

# Nurturing Wellness Professionals: Employee Perceptions and Satisfaction with Learning and Development Practices in Selected Spas in Cebu City

Frency Danica U. Papasin<sup>1\*</sup>, John Michael S. Say<sup>2,2</sup>, Rizalyn A. Abella<sup>1</sup>, Bernard Benjie B. Bravo II<sup>1</sup>, Klyde Brigoli<sup>1</sup>, Trisha Ann Marie T. Del Campo<sup>1</sup>, Genesis Rosell Miranda<sup>1</sup>, and Grischa Mae A. Penicka<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Southwestern University PHINMA;

<sup>2</sup> University of Southern Philippines Foundation

\*[frul.papasin.swu@phinmaed.com](mailto:frul.papasin.swu@phinmaed.com), <sup>2</sup>[jsay@uspf.edu.ph](mailto:jsay@uspf.edu.ph)

Date Submitted:  
March 12, 2026

Date Accepted:  
April 13, 2026

Date Published:  
May 18, 2026

DOI:  
10.5281/zenodo.20260031

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between learning and development practices and employee satisfaction among wellness professionals in selected spas in Cebu City. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 150 respondents through a structured survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis were employed to analyze the data. Findings revealed that most respondents were therapists aged 30–39 years with four to six years of industry experience. Results showed that all learning and development constructs were positively and significantly associated with employee satisfaction. Training opportunities ( $r = .311$ ) and skill development and career growth ( $r = .351$ ) demonstrated weak to moderate relationships, while management support for learning ( $r = .460$ ) showed a

moderate relationship. Learning environment and resources ( $r = .509$ ) exhibited the strongest association, indicating its critical role in enhancing employee satisfaction. The study concluded that effective learning and development practices contribute significantly to employee satisfaction. The findings imply that spa organizations should prioritize supportive learning environments and management involvement to improve workforce satisfaction, retention, and overall service quality.

**Keywords:** *learning and development practices; employee satisfaction; training opportunities; management support for learning; learning environment and resources; spa industry*

## INTRODUCTION

The spa and wellness industry has become a major part of the global hospitality and tourism sector as more clients prioritize health, relaxation, and self-care. Wellness tourism and related services continue to expand globally, increasing the demand for services that support physical and mental well-being (Global Wellness Institute, 2024). In this setting, the spa industry operates as a high-touch service sector where employee competence, professionalism, and performance directly shape customer experience and organizational success.

Spa establishments require specialized professional skills, certifications, and practical experience to meet changing customer expectations. As the wellness sector evolves, the range of required competencies expands, particularly with the emergence of specialized wellness services and new customer preferences (Novotná et al., 2024). This highlights the need for continuous training, workforce development, and effective human resource management within spa businesses.

In the Philippine context, the hospitality and tourism industry continues to recover and expand after the pandemic. The Department of Tourism reported 5.95 million international visitor arrivals in 2024, with tourism receipts reaching approximately ₱760.5 billion (Department of Tourism, 2025). The Philippine wellness economy

was also estimated at around US\$3.4 billion in 2024, reflecting continued consumer interest and investment in wellness-related services (Global Wellness Institute, 2024). These developments emphasize the need for employee competence and service excellence in local wellness establishments.

Cebu City is one of the country's major tourism destinations and has a growing market for spa and wellness services. Since spa employees directly interact with clients and deliver core services, their learning and development experiences may influence their satisfaction, motivation, and service quality. However, local studies focusing specifically on wellness professionals in Cebu City remain limited, as many existing studies examine hotel employees or hospitality workers in general. This study therefore examined employee perceptions of learning and development practices and their relationship with employee satisfaction in selected spas in Cebu City.

The study specifically described the demographic profile of respondents, assessed employee perceptions of learning and development practices in terms of training opportunities, skill development and career growth, management support for learning, and learning environment and resources, determined the level of employee satisfaction, tested the relationships between these constructs and satisfaction, and proposed recommendations to improve learning and development practices in selected spas in Cebu City.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Learning and Development in Service-Oriented Organizations***

Learning and development practices are organized activities that improve employees' job-related knowledge, skills, and competencies. In spa and wellness establishments, training is important because service quality depends heavily on technical expertise, interpersonal skills, customer handling, sanitation, health protocols, and professional behavior (Grenčíková et al., 2022; Sangpikul, 2022). Effective training helps employees adjust to changing customer expectations and operational demands (Kakarougkas & Papageorgakis, 2023).

Studies show that training opportunities positively influence employee competence, motivation, and satisfaction when programs are relevant, timely, and properly implemented (Noe, 2021; Vikasitha & Bhat, 2024). In small and medium enterprises, capability-building is particularly important because human resource systems may be less formalized and employee performance directly affects customer retention and business sustainability (Department of Trade and Industry, 2024).

### ***Skill Development, Career Growth, and Management Support***

Skill development and career growth refer to organizational efforts that help employees acquire new competencies and pursue professional advancement. In the wellness sector, these opportunities are essential because services rely on updated techniques, personalized client care, and professional confidence. Employee development is also associated with organizational performance when learning is integrated into daily operations (Apospori et al., 2022).

Management support for learning includes encouragement, feedback, guidance, recognition, and clear direction from supervisors. Perceived organizational support theory suggests that employees respond positively when they believe that their organization values their contribution and well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Supervisory support also strengthens motivation to learn and the application of training in the workplace (Mohamad et al., 2021; Robbins & Judge, 2021).

### ***Learning Environment, Resources, and Employee Satisfaction***

The learning environment includes the availability of facilities, materials, updated equipment, work schedules, and workplace systems that enable employees to apply what they learn. Armstrong (2022) emphasizes that effective learning requires both structured development opportunities and a workplace environment that supports application. A supportive environment may improve morale, competence, and commitment among service employees.

Employee satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel content and fulfilled with their work experiences and organizational support. In hospitality and service industries, learning and development practices are linked to satisfaction, performance, and career growth (Yoopetch et al., 2021). When employees perceive

learning opportunities as relevant and supportive, they are more likely to feel motivated and satisfied with their roles. This literature supports the assumption that learning and development constructs are significantly related to employee satisfaction among wellness professionals.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to determine the demographic profile of respondents and describe their perceptions of learning and development practices and employee satisfaction. The correlational component was used to determine whether significant relationships existed between employee satisfaction and the four learning and development constructs.

### **Research Environment and Respondents**

The study was conducted in selected medium-scale spa establishments in Cebu City. The respondents were 150 employees, including therapists and employees in supervisory or managerial positions. The inclusion of operational and supervisory personnel allowed the study to capture perceptions from employees directly involved in spa service delivery and workplace learning practices.

### **Research Instrument**

A structured survey questionnaire was used as the main data-gathering instrument. The instrument measured the demographic profile of respondents, employee perceptions of learning and development practices, and overall employee satisfaction. The learning and development section covered training opportunities, skill development and career growth, management support for learning, and learning environment and resources. Responses were rated using a four-point scale. The instrument underwent validation and reliability testing prior to data collection.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researchers secured permission from the selected spa establishments and coordinated with authorized representatives before administering the questionnaire. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Completed questionnaires were collected, checked, encoded, and analyzed according to the research objectives.

### **Data Analysis**

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the demographic profile of respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used to interpret employee perceptions and satisfaction levels. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the significant relationships between employee satisfaction and learning and development constructs. Statistical decisions were made at the 0.05 level of significance.

### **Ethical Consideration**

The study observed informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and responsible handling of data. Respondents were not required to disclose identifying information in the final report, and the data were used only for academic purposes.

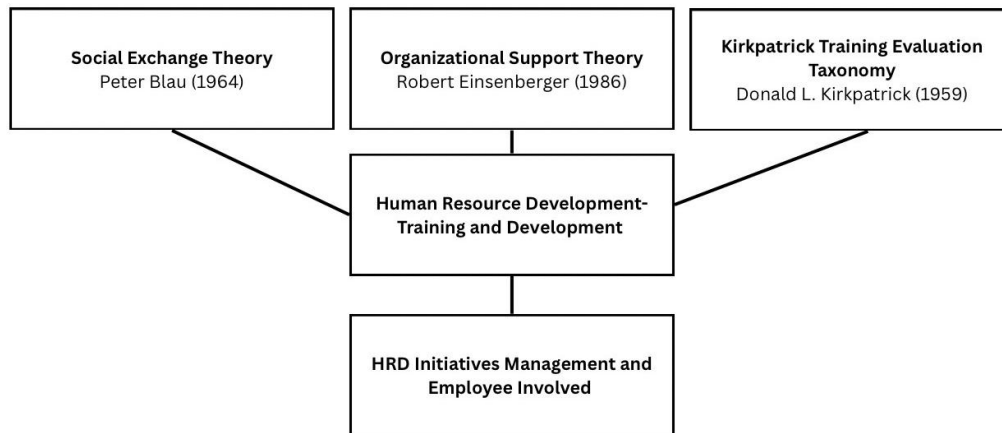


Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework of the Study*

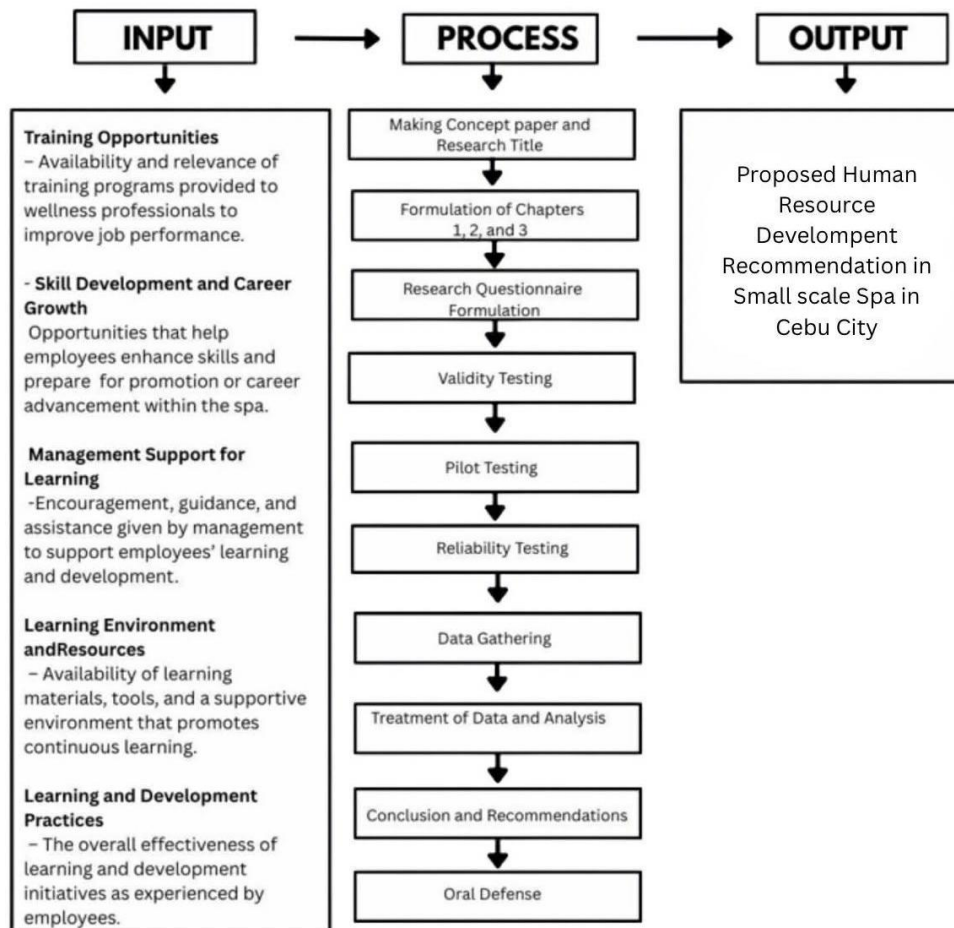


Figure 2. *Operational Framework of the Study*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. *Demographic Profile of the Respondents (n = 150)*

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age: 18–20 years old	16	10.7
Age: 30–39 years old	124	82.7
Age: 40 years and above	10	6.7
Position: Therapist	102	68.0
Position: Supervisor/Managerial	48	32.0
Years of experience: 6 months to 1 year	29	19.3
Years of experience: 4–6 years	99	66.0
Years of experience: 7 years and above	22	14.7

The respondents were predominantly aged 30–39 years (82.7%), indicating that the spa workforce was composed mainly of mature employees with sufficient physical capability and professional experience. Therapists represented the largest group (68.0%), reflecting the operational nature of spa establishments where direct service providers form the core workforce. Most respondents had four to six years of industry experience (66.0%), suggesting that they were familiar with spa operations, organizational practices, and existing learning and development initiatives.

Table 2. *Summary of Employee Perception on Learning and Development Practices*

Construct	Mean	SD	Description
Training opportunities	3.35	0.34088	Highly Practiced
Skill development and career growth	3.31	0.35189	Highly Practiced
Management support for learning	3.24	0.32512	Highly Practiced
Learning environment and resources	3.30	0.38057	Highly Practiced
Aggregate mean	3.30	0.04485	Highly Practiced

Employee perceptions of learning and development practices were generally positive, with an aggregate mean of 3.30 interpreted as highly practiced. Training opportunities obtained the highest factor mean ( $M = 3.35$ ), indicating that employees viewed available training as relevant and helpful for job performance. Skill development and career growth ( $M = 3.31$ ) and learning environment and resources ( $M = 3.30$ ) were also highly practiced. Management support for learning obtained the lowest factor mean ( $M = 3.24$ ), suggesting that although support was present, spa establishments may still improve feedback, guidance, coaching, and development direction.

Table 3. *Summary of Employee Satisfaction with Learning and Development Practices*

Construct	Mean	SD	Description
Satisfaction with training opportunities	3.30	0.35876	Very Satisfied
Satisfaction with skill development and career growth	3.30	0.35953	Very Satisfied
Satisfaction with management support for learning	3.26	0.34349	Very Satisfied
Satisfaction with learning environment and resources	3.30	0.30694	Very Satisfied
Aggregate mean	3.29	0.01912	Very Satisfied

The overall mean for employee satisfaction was 3.29, interpreted as very satisfied. Employees were highly satisfied with training opportunities, skill development and career growth, management support for learning, and learning environment and resources. The results suggest that learning and development practices contributed positively to employees' work experiences. However, management support obtained the lowest factor mean among the satisfaction constructs, indicating that supervisory recognition, listening to employee concerns, and feedback practices may still be strengthened.

Table 4. *Relationship Between Employee Satisfaction and Learning and Development Constructs*

Pair of Variables	r	p-value	Decision
Employee satisfaction and training opportunities	.31127	.00011	Reject Ho
Employee satisfaction and skill development and career growth	.35148	.00001	Reject Ho
Employee satisfaction and management support for learning	.46039	3.07249E-9	Reject Ho
Employee satisfaction and learning environment and resources	.50900	2.91529E-11	Reject Ho

Pearson correlation results showed that all learning and development constructs were positively and significantly related to employee satisfaction. Training opportunities ( $r = .31127, p = .00011$ ) and skill development and career growth ( $r = .35148, p = .00001$ ) showed weak to moderate positive relationships. Management support for learning ( $r = .46039, p < .001$ ) showed a moderate positive relationship, while learning environment and resources ( $r = .50900, p < .001$ ) showed the strongest relationship. These findings indicate that employee satisfaction was most strongly associated with the availability of supportive resources, tools, and work conditions for learning.

The findings support the view that effective learning and development practices contribute to employee satisfaction in service-oriented organizations. Training and career development are important, but the strongest influence in this study came from learning environment and resources. This implies that spa employees may value practical workplace support, adequate equipment, and accessible learning materials because these directly affect their daily work performance. Similarly, management support remains essential because coaching, feedback, and recognition help employees feel valued and motivated to improve (Robbins & Judge, 2021; Yoopetch et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that employees in selected spa establishments in Cebu City generally perceived learning and development practices as highly practiced and were very satisfied with these practices. Training opportunities, skill development and career growth, management support for learning, and learning environment and resources were all positively evaluated by respondents.

The study further concluded that all four learning and development constructs were significantly related to employee satisfaction. Learning environment and resources showed the strongest association, followed by management support for learning, skill development and career growth, and training opportunities. This indicates that employee satisfaction is strengthened when spa establishments provide adequate resources, supportive workplace conditions, and visible managerial involvement.

Overall, effective learning and development practices contribute significantly to employee satisfaction. Spa establishments that invest in employee growth, updated learning resources, and supportive leadership are more likely to enhance workforce satisfaction, improve retention, and sustain service quality.

## Recommendations

Spa owners and managers may strengthen learning environment and resources by providing updated tools, sufficient supplies, learning materials, and workplace systems that support employee development and service delivery. Supervisors may enhance management support for learning through regular coaching, mentoring, recognition, constructive feedback, and clear communication of employee development goals.

Management may improve training opportunities by offering structured, relevant, and regular training programs aligned with job responsibilities, customer service standards, sanitation protocols, and wellness competencies.

Spa establishments may develop clearer career development pathways, specialization tracks, and professional development plans so employees can see how learning activities contribute to career growth and retention. An integrated learning and development plan may be adopted to align training, career development, management support, and workplace resources into one coherent employee development strategy.

Future researchers may examine additional predictors of employee satisfaction such as compensation, work-life balance, organizational culture, leadership style, and customer-related stress. Similar studies may also be conducted in other wellness establishments, hotels, and tourism-related businesses for broader comparison.

## References

- Armstrong, M. (2022). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (16th ed.). Kogan Page. <https://www.koganpage.com/hr-learning-development/armstrongs-handbook-of-human-resource-management-practice-9781398606630>
- Aisha, N., Williady, A., & Kim, H. (2025). Reputation and guest experience in Bali's spa hotels: A big data perspective. *Tourism and Hospitality*, 6(4), 180. <https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp6040180>
- Apospori, E., Nikandrou, I., Brewster, C., & Papalexandris, N. (2022). HRM and organizational performance in SMEs: The role of employee development practices. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2022.2038294>
- Department of Tourism. (2025). *Tourism industry performance report*. <https://tourism.gov.ph/>
- Department of Trade and Industry. (2024). *MSME development plan 2023–2028*. <https://www.dti.gov.ph/resources/msme-development-plan-2023-2028/>
- Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(3), 500–507. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.71.3.500>
- Global Wellness Institute. (2024). *Wellness tourism*. <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/what-is-wellness/wellness-tourism/>
- Grenčíková, A., Navickas, V., Španková, J., & Krajčo, K. (2022). The motivation of different employee generations: A case study of the spa industry. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues*, 10(1), 80. [https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2022.10.1\(4\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jesi.2022.10.1(4))
- Kakaroungkas, C., & Papageorgakis, E. (2023). Evaluating the effectiveness of training methods on the performance of human resources in Greek hotel businesses. *Journal of Advances in Humanities Research*, 2(1), 62. <https://doi.org/10.56868/jadhur.v2i1.102>
- Mohamad, N. I., Ismail, A., & Nor, A. M. (2021). Relationship between managers' support and training application with motivation to learn as mediator. *Etikonomi*, 20(1), 119. <https://doi.org/10.15408/etk.v20i1.15231>
- Noe, R. A. (2021). *Employee training and development* (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education. <https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/employee-training-development-noe/M9781260043747.html>
- Novotná, M., Halánek, P., & Tóthová, D. (2024). Spa industry resilience in changing external conditions: Nexus between tourist attractiveness and fiscal policy. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 30(3), 317. <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.30.3.2>
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2021). *Organizational behavior* (18th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Sangpikul, A. (2022). Obtaining an in-depth understanding of the assurance dimension of SERVQUAL in the spa industry: A case of spas in Bangkok. *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 28(2), 381. <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.28.2.8>
- Sultana, S. (2024). Leadership support and employee learning satisfaction in service organizations. *Training Industry*. <https://trainingindustry.com/articles/leadership/6-steps-to-an-effective-leadership-training-program/>

- Sypniewska, B. A., Baran, M., & Klos, M. (2023). Work engagement and employee satisfaction in the practice of sustainable human resource management. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 19(3), 1069.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11365-023-00834-9>
- Vikasitha, K., & Bhat, K. S. (2024). Impact of training and development on employee performance and satisfaction. *International Journal of Commerce and Management Research*.  
<https://www.managejournal.com/assets/archives/2024/vol10issue4/10110.pdf>
- Yoopetch, C., Nimsai, S., & Kongarchapatara, B. (2021). The effects of employee learning, knowledge, benefits, and satisfaction on employee performance and career growth in the hospitality industry. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4101.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084101>