# Digital Transformation, Employee Well-Being, and Behavioral Risk Reduction in Honduran Organizations

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***Abstract*— *Digital transformation is increasingly framed as an organizational capability that supports innovation, efficiency, and regional competitiveness in emerging economies. However, the extent to which digitalization improves employee well-being and reduces behavioral risks, such as counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs), remains poorly understood in Central America. This study examined the associations between organizational digitalization, employee well-being, and CWBs among Honduran workers, testing whether well-being mediates the digitalization-CWB relationship. A cross-sectional survey was administered to a non-probability convenience sample of N = 167 formally employed Honduran workers, predominantly from private and service-sector organizations. A second-order structural equation model was estimated with robust maximum likelihood in Jamovi 2.7.12 (SEMlj/lavaan). The model showed acceptable fit (robust CFI = .908, TLI = .901, RMSEA = .051, SRMR = .072). Digitalization was positively associated with well-being (β = .424, p < .001). Well-being was not significantly associated with CWBs (β = −.179, p = .132), and the indirect effect was non-significant (β = −.076, 95% CI [−.170, .019], p = .126). Digitalization showed a significant direct negative effect on CWBs (β = −.255, p = .023; total effect β = −.330, p = .001). Findings suggest that, in this sample, digitalization functioned as an organizational capability associated with higher well-being and lower behavioral risk through non-mediated, likely situational, pathways. Because the analytic sample fell below the a-priori recommended size and was recruited by convenience, the results are exploratory and are not generalizable to Honduran organizations as a whole. Implications for managing digital transformation in emerging-economy organizations are discussed.*

***Keywords*— *Digital transformation; organizational digitalization; employee well-being; counterproductive work behaviors; emerging economies.***

## I. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation is widely regarded as a core organizational capability for improving efficiency, fostering innovation, and sustaining competitiveness in emerging economies [1], [2]. Beyond productivity gains, digitalization reconfigures how work is organized, monitored, and experienced by employees, with consequences that extend into workplace well-being and behavioral risk [3], [4]. For organizations pursuing capability-based innovation, digital transformation is therefore not only a technical upgrade but a human and behavioral intervention whose returns extend well beyond operational metrics.

In emerging economies, digital transformation advances unevenly. Organizations coexist with high levels of informality, uneven technological infrastructure, and limited institutional capacity, which shape how digitalization is implemented and experienced [5], [6]. Smaller and heterogeneously resourced organizations often digitalize under weaker governance conditions than their counterparts in developed economies, which can amplify both the benefits and the risks associated with technological change [5]. In this context, digitalization carries a double promise for organizations pursuing sustainable innovation. First, it may improve employee well-being by reducing manual, repetitive, and bureaucratic tasks and by expanding operational autonomy [7], [8]. Second, it may reduce counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs) — a class of behavioral risks that undermine productivity, organizational resources, and the sustainability of technological change — by increasing process traceability, standardization, and formal control [9], [10].

Despite this double promise, empirical evidence that jointly examines organizational digitalization, employee well-being, and CWBs remains scarce in Central America. Most available evidence originates from European, North American, and Asian contexts, and its generalizability to organizations shaped by informality and constrained institutional capacity is uncertain. Honduras exemplifies this gap: digital transformation is advancing across public and private organizations under conditions of high labor informality and limited institutional capacity [11], [1], yet no study has empirically modeled how digitalization, well-being, and behavioral risk relate to one another in this Central American context.

This study addresses this gap by examining organizational digitalization as a transformation capability associated with employee well-being and reduced CWBs among Honduran workers, and by testing whether well-being mediates this relationship. Framing digitalization primarily as a driver of well-being and behavioral risk reduction — rather than solely as a productivity tool — contributes evidence relevant to capability-based entrepreneurship and innovation scaling in emerging-economy organizations, and offers an empirical basis for managing digital transformation with attention to both human and structural outcomes.

This framing is directly relevant to organizations engaged in capability-based entrepreneurship, where the ability to scale technological innovation depends not only on infrastructure and capital, but on the workforce capabilities and behavioral conditions that sustain innovation over time. Understanding whether digitalization strengthens the human and behavioral foundations of organizations — rather than only their technical infrastructure — is therefore central to assessing its viability as a driver of sustainable innovation in emerging economies.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### *A. Organizational Digitalization as a Transformation Capability*

Organizational digitalization is conceptualized as an organizational capability encompassing technological integration, digital competence, process transformation, and digital culture, rather than the simple adoption of tools [12], [2]. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) [13] and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) [14] jointly explain adoption as a function of perceived usefulness, ease of use, performance expectancy, and facilitating conditions, moderated by organizational culture [15].

Maturity models further show that digital transformation capability develops progressively across strategy, infrastructure, culture, and workforce competence [2], and that organizational culture can either accelerate or constrain this progression [15]. Under this view, digital maturity is a multidimensional organizational asset rather than a binary state of technology adoption, which justifies operationalizing digitalization through technological integration, digital competence, process transformation, and digital culture, as done in the present study.

In Latin American economies, this capability tends to develop unevenly across firm size and sector, with larger service-oriented organizations typically advancing faster than smaller production and manufacturing firms [5]. This heterogeneity has direct implications for regional innovation ecosystems, since organizations with limited digital maturity may be less able to capture the well-being and behavioral-risk benefits documented in more digitally mature settings, reinforcing the need for context-specific evidence such as that provided by this study.

### *B. Employee Well-Being as a Strategic Outcome*

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model [16] frames digitalization as a potential organizational resource that reduces job demands and supports psychological flourishing, operationalized here through the PERMA model of well-being [17]. When digitalization simplifies processes, reduces administrative burden, and expands coordination capacity, it can function as a resource that sustains talent and supports strategic workforce outcomes [3], [18].

This positive association is nonetheless conditional: it depends on employees possessing sufficient digital competence and on implementation being accompanied by adequate organizational support [7], [8]. When these conditions are absent, digital tools can instead operate as an additional job demand, underscoring that well-being is best understood as a strategic, manageable outcome of digital transformation rather than an automatic byproduct of technology adoption.

### *C. Counterproductive Work Behaviors as Behavioral Risk*

CWBs are voluntary employee behaviors that violate organizational norms and threaten organizational or individual interests [9]. Beyond their motivational antecedents — including diminished well-being [19] and job dissatisfaction [20] — CWBs are also shaped by situational opportunity structures [21], [10].

Digitalization can act on these situational conditions by increasing traceability, standardizing procedures, and narrowing informal discretion, thereby reducing the objective opportunity for deviance independent of employees' psychological states [10]. Framed this way, CWBs represent a behavioral risk to productivity and to the sustainability of innovation processes, rather than merely an interpersonal or psychological concern, which situates them squarely within the organizational-capability perspective adopted in this study.

### *D. Hypotheses*

Based on this framework, three hypotheses were tested: organizational digitalization is positively associated with employee well-being (H1); employee well-being is negatively associated with CWBs (H2); and employee well-being mediates the association between organizational digitalization and CWBs (H3). A direct path from digitalization to CWBs was also estimated to test whether this association operates, at least partly, through a non-mediated pathway. Given the cross-sectional design, all hypotheses are interpreted as associations compatible with the proposed theoretical model, not as causal claims.

## III. METHOD

### *A. Design*

A cross-sectional, correlational-explanatory design was used, based on a self-administered online questionnaire. This design is appropriate for an exploratory examination of associations among variables that have not been jointly modeled in the Honduran context.

### *B. Participants*

The target population was adult workers with active formal employment residing in Honduras. Inclusion criteria were: age 18 years or older, active formal employment, residence in Honduras, and complete questionnaire responses. No exclusion criteria were applied by sector, industry, or tenure, in order to capture organizational heterogeneity. Non-probability convenience sampling was used; recruitment occurred through social networks and professional contacts between March and May 2026. An initial sample of 212 responses was obtained. Because recruitment relied on convenience sampling through social and professional networks, the resulting sample reflects formally employed workers in predominantly private-sector and service-sector organizations rather than the Honduran working population or the full range of Honduran organizations.

### *C. Sample Size Justification*

An a-priori power analysis for structural equation models was conducted using an established SEM sample-size calculator [22] (anticipated effect size = 0.30, power = .80, 15 latent variables, 41 observed variables, $\alpha = .05$), yielding a recommended minimum sample of N = 244. The final analytic sample (N = 167) fell below this threshold, which is treated as

an important methodological limitation; results are accordingly presented as exploratory. This shortfall reduces the statistical power available for a model of this complexity and increases the uncertainty of the parameter estimates, particularly for non-significant paths such as the proposed mediation. All findings are therefore interpreted as exploratory associations requiring confirmation in larger samples.

### *D. Procedure and Quality Control*

Data were collected through Microsoft Forms, which required complete responses, eliminating missing data by design. Digital informed consent preceded access to the questionnaire; participation was voluntary and anonymous, and the study was approved by an institutional research ethics committee. A time-based quality control procedure excluded low-quality responses: the interquartile range of completion time was computed (Q1 = 346 s, Q3 = 628 s, IQR = 282 s); 27 records below Q1 and 18 records exceeding the upper bound (Q3 + 1.5 × IQR = 1,051 s) were excluded, yielding a final analytic sample of N = 167 (Mage = 35.0, SD = 10.0; 62.3% women; 79.6% private-sector; 73.1% services sector).

### *E. Instruments*

Three ad hoc scales were used. Employee well-being was based on established well-being frameworks, specifically the vitamin model and the subjective and psychological well-being traditions, together with the PERMA model [17]; after confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a 14-item, four-dimension model (hedonic, psychological, social, and physical well-being) was retained (α = .906). CWBs were based on Robinson and Bennett's typology [9] and Spector and Fox's model of counterproductive behavior [21]; the final model comprised 12 items across four dimensions (organizational deviance, interpersonal deviance, production-related CWBs, and behaviors against organizational assets; α = .919). Organizational digitalization was based on TAM [13], UTAUT [14], and Westerman et al.'s digital transformation framework [12]; the final model comprised 15 items across four dimensions (technological integration, perceived digital competence, process transformation, and digital organizational culture; α = .898). All items were written in Spanish at a secondary-education reading level to ensure accessibility for the Honduran working population. Scale reliability is summarized in Table I. Because items were removed iteratively during CFA refinement, the retained measurement structures are considered preliminary and require validation in independent samples.

### *F. Counterproductive Work Behaviors Assessed in This Study*

Because counterproductive work behavior covers a broad behavioral domain, the content assessed in this study is specified here. The scale operationalized the four dimensions retained after CFA, defined following Robinson and Bennett's typology of deviant workplace behavior [9] and Fox and Spector's emotion-centered model of voluntary work behavior [21]. Items described observable workplace conduct and were answered on a five-point ordered frequency scale.

Organizational deviance refers to behaviors directed against the organization and its formal rules, such as disregarding established procedures, misreporting working time or attendance, and ignoring instructions or organizational norms.

Interpersonal deviance refers to behaviors directed against other members of the organization, such as disrespectful or hostile treatment of coworkers, damaging comments about colleagues, and withholding work-related information from others.

Production-related CWBs refer to the intentional withdrawal of effort or the degradation of work quality, such as working more slowly than required, prolonging breaks, leaving assigned tasks unfinished, and delaying responses to work requests.

Behaviors against organizational assets refer to the misuse of organizational resources, such as the personal use of institutional equipment, working time, materials, or information, and the careless handling of organizational property.

### *G. Statistical Analysis*

Analyses were performed in Jamovi 2.7.12 [23] using the SEMlj module, based on the lavaan package [24]. Measurement models were estimated via maximum likelihood with Huber-White robust standard errors and the scaled Yuan-Bentler $T^{2*}$ test; items with standardized loadings below .40 were removed iteratively during CFA refinement. Reliability (α, ω) and convergent validity (AVE ≥ .50) [25] were assessed for each dimension. A second-order structural mediation model was then estimated, with digitalization as predictor, well-being as proposed mediator, and CWBs as outcome. Indirect and total effects were estimated via bootstrapping with 95% confidence intervals. Likert-type items were treated as continuous indicators, consistent with recommendations for five-point ordered scales [26]. Given the cross-sectional design, no causal inference is drawn from the results.

## IV. RESULTS

### *A. Sample and Measurement Reliability*

Of the 167 participants, the mean age was 35.0 years (SD = 10.0; range = 19–73); 62.3% were women, 79.6% worked in the private sector, and 73.1% in the services sector. Table I summarizes the reliability of the three instruments.

**TABLE I**
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND SCALE RELIABILITY (N = 167)

| Characteristic | Value |
|---|---|
| Age, M (SD), range | 35.0 (10.0), 19–73 |
| Women / Men (%) | 62.3 / 36.5 |
| Private / Public sector (%) | 79.6 / 20.4 |
| Services sector (%) | 73.1 |
| Well-being scale: items, α | 14, .906 |
| CWB scale: items, α | 12, .919 |
| Digitalization scale: items, α | 15, .898 |

### *B. Measurement Model Adequacy*

The three measurement models showed acceptable-to-excellent fit. Employee well-being: robust CFI = .988, TLI = .985, RMSEA = .033, SRMR = .042. CWBs: robust CFI = .953, TLI = .932, RMSEA = .075, SRMR = .050. Organizational digitalization: robust CFI = .966, TLI = .956, RMSEA = .056, SRMR = .065.

### *C. Structural Model and Mediation*

The structural model showed acceptable fit: scaled $\chi^2(759) = 1061$, $p < .001$; robust CFI = .908; robust TLI = .901; robust RMSEA = .051, 95% CI [.043, .058]; SRMR = .072. The model explained 18.0% of the variance in well-being ($R^2 = .180$) and 13.5% of the variance in CWBs ($R^2 = .135$).

Digitalization was positively associated with well-being ($\beta = .424$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. Well-being was not significantly associated with CWBs when digitalization was included as a simultaneous predictor ($\beta = -.179$, $p = .132$), and H2 was not supported. The indirect effect of digitalization on CWBs through well-being was not significant ($\beta = -.076$, 95% CI [−.170, .019], $p = .126$); H3 was not supported. Digitalization showed a significant direct negative effect on CWBs ($\beta = -.255$, $p = .023$), and the total effect was negative and significant ($\beta = -.330$, 95% CI [−.502, −.158], $p = .001$). Table II and Fig. 1 summarize these results.

**TABLE II**
STRUCTURAL MODEL PATHS AND MEDIATION EFFECTS

| Path / Effect | β | p | 95% CI |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digitalization → Well-being | .424 | <.001 | — |
| Well-being → CWBs | −.179 | .132 | — |
| Digitalization → CWBs (direct) | −.255 | .023 | — |
| Indirect effect (via well-being) | −.076 | .126 | [−.170, .019] |
| Total effect | −.330 | .001 | [−.502, −.158] |

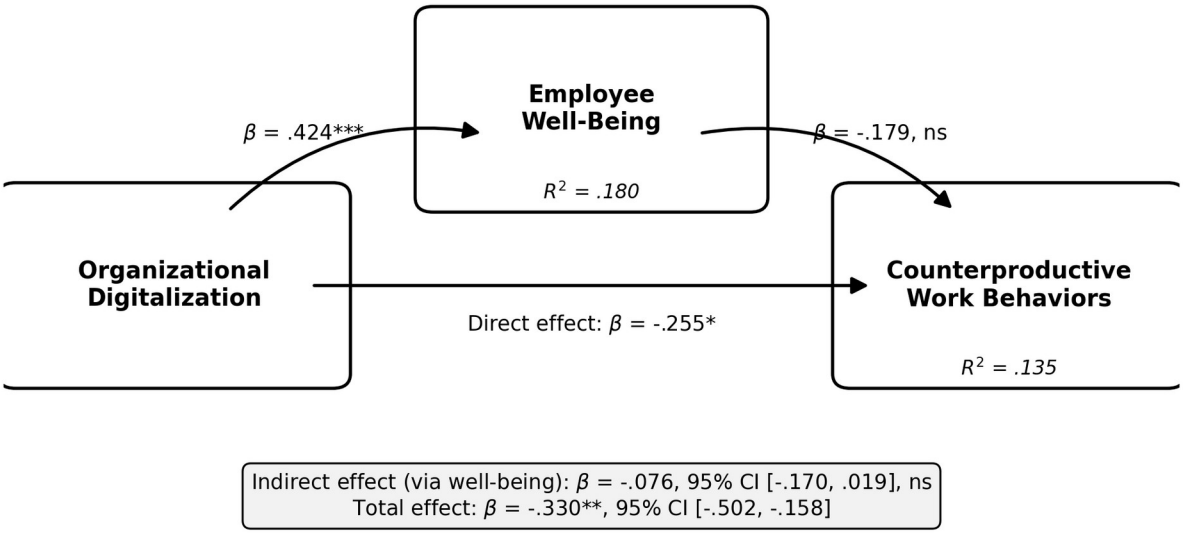



Fig. 1. Structural mediation model: organizational digitalization, employee well-being, and counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs). * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001; ns = not significant.

## V. DISCUSSION

### *A. Digitalization as a Well-Being Capability*

Digitalization was positively associated with employee well-being ($\beta = .424$, $p < .001$), consistent with the JD-R proposition that organizational resources, including digital tools that simplify processes and expand autonomy, support psychological flourishing [16], [17]. This finding is consistent with prior evidence from other regions [3], [18] and suggests that digitalization functioned predominantly as a resource in the sampled Honduran organizations. Operationally, this association is compatible with less administrative friction: faster task completion, fewer avoidable errors, more accessible information, and clearer coordination may reduce time pressure and cognitive strain. These mechanisms were not measured separately and should therefore be treated as plausible explanations rather than demonstrated mediators. The model explained 18.0% of well-being variance, indicating that digitalization is relevant but partial, consistent with prior findings [8].

This result also carries practical weight for capability-based innovation. When digital transformation reduces administrative burden and improves the use of information for routine decisions, it can generate human-capital returns alongside efficiency gains. However, those returns may depend on employees having the competence and support needed to use the technology effectively. Well-being should therefore be treated as a strategic transformation indicator, while training and implementation support should be examined as conditions that may strengthen or weaken its association with digitalization.

### *B. Well-Being Did Not Explain the Reduction in CWBs*

Contrary to H2 and H3, well-being was not significantly associated with CWBs once digitalization was controlled for, and the indirect effect was non-significant. This disconfirmation is informative rather than merely null: in this sample, well-being measured through a positive-functioning framework (PERMA) was not the principal mechanism inhibiting counterproductive behavior. Feeling better at work may be insufficient when CWBs also depend on accountability, role clarity, behavioral opportunities, and adverse affective states not captured by the positive well-being measure. Given that the analytic sample fell below the size recommended for the complexity of the model, the non-significant mediation should also be read as a result obtained under limited statistical power, and not as definitive evidence against a well-being pathway.

CWBs have been more consistently linked to negative affective states — perceived injustice, frustration, emotional exhaustion — than to the absence of positive well-being [19], [20], which may explain the limited predictive power of a positive-well-being indicator once a stronger structural predictor is included in the model.

### *C. Digitalization May Reduce CWBs Through Situational Mechanisms*

The most theoretically relevant finding is the direct negative effect of digitalization on CWBs, which remained significant after controlling for well-being. This is consistent with a situational account of workplace deviance [9], [10]: digitalization can increase process formalization, traceability, and standardization while reducing informal discretion and procedural ambiguity. Automatic records may make actions and outcomes more observable, clarify responsibility for errors or delays, and make performance expectations more explicit. Together, these conditions may narrow opportunities for deviance and strengthen accountability independently of employees' psychological states. These mechanisms were not tested directly and remain propositions for future mediation research. In Latin American organizations historically characterized by weak formal controls [6], this situational pathway may be particularly consequential for reducing behavioral risk during digital transformation.

This situational interpretation does not diminish well-being as an organizational outcome. Rather, it indicates that human and structural pathways may operate in parallel. Future explanatory models should test whether process clarity, traceability, and perceived accountability transmit the association with CWBs while positive well-being, stress, and exhaustion capture distinct motivational pathways.

### *D. Practical Implications*

Organizations should not evaluate digital transformation solely in terms of operational efficiency. The findings indicate that digitalization can coincide with greater employee well-being while also reducing behavioral risk through structural mechanisms. Yet the same technology may function as a resource or as an additional demand depending on how it is introduced. When digitalization is framed primarily as surveillance, employees may experience distrust, continuous monitoring, or uncertainty about replacement, potentially encouraging resistance and undermining well-being gains. Implementation should therefore combine digital-competence training, employee participation, transparent leadership, clear communication, and a culture of trust. Human resource functions should integrate well-being and behavioral-risk indicators into transformation metrics rather than treat them as separate agendas. For small and medium-sized enterprises central to Central American development, even modest investments may yield dual returns when accompanied by participatory change management rather than purely top-down control.

From a regional development perspective, these findings also suggest that public and private programs supporting digital adoption among emerging-economy organizations should be evaluated not only by productivity or efficiency metrics, but by their capacity to strengthen workforce well-being and reduce behavioral risk. Incorporating these dual outcomes into digital transformation policy and entrepreneurship-support programs may help scale innovation more sustainably across Central American economies.

As organizations increasingly incorporate artificial intelligence and advanced automation into their digital transformation initiatives, the present findings underscore the importance of monitoring well-being and behavioral-risk indicators alongside efficiency metrics. AI-enabled process automation is likely to intensify the same traceability and standardization mechanisms identified here, which may amplify their behavioral-risk-reduction potential while making the well-being consequences of implementation design even more consequential for organizations scaling innovation in emerging economies.

## VI. LIMITATIONS

Limitations include the cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference; self-reported measures for all variables, with possible social desirability bias for CWBs; non-probability convenience sampling; a final sample (N = 167) below the size recommended for the model's complexity (N = 244) [22], which limits statistical power and the precision of the estimates; overrepresentation of the services sector and private-sector employees, so that the findings describe the sampled workers rather than Honduran organizations as a whole; and ad hoc instruments with preliminary, though adequate, reliability evidence. Because item removal occurred iteratively during CFA refinement, the resulting measurement structures require cross-validation in independent samples before they can be considered established.

In addition, the well-being measure was limited to positive functioning and excluded burnout or negative affect. The model explained 18.0% of well-being and 13.5% of CWBs, indicating that important organizational and individual factors remain unaccounted for. Longitudinal designs, probabilistic sampling, objective behavioral indicators, and larger samples are needed. Future models should examine leadership, organizational climate, digital competence and training, perceived surveillance, trust, resistance to change, and work-family

balance as mediators or moderators. Sector, organizational size, and digital maturity also warrant comparison because the present sample overrepresented private-sector service employees. Research should further distinguish artificial-intelligence-enabled digitalization, which may intensify both resource and traceability mechanisms in ways the present ad hoc measure cannot fully capture. Finally, the study did not contrast workers with technical or engineering backgrounds against those with non-technical backgrounds, although these groups may experience and evaluate digitalization differently. Future studies should either survey more homogeneous occupational groups or test measurement invariance and structural differences across educational and occupational profiles.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Among the Honduran workers sampled, digital transformation was associated with greater employee well-being and lower counterproductive work behavior, and this reduction was not explained by well-being. These findings are consistent with the proposition that digitalization operates both as a human capability that improves the subjective experience of work and as a structural capability that constrains behavioral risk. Process formalization, traceability, and standardization were not measured in this study; they are therefore advanced as plausible, future-testable pathways rather than as demonstrated mediators of the observed association.

For emerging economies, technological innovation should be managed from a people-centered perspective that avoids reducing digitalization to surveillance and control, and instead articulates it with training, trust, and organizational sustainability. These results contribute early empirical evidence from Central America to the broader research agenda on capability-based entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, and innovation scaling in emerging global economies. Given the exploratory character of the study, the sample size, and the predominance of private-sector and service-sector respondents, these conclusions should be regarded as preliminary and tested in larger and more representative samples of Honduran organizations.

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