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The Autodidact Paradox: Structural Barriers and Career Stagnation Among Fixed-Term Employees

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Abstract

Purpose – This research intends to examine how support from supervisors affects career development prospects for fixed-term employees (PKWT).

Methodology – This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method. Data were gathered through interviews and in person observations. The participants included three temporary employees and one supervisor.

Findings – Support from supervisors was given through guidance, motivation, work assessments, and help with completing tasks. Nevertheless, numerous employees believed that this support had not significantly aided their professional growth due to a scarcity of training, promotion opportunities, and changes in employment status. Furthermore, several barriers were recognized, such as company regulations, restricted employment quotas, and a lack of clarity in the career development framework for fixed-term employees. The research also indicated that supervisor support affected employee motivation, although there were variations in how informants viewed the support they received.

Implications – This research aims to guide organizations in developing more equitable and transparent career advancement policies for employees on fixed-term contracts.

Originality – This research investigates the influence of supervisor support on career advancement opportunities for fixed-term workers, utilizing a qualitative methodology based on the viewpoints of employees and supervisors.

Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive business environment, organizations are required to maintain the quality of their human resources in order to support sustainable company performance. Supervisor support is considered one of the key factors that can enhance employee motivation, work performance, and career opportunities. Several previous studies have demonstrated that supervisor support positively contributes to career achievement, competency improvement, and employee engagement in the workplace. According to [Farla et al. \(2020\)](#), employees who receive positive support from their supervisors tend to show better motivation and stronger commitment toward their work responsibilities.

Career development is also recognized as one of the essential needs of employees because it contributes to reducing turnover intention and improving employee retention within organizations. [Putra et al. \(2020\)](#) explained that employees who are given opportunities for career growth are generally more likely to remain committed to the company. This chapter discusses several important concepts related to supervisor support, career development, and previous studies that examined the relationship between these variables and employee motivation and performance. Nevertheless, previous studies have rarely focused specifically on

fixed term employees (PKWT), creating a research gap regarding how supervisor support influences their career development opportunities.

When organizations provide access to training programs, coaching opportunities, and transparent promotion pathways, employees tend to feel appreciated and become more motivated to contribute positively to the company. However, previous studies have shown that contract employees or fixed term employees often encounter barriers in career development and promotion opportunities. [Marcella & Ie \(2022\)](#) highlighted that contract employees frequently experience uncertainty regarding career advancement and employment status changes.

This phenomenon is also experienced by fixed term employees. Although previous studies have identified the positive relationship between supervisor support and career development, only a limited number of studies specifically discuss its impact on PKWT employees, especially within the studied organization, where employees still face difficulties in obtaining promotion opportunities and transitioning into permanent employment status. Therefore, the research gap in this study lies in the limited understanding of how supervisor support may create career development opportunities for fixed term employees in the company.

Supervisor support is believed to be one of the strategic factors that may help fixed term employees obtain better career opportunities through guidance, recommendations, and objective performance evaluations. Positive relationships between supervisors and subordinates have been proven to improve employee engagement, work performance, and positive perceptions regarding career pathways. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by [Kamara et al., 2024](#). In addition, [Sudibyo et al. \(2026\)](#) highlighted that a participative leadership style and a supportive organizational culture are crucial elements in strengthening the overall control environment and institutional effectiveness.

Based on the phenomena and previous findings described above, although many studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between supervisor support and career development, very few have specifically examined its impact on fixed term employees within the studied organization, particularly those facing obstacles related to promotion and employment status transitions. Therefore, this study is considered relevant in addressing this research gap. Most previous studies focused mainly on permanent employees, whereas this study specifically examines fixed term employees at the selected company. This research is important because it aims to explore the role of supervisor support in creating career opportunities for employees with more flexible employment status. However, this study also has limitations because the participants are limited to fixed term employees within this specific organizational context, which may not fully represent conditions in other organizations. Therefore, further understanding is needed regarding how supervisor support influences career development opportunities for PKWT employees in this organization.

The main problems examined in this study include the forms of supervisor support received by fixed term employees at the studied organization and employee perceptions regarding organizational fairness in career development processes. This study also aims to analyze the role of supervisor support in opening career development opportunities for PKWT employees, who often experience difficulties in obtaining promotions and permanent employment status. In addition, this study identifies factors that hinder career development processes and employment status transitions among fixed term employees in the company.

This study aims to describe the forms of supervisor support received by fixed term employees at the selected company and to reveal employee perceptions regarding organizational fairness in career development processes, particularly related to promotion opportunities and employment status transitions. Furthermore, this study seeks to examine the extent to which supervisor support influences career development opportunities for PKWT employees whose career paths are often limited due to their employment status. The study also identifies factors that hinder career development and opportunities for becoming permanent employees within the organization. It is expected that the findings of this study will provide useful contributions for companies in designing fairer and more transparent career development policies for contract employees.

Finally, this study is expected to contribute to the development of human resource management knowledge, particularly in the areas of supervisor support, work motivation, and career development for fixed term employees. In addition, the findings are expected to provide valuable insights for the management of the studied organization in developing fairer and more transparent career development policies that may improve employee motivation and retention. More broadly, this study is also expected to offer practical

recommendations for other organizations in creating work environments that support career development opportunities for employees with flexible employment status in the workplace.

Literature Review

Supervisor Support in Employee Career Development

Supervisor support plays an important role in employee career development within an organization. According to the study conducted by [Farla et al. \(2020\)](#), support provided by supervisors can improve employee motivation, enhance work performance, and contribute to career development. Such support may include work guidance, training opportunities, and constructive feedback regarding employee performance. Employees who feel appreciated and supported by their supervisors tend to demonstrate stronger commitment toward their work and greater willingness to improve their skills and competencies. This finding is also supported by the study conducted by [Marcella & Ie, 2022](#).

Furthermore, research conducted by [Pritami et al. \(2023\)](#) strengthened this perspective by revealing that supervisor support has a significant influence on employee wellbeing and performance. Employees who receive positive support from their supervisors are generally more motivated and productive, which eventually contributes to better overall job performance.

In addition, [Agusti et al. \(2025\)](#) examined the influence of teamwork, supervisor support, and career development on employee work motivation at PT Ciomas Adisatwa. Their study found that teamwork had a significant effect on employee motivation, while supervisor support and career development did not show a partially significant influence. However, collectively, these three factors contributed to improving employee motivation in the workplace.

In this study, the researcher assumes that supervisor support has an important role in creating career development opportunities for fixed term employees (PKWT) at the studied organization. The support may take the form of guidance, training opportunities, and constructive feedback that help employees improve their competencies and work performance. Positive relationships between supervisors and employees, along with clear career development policies, are believed to help overcome obstacles frequently experienced by fixed term employees, such as limited promotion opportunities and difficulties in obtaining permanent employee status. Therefore, this study aims to explore more deeply how supervisor support may create better career opportunities for employees with flexible employment status such as PKWT employees. A better understanding of this issue is expected to assist companies in formulating more effective career development policies, particularly for contract employees.

Based on the conceptual framework described above, this study focuses on the forms of supervisor support received by fixed term employees within the company and how such support influences their career development opportunities. In addition, this study also examines employee perceptions regarding organizational fairness in career development and the challenges faced by PKWT employees in obtaining promotion opportunities and permanent employment status.

The Influence of Supervisor Support on Employee Motivation and Performance

A positive relationship between supervisors and employees may improve not only job satisfaction but also employee motivation and performance. Research conducted by [Kamara et al. \(2024\)](#) found that supportive relationships with supervisors increase employee work engagement and encourage employees to achieve their career goals. Supervisor support can also improve employee selfconfidence, which eventually contributes to better job performance.

Similarly, the study conducted by [Rahmayani & Wikaningrum \(2022\)](#) emphasized that supervisor support has a positive impact on employee performance. Recognition of employee achievements and constructive feedback make employees feel appreciated and motivated to contribute more effectively to organizational goals. Therefore, supervisor support plays an essential role in strengthening employee commitment and improving work performance.

Another study conducted by [He et al. \(2024\)](#) revealed that career support from supervisors significantly contributes to employee wellbeing. Through the social cognitive career theory approach, the study found that career support provided by supervisors improves employee wellbeing through career prospects and employee confidence in their work abilities. Such support is considered essential in increasing employee motivation and performance in the workplace. Furthermore, contemporary findings by [Sudibyo et](#)

[al. \(2026\)](#) demonstrate that participative leadership styles combined with a robust organizational culture positively and significantly affect operational effectiveness, reinforcing the importance of transparency and inclusivity within the management structure

Career Development of Fixed term Employees (PKWT)

Although many previous studies have focused on the career development of permanent employees, only a limited number of studies discuss career development opportunities for contract employees or fixed term employees (PKWT). Fixed term employees often face various barriers in developing their careers, including limited promotion opportunities and difficulties in obtaining permanent employment status. [Putra et al. \(2020\)](#) found that limited career development opportunities among PKWT employees may contribute to high turnover intention, which could negatively affect employee retention within companies.

In addition, research conducted by [Muawanah et al. \(2022\)](#) revealed that organizational support and clear career development opportunities can improve employee performance. Employees who are given opportunities to grow through training programs and supervisor guidance tend to demonstrate higher motivation and better work outcomes.

Moreover, according to [Nasution et al. \(2018\)](#), career development has a significant influence on employee performance. Their study indicated that employees who receive opportunities to participate in training programs and seminars generally show higher work motivation, which contributes positively to their overall performance. Organizational support was also found to significantly influence employee performance, as supervisor attention and supportive work environments help increase employee loyalty and productivity.

Likewise, [Bhawna et al. \(2024\)](#) investigated how career development and organizational support affect subjective career success, with career commitment acting as a mediating variable. Their findings revealed that perceived organizational support positively affects subjective career success, whereas career development, although positive, did not demonstrate statistically significant results.

Furthermore, [Budiyanto \(2025\)](#) explained that career development plays a major role in improving employee performance, particularly in government institutions. Employees who receive career development opportunities such as training and seminars tend to experience higher job satisfaction and better performance. Supervisor support was also found to strengthen the relationship between career development and employee performance.

Career Development as a Driving Factor of Employee Performance

Research conducted by [Pertiwi & Kasmir \(2025\)](#) found that career development plays a significant role in improving employee performance. Their study highlighted the importance of transformational leadership and organizational support in supporting employee career development, which eventually contributes to sustainable organizational performance.

Similarly, [Williana et al. \(2025\)](#) examined the relationship between career development and organizational support in improving employee performance within the manufacturing sector. They found that employees who have access to career development opportunities tend to be more motivated and demonstrate better performance. In addition, supervisor support in the form of appreciation and concern for employee wellbeing significantly influences employee productivity and organizational commitment.

Barriers to Career Development for Fixed Term Employees

Fixed term employees often perceive that their career development opportunities are limited. This condition is generally caused by uncertainty regarding promotion pathways and the lack of organizational support, including support from supervisors. [Marcella & Ie \(2022\)](#) explained that such barriers frequently arise due to unclear policies regarding promotion opportunities and changes in employment status from contract employees to permanent employees. Similar conditions are also experienced by PKWT employees, where previous studies have shown that although supervisor support positively influences career development, only a few studies specifically discuss its impact on fixed term employees.

In addition, previous studies indicate a significant research gap regarding how supervisor support can create career development opportunities for fixed term employees. Most existing studies focus primarily on permanent employees, while PKWT employees often face different working conditions and career challenges.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the role of supervisor support in helping fixed term employees overcome barriers related to promotion opportunities and career advancement.

Research Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study design to explore the experiences, perceptions, and social context of fixed term employees (PKWT) regarding supervisor support and career development opportunities. According to [Hanyfah et al. \(2022\)](#), descriptive qualitative research can be used to describe, explain, and analyze social phenomena without manipulating the variables being studied. The data collection process in this study was carried out directly through interviews and field observations.

Furthermore, the descriptive qualitative approach emphasizes understanding the social and organizational context in greater depth, allowing researchers to capture more complex aspects such as employee feelings, attitudes, and interactions between supervisors and employees. This method was considered appropriate because the study not only aimed to identify the influence of supervisor support but also intended to explore how such support is perceived by employees and how it affects their career development opportunities within the company.

In this study, the researcher did not manipulate or control any variables but focused on describing existing conditions based on the perspectives of both employees and supervisors. Therefore, the main focus of this research was to examine how supervisor support influences career development opportunities for fixed term employees.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered from in depth interviews with fixed term employees (PKWT) and a supervisor. The analysis is structured into four primary themes that emerged from the data: (1) The Dichotomy of Supervisor Subordinate Relationships, (2) Operational vs. Developmental Support, (3) Systemic Barriers in Career Advancement, and (4) The Perceptual Divergence on Meritocracy. Following the presentation of these results, a critical discussion synthesizes these findings with existing literature to provide broader theoretical and managerial implications.

Results

The Dichotomy of Supervisor Subordinate Relationships

The findings derived from the interviews illuminate a profoundly fragmented perception among fixed term employees concerning the quality and underlying nature of their relationships with direct supervisors. Rather than experiencing a unified organizational culture, the workplace dynamic appears to be heavily contingent upon individual supervisory leadership styles and the varying expectations of the employees themselves. On one end of the spectrum, certain employees perceive the relationship as strictly transactional and rigidly hierarchical, highlighting a distinct absence of genuine leadership responsibility. Within this context, the supervisor is frequently viewed merely as a boss who delegates daily operational tasks to the execution level while primarily functioning in an administrative capacity to drive production targets. Conversely, other informants reported a significantly more constructive and functional dynamic, noting that their supervisors consistently provide essential work directions and offer immediate assistance during operational difficulties. Consequently, this stark dichotomy suggests that while a portion of the temporary workforce enjoys a genuinely supportive environment, others suffer from a severe leadership vacuum where they feel treated as mere operational tools rather than valued team members.

Operational vs. Developmental Support

A critical revelation from this investigation is the sharp distinction between the operational support provided for daily tasks and the developmental support required for long term career mentorship. The empirical data clearly demonstrates that supervisory assistance within the studied organization is overwhelmingly concentrated on immediate, operational needs rather than future oriented professional growth. Supervisors are generally recognized for actively motivating their subordinates to maintain workplace discipline and for guiding them through routine daily production challenges on the factory floor. However, a severe deficit emerges regarding developmental support, as fixed term employees are frequently expected to engage in self directed, autodidactic learning to master complex new machinery without the benefit of formal

training programs. This specific dynamic creates a deeply frustrating paradox for the temporary workforce, who find themselves burdened with the identical responsibilities of permanent staff such as operating critical production machinery yet remain structurally classified merely as auxiliary helpers. Furthermore, managerial personnel explicitly acknowledged this limitation, admitting that their developmental support is largely confined to merely encouraging temporary workers to participate in internal recruitment selections only if a rare quota for permanent staff happens to become available.

Systemic Barriers in Career Advancement

The qualitative data unequivocally points to the existence of severe structural and systemic barriers that actively prevent the career advancement of fixed term personnel within the enterprise. Informants consistently expressed exceptionally high levels of frustration regarding the rigid nature and pervasive opacity of the internal human resource policies governing upward mobility. Consequently, employees overwhelmingly perceive their probability of accessing formal career development programs as being practically nonexistent, a situation that is heavily bottlenecked by highly restrictive departmental regulations. This sense of restricted opportunity is particularly acute within the demanding production environment, where attempting to balance exhausting daily manufacturing targets with individual professional development is viewed as an impossible task. Furthermore, a profound sense of systemic inequality permeates the workplace, primarily because essential training and competency development programs are almost exclusively reserved for the permanent, organic workforce. The company's underlying workforce calculation systems, locally known as the ABK, are widely criticized as being entirely outdated and misaligned with current operational realities, which further cements the stagnant positions of the temporary staff. Ultimately, these structural constraints have cultivated a deep sense of fatalism among the workers; when questioned about their future aspirations, multiple informants bluntly stated they harbored absolutely no hope, anticipating that any professional ambition would inevitably be crushed by the firm's unyielding regulations.

The Perceptual Divergence on Meritocracy

Perhaps the most significant finding derived from this qualitative study is the stark perceptual divergence between managerial figures and their subordinates regarding the actual mechanisms of career advancement. From the perspective of the supervisors, professional progression is viewed almost exclusively through a highly idealized lens of pure meritocracy and individual agency. Managerial personnel firmly believe that upward career potential genuinely exists for fixed term employees, provided these individuals take the independent initiative to elevate their personal competencies by pursuing higher education at the university level. Consequently, supervisors frequently advise their temporary staff to continuously improve both their technical and non-technical skills, assuming that formal educational backgrounds will naturally lead to promotion recommendations. In stark contrast, the temporary employees view career progression not as a simple matter of individual merit, but rather as an institutional impossibility dictated by unyielding structural constraints. While leadership emphasizes personal skill acquisition, the workforce accurately highlights the insurmountable nature of restrictive HR policies, the severe lack of available promotional quotas, and the highly confidential nature of the transition processes. Ironically, even the supervisors ultimately concede that the absolute lack of available quotas for permanent positions remains the primary barrier, a profound admission that inadvertently validates the employees' core argument that personal competence remains strictly secondary to systemic limitations.

Discussion

The primary objective of this research is to thoroughly investigate the intricate dynamics existing between the support provided by supervisors and the available career advancement prospects for fixed term (PKWT) personnel. Through a critical examination of the gathered qualitative data, the current investigation deliberately steps away from the overly simplified, straightforward belief which assumes that interpersonal encouragement automatically translates into employee motivation. Instead, the analysis brings to light an organizational environment that is profoundly fragmented and filled with complex nuances. The empirical findings clearly demonstrate that although interpersonal engagements at the micro level are highly effective at mitigating routine operational pressures on the factory floor, these localized efforts are ultimately rendered ineffective when confronted with inflexible and prejudiced macro level corporate structures. As a direct

result, the ensuing discussion meticulously explores the ways in which the collision between specific leadership behaviors and systemic institutional oversights actively restricts and molds the professional pathways available to temporary workers. Furthermore, this study strongly argues that the traditional understanding of what constitutes support in the field of human resource management requires a fundamental and radical reassessment, particularly when it is being applied to vulnerable, flexible labor arrangements found within contemporary manufacturing environments.

The Illusion of Meritocracy and the Micro Macro Gap

The gathered empirical data vividly portray a severe, deeply ingrained discrepancy separating the interpersonal encouragement occurring at the micro level from the overarching organizational policies enforced within the studied company. From one perspective, the managerial staff within the organization effectively execute their fundamental day to day duties by supplying technical instructions, addressing sudden operational blockages, and delivering regular verbal encouragement to their subordinates. This foundational degree of workplace interaction corresponds perfectly with the earlier theoretical propositions put forth by [Farla et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Trishendratmo \(2025\)](#), who maintain that seamless interpersonal backing from superiors fosters a noticeably more pleasant, stable, and inspiring daily atmosphere for workers. To illustrate this point, Informant Wfa clearly validated this particular workplace dynamic by stating that their immediate manager consistently issues accurate operational instructions and is always willing to provide direct, physical help whenever technical troubles arise during production. Nevertheless, the present investigation unequivocally reveals that such micro level encouragement functions within a complete systemic void, which essentially makes it completely useless for facilitating long term, upward career advancement for the workers. Consequently, the brief bursts of positive relational enthusiasm built between specific managers and their staff members are methodically destroyed the moment that contract workers try to translate their daily drive into actual, recognized professional promotions.

The sharp contrast in viewpoints discovered between managerial figures and the temporary workforce serves to illuminate a phenomenon that this research defines as the Illusion of Meritocracy operating deep within the organization's institutional structures. Managerial personnel frequently function based on the highly convenient, yet overly idealistic, belief that sheer diligence, the independent mastery of new skills, and the voluntary pursuit of formal academic degrees will automatically and unavoidably lead to professional advancement for every single worker. To provide a concrete example, Supervisor Informant Joni Rosi perfectly represented this specific mindset by claiming that distinct career opportunities are constantly available for fixed term employees, under the strict condition that these individuals independently take the initiative to enhance their personal credentials by attending university classes. This highly conventional perspective essentially forces the complete responsibility of professional growth squarely onto the shoulders of the individual employee, while simultaneously turning a blind eye to the deeply rooted structural disparities that are firmly woven into the company's official regulations. Taking a completely opposite stance, the temporary workers correctly recognize that in the absence of formally established promotional slots and clear human resource procedures, all of their personal attempts at self betterment will ultimately prove to be completely pointless. Ultimately, this specific insight considerably broadens the theoretical boundaries previously established by [Agusti et al. \(2025\)](#) by clearly proving that although personal competence is unquestionably required, it will always be wholly inadequate if it is not accompanied by overt, open, and fair systemic backing from the organization itself.

This profound ideological separation separating the concept of personal initiative from the reality of systemic limitations brings to light a deeply troubling inconsistency operating within the daily management of the production facility. Although Supervisor Joni Rosi chooses to assess professional growth exclusively through a strict merit based framework that highlights practical abilities and academic achievements, this specific demand entirely dismisses the harsh, physically demanding everyday conditions endured by the temporary staff. Informant Wfa successfully highlighted this glaring discrepancy by pointing out that the demand to meet severe daily manufacturing quotas and the expectation to participate in personal career enhancement activities are practically impossible to combine under the existing supervisory structure. Furthermore, demanding that lower income temporary laborers single handedly pay for and participate in higher education programs while they are concurrently draining their bodily strength to achieve strict, daily manufacturing goals constitutes a massive and undeniable institutional paradox. As a direct consequence of

this situation, the merit based language frequently utilized by the managerial staff essentially functions as a protective corporate shield that accidentally conceals far more serious foundational flaws within the company. Ultimately, any interpersonal motivation urging workers to develop themselves is made entirely pointless when the encompassing organizational framework actively refuses to supply any realistic channels to support and realize that desired development.

Structural Rigidities and the ABK Calculation Bottleneck

This systemic obstacle is additionally strengthened and formally embedded into the organization through the enterprise's antiquated labor measurement protocols, which are internally referred to as the Workload Analysis (ABK) framework. Informant Rmd specifically singled out this particular ABK methodology as the main organizational choke point, contending that its unchanging measurement criteria have become entirely disconnected from the genuine, swiftly growing daily production demands of the enterprise. Due to the unfortunate fact that these specific ABK standards are almost never formally reviewed or actively modernized, they completely neglect to capture the actual, massive quantity of labor that is routinely completed by the temporary workforce. Consequently, this deep seated administrative inflexibility successfully prevents the Human Resources department from creating new permanent employment positions, which essentially paralyzes any well intentioned leaders operating on the production floor. Eventually, even Supervisor Joni Rosi was forced to acknowledge this harsh truth, confessing that the biggest hurdle preventing the promotion of exceptionally skilled temporary workers is the drastic shortage of officially approved slots for permanent employment transitions. Therefore, individual excellence is systematically forced to take a back seat to outdated mathematical equations, serving as clear proof that individual skill matters far less than rigid organizational boundaries within the studied enterprise.

Making the systemic paralysis caused by the ABK framework even worse is an extreme absence of functional openness concerning the internal procedures governing professional promotions. Informant Wfa directly condemned the enterprise's internal human resource guidelines for being incredibly limiting, incredibly murky, and seemingly intentionally crafted to prevent temporary laborers from ever achieving upward professional movement. Expressing significant dismay, Wfa pointed out that the complete organizational procedure connected to rank elevations and employment status alterations appears to be treated as highly classified information that is intentionally concealed from the general employee population. Naturally, this pervasive environment of corporate hiddenness generates profound mistrust, cultivates strong feelings of injustice, and quickly destroys whatever lingering faith might still exist connecting the temporary laborers to the upper executive team. As previously theorized by [Bhawna et al. \(2024\)](#), the feeling of being supported by the organization serves as a fundamental requirement for establishing a personal sense of career achievement and strong mental dedication to the workplace. Consequently, whenever professional advancement procedures are hidden behind a veil of intense secrecy, temporary laborers will instinctively view the company as an uncaring, and potentially adversarial, organization that is simply taking advantage of their vulnerable employment situation.

This distinct absence of institutional transparency immediately obstructs the beneficial psychological channels that are normally created through supportive actions from immediate managers. Drawing upon the research presented by [Rahmayani and Wikaningrum \(2022\)](#), it is evident that corporate transparency acts as the crucial factor determining whether professional growth initiatives can effectively result in sustained, long term employment satisfaction. Whenever a corporate entity intentionally hides its specific requirements for career elevation behind a complex barrier of administrative rules, any spoken compliments delivered by immediate managers rapidly strip away their own believability. Over time, the workforce completely stops perceiving their managers as authentic guides or counselors, choosing instead to view them merely as bureaucratic tools designed to enforce strict compliance on the floor. Inevitably, this shifting perspective generates an intensely transactional atmosphere in the workplace, where temporary staff members execute their duties solely for the purpose of escaping dismissal, rather than striving to attain any sort of professional mastery. Ultimately, the complete absence of broad, system wide openness successfully destroys and cancels out any of the inspiring advantages that could have been gained from supportive, micro level managerial engagements.

Developmental Stagnation and the Autodidact Paradox

The gathered qualitative information effectively exposes a specific situation that the current research labels the Autodidact Paradox, which is a routine occurrence that perfectly illustrates the functional manipulation of precarious workers. To provide context, Informant Rmd disclosed that managerial staff regularly order temporary workers to independently figure out how to operate highly complex manufacturing equipment without any formal guidance, forcing them to depend exclusively on unsupported experimentation. Even though this independent educational process effectively increases the employee's practical usefulness and significantly enlarges their true daily workload, it results in absolutely no upward professional movement or corresponding monetary compensation. Ultimately, this specific habit permits the company to squeeze out levels of productivity normally expected from permanent staff out of inexpensive, vulnerable laborers by hiding behind the excuse of casual competency building. Adding to this point, Informant Diky mirrored this deep seated resentment by stating clearly that the everyday duties handed down to temporary workers frequently surpass the fundamental duties that are officially demanded of the standard, permanent workforce. In essence, the enterprise successfully maintains a deeply questionable double standard, taking full advantage of the temporary employee's obedience while continuously and intentionally denying them any formal, structural benefits.

This functional double standard is formally cemented into the organization's structure by means of the enterprise's biased methodology regarding employee education and skill enhancement. Informant Rmd highlighted the harsh reality that the studied organization exclusively restricts all of its official corporate educational initiatives and specialized engineering workshops solely for the benefit of its core, permanent workforce. Temporary laborers are methodically shut out from participating in these essential educational events simply because the internal human resource protocols distinctly categorize the temporary employment tier as nothing more than an assistant or supplementary labor pool. Naturally, this systemic marginalization directly opposes the accepted best practices that are heavily documented within contemporary industrial management academic studies. As clearly proven by the collaborative works of [Williana et al. \(2025\)](#) alongside [Muawanah et al. \(2022\)](#), unrestricted availability of formalized educational systems serves as the main catalyst for improving employee output, maintaining product standards, and ensuring workplace security inside the industrial domain. Consequently, by refusing to provide official educational support to the exact same temporary workers who physically operate the most critical manufacturing equipment, the organization injects enormous safety hazards into its operations while simultaneously destroying the psychological wellbeing of its staff.

This deliberate, organization wide marginalization effectively generates a condition that can be accurately labeled as a prolonged phase of professional paralysis. The labor force finds itself ensnared within a continuous functional cycle wherein their hands on abilities constantly improve through constant everyday practice, yet their recognized worth within the enterprise stays entirely paralyzed. Consequently, this specific workplace environment drastically alters the conventional comprehension of how acquired competencies should be financially and professionally rewarded within the scope of personnel administration. Under normal circumstances inside a typical business environment, the mastery of fresh competencies acts as the primary vehicle driving an employee's upward professional journey. Conversely, within the boundaries of the organization under investigation, the mastering of new techniques by temporary laborers serves only as an unrewarded enlargement of their mandatory daily tasks. Ultimately, this severe inequality transforms the factory floor into an abusive setting where temporary staff members are essentially punished with greater burdens but are completely denied any matching systemic progression or acknowledgment.

Psychological Deterioration: From High Motivation to Fatalism

Extended subjection to these vastly unbalanced institutional frameworks unavoidably sets off intense mental decline among those temporary workers who have served for extended periods. After dedicating four continuous years of labor to the enterprise without seeing a single instance of professional advancement, Informant Rmd displayed a profound level of corporate hopelessness and resignation. Upon being asked regarding their long term professional ambitions inside the studied organization, Rmd bluntly declared that they harbor absolutely zero expectations and have consciously decided to simply obey the regulations in a highly detached manner. This absolute destruction of any career related drive serves as a textbook psychological coping strategy utilized to survive continuous systemic denial and unbreakable institutional

barriers. Echoing the insights provided by [Marcella and Ie \(2022\)](#), ongoing professional unpredictability experienced by temporary laborers imposes a massive mental weight that swiftly reveals itself in the form of extreme motivational exhaustion. Thus, once a worker deeply accepts the reality that every ounce of their individual hard work will eventually be destroyed by uncompromising corporate rules, they instinctively pull back all of their psychological dedication from the enterprise.

This intense psychological separation compels temporary staff members to look for substitute origins of inspiration that exist completely beyond the physical and mental borders of the workplace. For instance, Informant Diky, a temporary laborer boasting five years of continuous service, exposed a highly revealing transformation regarding their personal sources of inner drive. Instead of extracting inspiration from the company's grand objectives, compliments from management, or the promise of future promotions, Diky explained that their main reason for enduring the job stems exclusively from duties owed to their parents and domestic dependents. Even though inspiration rooted in familial duties effectively guarantees that the worker stays physically reliable and obedient during their shifts, it simultaneously signifies a total collapse of the enterprise's internal personnel involvement tactics. Consequently, the laborer ceases to execute their tasks out of any sense of corporate allegiance or vocational dignity, choosing instead to work solely due to inescapable monetary survival needs. Ultimately, this severe alienation confirms the cautionary statements published by [Putra et al. \(2020\)](#), who observed that whenever a business neglects to offer transparent avenues for internal professional advancement, it directly fuels a gigantic spike in concealed desires to resign, coupled with profound mental disengagement.

When viewed through the lens of overarching corporate strategy, depending upon a profoundly discouraged and resigned temporary labor pool puts the enterprise's future viability at immense risk. Temporary laborers such as Rmd, Wfa, and Diky have successfully gathered between four to five years of intense, hands on mechanical proficiency while working directly on the manufacturing floor. These specific individuals embody a massive collection of unspoken, practical wisdom and specialized engineering capability concerning the handling of complex equipment. Therefore, by intentionally holding these highly seasoned technicians hostage inside a vulnerable, entry level classification for an indefinite period, the corporate leadership is purposely sabotaging its own standards of manufacturing excellence. As previously confirmed in the scholarly work of [Pertiwi and Kasmir \(2025\)](#), enduring business success depends enormously upon a harmonized internal environment wherein the backing of the corporation continuously ignites the dedication of the staff. In reality, the studied organization is recklessly depleting its own intellectual resources by handling veteran, competent technicians as if they were easily replaceable, temporary commodities, which inevitably establishes a highly volatile base for any upcoming manufacturing expansions.

Redefining Supervisor Support for Flexible Labor

These deeply rooted inconsistencies demand an absolute reassessment, both in theory and in everyday practice, regarding the true definition of managerial backing when dealing with non-permanent labor groups. Within the boundaries of classic personnel administration paradigms, the concept of managerial backing is frequently restricted merely to overseeing daily tasks, fixing sudden mechanical glitches, and offering basic spoken motivation. However, the evidence gathered from the studied organization clearly demonstrates that this orthodox approach is entirely insufficient when applied to temporary laborers who are actively colliding against impenetrable structural barriers. Simply instructing a temporary laborer to exert more effort or to maintain strict compliance while simultaneously denying them any formal route toward permanent employment is a completely hollow and meaningless activity. Therefore, when managing non-permanent labor pools, genuine managerial backing has to evolve away from gentle, passive mentoring and transform into aggressive, formal corporate championing. In practice, this means that front line managers need to be granted the authority and given the explicit mandate to fiercely defend the interests of their temporary staff, actively pushing the human resources department to enact real, systemic changes on their behalf.

Anchoring this necessary change of perspective within established academic writings, scholars such as [Kamara et al. \(2024\)](#) alongside [Nasution et al. \(2018\)](#) strongly stress that superior interactions between leaders and their teams must inevitably evolve into tangible corporate defense in order to truly elevate worker output. Whenever a manager's encouraging actions are strictly limited to basic human decency and friendly conversation, such behavior acts as nothing more than a fleeting, superficial remedy applied over a deeply fractured institutional framework. Currently, within the boundaries of the organization under review,

managerial encouragement is actively being utilized as a strategic weapon designed to squeeze out the highest possible level of worker obedience just to satisfy urgent daily manufacturing quotas. To highlight this issue, Informant Rmd directly condemned this exact situation, declaring that certain managers behave exclusively as relentless overseers who bark commands while completely abandoning their wider, more meaningful duties as true mentors. In order to permanently shatter this abusive loop, the official duties of a manager must be fundamentally redesigned so that their own professional evaluations are inextricably linked to the successful professional progression and long term hiring of their temporary staff members.

This theoretical broadening of what managerial encouragement entails brings about profound consequences regarding the established principles of Social Cognitive Career Theory. As thoroughly investigated by [He et al. \(2024\)](#), professional backing from a manager is theoretically supposed to function via a two pronged approach that simultaneously constructs a worker's personal vision of their future while also elevating their inner self assurance. Nevertheless, inside the targeted company, the avenue meant to broaden an employee's long term professional horizons is completely barricaded by massive bureaucratic obstacles. Even though front line managers are highly effective at fostering brief moments of task specific confidence by assisting workers through immediate mechanical hurdles, the total absence of formalized promotional ladders completely cancels out any positive mental impacts gained from this help. As a direct result, temporary laborers are ultimately abandoned holding exceptional technical skills but possessing absolutely no formal future within the company, which inevitably breeds a highly unstable and dangerous emotional climate among the staff.

Managerial Implications and Strategic Intervention

The wide ranging consequences uncovered throughout the course of this qualitative investigation urgently require swift and forceful strategic action to be taken by the senior leadership team of the studied organization. Persisting in the habit of depending exclusively upon the friendly conversational abilities of front line managers to preserve worker enthusiasm represents an incredibly precarious and completely unviable long term business approach. Friendly, one on one coaching simply cannot ever make up for deeply defective, prejudiced human resource regulations that purposefully alienate and corner temporary laborers. Therefore, the executive board is obligated to implement an exhaustive, company wide institutional overhaul designed specifically to connect the enormous divide separating localized, daily encouragement from overarching, enterprise wide regulations. In order to successfully realize this necessary operational harmony, the current research puts forward three essential, highly specific tactical proposals aimed at facilitating prompt and effective structural reorganization.

Initially, the enterprise is required to carry out an absolute reconstruction regarding its operational openness, with a particular focus on clarifying the exact procedures required to move from temporary to permanent employment. The upper management team is absolutely obligated to tear down the highly secretive atmosphere that presently surrounds the promotion process, a toxic condition that was explicitly detailed by Informant Wfa. Furthermore, the human resources department is required to formulate and publicly broadcast unambiguous, measurable, and impartial performance assessment rubrics that govern how employment contracts are upgraded. Temporary laborers must be granted instant, unrestricted visibility into their own personal performance metrics, enabling them to comprehend precisely how close they are to satisfying the requirements for permanent hiring. Additionally, the corporation needs to enforce a regular, open review of its labor measurement protocols to guarantee that the availability of permanent job slots grows in exact alignment with the actual physical demands of the manufacturing equipment. Ultimately, substituting enterprise wide hiddenness with genuine operational clarity will successfully eradicate the pervasive feelings of doom and hopelessness that are currently infecting the production area.

Secondly, the organization has to forcefully equalize the availability of its skill enhancement initiatives and official educational seminars for all staff members. Compelling temporary technicians to figure out how to run highly intricate industrial equipment by means of lonely, undocumented experimentation constitutes an intolerable hazard to the business that simultaneously obliterates worker enthusiasm. The personnel department is duty bound to abolish the biased regulation that currently limits specialized mechanical instruction solely to the core, permanent labor force. Should a temporary worker be ordered to handle a vital piece of manufacturing equipment, they absolutely must be granted the systemic and official right to participate in the identical formal educational sessions provided to the permanent crew. Through the

establishment of a truly fair and balanced educational structure, the organization will not only elevate the mechanical precision of its entire manufacturing process, but it will simultaneously ensure that temporary laborers feel authentically appreciated by their employer. Ultimately, whenever management demands identical levels of output from different workers, they are ethically required to supply those workers with identical levels of educational support, regardless of their specific contract type.

Thirdly, the highest levels of corporate leadership must thoroughly redesign their internal managerial development schemes in order to convert front line leaders from simple rule enforcers into powerful champions for employee careers. Front line managers need to be officially provided with transparent, highly organized pathways that permit them to hand in formal elevation endorsements straight to the personnel department without bureaucratic friction. The executive board is required to establish an official metric, perhaps termed a Mentorship Index, directly inside the personal performance evaluations belonging to the managers themselves. Consequently, the ultimate professional triumph of any manager will be evaluated not merely by their group's ability to achieve immediate manufacturing quotas, but equally by their proven capability to educate and permanently hire their temporary subordinates. Finally, managers have to receive specialized instruction on how to recognize and bridge the severe differences in viewpoint uncovered throughout this research, thereby guaranteeing that any spoken encouragement is continuously supported by tangible, systemic organizational backing.

To summarize the findings, this exhaustive analysis underscores the reality that friendly interactions taking place at the lowest levels can never repair a fundamentally shattered corporate system operating at the highest levels. Even though the encouragement provided by managers within the studied company is highly effective at boosting day to day manufacturing enthusiasm, it completely falls short of enabling any significant professional growth because of massive, institutional blockages. In order to genuinely maximize the capabilities of its labor force and protect its standing in the market, the enterprise is mandated to carry out rapid, sweeping administrative changes. One on one coaching and guidance have to be deeply embedded within an open, visible organizational structure that definitively promises equity, unrestricted entry to educational programs, and distinct promotional avenues for every single worker, completely ignoring the temporary nature of their current employment agreements. Ultimately, it is only by successfully closing this massive divide between the micro and macro levels that the organization will be able to convert its vulnerable temporary staff from a massive business risk into a permanent, driving force for unparalleled corporate achievement.

Conclusion

This study concludes that positive interpersonal interactions between supervisors and subordinates at the operational (micro) level are fundamentally rendered powerless when confronted with rigid and discriminatory organizational (macro) structures. Although supervisor support proves effective in alleviating daily workloads and fostering short term motivation on the production floor, it ultimately fails to facilitate meaningful career advancement for fixed term employees. The phenomena identified in this study as the Illusion of Meritocracy and the Autodidact Paradox underscore that, in the absence of institutionally transparent promotion pathways and equitable access to formal training, efforts to enhance individual competencies merely result in uncompensated labor expansion, career stagnation, and ultimately, the onset of psychological fatalism among the precarious workforce.

Theoretically, this research provides significant contributions to Human Resource Management literature and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) by deconstructing and redefining the concept of supervisor support. Within the context of precarious and flexible employment, supervisor support can no longer be confined to technical guidance or verbal motivation; instead, it must evolve into active organizational sponsorship. These findings challenge the traditional paradigm that assumes a linear relationship between managerial support and career progression. The study demonstrates that structural variables such as the opacity of HR policies and the rigidity of Workload Analysis (ABK) frameworks function as absolute institutional barriers that neutralize the positive outcomes of effective interpersonal leadership.

From a managerial perspective, the findings urge executives and organizational policymakers to urgently execute a comprehensive structural overhaul. Organizations are compelled to dismantle the culture of secrecy surrounding the status transition process from fixed term to permanent employment, critically realigning recruitment quota systems with actual operational workloads. Furthermore, management must eradicate

discriminatory policies that restrict access to formal technical training. It is equally imperative to recalibrate the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of supervisors, ensuring their professional success is evaluated not merely on achieving short term production targets, but also on their efficacy in advocating for and advancing the careers of their fixed term subordinates.

While this study offers profound empirical insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The research employs a qualitative case study design focused on a single manufacturing entity, which inherently constrains the generalizability of the findings across different industrial sectors or cultural landscapes. Therefore, future research is strongly encouraged to adopt a mixed methods approach to quantitatively measure the magnitude of the psychological impacts stemming from structurally induced career stagnation. Additionally, subsequent studies should expand the sample to encompass diverse industries that rely heavily on flexible labor arrangements, thereby validating the broader applicability and effectiveness of the structural interventions proposed herein.

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