

1 Visualizing Electricity Usage Using Power BI: 2 A Case Study In An Automotive Manufacturing 3 Plant

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ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aims to examine current electricity monitoring practices in an automotive manufacturing plant and to demonstrate how electricity usage data can be visualized using Microsoft Power BI to support better energy-related decision-making.

Study design: This research adopted a qualitative case study design.

Place and Duration of Study: The study was conducted at an automotive manufacturing plant, using electricity consumption data collected over a one-year period.

Methodology: A qualitative approach was employed using multiple data sources. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and analysis of existing documents. Based on the collected data, an interactive Power BI dashboard was developed to visualize electricity consumption.

Results: The developed dashboard included total electricity consumption, monthly usage trends, electricity usage per unit of production, plant-level comparisons, and electricity supply sources. The developed Power BI dashboard improved the visibility of electricity consumption patterns and enabled easier identification of inefficiencies and usage trends. The visualization supported more structured energy monitoring and enhanced management understanding of electricity usage across different production areas.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates that data visualization using Power BI can support data-driven decision-making and sustainability efforts in automotive manufacturing. The findings highlight the practical value of interactive dashboards as a tool to improve electricity monitoring practices in manufacturing environments.

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Keywords: Data visualization; Energy monitoring; Electricity usage; Power BI; manufacturing

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1. INTRODUCTION

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The increasing environmental awareness has raised concerns related to sustainable development (Elilli, 2024). In a manufacturing environment, the sustainability topic has become the organizational focus as manufacturers are now under pressure to reduce the environmental impact while still maintaining their operational efficiency (Uddin et al., 2023). In sustainability, energy consumption, particularly electricity usage, is one of the most significant challenges in manufacturing due to its direct relationship with operational costs and carbon emissions (Min et al., 2022; Uddin et al., 2023). The United Nations General Assembly put out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for sustainable development in 2030 towards climate action, increasing the need for

30 manufacturers to adopt data-driven approaches that support energy efficiency and
31 transparent monitoring practices.

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33 The manufacturing industry must remain competitive in a challenging market with applicable
34 strategic methods, and manufacturers must progress and improve to be sustainable. In
35 Malaysia, the manufacturing sector contributes approximately 23% of the national gross
36 domestic product (GDP) and has been the second-largest economic contributor for the past
37 two decades (Perkins et al., 2022). The automotive industry is recognized as a strategic
38 sector supporting industrialization and technological advancement (Monye et al., 2023).
39 Automotive manufacturing plants are characterized by high capital intensity and extensive
40 automation, where electricity is a critical enabler of production activities (Zehra et al., 2024).
41 Operations such as robotic welding, material handling, painting, and assembly depend
42 heavily on electrically powered systems to sustain continuous and high-volume production
43 (Pothamsetti, 2024). Consequently, electricity consumption constitutes a substantial portion
44 of operating costs and plays a significant role in the environmental footprint of automotive
45 manufacturing facilities.

46 This study was conducted in an automotive manufacturing plant, referred to as Company X,
47 which operates using automated and electricity-intensive production systems. Despite the
48 growing emphasis on sustainability and energy efficiency, the electricity data compiled from
49 the national grid bill were not used to construct an effective data visualization. Without data
50 visualization, raw electricity data provides limited information related to consumption
51 patterns, demand behavior, and the monthly target of energy usage. This limits the ability of
52 organizations to translate energy usage into the actions required by manufacturing plants to
53 support energy management and continuous improvement initiatives. To address this gap,
54 this study explores the visualization of electricity usage data through the development of an
55 interactive dashboard tailored to an automotive manufacturing environment. By transforming
56 electricity consumption and production data into a visualization, this study aims to enhance
57 the visualization of energy usage patterns, support sustainability-oriented decision-making,
58 and improve electricity monitoring practices within daily operations. Specifically, the
59 objectives of this study are:

- 60
- 61 1. To examine current practices of electricity usage recording and monitoring in an
62 automotive manufacturing plant.
 - 63 2. To develop and demonstrate a dashboard-based visualization approach for
64 analyzing electricity usage to support energy-related decision-making in the case
company.

65 This study contributes to both industrial practice and academic literature. From an industrial
66 perspective, the proposed dashboard provides a practical tool to improve transparency of
67 electricity consumption, support energy efficiency initiatives, and strengthen data-driven
68 decision-making in manufacturing operations. From a scholarly perspective, this study
69 contributes to sustainability and manufacturing research by demonstrating how electricity
70 usage data can be operationalized through visualization to generate actionable insights
71 within a real industrial context.

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73 **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

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75 **2.1 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)**

76 The United Nations set up the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encouraging all
77 countries to create a better future for everyone by 2030. 17 goals aim to eliminate poverty,
78 being responsible for the environment for the future generation. SDG 7 highlights affordable
79 and clean energy, which promotes affordable, reliable, sustainable, and contemporary

80 energy (Shafik, 2025). In the automotive manufacturing industry, an energy usage
81 visualization approach can be used to monitor the electricity usage, hence informing the
82 necessary steps for the organization to take actions such as a strategy to encourage cleaner
83 energy, low carbon technology, and reduce the reliance on non-renewable energy sources
84 (Alimin et al., 2025). SDG 9, as stated by the UN, aimed to build resilient infrastructure,
85 enhance sustainable and inclusive industrialization, and increase innovative technologies
86 (Aziz et al., 2025). The introduction of dashboard supports this goal by introducing a digital
87 and innovative method to monitor the electricity usage. This technology transforms the data
88 into a visualization to better understand the energy usage pattern and operational
89 performance. This supports efficient and sustainable industrial operations by improving
90 transparency and encouraging data-driven decisions.

91 **2.2 The Automotive Manufacturing Industry**

92 The automotive manufacturing sector is a significant part of the global economy, producing
93 vehicles such as cars, trucks, and buses for markets all over the world (Dakić et al., 2024).
94 This industry relies significantly on new technology, robotics, and efficient manufacturing
95 processes to meet rising demand while maintaining quality (Aripin et al., 2023). As
96 competition increases and sustainability becomes more important, automotive
97 manufacturers are adopting new technologies and energy-saving methods to improve
98 productivity and reduce costs (Zeng et al., 2022). These approaches help automotive
99 manufacturers stay competitive while addressing environmental concerns and changing
100 customer expectations (Dakić et al., 2024).

101 The automotive industry, which began in the late 19th century, has undergone some
102 changes over time (de Souza et al., 2022). The global automotive landscape experienced a
103 significant shift towards globalization in the late 20th century. This marked a significant shift
104 in automotive manufacturing, targeting to reduce operational costs and known in the global
105 market (Dakić et al., 2024). In addition, the integration of robotics in the automotive process
106 has increased the productivity and quality of production. Automated assembly lines have
107 become the main assurance of companies' competitiveness. Robots can handle repetitive
108 and hazardous tasks with precision and consistency while ensuring that defects are
109 minimized, resulting in higher-quality products (Pereira et al., 2022).

110 Electricity is essential in automotive production, powering a variety of operations from raw
111 material preparation to final vehicle assembly (Mohd Aripin et al., 2025). Additionally, energy
112 is needed to operate heavy machinery and automated robotics, as well as critical systems
113 like ventilation, heating, lighting, and quality control equipment. According to Dehning et al.
114 (2017) automotive manufacturing needs more electricity than most other manufacturing
115 industries. The body shop section, according to Konstantinidis et al. (2023) consumes
116 between one-quarter and one-third of the plant's total electric power for its operations, such
117 as welding and stamping. This high energy usage is primarily attributed to resistance spot
118 welding and laser welding technologies (Pittner & Rethmeier, 2022).

119 **2.3 Visualizations**

120 Data Visualization is a process of making data through a visual context, and it is a part of
121 analytics (Atobatele et al., 2022). There are various techniques to visualize data, including
122 interactive and dynamic options. These techniques utilize several elements such as graphs,
123 slicers, histograms, tables, and other types of visual representations. Microsoft Power BI is a
124 comprehensive business intelligence and analytics platform that enables users to analyze
125 data, share insights, and obtain timely answers through interactive data visualization (Molke
126 et al., 2024). Using visuals and filters helps the user understand the data more easily. The
127 general operations of Microsoft Power BI are as follows: 1) Get the Data from Required Data
128 Source, 2) Analyze the data by means of connectors and gateways of organization, 3) Build

129 the Report by means of Different Visuals and Filters, 4) Publish the Report into web through
130 Power BI Desktop, 5) Edit the report if any changes are needed and make shareable by
131 means of publishing on to web option for creating embed URL, 6) Access the report data
132 from different applications of Microsoft, and 7) Refresh the data using different gateways of
133 organization for updating the dashboard.

134 Previous researchers have demonstrated improvements in data analysis and decision-
135 making through the use of dashboards. Molke et al. (2024) investigated the role of Microsoft
136 Power BI in enhancing real-time data visualization for organizational decision-making. The
137 study focused on data collection, transformation, analysis, and dashboard development to
138 support performance monitoring, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises. The
139 findings showed that interactive dashboards improved data clarity, reduced analysis time,
140 and enabled users to identify trends and performance gaps more effectively. The use of
141 Power BI also enhanced user interaction through customizable visuals and filters, supporting
142 informed, timely, and data-driven decisions across organizational levels. In addition,
143 Naikwadi and Shende (2025) emphasized the growing importance of interactive data
144 visualization tools in procurement and financial analytics. Prior research has shown that
145 business intelligence platforms enhance organizations' ability to monitor spending behavior,
146 evaluate supplier performance, and support strategic sourcing decisions. The use of
147 dashboard-based visualization enables decision-makers to identify inefficiencies, detect cost
148 overruns, and improve budget control more effectively. These studies also highlight that real-
149 time analytics supports proactive decision-making rather than reactive responses.

150 **3. METHODOLOGY**

151 **3.1 Research Design**

152 This study adopts a qualitative case study research design to explore how electricity usage
153 data are monitored, managed, and visualized to support decision-making in an automotive
154 manufacturing environment. A qualitative approach is appropriate as the study focuses on
155 understanding real operational practices, data handling processes, and decision-making
156 challenges within their natural industrial context rather than testing hypotheses or
157 establishing causal relationships. According to Yin (1994), case study research is suitable for
158 investigating phenomena where contextual conditions are integral to the phenomenon under
159 investigation. In this study, energy usage, production activities, and data utilization practices
160 are closely interconnected, making a case study approach suitable for generating in-depth
161 and practice-oriented insights.

162 **3.2 Case Company and Informants**

163 The company referred to as Company X is an automotive manufacturing organization that
164 operates electricity-intensive production equipment. The company produces passenger
165 vehicles and relies on electrically driven systems such as welding equipment, robotic
166 stations, conveyors, and supporting utilities. Electricity usage data are routinely recorded for
167 reporting purposes; however, the absence of structured visual monitoring limits the effective
168 use of these data for operational and strategic decision-making. Company X was selected
169 using convenience sampling based on its relevance to the research objectives, accessibility,
170 and willingness to participate.

171 Informants were selected based on their direct involvement in electricity monitoring and
172 production operations. Selection criteria included holding operational or technical roles,
173 having at least five years of experience in the company, and possessing practical knowledge
174 of electricity usage practices. Two key informants participated in the study, representing
175 production and maintenance functions respectively, providing complementary perspectives
176 on electricity consumption and operational challenges.

177 **3.3 Data Collection Methods**

178 Multiple qualitative data collection methods were employed to ensure a comprehensive
179 understanding of electricity usage monitoring practices in Company X. Data were collected
180 through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. The use of
181 multiple sources enabled data triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and robustness
182 of the research findings Donnelly et al. (2023). Semi-structured interviews with the
183 respondents were conducted to obtain in-depth insights into current electricity monitoring
184 practices, data recording procedures, and challenges in interpreting electricity usage
185 information. The interview protocol focused on two main themes: current practices of
186 electricity usage monitoring and effective energy visualization and decision-making. This
187 approach allowed flexibility to explore emerging issues while maintaining alignment with the
188 research objectives.

189 Following that, direct observation was carried out during on-site visits to examine actual
190 electricity monitoring and operational practices. Observation enabled the researcher to verify
191 interview findings and to understand how electricity data were recorded, compiled, and used
192 in daily operations. The observation revealed that electricity usage data were primarily
193 recorded manually and analyzed using spreadsheet-based tools, limiting the ability to quickly
194 identify abnormal consumption patterns or relate electricity usage to production activities. In
195 addition, document analysis was conducted to review electricity usage records, production
196 reports, and Excel-based monitoring files used by the company. These documents provided
197 evidence of existing data structures, reporting frequency, and limitations in current electricity
198 monitoring practices.

199 **3.4 Data Analysis Process**

200 Data analysis followed a systematic qualitative approach by integrating findings from
201 interviews, observations, and document analysis. Electricity usage data obtained from
202 Company X covered the period from January to December 2024 and included structured
203 data such as monthly electricity consumption (kWh) and semi-structured data such as
204 production records and shift schedules. The analysis process consisted of three main
205 stages: data preparation, data organization, and data interpretation.
206 During data preparation, electricity and production data were cleaned, standardized, and
207 aligned to ensure consistency and usability. Spreadsheet functions such as pivot tables and
208 data matching techniques were used to organize the data by time period, plant, and
209 production output. This process enabled the identification of electricity usage trends,
210 variations across months, and differences in energy efficiency between production plants.
211 Qualitative insights from interviews and observations were then synthesized with the
212 analyzed electricity data to identify key issues in current monitoring practices and to
213 determine relevant indicators for visualization. These indicators included total electricity
214 consumption, time-based usage trends, production output, and electricity usage per unit.

215 **3.5 Dashboard Development**

216 Based on the analysis findings and literature review, an interactive electricity usage
217 dashboard was developed using Microsoft Power BI. The dashboard development focused
218 on transforming processed electricity and production data into clear and interpretable visual
219 elements, including charts, key performance indicators, and interactive filters. Power BI was
220 selected due to its compatibility with spreadsheet-based data, accessibility, and capability to
221 support interactive analysis.

222 The dashboard was designed to enhance visibility of electricity consumption patterns,
223 support comparison across time periods and production plants, and facilitate data-driven
224 decision-making. Emphasis was placed on clarity, simplicity, and usability to ensure that the
225 dashboard could be effectively used by management and operational personnel. The final

226 dashboard was presented to Company X’s respondents along with their management for
 227 validation and feedback to confirm its practicality and relevance in supporting electricity
 228 usage monitoring and sustainability-related decisions.

229 **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

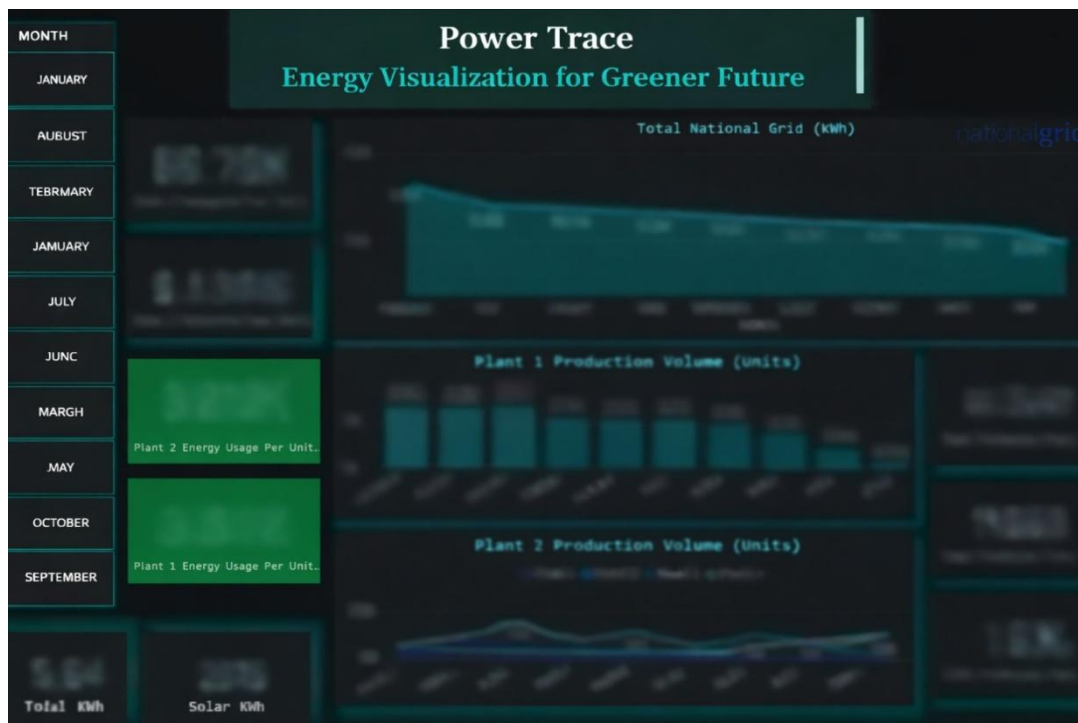
230 **4.1 Electricity Usage Data Management**

231 Electricity usage data in the automotive manufacturing plant were manually recorded and
 232 compiled using Microsoft Excel after each reporting period. Each record contained basic
 233 information such as electricity consumption values (kWh), reporting period, production
 234 volume, plant or section identifier, and source of electricity supply. These records were
 235 stored in multiple spreadsheet files and primarily used for reporting purposes. While this
 236 practice enabled basic documentation of electricity usage, the data were not structured for
 237 integrated analysis or operational monitoring. As a result, management and operational
 238 personnel faced difficulties in identifying electricity usage trends, peak consumption periods,
 239 and variations in energy efficiency across time and production units. The absence of
 240 structured summaries, such as comparative consumption across plants or electricity usage
 241 per unit, limited visibility of overall energy performance, and constrained the ability to support
 242 proactive energy management decisions. Consequently, electricity monitoring relied heavily
 243 on periodic reporting rather than data-driven analysis.

244 **4.2 Dashboard Visualization Results**

245 Based on the consolidated electricity usage data obtained from spreadsheet records, a
 246 dashboard was developed to visualize electricity consumption performance in the
 247 automotive manufacturing plant, as shown in Figure 1. To protect data confidentiality,
 248 sensitive numerical values in the dashboard were intentionally blurred before publication.
 249 The dashboard integrates key electricity usage indicators into a single interface to enhance
 250 visibility of energy consumption patterns and support structured energy monitoring and
 251 decision-making.

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253 **Fig. 1. Electricity Usage Dashboard for Automotive Manufacturing Plant**

254 The developed dashboard integrates several key indicators, as described below:

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1. **Plant and Time Period Selection**

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The dashboard includes filtering functions based on plant and time period. These selection features allow users to analyse electricity usage data for specific plants and selected months. This functionality supports focused analysis by enabling users to examine electricity consumption trends without the need to manually review multiple spreadsheet files.

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2. **Electricity Consumption by Plant**

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Electricity consumption is visualized by the plant using bar charts to highlight differences in total electricity usage between production plants. This visualization enables direct comparison of electricity consumption levels and helps identify plants with relatively higher energy demand, supporting prioritization of energy efficiency initiatives.

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3. **Total Electricity Consumption**

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Total electricity consumption is presented as a key performance indicator representing cumulative electricity usage within the selected period. This indicator provides a clear overview of overall energy demand and allows management to assess electricity consumption relative to production output and internal energy targets.

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4. **Time-Based Electricity Usage Trend**

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Electricity usage trends across different months are displayed using a line chart. This visualization supports the evaluation of consumption behavior over time. Increasing trends may indicate rising energy demand or inefficiencies, while stable or decreasing trends may reflect improved energy management practices.

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5. **Electricity Usage per Unit of Production**

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Electricity usage per unit of production is displayed as a key efficiency indicator. This metric enables comparison between plants by relating electricity consumption to production output. Visual cues are used to highlight acceptable and higher-than-expected energy usage levels, supporting quick identification of inefficiencies and areas requiring further investigation.

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6. **Electricity Supply Source Contribution**

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The dashboard also presents the contribution of electricity sources, such as the national grid supply, to overall electricity consumption. This indicator provides insight into the company's dependency on external electricity sources and supports the evaluation of potential energy diversification or sustainability strategies.

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5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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This study explored the management and visualization of electricity usage data in an automotive manufacturing plant through a qualitative case study approach. The findings

293 indicate that although electricity consumption data were routinely recorded, the absence of a
294 structured visual monitoring system limited the effective use of these data for operational
295 and sustainability-related decision-making. Electricity usage information was primarily used
296 for reporting purposes, resulting in limited visibility of consumption trends, energy efficiency
297 variations, and the relationship between electricity usage and production performance.

298 The development of an interactive dashboard using Power BI demonstrated the potential of
299 data visualization to transform raw electricity usage data into meaningful and actionable
300 insights (Gonçalves et al., 2023). By integrating key indicators such as total electricity
301 consumption, time-based usage trends, electricity usage per unit of production, and plant-
302 level comparisons, the dashboard enhanced transparency and supported more structured
303 energy monitoring. The visualization allowed management and operational staff to easily
304 identify patterns, detect inefficiencies, and connect electricity consumption behavior to
305 production activities. This facilitates a transition from reactive, report-based energy
306 monitoring to a more data-driven, sustainability-focused approach.

307 From a practical perspective, the study highlights the value of dashboard-based visualization
308 as a decision-support tool for energy management in automotive manufacturing
309 environments. Improved visibility of electricity usage can support energy efficiency initiatives,
310 cost control efforts, and alignment with organizational sustainability objectives. The findings
311 suggest that even with existing data sources, significant improvements in energy monitoring
312 and decision-making can be achieved through effective data structuring and visualization.
313 From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the manufacturing and sustainability
314 literature by demonstrating how electricity usage data can be operationalized through
315 visualization within a real industrial context. While existing studies often emphasize energy
316 audits or predictive energy models, this research provides empirical evidence of the role of
317 visualization in bridging the gap between available electricity data and practical decision-
318 making in manufacturing operations.

319 **5.1 Limitations And Suggestions For Future Research**

320 Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that provide opportunities for
321 future research. First, the study was conducted in a single automotive manufacturing plant,
322 which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could extend the analysis
323 to multiple plants or different manufacturing sectors to validate the applicability of
324 dashboard-based electricity visualization across diverse industrial contexts. Second, this
325 study focused on descriptive and diagnostic analysis of historical electricity usage data.
326 Future research could incorporate predictive and prescriptive analytics, such as forecasting
327 electricity demand or simulating the impact of energy-saving initiatives, to further enhance
328 the decision-support capability of energy dashboards. In addition, future studies may explore
329 the integration of real-time electricity monitoring systems and Internet of Things (IoT)
330 technologies to enable continuous and automated data collection. Such integration could
331 support real-time alerts, anomaly detection, and more proactive energy management
332 strategies. Overall, this study demonstrates that effective visualization of electricity usage
333 data can play a significant role in improving energy monitoring, supporting informed
334 decision-making, and advancing sustainability objectives in automotive manufacturing
335 environments.

350 **CONSENT (WHERE EVER APPLICABLE)**

351 Written informed consent was obtained from the respondents. A copy of the written consent
352 is available for review by the Editorial office/Chief Editor/Editorial Board members of this
353 journal.

354

355 **ETHICAL APPROVAL (WHERE EVER APPLICABLE)**

356 Not Applicable

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