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# Moderating effect of psychological contract on job performance

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**Abstract**---The objective of this study is to address the questions related to the determinants of job performance and to test the moderating role of psychological contract between employee engagement and job satisfaction. The study followed a quantitative cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between the variables. A sample size of 1000 members from 20 automobile companies from Uttarakhand state was used. Substantiating the role of social exchange theory, the study results indicate that employee engagement and job satisfaction significantly contribute to job performance in the automobile sector. The moderating effect of psychological contract also reports partial mediation among employee engagement and job satisfaction on job performance. The research delivers valuable insight to managers and leaders about the significance of employee-engagement, job-satisfaction, and psychological contracts to ensure better job performance in the automobile manufacturing sectors.

**Keywords**---employee engagement, job satisfaction, psychological contract, job performance.

## **Introduction**

Employee engagement among researchers has become a popular topic over past decades (Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Saks, 2006; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wollard, 2011), although there is still considerable confusion about the real meaning of employee engagement. According to Buckingham and Coffman (1999) employee engagement can be defined as "the right people in the right roles with the right managers". Employee engagement is one of the most discussed and challenging aspects faced by the most companies in today's corporate world. Engaged employee is the one who is emotionally and intellectually connected to the organization, who feels enthusiastic and committed for his goals and can go to extra mile beyond their basic needs. Employees who are not engaged, they should only focus on tasks rather than the goals and results of the organization. Unhappy, disengaged employees have an adverse impact on the organization, as customers get an adverse feeling which affect the performance and productivity level of employees and also hampers organizational performance. Disengaged employees are unhappy or dissatisfied in the workplace. Disengaged employees display their attitudes through their working habits, interaction with co-workers and customers, as their mood and state of mind affect all these interactions (Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wollard, 2011).

Employees play a vital role in any organization's success. Therefore, investing in employees should be a priority for any organization. A demotivated work force can lead to worker dissatisfaction. The element of dissatisfaction among the workforce can further cause fruitless tendencies comprising of higher charges, business slump and ultimately negative impact on the economy of the country. A demotivated workforce led to dissatisfaction and low level of commitment among employees, ultimately leading to potential consequences of unproductive trends including higher costs, business slump and eventually negative influence on the national economy.

Therefore, the most valuable-added assets, the current workforce, must be maintained and sustained, with the main requirement being to satisfy them. Studies have found that companies that outshine in issues of member's satisfaction, decreased labour turnover by 50 % from the current standards, boost buyer satisfaction almost at by an average of 95 % and reduced cost of labour 12 % (Carpitella, 2003). Job satisfaction is associated with the negative and positive feelings people have about the organisation, and it is felt by members in the organisation at certain point and situation (Davis, Nestrom 1985).

With regards to the automobile industry, the present research explores employee engagement and satisfaction as a measure to investigate job performance. A plethora of literature exists on employee engagement, employee satisfaction, and job performance. The previous literature explored various factors to determine job performance. There are various investigations that have analyzed the association among employee satisfaction and employee engagement with reference to different industries' job performance. But hardly any research is available that focuses on these three constructs together with reference to the automobile industry. Thus, the research studies the association between employee satisfaction and employee engagement on job performance in the automobile industry.

### **Research questions**

1. Does any association exist among employee engagement, job satisfaction, psychological contract, and job performance?
2. Is there a role for psychological contract in the association among employee engagement and job performance?
3. Is there a role for psychological contract in the association among job satisfaction and job performance?

### **Hypothesis-based literature Employee engagement and job performance**

Motivated workforces are an asset to any organisation, since they are not only focused on realising the set organisational goals but also motivate their coworkers in similar ways. Beyond their working hours and oriented functional responsibilities, motivate employees are showing their work involvement which is obviously of high value and emotionally well connected (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, (2014). Previous research findings have established a direct and positive relationship of employee engagement with performance, productivity, low employee turnover, and job involvement (Hallberg & Schaufeli 2006, Saks, 2006, Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2001, Demerouti, & Cropanzano, 2010). Even though such positive results are reported by many scholars, some are not agreed with the notion that employee engagement inspires business success and sighted insignificant relation between engagement and job performance (Ro, & Lee, 2017). This indicates that the past findings establishing relation among employee engagement and job performances are inconsistent. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formed.

H1. Employee engagement is strongly associated to job performance in automobile manufacturing units.

### **Job satisfaction and job performance**

Job satisfaction is associated with the feelings and emotions of employees towards the work they are engaged in (Guan et al., 2014; Brief, 1998). Previous research findings have established inconsistent results in establishing the association among job satisfaction and organisational performance. Research result of Fu & Deshpande, (2014) in this context reports that that job satisfaction noticeably leads to job performance. A significant correlation is established between job satisfaction and job performance by several research findings (Torlak & Kuzey, 2019, Ramezani et al., 2018, Durrah et al., 2016;). However, such findings are not supported by several other scholars (Tsui et al., 2013, Luring & Selmer, 2018; Fu & Deshpande, 2014), who have established an insignificant or no relationship between the two factors. This indicates that research scholars are not consistent in establishing the association among job satisfaction and job performance. Especially in the automobile industry, such observations have less consensus. Thus, the subsequent supposition is formed:

H2. Job satisfaction is strongly associated to job performance in automobile manufacturing units.

### **Psychological contract and job performance**

Social exchange theory postulates that people are associated with each other not only for financial gains but also to make use of social resources (Blau, 1964). Earlier studies on effect of psychological contract have given an idea that relational contract positively explains its association with job performance and tenure, in comparison with transactional contract, which establishes a negative relationship to it (Rousseau, 1990, Millward & Hopkins, 1998;). Those employees positively align themselves with the relational contract have an open-ended and broad interaction and interrelation with organisations set goals. They don't merely engage themselves for the financial gains, rather show their close relationship with coworkers, organisation, and job (Cavanaugh & Noe, 1999; Rousseau & McLean, 1993, Morrison & Robinson, 1997). When organisations and work context satisfy the relational expectations of the employees they are blogged for a reciprocal emotion (Gouldner, 1960). Such social and emotional contract are stronger inner feelings, that contributes to job and organisational performance (Uddin et al., 2019, Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Based on such arguments, the following assumption is formed.

H3. Psychological contracts are strongly associated to job performance in automobile manufacturing units.

### **Moderating relationship of employee engagement psychological contract, and job performance**

Several past research scholars have established the association among psychological contract and job performance in various sectors (Wells et al., 2021, Millward & Hopkins, 1998; Shigihara, 2018; Rousseau, 1990, Borman and Motowidlo (1997), Suazo, 2009). Scholars have established positive as well as negative relationships between employee engagement and job performance (Torlak & Kuzey, 2019, Ramezani et al., 2018, Durrah et al., 2016; Tsui et al., 2013, Luring & Selmer, 2018; Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Though such studies established direct relationships, hardly any studies positioned psychological contracts as a moderator among employee engagement and job performance. It is assumed in this context that job performance will be varied with the introduction of the psychological contract as a moderator in the middle of employee engagement and job performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is formed.

H5. Psychological contract moderates the association among employee engagement and job performance.

### **Moderating relationship of job satisfaction, psychological contract, and job performance all have a moderating relationship**

Establishing a proper moderator is an important factor in this study that projects a clearer understanding about the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance (Judge et al., 2001). Though Former researches have evidently revealed the positive and negative relationship between job satisfaction and job performance in various sectors (Kuzey, 2019, Ramezani et al., 2018; Torlak & Fu & Deshpande, 2014; Tsui et al., 2013, Durrah et al., 2016; Luring & Selmer, 2018;), its moderating relationship with psychological contract is less explored into. Psychological contract in several research act as moderator between the

independent and depended on factors (Raja et al., 2011, Montes and Irving 2008, ; Rousseau & McLean-Parks, 1993). It is assumed in this context that job performance will be varied with the introduction of psychological contract as a moderator among job satisfaction and job performance. Thus, the following hypothesis is formed.

H5. Psychological contract moderates the association among job satisfaction and job performance

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The design of the research answers the questions posed in this research and through assumptions. The current research applied a quantitative cross-sectional study design to test the suppositions. The gathered data was examined applying SEM. A quantitative researcher seeks cases and facts from external views, and this method would ensure that the study is conducted in a realistic or natural situation and preclude the need to establish the causal priorities of dependent and dependent variables.

### **Sampling**

The automobile companies selected for this study is made up of various departments i.e. (Human resource, marketing, finance and accounting, operations, purchase and store, quality, maintenance, production). The present study has taken 20 automobile companies from Uttarakhand state. The estimated number of employees in each company provided by the HR manager is 50-55. The researcher adopts proportionate stratified random sampling method to select 55 employees across various departments in each of the automobile company. The researcher distributed 1100 self-administrated questionnaire to the selected population, with each company receiving 55 questionnaires out of which 1062 were retrieved with 96.5 percent response rate. The final analysis was done using 1000 respondents as there are some errors and incomplete information in some questionnaire.

### **Measurements of construct after Pilot Testing with reliability**

Table 1 below exhibits the values connected to final measurements on constructs selected for the study, the number of items in the questionnaire, the differential scale used, the reliability value Cronbach alpha, and the authors' details from whom the research instruments were adapted.

Table 1  
Measurements on constructs

No	Instrument	No of Questions	Scale	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Author
1	Employee engagement	13		0.811	May et al. (2004)
2	Job satisfaction	36	5-point	0.803	Spector, 1997
3	Psychological contract (Transactional and relational)	18	scale	0.823	Millward and Hopkins (1998),
4	Job performance (Task and contextual) IWPS.	32		0.790	Bernaards, Koopmans, Van Buuren Van der Beek, De Vet, Hildebrandt, (2015)

The study finally proposed 99 items under four (4) constructs that were considered. The internal consistency, reliability was medium to high-level for the instruments noted with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.790–0.8231 supporting the minimum criteria of 0.60 (Hair and Anderson, 1998).

### Validity Analysis

In order to determine the exactness of the measurements used, current research employed validity analysis. The content validity is performed through 10 specialists. All the terms within the items are perfectly evaluated for its appropriateness to try for pilot assessment in order to make sure the item difficulties and item easiness. Hair, Sarstedt. Hopkins & Kuppelwieser (2014) proposed utilizing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as it has come to be a common procedure. In this context, (Hair et al., 2014) clearly states that the AVE of every latent construct ought to be considerably bigger than 0.50, for establishing satisfactory convergent validity The subsequent table offers the particulars of justifying the convergent validity on the concept point.

Table 2  
Convergent validity justification

Measurement	Item	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Employee engagement		0.812	0.902	0.903	0.828
Job satisfaction		0.832	0.901	0.923	0.819
Psychological contract		0.867	0.922	0.906	0.778
Job performance		0.789	0.914	0.919	0.791

Table 2, implies the advantages of AVE were in the standard scale between 0.778 and 0.828 indicative of an acceptable convergent validity. Therefore, the convergent validity was established.

Table 3  
Discriminant Validity – Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio

Factor	Employee engagement	Job satisfaction	Psychological contract	Job performance
Employee engagement	0.800			
Job satisfaction	0.779	0.731		
Psychological contract	0.832	0.789	0.799	
Job performance	0.744	0.800	0.780	0.712

HTMT value of each construct incorporated in the model is lesser extent than the necessary critical values of 0.85 (Kline, 2011) and 0.90 (Gold, Malhotra & Segars, 2001). Table 3 clearly also indicates values lower than 1 for each construct. Based on the table result it is confirmed that all the constructs incorporated in the research meet the discriminant validity (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt 2015).

### Reliability

Based on the questionnaire adopted, table 3 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha for the employee engagement is 0.81, job satisfaction is .77, psychological contract is 0.83, and job performance is .74. As it is evidenced from the table, all the scores constructs meet the standard values Cronbach's Alpha expected that exceeds 0.7 (Nunnally, 1970). Consequently, it is understood that the internal consistency of this instrument is good quality.

### Analysis and Result

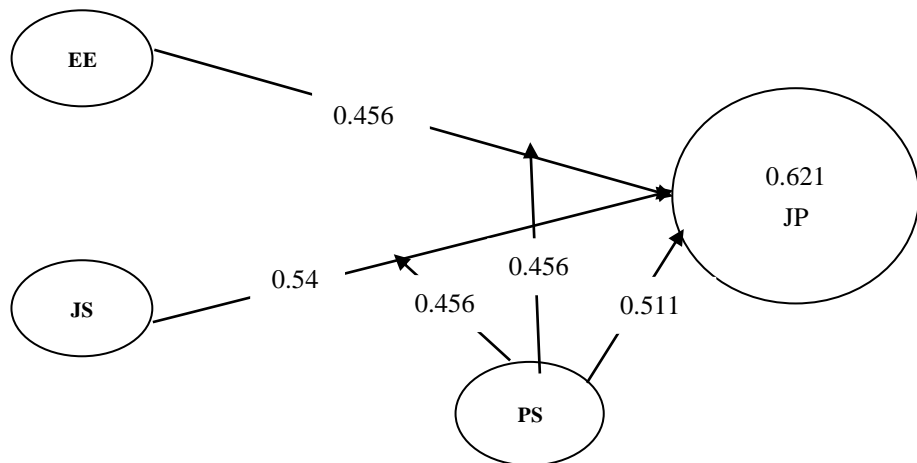


Figure 1. Structural frame

Table 4  
Outcomes of direct hypothesis

Interaction		Beta ( $\beta$ )		<i>t-Value</i>	<i>p-Value</i>	<i>R<sup>2</sup> Value</i>
Employee engagement	→ Job performance (IS)	0.456		2.012	0.021	0.621
Job satisfaction	→ Switch over intention (IS)	0.433		2.389	0.012	
Psychological contract	→ Switch over intention (IS)	0.511		2.782	0.031	

Significant level= \* $p < 0.05$ ,  $t > 1.65$

Table 4 suggests the findings of the suppositions testing with SmartPLS path model evaluation. Three key explanations are: To begin, employee engagement has a positive and important association with job performance (= 0.456;  $t = 2.012$ ), implying that H1 is supported. Second, job satisfaction has a positive and statistically confirmed association with job performance (= 0.433;  $t = 2.389$ ), indicating that H2 is supported. Furthermore, psychological contract has a positive and significant connection with job performance (= 0.511;  $t = 2.78$ ), supporting H3. The SmartPLS path model analysis includes employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological contract, which account for 62.1 percent of the change in job performance.

Table 5  
Outcomes of indirect hypothesis

Interaction	Direct Effect $\beta$	<i>t-Value</i>	Significant ( $p > 0.05$ )	Indirect Effect $\beta$	<i>t-Value</i>	Significant ( $p > 0.05$ )	Effect
EE → JP	0.490	2.023	Yes ( $p = 0.000$ )	0.309	1.678	Yes ( $p = 0.000$ )	Partial Mediation Complimentary
JS → JP	0.421	2.456	Yes ( $p = 0.000$ )	0.356	1.409	Yes ( $p = 0.000$ )	Partial Mediation Complimentary

Table 5 reveals the test results for suppositions 5 and 6. The assessment decisions indicate an indirect association of psychological contract among the employee engagement and the job performance, which is partially significant (0.309,  $p < 0.01$ ). The results also show an indirect psychological contract association between job satisfaction and the job performance, which is partially significant (0.309,  $p < 0.01$ ). Chin (1998), in this context proposes that the R-squared values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 in PLS-SEM be able to be counted as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. Surprisingly, the association scores among employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological contract on job performance have decreased but remain significant as complementary.

## Discussion

The purpose of this research is to explore the association among employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological contract on job performance in the automobile industries. All the direct effect observations clearly indicate that there is a strong and positive association between employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological contract on job performance. The indirect effect of psychological contract also had a partial moderating impact in its association with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and job performance.

The current study observed a positive and direct association among employee engagement and job performance. Previous studies have observed a strong relationship between these variables (Carter et al., 2018, Christian et al., 2011, Bakker & Bal, 2010). Such studies have pointed out the fact that the higher the employee's commitment to their work, the better their job performance will be. Employee engagement is a workplace factor that reflects the employees' feelings of attachment to the work and their motivation to accomplish the task provided with the best of their knowledge and skills. Employee engagement is a strong factor determining the accomplishment of organisational objectives. Once obtained, the study finding confirms such observations in the automobile sector, establishing the relationship between these factors (Kim et al., 2013; Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014).

Enhancing and increasing the job performance of staff and workers in organisations has constantly been a vital question for companies. Research findings also support the fact that there is a strong association among job satisfaction and job performance. A few of the major organisational factors which ensure companies' growth are job satisfaction and job performance. Job satisfaction is a pleasant poignant state that members derive from their job when they are at work. Once their expectations related to the tasks are evidently met, they feel satisfied at work. The study is in line with several past observations linking job satisfaction and job performance (Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer, Mueller, & Hulin, 2017, Choi, & Ha, 2018.) The current study does not follow the negative findings established by several authors in the past (Fu & Deshpande, 2014; Luring & Selmer, 2018; Tsui et al., 2013). The study outcomes are useful for executives in the automobile industry to improve their plans and deal with the satisfaction and performance of their workforce.

One of the major attitudinal and behavioural variables that has been shown to have an effect on job performance is psychological contract (De vos 2002). Several past research scholars have shown their keen interest in looking into this relationship and established the fact that there is a robust connection among psychological contract and job performance (Raiden, Dainty, and Neale, 2006), Rousseau, 1995, Coyle-shapiro & Kessler, 2000, Guest & Conway, 2000). The current finding is in tune with those scholars who have established a positive and direct relationship between psychological contract and job performance. This implies that careful thought and ensuring psychological contract expectations are critical to the success of any organization. A better employee relations strategy ensures a better psychological contract between managers and employees, which ensures better job performance. Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005) found social

exchange theory (SET) to be an important theory for explaining contractual interrelations and positive understanding of workplace behaviours.

Recent research also investigated the moderating effect of psychological contracts in their relationships with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and job performance. The study findings indicate that there is partial moderation among the constructs. Previous study findings state that the breach of a psychological contract may have an adversative impact on the employee–employer bond (Rousseau, 1995). Employment relations are considered by the workers' views that the employees and the firms have shared responsibilities. Accordingly, the psychological contract is perceived as wider and more hidden in relation to the official contract (Kickul & Lester, 2001). In this research, the psychological contract partially influences job performance, and this indicates that any breach of the psychological contract will lead to statistically substantial reductions in job performance. The worker's cognition and emotional responses are displayed in the form of various reactions (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Better organisational health and performance necessitate a sound psychological contract between employees and employers.

The psychological contract's moderating effect also established a partial relationship with job satisfaction and job performance. When employees and employers' expectations linked to their day-to-day tasks are satisfied, job performance is supposed to be better and satisfaction levels are anticipated to be high (Statt, 2004, Armstrong, 2006). However, if the employees feel that their demands related to work are not met by the employers, obviously it will lead to a state of disappointment and can cause a reciprocal negative emotional response towards the job demands. (1999, Millward & Brewerton). According to Guest and Conway (2000), psychological contracts are employees' beliefs concerning mutual commitments. Relational contracts will be affected when employees' needs are not met. Employers need to stress the significance of mutual obligations to develop a strong work environment in an organisation.

## **Implications**

### **Practical implications**

The study has extended several findings, exploring the behavioural factors determining job performance. As it is observed, job performance is affected by employee engagement and job satisfaction. The study provides several consequences for organisations relating to the variable selected.

First, organisations have to ensure a harmonious environment within the organisation. Employee engagement is possible only when people feel a comfortable work environment within which they work with. How an employee treats within the organisation and how they are motivated through work and organisational factors that decides the psychological contract between them and organisation. Several past studies clearly shows that work engagement as well as a positive attitude is the resultant outcome of better psychological contract (Bal, De Cooman & Mol (2013). Workforces become more inspired to capitalize their energy and support further to the company, signifying greater degree of employee engagement (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014, p. 4). A perception of breach of contract

related to work-oriented factors can lead to negative attitude towards the organisation and low level of job satisfaction. One of the major consequences is both the staffs and the organisation may suffer in the long term.

Organizations can attract and retain employees with proper relational and functional contracts. In addition to such contracts, human resources departments can support employees by extending a better understanding of the contracts by clarifying all possible benefits within the organisational rules and regulations. They can also arrange appropriate one-on-one meetings with the staff members as well as online and offline organisational communication measures through which employees' anxieties can be reduced, ultimately ensuring better job satisfaction. Previous studies have found that employees can avoid negative feelings towards the organisation by listening to their employees' anxieties and clarifying with evidence how the condition is beyond their direct control (Zottoli, 2003). Effective training and development programmes can also be augmented to employees and managers at all levels, supporting them to deal with workers' reactions and feelings such as anger, stress, and depression (Smits & Pace, 1992).

Third, it is recommended that psychological contracts should become part of a organisations inclusive business strategy and be accomplished in configuration with the corporation's overall corporate strategy (Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni, 1994, Ployhart, Van Iddekinge & MacKenzie, 2011). Even partial attainment of psychological contracts in organisations may support in rebuilding employees' confidence in management. If the management consistently rubbishes to achieve the promises, no matter what clarifications it offers, negative work consequences will be unavoidable. Two prominent factors like employee engagement and job satisfaction are thus well moderated by the psychological contract in its relationship with job performance. A positive attitude towards the work and organisation can lead to better job performance and it can be ensured by proper psychological contract between employees and employers.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The study findings related to four organisational behaviour variables have facilitated advancement of the body of knowledge, especially related to the automobile industry. Following the social exchange theory, the research has proved a significant relationship between the constructs. Psychological contract has emerged as a significant factor that has demonstrated a direct and indirect relationship with the dependent variable job performance to the point, the theory of the psychological contract has shown its close association with the feelings and emotions of the two parties involved, and it has a high effect on satisfaction, engagement, and job performance. The research has established a strong direct connection among employee engagement and job satisfaction with psychological contract. This indicates that the functional and relational contracts influence the employees' cognitive levels and lead to several organisational outcomes like job performance. The contractual obligations thus display as an important factor, which is subjective, and one of the parties contemplates that the other party has not sufficiently completed the commitments assured (Robinson, 1996). In reality, its impact extends to the individual's perception of the firm, influencing trust in

the company and the opinion of impartiality in the work bond (Cantisano et al., 2008). This research analytically contributes to the psychological contract knowledge base by verifying that employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological contract positively influence job performance. The study recalls positive attention among organisational leaders and managers about the important role played by employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological contract for better organisational outcomes.

### **Limitations of the study**

A study was conducted in the automobile manufacturing units in the Dehradun area of Uttarakhand, India. Hence, the results cannot be generalized to automobile manufacturing units. To increase the external validity of the findings, the study sampling should be expanded to cover a broader geographic area. Further, the study could not integrate qualitative research observations with in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations. Hence, more studies need to be conducted with mixed methods research to ensure proper external validity of findings, which come from qualitative and quantitative research. Additionally, the current research also suggests that a greater depth of understanding of variations in generations can also provide better insight into concepts like job satisfaction, employee engagement, and psychological contract in the automobile manufacturing sector.

### **Conclusion**

The objective of this research was to evaluate whether employee engagement and job satisfaction have an effect on job performance in the automobile manufacturing sector. There is a research gap observed by the investigators in the automobile manufacturing sectors regarding insights related to employee engagement and job satisfaction, which have an impact on job performance. Few studies have been conducted to examine the role of psychological contracting as a moderator. The study findings clearly indicate that employee engagement and job satisfaction have an effect on job performance. The psychological contract partially moderates the relationships. The observations extended in this research can provide valuable insight to managers and leaders about the importance of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological contracts to ensure better job performance in the automobile manufacturing sectors. Future research should concentrate on variations in related organizational, generational, and socio-demographic factors in order to ensure better job performance within the organization.

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