



Healthy Workplace Practices for Enhancing Employee Performance: A Case Study of Chinese Hot Pot Enterprise

Sicheng Li, Jirapong Ruanggoon

ABSTRACT

Purpose - This paper addressed the gap in research on healthy workplace practices in Chinese hot pot enterprises, particularly focusing on their impact on employee performance. The existing literature rarely explored this context, and this study aimed to fill that gap by providing industry-specific insights and practical recommendations for improving employee performance in Chinese food service settings.

Aims(s) - The primary aim was to examine the effects of healthy workplace practices on employee performance within a Chinese hot pot enterprise. The secondary aim was to propose initiatives to enhance employee performance.

Design/methodology/approach - The study employed quantitative methods to achieve its research objectives. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a random sample of 500 employees from 52 Chinese hot pot stores in Nanjing. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to analyze the relationships between healthy workplace practices and employee performance. Additionally, three industry experts evaluated and validated the proposed initiatives aimed at improving employee performance. This expert validation ensured the relevance and practicality of the recommendations for the industry.

Findings - The study found that healthy workplace practices—particularly work-life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety, and employee involvement—significantly improved employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises. Among these, work-life balance was the most influential factor, with each practice positively affecting both task and contextual performance. The study also proposed initiatives to further enhance employee performance, including flexible scheduling, increased access to training and career development, improved health resources, and better feedback systems.

Limitations of the study - The study was limited to Nanjing, and future research could expand the sample to other regions and incorporate qualitative methods for deeper insight.

Originality/value - This paper provided new insights into healthy workplace practices in the Chinese hot pot industry, offering valuable recommendations for HR professionals and managers to improve employee performance.

KEY WORDS

employee performance, work-life balance, healthy workplace, human resource management, hot pot industry

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1 INTRODUCTION

Chinese hot pot enterprises have become prominent entities within the hospitality industry, driven by their unique culinary offerings and cultural appeal (Yu et al., 2022). These enterprises are characterized by rapid growth and intense competition, navigating a dynamic market where operational efficiency and customer satisfaction are critical. Central to their success is the role played by employees, whose performance and commitment directly impact service quality, customer retention, and profitability. In recent years, there has been a notable shift towards recognizing the importance of employee well-being and effective workplace practices in driving organizational success (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021).

The hospitality sector, including hot pot enterprises, faces challenges such as high turnover rates, skill shortages, and the need to maintain consistent service standards amidst fluctuating consumer demands. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic approach that not only optimizes operational processes but also prioritizes the holistic development and satisfaction of employees (Sawhney et al., 2020).

The adoption of healthy workplace practices has emerged as a critical strategy for Chinese hot pot enterprises aiming to enhance employee engagement, retention, and overall organizational performance (Loh et al., 2024). The focus on initiatives such as work-life balance, professional growth, health and safety, recognition, and employee involvement reflects their relevance in addressing prevalent challenges in the industry, including high turnover rates, demanding work environments, and the need for sustainable workforce practices (Gu, 2016; Lu et al., 2023). These areas were chosen because they directly target critical aspects of employee well-being and motivation: enabling employees to manage personal and professional commitments effectively (Grawitch et al., 2006), promoting continuous skill development (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2022), safeguarding physical and mental health (Omolaro & Ochieng, 2024), acknowledging individual contributions (West et al., 2018), and fostering a sense of ownership and inclusion in organizational decision-making processes (Jha et al., 2024). Together, these initiatives create a holistic framework aimed at improving both employee satisfaction and business outcomes.

In the context of a Chinese hot pot enterprise, where the environment is typically fast-paced and demanding, implementing effective healthy workplace practices becomes essential. These enterprises often operate long hours, particularly during peak times and holidays (Chang et al., 2021). Promoting work-life balance through practices such as flexible working hours, adequate break times, and policies supporting employees' personal commitments can help reduce burnout and improve overall well-being. Employees who feel their work schedule accommodates their personal lives are more likely to be satisfied and motivated. Investing in employee growth and development is vital in an industry where skill refinement and service excellence are critical (Francois et al., 2020). This can include training programs that enhance culinary skills, customer service training, leadership development initiatives, and opportunities for career progression. Such practices not only improve individual competencies but also increase job satisfaction and loyalty among employees.

Given the nature of hot pot cooking, which involves handling hot liquids and open flames, maintaining rigorous health and safety standards is paramount. Practices such as regular safety training, proper equipment maintenance, and adherence to food safety regulations not only protect employees from workplace hazards but also contribute to a culture of care and professionalism (de Freitas et al., 2020). Involving employees in decision-making processes, such as menu planning, operational improvements, and policy development, empowers them and fosters a sense of ownership in the organization's success. This practice not only taps into frontline expertise but also enhances communication and trust between management and staff, leading to a more cohesive and resilient workplace culture (Nguyen et al., 2024).

For Chinese hot pot enterprises, integrating and effectively managing these healthy workplace practices not only enhances employee well-being but also contributes to sustainable business success through improved employee satisfaction, retention, and organizational performance. These practices are pivotal in creating a supportive and conducive work environment that aligns with both employee and organizational goals. Most studies on healthy workplace practices are generalized or based on Western organizational contexts. These studies may overlook the unique operational dynamics and cultural nuances that characterize Chinese hot pot enterprises (Prashantham & Eranova, 2020). These enterprises often operate in fast-paced environments with distinct organizational structures and customer service demands that differ significantly from Western hospitality settings. Chinese hospitality settings, including hot pot enterprises, face specific challenges such as high turnover rates, intense competition, and cultural expectations related to customer service. These factors can influence the effectiveness and applicability of standard healthy workplace practices, yet empirical research rarely addresses how these practices can be tailored to address these challenges effectively.

There is a gap in understanding how employees in Chinese hot pot enterprises perceive and respond to various healthy workplace initiatives. Studies often assume universal employee preferences without considering cultural factors or industry-specific demands that could influence the acceptance and impact of these practices (Bayraktar et al., 2020). While there is theoretical support for the benefits of healthy workplace practices (e.g., improved employee satisfaction, retention, and performance), empirical

evidence specific to Chinese hot pot enterprises is sparse. Research often lacks rigorous measurement of outcomes related to employee performance metrics like productivity, customer service quality, and organizational commitment within this industry context (Singh, 2022).

This study aims to explore the impact of healthy workplace practices on both task and contextual performance metrics. Furthermore, building on these insights, the study aims to propose practical initiatives that can enhance employee performance within this sector. By addressing these research objectives, this study aims to contribute empirical insights into the tailored of healthy workplace practices within Chinese hot pot enterprises. The findings are intended to inform organizational practices aimed at enhancing employee performance in this dynamic and competitive industry.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Healthy workplace practices are strategies and initiatives implemented by organizations to ensure the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of employees. These practices directly affect employee performance by fostering an environment conducive to job satisfaction, motivation, and overall productivity. Four key dimensions often identified in healthy workplace practices are work-life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety, and employee involvement. Together, these dimensions can significantly improve employee engagement, reduce turnover, and enhance organizational outcomes.

2.1 WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Work-life balance (WLB) has been identified as a critical factor that influences employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall performance (Rahim et al., 2020). It refers to the ability of employees to manage their work responsibilities alongside their personal and family commitments. In high-pressure environments such as Chinese hot pot enterprises, where employees often work long hours, promoting work-life balance can reduce stress and prevent burnout (Gull et al., 2023). Studies have shown that work-life balance practices, such as flexible working hours and adequate time off, positively affect employee performance by improving both job satisfaction and overall mental health (Parveen & Rizq, 2024). This is particularly relevant in the hospitality industry, where service quality is heavily dependent on employee engagement and performance (Rabiul et al., 2022).

H1: Work-life balance practices have a significant effect on employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.

2.2 EMPLOYEE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employee growth and development are integral to enhancing employee performance, especially in industries that require specialized skills and high levels of customer interaction, such as the hospitality sector. Providing opportunities for career development, skills enhancement, and leadership training has been linked to increased employee motivation, job satisfaction, and performance (Akdere & Egan, 2020). Specifically, within Chinese hot pot enterprises, where service quality is a competitive advantage, ensuring employees are continuously improving their skills directly impacts customer service and operational efficiency (Tortorella et al., 2021). Growth and development initiatives can lead to higher job satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and increased organizational commitment, all of which contribute to improved employee performance (Talapbayeva et al., 2024).

H2: Employee growth and development practices significantly affect employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.

2.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Health and safety practices are essential in any workplace, particularly in industries like foodservice, where employees are exposed to physical risks, including burns, cuts, and other injuries. A safe working environment not only ensures the physical well-being of employees but also contributes to their job

satisfaction and overall performance (de Freitas et al., 2020). In Chinese hot pot enterprises, where employees work with hot liquids and open flames, maintaining rigorous health and safety standards is critical (Nguyen et al., 2024). Research has shown that when employees feel safe and secure in their work environment, absenteeism decreases, and productivity increases (Kelloway & Day, 2005). Furthermore, health and safety practices that include proper equipment training, regular safety checks, and compliance with regulations foster a sense of care and professionalism, positively influencing employee performance (Loh et al., 2024).

H3: Health and safety practices significantly affect employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.

2.4 EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Employee involvement refers to practices that allow employees to actively participate in decision-making processes, such as operational improvements and policy development. Involving employees in decision-making has been found to enhance job satisfaction, commitment, and overall organizational performance (Yandi & Havidz, 2022). In the context of Chinese hot pot enterprises, where customer service is paramount, involving employees in decisions such as menu planning, safety procedures, and customer feedback systems can lead to increased innovation, better customer service, and improved employee performance (Nguyen et al., 2024). Studies suggest that when employees feel valued and part of the decision-making process, their motivation and performance are significantly enhanced (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Additionally, employee involvement fosters a culture of trust and cooperation between management and staff, further driving organizational success (Mohanty & Arunprasad, 2021).

H4: Employee involvement practices significantly affect employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.

The literature strongly supports the notion that healthy workplace practices, including work-life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety, and employee involvement, have a significant impact on employee performance. These practices contribute to higher job satisfaction, reduced turnover, enhanced engagement, and improved organizational outcomes, which are particularly relevant to the competitive and high-demand environment of Chinese hot pot enterprises.

2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework (Fig. 1) centers on fostering healthy workplace practices to enhance employee performance within a Chinese hot pot enterprise. These practices encompass four crucial dimensions such as work-life balance, employee growth & development, health & safety, and employee involvement (Grawitch et al., 2007; O'Donnell et al., 2019)

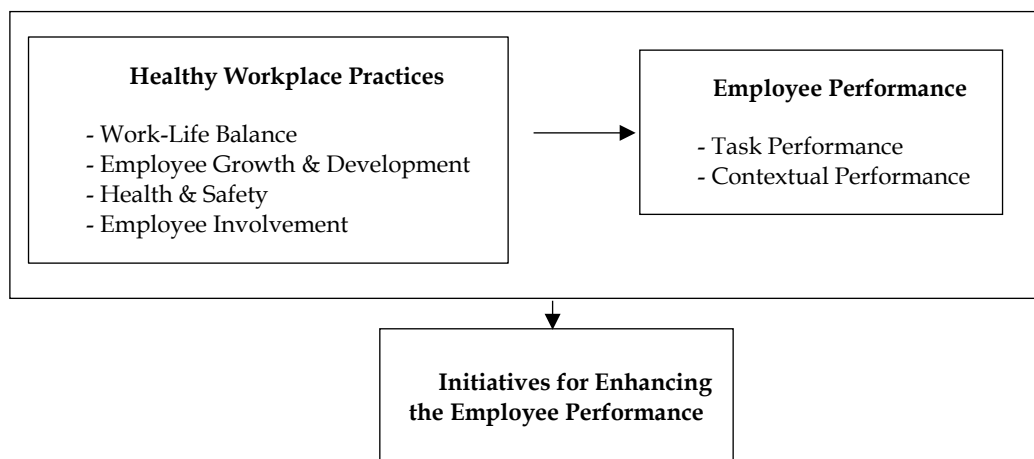


Fig 1. Conceptual framework

Healthy workplace practices, such as work-life balance, have been shown to help employees manage both work and personal commitments effectively, leading to reduced stress and increased job satisfaction (Aruldoss et al., 2021). Employee growth and development initiatives, which focus on skill enhancement and career progression, have bolstered engagement and commitment (Quader, 2024). Additionally, prioritizing health and safety has contributed to a secure work environment, improving physical well-being and reducing absenteeism (Tamers et al., 2020). Employee performance has been assessed through both task performance, reflecting the quality and efficiency of job task execution, and contextual performance, which encompasses behaviors such as teamwork and innovation that align with organizational goals (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Van Scotter et al., 2000; Koo et al., 2020)

The proposed initiatives aim to leverage these practices to optimize employee performance. By offering actionable insights, these initiatives provide organizational leaders with strategies to tailor interventions that enhance workplace well-being and engagement, ultimately fostering a more productive environment within Chinese hot pot enterprises.

3 METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using a quantitative research design to assess the impact of healthy workplace practices on employee performance within Chinese hot pot enterprises. A cross-sectional survey approach was employed to gather data from employees at a single point in time, which helped examine the relationships between workplace practices (work-life balance, employee growth, health and safety, employee involvement) and employee performance. Additionally, an expert review method was used to collect insights from industry experts regarding initiatives to enhance employee performance.

3.1 SAMPLE

The research subjects were divided into the following two categories: The first category involved studying Chinese hot pot enterprises, with 52 stores located in the researcher's city. The participants in this study were randomly selected from Nanjing, representing a Chinese hot pot brand. The sample size was calculated based on 28 observable variables, following the rule of thumb of 10–20 samples per observable variable (Tipton et al., 2017). Therefore, the calculated sample size ranged between 280 and 560 participants. A total of 500 responses were collected, which was sufficient for the study. Employees from all stores participated on a voluntary and confidential basis. The identities of survey participants were verified in advance through internal employee records to ensure the legitimacy of responses. To protect the anonymity of respondents, no personally identifiable information was collected during the survey, and all data were anonymized prior to analysis.

The demographic details of the study's respondents include categories such as gender, age, academic background, and length of service. In terms of gender, the sample consisted of 500 participants, with a notable majority of females accounting for 340 respondents (68.0%), compared to 160 males (32.0%). This disparity highlights a significant representation of women in the workforce of Chinese hot pot enterprises. The age distribution reveals that the largest group of respondents fell within the 31–40 years range, comprising 229 individuals (45.8%), followed by those aged 20–30 years (30.4%) and those aged 41 years and above (23.8%). This suggests that the workforce is predominantly composed of individuals in their prime working years.

When examining academic qualifications, the data indicates a diverse educational background among the respondents, with the majority holding a high school diploma (219 respondents or 43.8%). A smaller percentage of respondents completed higher education, with 21.0% attending institutions of higher education and 7.0% achieving undergraduate degrees. Additionally, the length of service data reveals that a significant portion of the respondents (36.0%) had less than one year of experience in their roles, while 40.2% had between one to five years of service. This indicates a relatively youthful workforce, which may reflect ongoing hiring trends within the industry. Cumulatively, the percentages across all categories confirm the completeness of the data, providing a solid foundation for analyzing the relationships between workplace practices and employee performance in the context of Chinese hot pot enterprises.

The expert review gathered informed opinions on initiatives to enhance employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises. Three experts were carefully selected based on their academic qualifications, extensive professional experience, and demonstrated expertise in fields directly related to the study—namely, human resource development, organizational development, and occupational health and safety. The selection criteria included holding advanced degrees in relevant disciplines, possessing at least 10 years of professional experience in their respective fields, publishing research or contributing to policy in related areas, and receiving recognition within the industry for their contributions. These experts' in-depth knowledge of employee performance practices and industry-specific challenges ensured the feasibility and practicality of the proposed initiatives were rigorously evaluated.

3.2 MEASUREMENT

The research employed a structured questionnaire to measure several key aspects of workplace practices and employee performance. The questionnaire was designed using established scales and validated items from prior research to ensure reliability and construct validity. Work-life balance was assessed using items that examined the flexibility and support provided to employees in managing their personal and professional responsibilities (Grawitch et al., 2007; Zahoor et al., 2021). Employee growth and development were evaluated through questions addressing training opportunities, career development programs, and prospects for advancement, focusing on how these elements contributed to employee motivation and retention (Grawitch et al., 2007; Firman, 2021). Health and safety practices were measured by assessing workplace safety measures, including compliance with safety standards and the availability of health resources, ensuring employees' physical and mental well-being (Grawitch et al., 2007; Berhan, 2020). Employee involvement practices were evaluated through items that captured the extent of employee participation in decision-making processes and their contributions to workplace improvements (Grawitch et al., 2007; Neirotti, 2020).

Employee performance was assessed through a dual framework: task performance, which measured the effectiveness and efficiency in completing job-specific tasks, and contextual performance, which captured behaviors that enhance the overall work environment and organizational culture (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Greenslade & Jimmieson, 2007; López-Cabarcos et al., 2022). Responses were collected on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

The questionnaire was pre-tested with a pilot group of 30 employees selected from similar workplace settings to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and reliability of the items. Feedback from the pilot group was used to refine ambiguous wording, adjust the length of the questionnaire, and ensure that the scales were easily understood by participants. Reliability analysis of the pilot data yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency of the instrument (Taber, 2018). This pre-test process enhanced the robustness of the research design and ensured that the questionnaire would effectively capture the impact of healthy workplace practices on employee performance.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics to examine the relationships between workplace practices and employee performance. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and provide an overview of the response distribution. To explore the relationships between independent variables, such as work-life balance and employee growth, and employee performance, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed.

The model fit was assessed using indices such as Chi-Square, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and other fit indices (Sathyanarayana & Mohanasundaram, 2024). Hypothesis testing was performed on the path coefficients to determine the statistical significance of the relationships and to analyze the effects of workplace practices on employee performance. Additionally, the expert review data was analyzed to assess the feasibility and practicality of the proposed initiatives aimed at enhancing employee performance within Chinese hot pot enterprises.

4 RESULTS

4.1 RELIABILITY INDICES

All variables exhibit high reliability, as evidenced by α values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. For example, work-life balance (WLB) shows an α of 0.863, while employee growth and development (EGD), health & safety practices (HSP), employee involvement practices (EIP), task performance (TP), and contextual performance (CP) display even higher α values, ranging from 0.949 to 0.962. This suggests a strong relationship among the items measuring these constructs.

Table 1. Reliability indices

Variable	α	ω_1	ω_2	ω_3	AVE
WLB	0.863	0.863	0.871	0.849	0.593
EGD	0.954	0.954	0.954	0.954	0.806
HSP	0.962	0.962	0.962	0.960	0.834
EIP	0.958	0.958	0.958	0.958	0.821
TP	0.949	0.949	0.949	0.949	0.822
CP	0.956	0.956	0.956	0.955	0.845

Additionally, McDonald's omega coefficients ($\omega_1, \omega_2, \omega_3$) serve as robust measures of reliability, often preferred over Cronbach's alpha, particularly in cases where item unidimensionality may be questioned. The ω values align closely with the α values, reinforcing the internal consistency of the variables. For instance, EGD and HSP both have ω values of 0.954 and 0.962, respectively, indicating strong reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) metric assesses the proportion of variance captured by a construct relative to measurement error. An AVE value above 0.50 indicates that a construct explains more than half of the variance of its items. In this analysis, all variables surpass the 0.593 mark, with EGD and HSP demonstrating particularly robust constructs at 0.806 and 0.834, respectively. These high reliability indices confirm that the measurement instruments utilized in the study are both reliable and valid. This enhances the credibility of the findings, suggesting that the collected data can be confidently employed in further analyses.

4.2 DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was calculated to assess the discriminant validity among the constructs. The results, as shown in Table 2, indicate that the HTMT values for all pairs of constructs fall below the common threshold of 0.90, suggesting adequate discriminant validity.

Table 2. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations

	WLB	EGD	HSP	EIP	TP	CP
WLB	1.000					
EGD	0.883	1.000				
HSP	0.868	0.912	1.000			
EIP	0.851	0.876	0.875	1.000		
TP	0.858	0.878	0.879	0.879	1.000	
CP	0.893	0.903	0.897	0.870	0.875	1.000

The correlation between WLB and EGD was 0.883, while the correlation between WLB and HSP was 0.868. Similarly, the correlations among EIP, TP, and CP were also below 0.90, ranging from 0.870 to 0.879. These findings support the distinctiveness of each construct, reinforcing their individual relevance within the broader framework of employee performance and workplace wellness. The HTMT analysis underscores the robustness of the model's structure, providing confidence in the measurement of the variables involved.

4.3 FIT INDICES

The overall test results for the model indicate a robust fit, as demonstrated by the chi-square values and associated fit indices. The user model presented a chi-square (X^2) of 816 with 335 degrees of freedom (df), yielding a p-value of less than 0.001, signifying a statistically significant model fit. In contrast, the baseline model exhibited a substantially higher chi-square of 18,629 with 378 degrees of freedom, also with a p-value of less than 0.001.

Table 3. Fit indices

Model tests				
Label	X^2	df	p	
User Model	816	335	< .001	
Baseline Model	18629	378	< .001	
Fit indices				
		95% Confidence Intervals		
SRMR	RMSEA	Lower	Upper	RMSEA p
0.022	0.054	0.049	0.058	0.101
User model versus baseline model				
				Model
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)				0.974
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)				0.970
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)				0.970
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)				0.974
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)				0.956
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)				0.951
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)				0.974
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)				0.847
Additional fit indices				
Hoelter Critical N (CN), $\alpha=0.05$				233.003
Hoelter Critical N (CN), $\alpha=0.01$				244.924
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)				0.958
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)				0.945
Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index (PGFI)				0.739
McDonald Fit Index (MFI)				0.618
Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI)				2.028
Loglikelihood user model (H0)				-13738.807
Loglikelihood unrestricted model (H1)				-13330.749
Akaike (AIC)				27675.613
Bayesian (BIC)				28092.859
Sample-size adjusted Bayesian (SABIC)				27778.627
R ²				
	Variable			R ²
	TP			0.840
	CP			0.876

The fit indices further support the adequacy of the user model. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was recorded at 0.022, indicating a good fit, as values below 0.08 are generally considered acceptable. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.054, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.049 to 0.058, and a p-value of 0.101, suggesting no significant model misspecification.

The comparative fit indices also demonstrate strong performance relative to the baseline model. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.974, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.970, both of which exceed the recommended threshold of 0.95, further validating the model's adequacy. Additionally, the Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI) were both 0.974, reinforcing these findings.

Regarding parsimony, the Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) was 0.847, while the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was 0.958, and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) was 0.945, all suggesting a well-fitted model. The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) values were 27,675.613 and 28,092.859, respectively, indicating that the user model is more parsimonious than the baseline model.

Finally, the R^2 values show that 84.0% of the variance in task performance (TP) and 87.6% of the variance in contextual performance (CP) can be explained by the model, further supporting its predictive power. Overall, the results indicate that the user model provides a robust and satisfactory fit to the data, effectively capturing the underlying relationships among the constructs in the study.

4.4 MEASUREMENT MODEL

Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the measurement model, highlighting the relationships between the latent constructs of WLB, EGD, HSP, EIP, TP, and CP alongside their observed indicators.

Table 4. Measurement model

La- tent	Ob- served	Esti- mate	SE	95% Confidence In- tervals		β	β 95% Confidence In- tervals		z	p
				Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper		
WLB	WLB1	1.000	0.0000	1.000	1.000	0.515	0.449	0.582		
	WLB2	0.564	0.0617	0.443	0.685	0.502	0.435	0.570	9.13	<.001
	WLB3	1.378	0.1084	1.166	1.591	0.919	0.902	0.935	12.71	<.001
	WLB4	1.392	0.1098	1.177	1.607	0.913	0.896	0.930	12.68	<.001
	WLB5	1.383	0.1093	1.169	1.597	0.908	0.890	0.926	12.65	<.001
EGD	EGD1	1.000	0.0000	1.000	1.000	0.895	0.876	0.914		
	EGD2	0.991	0.0297	0.933	1.049	0.921	0.905	0.936	33.34	<.001
	EGD3	0.993	0.0321	0.930	1.056	0.895	0.875	0.914	30.96	<.001
	EGD4	0.985	0.0324	0.922	1.049	0.889	0.868	0.909	30.44	<.001
	EGD5	0.999	0.0325	0.936	1.063	0.892	0.872	0.912	30.72	<.001
HSP	HSP1	1.000	0.0000	1.000	1.000	0.909	0.892	0.926		
	HSP2	1.026	0.0300	0.967	1.085	0.913	0.897	0.929	34.18	<.001
	HSP3	0.997	0.0310	0.937	1.058	0.893	0.874	0.913	32.17	<.001
	HSP4	1.030	0.0303	0.971	1.089	0.911	0.895	0.928	33.97	<.001
	HSP5	1.030	0.0276	0.976	1.084	0.940	0.928	0.952	37.34	<.001
EIP	EIP1	1.000	0.0000	1.000	1.000	0.901	0.883	0.919		
	EIP2	0.998	0.0323	0.935	1.062	0.888	0.867	0.908	30.86	<.001
	EIP3	0.993	0.0297	0.935	1.051	0.916	0.900	0.932	33.47	<.001
	EIP4	1.016	0.0305	0.956	1.075	0.914	0.898	0.931	33.31	<.001
	EIP5	1.009	0.0304	0.949	1.068	0.913	0.896	0.930	33.18	<.001
TP	TP1	1.000	0.0000	1.000	1.000	0.902	0.884	0.921		
	TP2	1.003	0.0303	0.944	1.062	0.913	0.896	0.930	33.10	<.001
	TP3	1.018	0.0304	0.959	1.078	0.917	0.901	0.934	33.50	<.001
	TP4	1.009	0.0322	0.946	1.072	0.895	0.875	0.914	31.35	<.001
CP	CP1	1.000	0.0000	1.000	1.000	0.931	0.917	0.945		
	CP2	0.987	0.0269	0.934	1.039	0.914	0.897	0.930	36.65	<.001
	CP3	0.979	0.0267	0.927	1.032	0.914	0.897	0.930	36.63	<.001
	CP4	0.980	0.0263	0.928	1.031	0.918	0.902	0.934	37.20	<.001

Each latent variable is represented by specific indicators, with the first indicator fixed at a value of 1.000 as a reference. For example, the estimates for WLB range from 0.564 to 1.392 for its indicators (WLB2 to WLB5), all of which show statistically significant z-values above 9, accompanied by p-values less than 0.001. This strong significance highlights the reliability of these indicators in measuring the WLB construct. Similarly, the EGD indicators display strong estimates, consistently close to 1.000, and yield impressive z-values exceeding 30, further validating their effectiveness in capturing employee growth and development.

The HSP indicators also reflect significant positive relationships, reinforcing the credibility of the measurement model, as each indicator reliably represents the latent construct. The same applies to EIP, where the indicators show significant estimates, demonstrating their effectiveness in measuring employee involvement. Finally, the constructs of TP and CP exhibit strong measurement properties, with all indicators showing significant positive estimates and high z-values, confirming their ability to accurately capture task and contextual performance. These results establish a robust measurement framework, supporting the subsequent analyses and hypothesis testing regarding employee performance in the study. This ensures a clear understanding of how these constructs interact and contribute to overall organizational outcomes.

4.5 PARAMETERS ESTIMATES

The data presented in Table 5 illustrates the parameter estimates derived from a structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis, revealing the effects of various predictors – WLB, EGD, HSP, and EIP – on employee performance outcomes, specifically TP and CP. Each predictor demonstrates a significant positive relationship with both performance metrics.

Table 5. Parameters estimates

Dependent	Predictors	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Intervals		β	95% Confidence Intervals		z	p
				Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper		
				TP	WLB		0.358	0.1067		
TP	EGD	0.172	0.0798	0.0153	0.328	0.170	0.0156	0.324	2.15	0.031
TP	HSP	0.232	0.0744	0.0862	0.378	0.226	0.0848	0.367	3.12	0.002
TP	EIP	0.311	0.0574	0.1987	0.424	0.313	0.2018	0.424	5.42	<.001
CP	WLB	0.485	0.1020	0.2854	0.685	0.330	0.2040	0.455	4.76	<.001
CP	EGD	0.266	0.0735	0.1216	0.410	0.258	0.1188	0.396	3.61	<.001
CP	HSP	0.257	0.0684	0.1228	0.391	0.245	0.1181	0.373	3.75	<.001
CP	EIP	0.143	0.0523	0.0409	0.246	0.141	0.0406	0.242	2.74	0.006

For instance, WLB shows a strong effect on TP, with an estimated coefficient of 0.358 and a highly significant p-value ($p < 0.001$), indicating that improvements in work-life balance are closely associated with enhanced task performance. Similarly, WLB positively influences CP, with a coefficient of 0.485 and a significant p-value ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that a supportive work-life balance also enhances broader contextual performance measures. EGD exhibits a noteworthy impact, with a coefficient of 0.172 on TP ($p = 0.031$) and 0.266 on CP ($p < 0.001$), emphasizing the importance of development opportunities for employees. HSP reflects a positive influence on TP with an estimate of 0.232 ($p = 0.002$) and on CP with a coefficient of 0.257 ($p < 0.001$), highlighting the critical role of health and safety practices in driving performance.

Lastly, EIP has a coefficient of 0.311 on TP ($p < 0.001$) and a smaller, yet still significant, effect of 0.143 on CP ($p = 0.006$), underscoring the value of engaging employees in decision-making processes. These findings provide compelling evidence that effective implementation of these practices is crucial for enhancing employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises, with WLB emerging as the most influential predictor across both performance dimensions. A summary of hypothesis testing is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Summary
H1: There is significant effect of work-life balance practices on employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.	Supported
H2: There is significant effect of employee growth & development practices on employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.	Supported
H3: There is significant effect of health & safety practices on employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.	Supported
H4: There is significant effect of employee involvement practices on employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.	Supported

The analysis reveals that several factors, including WLB, EGD, HSP, and EIP, significantly influence employee performance outcomes in Chinese hot pot enterprises. Each factor shows a positive correlation with both TP and CP, emphasizing their importance in boosting employee effectiveness. Specifically, WLB stands out as the most influential predictor, demonstrating strong effects on both TP and CP. This suggests that fostering a supportive work-life balance is crucial for enhancing employee performance. EGD also plays a vital role, highlighting the importance of providing growth opportunities to improve employee performance. HSP is equally critical, reinforcing the need for robust health and safety practices to drive performance outcomes. Additionally, EIP underscores the value of involving employees in decision-making processes, which further enhances performance.

The hypothesis testing confirms the positive impact of these practices on employee performance, with all proposed hypotheses being supported. These findings emphasize the importance of implementing effective work-life balance, growth and development opportunities, health and safety measures, and employee involvement strategies to improve employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises.

4.6 INITIATIVES FOR ENHANCING THE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF A CHINESE HOT POT ENTERPRISE PARAMETERS ESTIMATES

Initiatives to enhance employee performance in a Chinese hot pot enterprise as show in Table 7.

Table 7. Initiatives to enhance employee performance in a Chinese hot pot enterprise

Area of Focus	Key Findings	Suggested Initiatives
Work-life balance (WLB)	Employees have a generally positive perception of WLB practices, especially regarding manageable work hours. However, flexibility in adjusting schedules shows diverse responses.	Implement flexible scheduling options to accommodate individual needs.
		Regularly assess WLB practices for continuous improvement.
		Offer remote work or hybrid options for roles where feasible.
Employee growth & development (EGD)	Employees feel positively about growth opportunities, particularly with training enhancing job skills. Variation exists in perceptions of training access and management feedback.	Increase access to training sessions and development programs.
		Implement a formal feedback system for consistent, constructive feedback.
		Design a clear career advancement framework.
Health & safety practices (HSP)	Employees view health and safety practices positively, particularly in terms of safety equipment and resources, but access to health resources varies.	Enhance accessibility to health resources across all areas.
		Conduct regular safety audits and training programs.
		Develop a communication plan for emergency protocols and safety updates.
Employee involvement practices (EIP)	Generally positive perception of involvement in decision-making, but feedback from supervisors shows variation.	Provide training for supervisors on effective feedback techniques.
		Establish regular forums for employee feedback and involvement.
		Recognize and reward employee contributions to decisions and improvements.

In the area of work-life balance, employees generally hold a positive perception, particularly regarding manageable work hours, though flexibility in scheduling shows some variation. To address this, implementing flexible scheduling options and periodically assessing WLB practices for continuous improvement could better accommodate individual needs. For roles where feasible, offering remote or hybrid work options might further support work-life balance. For roles where feasible and aligned with industry requirements, offering remote or hybrid work options could further support work-life balance. However, it is important to note that the operational nature of the hot pot enterprise, particularly in service-oriented and customer-facing roles, may limit the implementation of such options. For non-operational roles, such as administrative or marketing positions, these flexible arrangements could be more practical and beneficial.

Regarding employee growth & development, employees value training that enhances job skills, but opinions are mixed about access to training and the frequency of management feedback. Improving training accessibility, establishing a clear framework for career advancement, and implementing a formalized

feedback system could offer employees greater development opportunities and boost morale. In terms of health & safety practices, perceptions are generally positive, particularly regarding safety equipment and resources. However, there is variability in access to health resources, which could be addressed by improving health resource accessibility across all locations, conducting regular safety audits, and developing a clear communication plan for emergency protocols and updates.

Employee perceptions of employee involvement practices are also favourable, especially in terms of involvement in decision-making, though feedback from supervisors varies. To foster stronger engagement, providing supervisor training in effective feedback techniques, establishing regular forums for employee input, and recognizing contributions to decision-making could reinforce a culture of inclusivity and involvement.

To evaluate the suitability and alignment of the proposed initiatives for improving employee performance in a Chinese hot pot enterprise, three experts were invited to assess the feasibility of implementing these initiatives. Their combined expertise in human resource management, organizational strategy, and workplace health and safety provided a comprehensive basis for evaluation. The evaluation results indicated that the proposed initiatives were suitable and well-aligned with current practices, with additional recommendations for implementation.

5 DISCUSSION

This study highlights the significant impact of healthy workplace practices on employee performance in a Chinese hot pot enterprise. It identifies four key areas – work-life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety practices, and employee involvement practices – as crucial to enhancing both task performance and contextual performance.

Work-life balance emerged as the most significant predictor of employee performance in this study, which aligns with findings from previous research highlighting the critical role of a supportive work environment (Aruldoss et al., 2021). Similar studies have found that flexible work arrangements and support for personal responsibilities lead to higher job satisfaction and reduced stress, thus enhancing performance (e.g., Kossek et al., 2014). This study confirms that employees with better work-life balance report improved job outcomes, reinforcing the relevance of work flexibility in enhancing employee performance.

Employee growth and development was another key factor, consistent with research by Yulianti and Fitriansyah (2024), who found that training and career development opportunities promote engagement and skill improvement. This study extends these findings by demonstrating that employees who perceive growth opportunities are more likely to be committed and perform better, supporting the arguments of Khaskheli et al. (2020). Health and safety practices were also found to significantly impact performance, echoing the work of Morgan et al. (2021), who identified that effective safety protocols improve employee morale and reduce absenteeism, leading to higher task performance. In this study, strong health and safety practices were linked to improved employee satisfaction and reduced disruptions, further corroborating these earlier findings. Similarly, employee involvement practices were positively associated with performance, mirroring the conclusions of Celestin et al. (2024), who emphasized that a collaborative culture boosts employee accountability and motivation. The results of this study align with these conclusions, highlighting that empowering employee to participate in decision-making fosters a more engaged and high-performing workforce.

These findings collectively reinforce the importance of comprehensive human resource practices in driving employee performance. The study suggests that tailored initiatives across these areas are essential for creating a motivated workforce capable of achieving exceptional results, consistent with the broader body of research on organizational performance.

The study emphasizes the importance of tailored initiatives to enhance employee performance, building upon and contributing to existing research findings. For instance, employees expressed generally positive views on work-life balance (WLB), particularly regarding manageable work hours, which aligns with findings by Lu et al. (2022). However, the mixed perceptions of scheduling flexibility observed in this study suggest a need for more personalized approaches, emphasizing the importance of periodic reassessment of WLB practices to address individual needs and enhance performance. Similarly, while employees valued skill-enhancing training, the reported gaps in access to training and management feedback

reinforce Kulkov et al.'s (2024) argument that clearer career advancement pathways and structured feedback systems are critical. These findings highlight the potential for such systems to improve engagement and retention, consistent with Al-Tameemi and Xue's (2019) work.

Although health and safety practices were largely viewed positively in this study, disparities in access to health resources highlight an area requiring improvement. This aligns with Shabani et al.'s (2023) recommendation for regular safety audits and training programs, as well as better communication of emergency protocols. Finally, employee involvement in decision-making was generally favorable, but inconsistent supervisor feedback identified in this study indicates a gap in leadership training, echoing Lee's (2021) findings. Implementing regular employee input forums and recognizing contributions, as suggested by Fait et al. (2023), could further enhance engagement and foster organizational commitment. Collectively, these tailored practices reinforce the critical role of employee-focused strategies in achieving organizational success, particularly in dynamic and competitive work environments.

6 CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that healthy workplace practices significantly enhance employee performance in Chinese hot pot enterprises. Key practices such as work-life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety practices, and employee involvement practices positively impact both task and contextual Performance. WLB was found to be the most influential factor, highlighting the importance of a supportive work-life balance in improving employee effectiveness. The study emphasizes that growth opportunities, strong health and safety standards, and employee involvement are essential for optimizing performance outcomes.

The findings suggest that organizations should prioritize and implement these initiatives to cultivate a motivated workforce capable of driving high performance, which is crucial for long-term success in a competitive market. Additionally, targeted initiatives in work-life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety practices, and employee involvement practices were identified to address gaps and further enhance employee performance. Expert evaluations confirm the feasibility of these initiatives, emphasizing the need for piloting, training, and continuous feedback to ensure their effectiveness. These strategies are vital for creating an engaged, skilled, and satisfied workforce in the competitive Chinese hot pot industry.

This research contributes to the literature on workplace practices by empirically validating the relationships between various healthy workplace practices and employee performance within the specific cultural and industry context of the Chinese hot pot enterprise sector. The findings emphasize the importance for managers to integrate multiple dimensions of workplace health—such as work-life balance, growth opportunities, health and safety, and employee involvement—into a comprehensive strategy for improving employee performance. By adopting these practices, managers can foster a more engaged, motivated, and productive workforce, ultimately enhancing organizational effectiveness and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market.

Future research could explore the applicability of the identified healthy workplace practices and their impact on employee performance in different industries beyond the hot pot sector. Comparative studies could reveal whether the significance of practices like work-life balance and employee development holds across various cultural and industry contexts, thus enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

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Contact address:

Sicheng Li, Jirapong Ruanggoon, Faculty of Management Science, Dhonburi Rajabhat University 172 Issaraphab Road, Wat Kanlaya Sub District, Thonburi District, Bangkok 10600, fax: 02 890 2895; e-mail: jirapong.r@dru.ac.th

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