

The Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance with the Mediating Role of Employee Well-Being and Employee Engagement in Start-Ups of Shanghai City, China

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Abstract: The burgeoning start-up ecosystem in Shanghai, characterized by relentless growth and innovation, necessitates a reevaluation of traditional work-life paradigms to ensure sustainable employee performance. This study aims to explore the influence of work-life balance on employee performance, with a specific focus on the mediating roles of employee well-being and engagement. Employing a quantitative research method, data were collected from a random sample of 400 employees across Shanghai's start-ups using structured questionnaires. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, mediated by employee well-being and employee engagement. These results underscore the critical importance of fostering a supportive work environment that prioritizes balanced work-life policies to mitigate stress and promote mental health. This research provides actionable insights for start-ups in Shanghai, advocating for a paradigm shift towards healthier and more engaged workforces to achieve sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

Keywords: work-life balance, employee performance, employee well-being, employee engagement

1. Introduction

The contemporary workforce within Shanghai's burgeoning start-up ecosystem is characterized by a relentless pursuit of growth, innovation, and competition (Sun, 2020). This environment necessitates a reevaluation of traditional work-life paradigms, as the pressures of rapid development and creative demands place unique strains on employees. Start-ups in Shanghai, known for their entrepreneurial spirit and dynamic operations, often require high levels of dedication and flexibility, pushing the boundaries of conventional work hours and environments (Ahmad et al., 2024). While this can foster rapid growth and a sense of ownership among employees, it also blurs the lines between professional and personal life, leading to potential burnout and decreased job satisfaction.

In the vibrant economic landscape of Shanghai, work-life balance has evolved into a critical aspect of organizational management (Fey et al., 2022). The city's reputation for rapid industrial growth and technological innovation amplifies the importance of this balance in shaping workforce productivity and overall well-being. This research explores the

intricate relationship between work-life balance and employee performance, focusing on how employee well-being and engagement mediate this relationship. Understanding these dynamics is essential for start-ups aiming to maintain high performance levels while ensuring their employees' health and satisfaction.

The concept of work-life balance has gained significant traction, especially in high-pressure environments like those of start-ups (Udin et al., 2023). A well-balanced approach to managing professional and personal responsibilities can lead to enhanced performance by reducing stress, fostering creativity, and increasing job satisfaction. Conversely, a lack of balance may result in burnout, decreased productivity, and higher turnover rates. Employee well-being, encompassing life, workplace, and psychological dimensions, is crucial in this context (Pradhan & Hati, 2022). Promoting well-being can improve performance, particularly in fast-paced start-ups where the risk of health deterioration is high.

Employee engagement, defined as the level of enthusiasm and commitment towards one's job and organization, is another critical factor influenced by work-life balance (Nagpal, 2022). Engaged employees are more likely to contribute positively towards organizational goals, demonstrating higher performance levels. In Shanghai's competitive start-up scene, fostering engagement through balanced work-life policies can be a key differentiator in achieving high performance and innovation. This research seeks to provide evidence-based insights into these relationships, offering strategies for start-ups in Shanghai to enhance employee performance sustainably.

Despite the potential benefits of a balanced work-life approach, many start-ups in Shanghai operate within an intensely competitive work culture (Deng & Yan, 2020). This culture often glorifies long working hours and high levels of commitment, leading employees to spend excessive time at work (Zhao, 2022). While such dedication may be viewed as essential for career progression, it can result in significant drawbacks—severe burnout, stress, and a lack of personal time, all detrimental to overall health and well-being.

A prominent issue is the lack of formal policies supporting work-life balance in many start-ups (Klofsten et al., 2021). Without flexible working hours, work-from-home options, or clear guidelines on work boundaries, employees struggle to manage personal responsibilities alongside professional duties (Gao et al., 2022). This lack of support can lead to increased stress and feelings of being overwhelmed, hindering engagement and productivity. The rapid growth and scaling typical of start-ups exacerbate these issues, as unpredictable workloads and pressures rise without a corresponding increase in resources or support (Zhou, 2020).

Cultural expectations in China further complicate the work-life balance scenario (Zhang, 2023). Traditional values emphasizing hard work and sacrifice often make it difficult for employees to request flexibility or express concerns about work-life balance (Li & Chan, 2024). This cultural backdrop can create an environment where prioritizing personal life is seen as a lack of commitment or motivation, adding to the pressure on employees.

The digital age has also blurred the boundaries between work and personal life (Crawford, 2021). In tech-oriented start-ups, constant connectivity through smartphones and laptops means work can intrude into personal time, reducing the quality of rest and relaxation essential for good mental health and sustained engagement (Kerman et al., 2022). This continuous connectivity exacerbates the strain on employees, contributing to burnout and decreased job satisfaction.

Start-ups in Shanghai often lack comprehensive health and well-being programs (Pessot et al., 2023). Insufficient health insurance, lack of mental health resources, and poorly developed work-life balance policies leave employees feeling unsupported, increasing the risk of health problems and disengagement (Poon et al., 2023). Moreover, the diverse workforce in Shanghai's start-ups, encompassing various age groups and cultural backgrounds, can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts that affect workplace harmony and individual well-being (Madgafurova, 2023).

The competitive and high-stress environment of Shanghai's start-ups, characterized by long hours and high expectations, poses significant challenges to maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Xiong, 2022). This culture of overwork can lead to physical health problems and strain personal relationships, further diminishing overall well-being and engagement (Fei, 2023). The absence of clear career progression paths and effective communication further exacerbates these issues, leading to uncertainty and dissatisfaction among employees (Boudlaie et al., 2022).

In conclusion, the working environment in Shanghai's start-ups presents several key issues impacting employee performance. The intense work culture, lack of formal work-life balance policies, rapid scaling pressures, cultural expectations, and continuous digital connectivity contribute to significant stress and burnout among employees. By investigating the mediating roles of employee well-being and engagement, this research aims to uncover actionable insights to transform workplace culture. Enhancing work-life balance is expected to mitigate the negative impacts of the current demanding work culture, fostering a more sustainable and productive work environment. This research will provide valuable recommendations for start-ups in Shanghai to thrive in today's competitive business landscape.

Given the intricate dynamics between work-life balance and its subsequent influence on employee performance within the context of Shanghai's start-up ecosystem, the research sets forth several research objectives that guide the investigation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Relationship Between Work-life Balance and Employee Performance

This section aims to explore the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance across various organizational settings.

Thamrin & Riyanto (2020), Preena (2021), Aisyah et al. (2023), and Anyim et al. (2020) underscore the multifaceted benefits of work-life balance on employee performance, innovation, commitment, and stress reduction, although their focal points diverge, weaving a nuanced tapestry of its implications in the workplace. Thamrin & Riyanto (2020) anchor their investigation in the domain of productivity and job satisfaction, positing that a harmonious work-life balance catalyzes not only employee efficiency but also an enhanced sense of fulfillment within their roles. This perspective is somewhat broadened by Preena (2021), who shifts the lens to the realm of employee innovation, suggesting that the equilibrium between professional and personal spheres fosters a conducive environment for creativity and groundbreaking contributions. The discourse takes a deeper dive into organizational psychology with Aisyah et al. (2023), who connect the dots between work-life balance and organizational commitment, proposing that this balance breeds a deeper loyalty and dedication among employees, which, in turn, translates into superior performance metrics. Meanwhile, Anyim et al. (2020) approach the dialogue from the angle of stress management, highlighting the tangible benefits of reduced stress levels on job performance and absenteeism, thereby presenting work-life balance as a cornerstone of not only employee well-being but also organizational health. These studies highlight the complexity of implementing work-life balance initiatives, suggesting that while the overarching benefits are clear, the pathways through which these benefits manifest are multifaceted and interdependent, necessitating a holistic approach to workplace policy formulation and implementation.

2.2 Relationship Between Work-life Balance and Employee Well-being

This section aims to explore the relationship between work-life balance and employee well-being by different scholars in the past few years.

Lee & Choi (2019), Fotiadis et al. (2019), and Rahim et al. (2019) affirm the significance of work-life balance in augmenting employee well-being through different lenses and emphases. Lee & Choi (2019) underscore the reduction in stress and anxiety as a crucial benefit of work-life harmony, positing that such balance leads to improved long-term mental health and job satisfaction. They advocate for organizational measures like flexible scheduling and time off to cater to employees' diverse needs. In a similar vein, Fotiadis et al. (2019) explore the impact of work-life balance on job satisfaction, suggesting that the equilibrium between professional obligations and personal life enhances feelings of accomplishment, autonomy, and recognition. This trio of factors, according to Fotiadis et al. (2019), elevates the overall sense of well-being among employees, making a strong case for the necessity of work-life balance in achieving both professional success and personal fulfillment. Conversely, Rahim et al. (2019) focus on the role of work-life balance in

combating burnout, demonstrating that effective management of work-life boundaries significantly diminishes burnout symptoms. They highlight the imperative for organizational support in the form of flexible work arrangements and access to mental health resources, thus providing a blueprint for cultivating a resilient and satisfied workforce.

2.3 Relationship Between Employee Well-being and Employee Performance

This section aims to review the relationship between employee well-being and employee performance by different scholars in the past few years.

Salas-Vallina et al. (2021) elucidated the direct correlation between employee well-being and enhanced performance, emphasizing how well-being leads to greater discipline and consistency in tasks, which are key for organizational success. This notion posits that well-being is a catalyst for deep engagement and quality output, fostering a supportive work environment that nurtures commitment. Conversely, Fogaca et al. (2021) extend this argument to the realm of leadership, asserting that the well-being of leaders significantly influences team performance through a positive leadership style that motivates, inspires collaboration, and manages stress effectively. This perspective suggests that the impact of well-being extends beyond individual performance to encompass team dynamics, highlighting the role of leaders in cultivating a positive work environment. Yan et al. (2020) pivoted the discussion towards the cognitive benefits of psychological well-being, arguing that it enhances employees' decision-making capabilities and strategic insights. They emphasize the cognitive clarity and emotional resilience that facilitate analyzing situations and foreseeing implications, thus driving organizational success and innovation. This viewpoint underscores the role of psychological well-being in equipping employees with crucial skills for high-level performance and strategic contributions. Each perspective contributes to an understanding of well-being's multifaceted impact on employee performance, suggesting a holistic approach to employee and leadership development that prioritizes psychological health as a key driver of success and innovation within organizations.

2.4 Relationship Between Work-life Balance and Employee Engagement

This section aims to review the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement by different scholars in the past few years.

Ricardianto et al. (2020), Lutarlean et al. (2020), and Mulang (2022) have illuminated the intricate dynamics between work-life balance and employee engagement, each contributing nuanced insights into how balancing professional and personal life can significantly enhance workforce motivation and commitment. Ricardianto et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of organizational policies that promote work-life harmony, suggesting that such initiatives are crucial in reducing job-related stress and fostering a satisfying work environment, which, in turn, boosts employee motivation and commitment. This perspective underscores the pivotal role of organizational support in enhancing employee engagement by addressing personal needs and well-being. Lutarlean et al. (2020) shifted the focus to the role of flexibility in achieving work-life balance, highlighting that enabling employees to have greater control over their schedules and responsibilities can mitigate stress and increase job satisfaction. This flexibility, manifested through options such as remote work and flexible working hours, cultivates a supportive culture that values employee needs, leading to heightened engagement and dedication to organizational objectives. Mulang (2022) further explored this relationship by pointing out the significance of employees' perceptions of control over their work and personal life. This perception of control is pivotal in reducing work-life conflict, thereby increasing job satisfaction and motivation through effective schedule and responsibility management, reinforcing the notion that autonomy and empowerment are key to fostering a committed and enthusiastic workforce. These studies reveal a theme that work-life balance is fundamentally linked to enhanced employee engagement.

2.5 Relationship Between Employee Engagement and Employee Performance

This section aims to explore the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance, offering a comprehensive overview of recent scholarly insights on the subject.

Al Zeer et al. (2023), Hidayat (2023), and Corbeanu & Iliescu (2023) affirm the role of employee engagement in elevating employee performance, each elucidating different dimensions of this dynamic relationship. Al Zeer et al. (2023) emphasized the direct impact of employee engagement on productivity and work quality, positing that a workforce deeply connected to its work exhibits higher output and superior performance, essentially identifying engagement as a critical lever for organizational success. In a similar vein, Hidayat (2023) shifts the focus towards the innovative and creative capacities unleashed by high levels of employee engagement. This research suggests that engagement transcends conventional performance metrics, fostering a culture where employees feel valued and, therefore, are more likely to contribute innovative ideas, significantly enriching the organizational knowledge base. Corbeanu & Iliescu (2023), meanwhile, explore the intermediary role of job satisfaction, arguing that engagement not only boosts direct performance outcomes but also cultivates a sense of satisfaction that, in turn, further enhances performance, thereby establishing a virtuous cycle of engagement, satisfaction, and performance. These insights from Al Zeer et al. (2023), Hidayat (2023), and Corbeanu & Iliescu (2023) underscore the indispensability of strategic engagement initiatives in achieving operational excellence and sustaining a competitive edge in the complex, ever-evolving business landscape.

3. Methodology

(1) Research design

The study employs a quantitative research method, characterized by systematic empirical investigation using statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques (Mohajan, 2020). The quantitative approach is particularly suitable for this study as it facilitates the collection of numerical data from a large sample, allowing for a structured and reliable measurement of variables (Kurzahls & Kurzahls, 2021). This method enables the quantification of correlations between work-life balance, employee well-being, engagement, and their collective impact on performance.

The quantitative approach also supports the generalization of results to a broader population, which is critical for startups in Shanghai aiming to implement evidence-based strategies for enhancing employee performance (Ghauri et al., 2020). The use of statistical analysis determines the strength and significance of the relationships among the studied variables, providing robust and generalizable outcomes that can guide managerial practices and policy-making (Habib, 2021).

Objectivity in research is another advantage of quantitative methods (Dunn, 2021). Standardized data collection instruments, such as surveys and questionnaires, minimize biases associated with qualitative data collection (Vu, 2021). This objectivity is crucial for ensuring the credibility and replicability of the research findings (Shaver, 2021). A cross-sectional survey strategy complements the quantitative methodology by enabling efficient and cost-effective data collection at a single point in time, which is essential for time-sensitive decisions in dynamic startup environments.

(2) Population and Sample Size

The study focuses on employees working within Shanghai's startup sector. According to the 2023 Shanghai Municipal Economic and Social Development Statistical Bulletin, the city hosts 39,092 startups employing approximately 175,682 people. This rapidly growing sector is critical due to its economic contributions and unique work culture that significantly influences employee performance, engagement, and well-being.

To ensure statistical significance and reliability of results, the study determined an appropriate sample size using the Raosoft online sample size calculator. With a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the suggested minimum sample size was 384. However, considering potential non-responses and incomplete data, the sample size was adjusted to 400 respondents. This adjustment ensures the robustness of the final analysis, enhancing the credibility of the findings.

A sample size of 400 is substantial enough to perform various subgroup analyses, which are essential in a study involving mediating variables like employee well-being and engagement. Such analyses allow for a deeper understanding

of different factors affecting various groups within the population, providing nuanced insights into the dynamics at play within Shanghai's startup ecosystem.

(3) Sampling

The study employs random sampling to obtain a representative cross-section of the target population. This technique ensures that every individual in the population of startup employees in Shanghai has an equal chance of being selected (Berndt, 2020), thus enhancing the credibility and generalizability of the research findings. Random sampling mitigates bias by eliminating researchers' discretion in selecting respondents, thereby enhancing data reliability (Stratton, 2021).

A comprehensive list of all employees working in the 39,092 startups in Shanghai will be constructed using the latest employee directories provided by the companies. A random number generator will then select 400 unique individuals from this list, ensuring an unbiased selection process. To address potential non-responses, a reserve pool of additional participants will be prepared in advance.

(4) Instrument

The research instrument is a structured questionnaire divided into two sections: demographic questions and specific items addressing the core variables of the study—work-life balance, employee well-being, engagement, and performance.

The first section collects demographic information, including age, gender, education level, position within the company, and years of experience. This data facilitates subgroup analyses and contextual understanding of responses.

The second section includes validated scales and question items adapted to the study's context. Each variable is explored through multiple dimensions to ensure a comprehensive understanding of its facets and implications. The questionnaire is designed to be clear, concise, and relevant, minimizing respondent burden while maximizing data quality. A pilot test with 100 participants will refine the questionnaire, ensuring its reliability and validity.

(5) Data Analysis Method

The data analysis employs several statistical techniques. Initially, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is used for descriptive analysis to compute means, medians, standard deviations, and ranges, providing an overview of the data's central tendencies and dispersions.

Next, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is conducted to validate the measurement model, ensuring that the items accurately measure the intended dimensions. CFA assesses construct validity using indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) path analysis examines the complex relationships between latent variables. SEM tests the research hypotheses and explores the direct and indirect effects of work-life balance on employee performance, with well-being and engagement as mediators. This comprehensive analysis provides detailed insights into the causal relationships among the variables, ensuring robust and generalizable outcomes.

4. Findings and Discussion

The study conducted the SEM path analysis to examine the relationship between work-life balance (WBL), employee well-being (EWB), employee engagement (EME) and employee performance (EE) in start-ups of Shanghai City, China. The path coefficients of research variables are shown in **Figure 1**.

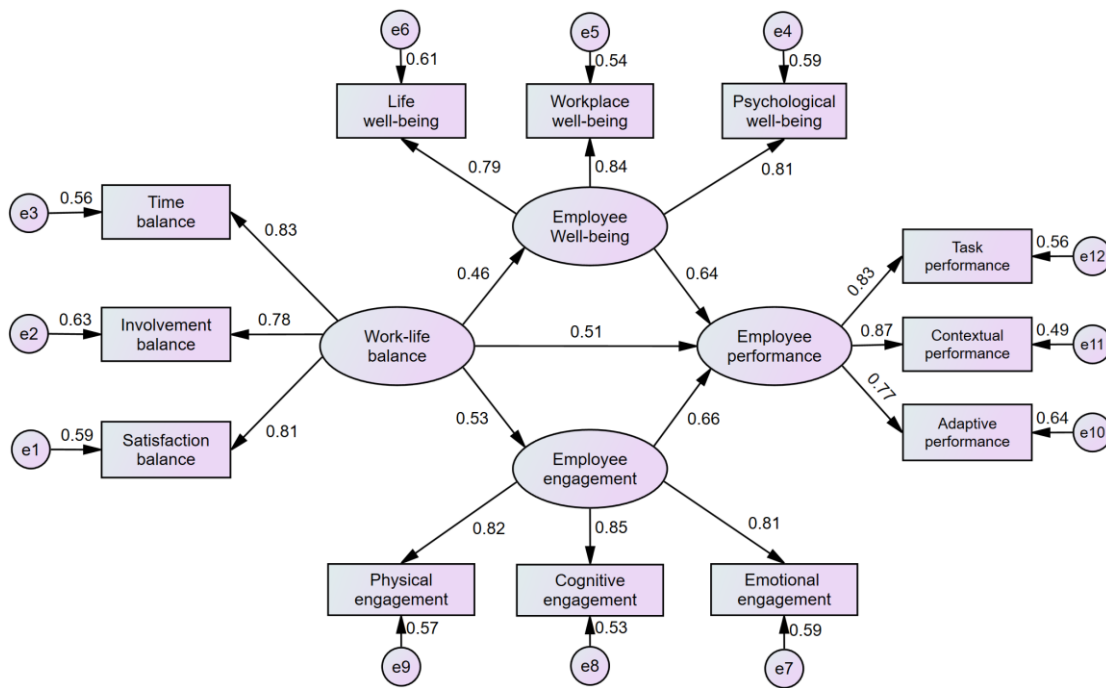


Figure 1: Path coefficient

The study also used bootstrap method to examine the mediating effect of employee well-being and employee engagement in the relationship between work-life balance and employee performance. The mediating effect analysis results of employee well-being and employee engagement are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Mediating effect analysis of employee well-being and employee engagement

| Standard effect | Path | Effect coefficient | 95% confidence interval | | S.E. | P-value | Results |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|---------|------------------|
| | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Total effect | WLB --->EE | 0.811 | 0.758 | 0.864 | 0.027 | *** | Mediating effect |
| Direct effect | WLB --->EE | 0.514 | 0.465 | 0.563 | 0.025 | *** | |
| Indirect effect | WLB-->EWB---> EE | 0.297 | 0.252 | 0.342 | 0.023 | *** | |
| Total effect | WLB --->EE | 0.862 | 0.811 | 0.913 | 0.026 | *** | Mediating effect |
| Direct effect | WLB --->EE | 0.514 | 0.465 | 0.563 | 0.025 | *** | |
| Indirect effect | WLB-->EME--> EE | 0.348 | 0.305 | 0.391 | 0.022 | *** | |

Based on above analysis results of path coefficient and mediating effect, the study concluded with the following findings:

(1) Positive Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance

The data analysis reveals a significant positive correlation between work-life balance and employee performance in Shanghai's start-ups. This aligns with existing literature suggesting that employees with a balanced approach to managing professional and personal responsibilities tend to exhibit higher productivity and job satisfaction (Thamrin & Riyanto, 2020). In Shanghai's high-pressure start-up environment, this balance is particularly crucial. Employees who can manage stress and maintain a sense of personal well-being are better equipped to handle the demanding workloads typical of start-ups. Consequently, they demonstrate improved performance, contributing positively to the organization's goals and

innovation efforts.

(2) Positive Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Well-Being

The study further confirms that work-life balance significantly enhances employee well-being in Shanghai's start-ups. This finding is consistent with research by Lee & Choi (2019) and Rahim et al. (2019), which highlights the reduction in stress and burnout as key benefits of balanced work-life dynamics. In the context of Shanghai's start-ups, where long hours and intense work culture prevail, a structured work-life balance helps mitigate the adverse effects of such environments. Employees with better work-life balance experience lower stress levels, improved mental health, and greater job satisfaction, which are crucial for sustaining long-term productivity and personal fulfillment.

(3) Positive Influence of Employee Well-Being on Employee Performance

The analysis also establishes a positive link between employee well-being and performance. This finding supports Salas-Vallina et al. (2021) and Yan et al. (2022), who argue that well-being leads to greater discipline, consistency, and cognitive clarity. In Shanghai's start-up scene, where rapid decision-making and innovative thinking are vital, employees with higher well-being levels are more likely to perform effectively. They exhibit enhanced strategic insights, better decision-making capabilities, and a higher degree of engagement, all of which drive superior performance and organizational success.

(4) Positive Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Engagement

The research highlights that work-life balance significantly influences employee engagement in Shanghai's start-ups. This result resonates with the findings of Ricardianto et al. (2020) and Luturlean et al. (2020), who emphasize the role of organizational policies and flexible work arrangements in fostering engagement. In the competitive start-up environment of Shanghai, where employees are expected to show high levels of commitment, work-life balance helps reduce job-related stress and enhance job satisfaction. Engaged employees are more likely to feel motivated and committed to their work, leading to higher levels of innovation and performance.

(5) Positive Influence of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance

The data further confirms that employee engagement positively impacts performance. This finding aligns with Hidayat (2023) and Corbeanu & Iliescu (2023), who assert that engaged employees exhibit higher productivity, better work quality, and more innovative contributions. In Shanghai's start-ups, where innovation and agility are critical, engaged employees are essential for maintaining competitive advantage. They bring forth creative solutions, exhibit higher dedication, and consistently deliver high-quality work, thereby enhancing overall organizational performance.

(6) Mediating Role of Employee Well-Being in the Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance

The study underscores the mediating role of employee well-being in the relationship between work-life balance and performance. This finding aligns with the conceptual frameworks proposed by Pradhan & Hati (2022) and Fogaca et al. (2021), suggesting that well-being serves as a crucial intermediary that enhances the positive effects of work-life balance on performance. In the start-up ecosystem of Shanghai, promoting employee well-being through balanced work-life policies can mitigate the adverse impacts of high-stress environments. As employees experience better mental health and reduced stress, their overall performance improves, leading to higher productivity and innovation.

(7) Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Influence of Work-Life Balance on Employee Performance

The research also highlights the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between work-life balance and performance. This finding is consistent with the perspectives of Mulang (2022) and Al Zeer et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of engagement in translating work-life balance into enhanced performance. In Shanghai's start-ups, where the pressure to perform is high, fostering employee engagement through work-life balance initiatives can significantly enhance motivation and commitment. Engaged employees are more likely to go above and beyond in their roles, contributing to higher performance levels and driving organizational success.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the critical importance of work-life balance in enhancing employee performance, particularly within the dynamic and high-pressure environment of Shanghai's start-ups. The research conclusively demonstrates that a well-maintained work-life balance positively influences employee well-being and engagement, which in turn significantly boosts overall performance. Employees who can effectively balance their professional and personal lives exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved mental health, all of which are vital for maintaining high productivity and innovation. The study's evidence indicates that well-being serves as a pivotal mediator, illustrating that employees with better mental and physical health are more capable of contributing effectively to organizational goals. Additionally, the research highlights the role of employee engagement as another crucial mediator, showing that engaged employees, who feel valued and connected to their work, are more likely to exhibit superior performance, creativity, and commitment. The intricate interplay between work-life balance, well-being, and engagement reveals that these elements are not isolated but rather deeply interconnected, each amplifying the effects of the other to create a conducive environment for optimal employee performance. This holistic approach to understanding employee dynamics suggests that start-ups in Shanghai can achieve sustainable growth and competitive advantage by fostering a supportive work culture that prioritizes work-life balance. Implementing flexible work policies, promoting mental health resources, and ensuring clear communication about work expectations can mitigate the adverse impacts of the demanding start-up culture, thereby enhancing both employee satisfaction and organizational success. Moreover, this study's insights are particularly relevant in the context of Shanghai's cultural backdrop, where traditional values and modern economic pressures intersect, making it essential for start-ups to adopt progressive management practices that align with both cultural expectations and contemporary work-life needs. The findings advocate for a paradigm shift in how start-ups approach employee management, urging a move away from glorifying overwork towards embracing balanced, healthy, and engaged workforces. Such a shift is not only beneficial for individual employees but also strategically advantageous for organizations aiming to thrive in the competitive landscape of Shanghai's burgeoning start-up ecosystem. In conclusion, this research provides robust evidence that promoting work-life balance is a strategic imperative for start-ups in Shanghai, offering a pathway to enhanced employee performance through improved well-being and engagement. By prioritizing these elements, start-ups can create a sustainable and productive work environment that supports both employee health and organizational excellence.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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