates both task and contextual elements in a more holistic and enduring manner. Sustainable task performance refers to the effectiveness of activities that contribute to organizational functioning, whereas sustainable contextual performance refers to the impact of social and cultural circumstances on task activities and processes (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Jiang et al., 2017).

Given the importance of sustainable job performance and the impact of emotional intelligence in enhancing it, attention now turns to a specific demographic that is increasingly gaining prominence in the modern workplace. Women leaders, with their unique abilities and traits, are well-positioned to contribute to sustainable job performance. Their adaptability, versatility, and tolerance of ambiguity, coupled with their innovative and creative perspectives, leadership attitudes, social awareness, and ability to identify opportunities, make them key drivers of sustainable change. Notably, emotional intelligence, a trait often attributed to women leaders, plays a significant role in these capacities and contributes to the overall effectiveness of leadership. To consolidate various conceptualizations of job performance and sustainable job performance, Table 2.2

summarize provide the theoretical foundation for this study’s conceptualization of sustainable job performance, particularly the dimensions of sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance. Therefore, this study to delve deeper into this relationship by examining the effect of emotional intelligence on the sustainable job performance of women leaders. It employs sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance as measures of job performance, aiming to provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of job performance in the modern workplace. This exploration is expected to shed light on how emotional intelligence can be harnessed to enhance the sustainable job performance of women leaders, thereby contributing to the broader objectives of individual and organizational sustainability.

Table 2.2: Definition of Job Performance and Sustainable Job Performance

Concept	Definition	Author(s)
Job Performance	The extent to which an individual effectively fulfils their assigned tasks, typically in alignment with organizational goals.	Milkovich et al. (1994)
Job Performance*	Job performance comprises two interrelated components: task performance (technical proficiency) and contextual performance (behaviours that support the social and psychological environment).	Van Scotter & Motowidlo (1996)
Job Performance*	Job performance is a multidimensional construct including task, contextual, adaptive, and counterproductive behaviours, reflecting the broad spectrum of work outcomes.	Koopmans et al. (2011)

Table 2.2 continued

Concept	Definition	Author(s)
Sustainable Job Performance*	Sustainable job performance integrates long-term productivity, renewal capacity, and ethical responsibility, ensuring consistent performance without depleting individual or organizational resources.	Haryanto (2022)
Sustainable Job Performance	Sustainable job performance extends beyond traditional performance metrics to emphasize an employee's long-term contribution to organizational success and personal growth, recognizing employees as individuals with aspirations rather than mere resources.	Jabeen et al. (2022)
Sustainable Job Performance	Sustainable job performance focuses on balancing social, ecological, and economic goals, encouraging adaptive, risk-taking, and innovative behaviors that support individual and organizational sustainability.	Ji et al. (2021); Iqbal et al. (2020)
Sustainable Job Performance	Sustainable job performance involves aligning personal and organizational goals through job satisfaction, work-life balance, continuous learning, and career development to promote long-term sustainability.	Deshpande & Srivastava (2023)
Sustainable Job Performance	Sustainable job performance encompasses task performance and contextual performance, integrating both technical and social contributions that support organizational functioning and long-term success.	Borman & Motowidlo (1997); Jiang et al. (2017)

Table 2.2 continued

Concept	Definition	Author(s)
Sustainable Job Performance	Sustainable job performance represents the aggregated value generated by employee behaviours that directly and indirectly contribute to achieving organizational objectives and long-term outcomes.	Rich et al. (2010); Lu et al. (2023)

Note: (*) Definition of job performance and sustainable job performance which were employed in this study.

2.4.1 Sustainable Task Performance

Sustainable job performance originates from the concept of 'ecology,' reflecting an organization's ability to nurture, develop, and sustain its processes over time (Guarini et al., 2022). It involves employees' dedicated efforts to promote both personal and organizational sustainable development. In this context, employees ensure that their actions and decisions contribute to the organization's long-term success and viability (Dey et al., 2022). A key component of sustainable job performance is sustainable task performance, which refers to how effectively individuals complete required tasks while contributing to the organization's long-term goals (Becton et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2023). Unlike traditional task performance, which focuses on the immediate completion and quality of a specific job or duty, which consist of activities that service and maintaining the technical core of the organizations such as providing planning, organizing, supervising, and coordinating the functions of the organizations immediately (Van Scotter & Motowildo, 1996). While, sustainable task performance integrates a forward-looking perspective, ensuring that tasks are completed in ways that support the organization's future growth (Fu et al., 2023). This performance area involves understanding methods, analysing data, and making decisions aligned with the organization's objectives (Mendoza et al., 2023). High sustainable task performance

enhances employees' flexibility in applying their knowledge, skills, and values across industries. Thus, while task performance ensures a job is done, sustainable task performance ensures that the job is done in a way that promotes long-term organizational stability and success.

Sustainable task performance, particularly in the context of women leaders, can be significantly enhanced by emotional intelligence. Women leaders, often recognized for their ability to navigate complex emotional landscapes, are uniquely positioned to influence not only immediate task outcomes but also the long-term sustainability of organizational processes. Emotional intelligence, which comprises self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, allows women leaders to effectively guide their teams, making decisions that foster both short-term task efficiency and long-term organizational resilience (Kaur, 2024). This emotional management enhances team dynamics by reducing conflicts, fostering collaboration, and ensuring smoother task completion (Ahsan & Aman-Ullah, 2023). However, the true strength of emotional intelligence lies in its capacity to transform task performance into sustainable task performance where tasks are not only completed efficiently but in a way that contributes to the organization's enduring success. By focusing on emotional well-being and fostering a supportive work environment, women leaders promote employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention, key drivers of sustainable performance. The role of women leaders in sustainable task performance represents significant opportunities for organizations. By harnessing the strengths of women leaders, organizations can enhance task sustainability, leading to improved organizational outcomes, employee satisfaction, and societal impact.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in enhancing sustainable task performance, a key aspect of sustainable job performance, particularly among women leaders. By effectively managing their own emotions, understanding the emotions of others, and building positive relationships, women leaders can create a supportive work environment that fosters sustainable task performance. This not only contributes to the personal growth and job satisfaction of individual employees but also leads to improved organizational outcomes. Therefore, organizations stand to benefit significantly from recognizing and harnessing the emotional intelligence of women leaders, as it can lead to enhanced sustainable task performance, improved organizational performance, and a positive societal impact.

2.4.2 Sustainable Contextual Performance

Effective leadership in today's dynamic organizational landscape requires an understanding of performance that goes beyond task completion (Cordova et al., 2023). Contextual performance does not contribute through the organization's core technical processes, but it does maintain the broader organizational, social, and psychological environment in which the technical core must function. It includes the activities that promote the viability of social and organizational network and enhance the psychological climate in which the technical core is embedded (Motowidlo et al., 1997; Pazetto et al., 2024). These actions improve the work culture and enhance the overall functioning of the organization. Sustainable contextual performance, however, takes this concept a step further. Earlier past study by Katz and Kahn (1978) has highlighted that contextual performance is essential to organizational survival and success. It emphasizes not only the immediate positive impact of these behaviours but also their long-term sustainability and contribution to the organization's ongoing development. Sustainable contextual performance ensures that these

behaviours are maintained over time, continuously aligning with and supporting the organization's evolving goals and needs (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024). The distinction between the two is crucial, while contextual performance focuses on short-term contributions to the work environment, sustainable contextual performance is concerned with fostering a long-lasting, positive impact that supports organizational resilience and adaptability. In this regard, women leaders have a distinct advantage. Their ability to nurture relationships and foster inclusive, supportive cultures aligns with the principles of sustainable contextual performance, driving long-term engagement, commitment, and organizational success.

Effective leadership in today's dynamic organizational landscape requires a deep understanding of performance beyond mere task completion (Cordova et al., 2023). Contextual performance, which encompasses behaviours that enhance the work environment and social fabric, plays a pivotal role. However, sustainable contextual performance takes this concept further by emphasizing not only immediate contributions but also their enduring impact. There is a distinct difference between contextual performance and sustainable contextual performance. Contextual performance refers to behaviours that contribute to the organizational environment and social framework, such as helping others and volunteering for extra tasks (Pazetto et al., 2024). In contrast, sustainable contextual performance extends this concept by emphasizing the long-term sustainability and development of these behaviours, ensuring they are maintained over time and continuously support the organization's evolving needs (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024). In this context, women leaders stand to gain significantly, leveraging their underlying abilities to nurture relationships and foster inclusive cultures. This alignment with their strengths drives long-term engagement and commitment.

In the contemporary corporate landscape, organizations expect employees to go beyond their job duties and engage in constructive activities that contribute to the organization's social network and psychological climate (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). Such sustainable contextual performance directly impacts an organization's overall performance, helping maintain smooth operations (Dongrey & Rokade, 2021). This type of performance involves investing cognitive, emotional, and physical resources in supporting organizational, social, and psychological contexts and ensuring task sustainability, such as through interpersonal, job-task, and organizational support (Greenslade & Jimmieson, 2007; Sarıköse & Göktepe, 2022). According to Jiang et al. (2017), sustainable contextual performance can be defined as employees' contributions to the sustainable development of project organizations and the promotion of organizational culture. This includes work activities not directly linked to an organization's technological foundation but still beneficial, such as volunteering and helping others (MacKenzie et al., 1998; Bag et al., 2024). Unlike task and in-role performance, sustainable contextual performance relies more on employees' discretionary motivation than on their abilities (Meyers et al., 2020).

Building on this understanding, organizations aim to create an enabling environment to improve task performance, enhance employee outcomes, and encourage contextual performance beyond job duties (Uraon & Gupta, 2020). Although previous studies focused on sustainable task performance, sustainable contextual performance can also significantly enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Ijaz Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023). In private sector organizations, sustainable contextual performance is critical to job performance as employees navigate technological, social, and psychological environments to support organizational goals (Pacheco & Coello-Montecel, 2023). It involves enduring

with zeal and extra resolve to complete task activities and supporting organizational goals by generating innovative ideas and taking action to protect against potential threats.

In the context of women's leadership, focusing on sustainable performance within specific organizational and cultural contexts allows women leaders to navigate complex challenges, adapt to changing environments, and foster meaningful connections with their teams and stakeholders (Sharr, 2023). Sustainable contextual performance is particularly relevant for women leaders, as it aligns with qualities often attributed to women leadership styles, such as collaboration, empathy, and relational skills (Manfreda et al., 2024). Additionally, women leaders often emphasize building strong, supportive networks and fostering inclusive organizational cultures, central to sustainable contextual performance (Lizares et al., 2024). By focusing on sustainable contextual performance, women leaders can enhance team cohesion, drive employee engagement, and promote a positive organizational climate, all essential for achieving long-term sustainability and success.

Building upon the context of women's leadership and sustainable performance, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in sustaining contextual performance among women leaders. By effectively managing their own emotions and understanding those of others, women leaders create positive and supportive work environments that foster strong relationships with colleagues and employees (Chikwe et al., 2024). Prioritizing empathy and compassion equip women leaders to sustain contextual performance over the long term (Mashele & Alagidede, 2022). By understanding the needs and perspectives of colleagues and employees, women leaders promote well-being and job satisfaction, contributing to sustained contextual performance. In sum, emotional intelligence not only benefits

organizations but also highlights and enhances the unique contributions of women leaders, paving the way for more inclusive and effective leadership paradigms.

2.5 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has increasingly been recognized in the literature as a key predictor of individual productivity and job performance in the literature (i.e., Supramaniam & Singaravello, 2021; Nasir et al., 2023; Stawicki et al., 2023; Yousaf et al., 2024). Previous research has categorized emotional intelligence models into three: ability, mixed, and trait models. Emotional intelligence has been defined and classified as non-cognitive by different theorists (Goleman, 1995; Bar-On, 1997; Petrides & Furham, 2001; Goleman, 2001), except for Salovey and Mayer (1990), who are the pioneers of emotional intelligence. In the original 1990 article, Salovey and Mayer has defined emotional intelligence as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, Salovey et al., 2007, p. 5). Later, the authors of the original definition revised their thinking on emotional intelligence and began defining it as involving the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey et al., 2007, p. 35)). In that same article, the authors simplify the definition by further stating that emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional meanings, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote both better emotion and thought (Salovey et al., 2007, p. 46). On the other hand, Mayer and Salovey (1997) redefined emotional intelligence as the capacity to perceive,

integrate, and regulate emotions to enhance thinking and promote personal development. Bar-On (1997) further identified emotional intelligence as knowing oneself and others, relating to individuals, and adapting to the surrounding environment to improve effectiveness in dealing with difficulties. The past literature by Goleman (1995) has also introduced emotional intelligence to the public as an array of skills and attributes influencing job performance and leadership.

In addition, emotional intelligence can be broadly categorized into two main domains: ability emotional intelligence and trait emotional intelligence. Ability emotional intelligence pertains to cognitive abilities related to emotions and can only be measured through performance-based assessments. It encompasses the capacity to perceive, manage, facilitate, and understand both one's own and others' emotions. On the other hand, trait emotional intelligence is closely tied to an individual's personality and primarily centres around their emotional self-efficacy. This aspect is typically evaluated using self-reporting scales. Both ability emotional intelligence and trait emotional intelligence play crucial roles in tasks that require individuals to comprehend the emotional and mental states of others (Saha et al., 2023). Broadly, emotional intelligence refers to one's capacity to connect with others, understand them, and be flexible in meeting workplace demands (Garcia Zea et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence bridges the gap between cognition and emotion. Women leaders with strong emotional intelligence exhibit positive attitudes, effective leadership, problem-solving abilities, time management, and conflict resolution skills, and are willing to go extra mile to achieve the organizational goals (Zaman et al., 2021; Akmadani & Alamri, 2024). Emotional intelligence enhances our ability to navigate a wide range of social situations and conflicts, as well as our motivation, empathy, reasoning, stress management, and communication skills (Setiyowati & Razak, 2019). Previous research by Mohamad and

Jais (2016) and Rasiah et al. (2018) have indicated that emotional intelligence directly impacts sustainable job performance and the ability to complete tasks effectively by managing emotions and maintaining a positive mental state. Therefore, organizations should pay attention to developing the emotional intelligence of their leaders, as it greatly influences job performance and reduces job burnout (Gong et al., 2019; Nasir et al., 2023).

The importance of emotional intelligence in understanding individual outcomes is increasing (Miao et al., 2017; Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020; Dastgeer, 2022). Prior research has suggested that emotional intelligence is a critical factor that differentiates successful and effective leaders (Saha et al., 2023). It has been postulated that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to leadership effectiveness and organizational outcomes (Santa et al., 2023). Previous studies by Kitsios et al. (2022) and Mérida-López et al. (2023) have mentioned that emotional intelligence in women leaders are considered an indicator of good mental health, social support, and job support. This finding is further supported by research evidencing that women leaders typically exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence than men, and women leaders with high emotional intelligence tend to exhibit high job satisfaction, superior job performance, and organizational commitment (D'Amico et al. 2020). Additionally, previous research has demonstrated that women's emotional intelligence is notably superior to men's, attributed to women's more nuanced disposition, which enables them to perceive and attend to others' emotions more effectively and respond promptly (Cao et al., 2022). In light of these findings, it is essential to recognize and leverage the emotional intelligence strengths of women in leadership roles to foster more inclusive and effective organizational environments. Subsequent studies by Urquijo et al. (2019) and Choi et al. (2024) have proven the notion that higher emotional intelligence tends to lead to greater success, productivity, and reduced counterproductive work behaviour.

Emotional intelligence is strongly linked to emotional and social skills that positively influence skills such as empathy, teamwork, communication, achievement orientation, and negotiation (Hussain et al., 2023). These skills have been demonstrated to contribute to more sustainable job performance (Mehreen & Ali, 2022). Thus, effective and sustainable job performance necessitates the combination of cognitive and emotional skills, which enable individuals to analyse their work environment and make precise decisions. To strengthen the conceptualization of emotional intelligence, Table 2.3 summarize the key definitions proposed by major theorists and thereby provide theoretical basis for this study’s adoptions of Goleman mixed model. In summary, this study has adopted the mixed model refined by Goleman (1995) and Goleman (2001) on self-awareness, self-management (personal), social awareness, and relationship management (social), as shown in Figure 2.1. By understanding and applying this model, organizations can better harness the power of emotional intelligence to enhance leadership effectiveness, improve job satisfaction, and foster a more inclusive and productive work environment.

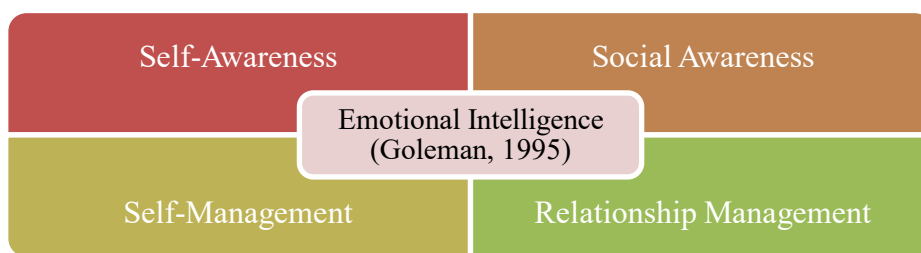


Figure 2.1: Emotional Intelligence Goleman Model (1995)

Table 2.3: Definitions of Emotional Intelligence

Concept/Model	Definition	Author(s)
Ability Model	Emotional intelligence is the subset of social intelligence involving the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, discriminate among them, and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.	Salovey & Mayer (1990)
Ability Model (Revised)	The ability to perceive, appraise, and express emotions; access and generate feelings that facilitate thought; understand emotional knowledge; and regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.	Mayer & Salovey (1997)
Mixed Model	Emotional intelligence is a set of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures.	Bar-On (1997)
Mixed Model*	Emotional intelligence is an array of skills and attributes influencing leadership and performance, comprising self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.	Goleman (1995, 2001)
Trait Model	Emotional intelligence is a constellation of self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies, primarily measured through self-report.	Petrides & Furnham (2001)
Ability Model	Emotional intelligence is the capacity to reason with emotions and to use emotions to enhance thought and understanding.	Mayer, Salovey & Caruso (2007)

Note: (*) Definition of emotional intelligence which was employed in this study.

2.5.1 Self-Awareness

Self-awareness entails a variety of psychological and social characteristics. These include emotions, thoughts, personality characteristics, preferences, goals, attitudes, perceptions, and intentions, all of which contribute to the sense of continuity when seeing oneself in a social setting. It involves the ability to focus on oneself, actively identify, process, and store information about oneself (London et al., 2023). The preceding study by Goleman (2001) defines self-awareness as knowing one's own strengths, limitations, desires, values, and effects on others. Self-awareness is one of the most essential aspects of emotional intelligence in regulating one's emotions and managing other people, and it is regarded as crucial to the change orientation (Mitrović Veljković et al., 2020). It reflects the ability to recognize one's identity, strengths and weaknesses, needs, and motivations. For emotional intelligence, awareness of one's own emotions is crucial (Drigas et al., 2023; Alshatarat et al., 2023). Individuals with strong self-awareness are balanced in their outlook; they are neither excessively critical of others nor overly optimistic. People with a great sense of self-awareness are open and honest with themselves and others, self-confident, conscious of their limitations and skills, and, as a result, keenly aware of the need for assistance. They are constantly willing to accept criticism, which ensures the essential commitment to change to achieve success.

In addition to motivating goal setting, enhancing organizational skills, managing stress, and solving problems, self-awareness is considered the core ability of emotional intelligence (Vasumathi et al., 2016; Rahiman et al., 2020; De Bruyn, 2023). Self-awareness refers to one's capacity to notice and discern their own emotions and understand their underlying causes (Kumar et al., 2016). Past literatures have indicated that self-awareness

helps leaders manage emotions, leading to effective leadership and performance within organizations (Thapa et al., 2023; Henry & Jonathan, 2024). These were indicated by past studies that high levels of self-awareness have been linked to better decision-making and increased chances of promotion to leadership positions (Dierdorff & Rubin, 2015; Carden et al., 2022). Therefore, women leaders with high levels of self-awareness are likely to achieve superior and sustainable job performance (Tyagi & Rastogi, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). Furthermore, leadership is a significant concern in most organizations, given that it is considered a primary factor in organizational success or failure (Akkaya, 2019; Jermsittiparsert & Srihirun, 2019; Sriyakul et al., 2019; Hartinah et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2023; Madi Odeh et al., 2023). While men have traditionally held leadership positions, the number of women leaders has been increasing in recent decades (O'Brien & Hanlon, 2023; Pick, 2024). Women leaders who possess emotional intelligence have the ability to understand others effectively and act intelligently in human relations. Past literature has suggested that self-awareness is essential for women leaders, as it requires an in-depth understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, consistency between values and actions, empathy, and the ability to manage interpersonal relationships, all of which rebuild and revitalize the fundamental aspects of emotional intelligence (Christo-Baker & Wilbur, 2017; Akkaya, 2020; Jermsittiparsert, 2020). Past studies by Ebieme et al. (2024) and Steele et al. (2024) have shown that women leaders with high levels of self-awareness can monitor themselves, observe and influence actions, leading to better job performance. Self-awareness empowers leaders to wisely observe and judiciously influence actions, thereby fostering an environment conducive to enhanced job performance (Toprak & Karakus, 2023).

It has become evident that emotional intelligence assumes a pivotal role in the domain of women's leadership, serving as a cornerstone for achieving sustained excellence

in job performance. The profound impact of emotional intelligence resonates throughout women's leadership endeavours, significantly contributing to their overall success and effectiveness in guiding teams towards collective goals and organizational success.

2.5.2 Self-Management

According to Caruso et al. (2002), emotional self-management involves being aware of one's emotions, particularly negative ones; differentiating whether an emotion is genuine or habitual; and handling situations that involve emotions without necessarily suppressing negative emotions. The practice of emotional self-management can significantly improve an individual's success and well-being, surpassing what might be expected based solely on intellectual capabilities (Goleman, 2001; Ida Merlin & Prabakar, 2023). Self-management involves the ability to regulate one's emotions both internally and externally, requiring a dual approach (Parker, 2019). It is a vital quality in a leader because it enables them to lead with honesty and integrity while fostering a trustworthy atmosphere. Such an environment is conducive to build trust, which in turn promotes the efficiency of working with others. Self-management refers to a leader's ability to regulate their own emotions as well as those of others. This is accomplished by determining whether it is appropriate to exhibit a specific emotion given the circumstances. It is a crucial tool that can help leaders manage stress effectively and maintain composure in difficult situations (Wang et al., 2023). Past studies have referred to self-management as "self-control" and have linked it to better decision-making as a leader and improved capacity for long-term planning (Gómez-Leal et al., 2021; Alsalmi & Omrane, 2023). Leaders' ability to clearly distinguish between their personal and professional lives indicates their professionalism while possessing a high level of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence includes managing frustration, controlling oneself and one's emotions, working with others, and having empathy (Arifin, 2019).

On the other hand, self-management can be referred to as the capacity to control one's emotions and impulses, retain composure in harmful conditions, and remain calm regardless of how one is feeling at the time. It involves self-monitoring and adapting or adjusting behaviours in response to various aspects of the surrounding environment (Ikpesu, 2017; Braiteh & De Vos, 2023). Effective self-management can help leaders establish a healthy work-life balance. Due to the unpredictable nature of workloads and personal life demands, leaders should maintain flexibility in managing their time. Past research by have shown that self-managing leaders who can set boundaries, take breaks, and manage stress can prevent burnout and maintain productivity (Essens, 2023; Háša & Houdek, 2024). Therefore, self-management skills are essential for leaders to remain calm and manage confrontation and emotional outbursts effectively.

Additionally, a leader's ability to manage their emotions is crucial in preventing those emotions from controlling situations. By being self-aware, leaders can effectively cope with frustration resulting from inadequate performance (Kitsios et al., 2022). Self-management comprises self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, and self-punishment techniques. Self-observation demonstrates a person's understanding of why and when they exhibit certain behaviours, motivating them to modify their behaviour accordingly. Self-goal setting aids in goal attainment, especially when goals are specific and challenging. Self-reward refers to behaviours that reinforce desired actions, while self-punishment discourages behaviours that lead to negative outcomes (Zeijen et al., 2018; Guan, 2023). Leaders possessing these qualities are likely to integrate growth-oriented strategies within their organizations and demonstrate creativity and initiative. Consequently, these practices are viewed as opportunities to achieve anticipated growth, requiring talented workers to attain this success (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019; Khatri et al., 2024). These self-management

techniques are essential for effective leadership, as they enable leaders to regulate their behaviour, emotions, and impulses, a trait that is often particularly pronounced in women leaders.

Effective leadership requires individuals to possess self-management skills, encompassing the capacity to regulate and manage their behaviour, emotions, and impulses (Toh & Kirschner, 2023). Women leaders have been found to exhibit higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to male leaders, which may contribute to their success in maintaining job performance (Bauer & Santia, 2022). Studies have found that women leaders score higher on measures of emotional intelligence, such as empathy, emotional regulation, and social skills, compared to male leaders (Arghode et al., 2022). This may be partly attributed to societal expectations that women are generally more emotionally expressive and attuned to the emotions of others, resulting in enhanced emotional intelligence skills. Women leaders may also have an advantage in managing self-management skills, an important aspect of emotional intelligence. These skills include the ability to regulate one's own emotions, impulses, and behaviour in a way that is appropriate for the situation (Singh et al, 2022). This skill is critical for women leaders who must navigate complex and challenging situations, such as managing conflict, making difficult decisions, and dealing with unexpected challenges. Past study has also highlighted that women leaders are more likely to use self-management strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, which involves reframing negative emotions positively and expressing emotions in a controlled and measured way. By contrast, male leaders may be more likely to use suppression, which involves hiding or repressing emotions, or venting, which involves expressing emotions in an uncontrolled or inappropriate manner (Kostromina et al., 2022).

In conclusion, women leaders could be better at maintaining work-life balance, an important aspect of self-management (Adamson et al., 2023). They are more likely to take advantage of flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting or flexible scheduling, helping them manage their work and personal responsibilities more effectively (Kossek et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023). Their higher levels of emotional intelligence give them an advantage in managing self-management skills and sustaining job performance. Women leaders excel at regulating their own emotions, using effective self-management strategies, and maintaining work-life balance, all of which contribute to effective leadership and sustained job performance (Kaur & Hirudayaraj, 2021; Thapa & Parimoo, 2022). To lead change initiatives and transform both people and organizational culture, a transformative woman leader must possess solid self-management skills. Therefore, women leaders must manage their emotions and utilize self-control to complete tasks and achieve goals.

2.5.3 Social Awareness

Social awareness refers to the ability to perceive, comprehend, and respond to other people's emotions (Goleman, 2001). It encompasses understanding and empathizing with individuals from various backgrounds and cultures, as well as identifying and supporting community and family resources (Chaidi & Drigas, 2022). The social awareness domain initially included three competencies: empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation. Developing social awareness requires adapting one's behaviour and interactions with others to achieve better outcomes in various social contexts. It involves the ability to put oneself in other people's shoes, understand them as individuals, and consider this perspective in relation to oneself and others simultaneously. Empathy enables leaders to understand others' feelings and thoughts from their point of view and actively engage in their challenges. Organizational awareness, on the other hand, entails effectively interpreting

emotional dynamics and political power structures within groups and appreciating the cultural context in which others' emotions operate (Brundin et al., 2022). Service orientation is the ability to perceive others' unspoken needs and concerns and focus one's efforts on fulfilling them (Liang et al., 2023). This involves offering advice and insights that are in the best interests of others. The ultimate outcome of social awareness is the continuous development of social skills and an ongoing process of personal growth (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2018).

According to Serrat (2017), social awareness includes the skills of empathy, service orientation, developing others, leveraging diversity, and political awareness. These qualities are exhibited by leaders who are sensitive to emotional cues, recognize people's talents, achievements, and progress, view diversity as an opportunity, and properly assess circumstances and organizational reality. Social awareness is where emotional intelligence is most apparent to others and has the most influence on a person's relationships with others. This skill is concerned with understanding others (empathy) and the capacity to hear and comprehend the thoughts, feelings, and concerns of others (Millar et al., 2019). Consequently, social awareness has been highlighted as a vital element in the formation of good leadership. Past study by Drigas and Papoutsi (2018) has highlighted that social awareness involves how individuals handle relationships and understand the feelings, needs, and concerns of others. It entails noticing and comprehending the emotions, desires, and concerns of others, interpreting emotional cues, and perceiving situations from others' perspectives (Raghubir et al., 2018). Furthermore, it involves introspective self-reflection that is influenced by observations of others (Carden et al., 2022).

In the context of leadership, social awareness is a leader's ability to recognize, comprehend, and respond to the emotions of others while participating in a social network (Karibeeran & Mohanty, 2019). Effective leadership is believed to depend on a leader's ability to be present for and aware of their followers in social situations. One critical component of a leader's social leadership ability is their awareness of others in those circumstances (Goldman-Schuyler et al., 2017; Dane & Rockmann, 2020; Urrila & Mäkelä, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to control and comprehend other people's emotions to generate effective communication (Hlaing et al., 2021). Another critical aspect of emotional intelligence that can lead to effective leadership is social awareness, which involves comprehending and navigating social dynamics and relationships (Barinua et al., 2022). Women leaders have an advantage in social awareness due to their tendency to be more attuned to social cues and interpersonal dynamics. They are better able to read the emotions and needs of others, which can enable them to build strong relationships and collaborate effectively with colleagues and employees. Women leaders are more likely to seek out diverse perspectives and encourage participation from all team members, fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging and promoting effective communication and problem-solving (Alang et al., 2022).

Besides, past study by Meletiadou (2022) has shown that women leaders are more inclusive and collaborative in their leadership style, enhancing their social awareness. They prioritize empathy and compassion in their leadership approach, building stronger relationships and fostering trust and mutual respect. By taking the time to understand the perspectives and experiences of others, women leaders can build stronger relationships and foster a sense of trust and mutual respect. Additionally, women leaders are often more attuned to social issues and trends, enabling them to stay ahead of the curve and adapt to

changing circumstances. They prioritize issues such as diversity, equity, and inclusion, which are increasingly important in the workplace (Dowling et al., 2022). To conclude, women leaders may exhibit higher levels of social awareness compared to male leaders due to their tendency to be more attuned to social cues, inclusive and collaborative leadership style, prioritization of empathy and compassion, and awareness of social issues and trends.

2.5.4 Relationship Management

According to Goleman (2001), relationship management is a crucial skill for leaders to be successful, particularly in cultures that value the behaviours associated with relationship management. It involves the ability to regulate emotions effectively during interactions with others, establish and maintain connections, lead, negotiate, resolve conflicts, and collaborate as a team (Hidayat et al., 2020). Building relationships with people with whom there may be no strong connection is an aspect of relationship management (Kumar et al., 2014; Filice & Weese, 2024). This requires appropriately and accurately handling emotions in relationships by analysing situations and social networks, communicating effectively, applying leadership and persuasion skills, and resolving conflicts collaboratively (Widodo et al., 2022). Previous research by Ahad et al. (2021) demonstrated that relationship management is the most significant factor in achieving optimal emotional intelligence, surpassing other elements such as self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness. It involves mastering the arts of persuasion, conflict resolution, and teamwork, as well as the ability to motivate, influence, and develop people (Shaffer, 2020).

Relationship management involves leveraging emotions to effectively communicate ideas and foster strong connections between individuals. When it comes to the interaction

between leaders and employees, a key factor is the ability of leaders to pay close attention to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of their employees and to communicate in a manner that showcases both understanding and empathy (Ward, 2020). This has been demonstrated by previous studies indicating that employees are more likely to remain involved with the business when leaders have highly developed relationship management abilities (Heckemann et al., 2015; Kumari et al., 2022). The strength of a leader's decision-making, which is directly based on their emotional intelligence, is key to attaining leadership authority. This highlights the critical role that emotional intelligence plays in leadership, impacting not only individual relationships but also the broader organizational dynamics and performance. It supports the entire system of an organization, beginning with the performance of its leaders and extending to organizational performance (Batool, 2013; Alzoubi & Aziz, 2021). Performance can only be effective if the decision-makers have complete control over their moods and emotions and are able to seize opportunities when they present themselves. Hence, leaders who prioritize relationship management empower individuals to navigate workplace challenges more effectively and increase their overall productivity (Udod et al., 2020).

Additionally, relationship management is about using emotional awareness to relate and interact with others for decision-making (Kuroda, 2020). For women leaders, this entails collaboration, fostering connections, and reciprocal interactions that encourage teamwork, problem-solving, and aid in the growth of individuals who are committed and dedicated to achieving exceptional performance and enhanced productivity (Igbafe, 2020). Leadership for women can be further defined as the capacity to influence and motivate people, resolve conflicts, and foster positive team dynamics. Putting themselves in the place of others, listening more than speaking, appreciating the efforts of others, discovering what inspires

others to invigorate them, and learning how to resolve disagreements constructively are tactics women leaders can use to improve relationship management (Shah & Shah, 2019). Effective women leaders tend to be professionals in reacting to workload, enforcing discipline, coping with stress, and conveying the organization's goals by introducing innovation to enhance the performance of team members. A leader deficient in relationship management would be insensitive to people's developmental needs and unable to enhance their skills (Anyim & Ilesanmi, 2019). As a result, women leaders who possess relationship management skills can interact with their followers with empathy, thereby fostering strong leader-follower connections and boosting followers' confidence in their leader (Ishola-Esan, 2019; Chen & Sriphon, 2022).

In conclusion, relationship management is an indispensable skill for effective leadership, particularly for women leaders who excel in fostering collaborative and empathetic environments (Savoy, 2024). By leveraging emotional intelligence, women leaders can build strong, productive relationships, resolve conflicts constructively, and inspire their teams to achieve exceptional performance (Consten, 2023). The ability to understand and manage emotions not only enhances individual leader-follower dynamics but also contributes significantly to the overall success and productivity of the organization (Liu et al., 2024). As research indicates, leaders who prioritize relationship management are better equipped to navigate workplace challenges, thereby driving organizational growth and performance. Thus, developing and practicing relationship management skills is essential for women leaders aiming to create positive, high-performing teams and organizations.

2.6 Digital Maturity

Digital transformation is a timely process that has attracted the attention of the scientific community. It refers to the use and utilization of current technology in the business operations of an organization to fulfil its objectives and improve its efficiency. Alongside the rise in popularity of digital transformation, the concept of digital maturity has gained ground. Digital maturity is introduced to assess the status or progress of digital transformation and is defined as "the level of execution of transformation activities already accomplished by a corporation (Chanas & Hess, 2016; He et al., 2021; Haryanti et al., 2023). The implementation of digital technology can lead to changes in a company's business models, operational processes, and customer experiences, resulting in digital transformation (Hortovanyi et al., 2023; Kargas et al., 2023). Achieving the desired digital transformation is a continuous and dynamic process, requiring the adaptation of an organization's technology, business models, culture, and personnel (Kane et al., 2017; Marx, 2021).

According to Aslanova and Kulichkina (2020), there are several elements under digital maturity, each with different definitions, namely, strategy, organization, people, technologies, and data. In this study, the people element was utilized to define digital maturity. Digital maturity can be described as the successful implementation of a plan that requires employee preparation and knowledge of impending changes. Individual engagement, motivation, and participation in strategic changes within a company are crucial to its success. According to Kane (2017), women leaders to effectively adapt their organizations to the rapid advancements in the digital world, they must shift their focus from digital transformation to digital maturity. Digital maturity entails incorporating new digital technologies by aligning an organization's strategy, people, culture, and structure to meet stakeholders' digital expectations. Therefore, digital maturity is a constant process of

adjusting to a fast-evolving digital environment (Westerman, 2019; Salviotti et al., 2019; Taherdoost, 2024).

Digital maturity comprises two components: digital intensity and transformation management intensity. Digital intensity pertains to the level of investment in technology-based initiatives and projects aimed at changing customer experiences, internal processes, and business models of an organization. According to Nwankpa et al. (2022), customer experience, operational procedures, and business models are the three primary components of digital intensity. A corporation has digital intensity when it can invest in and leverage digital channels and technology to advance the business and obtain a competitive edge. However, past studies by Xing et al. (2023) and Jia et al. (2024) have claimed that investment in technology is not necessary for maintaining a competitive advantage through digital intensity. Technology can provide a sustainable competitive edge when it is incorporated into a bigger organization, such as in managerial decision-making processes. This is due to the complexity of integrating technology and human processes, making it unlikely to be precisely imitated and difficult to replace (Manrique & Walker, 2023). Therefore, technology must be integrated into human operations as well as other areas of the organization to maintain a competitive edge based on technology.

Aside from that, the term 'transformation management intensity' refers to the leadership competencies required for an organization to successfully drive digital transformation. It suggests strong leadership from the top down, allowing for the establishment of direction, the creation of momentum, and ensuring the organization achieves its goals. Leaders need to take the initiative, and digital transformation should start at the top by communicating a compelling future vision throughout the business (Balaban et

al., 2018). Subsequently, businesses with a high intensity of transformation management have a transformational vision, governance, and culture in their organization, aiming to coordinate digital activities to optimize economic advantages (He et al., 2021; Nazari et al., 2023).

However, differences in the digital maturity of men and women leaders can affect how they manage and sustain digital transformation. Past studies have indicated that women leaders often face unique challenges in achieving digital maturity compared to their male counterparts (Oliver et al., 2024). Women leaders may encounter biases and stereotypes that can limit their access to critical resources and opportunities needed for driving digital transformation (Manishimwe et al., 2023; Akpuokwe et al., 2024). Women leaders often have to navigate a work environment that may undervalue their contributions or question their technical expertise, further complicating their efforts to lead digital transformation effectively. The intersection of gender biases with technological leadership can also result in women leaders being excluded from influential networks and conversations that are critical for staying abreast of the latest digital trends and innovations (Villamor et al., 2023; Schmitt et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, women leaders who effectively manage digital maturity are better equipped to sustain job performance over the long term in the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Women leaders can manage digital maturity to sustain job performance by staying up to date on emerging trends and technologies in their industry (Effendy & Arquisola, 2022). By investing in training and development programs that build digital skills and knowledge, women leaders stay ahead of the curve and ensure that their organizations are well-positioned for success in the digital age (Steenkamp, 2020). They also manage digital maturity to sustain job performance by leveraging data to drive decision-making and performance improvement. By using data analytics tools to identify trends and

insights, women leaders can make more informed decisions and optimize their operations for improved efficiency and effectiveness (Hortovanyi et al., 2023).

In short, digital maturity is a comprehensive and continuous process that integrates technology, strategy, culture, and leadership to drive digital transformation within an organization. It encompasses both digital intensity, which focuses on technological investments and their application in enhancing customer experience, operational processes, and business models, and transformation management intensity, which emphasizes the leadership skills necessary for guiding the organization through its digital evolution. The role of leaders, particularly the unique challenges faced by women leaders, is critical in navigating this dynamic landscape. By overcoming biases and leveraging resources such as training and data analytics, women leaders can effectively manage digital maturity, ensuring sustained performance and competitiveness in the digital age.

2.7 Gaps in the Literature

The present study examines the influences of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management on enhancing sustainable job performance such as sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance across private organization in Malaysian manufacturing industry. Besides, digital maturity is adopted as the moderating variable to investigate the moderating impacts among the proposed constructs.

Firstly, job performance has been researched predominantly in the manufacturing business, the banking industry, and public sector industry (Birkenmeier & Sanseau, 2016; Zeffane & Bani, 2017; Chin, 2018). Nonetheless, there are few research on sustainable job performance (Jiang et al., 2017; Cheah et al., 2019). Sustainable job performance (i.e.,

sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) is a new variable to be investigated, especially in Malaysian manufacturing industry. This study aims to address this gap by focusing on the sustainability aspect of job performance, which considers long-term impacts on both organizational success and societal well-being.

Although emotional intelligence is a well-researched topic, there are many studies have primarily adopted Wong and Law (2002) Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and performance (i.e., D'Amico et al., 2020; Alwali & Alwali, 2022; Merida-Lopez & Quintana-Orts, 2023; Nasir et al., 2023). Limited attention has been given to Goleman's mixed model of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2001). Goleman's model is widely integrated as a model of emotional intelligence, and it is one of the most influential frameworks in the field. While there are multiple models of emotional intelligence, Goleman's mixed-model approach is particularly prominent and chosen in this study because it bridges emotional intelligence with practical applications, especially organizational and leadership contexts (Goleman, 2001; Bradberry & Su, 2006). Goleman's model was first inspired by Mayer ability model (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and expanded the scope of their model to emotional competencies (i.e., self-awareness and self-management), and social competencies (i.e., social awareness and relationship management). Goleman mixed-model approach is unlike theoretical model which focus on trait and measurement, Goleman's model is action orientated where it provides a clear pathway to develop emotional intelligence skills for improve workplace performance (Goswami & Banerjee, 2023).

The relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance, especially from women leaders' perspective from the Malaysian manufacturing industry still

remained underexplored. While emotional intelligence has been extensively studied in leadership contexts, there is limited research examining how women leaders' emotional intelligence influences sustainable job performance in manufacturing industry (Saha et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023; Santa et al., 2023). Despite the significance of these factors in shaping organizational success and effectiveness, the specific context of manufacturing has not been extensively studied in relation to these variables. As a result, there remains a significant gap in understanding how emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance within manufacturing settings, representing an area ripe for future research.

Secondly, no known empirical research has studied digital maturity as a moderator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance). Previous research has used digital maturity as a moderator to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial agility and business success (Venkatesan, 2020). This study utilizes digital maturity as a moderator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance from the perspective of women leaders across private organizations in Malaysian manufacturing industry. To improve the acceptability and actual use of digitalization, new organizational competencies are required, and women leaders must first understand the complexities of digitalization ramifications for their organizations and employees (Gutu et al., 2023; Hooi & Chan, 2023).

It is essential to have a holistic investigation of how the proposed four variables (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) affect sustainable job performance with digital maturity playing a role in the proposed research framework. While the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership and its impact on

job performance is acknowledged, there is a need to delve deeper into how these specific components of emotional intelligence contribute to sustaining job performance, particularly in the evolving landscape of digital maturity. In addition, it is proposed that sustainable job performance is a factor where women leaders can understand whether their emotions have affected sustaining their task and contextual performance. The variables (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) could help women leaders to be aware and manage their emotions to sustain their job performance. Consequently, sustainable job performance serves as a crucial indicator of how women leaders navigate their emotions to sustain both task and contextual aspects of their roles. However, there is a gap in understanding how each of the identified emotional intelligence variables influences this sustainability within the context of digital maturity. Furthermore, the role of digital maturity as a catalyst for enhancing women leaders' emotional intelligence and, subsequently, their ability to drive sustainable job performance is not thoroughly explored. While it is suggested that digital maturity can contribute to women leaders' emotional intelligence by providing new avenues for learning and development, the specific mechanisms through which this occurs and its impact on sustainable job performance remain unclear.

In the next section, the conceptual framework is presented to indicate the relationship between the constructs and helps in the understanding of the research hypotheses that were developed.

2.8 Justification of the Study

In this study, the intricate relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance is investigated, with emotional intelligence serves as the

independent variable and sustainable job performance as the dependent variable. Emotional intelligence, comprising self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, all of which significantly influence behaviour, decision-making, and interactions within organizations. Women leaders possessing high emotional intelligence are often better equipped to navigate complex work environments, foster positive relationships, and drive performance outcomes. Numerous past studies by Nguyen et al. (2019), Chong et al. (2020), Furnham et al. (2021), Hu et al. (2022), Khassawneh et al. (2022), Chigeda et al. (2022), Deshpande & Srivastava (2023), and Deb et al. (2023) consistently highlighted the significant correlation between emotional intelligence and sustained job performance, with leaders exhibiting higher emotional intelligence displaying better task performance and fostering stronger contextual performance within their teams and organizations.

The conceptual framework of this study encompasses several hypotheses that merit exploration regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance. H1 and H2 hypothesized that self-awareness directly influences both task and sustainable contextual performance. Women leaders who are attuned to their emotions and strengths can make informed decisions and adapt effectively to changing circumstances. Additionally, H3 and H4 posited that effective self-management contributes to sustained job performance across tasks and contexts, as leaders who regulate their emotions, manage stress, and exhibit self-discipline are better positioned to lead their teams to success. Moreover, H5 and H6 anticipated a direct relationship between social awareness and sustained performance outcomes. Leaders who understand the emotions and needs of others can build cohesive teams, resolve conflicts, and create a positive work environment. H7 and H8 proposed that adept relationship management positively impacts both task and

sustainable contextual performance. Leaders excelling in interpersonal skills, communication, and conflict resolution foster collaboration and trust among team members.

Furthermore, the exploration of the moderating role of digital maturity on these relationships is undertaken. Specifically, it is expected that digital maturity enhances the relationship between self-awareness and sustained job performance (H9-H10), as leaders who are digitally mature can leverage technology to enhance their self-awareness and decision-making. Similarly, digital maturity is likely to amplify the impact of self-management on performance outcomes, as leaders who effectively navigate digital platforms and adapt to technological changes can optimize their self-management strategies (H11-H12). There is also an investigation into whether digital maturity moderates the relationship between social awareness and both task and sustainable contextual performance (H13 and H14). It is to determine whether leaders who are digitally savvy may better understand the nuances of communication and consequently build stronger relationships with their team members. Finally, the study of the moderating effect of digital maturity on the relationship between relationship management and sustained job performance (e.g., task and sustainable contextual performance) was conducted, as discussed in H15-H16, where leaders who can navigate digital channels for relationship-building may enhance team cohesion and collaboration. In summary, the study aims to bridge the gap between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance, shedding light on the intricate dynamics that shape organizational success.

The section is followed by conceptual framework in the current research and hypotheses development in the subsequent section.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The framework depicted in Figure 2.2 comprises of primary constructs that include independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variables encompass four constructs, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The proposed dependent variables consist of sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance. Additionally, digital maturity is utilized as the moderator variable to examine its effects on strengthening the relationship between the four proposed independent variables and the dependent variables.

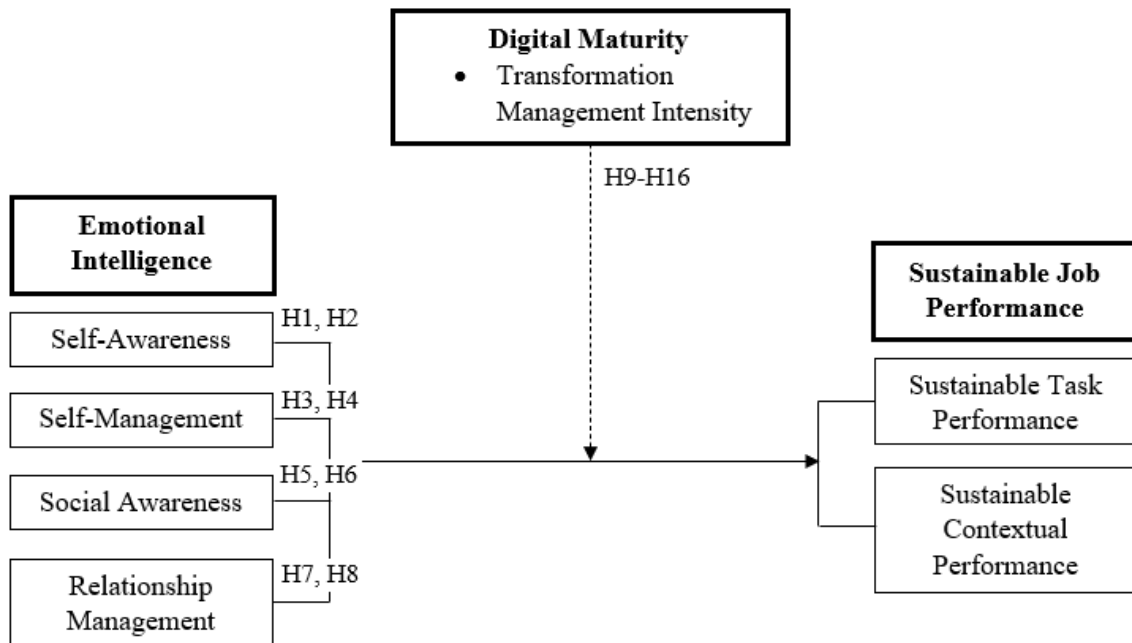


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

2.10 Development of Hypotheses

This section is focused on providing the description and justification for the development of hypotheses to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence

(i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) on sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) with the moderating impact of digital maturity.

2.10.1 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

The description and explanation of the hypotheses between self-awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) are provided in the following sections.

2.10.1.1 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

Self-awareness can be regarded as a person's approach to understanding themselves, their authority, responsibilities, and goals, especially when confronting and resolving problems. This self-awareness enables individuals to tackle tasks and issues more effectively (Alsalmi & Omrane, 2023). For women leaders, self-awareness significantly impacts and sustains their task performance within an organization (Hasanah & Mujanah, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023). The relationship between a person's knowledge, beliefs, task demands, and contextual factors is encapsulated in their self-awareness. This attribute is linked to the ability to monitor one's performance and recognize errors, which in turn helps in selecting appropriate strategies to improve sustainable task performance (Zlotnik & Toglia, 2018; Malik et al., 2023). Women leaders, in particular, benefit from high self-awareness as it enhances their understanding of personal goals and values, thereby contributing to sustained task performance (Kim & Wee, 2020). Furthermore, past studies have shown that increased self-awareness is associated with effective decision-making and improved task sustainability (Svalgaard, 2018; Balconi et al., 2023). Women leaders with higher levels of self-awareness are not only more likely to be promoted but are also seen as more effective in enhancing the

sustainability of their tasks (Carden et al., 2022). The ability to monitor and adjust one's performance is crucial for women leaders. It supports their achievement of personal goals and aligns with broader organizational objectives.

In Malaysia, women account for approximately 39% of managers and professionals (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024), and many worked in hierarchical and male-dominated environments. Self-awareness is particularly crucial for women, as it allows them to assess their capabilities and respond strategically to structural constraints. Malaysian women who hold their leadership roles practices reflective self-assessment and recognize their strengths demonstrate higher confidence and task consistency, particularly in manufacturing and service organizations where multitasking is common. This aligns with TalentCorp's (2023) observation that Malaysian women leaders who engage in self-awareness and goal alignment report improved performance stability and resilience. Hence, self-awareness enables women leaders to sustain their task performance through adaptability, confidence, and clear self-concept. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Self-awareness is positively and significantly related to sustainable task performance.

2.10.1.2 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Self-awareness, as defined by Walker et al. (2022), involves the introspective process of comparing oneself and evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses. This attribute holds particular significance for leaders, shaping their understanding of how their actions influence others (Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2023). Effective leadership is crucial for achieving organizational objectives and optimizing resource management. Hence, leaders must employ

strategies that enhance their relationships' performance. Past research has indicated that self-aware women leaders tend to cultivate a sense of well-being among their followers and contribute to stronger sustainable contextual performance (Coombes, 2023). In today's dynamic landscape, women leaders often stand out for their adeptness in self-awareness and contextual skills (Rizquha, 2023). Their leadership styles, emphasizing emotional intelligence and collaboration, foster positive work environments conducive to sustained performance. Women leaders with strong self-awareness correlates with traits such as mindfulness and a commitment to personal development (Newman & Nezelek, 2019), leading to outcomes like improved job satisfaction and sustainable contextual performance (Budworth & Chummar, 2022). Past research by Sebastian & Hühn (2023) has further supported the positive impact of self-awareness on sustainable contextual performance, where individuals possess a high level of self-awareness, they are better equipped to make decisions and take actions that contribute positively to sustainable outcomes within their respective contexts.

In the Malaysian public and private sectors, women leaders increasingly apply self-awareness to manage diverse teams and balance competing expectations. Women who occupy leadership roles often engage in self-evaluation and continuous learning to strengthen their interpersonal effectiveness. Such self-awareness helps them understand how their actions affect subordinates and colleagues, promoting collaboration and cohesion. In collectivist work settings such as Malaysia's, this behaviour strengthens contextual performance by aligning individual and organisational goals. Women leaders' ability to leverage emotional intelligence influences sustainable contextual performance, as stated by Safa (2024). This can further elaborate that women leaders who possess high emotional intelligence can better understand their own emotions and those of others, manage

interpersonal relationships effectively, and make decisions that consider the broader context of sustainability. From these insights, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Self-awareness is positively and significantly related with sustainable contextual performance.

2.10.2 Self-Management and Sustainable Job Performance

The description and explanation of the hypotheses between self-management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) are provided in the following sections.

2.10.2.1 Self-Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Self-management, defined as the ability to exert control over oneself while engaged in work (Wilson et al., 2018), is a critical skill involving effective regulation of emotions (Bostrack, 2023). In recent years, it has become increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of effective leadership, particularly among women leaders who often navigate complex professional environments while juggling multiple responsibilities (Maphumulo, 2023). Renowned for their multitasking prowess and emotional intelligence, women leaders exemplify strong self-management skills. They adeptly balance leadership demands while maintaining composure and focus. In Malaysian organizations, self-management is an essential trait for women leaders who often balance professional responsibilities with family commitment. Past statistics have proven that women who hold leadership positions are also more likely to work less hours and less willing to work more hours, possibly because of caregiving and household responsibilities (World Bank, 2019; Rahman & Jasmin, 2023). Therefore, it reflects their ability to manage emotions and prioritise tasks efficiently.

Past in today's diverse workplaces, these leadership qualities, including effective self-management, are valued more than ever (Allison, 2023). Self-managed leaders, irrespective of gender, play a crucial role in keeping their teams focused and enhancing performance (Javed et al., 2019). Previous research underscores the significant influence of self-management on task-sustained performance, encompassing efficient task completion, emotional regulation, and maintaining a positive mental state (Mohamad & Jais, 2015; Rasiah et al., 2019). According to Gómez-Leal et al. (2022), self-management involves a leader's ability to regulate emotions and discern when to express specific emotions in diverse situations. It acts as a vital tool for managing stress and maintaining composure in challenging circumstances, thereby sustaining job performance. Additionally, self-managed leaders set and pursue goals actively (Yasir & Masjid, 2018; Kummelstedt, 2023), further enhancing their ability to sustain task performance. In essence, sustainable task performance hinges on leaders' self-management capabilities. Thus, based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Self-management is positively and significantly related with sustainable task performance.

2.10.2.2 Self-Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Self-management encompasses a leader's ability to supervise and direct their actions, demonstrating determination to pursue goals with fervour and perseverance. This construct includes six core facets: self-control, trustworthiness, integrity, initiative, adaptability to ambiguity, openness to change, and drive to accomplish set goals (Tüner, 2023). Essentially, self-management empowers leaders to align their behaviour with their aspirations (Rafiq et al., 2021). Given the significance of self-management in guiding a leader's behaviour and

actions, it becomes evident that understanding its impact is crucial in the context of women leaders and their contributions to organizational sustainability. Past study by Panlaqui (2023) has stated that women leaders often juggle multifaceted roles, requiring adept management of their behaviour to achieve organizational goals while balancing various demands. Consequently, they utilize self-management to enhance self-motivation and foster sustainable contextual performance. Women leaders who effectively monitor and manage their behaviour undertake managerial functions such as self-performance evaluation, corrective action, and resource acquisition (Bakker, 2017; Hou et al., 2022).

At the same time, within Malaysian multicultural workplaces, women leaders frequently rely on self-management to foster harmony and inclusiveness. Past studies on Malaysian educators and public administrators highlighted that emotional regulation enhances cooperation and role-model behaviour (Nawi et al., 2013). Similarly, women who demonstrate calmness and adaptability in corporate setting contribute to positive team climates and mutual support. Such behavioural consistency enhances sustainable contextual performance by reinforcing mutual respect in teams. Subsequently, previous studies by Choerudin (2016) and Mulyana et al. (2022) have illustrated women leaders with strong self-management, particularly in emotion regulation, contribute significantly to sustainable contextual performance. This finding is further supported by Abuayyash et al. (2018), emphasizing the impact of emotional regulation on sustaining performance and promoting organizational culture. From the foregoing discussion, the following hypothesis is derived:

H4: Self-management is positively and significantly related with sustainable contextual performance.

2.10.3 Social Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

The description and explanation of the hypotheses between social awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) are provided in the following sections.

2.10.3.1 Social Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

Social awareness plays a pivotal role in effective leadership, involving a leader's ability to empathize with others and understand their emotions, needs, and concerns (Al-shatarat et al., 2023). This multifaceted skill extends to discerning subtle emotional cues and navigating complex social dynamics within the organizational setting (Choudhury, 2021). In the contemporary dynamic business landscape, the significance of emotional intelligence, notably the dimension of social awareness, as an invaluable and indispensable resource cannot be overstated. This holds particularly true for women leaders, who often excel in fostering inclusive and empathetic work environments. Past study by Salehi and Mohammed (2017) have highlighted its pivotal role as the linchpin for sustaining task performance aligned meticulously with the overarching objectives of the organization. Augmenting this argument, prior research conducted by Al-Fawaeer and Alkhatib (2020) clearly highlighted the central and indispensable role of social awareness in achieving and perpetuating sustainable task performance.

Furthermore, the empirical findings presented by Drigas and Papoutsi (2019) provide additional support to the argument, clearly showing that women leaders with enhanced social awareness not only exhibit superior task productivity but also reach higher levels of sustainable task performance. This has further supported by past study in Malaysia context which stated that emotional intelligence, particularly understanding others' emotions,

predict leadership performance in Malaysian public-sector agencies (Saferdin et al., 2023). This indicates that socially women leaders are better able to coordinate and maintain task performance through empathetic communication and trust-building. Therefore, the enhancement of social awareness emerges as a transformative factor, enriching a leader's ability to empathize and deeply understand others' viewpoints while simultaneously acting as a powerful catalyst for effective communication (Sharr, 2023). Inevitably, this augmentation strengthens self-confidence, propelling women leaders to the highest levels of productivity and effectiveness within the continually evolving workplace environment (Nuraini, 2023). As outlined earlier, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H5: Social awareness is positively and significantly related to sustainable task performance.

2.10.3.2 Social Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

In the context of sustainable leadership, social awareness refers to a leader's ability to recognize and understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of others. This skill is essential in creating a work environment that supports long-term sustainability, particularly in terms of performance. As we delve into sustainable leadership, it becomes clear that social awareness is not only critical but also a defining trait of effective leaders, particularly among women leaders. Women leaders often excel in creating inclusive and supportive work environments, where social awareness is vital for understanding and addressing the diverse needs and perspectives of team members (Thelma & Ngulube, 2024). Past study by Wang & Li (2022) and Balabantaray (2023) have found that women leaders with high social awareness help build stronger social networks within their organizations. These networks

foster trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to sustainability, which directly contributes to a better contextual performance.

Besides, from a Malaysian perspective, social awareness helps women leaders address diversity and maintain inclusiveness across ethnic and generational line. Past study by Othman and Hamid (2023) found that women leaders in Malaysian universities rely heavily on their social awareness skills to motivate staff, handle conflicts, and promote team cohesion. In the private sector, similar relational sensitivity enables women to foster collaborative networks that sustain performance beyond individual tasks. This could be further supported by past evidence from Varshney and Varshney (2020) and Zhang et al. (2023) have further supported the pivotal role of social awareness in driving sustainable performance by strengthening organizational culture and social networks, making them more engaged and willing to go the extra miles, which in turn improves sustainable outcomes. Women leaders proficient in social awareness can positively influence sustainable performance by empathetically understanding others' emotions and responding with support and impartiality (Gregory, 2023). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Social awareness is positively and significantly related to sustainable contextual performance.

2.10.4 Relationship Management and Sustainable Job Performance

The description and explanation of the hypotheses between relationship management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) are provided in the following sections.

2.10.4.1 Relationship Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Relationship management is a cornerstone of effective leadership, encompassing a leader's ability to mentor, coach, and influence while skilfully navigating conflicts (Wefald, 2024). This skill profoundly impacts critical organizational functions such as decision-making, team stewardship, and organizational change. Women leaders, known for fostering collaborative environments, prioritize effective relationship management to build trust and cohesion among team members (Carvajal et al., 2023). Their empathy and communication skills enable them to establish strong interpersonal connections, fostering a sense of belonging within teams. Previous research has suggested that women leaders with an internal locus of control, characterized by traits like intrinsic motivation and stellar performance, often excel in relationship management (Gandhi et al., 2022).

In today's leadership landscape, relationship management is increasingly recognized as indispensable. Networking process and adept relationship management at higher management levels significantly influence organizational outcomes (Rath & Vasantha, 2017). This has been highlighted in Malaysia TalentCorp (2023) report saying Malaysian women leaders who mentor, and support subordinates report higher team performance and retention, underscoring that relationship management directly sustained their task success. This notion is supported by research conducted by Hadiwijaya and Hutasoit (2017), indicating a strong link between proficient relationship management and sustained job performance, crucial for sustaining task performance in the long term. From these insights, the following hypothesis is derived:

H7: Relationship management is positively and significantly related with sustainable task performance.

2.10.4.2 Relationship Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Relationship management, a vital part of emotional intelligence, is the ability to navigate and influence others' emotions effectively. It involves skilfully guiding emotional dynamics in relationships through communication, empathy, and conflict management (Drigas et al., 2023). In emotional intelligence, relationship management is accompanied by various social dimensions, including inspiring leadership and effective communication (Saha et al., 2023). Positioned within social intelligence, it enables individuals to comprehend and connect deeply with others, fostering rich interpersonal relationships across diverse social contexts. Understanding the intricacies of relationship management within the broader framework of emotional intelligence provides valuable insights into how women leaders leverage their natural strengths to cultivate supportive work environments.

As relationship management forms a cornerstone of emotional intelligence, its application by women leaders plays a pivotal role in fostering trust, cohesion, and relational social capital within teams (Worokinasih et al., 2023). Women leaders often excel in creating inclusive and supportive work environments, relying on effective relationship management to build trust and cohesion among team members. Similarly, in Malaysia past study perspective by Syed Ahamd (2023) observed that women who hold leadership roles in Malaysia's port sector sustain team loyalty through compassionate communication and fairness, while these behaviours aligned with contextual sustainability. Their natural empathy and communication skills foster strong interpersonal connections, enhancing team camaraderie. Relationship management is vital for generating relational social capital and fostering high-quality interpersonal connections (Di Gangi et al., 2023). This concept is further underscored by its integral position within social intelligence (Alipour & Fayyazi, 2019). In summary, the discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

H8: Relationship management is positively and significantly related to sustainable contextual performance.

2.10.5 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

The following section focused on describing and explaining the hypotheses formulated to investigate the moderating impact of digital maturity on the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance).

2.10.5.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, organizations are driven by the pursuit of innovation and the desire for a competitive edge through the integration of new technologies (Agustian et al., 2023). This journey of digitalization leads to the attainment of digital maturity, reflecting the multifaceted progress an organization achieves in implementing transformative initiatives while preserving its competitive stance within the industry (Teichert, 2019). Within the context of digital transformation and the attainment of digital maturity, the importance of self-awareness in leaders cannot be overstated. This is especially true for women leaders, as they play pivotal roles in steering organizations through change. Self-awareness empowers women leaders with the ability to accurately assess the requirements for navigating diverse dimensions of change (Grönfors, 2023).

In leading digital transformation, where the stakes are high, self-awareness plays a pivotal role, particularly concerning one's own digital mindset. This facet of self-awareness profoundly influences both the explicit and implicit messages leaders convey to their employees regarding the adoption of new technologies (Solberg et al., 2020; Adeniyi et al.,

2024). Women leaders who possess self-awareness tend to cultivate a constructive digital mindset within their organizations by skilfully reframing circumstances to align with growth-oriented objectives. This ensures the perpetuation of sustainable task performance amidst digital disruption. From the perspective stated in Malaysia's MyDigital Blueprint (2021) and the 12th Malaysia Plan highlighted women's inclusion in digital leadership as a strategic goal. Self-aware women leaders are crucial in this transition because they can recognize their own digital competency gaps and drive personal upskilling. In organizations with high digital maturity, self-aware women leaders should leverage on this technology (e.g., e-learning and performance analytics) to monitor productivity and maintain sustainability. Therefore, women leaders' aspiring to achieve elevated levels of task sustainability must prioritize enhancing their self-awareness regarding their own digital mindset (London et al., 2023). Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

H9: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable task performance.

2.10.5.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, businesses face a surge in demand for digitization, necessitating a graceful embrace of change and a prioritization of enhancing personnel's sociological and psychological characteristics (Budhiraja, 2020). Managing transformational change amidst diverse backgrounds, managerial styles, and performance expectations requires adept leadership and robust strategies (Buick et al., 2018; Ismail et al., 2023). In steering a company through digital transformation, a leader's self-awareness plays a crucial role. Women leaders, known for their adaptability and forward-thinking approach,

are particularly well-positioned to navigate the complexities of digital transformation (Hägg & Sandhu, 2017; Hortovanyi et al., 2023). Past research has suggested that self-awareness, coupled with strong self-organization skills, is essential for effective leadership (Klus & Müller, 2019).

Moreover, high levels of self-awareness enable leaders, including women leaders, to adapt to change by transforming their beliefs and mindsets into a more open, reflective, and emotionally connected perspective conducive to change (London et al., 2023). This adaptability is crucial for driving digital transformation and sustaining performance amidst evolving challenges. Past studies have also emphasized the importance of sustainable contextual performance over sustainable task performance (Yuliansyah et al., 2019; Klein, 2020; Chen et al., 2023). While this in line with Malaysian contexts where hybrid work and digital communication are growing, self-aware women leaders adapt effectively by acknowledging emotional challenges among subordinates and maintaining team cohesion through digital platforms. This underscores the need for leaders, including women leaders, to possess strong self-awareness capabilities to drive digital transformation effectively. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

H10: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable contextual performance.

2.10.6 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Job Performance

The following section focused on describing and explaining the hypotheses formulated to investigate the moderating impact of digital maturity on the relationship

between self-management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance).

2.10.6.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Task Performance

The persistent adoption of digital technologies is indisputably reshaping the fundamental landscape of work, often heralded as the advent of the "fourth industrial revolution" (Colbert et al., 2016). White (2012) articulates digital transformation as an organic response to the evolving dynamics within individuals, organizations, and society at large. It encapsulates a profound shift in the modus operandi of businesses, as they embrace and leverage emerging digital technologies to redefine their operations. In this context, digital maturity, especially concerning the transformation management intensity, plays a crucial and indispensable role in guiding an organization's journey through the complexities of digital transformation. Women leaders, often at the forefront of embracing change and innovation, are pivotal in steering organizations through this transformative process (Sharr, 2023). This aspect of digital maturity involves skilfully managing the intricate emotional dimensions that are inherent in the process of adopting new digital paradigms (Jameson et al., 2022).

As Malaysia advances its digital transformation agenda, self-management becomes essential for women leaders managing rapid technological shifts. Women who maintain emotional balance under digital workload pressures help stabilise their own productivity. Besides, women increasingly lead digital projects in SMEs, demonstrating how digital readiness strengthens the impact of self-management on sustainable job performance (Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation, 2024). This further supported that strong emotional management, particularly among women leaders, serves as the pivotal factor in maintaining

task performance and accelerating the enhancement of work productivity (Alshibly & Alzubi, 2022). This role becomes notably prominent within organizations that have effectively increased their work productivity and prudently sustained consistent task performance. Therefore, the aforementioned discussion gives rise to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H11: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-management and sustainable task performance.

2.10.6.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

The labour market is currently undergoing a transformative phase, driven by technological advancements that are reshaping traditional job roles and creating new opportunities (Skopek, 2023). This shift necessitates significant changes in the core responsibilities and skill sets required across various professions and occupations in the coming decades (Arntz et al., 2016). Amidst this rapid change, adaptability and self-management skills have become increasingly crucial for leaders, especially women leaders (Albuquerque et al., 2024). Women leaders, known for their adaptability and resilience, are particularly adept at navigating these challenges. The accelerating pace of change also places a greater demand on women leaders within organizations, who require both informational and emotional support to navigate uncertainty effectively (Jogulu & Franken, 2023).

As organizations embrace more extreme forms of self-management, the demand for competent women leaders capable of providing guidance and support intensifies (Eke, 2023). In this digital era, understanding the role of self-managed women leaders is essential, necessitating an analysis of current organizational change drivers. This in line with

Malaysia's digital initiatives where self-management skill is becoming crucial for women leaders to have strong emotional regulation to go through digital uncertainty and change. However, driving organizational culture change is a complex and time-consuming process that requires substantial effort (Tortorella et al., 2023). Therefore, effective self-managed women leaders must navigate these challenges by managing their emotions, fostering readiness for change, and identifying team obstacles hindering digital transformation (Fey et al., 2022). Based on the discussion above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H12: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-management and sustainable contextual performance.

2.10.7 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

The following section focused on describing and explaining the hypotheses formulated to investigate the moderating impact of digital maturity on the relationship between social awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance).

2.10.7.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

As organizations embark on the journey of digital transformation, understanding the nuances of digital maturity becomes imperative for leaders, particularly women leaders, who are instrumental in driving this change. Digital maturity serves as a key determinant of an organization's readiness to effectively integrate new technologies and adapt to the evolving digital landscape (Boston Consulting Group, 2023). Concurrently, the concept of "digital transformation" encompasses the process of reshaping a company through the integration of newly developed digital technologies and innovative business strategies. It goes beyond

mere technological deployment, involving a harmonization of human factors, organizational dynamics, and digital tools (Elia et al., 2024). The adoption of new digital technologies often triggers significant shifts in deeply ingrained values, norms, attitudes, and behaviours within organizations. Neeley and Leonardi (2022) has emphasized the importance of two pivotal aspects in navigating this transformation: buy-in and the capacity to learn. Buy-in refers to individuals' belief in the benefits of change for both them and the organization, while the capacity to learn pertains to their confidence in acquiring the necessary literacy to adapt effectively. Women leaders proficient in driving digital transformation prioritize understanding others' emotions, ensuring readiness for digital change (Flink et al., 2023).

By leveraging their social awareness, women leaders play a crucial role in preserving and sustaining the competitive advantage of their organizations amidst digital business transformation (Huda et al., 2023). Furthermore, understanding and managing emotions, both of oneself and others, play a vital role in facilitating the acceptance and effective utilization of new digital technologies (Drigas et al, 2023). While in Malaysia context, socially aware women leaders play a pivotal role in digital adoption by empathising with others' learning anxieties and encouraging participation. In a highly digital-mature workplace, this empathy helps ensure inclusive transformation, directly sustaining task performance. In this context, effective management of emotions contributes significantly to achieving and maintaining task-sustainable performance in the digital era. Drawing from the above discussion, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H13: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between social awareness and sustainable task performance.

2.10.7.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Understanding the pivotal role of digital maturity in shaping organizational strategies and capabilities sheds light on the significance of leadership qualities, particularly social awareness, in driving digital transformation (Senadjki et al., 2024). Women leaders, renowned for their social awareness capabilities, contribute significantly to an organization's digital maturity, as highlighted by Brodny & Tutak (2023). These leaders exhibit not only an understanding of emerging technologies but also a discerning approach to their adoption, underscoring the importance of emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and cultural awareness in navigating digital transitions (Van Wart et al., 2019). According to Rader (2019), digital maturity provides a clear lens for monitoring the digital transition of a company. Digital maturity focuses on enhancing market service via the application of digital technologies to enhance efficiency and innovation (Pang & Wang, 2023). Consequently, firms striving for digital maturity allocate considerable resources to develop digital skills and leadership capabilities, as noted by Kane (2019) and Robertson et al. (2021).

However, the unforeseen global epidemic has forced many businesses to establish virtual work environments, presenting new challenges for women leaders (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Ndiege & Mwaura, 2023). In such contexts, socially aware leaders are pivotal for overcoming challenges and achieving sustained performance, both in tasks and contextual performance (Bolden & O'Regan, 2016; Vial, 2019). Women leaders with high social awareness skills are highly needed to combine empathy with technological literacy foster trust and engagement which reinforced sustainable contextual outcomes under digital transformation. Therefore, women leaders equipped with robust social awareness and digital maturity excel in various leadership aspects, focusing on organizational goal achievement,

fostering collaboration, and driving innovation (Mohammadi et al., 2023; Rony et al., 2023).

Based on the above debate, the following hypothesis is developed:

H14: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between social awareness and sustainable contextual performance.

2.10.8 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Job Performance

The following section focused on describing and explaining the hypotheses formulated to investigate the moderating impact of digital maturity on the relationship between relationship management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance).

2.10.8.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Task Performance

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is reshaping business landscapes, building upon the foundations laid by Industry 4.0, which primarily focused on integrating technology within enterprises (Piccarozzi et al., 2018; Nagy et al., 2023). However, with the emergence of Web 4.0, this revolution transcends traditional boundaries by incorporating decentralized technologies like blockchain and enhanced internet capabilities (Singh & Sisodia, 2023). In this era of rapid technological advancement, leaders, particularly women leaders, must exhibit adaptability to navigate continual change and uncertainty (Whysall et al., 2019; Behie et al., 2023). The evolving demands of leaders' responsibilities necessitate a shift in competencies and abilities to drive digital change within organizations. Effective leaders recognize that successful digital transformation hinges not only on technology but also on understanding and managing the emotions of those involved (Marnewick & Marnewick, 2021).

As organizations transition from digital adolescence to digital efficiency, emotional intelligence becomes paramount for women leaders in guiding their teams through technological advancements (Imjai et al., 2024). Women leaders' acceptance and response to technological changes are vital for the success of digital transformation initiatives (McCarthy et al., 2023). Hence, women leaders must possess the emotional maturity to foster a conducive environment for digital adoption. Relationship management skills are integral for motivating individuals to embrace change and drive innovation. This applicable to Malaysian organizations as well where relationship management remains vitals for women leaders to maintain transparent communication and emotional connection through digital platforms that help mitigate resistance to change. As MyDigital initiatives expand, such relational skills become key to sustaining digital task performance. Thereby, women leaders' adept in relationship management can cultivate adaptive, curious, and motivated teams in the face of transformative changes (Gilli et al., 2024). They establish symbiotic partnerships between humans and technology, ensuring seamless collaboration to achieve organizational objectives. As aforementioned, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H15: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between relationship management and sustainable task performance.

2.10.8.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Digitalization, once confined to technological advancements, now permeates every aspect of our lives, transforming not just the tools we use but also reshaping our connections and interdependencies (Vickers, 2016; Kumar & Agrawal, 2024). Achieving digital maturity within organizations requires active engagement from all employees, recognizing the need for a new digital culture cultivated from the top down, starting with senior executives (Rigby,

2015; Doctor et al., 2023). In this landscape of digital transformation, women leaders play a crucial role in driving organizational change. Women leaders must demonstrate proficiency in relationship management, fostering a sense of urgency, facilitating effective communication, and addressing employee resistance to change arising from the adoption of new digital technologies (Hie, 2019; Alojail et al., 2023). Moreover, transparency is paramount for women leaders with relationship management skills. They must remain informed about developments at all organizational levels, ensuring no critical details escape their attention (Veitas & Weinbaum, 2017).

At the same time, in Malaysia's digitalized work settings, women leaders who use relational leadership through collaborative digital tools (e.g., Microsoft Teams) maintain social cohesion and trust across geographically dispersed teams. Their ability to blend relationship management with digital proficiency reinforces sustainable contextual performance. Therefore, women leaders must navigate this environment with care and responsibility, understanding that transparency has fundamentally reshaped how organizational performance is achieved and sustained (de Araujo et al., 2021). Besides, they must also be adept at managing relationships should embrace this transparency, recognizing its impact on organizational dynamics (Lee & Chan, 2015). In light of these considerations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H16: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between relationship management and sustainable contextual performance.

2.11 Overview of Hypotheses Development

This section presents an overview of the hypotheses developed for this study that categorized into direct relationships and moderating relationships, as shown below.

Direct Relationships

H1: Self-awareness is positively and significantly related to sustainable task performance.

H2: Self-awareness is positively and significantly related with sustainable contextual performance.

H3: Self-management is positively and significantly related with sustainable task performance.

H4: Self-management is positively and significantly related with sustainable contextual performance.

H5: Social awareness is positively and significantly related to sustainable task performance.

H6: Social awareness is positively and significantly related to sustainable contextual performance.

H7: Relationship management is positively and significantly related with sustainable task performance.

H8: Relationship management is positively and significantly related to sustainable contextual performance.

Moderating Relationships

H9: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable task performance.

H10: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable contextual performance.

H11: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-management and sustainable task performance.

H12: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between self-management and sustainable contextual performance.

H13: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between social awareness and sustainable task performance.

H14: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between social awareness and sustainable contextual performance.

H15: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between relationship management and sustainable task performance.

H16: Digital maturity moderates the relationship between relationship management and sustainable contextual performance.

2.12 Summary

In a nutshell, the purpose of this chapter was to discuss the independent variables, the dependent variables, and the moderator variable that were employed in this study. Overall, a total of four independent factors were explored: namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Aside from that, the key dependent variable was sustainable job performance. More specifically, the components that come under sustainable job performance are task and sustainable contextual performance. In addition, the role of digital maturity as a moderator has been examined in relation to this study. This study has also delved further into the fundamental theories that support the suggested research framework. These theories include the social exchange theory, self-efficacy theory and dynamic managerial capabilities theory. This chapter also presents the gaps in the research that need to be filled, as well as the theoretical framework and the hypotheses that need to be developed. The research methodologies and processes that were carried out for the purpose of this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction





This chapter discusses the present study's methods and procedures, which include the research site, research design, sample, procedures, research questionnaire, measurements, and pilot study. This chapter also discusses data statistical analysis techniques such as descriptive statistics, factor analysis, reliability analysis, and factor independence analysis. Finally, the rationale for all steps taken in the study is revealed.

3.2 Research Sites

The research is being conducted across private organizations in Malaysian manufacturing industry. Malaysia's manufacturing sector continues to play a vital role in the country's economic transformation. Its contributions to the nation's export revenue and job creation ensured the country's growth despite global economic uncertainties. The priority remains on producing higher value-added, diverse and complex products, particularly in the catalytic sub-sectors, namely electrical and electronics (E&E), machinery and equipment (M&E), and chemical products (Malaysia Investment Development Authority, 2024). In addition, Malaysia has progressed towards adopting the Fifth Industrial Revolution (IR5.0), an innovative manufacturing paradigm that emphasizes human-centricity, resilience, and sustainability in response to the limitations of Industry 4.0. IR5.0 offers a holistic perspective, recognizing the need to reorganize manufacturing processes by addressing structural, organizational, managerial, cultural, and competency aspects of digital

transformation. Consequently, workers need to be upskilled to drive mass customization and personalization for individual clients (Olsson et al., 2024).

The manufacturing sector in Malaysia has recorded a total domestic investment of RM 1,529.4 million and a foreign investment of RM 33,868.5 million, resulting in a total capital investment of RM 27,929.2 million in the first half of 2023. This sector potentially created employment for 63,327.1 individuals. The Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI) expects approved investments to record stronger growth in the second half of 2023, on track to hit its annual target, after achieving RM132.6bil worth of approved investments in the first half of 2023. For the entire year of 2022, the manufacturing sector attracted a total domestic investment of RM 12,437.1 million, foreign investment of RM 66,021.3 million, and a total capital investment of RM 84,877.0 million, potentially generating employment for 163,335.4 individuals (Statistics of Malaysian Investment Development Authority, 2023). Additionally, the statistics by Global Gender Gap (2024), written by Pal et al. (2024) has proven that the labour force participation rate (LFPR) of women in Malaysia in 2024 was recorded 56.2% (see Figure 3.1), which achieve the target of 30% women in decision-making positions also extends to the corporate sector (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2025). These trends highlight Malaysia's growing emphasis on empowering women through education, leadership development, and economic participation, which are essential pillars that contribute to sustainable performance at both individual and organizational levels, as the Malaysian government has set a target of a 60% female labour force participation rate (LFPR) by 2030. This goal is part of the broader Madani Economy framework aimed at boosting national GDP and advancing gender equality.

Selected indicator	 *Malaysia	 Singapore	 Indonesia	 Philippines
Total population (million)	33.4	5.6	275.5	115.6
Sex ratio (female/male)	0.91	0.91	0.99	0.97
Labour force participation rate for women (%)	56.2	63.4	52.5	50.2
Birth attended by skilled personnel (%)	99.6	99.6	94.7	84.4
Women in Parliament (%)	13.5	29.3	n.a.	27.3





Selected indicator	 USA	 UK	 Japan	 Australia
Total population (million)	333.3	67.0	125.1	26.0
Sex ratio (female/male)	1.02	1.02	1.06	1.01
Labour force participation rate for women (%)	57.3	58.5	54.8	62.6
Birth attended by skilled personnel (%)	99.0	n.a.	99.9	98.8
Women in Parliament (%)	29.2	34.8	10.3	38.0

Figure 3.1: Percentage of women leaders' participation in Malaysia

Data were collected from women who hold various managerial positions, including C-suite roles (e.g., Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer), middle management positions (e.g., General Manager, Regional Manager), and operational management roles (e.g., Supervisor, Project Manager) in private organizations within the Malaysian manufacturing industry. These managerial positions were selected because they involve leadership responsibilities such as decision-making, supervising

employees, managing operations, and implementing digital initiatives, all of which are critical for evaluating digital leadership and sustainable job performance. In Malaysia, manufacturing industry is a vital component of its economy, contributing significantly to GDP and employment. Despite challenges, including a marginal rebound of 0.1% in the last quarter of 2023, the sector remains crucial due to its high-value manufacturing hubs located in key areas such as Penang, Kulim, the Klang Valley, and Johor. Additionally, Malaysia's emphasis on smart manufacturing and digital transformation can serve as a model for other developing economies. The industry's shift towards high-value activities and the creation of skilled jobs highlights the importance of workforce upskilling, providing insights into labour market trends (Malaysian Investment Development Authority, 2023). Based on data from the Malaysian Investment Development Authority, four states in Malaysia which consisted of Pulau Pinang, Selangor, Johor, and Sarawak have recorded significant approved investments in the manufacturing sector throughout 2023. The total investments were RM 63,420.60 million, RM 19,309.30 million, RM 14,617.30 million, and RM 7,699.10 million, respectively. Additionally, Selangor recorded 21 industrial parks with 462 manufacturing organizations; Johor had 55 industrial parks and 251 manufacturing organizations; Penang had 16 industrial parks and 241 manufacturing organizations; and Sarawak had 20 industrial parks with 56 manufacturing organizations (Malaysian Investment Development Authority, 2023).

Selangor, Johor, Pulau Pinang, and Sarawak were selected for the research study on Malaysia's manufacturing industry due to their significant contributions and strategic advantages in this sector. Selangor is the most important manufacturing hub, contributing nearly 30% to Malaysia's manufacturing value, supported by its advanced infrastructure and proximity to major transportation hubs. Johor has a robust manufacturing sector, particularly

in electronics, and benefits from substantial foreign and domestic investments. Pulau Pinang is known as “Silicon Valley of the East”, as it excels in high-tech electronics manufacturing and provides state-of-the-art facilities. Sarawak, with its Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE), offers extensive opportunities in industries such as petroleum, chemicals, and renewable energy. These regions collectively provide a comprehensive view of Malaysia's diverse and thriving manufacturing landscape, making them ideal for the study. These prominent manufacturing entities in Malaysia are also noteworthy for their private organizations, many of which boast the financial capacity to invest in comprehensive training programs. Furthermore, these organizations exhibit a strong presence of women in leadership positions, indicating their commitment to diversity and inclusion. This correlation suggests that their financial strength enables them to provide extensive training opportunities, promoting a culture of continuous learning and development within the industry.

In addition, manufacturing has traditionally been a male-dominated industry – fewer than one third of manufacturing employees are women. However, the industry is at tipping point, and its future depends on a diverse workforce. Though there have been improvements in recent years, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions, particularly in Malaysia (Varma et al., 2023). In addition, Malaysia is a multicultural country with a predominantly Muslim population, and gender roles and expectations can vary across different ethnic and religious communities. Despite efforts to increase gender diversity in leadership roles, women still face systemic barriers that prevent them from advancing in their careers. Studying women's emotional intelligence can provide insights into how women can develop the skills and competencies needed to overcome these barriers and succeed in leadership roles. Secondly, manufacturing can be a high-pressure environment with tight

schedules and limited resources (Nurhasanah et al., 2023). Therefore, women with strong emotional intelligence can navigate conflicts and disagreements more effectively, leading to smoother operations and improved morale among employees. On the other hand, emotional intelligence is a critical trait for effective leadership (Al-Dhuhouri et al., 2023). Women who excel in emotional intelligence can inspire and motivate their teams, adapt to changing circumstances, and make informed decisions, ultimately driving organizational success and fostering a more inclusive workplace culture.

Moreover, manufacturing industry is increasingly focused on innovation and process improvement. Therefore, women with high emotional intelligence can bring innovative perspective to problem-solving and contribute to the development of more creative and effective solutions. Besides, women with strong emotional intelligence can help create a more inclusive workplace, where people from different backgrounds feel valued and can contribute their unique insights and skills (Wamsler & Restoy, 2020). In today's rapidly changing manufacturing landscape manufacturing jobs can be physically demanding and mentally taxing. Women with strong emotional intelligence can help employees manage stress and maintain their well-being, which can lead to higher productivity and reduced turnover, in addition to this, women who have strong emotional intelligence are often more flexible and open to change, making them valuable assets in industries undergoing transformation (Pong & Leung, 2023). To promote the integration of emotional intelligence in the manufacturing industry, organizations can implement training programs and diversity initiatives that encourage the development of these skills among all employees. Additionally, fostering a culture of empathy, communication, and mutual respect can create an environment where individuals of all genders can thrive and contribute to the success of the industry.

Finally, studying women's emotional intelligence can help identify ways to improve the overall well-being of women leaders in Malaysia. Work-related stress and burnout are common in academia, and women may encounter added pressures related to family responsibilities and societal expectations (Adisa & Antonacopoulou, 2022; Horta & Tang, 2023). By understanding how emotional intelligence can help women cope with these stressors, organizations can develop targeted interventions to promote mental health and well-being among women in managerial positions.

3.3 Sampling Design

The study focuses on private organizations within the Malaysian manufacturing industry, specifically targeting the states of Selangor, Pulau Pinang, Johor, and Sarawak. The sampling frame includes all private manufacturing organizations listed by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority in 2023, clearly identifying those located in industrial parks. Manufacturing organizations in Malaysia play a critical role in educating the next generation of professionals and leaders. Thus, understanding how emotional intelligence impacts the sustainable job performance of women in manufacturing industry can inform strategies for promoting gender equity and diversity in the workforce. As women are increasingly participating in prominent positions within the said industry, understanding how their emotional intelligence contributes to their success is crucial.

Furthermore, teamwork and employee engagement are integral to manufacturing's operational efficiency and product quality. Additionally, emotional intelligence is instrumental in building strong, cohesive teams and fostering positive relationships among employees. Women leaders who excel in creating inclusive and engaging work environments are likely to significantly contribute to sustaining job performance. Besides,

the manufacturing sector operates in a dynamic environment characterized by constant change, technological advancements, and global competition. Therefore, women leaders with emotional intelligence are often more adaptable and resilient confronting these challenges, making their experiences valuable for understanding how emotional intelligence supports job performance in a changing landscape.

Moreover, women leaders often excel in this aspect by leveraging their emotional intelligence to comprehend and meet customer preferences effectively. Apart from this, employee well-being is closely linked to job performance (Das & Pattanayak, 2023). Leaders with emotional intelligence can create supportive work environments, manage stress effectively, which eventually lead to enhanced employee well-being. Studying how women leaders leverage emotional intelligence to enhance employee satisfaction and retention provides valuable insights into sustaining job performance. In short, the manufacturing industry serves as an ideal setting to explore the impact of women leaders' emotional intelligence on sustainable job performance, offering critical lessons for promoting diversity, inclusivity, and emotionally intelligent leadership in an evolving and competitive sector.

Subsequently, power analyses should be conducted prior to determining the sample size. By using G*Power 3.1.9.4 software, the minimal sample size was calculated for this research study. G*Power is an independent power analysis software commonly used in social, behavioural, and biomedical research (Faul et al., 2009). Past study by Cohen (1988) has suggested that statistical power should be at least 0.80, with higher power (> 0.95) indicating that the relationships between constructs are likely to be robust and that statistical tests produce reliable results. As shown in Figure 3.2, a sample size of 166 (N=166) is

required, with a statistical power of 0.95, 5% significance level, an effect size of 0.15 and a total of 9 predictors.

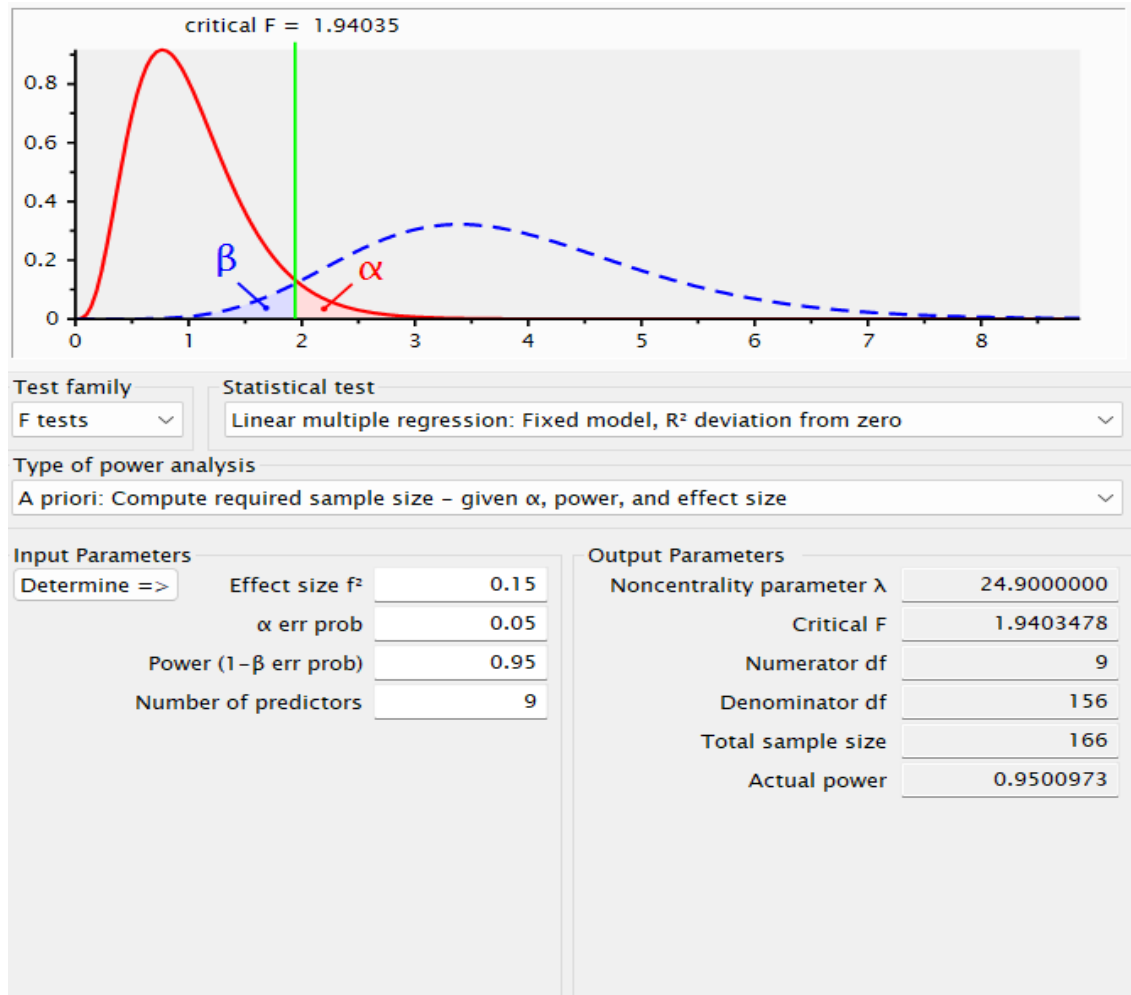


Figure 3.2: Results of G*Power Analysis

Sampling is a crucial process for selecting a representative sample from a population. In this study, non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling was chosen. Purposive or judgmental sampling was employed to select respondents who met specific, predefined criteria relevant to examining the impact of emotional intelligence on sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among women in managerial levels. Purposive sampling allows researchers to deliberately select participants based on their relevance to the research objectives and their ability to

provide valuable insights. This approach was deemed appropriate as it enabled the inclusion of individuals with specialized expertise and experience, which are essential for testing the study's hypotheses in the Malaysia manufacturing industry. by researchers seeking individuals possessing specific traits pertinent to their study (Memon et al., 2025).

The unit of analysis for this study consists of women who holds managerial level employed in private organizations within Malaysia's manufacturing industry. The criteria for respondents' selection were grounded in both theoretical considerations and the objectives of this study. Participants were required to identify women and be employed in managerial positions within Malaysia's private manufacturing industry. This ensured that the respondents were representative of the target demographic and possessed sufficient insight into the industry-specific dynamics being investigated. This diversity allowed them to provide insights into the unique cultural, social, and economic factors that may impact their roles and experiences. To ensure relevance and depth of responses, participants were required to have at least five years of managerial experience. These criteria reflect a foundational level of engagement with managerial roles and organizational processes, allowing respondents to provide informed perspectives on emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance. Furthermore, participants needed to hold positions at various managerial levels, including C-suite roles (e.g., CEO, COO, CFO), middle management (e.g., General Manager, Regional Manager), and operational management (e.g., Supervisor, Project Manager). This diversity ensured that the study captured insights from a range of leadership roles across the organizational hierarchy. The reason for selecting women in managerial level are individuals in managerial level are often responsible for strategic decisions, operational management, and team leadership. Their roles required higher level of emotional intelligence to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and achieve

sustainable outcomes, making them ideal respondents for the study's focus. Most of them typically the group who are often faced with work-family conflict, lacked emotional intelligence in handling work-life balance, and digital uncertainty the most, thereby investigating their emotional intelligence in sustaining job performance within the Malaysian manufacturing industry is the most appropriate strategy.

3.4 Development of Research Questionnaires

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management on sustainable job performance, which includes sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance. Additionally, the moderating effect of digital maturity on the proposed research framework is examined. A conventional research questionnaire with 48 questions was utilized and adapted for data collection. The questionnaire was developed in English and consisted of four sections. Section A contained nine questions related to the respondents' demographic information. Followed by, Section B with 20 questions to evaluate the emotional intelligence constructs, while the eight questions in Section C served to measure their digital maturity (i.e., transformation management intensity). Finally, Section D contained 12 questions to assess sustainable job performance, with five questions assessing sustainable task performance and seven questions assessing sustainable contextual performance. The items in the questionnaire were concise and comprehensible. Table 3.1 shows a detailed breakdown of the questionnaire's sections and measures.

Table 3.1: Summary of the Questionnaire

Sections	Measures	Dimension	Number of Items	Sources	Rating Scale
A	Demographic Information	-	9	-	-
B	Emotional Intelligence	Self-Awareness	5	Goleman, 1995; Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Samra, 2021	1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree
		Self-Management	5	Goleman, 1995; Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Samra, 2021	1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree
		Social Awareness	5	Goleman, 1995; Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Samra, 2021	1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree
		Relationship Management	5	Goleman, 1995; Cooper & Petrides, 2010; Samra, 2021	1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree
C	Digital Maturity	Transformation Management Intensity	8	Westerman et al., 2012; He et al., 2021	1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree

Table 3.1 continued

Sections	Measures	Dimension	Number of Items	Sources	Rating Scale
D	Sustainable Job Performance	Sustainable Task Performance	4	Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996; Koopmans et al., 2013; Haryanto et al., 2022	1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree
		Sustainable Contextual Performance	8	Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996; Koopmans et al., 2013; Haryanto et al., 2022	1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree

3.5 Measures

In this study, a total of seven constructs were used to measure the proposed research framework, and each construct had its respective measure. The constructs used in this study were self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, digital maturity (transformation management intensity), sustainable job performance (sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance). Additionally, demographic information, including age, marital status, ethnicity, education level, number of children, managerial positions, years of employment with the current organization, years of managerial experience, and classifications of manufacturing organizations, was gathered. A

7-point Likert scale was established for assessing the responses, with "1" representing "Strongly Disagree," "2" representing "Disagree," "3" representing "Slightly Disagree," "4" representing "Neutral," "6" representing "Agree," and "7" representing "Strongly Agree." The indicators that made up the demographic profile and the components of the study are described in the subsequent sections.

Table 3.2 presents the summary of measurement items highlighting the differences between the original and adopted/adapted items. Several items were adapted to suit the Malaysian organizational context and refined after the pre-test to ensure linguistic clarity and contextual appropriateness. The refinement process involved simplifying wording and aligning expressions with local work culture while retaining the constructs' original conceptual meaning. Certain items were negatively worded to maintain conceptual integrity with the original scale. This approach is supported by previous studies (Sánchez-Carracedo et al., 2012; Galiana et al., 2016), which found that reverse-coded items may distort the factor structure, reliability, and validity of scales. Consistent with these findings, other scholars (Suárez-Alvarez et al., 2018; Van Sonderen, Sanderman, & Coyne, 2013; Weijters & Baumgartner, 2012) have highlighted that reverse coding may not be necessary when the scale demonstrates sound psychometric properties, as it can sometimes reduce response reliability due to respondent confusion. Therefore, the original wording was retained to preserve item meaning and ensure consistency with the validated instrument. The decision to retain the original wording was further justified as all constructs demonstrated sound psychometric properties, including satisfactory reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity in the measurement model assessment.

3.5.1 Demographic Information

Section A of the questionnaire consisted of eight questions designed to collect demographic and personal information from the respondents. The questions included gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, education level, number of children, managerial positions, years of employment with the current organization, years of managerial experience, and classifications of manufacturing organizations. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information collected, which was solely for analysis purposes, and only aggregate results would be reported. The demographic data collected was important in helping the researcher gain a better understanding of each respondent's profile.

3.5.2 Self-Awareness

In this study, self-awareness was assessed using five items sourced from Samra (2021), organized under Goleman (1995), and cross-validated by Cooper and Petrides (2010). A 7-point Likert scale was employed to assess the items, with respondents rating their perceptions from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A higher score obtained from the respondents indicated that they highly perceived self-awareness as a crucial element in sustaining job performance. The use of a Likert scale allowed for a more nuanced assessment of the respondents' perceptions on self-awareness.

3.5.3 Self-Management

Self-management was measured with five items drawn from Samra (2021), organized under Goleman (1995), and cross-validated by Cooper and Petrides (2010). A 7-point Likert scale was employed to measure the respondents' perceptions towards the given items. All participants were asked to rate their opinions on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 7 indicating "strongly agree" for each of the five items. Respondents

who provided high score on these items signify the essential role self-management was essential in contributing to their sustainable job performance.

3.5.4 Social Awareness

Social awareness was evaluated using five items from Samra (2021), structured under Goleman (1995), and cross-validated by Cooper and Petrides (2010). Participants rated their level of agreement with each item using a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 7 represented "strongly agree". A higher score on the scale indicated that respondents attributed significant importance to social awareness in relation to sustainable job performance.

3.5.5 Relationship Management

Relationship management was assessed with five items sourced from Samra (2021), organized by Goleman (1995), and then cross-validated by Cooper and Petrides (2010). Respondents rated their perceptions on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) for all five items. Respondents who scored high indicated that they believed relationship management to be crucial in contributing to sustainable job performance.

3.5.6 Digital Maturity

Section C of the questionnaire included a measurement of digital maturity (i.e., transformation management intensity), which was assessed using eight items developed by Westerman et al. (2012), subsequently adopted by He et al. (2021). The purpose of measuring digital maturity was to analyse its moderating impact on the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance, including both sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance. Participants rated the items on a 7-

point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating a stronger belief in the significant role of digital maturity in moderating this relationship.

3.5.7 Sustainable Task Performance

Section D of the questionnaire comprised five items originally developed by Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996), subsequently adopted by Koopmans et al. (2013), and further adapted by Haryanto et al. (2022) within a sustainable context to assess sustainable task performance. Respondents rated their perceptions using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) for all four items. Those who responded with a high score indicated that they believe sustainable task performance is a crucial factor in delivering effective job performance and achieving organizational goals.

3.5.8 Sustainable Contextual Performance

For the construct of sustainable contextual performance, the study utilized a total of eight items from the questionnaire developed by Van Scotter and Motowidlo (1996), which were later adopted by Koopmans et al. (2013) and further adapted by Haryanto et al. (2022) in a sustainable context. Participants rated their perceptions on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) for all eight items. Higher scores from respondents indicated that they view sustainable contextual performance as a key factor in delivering effective job performance to meet organizational goals.

Table 3.2: Summary of Measurement Items

Construct	Original Measurement Item	Adopted/ Adapted Measurement Item	Remarks
Self-Awareness	I'm aware of what might trigger my emotions or reactions.	I am aware of what might trigger my emotions or reactions.	Adopted
	I can accurately describe the specific emotions I'm feeling at any given moment.	I can accurately describe my specific emotions at any given moment.	Adopted
	I can easily tell the difference between similar emotions, such as anger, disgust and shame.	I can easily tell the difference between similar emotions, such as anger, disgust, and shame.	Adopted
	I can usually pinpoint exactly why I reacted a certain way.	I can usually pinpoint my problems and the reason why I reacted to certain emotions.	Adapted
	I'm aware of the effect what I do or say has on others.	I am aware of what I do or say has on others.	Adapted
Self-Management	I regularly struggle with maintaining good work-life harmony.	I regularly struggle with maintaining a healthy work-life balance.	Adapted
	I remain calm even under extreme pressure.	I remain calm even under extreme pressure.	Adopted
	Others would say I'm always respectful no matter how frustrated or upset I am.	Others would say I'm always respectful no matter how frustrated or upset I am.	Adopted

Table 3.2 continued

Construct	Original Measurement Item	Adopted/Adapted Measurement Item	Remarks
	When under high pressure, I tend to act quickly and reflect later.	I tend to act quickly and reflect later when under high pressure.	Adopted
	It's unreasonable to focus on others' emotional reactions when I'm under high demands.	I am unable to care others' emotions when I am under work pressure.	Adapted
Social Awareness	I can easily remain calm when dealing with someone who's emotionally upset.	I can easily remain calm when dealing with someone who's emotionally upset.	Adopted
	I'm easily able to approach emotionally charged situations from a place of non-judgmental empathy and understanding.	I can handle emotional situations with empathy and understanding, without judging.	Adapted
	I feel comfortable dealing with others' negative emotional reactions.	I feel comfortable dealing with others' adverse emotional reactions.	Adopted
	I'm easily able to adapt my communication style to meet others' needs and preferences.	I can easily adapt my communication style to meet others' needs and preferences.	Adopted
	I generally don't acknowledge others' emotional distress unless they choose to come to me for support.	I usually don't respond to others' emotional distress unless they seek support from me.	Adapted

Table 3.2 continued

Construct	Original Measurement Item	Adopted/ Adapted Measurement Item	Remarks
Relationship Management	I generally avoid expressing my concerns if I know addressing an issue might upset someone.	I avoid expressing my concerns if I know addressing an issue might upset someone.	Adopted
	I tend to communicate more intensely when I feel I'm not getting my message across.	I tend to communicate more intensely when I feel I'm not getting my message across.	Adopted
	I tend to immediately defend or justify myself when receiving negative or critical feedback.	I tend to defend or justify myself immediately when receiving negative or critical feedback.	Adopted
	I know how to create a positive mood when those around me are under high stress.	I know how to create a positive mood when those around me are under high stress.	Adopted
	I'm generally calm and confident in difficult situations.	I'm generally calm and confident in difficult situations.	Adopted
	Digital Maturity	Senior executives have a transformative vision of the digital future of our company.	I have a transformative vision of the digital future of our company.
Senior executives and middle managers share a common vision of digital transformation.		All managers in this organization share a common vision of digital transformation.	Adapted

Table 3.2 continued

Construct	Original Measurement Item	Adopted/ Adapted Measurement Item	Remarks
	There are possibilities for everyone in the company to take part in the conversation around digital transformation.	There are possibilities for everyone in the company to take part in the conversation around digital transformation.	Adopted
	The company is promoting the necessary culture changes for digital transformation.	The company is promoting the necessary cultural changes for digital transformation.	Adopted
	The company is investing in the necessary digital skills.	The company is investing in the necessary digital skills.	Adopted
	Digital initiatives are coordinated across silos such as functions or regions.	Digital initiatives are coordinated across functional and geographical divisions.	Adapted
	Roles and responsibilities for governing digital initiatives are clearly defined.	Roles and responsibilities for governing digital initiatives are clearly defined.	Adopted
	Digital initiatives are assessed through a common set of key performance indicators.	Digital initiatives are assessed through a standard set of key performance indicators.	Adopted
Sustainable Task Performance	I always maintain a high-performance standard.	I always maintain a high-performance standard.	Adopted

Table 3.2 continued

Construct	Original Measurement Item	Adopted/ Adapted Measurement Item	Remarks
	I am high spirited in working.	I am high spirited in working.	Adopted
	I could complete many tasks to achieve organizational objectives.	I could complete many tasks to achieve organizational objectives.	Adopted
	I always completed my tasks on times.	I always completed my tasks on times.	Adopted
Sustainable Contextual Performance	When someone asks or need it, I always help my colleagues.	When someone asks or need it, I always help my colleagues.	Adopted
	When my colleagues are in problems, I always show sympathy for them.	When my colleagues are in problems, I always show sympathy for them.	Adopted
	I actively participate in work discussion and meeting.	I actively participate in work discussion and meeting.	Adopted
	I always praise my colleagues for their excellent job.	I always praise my colleagues for their excellent job.	Adopted
	I always get high satisfaction in helping others in the organization.	I always get high satisfaction in helping others in the organization.	Adopted
	I always maintain a good coordination.	I always maintain a good coordination.	Adopted
	I always communicate effectively with my colleagues to solve issues and make a decision.	I always communicate effectively with my colleagues to solve issues and make a decision.	Adopted

Note: Several questionnaire items were refined following the pre-test to improve clarity and contextual suitability.

3.6 Pre-test

Before conducting the main survey, a pre-test was carried out to ensure the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire and to identify any errors or inconsistencies. The pre-test aimed to eliminate potential ambiguity and confusion in the questionnaire, as well as to ensure the reliability and validity of its items. According to Maiyaki and Mohd Mokhtar (2011), a pre-test is an important step conducted on a small sample of respondents prior to the full-scale study.

A total of 15 respondents were selected for the pre-test based on their suitability as women in managerial positions within private organizations in the Malaysian manufacturing industry. The participants included C-suite executives (e.g., CEO, COO, CFO), middle management (e.g., General Manager, Regional Manager), and operational management (e.g., Supervisor, Project Manager) to ensure a balanced representation across hierarchical levels.

Participants were asked to review the questionnaire items and provide written feedback on the clarity, wording, and structure of each question. Their comments were recorded in a column beside each item, as summarized in Table 3.3. Based on the feedback, several modifications were made to improve question phrasing, reduce ambiguity, and enhance comprehension. Besides, the average time was also calculated to determine the total time required to complete the questionnaire.

The reliability of each construct was further examined after full data collection to ensure internal consistency. As shown in Chapter 4, all Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded

0.70, confirming the reliability of the measurement model and reinforcing that the pre-tested instrument was statistically sound and appropriate for the study.

Table 3.3: Outcomes of Pre-Test

Section and Question Items	Comment 1	Comment 2	Changes Made
Section B Q4. I can usually pinpoint exactly why I reacted a certain way.	Unclear question.	Must specify the question clearly such as what direction are you going to pinpoint?	I can usually pinpoint my problems and the reasons why I reacted to certain emotions.
Q6. I regularly struggle with maintaining good work-life harmony.	Prefer to change the wording of harmony to work-life balance.	Suggest changing the word – good to healthy.	I regularly struggle with maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
Section C Q26. Digital initiatives are coordinated across silos such as functions or regions.	Try to avoid using a complicated terms such as “silos” as not everyone could understand the term “silos”.	Suggest removing the word – silos and restructuring the question.	Digital initiatives are coordinated across functional and geographical divisions.
Q23. Senior executives and middle managers share a common vision of digital transformation.	This sentence has unintentionally to “senior executives and middle managers” which caused confusion for respondents to fill.	Streamlined the question, by not specifically mentioned “senior executives and middle managers”	All managers in these organizations share a common vision of digital transformation.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

To collect data for this study, self-administered surveys and questionnaires were used. Following the pre-test refinement, the finalized questionnaire was distributed to women in managerial roles across private organizations within Malaysia's manufacturing industry, focusing on four key states which consists of Selangor, Johor, Penang, and Sarawak. Prior to the survey distribution, ethical approval and organizational consent were obtained. A letter of intent was then emailed to the HR departments of the selected manufacturing organizations, outlining the study's objectives, confidentiality assurances, and participation criteria. Only organizations that voluntarily agreed to participate were included in the study.

The questionnaire was distributed through two channels to maximize accessibility and participation (i) online distribution via Google Forms, shared through official organizational or personal email links and (ii) physical (hard copy) questionnaires, delivered personally to respondents who preferred printed copies or were located in areas with limited internet access. A total of 705 questionnaires were distributed, and 325 valid responses were collected, yielding a response rate of 46.1%. To improve participation, follow-ups were conducted with non-responding organizations and individuals through phone calls and reminder emails.

To minimize potential common method bias, several procedural and statistical remedies, including the Harman single-factor test, full collinearity test, and marker variance techniques (i.e., Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Pavlou et al., 2007; Richardson et al., 2009; Kock & Lyn, 2012; Henseler et al., 2015; Kock et al., 2021). Procedurally, respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, informed that

there were no right or wrong answers, and the questionnaire was structured to psychologically separate sections measuring independent and dependent variables. Statistically, full collinearity test was conducted after data collection, and the results indicated that all the VIF values were less than the critical threshold of 3.3, confirming that common method bias was not a significant concern in this study.

Overall, the data collection process was conducted ethically and systematically, ensuring high data quality and reliability. The responses obtained provided a robust basis for examining how women leaders perceive self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, as well as the moderating effect of digital maturity on sustainable task and contextual performance.

3.8 Statistical Analysis

Both the SmartPLS 4.0 and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were employed as the statistical techniques to analyse the data. Initially, preliminary data was gathered and subjected to a descriptive statistical analysis using SPSS version 28.0. Following this, the factor and reliability analyses were conducted to assess the accuracy of the measure. Lastly, the partial least squares – structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) assessment was carried out in this study using the SmartPLS 4.0 software. Further details on the statistical analyses are elaborated on in subsequent sections.

3.8.1 Preliminary Data Analysis

To ensure the accuracy and validity of research findings, a preliminary data analysis is conducted before proceeding with more advanced statistical analyses. For the present study, the preliminary data analysis was performed using SPSS 28.0 to examine and authenticate the data gathered. Specifically, the analysis focused on missing data, suspicious

reaction patterns, normality of knowledge, and potential process bias. In the initial examination of the data, missing information was identified as the primary concern. The data set was examined, and if the proportion of missing data exceeded 15%, or if there were several absent responses for one structure, the case or observation was removed from the data set (Hair et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2021). To determine the most appropriate imputation approach for missing data, the patterns of missing data were first identified. According Little (1998), there are three types of missing data are missing completely at random (MCAR), missing at random (MAR), and missing at non-random (NRM). Based on Mooi et al. (2018), when handling different types of missing data, separate imputations with $m = 5$ should be applied if fewer than 10% or more than 10% of values are missing for MCAR. For MAR, multiple imputations with $m = 5$ should be used, while for NRM, listwise deletion is recommended, with any limitations due to missing data being documented.

Next, the analysis then proceeded with the identification of suspicious response patterns, such as straight-lining and inconsistencies (Hair et al., 2019). Respondents who select the same answer for several questions or provide the same answer to comparable questions exhibit straight-lining and inconsistency. These patterns frequently occur when respondents are uninterested or unmotivated to complete a survey. In line with Mooi et al. (2018), a result with straight lining or inconsistent replies should be thoroughly examined for deletion from the data set since it may be detrimental to the quality of the data.

The next step in the preliminary data analysis involved checking for normality of the results. Although normality concerns are less critical in PLS-SEM due to its non-parametric nature, it is still necessary to verify normality (Hair et al., 2019). The data distribution can be assessed by evaluating skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness indicates the symmetry

of the data distribution, while kurtosis measures the distribution's relative peak (Pallant, 2007; Refaie et al., 2023). In a perfectly normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values would be zero, though this is uncommon in social science research (Pallant, 2007; Hair et al., 2017; Rigdon, 2023). According to Hair et al. (2017), skewness and kurtosis values between +1 and -1 are considered acceptable.

The final step of the preliminary data analysis involved assessing the data for common method variation. Common method bias can significantly affect the validity of the relationships between constructs, particularly when data are collected using a single informant survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To minimize common method bias, several preventive measures were implemented prior to data collection, including the Harman single-factor test, full collinearity test, and marker variance techniques (i.e., Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Pavlou et al., 2007; Richardson et al., 2009; Kock & Lyn, 2012; Henseler et al., 2015; Kock et al., 2021). After data collection, a full collinearity test was performed to assess potential process bias (Kock & Lyn, 2012).

3.8.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used as a tool to summarize and describe the key characteristics of the data in a study. In this study, a basic form of graphical analysis was employed to compile the collected data and present it in a clear and readable format. Statistical measures such as frequency, proportion, mean, and standard deviation were calculated. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the demographic information of the respondents, including categories such as age, marital status, ethnic group, education level, number of children, managerial positions, years of employment in the current organization, years of managerial experience and manufacturing industry classification. The

mean was used to determine the average age of respondents, while the standard deviation measured the average score across the distribution. In summary, the descriptive statistics provided insight into the characteristics of the respondents.

3.8.3 Partial Least Square (PLS)

The partial least square (PLS) method is a statistical technique that is often used for modelling, discrimination, and classification. It combines the benefits of component analysis with various regression techniques and is particularly useful for predicting dependent variables from a broad range of independent variables. The term PLS comes from "partial least square" and was named by its founder Wold (1985), as well as later by Chin (1998) and Abdi (2003). Initially developed by Wold (1966, 1982) for econometric data analysis, PLS has found many applications in various fields such as computer technology (Fornell, 1982; Bollen, 1989; Vinzi et al., 2008), management (Wang et al., 2004), social science (Henseler et al., 2016; Cheah et al., 2023), education, and advertising (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Chin (1998) suggests that PLS is an alternative approach to structural equation modelling.

PLS path modeling is a vital method for analysing complex multivariable interactions between both observable and latent variables (Gefen et al., 2000; Esposito Vinzi et al., 2010). PLS is especially effective for prediction analysis, as it can manage intricate research models with numerous constructs and indicators, without imposing strict assumptions about sample size or normality (Hair et al., 2017; Matthews et al., 2018; Legate et al., 2023). A key advantage of PLS is its capability to address complex models with many indicators and to model relationships between these indicators and latent variables across multiple models (Chin & Newsted, 1999). Furthermore, PLS assesses the measurement model, including the outer model and the relationships between independent and dependent variables in the inner

model (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982; Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2012). In this study, a two-step PLS-SEM approach was adopted, consisting of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement model, followed by an examination of the structural model to test the hypothesised correlations between constructs (Hair et al., 2017). In the evaluation of the measurement model, the reliability and validity of the indicators, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed and analysed. The structural model evaluation analysed the research model using route coefficients, effect size (f^2), coefficients of determination (R^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2021).

In this study, SmartPLS was employed to perform PLS estimation and test the proposed hypotheses, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the interactions between the variables of interest (Ringle et al., 2024). SmartPLS is preferred for causal-predictive path analysis in structural equation modeling (SEM) because it does not rely on a strong theoretical foundation (Alsmadi et al., 2023). Unlike traditional SEM approaches, PLS relaxes many of the stringent assumptions, making it more suitable for developing conceptual models and exploring relationships, rather than confirming established theories. PLS prioritizes minimizing the variance in dependent variables over explaining the co-variation among all indicators (Chin, 1998). SmartPLS, a popular PLS-SEM software, is particularly advantageous for estimating and testing models with small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2017; Cheah et al., 2024). One key benefit of PLS is its ability to investigate new relationships between emerging constructs without falsely identifying non-existent connections. In summary, SmartPLS 4.0 is an effective tool for conducting PLS-SEM analysis, facilitating the exploration of causal relationships among latent constructs in this study.

3.8.4 Measurement Model

To establish the accuracy and validity of the measurements and structures, it is important to examine the relationship between measurements and constructs, which is known as the model of measurement or confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In the current study, reflective measures were used to evaluate both dimensions. The evaluation of the measurement model involved assessing the reliability and validity of the indicators. Reliability and internal consistency were evaluated to ensure that the measurements are consistent and dependable, whilst convergent validity and discriminating validity were evaluated to determine the accuracy and effectiveness of the measurements (Sarstedt et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2021). The specific criteria used to evaluate the measurement model are outlined in detail in the subsequent sections.

3.8.4.1 Indicator Reliability

Götz et al. (2010) explained indicator reliability as the extent to which the variance in a measure is accounted for by the construct. The outer loadings of the indicators are used to calculate indicator reliability, with higher outer loadings indicating greater reliability (Hair et al., 2021). It is generally recommended that outer loadings should be greater than 0.70 to achieve indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2017, Hair et al., 2021). However, indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should also be examined, as their removal could affect the composite reliability (CR) and average extracted variance (AVE) of the construct. An indicator shall omit if both values of CR and AVE are improved following its removal, or else it should be retained (Hair et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to carefully evaluate the reliability of each indicator before including it in the model.

3.8.4.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency refers to the extent to which measurements designed to assess the same construct produce consistent scores (Hair et al., 2017). Cronbach's alpha is a widely used method for determining internal consistency reliability; however, some researchers argue that it may either overestimate or underestimate reliability (Hair et al., 2017). To address this issue, composite reliability (CR) has been proposed as an alternative measure. According to Garson (2016), CR offers a more accurate estimate of reliability compared to Cronbach's alpha. Both Cronbach's alpha and CR are recommended to have values between 0.70 and 0.95 to establish internal consistency, with CR values ranging from 0 to 1 (Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2021). While Cronbach's alpha remains widely used, the increasing preference for CR is due to its superior precision in estimating reliability.

3.8.4.3 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is a critical concept in studies aiming to determine the degree of correlation between measurements that evaluate the same construct (Hair et al., 2021). One of the most used indicators for evaluating convergent validity is the average variance extracted (AVE), which is used to verify the validity of the convergent relationship. The AVE is a measure of the extent to which a structure can account for the variation in its constituent elements and is typically expressed as a proportion or percentage. The generally accepted criterion for assessing convergent validity is that the AVE values must be greater than or equal to 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kock & Lynn, 2012; Hair et al., 2021). This means that the structure being measured is able to explain at least 50 percent of the normal variation in its elements (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2021). AVE values that fall below this threshold are considered inadequate for establishing convergent validity. Götz et al. (2010) explained that the failure for an AVE to meet the minimum criterion is mainly

due to the error variance is greater than the variance accounted for the respective construct. This implies that the measurement model is not accurately capturing the underlying construct and may be subject to various sources of bias and inconsistency. In addition to the AVE, other measures of convergent validity may include the outer loadings of the indicators, which reflect the extent to which each indicator measures the underlying construct.

3.8.4.4 Discriminant Validity

In the field of research, the concept of discriminant validity is essential to determine whether different constructs are distinct from one another. It is important to establish whether these constructs are theoretically unrelated to each other, or if there is any overlapping of measurement scales that may skew the data obtained from them. In order to evaluate this, the correlation strength between each construct and its corresponding metrics is examined (Hair et al., 2017, Hair et al., 2021). Discriminant validity is typically determined by the degree to which the measures of a given construct are not related to measures of other constructs, using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), It reflects the average of the monotrait-heteromethod correlations (Hair et al., 2017). The HTMT values are compared against a threshold of 0.85 or 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015) and inferential statistics are used to test the hypothesis that HTMT equals 1 (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). According to these suggested thresholds, the HTMT value should be below 0.85 or 0.9. For the inferential statistic method, the hypothesis that HTMT equals 1 should be rejected.

3.8.5 Structural Model

The structural model illustrates the relationships among the components of the research model. The purpose of evaluating the structural model is to assess the hypothesized

connections between the constructs and the model's predictive capability. This evaluation included estimating path coefficients, effect size f^2 , coefficient of determination R^2 , and predictive relevance Q^2 . The following sections will provide a more detailed examination of these criteria.

3.8.5.1 Path Coefficients

In order to assess the relationship between constructs, path coefficients are a commonly used metric (Hair et al., 2014, Hair et al., 2021). These coefficients, which can range from -1 to +1, reflect the estimated path relationships between constructs. A negative path coefficient indicates a negative relationship, while a positive path coefficient denotes a positive relationship. When a path coefficient is closer to -1, it suggests a strong negative relationship between the constructs. Conversely, when the path coefficient is closer to +1, there is a strong positive relationship between the constructs. A path coefficient of 0, on the other hand, indicates that there is no relationship between the constructs being evaluated. It is important to consider the sign and magnitude of path coefficients when interpreting the relationship between constructs, as it can provide valuable insights into the nature and strength of the associations under investigation.

3.8.5.2 Effect Size (f^2)

It is important to determine the extent to which an exogenous construct influences an endogenous construct, and this can be done by calculating its effect size (f^2). Effect size is a representation of the potential interactions between the structures, and it helps in understanding the magnitude of the impact that an external factor has on the endogenous structure. Reporting the magnitude of an effect is essential, as there are situations where the statistical significance of the interaction between an exogenous construct and an endogenous

construct may not be compelling enough for management to take action. Generally, effect sizes are categorized as high, medium, or low based on the calculated values. Specifically, effect sizes of 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 are typically regarded as high, medium, and low, respectively (Cohen, 1988; Hair et al., 2017; 2021). It is important to note that an impact size of 0 indicates that there is no influence of the exogenous structure on the endogenous structure, while a value of 1 indicates a complete influence.

3.8.5.3 Coefficients of Determination (R^2)

In the realm of modelling, the coefficients of determination, also known as R^2 , play a vital role in assessing the predictive ability of a model and the overall impact of exogenous variables on endogenous structures. As explained by Hair et al. (2017), R^2 is a measure of how much variation in the endogenous structure is explained by all the corresponding exogenous structures. The R^2 value varies between 0 and 1, where 0 denotes that the model is unable to predict the outcome, while 1 represents the ideal scenario where the model can accurately predict the future outcome. To interpret the significance of the R^2 coefficient, Falk and Miller (1992) proposed that it should be at least 0.10. A value less than 0.02 indicates that the combined influence of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variables is too weak to warrant any attention, and the model needs to be re-examined (Cohen, 1988; Kock, 2014). Furthermore, Chin (1998) proposed that an R^2 value of 0.19 should be considered unimportant, 0.33 as moderate, and 0.67 as significant. Similarly, the studies by Hair et al. (2017) and Hair et al. (2021) have recommended that R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 be considered as important, moderate, and low, respectively.

3.8.5.4 Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

The Stone-Geisser Q^2 value, obtained through the PLS blindfolding procedure, is the preferred metric for evaluating the research model's ability to predict outcomes accurately (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974; Kock, 2015). It is widely accepted that a model is considered to have predictive relevance if its Q^2 value is greater than zero ($Q^2 > 0$). A higher Q^2 value indicates that the model is more important for prediction (Hair et al., 2014). For example, Q^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent low, moderate, and high levels of predictive significance, respectively (Chin, 1998; Cohen, 1988; Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2017, 2021).

3.9 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter explored a variety of research methods utilized in this study. This chapter began with a discussion of the study's locations, data collection protocols, measurement item adaptation, and questionnaire development, followed by a pre-test. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.0 for Microsoft Windows and SmartPLS 4.0 were also utilised for this study's statistical analysis and software. In this study, SPSS 28.0 was used to analyse the demographic profiles of the respondents. On the other hand, SmartPLS 4.0 was utilised to do a two-step analysis, consisting of the PLS Algorithm for testing the measurement models and the bootstrapping process for evaluating the structural models. The results of this investigation are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data analysis. The collected data were analysed using two main software programs: the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28.0 and SmartPLS 4.0 (Ringle et al., 2024). SPSS 28.0 was employed to perform several key analyses, including (i) data screening to ensure the data were free from missing values and straight-lining issues, (ii) a full collinearity test to address common method bias (CMV), and (iii) the generation of descriptive statistics, particularly in relation to the demographic profile of the respondents. Following this, SmartPLS 4.0 was utilized to conduct the partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) estimation procedure, which was essential for testing the developed hypotheses.

4.2 Profile of Respondents

A total of 705 questionnaires were distributed to women holding managerial roles in private manufacturing organisations across four Malaysian states, which consists of Selangor, Johor, Penang, and Sarawak. This study employed purposive sampling to target women managers in these key industrial regions, as described in Chapter 3. Of the total distributed, 435 questionnaires were administered through softcopy (Google Form) and 270 through hardcopy distribution. Out of these, 325 questionnaires were returned, comprising 240 softcopy and 85 hardcopy responses, resulting in an overall response rate of 46.1%. The study focused on the major private manufacturing organisations operating in the four states, which collectively represent a substantial portion of Malaysia's industrial sector. Prior to

performing measurement and structural analyses, the collected data were screened using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28.0 to identify missing data, outliers, and straight-lining patterns. A total of 15 hardcopy questionnaires were excluded due to significant missing data and outlier-related issues, yielding a final usable sample of 310 respondents (240 softcopy; 70 hardcopy). Responses from all four states ensured geographical representation of women managers across Malaysia’s leading manufacturing hubs. The demographic profile of the respondents is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

		Respondents	
		(N=310)	
Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	25 to 30 years old	69	22.3
	31 to 40 years old	88	28.4
	41 to 50 years old	93	30.0
	51 to 60 years old	45	14.5
	Above 60 years old	15	4.8
Marital Status	Single	98	31.6
	Married	212	68.4
Ethnic	Malay	115	37.1
	Chinese	133	42.9
	Indian	30	9.7
	Others	32	10.3

Table 4.1 continued

Education Level	Diploma	22	7.1
	Degree or Professional	183	59.0
	Master	65	21.0
	PhD	40	12.9
Number of Children	None	10	3.2
	1	56	18.1
	2	89	28.7
	3	76	24.5
	4	43	13.9
	> 5	36	11.6
Managerial Positions	Chief Executive Officer/ Chief Operating Officer/ Chief Financial Officer/ Chief Marketing Officer	25	8.1
	General Manager/ Regional Manager/ Division Manager/ Branch Manager	123	39.7
	Supervisor/ Project Manager/ Functional Manager	162	52.3
Years of Employment with your Current Organizations	< 1 year	23	7.4
	1 to 5 years	99	31.9
	6 to 10 years	115	37.1
	11 to 15 years	52	16.8
	16 to 20 years	11	3.5
	> 20 years	10	3.2

Table 4.1 continued

Years of Managerial Experience	5 years	141	45.5
	6 to 10 years	116	37.4
	11 to 15 years	32	10.3
	16 to 20 years	11	3.5
	> 20 years	10	3.2
Manufacturing Industry Classifications	Food and beverage	14	4.5
	Chemicals and pharmaceuticals	56	18.1
	Electronics and electrical	111	35.8
	Aerospace and defence	5	1.6
	Textiles and apparel	9	2.9
	Machinery and equipment	81	26.1
	Automotive	34	11.0

Note: Some respondents who identified as single may have children (e.g., single parents, divorced, or widowed), reflecting individual interpretations of marital and family status rather than formal definitions.

Table 4.1 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic profile of the respondents (N=310) engaged in the study. The age distribution shows that the majority of respondents are between 31 to 50 years old, with the largest segment aged between 41 to 50 years old (30.0%), closely followed by those aged 31 to 40 years old (28.4%). Only a minority of the 15 respondents are above 60 years old (4.8%). In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents are married (68.4%), while single individuals account for 31.6% of the sample. Additionally, the ethnic breakdown is diverse, with Chinese respondents being the most prominent at 42.9%, trailed by Malays at 37.1%. Indians represent 9.7% of the

sample, while other ethnic groups, including Iban and Kadazan, collectively account for 10.3%. Besides, the majority (59.0%) hold a degree or professional qualification, while 21.0% have a Master's degree and 12.9% hold a PhD. Only 7.1% of respondents hold diplomas.

When looking at the number of children, the most common family size among respondents is two children, reported a total of 89 (28.7%) of the data collection. Those with three children make up 24.5%, while 18.1% have one child. A smaller percentage consists of respondents with no children (3.2%) and those with more than five children (11.6%). In terms of managerial roles, over half of the respondents hold positions such as Supervisors, Project Managers, or Functional Managers (52.3%), while 39.7% occupy higher positions like General Managers or Branch Managers, and 8.1% hold top executive roles like CEO or CFO. Concerning managerial experience, the largest group has at least five years of experience, totalling 141 (45.5%), while the respondents with 6 to 10 years of experience represent 37.4%. Additionally, 10.3% have 11 to 15 years of experience, and smaller percentages have 16 to 20 years (3.5%) or more than 20 years (3.2%). Finally, regarding industry classification, the electronics and electrical sector is the most represented, with 35.8% of respondents working in this field, followed by machinery and equipment (26.1%). Other sectors include chemicals and pharmaceuticals (18.1%), automotive (11.0%), food and beverage (4.5%), textiles and apparel (2.9%), and aerospace and defence (1.6%). This diverse representation indicates a broad spectrum of industry experience among the respondents.

Overall, this diverse and comprehensive demographic profile ensures that the findings of the present study are firmly grounded in a wide array of perspectives and

experiences among women in managerial positions within the private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia.

4.3 Common Method Variance (CMV)

Various statistical techniques have been developed to manage the influence of common method variance (CMV) in research design, including the Harman single-factor test, full collinearity test, and marker variance techniques (i.e., Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Podsakoff et al., 2003; Pavlou et al., 2007; Richardson et al., 2009; Kock & Lyn, 2012; Henseler et al., 2015; Kock et al., 2021). In this study, the full collinearity test was used to address the issue of common method variance (Kock, 2015). This test involved regressing a dependent variable, randomly generated, against all constructs in the model to check for collinearity, which could indicate potential method bias. The key indicator for this is the variance inflation factors (VIFs); if the values are below the critical threshold of 3.3, it suggests that collinearity, and thus common method bias, is not significantly affecting the results (Lim, 2024). As shown in Table 4.2, the VIF values were below 3.3, indicating no common method bias in this study.

Table 4.2: Full Collinearity Approach using Random Variable

Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness	Relationship Management	Digital Maturity	Task Sustainable Performance	Contextual Sustainable Performance
1.077	1.156	1.152	1.152	1.097	1.065	1.058

4.4 The Statistical Overview of the Variables

Before conducting the measurement and structural model analyses, a preliminary analysis, also referred to as data screening, was carried out to address potential issues of missing values and straight lining in the data. This step was essential to ensure the data's appropriateness for subsequent testing and hypothesis analysis. Initially, a frequencies test using SPSS 28.0 was performed, which involved descriptive statistics analysis to identify any missing values in the dataset. The results indicated that the data was devoid of any missing values, ensuring its completeness for subsequent analysis. Additionally, to check for the presence of straight lining, the researcher calculated the standard deviation. A standard deviation value of 0 indicates that respondents answered the questionnaire with the same value for all questions, which could compromise the data's reliability. Fortunately, the results showed that all standard deviation values were above 0, thus further affirming that the data did not suffer from the issue of straight lining. As a result of the rigorous data screening process, this study confidently proceeded with the subsequent measurement test and structural analyses, ensuring the accuracy and credibility of hypothesis testing.

In addition to the previous analyses, the researcher also calculated the arithmetic mean (AM), also known as the mean or average, to assess the central tendency of the data. This allowed for summarizing the average responses given by the respondents. Furthermore, standard deviation values were reported to measure the dispersion of the data. Table 4.3 presents the results of the descriptive statistics, specifically reporting the mean and standard deviation for each item.

The mean and standard deviation were analysed based on 310 valid responses, with all independent variables, moderator, and dependent variables rated on a 7-point Likert scale.

The findings revealed that the highest mean was observed for self-management 1 (SM1) with a score of 5.2323, indicating that, on average, the respondents rated self-management 1 as 5.2314. The standard deviation of self-management 1 was 1.21915, indicating that only a few respondents had divergent opinions about this aspect of self-management 1. In other words, the majority of respondents shared a relatively similar viewpoint on this variable.

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation

Respondents (N=310)					
Item(s)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Item(s)	Mean	Std. Deviation
SelfA1	4.6161	1.54890	DM1	4.5742	1.68353
SelfA2	4.4871	1.69087	DM2	4.0226	1.88920
SelfA3	4.7548	1.59222	DM3	4.0645	1.88050
SelfA4	4.6065	1.59893	DM4	3.8903	1.91593
SelfA5	4.5806	1.70615	DM5	3.8839	1.85023
SM1	5.2323	1.21915	DM6	4.5097	1.60044
SM2	5.1774	1.22704	DM7	4.9968	1.31582
SM3	5.0774	1.25430	DM8	5.0129	1.28716
SM4	4.5903	1.67889	STP1	4.8387	1.49426
SM5	4.7000	1.67902	STP2	4.7968	1.49670
SocialA1	4.7645	1.74026	STP3	4.8645	1.47724
SocialA2	4.8097	1.61282	STP4	4.8774	1.43843
SocialA3	4.7065	1.56446	SCP1	4.7129	1.59434
SocialA4	4.4419	1.65900	SCP2	5.0903	1.44082
SocialA5	4.6742	1.62713	SCP3	5.0419	1.43066

Table 4.3 continued

Item(s)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Item(s)	Mean	Std. Deviation
RM1	5.0613	1.34120	SCP4	5.0613	1.44347
RM2	5.1323	1.34330	SCP5	4.9742	1.53681
RM3	4.8968	1.39891	SCP6	4.9290	1.54170
RM4	4.5645	1.67623	SCP7	4.9839	1.45362
RM5	4.6226	1.69412	SCP8	4.9645	1.40343

Notes: Scale for independent variables, moderator and dependent variables used 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree; SelfA represents self-awareness, SM represents self-management, SocialA represents social awareness, RM represents relationship management, STP represents sustainable task performance and SCP represents sustainable contextual performance

4.4.1 Assessment of the Measurement Model

The research model for the present study as shown in Figure 4.1, demonstrated both directing and moderating relationship among the proposed constructs. The model consists of four independent variables (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and relationship management), two constructs (task-sustainable performance and sustainable contextual performance) representing the main dependent variables of sustainable job performance and a moderator variable – digital maturity (transformation management intensity).

The Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method was applied in this study because as it measures both the reflective and formative measurement models at once (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001) while a non-normal distributed data (Vinzi et al., 2010). The SmartPLS 4.0 was adopted to perform the Partial Least Square –

Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis. SmartPLS software is adopted because it is particularly well-suited for estimating models from an explanation-prediction perspective, enabling both an understanding of the assumed relationships in the model and the theoretical concepts under consideration (Hair & Sarstedt, 2021; Liengaard et al., 2021; Sarstedt & Danks, 2022; Ringle et al., 2023). The total row of data collected was about 310 (considered small) and the data is not normally distributed. Therefore, the PLS-SEM approach was used to perform the data analysis.

As shown in Figure 4.1, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to assess the model developed to check on the reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the scales (Thurstone, 1931). As was suggested by Chin (1998), the minimum outer loading for each of the items should be above 0.70 for it to be considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2010). However, Henseler et al. (2009) confirmed that the minimum accepted value for item loading is between 0.40 and 0.70. As noted by Gefen et al. (2000), item loadings should exceed 0.50. Composite reliability (CR) was then employed to evaluate the internal consistency of the construct. CR is deemed to be a better measure for internal consistency compared to Cronbach's alpha because it employs the standardized loadings of the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Memon & Rahman, 2014). As suggested by Hair et al. (2011), the minimum cut off point for CR should be 0.70 and above for it to be considered "modest". Lastly, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was also applied to assess the constructs. The acceptance for AVE value is 0.5 and above (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Thus, the criteria for the item loadings should be above 0.50, CR must exceed 0.70 and AVE of 0.50 and above is needed for the data to be considered acceptable in this research study. However, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), if the AVE value is below 0.50 but larger than 0.40, this would still be acceptable with the condition that the CR values must larger than 0.60.

The research followed the suggestion stated by Gefen et al. (2000), which is that item loading below 0.50 should be removed in order to ensure the internal consistency of the model is achieved before proceeding to the structural analysis. Based on the above criteria, the researcher evaluated the measurement model, where all the items' loadings passed the threshold value of 0.50, except items DM 7 and DM 8 under the construct of digital maturity, which found the items loadings were below 0.50. Table 4.4 summarizes the summary of construct reliability and validity.

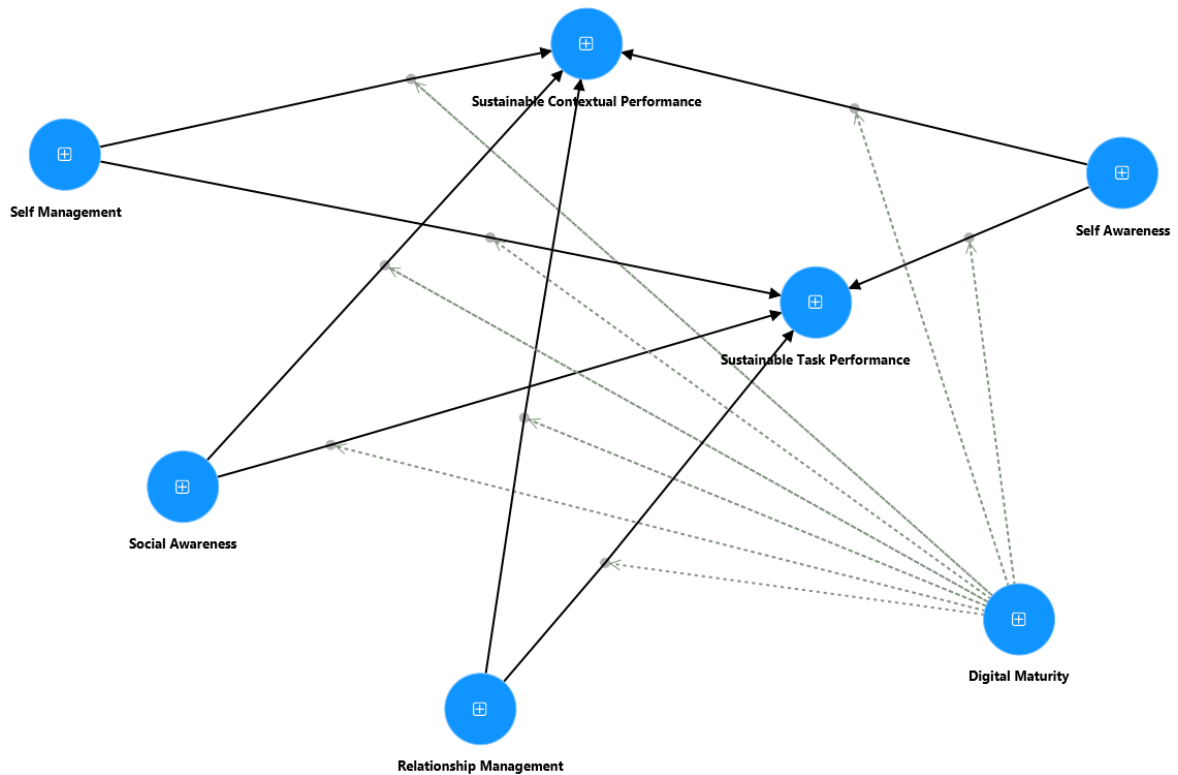


Figure 4.1: Research Model

Table 4.4: The Results of Measurement Model

Construct(s)	No of Items	Items Deleted	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Self- Awareness	5	0	SelfA1	0.870	0.739	0.934	0.912
			SelfA2	0.862			
			SelfA3	0.888			
			SelfA4	0.827			
			SelfA5	0.852			
Self- Management	5	0	SM1	0.825	0.606	0.884	0.837
			SM2	0.812			
			SM3	0.838			
			SM4	0.718			
			SM5	0.689			
Social Awareness	5	0	SocialA1	0.767	0.607	0.885	0.866
			SocialA2	0.704			
			SocialA3	0.821			
			SocialA4	0.879			
			SocialA5	0.711			
Relationship Management	5	0	RM1	0.819	0.598	0.881	0.833
			RM2	0.771			
			RM3	0.779			
			RM4	0.732			
			RM5	0.764			

Table 4.4 continued

Construct(s)	No of Items	Items Deleted	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Maturity	8	2	DM1	0.746	0.675	0.925	0.906
			DM2	0.880			
			DM3	0.874			
			DM4	0.877			
			DM5	0.852			
			DM6	0.678			
Sustainable Task Performance	4	0	STP1	0.829	0.686	0.897	0.846
			STP2	0.762			
			STP3	0.903			
			STP4	0.813			
Sustainable Contextual Performance	8	0	SCP1	0.675	0.605	0.924	0.909
			SCP2	0.826			
			SCP3	0.847			
			SCP4	0.810			
			SCP5	0.743			
			SCP6	0.845			
			SCP7	0.853			
			SCP8	0.581			

4.4.1.1 Loading and Cross Loading

To assess the model's internal consistency, the items' loading, and cross-loading were demonstrated, following the suggestions of Chin (2009) and Ab Hamid et al. (2017). Various

recommendations exist for achieving internal consistency. As proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), internal consistency should exceed 0.50 (Bagozzi et al., 1991), or preferably exceed 0.60 (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2006), or even go beyond 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hulland, 1999). In this study, the recommendation by Bagozzi et al. (1991) was adopted, requiring an item loading value of 0.50 to establish internal consistency. Refer to Table 4.5 for the presentation of loadings and cross-loadings of items across constructs. The values indicate successful attainment of internal consistency and confirmation of construct validity.

Table 4.5: Loadings and Cross Loadings

	SelfA	SM	SocialA	RM	DM	STP	SCP
SelfA1	0.870	0.101	-0.158	0.054	0.200	0.202	0.187
SelfA2	0.862	0.092	-0.133	0.039	0.203	0.238	0.215
SelfA3	0.888	0.121	-0.129	0.025	0.250	0.188	0.241
SelfA4	0.827	0.109	-0.097	-0.093	0.243	0.115	0.195
SelfA5	0.852	0.115	-0.082	-0.027	0.207	0.126	0.239
SM1	0.091	0.825	0.111	0.003	0.025	0.005	0.201
SM2	0.128	0.812	0.123	0.000	0.012	-0.024	0.163
SM3	0.066	0.838	0.143	-0.001	0.064	-0.044	0.188
SM4	0.085	0.718	0.270	0.034	0.284	-0.022	0.193
SM5	0.140	0.689	0.323	0.027	0.225	0.016	0.117

Table 4.5 continued

	SelfA	SM	SocialA	RM	DM	STP	SCP
SocialA1	-0.104	0.162	0.767	0.044	0.187	0.016	-0.040
SocialA2	-0.121	0.162	0.704	0.000	0.202	-0.002	-0.006
SocialA3	-0.062	0.131	0.821	0.071	0.176	0.093	-0.038
SocialA4	-0.158	0.258	0.879	0.214	0.269	0.110	-0.073
SocialA5	-0.150	0.179	0.711	0.136	0.125	0.009	-0.023
RM1	0.031	-0.077	0.121	0.819	0.113	0.261	-0.044
RM2	-0.004	-0.076	0.079	0.771	0.091	0.195	0.033
RM3	-0.001	-0.046	0.037	0.779	0.118	0.249	-0.086
RM4	-0.099	0.156	0.188	0.732	0.131	0.237	0.032
RM5	-0.123	0.121	0.233	0.764	0.107	0.193	-0.027
DM1	0.249	0.149	0.067	0.063	0.746	-0.003	0.223
DM2	0.193	0.105	0.239	0.156	0.880	-0.063	0.143
DM3	0.208	0.108	0.270	0.119	0.874	-0.090	0.089
DM4	0.214	0.130	0.266	0.138	0.877	-0.087	0.098
DM5	0.210	0.120	0.274	0.122	0.852	-0.096	0.140
DM6	0.097	0.093	0.341	0.231	0.678	0.014	0.050
STP1	0.082	0.019	0.227	0.320	0.074	0.829	-0.101
STP2	0.140	-0.011	0.016	0.215	-0.107	0.762	0.055
STP3	0.199	-0.033	0.040	0.260	-0.111	0.903	-0.045
STP4	0.249	-0.036	0.066	0.197	-0.076	0.813	0.079

Table 4.5 continued

	SelfA	SM	SocialA	RM	DM	STP	SCP
SCP1	0.065	0.003	-0.030	0.147	-0.003	0.307	0.675
SCP2	0.184	0.134	-0.019	-0.030	0.132	-0.004	0.826
SCP3	0.173	0.158	-0.013	-0.013	0.117	0.023	0.847
SCP4	0.308	0.154	-0.057	-0.048	0.178	0.032	0.810
SCP5	0.081	0.107	0.068	0.138	0.191	0.003	0.743
SCP6	0.180	0.307	-0.065	-0.065	0.150	-0.035	0.845
SCP7	0.199	0.240	-0.106	-0.082	0.119	-0.080	0.853
SCP8	0.215	0.074	-0.090	0.044	0.101	0.037	0.581

Note: SelfA represents self-awareness, SM represents self-management, SocialA represents social awareness, RM represents relationship management, STP represents sustainable task performance and SCP represents sustainable contextual performance.

4.4.1.2 Convergent Validity

As presented in Table 4.5 earlier, both composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to validate constructs in the proposed research model. The minimum values of AVE and CR need to be 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Rodgers & Pavlou, 2003) and 0.70 (Churchill, 1979; Chin, 2009) respectively to achieve convergent validity. It is important to achieve the minimum value of 0.50 and above for AVE because it indicates that the average for the total items explains a minimum 50% of a construct. However, if the AVE value is below 0.50 but larger than 0.40, this is still acceptable with the condition that the CR values must be larger than 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

In the present study, the AVE value computed for self-awareness was 0.739, self-management was 0.606, social awareness was 0.607, relationship management was 0.598 while digital maturity (transformation management intensity) was 0.675, followed by 0.686 for sustainable task performance, and 0.605 for sustainable contextual performance. In sum, all the CR and AVE values for each of the constructs have achieved a satisfactory level and meet the suggested minimum requirements. Therefore, the variables were validated, and the convergent validity was satisfied.

4.4.1.3 *t*-Value

The outcomes of *t*-values for constructs are displayed in Table 4.6. The rationale behind presenting the *t*-values for individual constructs lies in gauging the significance of each variable, as emphasized by Komiak & Benbasat (2006).

Table 4.6: Results of Model Constructs

Model Construct	Measurement Items	Loadings	<i>t</i>-value
Self-Awareness	SelfA1	0.870	51.241
	SelfA2	0.862	49.802
	SelfA3	0.888	64.498
	SelfA4	0.827	30.214
	SelfA5	0.852	32.755

Table 4.6 continued

Model Construct	Measurement Items	Loadings	<i>t</i>-value
Self-Management	SM1	0.825	12.638
	SM2	0.812	11.854
	SM3	0.838	12.542
	SM4	0.718	7.836
	SM5	0.689	7.125
Social Awareness	SocialA1	0.767	2.885
	SocialA2	0.704	2.576
	SocialA3	0.821	3.477
	SocialA4	0.879	3.728
	SocialA5	0.711	3.273
Relationship Management	RM1	0.819	17.064
	RM2	0.771	12.960
	RM3	0.779	18.009
	RM4	0.732	12.619
	RM5	0.764	13.992
Digital Maturity	DM1	0.746	6.572
	DM2	0.880	10.819
	DM3	0.874	10.242
	DM4	0.877	10.110
	DM5	0.852	9.887
	DM6	0.678	7.189

Table 4.6 continued

Model Construct	Measurement Items	Loadings	<i>t</i>-value
Sustainable Task Performance	STP1	0.829	20.747
	STP2	0.762	19.272
	STP3	0.903	59.360
	STP4	0.813	26.104
Sustainable Contextual Performance	SCP1	0.675	9.779
	SCP2	0.826	18.851
	SCP3	0.847	20.912
	SCP4	0.810	23.734
	SCP5	0.743	13.415
	SCP6	0.845	28.382
	SCP7	0.853	31.118
	SCP8	0.581	8.605

4.4.1.4 Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity was examined using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT), which reflects the average of the monotrait-heteromethod correlations (Hair et al., 2017). There are two methods to assess discriminant validity using HTMT: comparing the values with a threshold of either 0.85 or 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015) and using inferential statistics to test the hypothesis that HTMT equals 1 (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). According to the suggested thresholds, the HTMT value should be lower than 0.85 or 0.9. For the inferential statistic method, the hypothesis that HTMT equals 1 should be rejected.

As outlined in Table 4.7, the findings of the HTMT analysis were evaluated using the test criteria proposed by Henseler et al. (2015). All discriminant validity tests met the necessary conditions and supported the discriminant validity analysis between the two reflective constructs. The HTMT assessment indicated sufficient discriminant validity, with the highest HTMT value being 0.353, which is below the threshold value of 0.90 (Lim, 2024). Therefore, the measurement model demonstrated satisfactory construct validity.

Table 4.7: Discriminant Validity of Constructs

	SelfA	SM	SocialA	RM	DM	TSP	CSP
SelfA							
SM	0.150						
SocialA	0.164	0.273					
RM	0.093	0.155	0.183				
DM	0.262	0.178	0.313	0.191			
STP	0.224	0.079	0.111	0.352	0.130		
SCP	0.246	0.220	0.107	0.120	0.165	0.149	

Notes: SelfA represents self-awareness, SM represents self-management, SocialA represents social awareness, RM represents relationship management, STP represents sustainable task performance and SCP represents sustainable contextual performance.

4.4.1.5 Reliability Test

A reliability test was executed to confirm the consistency of the study's constructs, utilizing Cronbach's alpha as the measure of reliability (Cronbach, 1951; Nunally & Bernstein, 1978). The established minimum threshold for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70. As reflected in Table 4.8, the calculated Cronbach's alpha values were as follows: 0.912 for self-awareness, 0.837 for self-management, 0.866 for social awareness, 0.833 for

relationship management, 0.906 for digital maturity, 0.846 for sustainable task performance, and 0.909 for sustainable contextual performance. Collectively, all of the constructs surpassed the recommended minimum threshold of 0.70, ensuring their reliability.

Table 4.8: Results of Reliability Test

Model Construct	Measurement Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Loadings	Number of Items
Self-Awareness	SelfA1	0.912	0.827-0.888	5(5)
	SelfA2			
	SelfA3			
	SelfA4			
	SelfA5			
Self-Management	SM1	0.837	0.689-0.838	5(5)
	SM2			
	SM3			
	SM4			
	SM5			
Social Awareness	SocialA1	0.866	0.704-0.879	5(5)
	SocialA2			
	SocialA3			
	SocialA4			
	SocialA5			

Table 4.8 continued

Model Construct	Measurement Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Loadings	Number of Items
Relationship Management	RM1	0.833	0.732-0.819	5(5)
	RM2			
	RM3			
	RM4			
	RM5			
Digital Maturity	DM1	0.906	0.678-0.880	8(6)
	DM2			
	DM3			
	DM4			
	DM5			
	DM6			
Sustainable Task Performance	STP1	0.846	0.762-0.903	4(4)
	STP2			
	STP3			
	STP4			

Table 4.8 continued

Model Construct	Measurement Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Loadings	Number of Items
Sustainable Contextual Performance	SCP1	0.909	0.581-0.853	8(8)
	SCP2			
	SCP3			
	SCP4			
	SCP5			
	SCP6			
	SCP7			
	SCP8			

4.4.1.6 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

In this study, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was disclosed as a means of assessing the degree to which the model's presence effectively predicted the actual data points, categorized as substantial, moderate, or weak, in accordance with Cohen (1988) and Hair et al. (2012). The calculated R^2 values for sustainable job performance, sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance were 0.217 (small) and 0.201 (small) respectively. Refer to Table 4.9 for a comprehensive presentation of the R^2 values corresponding to each of the dependent variables.

Table 4.9: The R-squared Values (R^2)

Construct(s)	R-squared value
Sustainable task performance	0.217
Sustainable contextual performance	0.201

4.4.1.7 Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

To elucidate the predictive significance of the data, the Q^2 values corresponding to the dependent variables were provided, in line with the criteria that Q^2 should exceed zero, as outlined by Hair et al. (2019). In this context, all the Q^2 values fulfilled this criterion. Specifically, the Q^2 value for sustainable task performance was 0.170 and sustainable contextual performance was 0.122. A comprehensive representation of the Q^2 values for each of the dependent variables can be found in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: The Q-squared Values (Q^2)

Construct(s)	Q-squared value
Sustainable task performance	0.170
Sustainable contextual performance	0.122

4.5 Assessment of the Structural Model

Derived from the constructed research model, a set of 8 directional hypotheses along with 8 moderation hypotheses were formulated. The outcomes of the hypothesis testing are outlined in the subsequent sections.

4.5.1 Hypothesis Testing

In the preceding section, a confirmatory factor analysis was executed to validate the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model. The findings demonstrated that the model achieved satisfactory levels of validation, affirming that the collected data was suitable for subsequent structural analyses and hypothesis testing.

Various methodologies are at one's disposal for testing the developed hypotheses. These encompass the utilization of R^2 to elucidate the relationships between exogenous and endogenous factors, as well as the employment of the average variance accounted for (AVA) within the model. Additionally, regression weights, bootstrap critical ratios (t -values), and p -value statistics are also employed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; O'Cass, 2002; Cramer & Howitt, 2004). In the present study, hypotheses were tested using and reporting R^2 values, t -values, and p -value statistics. Generally, when conducting one-tailed hypothesis testing, a hypothesis garners support if the p -value statistic is < 0.05 for t -values exceeding 1.645, or if the p -value is < 0.01 for t -values surpassing 2.33 (Nunally & Bernstein 1978; Chin, 1998; O'Cass & Grace, 2003; Gelman et al., 2012), alongside individual R^2 values greater than 0.10 (Falk & Miller, 1992).

Furthermore, Table 4.11 shows the calculation and presentation of the effect size (f^2). The rationale behind reporting the effect size lies in quantifying the potency of each independent variable's impact on the dependent variable (Chin, 1998). The standard benchmarks categorize effect sizes as small ($f^2 \geq 0.02$, $r \approx 0.1$ to 0.3), medium ($f^2 \geq 0.15$, $r \approx 0.3$ to 0.5), or large ($f^2 \geq 0.35$, $r > 0.5$), offering a context to the statistical significance. (Cohen, 1988; Lim, 2024). As emphasized by Hair et al. (2017), it is pivotal to report both the effect size and t -values during hypothesis testing. This dual reporting underscores the

necessity to demonstrate not only statistically significant relationships between variables but also meaningful effect sizes, which should be at least 0.02 or higher to avoid inconsequential findings.

Lastly, the values of the variation inflation factor (VIF) were disclosed to assess the potential presence of multicollinearity among constructs. The findings indicated that VIF values should remain below 10 to mitigate issues related to multicollinearity (Bock et al., 2005).

4.5.2 Findings of Hypotheses Testing

Table 4.11 showcases the outcomes of hypothesis testing, while Figure 4.2 depicts the research model, including path coefficients, t-values, and p-value statistics.

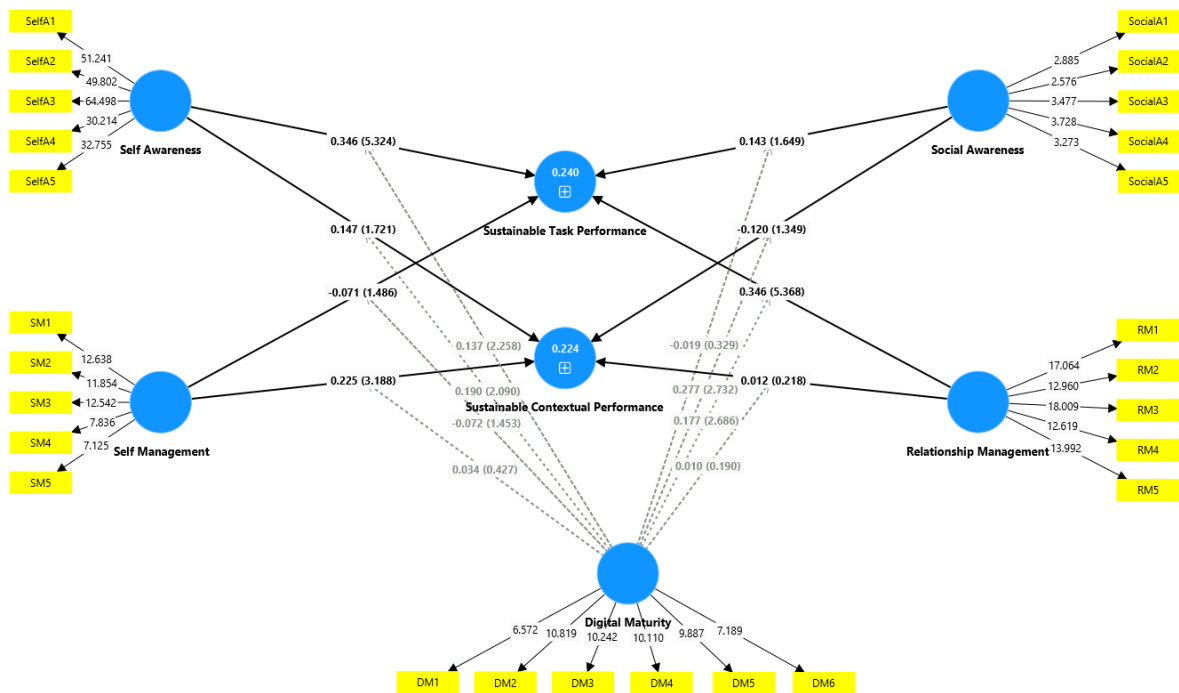


Figure 4.2: Research Model with Path Coefficient and P-Values

Table 4.11: Summary of Path Coefficients, t-Value, p-Value and Hypotheses Testing

H	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Decision	VIF	f^2
Direct Relationships							
H1	SelfA -> STP	0.346	5.324**	0.000**	Supported	1.243	0.127
H2	SelfA -> SCP	0.147	1.721*	0.043*	Supported	1.243	0.022
H3	SM -> STP	-0.071	1.486	0.069	Not Supported	1.092	0.006
H4	SM -> SCP	0.225	3.188**	0.001**	Supported	1.092	0.060
H5	SocialA -> STP	0.143	1.649*	0.050*	Supported	1.268	0.021
H6	SocialA -> SCP	-0.120	1.349	0.089	Not Supported	1.268	0.015
H7	RM -> STP	0.346	5.368**	0.000**	Supported	1.063	0.148
H8	RM -> SCP	-0.012	0.218	0.414	Not Supported	1.063	0.000
Moderating Effects of Digital Maturity							
H9	DM* SelfA -> STP	0.137	2.258*	0.012*	Supported	1.221	0.020
H10	DM* SelfA -> SCP	0.190	2.090*	0.018*	Supported	1.221	0.038
H11	DM* SM -> STP	-0.072	1.453	0.073	Not Supported	1.156	0.006
H12	DM* SM -> SCP	0.034	0.427	0.335	Not Supported	1.156	0.001
H13	DM* SocialA -> STP	-0.019	0.329	0.371	Not Supported	1.261	0.000

Table 4.11 continued

Moderating Effects of Digital Maturity									
H14	DM*	SocialA	->	0.277	2.732**	0.003**	Supported	1.261	0.083
		SCP							
H15	DM*	RM	->	0.177	2.686**	0.004**	Supported	1.056	0.040
		STP							
H16	DM*	RM	->	0.010	0.190	0.425	Not Supported	1.056	0.000
		SCP							

Note: $p < 0.01 = t > 2.33^{**}$; $p < 0.05 = t > 1.645^*$ (H = Hypothesis); *SelfA* represents self-awareness, *SM* represents self-management, *SocialA* represents social awareness, *RM* represents relationship management, *STP* represents sustainable task performance and *SCP* represents sustainable contextual performance.

4.5.2.1 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.1.1 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 1 examined the direct influence of self-awareness on sustainable task performance. The findings underscored the significant effect of self-awareness on sustainable task performance ($\beta = 0.346$; $p < 0.000$; $t = 5.324$). This outcome decisively supported H1. The corresponding effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 1 were 0.127 and 1.243 respectively. This result has indicated that women leaders with strong sense of self-awareness are those who understand their strength, limitations, and emotions, which are capable of performing sustainably. This finding highlights that when women leaders possess self-reflective capabilities, they can align their goals and behaviours with organizational expectations, leading to consistent, quality work performance.

4.5.2.1.2 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 2 examined the direct influence of self-awareness on sustainable contextual performance. The findings revealed a noteworthy effect of self-awareness on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = 0.147$; $p = 0.043$; $t = 1.721$), thereby providing support for H2. The associated effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 2 were determined to be 0.022 and 1.243, respectively. The positive relationship between self-awareness and sustainable contextual performance indicates that self-aware women leaders tend to engage in behaviours that promote a supportive and collaborative work environment. Women leaders are likely to demonstrate empathy, encourage teamwork, and maintain positive interpersonal relationships. It highlights the importance of incorporating self-awareness training into human resource and leadership frameworks to foster long-term employee engagement and positive organizational culture.

4.5.2.2 Self-Management and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.2.1 Self-Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 3 investigated the direct impact of self-management on sustainable task performance. The results demonstrated that self-management had no significant impact on sustainable task performance ($\beta = -0.071$; $p = 0.069$; $t = 1.486$); therefore, H3 was not supported. The corresponding effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) for H3 were 0.006 and 1.092, respectively. Although self-management is an important component of emotional intelligence, its insignificant relationship with task performance may indicate that managing one's emotions alone is insufficient to sustain performance without complementary social and contextual factors such as teamwork or organizational support. This limitation could stem from external pressures or organizational constraints that restrict

leaders' autonomy to apply self-regulation effectively. From a practical standpoint, organizations should establish supportive structures such as flexible work arrangements and stress management resources to enable leaders to exercise self-management in ways that enhance task performance over time.

4.5.2.2.2 Self-Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 4 examined the direct effect of self-management on sustainable contextual performance. The results indicated that self-management had a significant impact on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = 0.225$; $p = 0.001$; $t = 3.188$), thereby providing strong support for H4. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 4 were 0.060 and 1.092, respectively. This finding indicates that women leaders who effectively regulate their emotions and maintain composure under pressure tend to foster a more harmonious workplace climate, which in turn enhances contextual performance such as collaboration, supportiveness, and adaptability. Practically, leadership training that emphasizes emotional self-regulation can strengthen women leaders' capacity to sustain productive relationships and promote psychologically safe work environments.

4.5.2.3 Social Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.3.1 Social Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 5 explored the direct effect of social awareness on sustainable task performance. The findings showed that social awareness significantly influenced sustainable task performance ($\beta = 0.143$; $p = 0.050$; $t = 1.649$), thereby supporting H5. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 5 were found to be 0.021 and 1.268, respectively. The findings suggest that women leaders who demonstrate empathy and social perceptiveness are more capable of aligning team dynamics with organizational

objectives, thereby fostering consistent and sustainable task achievement. In practice, organizations can enhance long-term performance outcomes by cultivating empathy and social awareness through mentoring programs and collaborative learning initiatives.

4.5.2.3.2 Social Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 6 examined the direct effect of social awareness on sustainable contextual performance. The results indicated that social awareness did not have a significant impact on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = -0.120$; $p = 0.089$; $t = 1.349$), leading to the conclusion that H6 was not supported. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 6 were 0.015 and 1.268, respectively. This unsupported finding reflects that while social awareness enhances understanding of others' emotions, it may not directly translate into contextual behaviours unless supported by strong organizational culture or relational factors. Therefore, organizations should not only emphasize empathy but also create inclusive systems that empower leaders to act on their social awareness effectively.

4.5.2.4 Relationship Management and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.4.1 Relationship Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 7 examined the direct effect of relationship management on sustainable task performance. The findings indicated that relationship management significantly influenced sustainable task performance ($\beta = 0.346$; $p = 0.000$; $t = 5.368$), thus supporting H7. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 7 were 0.248 and 1.063, respectively. This finding highlights that women leaders who cultivate positive relationships and communicate effectively are more capable of sustaining productivity, teamwork, and morale in achieving long-term organizational objectives. In practical terms,

organizations should emphasize relational and communication competencies in leadership development programs to promote long-term task effectiveness, especially in digital and cross-functional environments.

4.5.2.4.2 Relationship Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 8 examined the direct effect of relationship management on sustainable contextual performance. The results showed that relationship management did not have a significant impact on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = -0.012$; $p = 0.414$; $t = 0.218$), indicating that H8 was not supported. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 8 were 0.000 and 1.063, respectively. This result leads to an understanding that while relationship management strengthens task-related collaboration, it may not directly predict broader contextual performance, possibly due to external constraints or differing social norms within the manufacturing sector. It practically suggests that women leaders should be encouraged to apply their relationship skills beyond immediate work demands to nurture supportive climates that strengthen long-term organizational well-being.

4.5.2.5 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.5.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 9 scrutinized the direct influence of self-awareness sustainable task performance. The findings highlighted a meaningful impact of self-awareness on sustainable task performance ($\beta = 0.137$; $p = 0.012$; $t = 2.258$), thereby solidifying the support for H9. The associated effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 9 were 0.020 and 1.221, respectively. In Figure 4.3, a simple slope graph elucidates the moderating effect. These statistical findings revealed that when digital maturity is high, the relationship

between self-awareness and sustainable task performance becomes more strengthened. In other words, digitally competent leaders are more capable of using technology to self-reflect, plan, and execute tasks effectively, thereby achieving sustainable performance outcomes. Practically, the capacity of women leaders needs to be continuously strengthened in terms of self-assessment, data-driven decision-making, and sustaining productivity in technologically advanced environments by investing more in digital literacy programs, especially in the new digital transition era.

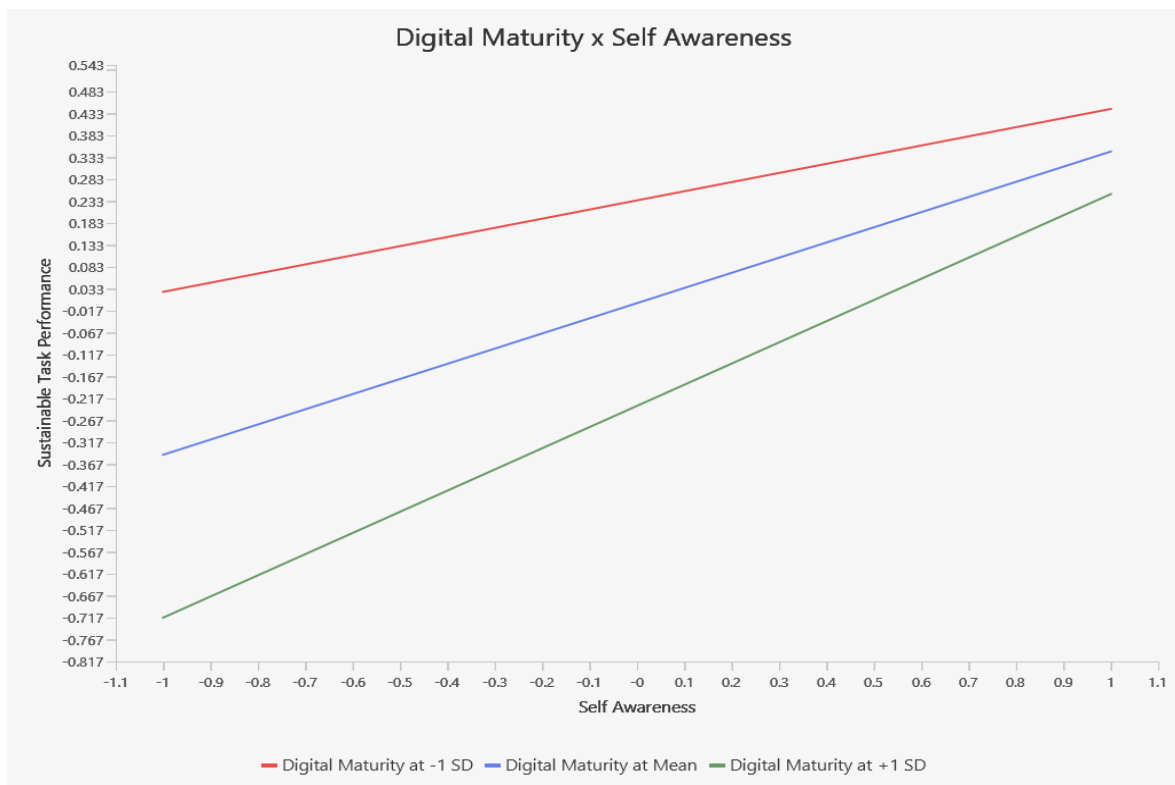


Figure 4.3: Simple Slope Graph for Moderating Effect for H9 (DM*SelfA*STP)

4.5.2.5.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 10 examined the direct effect of self-awareness on sustainable contextual performance. The results indicated that self-awareness had a significant impact on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = 0.190$; $p = 0.018$; $t = 2.090$), thus supporting H10.

The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for H10 were 0.038 and 1.221, respectively. Figure 4.4 presents the simple slope graph illustrating the moderating effect. The statistical findings demonstrated that when digital maturity is high, the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable contextual performance is enhanced. This result implies that women leaders who possess both self-awareness and high digital maturity are more capable of fostering positive workplace relationships, communication, and collaboration in a digitally enabled environment, contributing to sustained contextual performance. This positive result leads to an outcome where organizations should cultivate digital confidence among women leaders to ensure that heightened self-awareness translates into supportive, inclusive, and adaptive working environments.

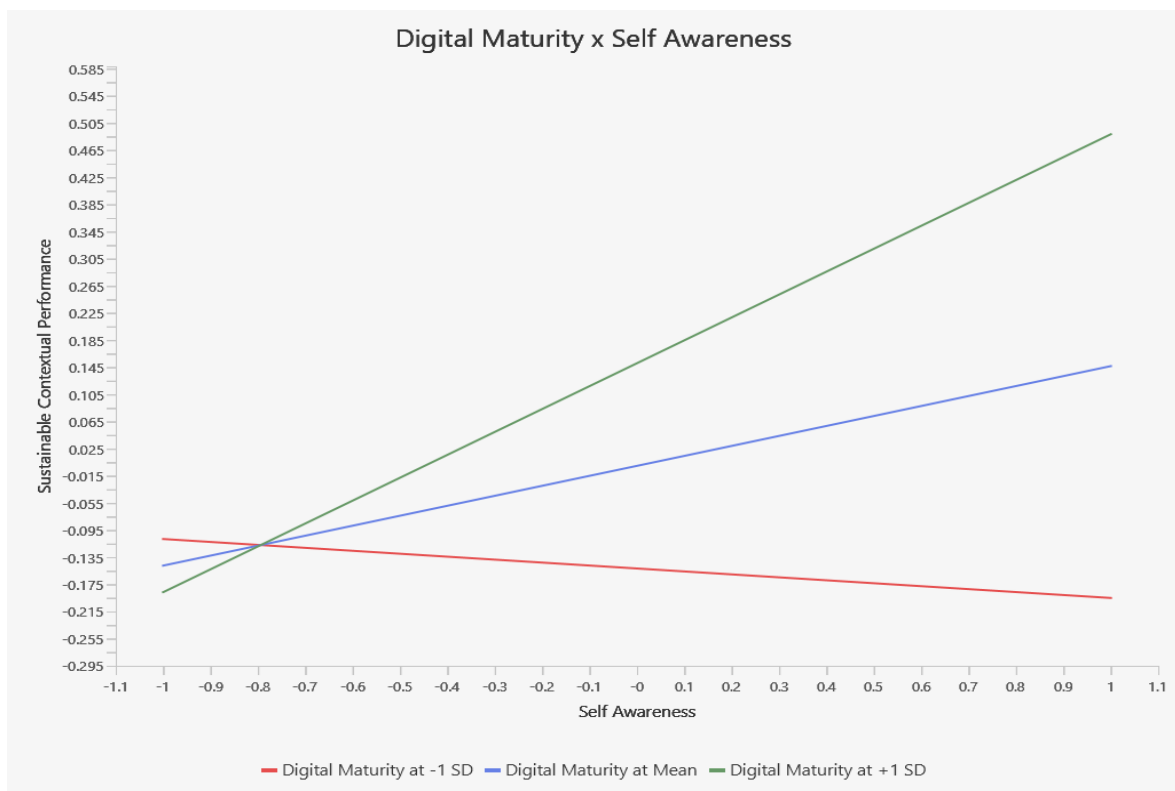


Figure 4.4: Simple Slope Graph for Moderating Effect for H10 (DM*SelfA*SCP)

4.5.2.6 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.6.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 11 examined the direct effect of self-management on sustainable task performance. The results indicated that self-management had a non-significant impact on sustainable task performance ($\beta = -0.072$; $p = 0.073$; $t = 1.453$); therefore, the findings did not offer strong support for H11. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 11 were recorded at 0.006 and 1.156, respectively. This non-significant result highlights that the ability to regulate one's emotions does not necessarily improve task performance through digital maturity. Women leaders may struggle to balance digital demands with emotional regulation, leading to digital fatigue or cognitive overload. Practically, this finding has highlighted the need for digital well-being initiatives and training on balancing technology use with emotional resilience to optimize task performance in digital workplaces.

4.5.2.6.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 12 examined the direct effect of self-management on sustainable contextual performance. The results indicated that self-management had no significant impact on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = 0.034$; $p = 0.335$; $t = 0.427$); thus, H12 was not supported. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for Hypothesis 12 were 0.001 and 1.156, respectively. While self-management contributes to emotional stability, digital maturity does not necessarily strengthen this effect in relation to contextual behaviours such as teamwork or cooperation. One possible reason is that increased digitalization can create emotional detachment or reduce face-to-face interactions, limiting

the expression of contextual support. Practically, women leaders should be trained to use digital tools that maintain human connection and teamwork specifically in virtual or hybrid settings, where they are digitally ready.

4.5.2.7 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.7.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 13 investigated the direct impact of social awareness on sustainable task performance. The results demonstrated that social awareness had no significant impact on sustainable task performance ($\beta = -0.019$; $p = 0.371$; $t = 0.329$); therefore, H13 was not supported. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for H13 were 0.000 and 1.261, respectively. From the result in direct effect of social awareness on sustainable task performance has indicated that social awareness helps leaders understand and empathize with others. On the other hand, digital maturity acts as the moderating role does not significantly strengthen its impact on task performance. It tells that empathy and social perception may not directly translate into task efficiency through digital means. Therefore, emotional intelligence development with digital skills training needs to be implemented to help women leaders to interpret non-verbal signals and maintain empathy even in technology-mediated communication.

4.5.2.7.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 14 investigated the direct impact of social awareness on sustainable contextual performance. The results demonstrated that social awareness had a significant impact on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = 0.277$; $p = 0.003$; $t = 2.732$); therefore, H14 was supported. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for H14 were

0.083 and 1.261, respectively. Figure 4.5 shows the simple slope graph on the moderating effect. The statistical results showed that digital maturity is high, and the relationship between social awareness and sustainable contextual performance is strengthened. This result highlights that digital maturity enhances leaders' capacity to apply social awareness in fostering cooperation, inclusivity, and mutual respect within the workplace. Digitally mature leaders can use communication technologies to build relationships and promote team cohesion across digital platforms. Practically, leadership development initiatives should combine social-emotional competencies with digital collaboration skills to sustain positive organizational behaviour in technologically dynamic contexts.

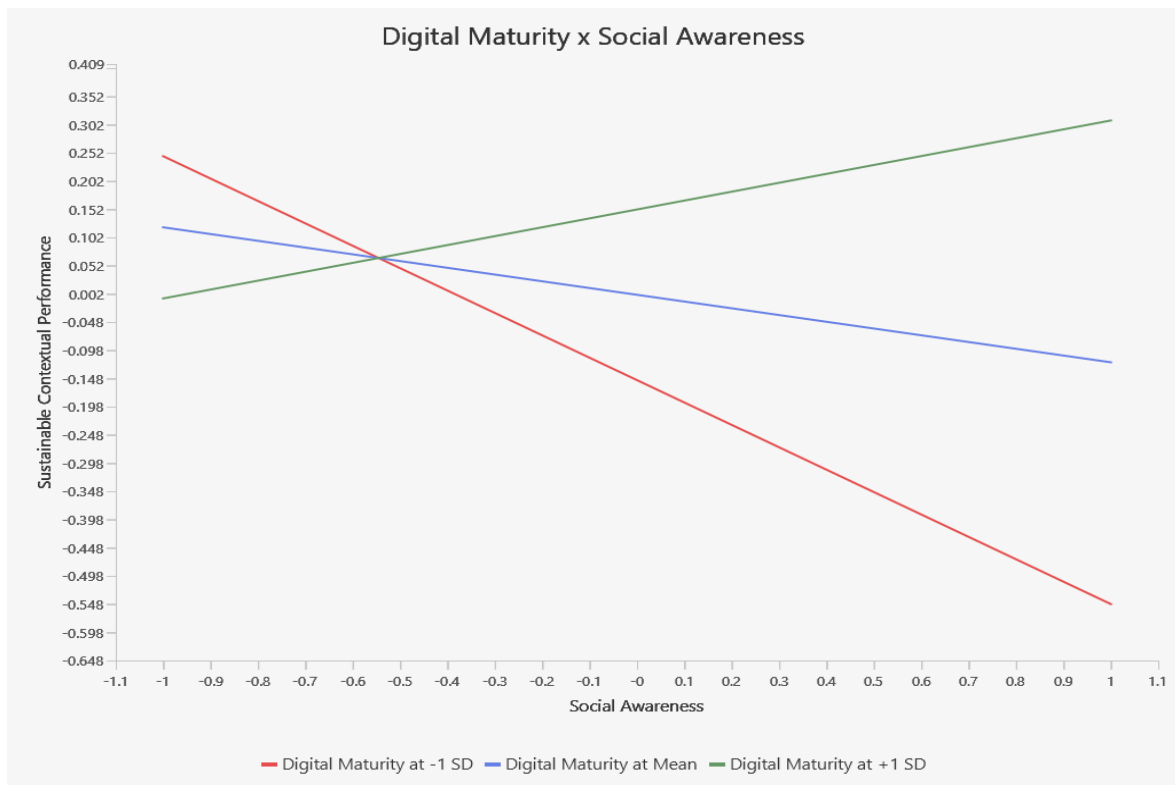


Figure 4.5: Simple Slope Graph for Moderating Effect for H14 (DM*SocialA*SCP)

4.5.2.8 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Job Performance

4.5.2.8.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Hypothesis 15 investigated the direct impact of relationship management on sustainable task performance. The results demonstrated that relationship management had a significant impact on sustainable task performance ($\beta = 0.177$; $p = 0.004$; $t = 2.686$); therefore, H15 was supported. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for H15 were 0.040 and 1.056, respectively. Figure 4.6 shows the simple slope graph on the moderating effect. The statistical results showed that digital maturity is high, the relationship between relationship management and sustainable task performance is strengthened. This result indicates that digital maturity enhances the positive influence of relationship management on task performance. Women leaders who can effectively navigate digital communication channels are more capable of maintaining collaboration, resolving conflicts, and coordinating tasks efficiently. Therefore, the need for hybrid leadership training that integrates interpersonal skills with digital communication proficiency needs to be emphasized to sustain productivity in digitally connected organizations.

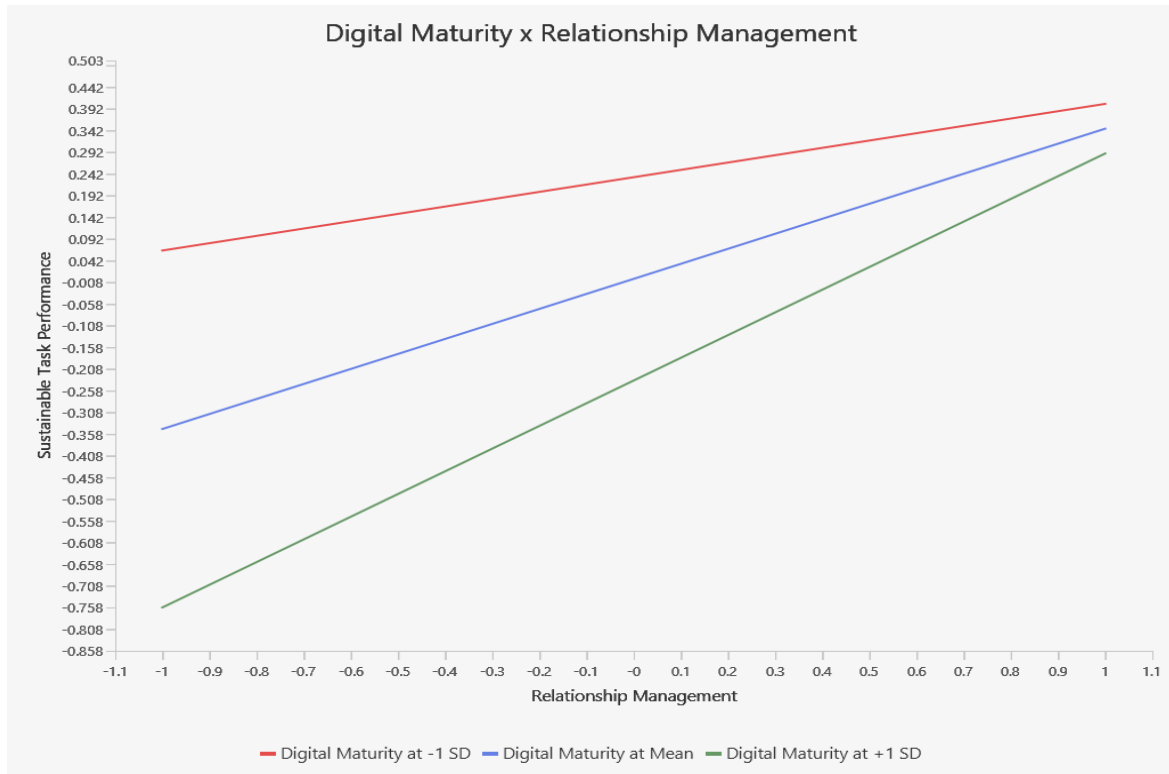


Figure 4.6: Simple Slope Graph for Moderating Effect for H15 (DM*RM*STP)

4.5.2.8.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Hypothesis 16 investigated the direct impact of relationship management on sustainable contextual performance. The results demonstrated that relationship management had no significant impact on sustainable contextual performance ($\beta = 0.010$; $p = 0.425$; $t = 0.190$); therefore, H16 was supported. The effect size and variation inflation factor (VIF) values for H16 were 0.000 and 1.056, respectively. This unsupported relationship highlights that digital maturity, by itself, may not be sufficient to enhance the relational dimension of contextual performance. Rather, this aspect of performance appears to depend more on factors such as organizational culture and intrinsic motivation than on digital proficiency. Thereby, organizations should prioritize cultivating supportive cultures and reinforcing team-oriented values that motivate leaders to engage in discretionary behaviours beyond their formal roles, irrespective of their level of digital maturity.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the hypotheses testing, supported by evidence of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The analysis provided empirical support for several hypothesized relationships between emotional intelligence dimensions, digital maturity, and sustainable job performance among women leaders in the Malaysian manufacturing sector, with nine hypotheses supported and seven not supported (as presented in Table 4.12). Overall, the findings revealed that self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management significantly influenced sustainable task performance, while self-awareness and self-management demonstrated a significant effect on sustainable contextual performance. These results highlight that women leaders who possess higher emotional intelligence, particularly in self-awareness and relationship management are more capable of maintaining consistent and effective performance outcomes.

The moderation analysis further underscored the important role of digital maturity. The findings indicated that digital maturity strengthened the relationships between emotional intelligence components (self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management) towards sustainable performance dimensions. This supported relationship highlights that as women leaders become more digitally competent, their ability to translate emotional intelligence into effective and sustainable work behaviors improves. In contrast, non-significant moderation effects for self-management highlight that emotional regulation operates more as personal competency than one enhanced through digital engagement. These findings have demonstrated high digital maturity among women leaders could strengthen the positive effects of emotional intelligence on both sustainable task and contextual performance. Therefore, organizations in the manufacturing sector should consider targeted

initiatives such as digital leadership training and emotional intelligence development programs to sustain workforce performance in the digital era.

Table 4.12: Summary of Supported and Unsupported Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Relationships	Decisions
H1	Self-Awareness → Sustainable Task Performance	Supported
H2	Self-Awareness → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Supported
H3	Self-Management → Sustainable Task Performance	Not Supported
H4	Self-Management → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Supported
H5	Social Awareness → Sustainable Task Performance	Supported
H6	Social Awareness → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Not Supported
H7	Relationship Management → Sustainable Task Performance	Supported
H8	Relationship Management → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Not Supported
H9	Digital Maturity* Self-Awareness → Sustainable Task Performance	Supported
H10	Digital Maturity* Self-Awareness → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Supported
H11	Digital Maturity* Self-Management → Sustainable Task Performance	Not Supported
H12	Digital Maturity* Self-Management → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Not Supported
H13	Digital Maturity* Social Awareness → Sustainable Task Performance	Not Supported
H14	Digital Maturity* Social Awareness → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Supported

Table 4.12 continued

H15	Digital Maturity* Relationship Management → Sustainable Task Performance	Supported
H16	Digital Maturity* Relationship Management → Sustainable Contextual Performance	Not Supported

The subsequent chapter will provide a detailed discussion and interpretation of these results. It will relate the findings to existing theories and prior empirical studies, elaborate on their practical and theoretical implications, highlight the study's contributions to the leadership and digital transformation literature, and acknowledge its limitations.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this study, the previous chapter comprehensively presented the outcomes of the analyses. Now, a summarized overview of the research objectives and questions are provided in the current chapter. The ensuing sections engage in discussions and justifications of the research findings. Furthermore, within this chapter, the focus is on highlighting the theoretical and practical consequences of the research. Attention is also be given in addressing the encountered limitations and proposing recommendations for future research.

5.2 The Recapitulation of the Study

Present study investigated the impact of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) on sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia. In this study, a total of five main objectives were outlined, the first objective was to investigate the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance). The second objective of this study was to examine the relationship between self-management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia. Subsequently, the third objective was to explore the relationship between social awareness and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance). The fourth objective was to determine

the relationship between relationship management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance). Lastly, the fifth objective was to explore the moderating impact of digital maturity in enhancing the relationship between emotional intelligence on sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance). To meet with these objectives, this study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- i. Does self-awareness affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance in private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?
- ii. Does self-management affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance in the private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?
- iii. Does social awareness affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance in the private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?
- iv. Does relationship management affect the sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance in the private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?
- v. Does digital maturity (i.e., transformation management intensity) has a positive moderating impact on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, as well as relationship management and sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) in the private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?

In this study, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management were selected as independent variables, whereas sustainable job performance with the sub-dimensions, consisting sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance was grouped as the dependent variables. Self-awareness was made up of the

dimensions on emotional recognition, self-reflection, self-confidence, and emotional awareness, whereas self-management was made up of the components of emotional regulation, stress management, self-control, and adaptability. Subsequently, social awareness was made up of the determinants of empathy, compassion, organizational awareness, and social perception, whereas relationship management was made up of communication, conflict resolution, influence and collaboration. These components are often used in research studies to assess emotional intelligence and its impact on personal and professional outcomes. On top of that, digital maturity (transformation management intensity) plays a role in moderating and enhancing the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. In this study, digital maturity referred to the level of readiness and capability that an organization possesses to effectively plan, execute, and sustain digital transformation initiatives. It measures how well leaders integrate digital technologies into strategy, culture, and operations to foster innovation and efficiency.

In the Malaysian manufacturing context, women leaders frequently face intense operational pressures, gendered expectations, and evolving digital transitions. Hence, this study also emphasizes the strategic psychological responses women leaders employ to navigate these realities, balancing emotional intelligence competencies with rational decision-making, resilience, and emotional attachment to their teams. Within Malaysia's expanding digital ecosystem, where automation and data-driven processes redefine leadership expectations, women managers increasingly rely on emotional self-regulation, reflective decision-making, and interpersonal adaptability to sustain both personal well-being and organizational performance. Understanding these behavioural dynamics provides insight into how emotional intelligence shapes strategic resilience and leadership effectiveness in digitally transforming industries.

To determine the reliability and validity of the data collected in supporting the hypotheses developed, a series of statistical analyses were performed. The findings are discussed in the following sections.

5.3 Discussion of the Findings

The studies on women's emotional intelligence (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) and its relationship with the development of sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) remain notably scarce in academic literature. This research therefore represents an important empirical contribution by highlighting how emotional intelligence functions among women leaders within Malaysia's manufacturing industry, a sector traditionally characterized by male dominance and performance-driven cultures. While prior research on emotional intelligence and leadership has primarily centred on male perspectives (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Kassotakis, 2024; Kark & Blatt, 2024), this study provides an alternative lens by focusing on women leaders who must navigate gendered expectations, implicit biases, and structural barriers (Stephenson et al., 2023; Heilman et al., 2024). Examining how emotional intelligence enhances their sustainable job performance not only extends theoretical understanding but also contextualizes leadership effectiveness within Malaysia's socio-cultural and industrial landscape.

Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and employ emotions effectively which has been emerged as a decisive factor influencing women leaders' professional sustainability (Hu et al., 2022; Saha et al., 2023). The present study confirms that emotional intelligence is not a singular construct but a multidimensional

capability encompassing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, which collectively empower leaders to navigate complex emotional and organizational challenges. Self-awareness, as the foundational element, plays a critical role in enabling women leaders to assess their strengths and limitations realistically, make informed decisions, and maintain equilibrium in the face of pressure (Kers-Visker, 2021; Kohn, 2024). These traits are particularly valuable in Malaysian workplaces, where female leaders must balance performance expectations with cultural norms that emphasize humility and relational harmony. The ability to reflect on personal actions and align them with professional values helps mitigate burnout and sustain consistent task performance (Matahela et al., 2023).

Beyond individual regulation, social awareness and relationship management also emerged as crucial dimensions of emotional intelligence influencing sustainable job performance. As highlighted by Keller et al. (2020) and Idris (2023), women leaders who exhibit strong social awareness are more attuned to the emotional needs of their teams, enabling them to foster collaboration and trust. This is particularly relevant in Malaysia's collectivist and hierarchical work environments, where relational understanding is often as important as technical competence. Relationship management further reinforces this dynamic by allowing leaders to resolve conflicts, offer support, and nurture a cooperative culture (Kisimbo et al., 2023). Such emotionally intelligent behaviours contribute not only to improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover but also to sustained individual and organizational performance. These findings align with Goleman's proposition that emotional intelligence is more predictive of leadership success than technical ability or IQ, as well as with empirical evidence linking emotional intelligence to higher job performance and

employee engagement (Bar-On, 2006; Boyatzis & Sala, 2004 Lee et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2024).

Critically, this study extends these insights by demonstrating how emotional intelligence interacts with digital maturity, a dimension that reflects an women leader's readiness and capability to adapt to technological transformation. Emotional intelligence and digital maturity are not competing attributes but mutually reinforcing competencies. As prior studies observed (Hoe, 2022; Karpunina et al., 2023), digital maturity can enhance emotional intelligence through exposure to new tools, learning systems, and communication platforms that require empathy-driven digital leadership. For Malaysian women leaders, this connection is particularly meaningful, especially those with high emotional intelligence are better positioned to navigate both the technical and human aspects of digital transformation, reducing resistance to change and supporting innovation (van Dun et al., 2023). This interplay enables women leaders to not only adopt technology effectively but also to humanize its implementation that bridge the emotional gap between systems and people.

Furthermore, this research supports Bond (2023) argument that leaders with digital maturity with emotionally intelligent leadership achieve higher sustainable performance. Malaysian women leaders who demonstrate both digital adaptability and relational sensitivity often cultivate inclusive digital environments that enhance team motivation and resilience. These competencies help sustain performance amid the volatility of technological change which is a vital insight for organizations under Malaysia Digital initiatives. The findings thus highlight that emotional intelligence is not an isolated psychological construct but a practical leadership asset that complements the nation's broader digital transformation agenda.

Overall, this study enriches the theoretical and practical understanding of how emotional intelligence contributes to sustainable job performance in Malaysia's manufacturing sector. By empirically validating 16 hypotheses, including both direct and moderating effects that provides a nuanced picture of how different emotional intelligence dimensions operate in real organizational contexts. Specifically, five direct relationships (H1, H2, H4, H5, H7) and four moderating relationships (H9, H10, H14, H15) were supported. The supported hypotheses confirm that women leaders' emotional intelligence, particularly self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management significantly enhances sustainable performance outcomes. Moreover, digital maturity strengthens certain emotional intelligence and performance relationships, highlighting the importance of aligning technological readiness with emotional capability.

From a critical perspective, these findings suggest that the success of Malaysian women leaders depends not only on individual emotional competence but also on organizational support systems that recognize and reward emotionally intelligent leadership. The findings challenge conventional leadership narratives by demonstrating that empathy, reflection, and adaptability are not "soft" traits but strategic competencies vital for sustaining performance in a digital economy. As such, this research provides a distinctive and contextually grounded contribution to the study of leadership and emotional intelligence, bridging psychological insight with Malaysia's evolving industrial realities. Table 5.1 displays an overview of the insights obtained from the findings.

Table 5.1: Overview of the Results of Hypotheses Testing

H	Relationships	Insights	Decisions
Direct Relationships			
H1	SelfA -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with past studies (Hasanah & Mujanah, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023). • Women leaders who are aware of their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses can set clear goals, monitor progress, seek feedback, and improve task quality and consistency. 	Supported
H2	SelfA -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with past studies (Newman & Nezlek, 2019; Coombes, 2023). • Women leaders who understand how their behaviours impact others foster trust, collaboration, and a positive organizational climate, supporting long-term relational performance. 	Supported
H3	SM -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with past study (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). • Emotional regulation and calmness, while valuable, may not translate into measurable task performance in Malaysian manufacturing environments that prioritize decisiveness and urgency. 	Unsupported

Table 5.1 continued

H	Relationships	Insights	Decisions
H4	SM -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align with past studies by Choerudin (2016) and Gkintoni et al. (2022). • Women leaders regulate emotions, maintain balance, resolve conflicts, and foster trust, contributing to long-term team cohesion. 	Supported
H5	SocialA -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports by past studies (Al-Fawaer & Alkhatib, 2020; Choudhury, 2021). • Women leaders understand team members' emotions, empathize with perspectives, communicate effectively, and build cohesive work environments. 	Supported
H6	SocialA -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with past studies (Varshney & Varshney, 2020; Wang & Li, 2022). • Excessive focus on relational harmony may reduce attention to strategic or operational priorities. 	Unsupported
H7	RM -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with past studies (Rath & Vasantha, 2017; Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019). • Women leaders foster trust, collaboration, problem-solving, and constructive conflict management. 	Supported

Table 5.1 continued

H	Relationships	Insights	Decisions
H8	RM -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with past studies by Bradberry (2023) and Wefald (2024). • Cultural and organizational factors, including the “double bind” for women leaders, may limit the effect of relational behaviours. 	Unsupported
Moderating Effects of Digital Maturity			
H9	DM* SelfA -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with past studies (Solberg et al., 2020; Carden et al., 2022). • Digitally ready women leaders leverage self-awareness to adapt behaviours, support innovation, and improve task outcomes. 	Supported
H10	DM* SelfA -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align with past study (Ismail et al., 2023). • Women leaders combine self-awareness with digital skills to foster collaboration, trust, and inclusiveness. 	Supported
H11	DM* SM -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with past studies (Colbert et al., 2016; Diller et al., 2020; Leesakul et al., 2022). • Digital readiness alone did not amplify self-management behaviours. 	Unsupported

Table 5.1 continued

H	Relationships	Insights	Decisions
H12	DM* SM -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with past studies (Arntz et al., 2016; Albuquerque et al., 2024). • Effective contextual performance requires both digital infrastructure and leadership alignment. 	Unsupported
H13	DM* SocialA -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with past study by Huda et al. (2023). • Human competencies like empathy and relational sensitivity are distinct from digital capabilities. 	Unsupported
H14	DM* SocialA -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with past studies by Mohammadi et al. (2023) and Rony et al., (2023). • Women leaders align technology adoption with team well-being and engagement. 	Supported
H15	DM* RM -> STP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align with past study by Gilli et al. (2024). • Women leaders integrate digital tools with relational skills to enhance engagement and task outcomes. 	Supported
H16	DM* RM -> SCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrasts with past studies (Hie, 2019; Veitas & Weinbaum, 2017). • Technology alone could not strengthen relational outcomes. • Leadership and cultural factors play a larger role. 	Unsupported

Note: (*H* = Hypothesis); *SelfA* represents self-awareness, *SM* represents self-management, *SocialA* represents social awareness, *RM* represents relationship management, *STP* represents sustainable task performance and *SCP* represents sustainable contextual performance.

5.3.1 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

Past studies have proven that self-awareness is a fundamental factor on sustainable job performance (Tyagi & Rastogi, 2022; Liu et al., 2023). Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings, this section aims to answer the first research question. Does self-awareness affect sustainable job performance in private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia? The discussion of the findings is further elaborated in the next few sections, specifically to discuss the results for H1 and H2.

5.3.1.1 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

The analysis revealed that self-awareness had a significant positive influence on sustainable task performance, confirming the proposed relationship in H1. This finding aligns with prior studies asserting that self-awareness forms the basis of effective leadership and consistent performance (Hasanah & Mujanah, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023; Alsalminy & Omrane, 2023). Women leaders who exhibit higher self-awareness tend to set clear goals, monitor their progress, and seek feedback, thereby improving the quality and sustainability of their task performance. Furthermore, being aware of one's own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations enhances judgment, communication, and decision-making (Christo-Baker & Wilbur, 2017; Akkaya, 2020; Jermstittiparset, 2020). Such awareness cultivates the ability to remain adaptable and consistent, particularly when managing complex responsibilities or team dynamics.

These insights hold particular relevance in Malaysian manufacturing organizations. Women leaders who operate in male-dominated and performance-driven settings where heightened self-awareness becomes a strategic tool for navigating workplace challenges. Rather than relying solely on authority, many use self-reflection to evaluate their leadership style, manage stress, and communicate with empathy. This ability to remain self-regulated enables women leaders to maintain focus on quality and productivity despite competing demands. As observed by TalentCorp (2023), Malaysian women who consistently engage in self-assessment and goal alignment demonstrate higher resilience and stability in their performance. Thus, self-awareness functions not only as a psychological strength but also as a practical competency that helps women leaders in Malaysia sustain effective task performance within complex industrial environments.

5.3.1.2 Self-Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

The statistical results further demonstrated a significant and positive association between self-awareness and sustainable contextual performance, supporting H2. This outcome reinforces previous findings that identify self-awareness as a key leadership trait influencing interpersonal effectiveness and team cohesion (Coombes, 2023; Newman & Nezlek, 2019; Budworth & Chummar, 2022). Leaders who are self-aware demonstrate a clearer understanding of how their behaviors affect others, enabling them to promote a positive organizational climate and long-term performance sustainability (Oba-Adenuga et al., 2022; Sutton & Crobach, 2022). By practicing mindfulness and reflection, women leaders can foster stronger relational bonds, build trust, and encourage open communication—factors that underpin contextual performance within organizations. This finding aligns with prior research asserting that self-awareness contributes to leadership

authenticity and helps sustain psychological well-being and motivation among subordinates (Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2023; Sebastian & Hühn, 2023).

In Malaysian workplaces, particularly in the manufacturing sector, women leaders usually need to balance organizational goals with the relational expectations of their teams, where collective harmony and mutual respect are highly valued. Those who demonstrate high self-awareness are better equipped to manage workplace dynamics, mediate conflicts, and maintain inclusivity across multicultural teams. Such behaviours are essential where interpersonal understanding and emotional regulation enhance collaboration and team morale. Moreover, women leaders who model reflective and empathetic leadership contribute to greater engagement and loyalty among subordinates, supporting the long-term sustainability of contextual performance. Therefore, self-awareness not only strengthens women leaders' internal clarity but also allows them to foster supportive environments that drive collective success in Malaysia's evolving industrial landscape.

5.3.2 Self-Management and Sustainable Job Performance

This section is dedicated to address the second research question: "Does self-management has an impact on task and sustainable contextual performance within the private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?" Subsequently, the subsequent sections will delve into a detailed discussion of the findings pertaining to hypotheses 3 (H3) and 4 (H4).

5.3.2.1 Self-Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Surprisingly, the results indicated that self-management did not have a significant relationship with sustainable task performance, leading to the rejection of H3. This finding contrasts with several earlier studies that regarded self-management as essential for

regulating emotions, exercising sound judgment, and making reflective decisions (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022). Women leaders who practise self-management often set goals and work diligently toward them (Yasir & Masjid, 2018; Kummelstedt, 2023), demonstrating calmness and balance in their leadership approach. Nevertheless, within the present study, such behaviours did not translate into measurable task performance outcomes. One possible reason is that the emphasis on emotional control and harmony may sometimes be perceived as a lack of assertiveness or urgency where qualities traditionally associated with performance in high-pressure organizational settings (Johnson & Johnson, 2024).

For women leaders in Malaysia's manufacturing sector, this outcome highlights that self-management is undervalued in environments that prize decisiveness and speed over emotional balance. Many women leaders strive to maintain harmony and stability among their teams, but these strengths may be overlooked when immediate productivity is prioritized. In addition, gendered expectations continue to shape perceptions of leadership behaviour (e.g., calmness and empathy), although important for sustainable leadership, are sometimes interpreted as passivity. Consequently, they must continuously negotiate between demonstrating authority and preserving workplace cohesion, which may explain why self-management, despite its intrinsic value, did not significantly predict sustainable task performance in this study.

5.3.2.2 Self-Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

The findings revealed that self-management had a significant positive relationship with sustainable contextual performance in Malaysia's manufacturing sector, thereby supporting H4. This result is consistent with earlier studies demonstrating that leaders who effectively manage their emotions play a crucial role in creating stable and cohesive

organizational environments (Choerudin, 2016; Mulyana et al., 2022). Leaders who regulate their emotions cultivate trust, empathy, and composure could sustain long-term team collaboration and mutual respect (Abuayyash et al., 2018). Similarly, Goleman (1995) emphasized that self-management forms the emotional foundation of leadership effectiveness, as it enhances a leader's capacity to influence others constructively. Women leaders with high self-management skills tend to maintain balance and patience, especially when navigating workplace challenges, thereby fostering a culture of consistency and emotional stability (Gkintoni et al., 2022; Richardson, 2022).

In Malaysia's manufacturing industry, these qualities are especially valuable given the sector's dynamic nature and hierarchical organizational structures. Women leaders repeatedly encounter complex interpersonal and operational demands that require emotional regulation and adaptability. Their ability to manage stress, resolve conflicts, and maintain morale contributes to positive relationships across departments. They as leaders who holds managerial positions have to demonstrate resilience in facing gender-based expectations by using emotional intelligence to lead through empathy and composure rather than authority alone. This balance not only enhances team cohesion but also ensures that sustainable contextual performance is maintained amid rapid industrial and technological change.

5.3.3 Social Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

This section is dedicated to addressing the third research question: "Does social awareness has an impact on task and sustainable contextual performance within private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?" Subsequently, the following sections will delve into a comprehensive discussion of the findings related to Hypotheses 5 (H5) and 6 (H6).

5.3.3.1 Social Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

The results indicated that social awareness had a significant and positive influence on sustainable task performance, providing support for H5. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing that emotional intelligence, particularly social awareness, enhances leaders' ability to sustain task performance and achieve organizational objectives (Al-Fawaeer & Alkhatib, 2020). Women leaders with high social awareness are better equipped to understand their team members' emotions, empathize with diverse perspectives, and manage interpersonal dynamics effectively (Choudhury, 2021). Such leaders tend to build cohesive and cooperative work environments, which directly contribute to sustained performance outcomes. Moreover, effective communication as an integral component of social awareness has been shown to foster team cohesion, engagement, and long-term productivity (Byrd, 2023). These attributes collectively support an environment conducive to sustainable task performance.

Within the Malaysian manufacturing context, social awareness enables women leaders to navigate multi-ethnic and gender-diverse workplaces where interpersonal harmony is highly valued. Their ability to empathize and communicate across hierarchical and cultural boundaries strengthens collaboration and enhances task efficiency. Unlike in more individualistic cultures, Malaysian organizations often prize relational sensitivity and mutual respect, which socially aware women leaders naturally embody. By understanding subtle workplace dynamics and maintaining inclusiveness, these leaders reinforce trust and alignment that sustain high-quality task performance in the long run.

5.3.3.2 Social Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Unexpectedly, the analysis showed that social awareness did not have a significant relationship with sustainable contextual performance, leading to the rejection of H6. This outcome diverges from several earlier studies that associated social awareness with stronger internal social capital, collaboration, and interdependence within organizations (Varshney & Varshney, 2020; Wang & Li, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Although women leaders with high social awareness are typically skilled in fostering empathy, cooperation, and trust, these qualities did not appear to translate directly into measurable contextual performance in the current study. One possible explanation is that an excessive focus on emotional dynamics and relational harmony may unintentionally divert attention from strategic objectives or operational priorities essential for contextual sustainability (Gabriel et al., 2023).

This result may also reflect the cultural and structural realities of leadership especially in the Malaysian manufacturing environment. Women leaders often emphasize empathy and consensus-building to maintain workplace harmony, yet these relational efforts may not always be recognized in performance evaluations that prioritize quantifiable outcomes such as efficiency and productivity. Additionally, organizational hierarchies and gender norms may limit the visibility of their socially driven contributions. As a result, while women leaders continue to play a vital role in maintaining team morale and social balance, such efforts might not be adequately captured through formal indicators of contextual performance.

5.3.4 Relationship Management and Sustainable Job Performance

This section is devoted to addressing the fourth research question: "Does relationship management have an impact on task and sustainable contextual performance within the

private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?" Subsequently, the forthcoming sections will provide an in-depth discussion of the findings pertaining to hypotheses 7 (H7) and 8 (H8).

5.3.4.1 Relationship Management and Sustainable Task Performance

The results indicated that relationship management had a positive and significant effect on sustainable task performance, thereby supporting H7. This finding is consistent with prior studies that have emphasized relationship management as a critical leadership competency influencing long-term organizational outcomes (Rath & Vasantha, 2017; Hadiwijaya & Hutasoit, 2017). Leaders who excel in managing relationships tend to foster collaboration, problem-solving, and mutual trust that directly sustain individual and team performance (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019; Foster & McCloughen, 2020; Gandhi et al., 2022). Furthermore, relationship management forms a central component of emotional intelligence, as it involves the ability to inspire, influence, and support others while managing conflict constructively (Wefald, 2024). Women leaders with strong relationship management skills often adapt quickly to change and maintain productive work climates, enhancing overall task sustainability (Madi Odeh et al., 2023).

An effective relationship management plays a particularly strategic role for women leaders navigating complex hierarchies and cross-functional teams, especially in complex dynamic environment. Their interpersonal sensitivity and communication skills enable them to bridge departmental silos and create cohesive, goal-oriented teams. In a culture that values harmony and respect, these women often cultivate trust-based networks that enhance collaboration and reduce workplace friction. As a result, their relationship management skills not only sustain high task performance but also contribute to building resilient organizational

systems capable of adapting to industrial and technological changes, especially in manufacturing industry.

5.3.4.2 Relationship Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

The findings revealed that relationship management did not have a significant relationship with sustainable contextual performance, resulting in the rejection of H8. This outcome contrasts with the expectation that relationship management through effective communication, influence, and conflict resolution would enhance contextual sustainability. Past studies have acknowledged that assertive communication and emotional intelligence are integral to effective relationship management (Bradberry, 2023). However, in practice, these traits can be interpreted differently depending on organizational and cultural settings. Women leaders often face the “double bind,” where being assertive may invite criticism, yet being too accommodating can be perceived as weak (Weatherspoon et al., 2023; Riley, 2023). Consequently, such conflicting expectations may have constrained the observable link between relationship management and contextual performance within this study.

Additionally, women leaders who worked within traditional, male-dominated hierarchies where assertiveness can be misread as non-conformity. To avoid negative perceptions, many adopt a more diplomatic communication style, which, while fostering harmony, may limit their ability to assert influence or drive change decisively. Moreover, the industry’s strong focus on technical competencies often overshadows relational leadership attributes. As a result, women leaders’ contributions in maintaining social balance and employee engagement are the key aspects of contextual sustainability and may be underrecognized in formal performance indicators.

5.3.5 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

This section aims to answer the fifth research question: Does digital maturity have a positive moderating effect on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management towards sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) among private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia? In this section, the discussion is focused on the moderating role of digital maturity to enhance the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable job performance which consists of sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance, and is presented in the following hypotheses developed, namely H9 and H10.

5.3.5.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

The analysis for H9 demonstrated that digital maturity significantly moderated the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable task performance. This finding reinforces prior research suggesting that leaders' digital readiness enhances their capacity to leverage self-awareness in navigating technology-driven work environments (Solberg et al., 2020). Self-awareness allows leaders to evaluate their digital mindset and adapt behaviours that support innovation, flexibility, and effective decision-making (Grönfors, 2023; Carden et al., 2022). When integrated with a digitally mature organizational culture, such awareness contributes to stronger leadership performance and improved task sustainability (Dierdorff & Rubin, 2015; London et al., 2023). Moreover, women leaders who are self-aware of their digital competencies are better positioned to lead transformation initiatives and manage technology adoption effectively (Adeniyi et al., 2024; Vivilaki et al., 2021).

Within the Malaysian manufacturing sector, this interaction between self-awareness and digital maturity carries practical significance where many women leaders have had to

adapt quickly to the demands of Industry 5.0, balancing traditional management practices with new digital tools and processes. Their ability to assess personal readiness and understand digital trends enables them to make informed decisions and maintain consistent task performance amid change. In workplaces where digital transformation is uneven, such self-awareness empowers women leaders to bridge skill gaps and guide their teams with confidence, contributing to both operational efficiency and long-term task sustainability.

5.3.5.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

A closer examination of the findings revealed that digital maturity strengthened the relationship between self-awareness and sustainable contextual performance, thereby supporting H10. This outcome underscores the importance of digital capability as a complementary factor to emotional intelligence in sustaining organizational relationships and culture. Prior studies have emphasized that leaders who are self-aware are more open to digital transformation and capable of reframing their mindsets to adapt to emerging technological changes (Ismail et al., 2023). Digital maturity, defined by the ability to integrate digital tools and skills into leadership practices, enhances collaboration and innovation within the organization (Awdziej et al., 2023). When leaders combine self-awareness with digital fluency, they are better able to create inclusive and adaptive environments that promote long-term contextual sustainability (Zapata et al., 2020; Bozkuş, 2023; Philip, 2021).

Where digital transformation is still evolving, women leaders who possess both self-awareness and digital maturity often stand out as change enablers. Their reflective understanding of personal strengths allows them to embrace technological transitions with confidence, fostering trust and open communication across diverse teams. Organizations that

empower such leaders through digital training and tools not only enhance leadership effectiveness but also reinforce a culture of adaptability and inclusiveness. This relationship between emotional intelligence and digital maturity thus contributes to sustained contextual performance in Malaysia's rapidly modernizing industrial landscape.

5.3.6 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Job Performance

This section aims to answer the fifth research question: Does digital maturity has a positive moderating effect on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management towards sustainable job performance of the private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia? However, the discussion of the results presented in this section is specifically focused on the role of digital maturity to enhance the relationship between self-management to sustainable job performance (i.e., sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) and are presented in two hypotheses developed, namely, H11 and H12.

5.3.6.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Task Performance

The findings for H11 revealed that digital maturity did not moderate the relationship between self-management and sustainable task performance, indicating that the anticipated interaction effect was not supported. This result diverges from prior expectations that digital maturity would strengthen leaders' capacity to translate self-management skills into improved performance outcomes. While self-management involves regulating emotions, exercising sound judgment, and making reflective decisions (Gómez-Leal et al., 2022), the lack of significance may suggest that digital transformation alone does not automatically enhance these behavioural competencies. Previous scholars have highlighted that digital

maturity requires not only technological readiness but also training and awareness to fully align leadership practices with evolving work demands (Colbert et al., 2016; Diller et al., 2020; Leesakul et al., 2022). Resistance to change, insufficient digital literacy, and the absence of supportive organizational cultures may have limited the moderating role of digital maturity in this study (Harlan, 2020; Salem et al., 2023).

This finding reflects the challenges women leaders face in integrating emotional intelligence with digital transformation initiatives. Many manufacturing firms are still transitioning towards digitalization, often without comprehensive training or inclusive leadership development programs. As a result, women leaders may find it difficult to apply self-management strategies effectively while adapting to new technologies or performance systems. Furthermore, workplace cultures that prioritize operational outcomes over emotional awareness may hinder the visible impact of self-management on task performance. These insights highlight the need for Malaysian organizations to complement digital initiatives with leadership support systems that emphasize both technological competence and emotional intelligence.

5.3.6.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Self-Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

The results for H12 showed that digital maturity did not moderate the relationship between self-management and sustainable contextual performance, leading to the rejection of this hypothesis. This outcome contrasts with prior studies suggesting that digital maturity enhances leaders' ability to regulate emotions and manage relationships effectively in a technology-driven environment (Arntz et al., 2016; Albuquerque et al., 2024). Although self-management remains an essential skill for maintaining stability and emotional control at work (Singh et al., 2022), the findings imply that digital readiness alone may not strengthen

its influence on contextual performance. As previous scholars noted, successful digital transformation requires both technological infrastructure and human adaptability, including leadership that integrates emotional intelligence with change management (Jogulu & Franken, 2023). Without this holistic alignment, digital maturity may fail to amplify the behavioural benefits of self-management.

The result of this study reflects the ongoing struggle to balance technological adaptation with people-oriented leadership. Many women leaders face structural and cultural barriers that limit their ability to integrate emotional regulation with digital initiatives. While they excel in maintaining team harmony and empathy, organizational systems may prioritize operational efficiency and technical metrics over relational aspects of leadership. Consequently, the potential interaction between self-management and digital maturity remains underdeveloped. To address this gap, Malaysian firms should invest in leadership programs that combine digital training with emotional intelligence development, enabling women leaders to translate self-management into stronger contextual and relational performance outcomes.

5.3.7 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Job Performance

This section is dedicated to addressing the fifth research question: Does digital maturity exert a positive moderating influence on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management towards sustainable job performance in private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia? Nonetheless, the discussion primarily concentrates on the impact of digital maturity on augmenting the relationship between social awareness and sustainable job performance. To this end, we have formulated two hypotheses, namely H13 and H14, which focus on the role of digital maturity in enhancing

the relationship between social awareness and sustainable job performance, encompassing both sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance.

5.3.7.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Task Performance

Contrary to expectations, the analysis indicated that digital maturity did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between social awareness and sustainable task performance, resulting in the rejection of H13. This finding suggests that, although social awareness contributes to understanding and managing interpersonal dynamics, its impact may not be strengthened by digital maturity within the current organizational settings. Previous studies have highlighted that digital maturity reflects an organization's capability to leverage technology for performance improvement (Boston Consulting Group, 2023), while social awareness remains a distinctly human competency centred on empathy and communication (Huda et al., 2023). The lack of a significant moderating effect may therefore indicate that digital advancements, by themselves, do not necessarily enhance interpersonal sensitivity or social perception within the workplace. Organizational resistance to change and rigid cultural practices may also hinder the integration of digital tools into relational leadership processes (Martínez-Peláez et al., 2023).

For Malaysian women leaders, this outcome may reflect the challenge of balancing technological adoption with the relational expectations inherent in local workplace culture. Many leaders in the manufacturing sector still rely on face-to-face interactions to manage relationships and build trust, limiting the extent to which digital tools influence their leadership behaviours. Furthermore, women leaders often shoulder the dual burden of achieving operational targets while maintaining social harmony, leaving limited space to experiment with digital solutions for relational engagement. As such, the absence of

moderation could imply that, in Malaysia's manufacturing context, human connection and empathy remain more decisive factors for sustaining task performance than technological readiness.

5.3.7.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Social Awareness and Sustainable Contextual Performance

The findings revealed that digital maturity significantly moderated the relationship between social awareness and sustainable contextual performance, thereby supporting H14. This result highlights that when organizations achieve higher levels of digital maturity, women leaders' social awareness becomes a more powerful driver of contextual sustainability. Past studies have affirmed that digital maturity serves as a strategic lens to evaluate a company's digital evolution and its capacity to leverage technologies for efficiency and innovation (Senadjki et al., 2024; Kane, 2019; Robertson et al., 2021). Within this landscape, socially aware women leaders, as noted by Mohammadi et al. (2023) and Rony et al. (2023), play an essential role in humanizing digital transformation by ensuring that technological changes are aligned with employees' emotional needs and well-being. Such leaders are capable of understanding both the technological and human dimensions of change, fostering trust and collaboration that strengthen sustainable contextual outcomes.

As digital transformation accelerates through national initiatives such as MyDigital Blueprint (2021), women leaders increasingly find themselves leading hybrid teams and managing cross-functional collaboration through digital platforms. Their ability to empathize, listen, and adapt communication styles through virtual environments enhances team inclusiveness and engagement. This finding suggests that digital maturity does not replace human connection; instead, it amplifies the impact of social awareness by providing women leaders with better tools for communication and collaboration. Hence, organizations

that combine technological readiness with emotionally intelligent leadership are more likely to achieve sustainable contextual performance with a balance that is especially vital for Malaysia's rapidly digitalizing industrial sector.

5.3.8 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Job Performance

This section is focused on exploring the fifth research question: "Does digital maturity play a beneficial moderating role in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management towards sustainable job performance in private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia?" However, our discussion primarily emphasizes the influence of digital maturity on strengthening the connection between relationship management and sustainable job performance. Accordingly, two hypotheses have been formulated, namely H15 and H16, which centre on digital maturity's role in enhancing the association between relationship management and sustainable job performance, encompassing both task and sustainable contextual performance.

5.3.8.1 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Task Performance

Analysis of the results for H15 demonstrated that digital maturity significantly moderated the relationship between relationship management and sustainable task performance, confirming the proposed hypothesis. This implies that in more digitally mature organizations, the ability of women leaders to manage relationships effectively becomes an even stronger determinant of sustained task success. Relationship management, as emphasized by Rath and Vasantha (2017), plays a crucial role in shaping organizational outcomes by fostering trust, cooperation, and open communication. Likewise, Gilli et al. (2024) and Jarrahi et al. (2023) have observed that women leaders skilled in emotional

intelligence can integrate technology with human collaboration, cultivating adaptive and motivated teams. Digital maturity, therefore, enhances this process by enabling leaders to use data-driven insights and digital communication tools to maintain engagement and monitor performance effectively.

These findings resonate strongly with ongoing digitalization efforts under the National Cloud Computing Policy (2025) and the MyDigital (2025). Many women leaders now lead teams that depend on digital platforms for coordination, workflow tracking, and performance evaluation. Their ability to balance relational sensitivity with digital competence is critical in managing employees' morale and productivity across hybrid and technology-driven environments. Furthermore, women leaders often leverage digital tools not merely for efficiency but to sustain meaningful workplace relationships which are aligning with Malaysia's collectivist cultural values that emphasize harmony and mutual respect. Hence, when digital maturity aligns with relationship-focused leadership, women leaders can enhance team trust, agility, and sustainable task performance in ways that support both technological progress and human connection.

5.3.8.2 Digital Maturity Moderates Relationship Management and Sustainable Contextual Performance

Contrary to expectations, the findings for H16 revealed that digital maturity did not moderate the relationship between relationship management and sustainable contextual performance. This outcome diverges from earlier studies suggesting that effective digital transformation relies heavily on leaders' relational and emotional intelligence skills (Hie, 2019; Veitas & Weinbaum, 2017; Nuraini, 2023). While past literature (Rigby, 2015; Doctor et al., 2023) emphasized that digital maturity should strengthen leaders' ability to communicate transparently and build trust, the absence of a significant effect here implies

that digital advancement alone may not automatically translate into enhanced relational dynamics. It is possible that leadership competencies and cultural factors play a more decisive role than digital readiness in shaping contextual sustainability.

This finding reflects the reality that many organizations remain in transitional stages of digital adoption, where technology implementation often precedes cultural adaptation. Women leaders, despite their strong interpersonal capabilities, may face institutional barriers such as hierarchical communication structures and limited autonomy that restrict their ability to apply relationship management effectively through digital platforms. Moreover, digital tools may not fully capture the nuances of empathy, trust-building, and interpersonal connection that women leaders rely on to sustain team cohesion. Thus, while digital maturity enhances operational efficiency, it may not inherently foster the relational climate necessary for long-term contextual sustainability. For Malaysian organizations, this finding highlights the importance of complementing digital initiatives with leadership development programs that emphasize human-centric communication and emotional intelligence.

5.4 Implications

From both theoretical and practical perspectives, this study offers several significant implications for scholars and practitioners, particularly in understanding the role of women's emotional intelligence in sustaining job performance within Malaysia's manufacturing sector. By integrating emotional intelligence and digital maturity into a single framework, this research advances leadership and performance theories while providing practical guidance for empowering women leaders in technology-driven environments.

5.4.1 Theoretical Implications

This study began by presenting empirical research on the impact of women's emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) on enhancing and strengthening sustainable job performance (sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance) in the Malaysian manufacturing industry. The framework also introduces digital maturity as a moderating variable, providing an in-depth understanding of how technology readiness interacts with emotional intelligence to influence sustained performance outcomes. These findings extend established theories which consists of social exchange theory, self-efficacy theory, and dynamic managerial capabilities theory by embedding gender and digital perspectives within them. Through this integration, the study deepens theoretical understanding of how women leaders in Malaysia navigate emotional and technological challenges to sustain high performance.

The results align with social exchange theory, emphasizing that trust, reciprocity, and positive interpersonal exchanges strengthen performance sustainability. The significant relationship between self-awareness and both sustainable task and contextual performance confirms that emotionally aware leaders foster trust and cooperation through transparent and reflective behaviour (Pretorius & Plaatijies, 2023). This implies that emotional intelligence operates not merely as an individual attribute but as a social resource that sustains collective performance in interdependent work systems. Similarly, the positive link between self-management and sustainable contextual performance reinforces the role of emotional regulation in maintaining relational stability within high-pressure environments (Kilroy et al., 2023; Manning, 2023). Women leaders who manage stress and emotions effectively contribute to psychologically safe teams, thereby creating conditions conducive to enduring performance. Within Malaysia's manufacturing culture where hierarchical norms and

operational targets dominate such as emotional composure is instrumental in balancing productivity with workplace harmony.

At the same time, social awareness emerged as another key dimension influencing sustainable task performance. This finding aligns with the principles of social exchange theory by highlighting that empathy and active listening strengthen collaboration and shared accountability (Ahmad et al., 2023). Particularly in digitalized settings where face-to-face interactions are limited, social awareness becomes vital for maintaining engagement and trust. Organizations that encourage empathy-driven leadership among women managers are better positioned to sustain motivation and task performance over time. The relationship between relationship management and sustainable task performance also underscores how emotional intelligence translates into coordinated team efforts and improved productivity. Women leaders who exhibit strong interpersonal skills enhance team morale and cooperation, reflecting the essence of reciprocal exchanges central to social exchange theory.

Beyond interpersonal theories, the findings also contribute to self-efficacy theory, demonstrating that women leaders with higher self-confidence in their emotional and decision-making capabilities sustain stronger performance outcomes. Their belief in their competence enables them to remain resilient in dynamic work settings, reinforcing both task execution and contextual contributions. On the other hand, the moderating influence of digital maturity extends these insights by integrating the lens of dynamic managerial capabilities theory. This study shows that emotionally intelligent women leaders are better able to adapt and thrive in digitally mature organizations, where technology reshapes traditional communication and decision-making processes. As supported by Heubeck (2023), leaders who possess dynamic managerial capabilities can navigate environmental

complexity by leveraging emotional and cognitive flexibility. In Malaysian manufacturing firms, this relationship between emotional intelligence and digital maturity represents a forward-looking leadership model where empathy and adaptability coexist with innovation and technological fluency.

Within the digital ecosystem of Malaysia's manufacturing industry, women leaders increasingly face the need to balance rational decision-making with emotional resilience and psychological adaptability. Their ability to maintain composure under pressure, make empathetic yet strategic decisions, and remain emotionally connected to their teams represents a form of psychological capital that complements digital competence. This behavioural equilibrium underscores that sustainable leadership is not only about technical acumen but also about balancing emotional values, such as resilience, trust, and attachment with data-driven decision-making in digitalized work systems. In summary, this study provides a theoretically integrated framework that positions emotional intelligence as both a psychological resource and a managerial capability, strengthened by digital maturity. It offers new theoretical insight into how women leaders sustain performance under technological disruption, adding a gender-sensitive and context-specific dimension to leadership theory.

5.4.2 Practical Implications

Practically, the findings of this research carry substantial implications for organizations, policymakers, and leadership development institutions. They demonstrate that emotional intelligence when nurtured through structured development and aligned with digital readiness can significantly enhance women leaders' ability to achieve sustainable performance outcomes.

First, organizations should recognize emotional intelligence as a strategic leadership competency rather than a soft skill. Self-awareness, which significantly affects both task and contextual performance, should be cultivated through targeted leadership programmes incorporating psychological assessments, reflective coaching, and feedback mechanisms. Such initiatives would enable women leaders to understand their behavioural patterns and make conscious improvements to enhance performance effectiveness. Second, the findings on self-management underscore the importance of equipping women leaders with tools to regulate emotions and maintain composure in fast-paced, male-dominated environments. Stress management and resilience training, combined with scenario-based exercises, would help women leaders translate emotional control into consistent workplace performance.

Third, social awareness and relationship management should form the foundation of leadership capacity-building programmes. Training in empathy, communication, and conflict resolution can help women leaders strengthen team cohesion and inclusivity, especially in multicultural Malaysian workplaces. Mentorship programmes where experienced women leaders model effective interpersonal management can further reinforce these competencies and reduce relational conflicts. Beyond these skills, organizations should also focus on strengthening women leaders' psychological resilience and decision-making stability in digitally intensive settings. The rise of automation and data-driven processes often increases emotional fatigue and uncertainty; therefore, interventions such as mindfulness training, emotional recovery workshops, and digital well-being initiatives can help women leaders manage cognitive load and sustain motivation. Such programmes encourage leaders to make balanced strategic responses—anchored in empathy yet aligned with business objectives while maintaining emotional attachment and stability amid digital disruption.

Fourth, digital maturity emerged as a key enabling factor that enhances the link between emotional intelligence and performance. Organizations should therefore integrate digital leadership training into their capacity-building agendas. Workshops on artificial intelligence, data analytics, and digital collaboration tools can help women leaders align emotional understanding with technology-driven strategies. Moreover, digital maturity assessments should be conducted to identify readiness gaps and tailor leadership interventions accordingly. From a policy perspective, ministries and agencies, particularly the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp), and Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) should champion national leadership initiatives that embed emotional intelligence and digital readiness into workforce transformation policies. Cross-sector collaborations and public-private partnerships can accelerate the development of emotionally intelligent, digitally competent women leaders who can thrive in transitioning from Malaysia's Industry 4.0 to Industrial 5.0 ecosystem.

Finally, organizations must view emotional intelligence not merely as an individual trait but as a strategic enabler of sustainability. By embedding emotional intelligence and digital maturity into leadership frameworks, firms can create workplaces that value empathy, innovation, and adaptability. Such cultures not only elevate women leaders' potential but also contribute to organizational resilience and long-term competitiveness in the global manufacturing landscape.

5.5 Limitations of the Research

The present study investigating the impact of emotional intelligence on sustainable job performance among private manufacturing organizations in Malaysia is a commendable

endeavour, but it is essential to recognize several potential limitations that could affect the generalizability and validity of its findings. Firstly, there may be sampling limitations if the selection of participants is not representative of the entire manufacturing industry in Malaysia, which could limit the pertinency of the results. This concern extends to various dimensions, including the industry's heterogeneity and the diverse experiences of its leaders. Based on the findings of this study within the context of the Malaysian manufacturing industry, it is evident that women leaders believe that emotional intelligence and digital maturity are crucial components for sustaining their task and sustainable contextual performance. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that results may vary if the survey is conducted in a different context, such as an international setting. Therefore, it may be beneficial to conduct subgroup analyses or compare the characteristics of the study sample with those of the broader industry to assess the extent of sampling bias and its potential influence on the study's outcomes. By doing so, this study can provide a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the emotional intelligence on the sustainable job performance, particularly when considering the moderating variable of digital maturity.

Secondly, the data collection for this study was conducted at a single time point rather than at multiple intervals. Consequently, the establishment of causal relationships within this study is challenging because the data were gathered only once, and there was no observation of the same group of participants over an extended period. As a result, this study has presented conclusions and discussions concerning the general relationships between variables, as well as insights into moderating effects. In essence, to ascertain causality, it is advisable to replace the current cross-sectional study design with a longitudinal one. This longitudinal approach would involve collecting data from the same participants over an extended duration, enabling a more comprehensive exploration of causal effects.

Thirdly, another limitation to consider is the use of digital maturity as the sole moderator in this study. In fact, there is an opportunity to explore additional moderating variables that could be incorporated into the model. Several other potential moderator variables, such as digital transformation, emotional labour, job control, work-family conflict, and leadership, could add value and merit examination within the current research framework. Furthermore, it's worth noting that this study exclusively focused on the refined model proposed by Golemon (2001) as the predictors for measuring sustainable job performance. However, it is possible that other observed indicators, variables, and constructs related to emotional intelligence may exist, which could provide further insights into sustainable job performance. Exploring these additional facets could enhance the depth and breadth of the research findings. Finally, practical challenges were encountered during data collection, which may have influenced the study outcomes. Limited access to top management, coupled with gatekeeper restrictions, made reaching potential participants difficult.

Despite its limitation, the research study presented here demonstrates several notable strengths that significantly contribute to both theoretical and practical implications. The study's theoretical contributions lie in its original exploration of the relationship between women's emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance, specifically in the Malaysian manufacturing industry. It sheds light on the essential emotional intelligence competencies encompassing self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, emphasizing their pivotal role in enhancing and strengthening their sustainable job performance in Malaysian manufacturing industry.

Furthermore, the incorporation of digital maturity as a moderating factor in this relationship represents a pioneering approach that acknowledges the ever-evolving landscape of work in the digital era. It transcends the examination of emotional intelligence in isolation and delves into how digital maturity can either augment or limit the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable job performance. This recognition is of paramount importance because organizations increasingly operate within digitally mature environments, necessitating emotional intelligence competencies that are aligned with these contexts to achieve optimal results. In essence, this study recognizes that emotional intelligence competencies may manifest differently in sustaining leaders' job performance. This study marks the inaugural exploration of digital maturity as a moderating variable within the Malaysian manufacturing industry, specifically concerning the development of sustainable leaders' job performance within the sector.

5.6 Directions for Future Research

In the realm of emotional intelligence and its profound influence on long-term sustainable job performance, particularly when considering the moderating role of digital maturity within Malaysia's manufacturing industry, the researcher has recommended the following future research to overcome the limitations.

First, while this study focused on women in managerial positions within the manufacturing industry, future research could explore emotional intelligence and digital maturity across other key sectors, such as education, public administration, healthcare, and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to compare leadership behaviours across contexts. Given Malaysia's diverse economic structure, examining whether emotional intelligence operates similarly in different work environments could offer richer insights into

how leadership styles evolve across industries and cultural settings. Second, this study employed a quantitative approach using self-reported survey data. Although this method provided statistical rigor, it may not fully capture the depth of emotional experiences and behavioural nuances that shape women's leadership journeys. Future research could adopt mixed-method or longitudinal designs, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups. Such approaches would enable deeper exploration of how emotional intelligence develops over time and how women leaders apply these skills in real workplace situations.

Third, future studies should consider incorporating organizational variables such as culture, leadership style, and work–family balance policies as mediating or moderating factors. These variables may help explain why emotional intelligence manifests differently among women leaders in Malaysia, where traditional gender norms and collectivist values influence workplace expectations. Understanding how these structural and cultural elements interact with emotional intelligence could yield more comprehensive models of sustainable leadership. Fourth, while digital maturity was examined as a moderator, future studies could adopt a more holistic view by exploring digital leadership or digital emotional intelligence as standalone constructs. As Malaysia advances toward Industry 5.0, emotional adaptation to AI-driven tools and digital collaboration environments will become increasingly relevant. Examining how women leaders integrate empathy and technology fluency could reveal new pathways to sustaining performance in hybrid and automated workplaces.

Fifth, expanding the sampling frame beyond Malaysia to include cross-country comparisons, particularly within ASEAN nations could strengthen understanding of how cultural dimensions (e.g., collectivism, power distance, or gender egalitarianism) shape the emotional intelligence and performance relationship. Such comparative perspectives would

allow researchers to situate Malaysian women's experiences within the broader regional discourse on gender and digital transformation. Finally, future research could investigate the role of institutional support systems, such as mentorship networks, women-in-leadership initiatives, and government training schemes in enhancing emotional intelligence competencies. Assessing the long-term impact of these programmes on women's career advancement and organizational performance would bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical policy implementation.

In conclusion, future research should continue to refine and expand the emotional intelligence framework by incorporating contextual, digital, and gender-related dimensions. This will not only advance academic understanding but also provide actionable insights for policymakers and organizations seeking to empower women leaders in Malaysia's evolving economic and technological landscape.

5.7 Conclusion

In summary, this study explored the influence of women leaders' emotional intelligence, comprising self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management on sustainable job performance, specifically sustainable task performance and sustainable contextual performance, within Malaysia's manufacturing industry. It also examined the moderating role of digital maturity, conceptualized through transformation management intensity. The results revealed several significant relationships within this framework. Self-awareness demonstrated a positive influence on both sustainable task and contextual performance, while self-management showed a significant relationship with sustainable contextual performance. Similarly, social awareness and relationship management were positively associated with sustainable task performance. Beyond these direct relationships, digital maturity was found to strengthen the positive effects of self-

awareness, social awareness, and relationship management on sustainable job performance, underscoring its importance in digitally evolving workplaces.

The findings provide several important insights for organizations, policymakers, and leadership practitioners in Malaysia. The results reaffirm that emotional intelligence is not merely a personal trait but a strategic capability for sustaining job performance in demanding environments. Women leaders who demonstrate high self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal sensitivity are better equipped to sustain performance over time. In the Malaysian manufacturing sector where the workforce operates within a fast-paced, technology-driven, and male-dominated setting, these emotional competencies serve as a crucial foundation for resilience, adaptability, and leadership credibility.

Moreover, the moderating role of digital maturity highlights how the integration of technological readiness amplifies the benefits of emotional intelligence. Women leaders who are digitally capable can better leverage data, communication tools, and digital collaboration platforms to sustain team performance and manage organizational transformation effectively. This finding reinforces the Malaysian government's vision under the MyDigital Blueprint and the Twelfth Malaysia Plan, which advocate for greater women's participation in digital leadership and technology-driven growth.

Overall, this study contributes both theoretically and practically by integrating emotional intelligence and digital maturity into a unified model of sustainable job performance. It enriches the understanding of women's leadership effectiveness in Malaysia's digital economy and demonstrates how emotional competencies, supported by digital capability, can promote long-term organizational sustainability. The study also sets the foundation for future research, highlighting opportunities to examine these dynamics in

other sectors and contexts. Ultimately, the findings underscore that empowering women leaders through emotional intelligence and digital readiness is vital for fostering resilient, innovative, and high-performing organizations in Malaysia's evolving industrial landscape.

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APPENDIX



UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

QUESTIONNAIRE

This study is conducted solely as an academic exercise to fulfil the requirements for completing the PhD Research Study at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

This questionnaire focuses on obtaining views from respondents on **"Emotional Intelligence on Sustainable Job Performance of Women Leaders: The Moderating Impact of Digital Maturity"**.

This questionnaire consists of four sections. Kindly answer ALL the questions. It should take you about **10 to 15 minutes** to complete the questionnaire. Please note that your confidentiality and anonymity are assured. Data gathered will be stored safely and can only be accessed by the researcher.

For your cooperation and support in making this survey a success. I hereby tender my greatest appreciation and deepest gratitude for your time and patience.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

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Section A: Demographic Characteristics

Please answer the following items by placing a tick (✓) in the bracket or writing your answer above the line.

1. Age

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21 to 30 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 51 to 60 years old |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31 to 40 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> Above 60 years old |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 41 to 50 years old | |

2. Marital status

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single | <input type="checkbox"/> Married |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|

3. Ethnic

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malay | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify: __ |

4. Education level

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> PhD |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Degree or Professional | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify: _ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Master | |

5. Number of children

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> > 5 |

6. Managerial positions

- Chief Executive Officer/ Chief Operating Officer/ Chief Financial Officer/ Chief Marketing Officer
- General Manager/ Regional Manager/ Division Manager/ Branch Manager
- Supervisor/ Project Manager/ Functional Manager
- Others (please specify): _____

7. Years of employment with your current organization

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> < 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> > 20 years |

8. Years of managerial experience

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 years |
|----------------------------------|---|

6 to 10 years

16 to 20 years

> 20 years

9. Manufacturing industry classifications

Food and beverage

Textiles and apparel

Chemicals and pharmaceuticals

Machinery and equipment

Electronics and electrical

Automotive

Aerospace and defence

Others (please specify): _____

Social Awareness								
11.	I can easily remain calm when dealing with someone who's emotionally upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I can handle emotional situations with empathy and understanding, without judging.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	I feel comfortable dealing with others' adverse emotional reactions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	I can easily adapt my communication style to meet others' needs and preferences.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	I usually don't respond to others' emotional distress unless they seek support from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Relationship Management								
16.	I avoid expressing my concerns if I know addressing an issue might upset someone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	I tend to communicate more intensely when I feel I'm not getting my message across.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	I tend to defend or justify myself immediately when receiving negative or critical feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	I know how to create a positive mood when those around me are under high stress.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	I'm generally calm and confident in difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

