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Employee training, safety and health care practices in manufacturing industry: Basis for employee holistic well-being framework in manufacturing firms

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Abstract

Employee training, safety practices, and health care are important factors influencing employee well-being and productivity in manufacturing companies. China's rapid industrialization has resulted in a complex interaction of many factors, including government regulations, workforce demographics, and intense competition. These factors have significant impacts on the implementation and effectiveness of employee health care initiatives. A comprehensive understanding of these practices is essential to developing targeted interventions and creating a comprehensive well-being framework that addresses the unique challenges faced by employees in manufacturing sector. The study aimed to evaluate the employee training, safety and health care practices among manufacturing that was made the basis in developing an employee holistic well-being framework. A descriptive research design is employed in this study to comprehensively examine and document the current state of employee training, safety, and healthcare practices within manufacturing firms. A survey questionnaire was the most appropriate data collection tool for this study as it allows for systematic and efficient data collection from a large sample of employees in manufacturing companies. The respondents were 400 employees of five manufacturing enterprises in Guangdong Province. The results revealed that respondents have moderate agreement on employee training in terms of training contents, delivery method and training evaluation which indicates an effective training program in the manufacturing firms. They also moderately agreed on the employee safety in terms of safety culture, safety management system and physical workplace. There is a moderate agreement on the employee healthcare practices in terms of physical, mental and social health practices. A high significant relationships were found among employee training, employee safety and employee health care practices. An employee holistic well-being framework was developed for manufacturing companies to create a positive and safe working environment for the employees.

Keywords: employee training, safety and health practices, employee holistic well-being

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1. Introduction

Manufacturing enterprises are the foundation of the national economy, the foundation of establishing a country, the tool for revitalizing the country, and the foundation for building a strong country. Building a well-established, powerful, and internationally competitive manufacturing industry is a necessary path for the rise of the Chinese nation. After implementing the reform and opening up policy in China, the manufacturing industry has developed rapidly, basically completing the transformation of the manufacturing system from scratch to complete categories and independent integrity. With the improvement of industrialization level, China's comprehensive national strength has significantly increased and gradually developed into the world's second largest economy. The manufacturing industry, a major part of the global economy, has undergone significant transformations characterized by technological advancements and increased competitive pressures. While these developments have boosted productivity and innovation, they have also posed new challenges to the workforce. To address these challenges, a comprehensive approach to employee well-being, including training, safety and health practices, is essential.

This study delves into the essential role of these elements in the manufacturing sector, examining their interconnections and their impact on overall organizational performance. By understanding the current scenario of employee training, safety and health, this study aims to contribute to the development of a comprehensive well-being framework tailored to the specific needs of manufacturing employees. Employee training in manufacturing firms is a systematic process of developing employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance their job performance and contribute to organizational goals. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from on-boarding new employees to providing ongoing skill development opportunities for experienced workers. Effective training programs are essential for improving product quality, increasing productivity, reducing errors, and fostering a positive work environment.

The study of Lubondo (2024) examined the relationship between employee training programs and organizational performance in technology companies have consistently shown a positive correlation. Study indicates that investing in training programs leads to improved employee skills, knowledge, and productivity, which in turn positively impact organizational performance metrics such as profitability, innovation, and market competitiveness. Effective training programs not only enhance individual employee performance but also contribute to a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within the organization, crucial in the rapidly evolving landscape of technology. Additionally, companies that prioritize training demonstrate higher employee satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and greater employee engagement, further bolstering overall organizational effectiveness and success in the dynamic tech industry. It is worth to note that in a world of fierce and dynamic competition, an organization's most important asset is its human capital. Human capital can explore their dexterity with the aid of training and growth. Organizations that invest in efficient human resource training and development are likely to reap both immediate and long-term benefits Due to organizational, technical, and social dynamics, staff has a tendency to become absolute, necessitating the need to adapt to ongoing learning and change of the talent and knowledge. Therefore, it is crucial to manage training and development programs well in order for firms to get the most returns on their investments (Ogbulu et al.,2024).

The Occupational Health and Safety Management System (SGSST) must be led and implemented by the employer or contractor, with the participation of the workers and/or contractors, guaranteeing through said system, the application of safety measures. Marrugo et al.,(2024) disclosed that safety and health at work includes the improvement of workers' behavior, conditions, and the work environment also the effective control of hazards and risks in the workplace. As revealed by Lari (2024) occupational health and safety interventions

can enhance workplace ambiance and significantly boost employee productivity. A direct link between improved OHS practices and heightened productivity was observed, along with a marked shift in employee OHS perceptions. OHS practices are pivotal for both a secure working atmosphere and heightened employee productivity. Embracing proactive OHS strategies offers dual advantages: better well-being and improved organizational output. The study of Septian (2024) showed that there is a strong influence between occupational health and safety which is the most important indicator in improving an employee's performance in a company so that results and production targets on the company can be achieved more optimally and effectively in the future, as well as making the work environment for the steel panel manufacturing process safer and healthier by using the method of overcoming potential work accidents, namely job safety analysis in the steel panel manufacturing division.

China's rapid economic growth has led to a wide diversity of manufacturing activities, making it difficult to generalize results across different regions and industries. The effectiveness of safety regulations and their enforcement varies by region, affecting the implementation of safety and health measures. Accessing comprehensive and reliable data on employee training, safety and health practices can be difficult due to concerns about data privacy, lack of standardized reporting, and under-reporting of incidents. This research gap prompted the proponent to delve in the present study of employee training, health and safety practices in the manufacturing firms.

By examining the complex relationship between employee training, safety and wellness practices, this study aims to contribute to the development of a comprehensive wellness framework that can be implemented in manufacturing enterprises. The proponent may also provide an opportunity to contribute to the existing knowledge base on employee well-being and identify potential gaps in research and practice. Results of this study can serve as a basis for developing targeted interventions to improve the quality of working life of workers in the manufacturing sector, which will ultimately lead to increased productivity, reduced employee turnover and enhanced economic performance.

Objectives of the Study - The study aimed to evaluate the employee training, safety and health care practices among manufacturing firms that was made the basis in developing an employee holistic well-being framework. Specifically, it determined the employee training as to training contents, delivery method and training evaluation; describe the employee safety in terms of culture, management system and physical workplace environment; describe the employee health care practices in terms of physical health, mental health and social health, test the significant relationship among employee training, safety and health care practices and develop an employee holistic well-being framework for manufacturing firms in China.

2. Methods

Research Design - This study used a descriptive research design to help interpret the data collected, using a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. Descriptive method of research is a type of research that obtains relevant facts, data and information at present, and provides an accurate overview of situations, people or events. In addition, descriptive research design is one form of formal study intended to provide a description of a phenomenon or an inherent characteristic of a population. Descriptive research aims to study and monitor an emerging sensation that cannot be recognized as an unbiased factor. Descriptive correlation research helps to describe the relationship between one phenomenon and another in cases where the study cannot control independent variables.

Participants of the Study - The respondents were 400 employees of manufacturing enterprises in Guangdong Province, and according to the random sampling of 5 manufacturing enterprises in Guangdong Province, 80 employees of each manufacturing enterprise were randomly sampled. Manufacturing employees are ideal participants for a study of employee training, safety practices, and health care in the manufacturing industry. Their direct involvement in the production process exposes them to working conditions, training programs, and

safety measures firsthand. Additionally, understanding employee perspectives can help identify gaps in training, safety practices, or health care, leading to more effective strategies. The five companies selected come from Guangdong Province, mainly located in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, which belong to the core cities of Guangdong Province. But the size of these five companies is quite different. BYD Precision Manufacturing Co., Ltd is a listed company with more than 10,000 employees; Shenzhen CBT Enterprise Co., Ltd is a private enterprise and classified as a small and medium-sized enterprise. Guangdong Xiongxing Holdings Group Co., Ltd is a large private enterprise. Bochuang Intelligent Equipment Co., Ltd is a professional design and manufacturing of high-tech enterprise, a small enterprise. Guangzhou Zhujiang Pipe Industry Technology Co., Ltd is a large enterprise.

Instrument of the Study - The survey questionnaire was the data gathering instrument used in the present study. Surveys are a great way to efficiently collect data from a large number of employees. Their anonymous nature encourages honest responses, especially on sensitive topics such as security concerns or training gaps. Additionally, surveys collect quantitative data, which provides a comprehensive understanding of employee perceptions and experiences. The flexibility of survey administration and the relatively low cost compared to other methods make them a practical option for researchers. Surveys provide a direct way to assess employee perspectives on training, safety, and health, helping to identify areas for improvement and inform the development of comprehensive well-being frameworks for manufacturing companies. A self-made questionnaire was essential to effectively studying employee training, safety, and wellness practices in the manufacturing industry. By developing a customized instrument, researcher was able to delve deeper into specific areas of interest, ensuring that the data collected is directly relevant to the research objectives. This level of control over question wording and structure allows for accurate data collection and minimizes the risk of bias. Additionally, a customized questionnaire provides flexibility as the study evolves, adapting to changes in focus or emerging topics. Creating a customized questionnaire is often more cost-effective while providing greater relevance and depth to the research findings.

The first part of the questionnaire assessed the employee training as to training contents, delivery method and training evaluation; The second part evaluated the employee safety in terms of culture, management system and physical workplace environment while the third part assessed the employee health care practices in terms of physical health, mental health and social health, Specific Likert scales were used: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree. Based on result, the Employee Training, Safety and Health Care Practices Instrument has an Excellent consistency as exhibited by the Cronbach's Alpha value of (.943). This was validated by the Good remarks from Employee Training (.863); it was confirmed by the Acceptable results from Training Contents (.716), Delivery Methods (892), and Training Evaluation (.782). Also, it was validated by the Excellent remarks from Employee Safety (.925); it was confirmed by the Acceptable result from Safety Culture (.821), and Good results Safety Management System (.870), and Physical Workplace Environment (.821). It was further validated by the Good result from Employee Health Care Practices (.854); it was confirmed by the Good results from Physical Health Practices (.860), Mental Health Practices (.860), and Acceptable result from Social Health Practices (.771); which shows that the instrument at hand passed the reliability index test.

Data Gathering Procedures - Developing a well-structured questionnaire requires careful consideration of the research objectives and target population. Self-made questionnaires provided the ability to tailor questions to specific research interests, ensuring that data are relevant to the research objectives. By developing clear and relevant questions, the researcher was able to effectively collect employee perceptions and experiences of training, safety, and health practices. Obtaining the necessary approvals and ensuring the quality of research instruments are important steps in conducting research on employee training, safety, and health practices. The researcher obtained approval from human resources department of the research locale and submitted a detailed research proposal, addressing ethical concerns, and obtaining formal consent. To ensure the validity of a questionnaire, content validation is necessary. The researcher did the process which includes expert review, content analysis, and pilot testing to refine questions. Pilot testing was done to test the indicators' internal consistency. By meticulously following these procedures, the researcher was able to improve the reliability and

trustworthiness of the research results. Rigorous research processes are the foundation for producing reliable and valid results. By obtaining appropriate permits, conducting thorough content and reliability testing, and developing a well-designed questionnaire, the researcher was able to establish a solid foundation for their research on employee training, safety, and health practices in the manufacturing industry. This process increases the credibility of the research and contributes to the development of effective strategies to improve employee well-being. Data collection for the study on employee training, safety practices and health in manufacturing was conducted primarily through online questionnaires. This method facilitated efficient data collection from a large sample size, allowing for a broader representation of the workforce. After collecting responses, the data was cleaned, meticulously coded and entered into appropriate software for analysis.

Data Analysis - Weighted mean and rank were used to determine the impact of employee training as to training contents, delivery method and training evaluation; describe the employee safety in terms of safety culture, safety management system and physical workplace environment; describe the employee health care practices as to physical health, mental health and social health. The result of Shapiro-Wilk Test showed that p-values of all variables were less than 0.05 which means that the data set was not normally distributed. Therefore, Spearman rho was used as part of the non-parametric tests to determine the significant relationship. All analyses were performed using SPSS version 28.

Ethical Considerations - Ethical considerations were practiced in the conduct of the research work to warrant that every information that was gathered are used for research purposes only to maintain the quality and integrity of the research. The researcher sought the consent of the ethics committee through letter and communication to make sure that the methods and contents are in accordance with the research ethics. Ethics review is a crucial process in research to ensure that studies are conducted in a responsible and ethical manner. Its primary purpose is to protect the rights, safety, and well-being of research participants. It also ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents by not seeking their names as they were answering the questionnaires. The researcher also ensured that the respondents voluntarily answer the questionnaires according to their will. Lastly, it also ensured that none of the respondents of the study were be hurt or harmed and their safety and security is of top priority.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1
Summary Table on Employee Training

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Training Contents	3.34	Agree	1
Delivery Method	3.23	Agree	3
Training Evaluation	3.27	Agree	2
Grand Composite Mean	3.28	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Table 1 shows the summary of employee training. With a grand composite mean of 3.28, the respondents generally agreed on the employee training provided in the companies. The agreement among respondents on training content, delivery methods, and assessment in manufacturing companies may stem from a combination of factors. Industry-wide standards, regulatory compliance, and the standardized nature of many manufacturing roles contribute to a degree of uniformity in training practices (Armstrong, 2018). Safety regulations mandate specific training content, while operational requirements often dictate standardized delivery methods such as on-the-job training or classroom instruction (Noe, et al., 2019). Additionally, the adoption of established training frameworks and models by multiple manufacturing organizations may promote convergence in training methods. These frameworks typically outline core training competencies, delivery mechanisms, and assessment criteria, resulting in a level of consistency across the industry (Churchill, 2021). However, it is essential to acknowledge that differences in organizational culture, technological advances, and specific job roles may influence the level of agreement among respondents.

Among the aspects cited, training content was rated the highest. When training content is tailored to specific job roles and responsibilities, employees are more likely to find it relevant and useful, leading to increased engagement and motivation. The high employee ratings of training content in manufacturing environments highlight its essential role in improving job performance and overall organizational effectiveness. By equipping employees with the necessary knowledge and skills, well-designed training content can directly contribute to improved productivity, quality, and innovation (Noe, et al., 2019).

Table 2
Summary Table on the Employee Safety

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Safety Culture	3.36	Agree	1
Safety Management System	3.26	Agree	3
Physical Workplace Environment	3.27	Agree	2
Grand Composite Mean	3.30	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Table 2 summarizes the employee safety with a grand composite mean of 3.30. Among them, the highest average is safety culture score with a composite mean 3.36. This is followed by physical workplace environment scores (3.27) and safety management system (3.26). Hofmann et. al.,(2022) likely found a positive correlation between safety culture and organizational performance. Stronger safety cultures are associated with lower accident rates and reduced costs. Safety culture influences employee engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover. Specific aspects of safety culture like communication, management support, employee involvement) have different impacts on organizational performance. Among the dimensions, the safety culture was assessed the highest. When employees perceive a strong safety culture, they are more likely to report hazards, participate in safety initiatives, and comply with safety procedures. This in turn contributes to a positive safety climate and reduces the likelihood of accidents and injuries (Cooper et. al.,2016). Although safety management systems and physical workplace conditions are essential elements of safety, they are often viewed as tools or enablers of a strong safety culture rather than independent drivers of safety performance.

Table 3
Summary Table on the Employee Health Care Practices

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Physical Health	3.20	Agree	2
Mental Health	3.18	Agree	3
Social Health	3.31	Agree	1
Grand Composite Mean	3.23	Agree	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

Table 3 summarizes the employee health care practices in terms of physical health, mental health and social health with a grand composite mean of 3.23 and the respondents generally agreed on all the dimensions. The high level of agreement among manufacturing workers regarding wellness practices in terms of physical, mental, and social health may reflect several interrelated factors. The increased emphasis on work-life balance, mental health, and general well-being has led to increased employee awareness of the importance of these factors. Compliance with occupational health and safety regulations, which often include physical and mental health components, contributes to a standardized approach to wellness practices. Employees recognize the link between their physical, mental, and social health and their ability to work effectively.

Among the employee health care practices, social health was assessed the highest. High social well-being ratings among manufacturing employees may reflect a growing recognition of the importance of interpersonal relationships and work-life balance to overall health. Organizations recognize that engaged employees are more productive and satisfied. Social connections in the workplace contribute significantly to engagement. Many manufacturing roles require effective teamwork, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationships. Social connections at work can contribute to a positive work-life balance by providing a sense of belonging and support.

Table 4
Relationship Between Employee Training and Employee Safety

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
Training Contents			
Safety Culture	0.713**	< .001	Highly Significant
Safety Management System	0.506**	< .001	Highly Significant
Physical Workplace Environment	0.602**	< .001	Highly Significant
Delivery Method			
Safety Culture	0.731**	< .001	Highly Significant
Safety Management System	0.634**	< .001	Highly Significant
Physical Workplace Environment	0.675**	< .001	Highly Significant
Training Evaluation			
Safety Culture	0.733**	< .001	Highly Significant
Safety Management System	0.613**	< .001	Highly Significant
Physical Workplace Environment	0.666**	< .001	Highly Significant

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

As seen in the table 4, the computed rho-values ranging from 0.506 to 0.733 indicate a moderate to strong direct relationship among the sub variables of employee training and employee safety. There was a statistically significant relationship between employee training and employee safety because the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. The positive correlation between employee training and safety has been clearly established in occupational safety. Several factors contribute to this relationship. Effective training equips employees with the knowledge and skills needed to identify, assess, and control workplace hazards. Training can influence employee attitudes and behaviors, promoting safety-conscious activities. It also helps employees understand and comply with safety regulations and standards and it also includes emergency response procedures, improving employees' ability to respond effectively to hazardous situations.

It is not difficult to see from the concept of employee safety participation that it is a voluntary effort that has exceeded the minimum standards for employee safety compliance. Extra effort is part of organizational citizenship behavior. In construction operations, each process cannot be completed by a single person alone, and it inevitably forms mutual cooperation among workers, with a very close working relationship between them. The active participation of employees in safety affairs is not only beneficial for their own work safety, but also affects the surrounding workers' awareness and attitude towards safety. In his study on the impact of safety atmosphere on safety behavior in construction enterprises. Mohamed (2002) found that timely fulfillment of safety commitments by management personnel and frequent interaction and communication with employees will be beneficial for the cultivation of organizational safety, which will be beneficial for employees to make safety behaviors in their work.

Table 5
Relationship Between Employee Training and Employee Health Care Practices

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
Training Contents			
Physical Health	0.700**	< .001	Highly Significant
Mental Health	0.603**	< .001	Highly Significant
Social Health	0.662**	< .001	Highly Significant
Delivery Method			
Physical Health	0.621**	< .001	Highly Significant
Mental Health	0.527**	< .001	Highly Significant
Social Health	0.566**	< .001	Highly Significant
Training Evaluation			
Physical Health	0.654**	< .001	Highly Significant
Mental Health	0.491**	< .001	Highly Significant
Social Health	0.600**	< .001	Highly Significant

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

As seen in table 5, the computed rho-values ranging from 0.491 to 0.700 indicate a moderate to strong direct relationship among the sub variables of employee training and employee health care practices. There was a statistically significant relationship between employee training and employee health care practices because the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. The correlation between employee training and wellness practices is

significant. Effective training programs can significantly impact employee health and well-being in a number of ways: Equipping employees with safety knowledge and skills reduces accidents and injuries, which in turn contributes to improved physical health. Programs on nutrition, stress management, and ergonomics promote overall employee well-being. Training employees on how to respond to health emergencies can save lives and build confidence. Complying with health and safety regulations protects employees from hazards and promotes a healthy work environment. By investing in comprehensive training programs, organizations can create a culture of health and safety that improves employee morale, productivity and retention. The improvement of safety behavior requires employees to study safety protection knowledge and enhance their awareness of safety behavior, which indicates that safety awareness has a positive impact on employees' healthcare. If employees in a company have a low level of safety awareness, they are prone to engage in unsafe behaviors at work, which can lead to safety accidents.

Table 6

Relationship Between Employee Safety and Employee Health Care Practices

Variables	rho	p-value	Interpretation
Safety Culture			
Physical Health	0.670**	< .001	Highly Significant
Mental Health	0.614**	< .001	Highly Significant
Social Health	0.697**	< .001	Highly Significant
Safety Management System			
Physical Health	0.422**	< .001	Highly Significant
Mental Health	0.604**	< .001	Highly Significant
Social Health	0.516**	< .001	Highly Significant
Physical Workplace Environment			
Physical Health	0.618**	< .001	Highly Significant
Mental Health	0.688**	< .001	Highly Significant
Social Health	0.653**	< .001	Highly Significant

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*

As seen in the table 6, the computed rho-values ranging from 0.422 to 0.697 indicate a moderate to strong direct relationship among the sub variables of employee safety and employee health care practices. There was a statistically significant relationship between employee safety and employee health care practices because the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. The relationship between safety practices and employee health is symbiotic. Manufacturing firms that prioritize safety are more likely to invest in comprehensive health programs, and conversely, organizations with strong health initiatives are more proactive in addressing safety issues. Effective safety practices help identify and reduce hazards, thereby reducing the likelihood of injuries and illnesses requiring medical intervention. A comprehensive approach to employee health, including physical and mental health, improves overall job satisfaction, productivity, and safety awareness. Compliance with safety and health regulations is essential to protecting employees and avoiding liability. Investing in safety and wellness activities can result in long-term savings through reduced absenteeism, workers' compensation claims, and health care costs.

Employee Holistic Well-being Framework

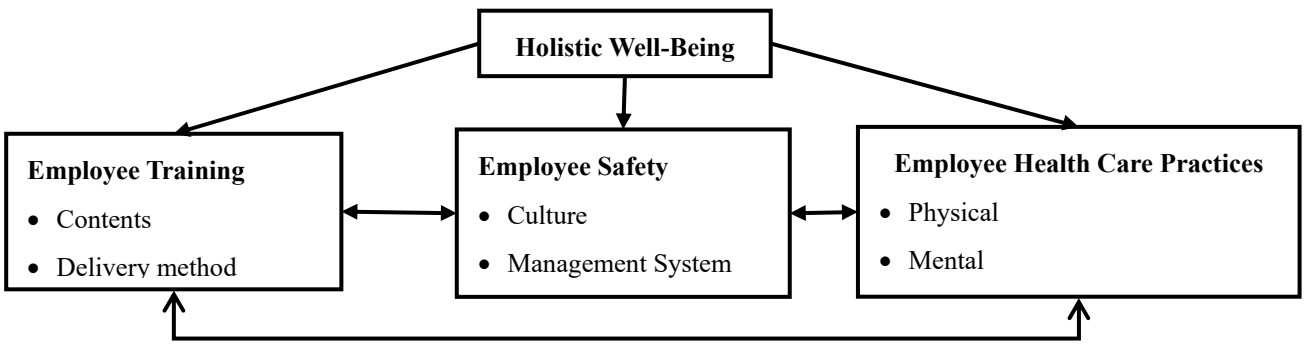

Figure 1: Employee Holistic Well-being Framework

Employee training, safety practices, and wellness are interconnected elements of a comprehensive employee holistic well-being framework. Each contributes significantly to the overall health and well-being of manufacturing company employees. Effective training programs equip employees with the knowledge and skills to perform their jobs safely, reducing the risk of accidents and injuries. These programs also help build a positive safety culture, fostering a sense of autonomy and ownership among employees when it comes to safety. A strong safety culture is essential to protecting the physical and mental health of employees. By implementing strong safety measures, organizations can prevent accidents, reduce absenteeism, and create a positive work environment. Safety measures, such as hazard identification and risk assessment, are closely linked to employee well-being because they contribute to a sense of security and control. Comprehensive wellness activities, including physical and mental health services, are essential to supporting employee health. Access to wellness resources can help prevent illness, manage chronic conditions, and promote overall health and productivity.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The study found moderate agreement on employee training in terms of training contents, delivery method and training evaluation which indicates an effective training program in the manufacturing firms. The respondents moderately agreed on the employee safety in terms of safety culture, safety management system and physical workplace. There is a moderate agreement on the employee health care practices in terms of physical, mental and social health practices. A high significant relationships were found among employee training, employee safety and employee health care practices. An employee holistic well-being framework was developed for manufacturing companies to create a positive and safe working environment for the employees. The manufacturing manager may implement training programs which will provide flexibility and use of modern technology in the delivery method to engage the learning experiences of the trainees. The HR manager may examine the root causes of past safety incidents in the manufacturing company to determine areas for preventive measures. The department heads and HR manager may continuously improve the health-care practices by bench-marking with other companies so they can measure the effectiveness of the employees' overall well-being. The employee holistic well-being framework may be used by other manufacturing firms to continuously enhance their employees training, safety and health care practices. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using different locations or industries, and studying the same phenomenon in different locations or industries which can help identify factors specific to the current context.

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