

# Reviewing Employee Performance Frameworks: Insights and Directions for Malaysia's Automotive Component Manufacturing Sector

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## Abstract

Employee or operator job performance is widely recognized as a cornerstone of organizational success, shaping productivity, quality, and competitiveness. Existing studies highlight key determinants such as organizational support, workplace environment, leadership, motivation, training, employability, and adaptability. However, current frameworks remain fragmented and largely generic, limiting their applicability across diverse industrial contexts. This review synthesizes on major frameworks of employee performance and evaluates their relevance to Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing sector, a critical industry characterized by semi-skilled labour, technological disruption, and global competition. The review findings reveal that supportive workplace practices, transformational and digital leadership, structured training, and motivational systems enhance performance, while adaptability and employability skills are increasingly vital under Industry 4.0 pressures. Despite these insights, gaps persist in integrating human, organizational, and technological dimensions into a coherent framework for the development of a context-specific framework tailored to Malaysia's automotive components manufacturing industries. Future research is suggested to employ longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to capture dynamic interactions and validate sector-specific models. By addressing these gaps, scholars and practitioners can advance theory and provide actionable strategies to strengthen operator productivity, resilience, and competitiveness in Malaysia's automotive Component manufacturing industry. with that empirical result, the industry's stakeholders can benefit from the study.

**Keywords:** Employee Performance, Operator Job Performance (OJP), Industry 4.0, Automotive Component Manufacturer, On-Job-Training (OJT)

**Introduction**

This study addresses a specific problem in existing employee performance frameworks, which are overly generic and unable to capture the unique dynamics of Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing sector, where semi-skilled labour, Industry 4.0 disruptions, and global competition directly affect operator job performance (OJP). The phenomenon of interest in this study is OJP, which is critical in manufacturing lines that depend heavily on human-machine interaction, adaptability to digital systems, and the productivity of semi-skilled workers. The need for this study arises because Malaysia's automotive component industry is in a very competitive state. The industry player is challenge to improve and enhance the OJP efficiency adaptively to sustain in global competitiveness, hence very little research provides frameworks tailored to this context.

Employee or OJP is widely recognized as a fundamental driver of organizational success, as it determines how effectively employees fulfil their responsibilities in terms of productivity, quality, and accountability. High performance enhances competitiveness and sustainability, while low performance undermines outcomes and growth (Abdullahi et al., 2024). Prior studies highlight several critical factors shaping performance. The workplace environment, including physical conditions, organizational culture, and supportive practices has been shown to increase employee satisfaction, reduce absenteeism, and boost productivity (Sri Devi & Selvan, 2024). Leadership also plays a vital role; transformational and digital leadership foster creativity, engagement, and adaptability, enabling employees to contribute more effectively to organizational goals (Öngel et al., 2024; Kuntadi et al., 2023). In addition, creativity and proactive behavior are considered competitive assets that help organizations innovation and respond to dynamic challenges (Zhou et al., 2024). Motivation and engagement likely remain central, as employees motivated through training, welfare, compensation, and job security display higher commitment and job performance, particularly in labor intensive industries (Mehak & Moideen, 2024; Abdelwahed & Al Doghan, 2023). Training and knowledge management practices further strengthen resilience and adaptability. It is equipping employees with the skills to sustain productivity in disruptive contexts (Ataburo et al., 2025; Naseem et al., 2025). Overall, when employees are engaged, supported, and motivated, they directly increase organizational effectiveness (Latifoglu et al., 2023). However, existing frameworks are often generic and lack sectoral focus. In Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing industry, where workforce diversity, reliance on semi-skilled labor, and Industry 4.0 reveal that, operator performance is literally critical. This paper therefore reviews major frameworks of employee or operator job performance, identifies their limitations, and highlights the need for a specific focus framework that been tailored to specific services or industries sector.

**Literature Review on Frameworks on Employee Performance.**

Employee performance has been conceptualized across multiple disciplines, leading to a wide variety of frameworks that seek to explain its determinants and pathways. At its core performance, it is understood not as the outcome of individual effort alone but as the product of man, machine, method and psychological processes. The existing literature presents numerous frameworks that offering valuable insights, also reveal significant fragmentation.

Table 1.0: The review of Employee or Operator Performance research Framework.

Author & Year	IV (Independent Variable)	Mediator(s)	DV (Dependent Variable)	Framework Findings & Claim
Abdullahi et al. (2024)	Perceived organizational support	Job satisfaction	Employee performance	Supportive environments enhance performance.
Sri Devi & Tamil Selvan (2024)	Workplace environment & culture	–	Employee performance	Positive workplace settings increase motivation and productivity.
Zhenjing et al. (2022)	Work environment	Achievement striving, organizational commitment	Employee performance	Environment indirectly affects performance through psychological and attitudinal factors.
Kuntadi et al. (2023)	Transformational leadership	Motivation, engagement	Employee performance	Leadership fosters motivation and engagement, leading to higher performance.
Latifoglu et al. (2023)	Leader–member exchange (LMX)	Proactive behaviour	Employee performance	Strong LMX encourages proactive behaviour that boosts performance, especially in innovative climates.
Öngel et al. (2024)	Digital leadership	Creativity	Task performance, Contextual performance	Digital leadership influences performance through employee creativity.
Wahyudi, Nugraha & Suharto (2023)	Organizational justice, Leadership, Motivation	Organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB)	Employee performance	Leadership enhances OCB, which translates into improved performance.
Mehak & Batcha (2023/2024)	Motivation factors (compensation, training, job security)	–	Employee performance	Motivation and extrinsic factors strongly influence employee outcomes.
Afrin et al. (2023)	Motivation	Green work environment, engagement	Employee performance	Motivation improves performance through practices and engagement.
Ullah et al. (2024)	Talent practices & well-being	Psychological, social, physical well-being	Employee performance	Well-being enhances talent practices that drive stronger performance.

Adomako (2023)	Management by objectives (MBO)	Motivation, accountability	Employee performance	Goal alignment and feedback enhance motivation, leading to higher performance.
Ahmad et al. (2024)	OJT content & design	Training effectiveness	Employee performance	Structured training improves performance through effectiveness of learning.
Trang & Nguyen (2023)	OJT, organizational motives	Motivation	Employee performance	Training and motives improve performance via motivational pathways.
Robert & Mori (2025)	Training needs assessment	Skills alignment	Employee performance	Proper needs assessment ensures relevant training, boosting performance.
Boakye, Musah & Opoku (2024)	Institutional training & development	Training effectiveness	Employee performance	Institutional training significantly improves competencies and performance.
Yassin & Yimam (2022)	Career development	Job satisfaction	Employee performance	Development opportunities increase satisfaction and performance.
Aman-Ullah et al. (2022)	Human capital (knowledge, skills, experience)	Innovative leadership	Employee performance & organizational performance	Human capital drives performance when supported by innovative leadership
Boakye et al. (2024)	Employability skills	Engagement	Employee performance	Employability skills foster engagement, which mediates performance outcomes.
Al-Qudah et al. (2023)	Industry 4.0 adaptation, robotics	Adaptability	Employee performance	Adaptability to new technologies sustains productivity in Industry 4.0.

A considerable body of research has emphasized organizational support and workplace environment as antecedents of performance. Abdullahi et al. (2024) established that perceived organizational support strongly enhances performance, particularly when mediated by job satisfaction. Similarly, Devi and Selvan (2024) and Awan (2024) argued that workplace conditions, including culture and physical environment, directly shape employee motivation and productivity. Zhenjing et al. (2022) and Noraini et al. (2024) advancing to this understanding by demonstrating that achievement striving and organizational commitment act as mediators between the work environment and employee outcomes, suggesting that supportive environments influence performance both directly and indirectly. These studies converge on the claim that the quality of organizational support and the workplace setting

are crucial determinants of productivity and satisfaction. Another significant stream of literature has focused on leadership-oriented frameworks. Transformational leadership, as explored by Kuntadi et al. (2023), has been shown to improve employee performance via motivation and engagement. In parallel, Latifoglu et al. (2023) highlighted the role of leader Member Exchange (LMX), which increases performance by fostering proactive behavior, particularly in innovative climates. Öngel et al. (2024) extended this perspective into the digital domain, demonstrating that digital leadership exerts its influence on performance primarily through employee creativity, which fully mediates the relationship. Similarly, Wahyudi, Nugraha & Suharto (2023) and Affini et al. (2022) emphasized that Organizational justice, Leadership, Motivation impacts performance through Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), amplifying the relational and behavioral mechanisms linking leaders and employees. Collectively, these frameworks highlight that leadership effectiveness not merely in direction but in the capability to stimulate motivation, creativity, proactivity, and ownership behaviors among employees.

Motivation and well-being emerge as another key domain in performance research. Mehak and Batcha (2023) validated Herzberg's two-factor theory by showing that motivation, compensation, training, and job security substantially enhance employee performance. Building on this, Afrin et al. (2023) and Nusraningrum et al. (2024). demonstrated that motivation operates through green work environments and engagement, showing that sustainability-oriented practices also foster employee outcomes. Ullah et al. (2024) contributed to this argument by revealing that psychological, social, and physical well-being strengthen talent practices, which in turn lead to higher performance. Likewise, Adomako (2023) emphasize the significance of Management By Objectives (MBO), where alignment of organizational goals with individual accountability fosters motivation and performance. Together, these frameworks underline the centrality of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in sustaining high performance. Parallel to leadership and motivation, the role of training and skill development has received widespread attention. Ahmad et al. (2024) and Trang & Nguyen (2023) and Puspitawati et al. (2025) highlighted the role of effective On-Job-Training (OJT), showing that training content, manager support, and organizational motives influence performance through training effectiveness and motivation. Robert and Mori (2025) stressed that training needs assessment is essential to ensuring that skill-building efforts align with employee requirements, which subsequently enhances performance. Complementing this, Boakye, Musah & Opoku (2024) demonstrated that institutional training and career development programs significantly improve competencies and long-term performance. Yassin and Yimam (2022) and Aman-Ullah et al. (2022) also showed that career development strategies such as Human capital knowledge, skills and experience drive outcomes in both educational and industrial contexts. These findings affirm the idea that structured and context-sensitive training frameworks play a pivotal role in shaping sustainable employee performance.

Finally, recent studies have introduced adaptability and employability as critical dimensions within performance frameworks. Boakye et al. (2024) demonstrated that employability skills enhance engagement, which subsequently mediates their impact on performance. Al-Qudah et al. (2023) and Patwary et al. (2024). highlighted adaptability as a central determinant in Industry 4.0 contexts, where employee readiness to work with robotics and automation becomes essential to maintaining productivity. These insights indicate that in technologically

dynamic and uncertain environments, frameworks that emphasize adaptability, learning, and employability are increasingly vital for sustaining the employee or operator performance in today's 4.0 industry.

**Discussion: Identified Gaps Across Frameworks.**

Previous studies have been unable to provide an integrative framework that combines organisational and human dimensions in the automotive component manufacturing sector. For instance, motivation, or On-Job-Training (OJT), often treats these in isolation without accounting for their combined effects under Industry 4.0 pressures toward human-machine effectiveness and to achieve competitiveness.

Overall, the literature reveals that employee performance frameworks are diverse and multifaceted, incorporating organisational support, leadership, motivation, training, well-being, adaptability, and sustainability. Despite this breadth, the frameworks remain fragmented and highly context-specific, often limited to particular industries or cultural settings. What is notable is the gap in an integrative and contextually validated framework for OJP, specifically in automotive component manufacturing in Malaysia, where unique organisational, technological, automotive positive culture, dynamic ethnic culture and workforce dynamics may shape OJP differently. Addressing this gap would not only contribute to theory development but also provide practical guidance for an industry central to Malaysia's component manufacturing industrial growth.

**Implications for Automotive Component Manufacturing in Malaysia**

The review of employee performance frameworks reveals important implications for Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing sector, where (OJP) is vital due to its dependency on semi-skilled labor, global competition, and Industry 4.0 transformation pressures. Research shows that organizational support and workplace conditions strongly shape motivation, satisfaction, and productivity (Abdullahi et al., 2024; Devi & Selvan, 2024), suggesting that improving safety, ergonomics, and culture in manufacturing plants can directly enhance operator outcomes. Leadership also emerges as a critical factor, as transformational, digital, and relational leadership styles foster motivation, creativity, and proactive behaviors (Kuntadi et al., 2023; Öngel et al., 2024), which are increasingly needed in an industry facing automation and innovation challenges. Motivation, whether through fair compensation, welfare, or engagement with green practices, is shown to strengthen employee commitment and sustain high performance (Mehak & Batcha, 2023; Afrin et al., 2023), aligning with Malaysia's push toward sustainable manufacturing. Training and skill development represent another central pillar, with evidence that effective OJT, career development, and rotation programs significantly enhance adaptability and long-term performance (Ahmad et al., 2024; Aman-Ullah et al. 2022). This is especially relevant for Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing supply chain, which requires continuous upskilling to maintain global competitiveness. Furthermore, studies on employability and adaptability underline the importance of equipping employees with Industry 4.0-ready skills and resilience to cope with robotics and automation (Boakye et al., 2024; Al-Qudah et al., 2023). Latest update by Tatiparti, Goli & Reddy (2025) on their finding the AI in talent management enhances performance through preselection, organizational culture, and workload reduction. Collectively, these findings suggest that for Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing sector, a context-specific framework should integrate supportive

environments, adaptive leadership, motivation systems, and structured training while embedding sustainability and adaptability. Such a framework would not only close existing gaps in generic models but also provide a strategic blueprint to boost operator job productivity to ensure resilience, and sustain Malaysia's position in the global automotive component manufacturer supply chain.

### **Conclusion & Future Directions**

This paper contributes by synthesising fragmented insights into a direction for a context-specific framework for Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing industry. Its motivation lies in addressing a clear gap between theory and practice, while its contribution is both academic in advancing integrative frameworks specifically on theory and practical in guiding industries' policymakers in enhancing competitiveness, the operation management in operators' efficiency improvement and the future research direction of this industry.

The synthesis of the existing research frameworks reveals that employee and operator performance is shaped by multifaceted factors spanning organizational support, leadership, motivation, training, and adaptability. While these frameworks provide valuable insights, they remain fragmented and context-specific, lacking integrative models that can account for the complexities of different industrial settings. In particular, Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing industry, with its reliance on semi-skilled labor, exposure to global competition, and the demands of Industry 4.0, requires an operator performance framework that is both theoretically robust and empirically validated in context. Future research should move beyond generic constructs and prioritize the development of contextually grounded frameworks that capture the mediating and moderating roles of variables such as creativity, proactive behavior, digital adaptability, and sustainability practices. Methodologically, longitudinal and mixed-method approaches would be crucial to uncover causal pathways and dynamic interactions between organizational practices and employee outcomes, while cross-sectoral comparisons could help test the generalizability of existing models. Additionally, there is a need to integrate technological factors such as automation, robotics, and digital leadership operator job performance frameworks to reflect the realities of modern manufacturing. Scholars should also explore the intersection of human and technological dimensions, particularly how training, employability, and well-being interact with digital transformation to sustain performance. Addressing these gaps will not only advance theoretical discourse on employee performance but also provide empirically tested frameworks with practical relevance, offering strategic insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to strengthen the resilience and global competitiveness of Malaysia's automotive component manufacturing sector.

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