Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances

eISSN: 2582-5003

Cross Ref DOI: 10.30574/gjeta

Journal homepage: https://gjeta.com/

(Review Article)

Federated Learning for Automotive Aftermarket Supply Chains: A Privacy-Preserving Framework for Predictive Maintenance Optimization

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Global Journal of Engineering and Technology Advances, 2025, 23(03), 216-223

Publication history: Received on 05 May 2025; revised on 11 June 2025; accepted on 14 June 2025

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.30574/gjeta.2025.23.3.0200

Abstract

Global automotive aftermarket networks face critical challenges in predicting part failures while maintaining data privacy across decentralized suppliers and distributors. This article presents a novel federated learning framework that enables collaborative predictive maintenance without raw data sharing. The article combines edge-based LSTM networks for local failure prediction using IoT sensor data with a cloud-based meta-model aggregating knowledge via secure multi-party computation. Privacy preservation is achieved through differential privacy applied to gradient updates and homomorphic encryption for sensitive feature aggregation. Domain-specific optimizations include attention mechanisms for handling intermittent failure patterns and transfer learning across part categories. Validated across a network of Tier-1 suppliers and distribution centers, the framework achieves significant prediction accuracy improvements over isolated models, reduces unnecessary part replacements, and maintains full compliance with regulatory standards while optimizing inventory management across participants.

Keywords: Federated learning; Predictive maintenance; Automotive aftermarket; Privacy-preserving machine learning; Supply chain optimization

1. Introduction

The global automotive aftermarket represents a complex ecosystem of manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and service providers managing billions of parts across diverse geographies. According to recent industry reports, this market was valued at USD 390,963.5 million in 2022 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 4.5% from 2023 to 2030, potentially reaching USD 589,011.4 million by 2030 [1]. This robust growth is driven by increasing vehicle average age, rising consumer preference for vehicle customization, and technological advancements in automotive components.

Predictive maintenance has emerged as a critical capability for this industry, enabling proactive identification of part failures before they occur. However, traditional predictive maintenance approaches face significant barriers in this domain, primarily due to the decentralized nature of supply chains and strict privacy requirements that prevent sharing of raw operational data. The aftermarket value chain includes multiple stakeholders, from OEMs to retailers, creating complex data silos that inhibit collaborative intelligence development.

This paper introduces a novel federated learning framework specifically designed for automotive aftermarket networks, enabling collaborative intelligence while maintaining data sovereignty and privacy across organizational boundaries. The approach addresses the challenges identified by Zhang et al. [2] regarding privacy preservation in industrial settings, where federated learning has shown promise in balancing data utility and privacy through techniques like differential privacy and secure multi-party computation. Their research demonstrates that federated learning

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implementations can achieve comparable accuracy to centralized models while maintaining strict privacy guarantees and reducing computation overhead.

Building on the author's extensive experience in large-scale inventory management systems that achieved 99.8% accuracy, this research addresses the fundamental tension between prediction quality and data privacy. The approach enables multiple participants across the supply chain to contribute to a unified predictive model without exposing proprietary data, creating a privacy-preserving ecosystem for collaborative intelligence in aftermarket operations that aligns with the emerging privacy-preserving AI paradigms outlined by Zhang et al. [2].

2. Background and Related Work

Predictive maintenance in automotive applications has traditionally relied on centralized models trained on aggregated datasets. Previous research has demonstrated the efficacy of deep learning approaches, particularly Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, for capturing temporal dependencies in failure patterns. A comprehensive study by Andreas Theissler et al. [3] evaluated various prediction techniques for machinery failure prognostics, finding that deep learning methods achieved higher accuracy (91.79% for RNN-LSTM) compared to traditional approaches such as Support Vector Machines (87.02%). Their systematic review of 132 articles published between 2009 and 2020 revealed that while deep learning approaches outperform other methods in prediction accuracy, they often require extensive computational resources and large, centralized datasets. However, these approaches typically require data centralization, which presents insurmountable barriers in privacy-sensitive supply chain contexts, particularly when dealing with the 4.7 billion annual maintenance records generated across the automotive aftermarket supply chain.

Federated learning (FL) has emerged as a promising paradigm for distributed model training, with applications primarily in mobile computing and healthcare. According to Badra Souhila Guendouzi et al. [4], federated learning enables privacy-preserving data analytics while maintaining local data sovereignty through distributed training processes. Their analysis of FL implementations in industrial Internet of Things environments demonstrated that federated approaches can achieve 86-93% of the accuracy of centralized models while reducing privacy risk exposure by up to 78%. Recent work has explored FL for manufacturing settings, but the unique challenges of aftermarket supply chains—including extreme data heterogeneity, intermittent communication, and multi-stakeholder privacy requirements—remain unaddressed in existing literature. Badra Souhila Guendouzi experimental evaluation across 8 different smart manufacturing scenarios revealed that communication overhead remains a significant challenge, with federated approaches requiring 2.1-3.4 times more bandwidth than traditional centralized training.

The automotive aftermarket presents distinct challenges that differentiate it from other FL application domains. Andreas Theissler et al. [3] identified that data quality heterogeneity across organizations represents a critical barrier to effective predictive maintenance, with approximately 35% of maintenance data requiring significant preprocessing before modeling. Furthermore, their study found that intermittent failure patterns, occurring in roughly 27% of critical components, are particularly difficult to detect without cross-organizational insights, as these patterns often manifest differently across operational environments. The complexity of regulatory compliance requirements spanning multiple jurisdictions introduces additional challenges, with Andreas Theissler et al., analysis revealing that cross-border data sharing is subject to an average of 14 distinct regulatory frameworks in typical multinational automotive operations. Badra Souhila Guendouzi et al. [4] highlighted the computational resource disparities between supply chain participants as another significant barrier, noting that in their industrial IoT testbed, edge nodes possessed computing capabilities ranging from 8% to 62% relative to cloud resources, creating substantial imbalances in training capabilities across the federated network.

Table 1 Comparative Performance and Implementation Challenges of Predictive Maintenance Approaches. [3, 4]

Method/Challenge	Performance Metric	Value
RNN-LSTM (Deep Learning)	Prediction Accuracy	91.79%
Support Vector Machines	Prediction Accuracy	87.02%
Federated Learning	Accuracy Compared to Centralized Models	86-93%
Federated Learning	Privacy Risk Reduction	78%
Federated Learning	Communication Overhead	2.1-3.4× more bandwidth
Maintenance Data	Preprocessing Requirement Rate	35%
Critical Components	Intermittent Failure Pattern Rate	27%

Multinational Operations	Average Distinct Regulatory Frameworks	14
Edge Computing Nodes	Relative Computing Capability	8-62%

Table 1 illustrates the performance trade-offs in automotive predictive maintenance approaches. While RNN-LSTM networks achieve superior accuracy over traditional Support Vector Machines, federated learning presents implementation challenges including increased communication overhead and computational disparities. The data reveals significant barriers including preprocessing requirements for maintenance data, intermittent failure patterns, and complex regulatory compliance across multinational operations.

3. Proposed Framework Architecture

Our federated learning framework employs a hybrid architecture that balances local computation at participant sites with secure global aggregation. This design addresses the fundamental challenges identified by Lingjuan Lyu. et al. [5], who categorized privacy threats in federated learning into data leakage, model leakage, and membership inference attacks. Their analysis showed that without proper protection mechanisms, up to 60% of private training data could be reconstructed through model inversion attacks. The system utilizes a three-component architecture that maintains data privacy while enabling collaborative intelligence.

3.1. Edge-Based Feature Extraction and Local Modeling

The foundation of the framework is a distributed network of edge computation nodes deployed across supplier and distributor sites. Each node implements locally trained LSTM networks optimized for specific operational characteristics. These edge nodes perform real-time processing of IoT sensor data captured from inventory systems and returned parts, generating comprehensive feature vectors while maintaining data locality. Local models produce failure predictions with calibrated confidence scores, achieving a mean calibration error of 0.042 across test deployments. For model updates, implementing privacy-preserving gradient computation that prevents information leakage through techniques such as secure aggregation and gradient pruning. As observed by König et al. [6], who identified hardware diversity as a significant challenge in industrial federated learning deployments, the approach accommodates computational heterogeneity through adaptive resource allocation.

3.2. Cloud-Based Meta-Model Aggregation

The global aggregation component leverages secure multi-party computation (MPC) for combining model updates without exposing sensitive information. This addresses the threat of poisoning attacks, which according to Lingjuan Lyu et al. [5], can degrade model performance by up to 30% through malicious parameter manipulation. For sensitive feature protection, implement a hybrid homomorphic encryption scheme that selectively applies encryption based on feature sensitivity. Differential privacy mechanisms ($\varepsilon=0.3$) are applied to parameter updates, ensuring formal privacy guarantees while maintaining model utility. The federated averaging algorithm incorporates weighted contributions based on automatically computed data quality metrics, addressing the non-IID data challenges highlighted by König et al. [6], who found data heterogeneity could reduce model accuracy by 15-20% in industrial settings.

3.3. Domain-Specific Optimization Layer

Our framework incorporates domain-specific optimizations essential for the automotive aftermarket context. Attention mechanisms specifically designed for automotive component failure patterns improve detection of rare failure modes. Transfer learning capabilities enable knowledge sharing across 50+ part categories, addressing cold-start problems for new components. Adaptive learning rate scheduling based on convergence metrics enhances training efficiency across heterogeneous participants. Model personalization capabilities allow global knowledge to be fine-tuned for specific operational contexts while maintaining compatibility with the global model architecture. The framework implements a novel communication protocol that minimizes bandwidth requirements while ensuring update integrity, addressing the challenge of reducing communication overhead which König et al. [6] identified as critical for sustainable industrial federated learning deployments.

Table 2 demonstrates how the federated learning framework systematically addresses critical challenges in automotive predictive maintenance. The solutions effectively mitigate severe threats like data reconstruction and poisoning attacks while optimizing performance through techniques such as attention mechanisms and transfer learning. Each mitigation strategy directly counters specific vulnerabilities, ensuring robust privacy preservation and operational efficiency.

Table 2 Comparative Impact of Privacy Threats and Optimization Techniques in Federated Learning [5, 6]

Component/Challenge	Impact Without Mitigation	Solution Applied	Performance Impact
Data/Model Leakage	Up to 60% data reconstruction	Edge-based computation	Data locality preservation
Poisoning Attacks	Up to 30% performance degradation	Secure MPC	Protection against malicious manipulation
Calibration Error	N/A	Confidence score calibration	0.042 mean error
Hardware Diversity	Resource allocation challenges	Adaptive resource allocation	Accommodation of heterogeneity
Data Heterogeneity	15-20% accuracy reduction	Weighted contributions	Non-IID data handling
Rare Failure Modes	Detection difficulties	Attention mechanisms	Improved rare event detection
Cold-start Problems	Limited new component performance	Transfer learning	Knowledge sharing across 50+ categories
Communication Overhead	Sustainability challenges	Novel communication protocol	Minimized bandwidth requirements

4. Privacy Preservation Mechanisms

Privacy preservation represents a cornerstone of the framework, implemented through multiple complementary techniques that work in concert to ensure no raw operational data leaves organizational boundaries while enabling the collaborative intelligence necessary for high-quality predictions. The integrated privacy design draws from established methodologies in both theoretical privacy research and practical industrial deployments.

4.1. Differential Privacy Implementation

Our differential privacy implementation centers on Laplacian noise addition to gradient updates with a carefully calibrated ε=0.3 privacy budget, balancing privacy protection with model utility. This approach aligns with Stacey Truex et al. [7], who demonstrated that hybrid approaches combining local and global differential privacy can increase model accuracy by up to 30% compared to purely local approaches while maintaining strong privacy guarantees. Their work showed that the primary challenge in industrial settings is not just implementing differential privacy but calibrating it appropriately for the specific data sensitivity profiles of different organizations.

The implementation adopts adaptive clipping thresholds based on gradient distribution analysis, dynamically adjusting bounds between training rounds to accommodate varying gradient magnitudes across different component categories. The privacy accounting system leverages advanced composition theorems to track cumulative privacy loss, implementing the moments accountant method that provides tighter bounds than standard approaches. Inspired by Naman Agarwal et al. [8], who demonstrated that carefully calibrated noise mechanisms can achieve ε-differential privacy with minimal utility loss (reducing error rates by up to 25%), the system employs formal verification of privacy guarantees using automated theorem provers to mathematically prove privacy properties even under worst-case scenarios.

4.2. Homomorphic Encryption Scheme

The framework implements a custom hybrid encryption approach combining partial and fully homomorphic techniques, selectively applying them based on data sensitivity and computational requirements. This design achieves a 57% reduction in computational overhead compared to standard FHE approaches, addressing the primary challenge identified by Stacey Truex et al. [7] regarding the prohibitive computational costs of homomorphic encryption in resource-constrained environments. Their experimental results showed that hybrid approaches reduced encryption time by 45-62% while maintaining equivalent security guarantees.

Key rotation policies are aligned with automotive industry security standards, implementing automatic renewal cycles that Naman Agarwal et al. [8] identified as critical for maintaining cryptographic hygiene in long-running federated systems. Secure aggregation protocols for multi-party model updates leverage threshold cryptography, allowing the system to continue functioning even when some participants are offline or compromised, addressing the practical deployment challenges Naman Agarwal et al. observed in their analysis of 13 real-world federated learning implementations.

4.3. Trust Boundary Management

The system establishes clear delineation of data visibility across organizational boundaries through a formal access control model with cryptographic enforcement. As Stacey Truex et al. [7] demonstrated in their evaluation of a hybrid privacy-preserving framework, cryptographic access controls provided 100% protection against policy violations compared to 82-96% for traditional enforcement mechanisms. The approach implements auditable privacy guarantee verification through cryptographically signed logs, creating verifiable evidence of compliance for both internal and external auditors. The comprehensive privacy architecture ensures full compliance with GDPR Article 25 requirements, implementing privacy by design principles that Naman Agarwal et al. [8] identified as essential for sustainable cross-organizational data collaboration.

Table 3 Efficiency and Effectiveness Metrics of Privacy-Preserving Techniques in Federated Learning [7, 8]

Privacy Mechanism	Protection Level
Hybrid Differential Privacy	Strong
Calibrated Noise Mechanisms	ε-differential
Hybrid Homomorphic Encryption	Equivalent to FHE
Hybrid Encryption Approaches	Equivalent
Cryptographic Access Controls	100% protection
Traditional Enforcement	82-96% protection

Table 3 demonstrates the superior effectiveness of advanced privacy-preserving techniques in federated learning implementations. Cryptographic access controls achieve complete protection compared to traditional enforcement methods, while hybrid approaches maintain equivalent security to fully homomorphic encryption. The differential privacy mechanisms provide strong theoretical guarantees, establishing a comprehensive defense against various privacy threats in automotive aftermarket applications.

5. Experimental Validation

Research validated the framework through deployment across a network of 3 Tier-1 suppliers and 28 distribution centers, with organizations anonymized to protect commercial interests. The real-world validation approach aligns with recommendations from Jisu Ahn et al. [9], who emphasized that predictive maintenance systems should be evaluated in actual industrial environments rather than laboratory settings to capture the true complexity of operational data.

5.1. Dataset Characteristics

Our experimental deployment encompassed 3.7 million parts across more than 50 categories, providing comprehensive coverage of the automotive aftermarket supply chain. The dataset included 24 months of historical data, capturing seasonal variations and long-term degradation patterns essential for accurate predictive modeling. This timeframe allows to identify 142 distinct failure modes across component categories, enabling fine-grained prediction at the failure mechanism level. The data collection infrastructure integrated IoT sensor data from over 4,500 monitoring points, similar to the sensor density that Jisu Ahn et al. [9] found optimal in their multi-sensor fusion approach for industrial equipment, where their experiments with 3,240 sensors achieved a 94.2% detection rate for early-stage failures in manufacturing equipment.

5.2. Evaluation Metrics

Our evaluation employed multiple complementary metrics to assess both technical performance and business impact. Prediction accuracy was measured both overall and per failure mode, with particular emphasis on high-consequence failures. The quantified false positive/negative rates with associated cost matrices derived from historical maintenance records, addressing the asymmetric impact of different error types. Privacy leakage was assessed through formal methods and empirical tests following the methodology described by Jie Wen et al. [10], who demonstrated that privacy metrics must be tailored to specific threat models in industrial settings. Their work on privacy assessment in federated industrial learning showed that computational overhead and communication efficiency are critical operational constraints, with bandwidth limitations often restricting model complexity in distributed environments.

5.3. Comparative Baselines

To establish relative performance, implemented multiple baseline approaches. Isolated local models trained exclusively on organization-specific data represented the current industry standard, providing a performance floor. A centralized model trained on synthetic data generated through differential privacy mechanisms represented an alternative privacy-preserving approach. Implementation standard federated averaging without privacy enhancements to isolate the performance impact of the privacy mechanisms. Finally, transfer learning from adjacent domains provided context for the domain-specific optimizations. This comprehensive baseline strategy aligns with Jie Wen et al.'s [10] recommendation to evaluate federated learning implementations against multiple alternatives, as they demonstrated that the optimal approach varies based on data characteristics and privacy requirements.

5.4. Results

Our framework achieved 94.2% overall prediction accuracy compared to 88.5% for isolated models, demonstrating the value of cross-organizational learning while preserving privacy. This led to a 32% reduction in unnecessary part replacements, similar to the 29.6% reduction reported by Jisu Ahn et al. [9] in their sensor-based predictive maintenance implementation. The system demonstrated 43% faster model convergence than conventional federated learning approaches, addressing a key limitation identified by Jie Wen et al. [10] regarding convergence efficiency in heterogeneous deployments. Their experiments showed that standard federated learning often requires 1.8-2.4× more training rounds in non-IID industrial data environments. The achieved 99.7% privacy guarantee verification through formal methods, exceeding the 95% confidence level that Jie Wen et al. [10] established as the minimum threshold for industrial deployments. These improvements translated to approximately $18M annual savings from optimized inventory across participating organizations, demonstrating that the framework successfully balances prediction quality and privacy preservation in real-world deployment scenarios.

6. Implementation Guidelines and Challenges

Based on the deployment experience, the following guidelines for organizations implementing federated learning in automotive aftermarket contexts. These recommendations draw from practical insights gained during the multi-stakeholder implementation.

6.1. Organizational Considerations

Effective federated learning deployment requires robust organizational foundations. Executive sponsorship and clear governance structures are critical for implementation success, as Jiewu Leng et al. [11] found in their study of 23 industrial federated learning projects where leadership commitment directly correlated with 41% higher project completion rates. Their research emphasized that establishing data quality standards before federation is essential, as data heterogeneity accounted for approximately 37% of performance degradation in cross-organizational models. Developing clear incentive structures for participation ensures sustainable collaboration; Jiewu Leng et al. [11] documented that well-defined incentive frameworks improved participation rates by 34% and reduced stakeholder attrition. Creating transparent privacy policies and data usage agreements builds essential trust, with their case studies showing that organizations with formalized privacy frameworks were 2.8 times more likely to share operational data than those without such protections [13].

6.2. Technical Implementation

When implementing federated learning, organizations should start with high-value parts categories to demonstrate tangible ROI. According to Farzana Islam, Ahmed Shoyeb Raihan, Imtiaz Ahmed [12], who evaluated federated learning in smart manufacturing environments across 14 industrial sites, targeting high-value components initially yielded 3.1 times faster return on investment compared to broader implementation approaches. Their framework advocates implementing progressive privacy budgets that adapt to trust levels, which reduced privacy-utility tradeoffs by 23% compared to static approaches. Designing for intermittent connectivity and heterogeneous computing environments is essential in industrial settings where Farzana Islam, Ahmed Shoyeb Raihan, Imtiaz Ahmed [12] observed network reliability variations of 16-27% across different tiers of suppliers. Alignment with IEEE P2851 standards for system interoperability facilitated integration with existing systems, reducing implementation time by approximately 40% in their industrial deployments.

6.3. Common Challenges and Mitigations

Common implementation challenges require systematic mitigation strategies. Data distribution shifts, which Jiewu Leng et al. [11] found can reduce model accuracy by up to 28% over a six-month period, necessitate regular model revalidation. Computational resource disparities, with processing capabilities varying by as much as 12x between large manufacturers and smaller suppliers in their study, can be addressed through task allocation optimization. Trust establishment requires formal verification coupled with transparent processes; according to Farzana Islam, Ahmed Shoyeb Raihan, Imtiaz Ahmed [12], implementations incorporating cryptographic proof mechanisms achieved 57% higher data contribution rates. Regulatory requirements vary by region and require flexible compliance approaches, with their framework supporting modular privacy controls adaptable to different jurisdictions, reducing compliance overhead by 44%.

6.4. Performance Optimization

Performance optimization techniques significantly enhance federated learning deployments. Implementing compression techniques for gradient updates reduced communication overhead by 82% in Jiewu Leng et al.'s [11] industrial case studies while maintaining model performance. Knowledge distillation for edge deployment, as demonstrated by Farzana Islam, Ahmed Shoyeb Raihan, Imtiaz Ahmed [12], enabled model size reduction of 65-73% while preserving 94% of accuracy for resource-constrained devices. Leveraging warm-starting for new participants accelerated onboarding by an average of 67%, reducing the time to reach acceptable performance levels [14]. Employing adaptive sampling based on prediction uncertainty optimized computational resource utilization, with their experiments showing 31% reduction in required training iterations while improving rare event detection by 24%.

7. Conclusion

The federated learning framework presented for automotive aftermarket supply chains successfully addresses the fundamental tension between prediction quality and privacy preservation. By implementing a hybrid architecture with edge-based feature extraction, secure cloud aggregation, and domain-specific optimizations, the system enables collaborative intelligence without compromising sensitive operational data. The comprehensive privacy preservation mechanisms, including differential privacy, homomorphic encryption, and trust boundary management, provide robust guarantees while maintaining model utility. Experimental validation demonstrates substantial improvements in prediction accuracy, maintenance optimization, and operational efficiency compared to traditional approaches. The implementation guidelines offer practical direction for organizations seeking to deploy similar systems, highlighting both organizational and technical considerations critical for success. This work represents a significant advancement in applying privacy-preserving machine learning to supply chain operations, with broad applicability across the automotive aftermarket ecosystem.

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