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# The Effects of Performance Appraisal on Secondary School Teachers' Work Engagement in China-Based on the Mediating Effect of Teacher Identity

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**Abstract.** The level of teachers' work engagement plays a crucial role in determining the quality of education. Secondary schools, being a vital component of China's basic education system, exert a significant influence on the overall educational quality in the country. This research delves into the connection between performance appraisal and the work engagement of secondary school teachers, while also exploring the mediating role of teacher identity. Employing a correlational research design, the study distributed 4848 questionnaires across 202 middle schools (comprising both middle and high schools) in eight cities within Henan Province, China. The returned 4290 valid questionnaires resulted in a commendable validity rate of 88.5%. The research methodology integrates descriptive statistical analysis, difference testing, and structural equation modeling to analyze survey responses and questionnaire retrieval outcomes. The study's findings reveal that while secondary school teachers exhibit a high level of identity, there is room for improvement in the fairness of performance appraisal and work engagement. Moreover, a fairer performance appraisal demonstrates a significant and positive correlation with work engagement and teacher identity. Additionally, teacher identity serves as a substantial predictor of teachers' work engagement and partially mediates the impact of performance appraisal on teachers' work engagement. These outcomes

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offer a foundational understanding for further enhancing the equity of performance appraisal for secondary school teachers in China. The study also recommends strategies to bolster teachers' self-identity by promoting fairness in performance appraisal, thereby fostering improvements in teachers' work engagement and, consequently, elevating the overall quality of education.

**Keywords:** identity; mediating effect; performance appraisal; teaching quality; work engagement

## 1. Introduction

Work engagement, as an innovative concept, emerges as a pivotal determinant influencing job performance. In accordance with Kahn (1990, P705) work engagement entails "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles." Over the past two decades, Chinese scholars have increasingly exhibited interest in the work engagement of teachers. Considering the intimate connection between work commitment in education and education quality (Li, 2014), the investigation into the specific factors influencing teachers' work input assumes paramount significance for the enhancement of educational quality.

The work engagement of teachers primarily encompasses their intrinsic motivation and dedication to participating in educational activities (Liu & Wen, 2022). Prevailing research on the factors affecting teachers' work engagement predominantly focuses on individual and environmental characteristics. Firstly, factors such as teachers' gender, students' stage, and teaching courses exert influence on teachers' work engagement (Li, 2019; Topchyan & Woehler, 2021). Additionally, teachers' happiness and mental health also wield a specific impact on their work engagement (Wang et al., 2019; Wu & Qi, 2021). Secondly, with regard to environmental characteristics, factors including the region and type of school (Li, 2019), teachers' family relationships (Wang et al., 2021), social resources (Liu & Wen, 2022), leadership styles (Gong, 2020), and organizational identities (Zou & Yin, 2021) further contribute to shaping teachers' work engagement.

China has actively pursued the reform of performance pay for teachers in basic education to augment work commitment and motivation (An, 2020). Despite these endeavors, there exists a noticeable dearth of empirical analyses scrutinizing the relationship between performance appraisal and work engagement. In 2022, this study conducted field research in 202 secondary schools (encompassing both middle and high schools) across eight cities in Henan Province. The findings illuminated issues in certain schools, such as inadequate infrastructure and subpar teacher treatment. These challenges render secondary school teachers highly sensitive to the fairness of performance appraisal, thereby impacting their work commitment.

Therefore, this study concentrates on secondary school teachers (encompassing both middle and high schools) as its research subjects. Through model analysis, it endeavors to scrutinize the impact of performance appraisal on work commitment and elucidate the underlying mechanisms. The study aspires to provide both

theoretical insights and practical foundations for advancing the reform of performance appraisal for secondary school teachers.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Fairness and Identity in Performance Appraisal**

Performance appraisal functions as a managerial approach designed to stimulate individual and organizational work performance (Zhao, 2013). The perceived fairness of this process significantly contributes to employees' sense of identity (Greenberg, 1986). In situations where performance appraisal is perceived as equitable, employees cultivate a sense of belonging and identification with their organizational role (Huang & Liu, 2016). Consequently, the fairness of performance appraisal plays a crucial role in shaping employees' identity (Gao et al., 2014). Conversely, the absence of fairness erodes employees' human identity and their attachment to the organization, weakening the connection between the employee and the organization, ultimately impacting motivation and behavior. Unfair performance appraisal has even been identified as a key factor contributing to employee turnover (Xiang, 2017). Implementing fair human resource management measures to enhance the fairness of employee appraisals is recognized as beneficial for improving employees' identity (Huang & Liu, 2016).

For teachers, fair performance appraisal signifies the school's recognition of their work behavior and performance (Qiao & Chen, 2017). According to the group involvement model, experiencing fairness in an organization prompts employees to develop a more robust organizational identity (Blader & Tyler, 2009). Building upon these concepts, this study posits the following hypothesis:

**H1: Fair performance appraisal has a significant positive effect on the identity of secondary school teachers.**

### **2.2 Identity and work engagement**

Identity, defined as the amalgamation of organizational members' perceptions of their own identities, their sense of belonging to the organization, and external evaluations of themselves, reflects the alignment of individual, external, and organizational systems (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Research on identity holds significant value (Shen et al., 2008) as it serves as a psychometric variable illustrating the intrinsic connection between individuals and organizations. Identity explains and predicts numerous vital attitudes and behaviors in the workplace, as emphasized by foreign scholars who highlight that highly identified employees are more likely to exhibit organizationally expected attitudes and behaviors (Cheney, 1983). For instance, elevated employee identity correlates with increased resource investment in the workplace, indicative of a higher degree of work engagement (Zhang & Yang, 2020). Within the educational sector, the interaction between identity and work engagement is notable, with scholars like Christ (2003) contending that teachers' identity is a determinant factor explaining significant differences in teachers' work performance.

Furthermore, work performance, encompassing individual workability, attitude, and behavior, is considered the outcome variable of work engagement (Chen et

al., 2018). Empirical studies in kindergarten and university settings highlight that identity, as a positive psychological state, positively influences faculty members' work engagement (Ji & Cui, 2021). Investigations focusing on primary and secondary school teachers reveal that identity not only significantly impacts positive outcome variables such as caring about students' life and learning, positive work initiative, and knowledge-sharing behaviors (Zheng & Fu, 2019) but also effectively reduces teachers' turnover rates (Zhang & Geng, 2018). Hence, the anticipation is that secondary school teachers' sense of identity will positively influence work engagement. Building upon these considerations, this study posits the following hypothesis:

**H2: Secondary school teachers' identity has a significant positive effect on their work engagement.**

### **2.3 Fairness in performance appraisal and work engagement**

According to Kahn (1990), work engagement is a state of active integration into one's work on physical, cognitive, and emotional levels. In the context of Chinese researchers (Ling et al., 1997), it is characterized as a person's passion and affection for their work. Saufley (2002) laid the groundwork for the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, identifying vigor, devotion, and concentration as the three primary components of work engagement.

The social exchange hypothesis posits that when employees perceive fair treatment from the company, they develop confidence that the organization can provide the necessary resources for their job, significantly enhancing job satisfaction and motivating them to contribute more effectively (Zhang, 2014). Academics suggest that organizational fairness contributes to increased employee engagement, aligning with the company's objectives (Dong & Gao, 2019).

Equity in performance evaluations plays a crucial role in the broader organizational fairness system and has a direct correlation with job engagement. Involving employees in the performance appraisal process has been shown to elevate satisfaction, motivation, and reduce turnover rates, especially among knowledge workers. Furthermore, a cross-national study involving workers from India and the UK indicated that perceptions of fairness in performance reviews positively impact work engagement.

Given that educators operate within the knowledge economy, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H3: Secondary school teachers' work engagement is significantly enhanced by fair performance reviews.**

### **2.4 Performance appraisal fairness, identity and work engagement**

The analyses above demonstrate that fair performance evaluations play a pivotal role in motivating teachers to actively engage in their work. Simultaneously, enhancing teachers' identities contributes to increased job satisfaction, fostering a sense of contentment and passion for their work. In this framework, work engagement is identified as a significant outcome variable associated with

identity. Performance assessment is established as the independent variable in this study, work engagement as the dependent variable, and identity as the mediating variable in examining the relationship between performance appraisal, identity, and job engagement. Based on this conceptual framework, the following theoretical proposition is advanced:

**H4: The relationship between secondary school teachers' job engagement and their performance evaluation is mediated by identity.**

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Data collection

This study places a strong emphasis on ensuring the reliability of its findings through careful considerations of sample composition, scale selection, and data analysis strategies. A total of 202 secondary schools across eight cities in Henan Province were selected as the study's sample, and electronic questionnaires were distributed to in-service teachers through online channels. Out of the 4848 questionnaires collected, 4290 were deemed valid, resulting in a commendable validity rate of 88.50%.

Regarding the demographic characteristics of the sample, the majority comprised 3,046 female teachers, constituting 71% of the sample. The educational background was predominantly at the undergraduate level (80.5%), with a relatively small percentage of teachers holding leadership positions (18.4%). The most common age range was 40-50 years old (25.2%), and a significant portion of teachers had over 20 years of service, accounting for 48.3% of the total sample – close to half of the participants.

For clarity in data presentation, the study assigned specific values to each variable as follows:

*Gender: male = 1, female = 2;*

*Academic level: middle school = 1, high school = 2;*

*Position: non-leadership position = 1, leadership position = 2;*

*Education: high school and below = 1, college = 2, bachelor's degree = 3, graduate and above = 4;*

*Age: 30 years old and below = 1, 31 to 40 years old = 2, 41 to 50 years old = 3, 51 to 60 years old = 4, 60 years old and above = 5;*

*Length of service: less than 2 years = 1, 2 to 5 years = 2, 6 to 10 years = 3, 11 to 20 years = 4, more than 20 years = 5;*

*Annual income (yuan): 30,000 and below = 1, 30,001 to 50,000 = 2, 50,001 to 80,000 = 3, 80,001 to 120,000 = 4, more than 120,000 = 5.*

*Specific statistics are presented in Table 1 for a comprehensive understanding of the sample composition.*

**Table 1. Preliminary statistical information on sample size**

Variable Name	1		2		3		4		5	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex	1224	29	3046	71						
Academic Section	2475	57.7	1815	42.3						

<b>Position</b>	3501	81.6	789	18.4						
<b>Academic qualifications</b>	69	1.6	756	17.6	3453	80.5	12	0.3		
<b>Age</b>	1145	26.7	1180	27.5	1193	27.8	759	17.7	13	0.3
<b>Length of service</b>	390	9.1	712	16.6	644	15	523	12.2	2021	47.1
<b>Annual income</b>	785	18.3	2252	52.5	1103	25.7	142	3.3	4	0.1

### 3.2 Variable Measurement Tools

In this study, the Likert scale was employed for all scales, where higher scores indicate a greater sense of fairness in performance appraisal, identity, and work engagement among teachers.

#### 3.2.1 Performance Appraisal Fairness Scale:

Colquitt et al. (2001) identified four dimensions of performance appraisal fairness: procedural fairness, outcome fairness, interpersonal fairness, and informational fairness. This study utilized Wu's (2010) Perception of Performance Fairness Scale, adjusted for the specific characteristics of the research subjects in the educational context. The scale comprises 14 questions, with five measuring procedural fairness, five measuring outcome fairness, two measuring interpersonal fairness, and two measuring informational fairness. The internal consistency test yielded an alpha coefficient of 0.949, indicating good reliability. The sampling appropriateness (KMO) was 0.956, and Bartlett's test was significant ( $P < 0.001$ ), indicating suitability for factor analysis. Structural validity was confirmed through factor analysis, with favorable indices such as  $CMIN/DF=26.522$ ,  $RMSEA=0.075$ ,  $CFI=0.966$ ,  $TLI=0.966$ ,  $NFI=0.965$ , indicating good structural validity.

#### 3.2.2 Identity Scale:

The Identity Questionnaire by Li et al. (2007) was employed to measure the degree of identity among secondary school teachers. The internal consistency test demonstrated good reliability with an alpha coefficient of 0.893. Sampling appropriateness (KMO) was 0.881, and Bartlett's test was significant ( $P < 0.001$ ), allowing for factor analysis. One factor with an eigenvalue greater than one was extracted, explaining 65.148% of the variance. The factor loadings of the six measurement entries were greater than 0.6, indicating good structural validity.

#### 3.2.3 Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17):

The UWES-17 was used to measure teachers' work engagement across three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and concentration. The internal consistency test showed good reliability, with an overall alpha coefficient of 0.948. The vitality dimension had a reliability of 0.861, dedication was 0.868, and concentration was 0.862. Sampling appropriateness (KMO) was 0.962, and Bartlett's test was significant ( $P < 0.001$ ), permitting factor analysis. The extraction of three factors with an eigenvalue of more than 0.75 explained 68.456% of the variance, indicating good structural validity.

## 4. Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Common Method Bias Test

To ensure the reliability of the results, a common method bias (CMB) test was conducted, given the questionnaire survey's reliance on the same sample using three subscales. Harman's one-factor method exploratory factor analysis on 37 questions, including three subscales, revealed that the first factor explained only 41.899% of the variance, falling below the critical standard of 50%. Moreover, the one-factor model poorly fit, supporting the notion that the common method bias in this study is not severe and has a weak impact on subsequent data analysis.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Difference Test

Using SPSS software, descriptive statistics, difference tests, and correlation analyses were conducted on performance appraisal and its sub-dimensions, work commitment and its sub-dimensions, and teachers' identity. The mean score for work commitment was 3.45, identity was 3.97, and performance appraisal fairness was 3.31. Independent samples t-test revealed no significant difference in work engagement concerning teachers' gender and position. However, a significant difference was found in the teaching section, with senior high school teachers exhibiting higher work engagement than junior high school teachers.

One-way ANOVA tests indicated significant differences in work engagement based on teachers' ages, working ages, qualifications, and annual incomes. Age-wise, higher age groups displayed higher levels of work engagement. In terms of working ages, there was a U-shaped distribution, with higher work engagement at both ends. Regarding academic qualifications, teachers with a bachelor's degree or above exhibited lower work engagement than those with less than a bachelor's degree. Annual income-wise, a general increasing trend in work engagement was observed with the rise in income, though not statistically significant.

Correlation analyses revealed positive relationships between performance appraisal fairness and work engagement ( $r = 0.53$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and between performance appraisal fairness and teacher identity ( $r = 0.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, all sub-dimensions of performance appraisal fairness showed significant positive correlations with organizational identity. Moreover, teacher identity exhibited a significant positive relationship with work commitment ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings suggest a significant positive association between performance appraisal fairness and work engagement, between the perception of fairness in performance appraisal and teacher identity, and between teacher identity and work engagement.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of variables (N = 4290)**

V	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WE	3.45	0.72	1									
V	3.34	0.76	0.95**	1								
D	3.68	0.76	0.92**	0.82**	1							
A	3.38	0.75	0.96**	0.88**	0.83**	1						
POPF	3.31	0.74	0.53**	0.51**	0.50**	0.49**	1					

P	3.43	0.82	0.51**	0.49**	0.50**	0.47**	0.92**	1				
R	3.29	0.74	0.48**	0.45**	0.46**	0.44**	0.92**	0.77**	1			
I	3.12	0.88	0.41**	0.41**	0.38**	0.38**	0.84**	0.67**	0.72**	1		
M	3.24	0.92	0.46**	0.45**	0.43**	0.43**	0.88**	0.75**	0.74**	0.79**	1	
OID	3.97	0.72	0.58**	0.53**	0.59**	0.54**	0.48**	0.49**	0.43**	0.33**	0.41**	1

Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01; WE = Work Engagement, OID = Organisational Identification, POPF = Perception of Performance Appraisal Fairness; V = Vitality, D = Dedication, A = Attentiveness; P = Procedural Fairness, R = Results Fairness, I = Interpersonal Fairness, and M = Information Fairness.

### 4.3 Validation of Mediating Effects

#### 4.3.1 Overall Test of Structural Equation Model

After examining the correlations between performance appraisal fairness, identity, and teachers' work engagement, a structural equation model (SEM) was constructed using AMOS software. The fairness of teachers' performance appraisal served as the independent variable, work engagement as the dependent variable, and the overall model test yielded the following fit test results:  $\chi^2/df = 29.937$ , RMSEA = 0.080, CFI = 0.960, TLI = 0.950, RFI = 0.948, and NFI = 0.959. Given the large sample size and the sensitivity of the chi-square value, comprehensive judgment considers other fit indicators. Referring to established standards in psychological measurements, where an RMSEA not exceeding 0.08 and other indicators surpassing 0.9 are considered satisfactory, the model demonstrates good fit with the actual data. (Reference: Zeng et al., 2020; Trindade, 2021).

#### 4.3.2 Path Test of Direct Effect

The model features three direct effect paths: fairness of performance appraisal → identity, identity → work engagement, and fairness of performance appraisal → work engagement. Analysis results indicate standardized coefficients of 0.508, 0.454, and 0.322, respectively. All three paths are highly significant at the level of  $p < 0.001$ . Consequently, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are validated. (Refer to Table 3 for detailed coefficients.) These findings underscore the significance of the fairness of performance appraisal in influencing teachers' identity, the positive impact of identity on work engagement, and the overall effect of performance appraisal fairness on work engagement. The SEM analysis supports the theoretical framework and provides empirical evidence for the interrelationships among these key variables.

**Table 3. Path test for direct effects between variables**

Path	Unstandardised coefficient	Standardised coefficient	SE	CR	P
POPF→ID	0.476	0.508	0.013	30.794	<0.001
POPF→WE	0.324	0.322	0.018	27.843	<0.001
OID→WE	0.487	0.454	0.013	21.493	<0.001

Note: WE = Work Engagement, ID = Organisational Identification, POPF = Performance Appraisal Fairness.

#### 4.3.3 Mediating Effect Test of Identity

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To ensure the robustness of the findings, this study conducted a mediating effect test. The results, presented in Table 4, reveal a point estimate of the mediating effect of identity as 0.233. This signifies that the mediating effect in the path "fairness of performance appraisal → identity → work engagement" is statistically significant.

As a consequence, Hypothesis H4, asserting that identity acts as a mediating factor between the fairness of performance appraisal for secondary school teachers and their work engagement, is supported by the data. Further analysis of the antecedent direct effect test indicates that identity plays a partial mediating role in the relationship.

These results underscore the intricate dynamics between the fairness of performance appraisal, identity, and work engagement. The mediation effect of identity provides nuanced insights into how perceptions of fairness in performance appraisal can influence teachers' work engagement through their sense of identity. The study thus contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms at play in shaping teachers' work commitment in the context of secondary schools.

**Table 4. Identity mediation test**

Path	Value	bias-corrected95%CI				percentile95%CI		
		SE	Lower	Upper	P	Lower	Upper	P
Mediating effect	0.231	0.010	0.211	0.251	<0.001	0.211	0.251	<0.001
Direct effect	0.322	0.017	0.289	0.355	<0.001	0.289	0.355	<0.001
Total effect	0.553	0.014	0.526	0.580	<0.001	0.526	0.581	<0.001

## 5. Research Conclusion and Countermeasure Suggestion

This study explored the relationship between the fairness of performance appraisal, identity, and work engagement based on structural equation modeling. The empirical results show that the fairness of performance appraisal has both a direct effect on teachers' work engagement and an indirect effect on work engagement through the mediating effect of identity. This result contributes to a better understanding of how the fairness of performance appraisal affects secondary school teachers' work engagement and the course of action that produces that effect.

### 5.1 Findings

#### 5.1.1. Secondary school teachers' overall weak work engagement

The study found that the average work engagement score of secondary school teachers in Henan Province is 3.45, which still has much room for improvement. Among the three sub-dimensions of work engagement, about one-quarter of the teachers in the vitality and dedication dimensions, respectively, have mean scores less than the median value, showing lower levels of vitality and dedication. Conversely, scores on the dedication dimension were relatively

higher, with 3.3% of teachers showing fullness on all measures of the dedication dimension, compared to only 0.7% on the concentration and vitality dimensions. The differences shown between the three sub-dimensions are similar to previous studies, which may be due to the sense of mission and responsibility inherent in the position of teaching. Related analyses showed that teachers' work commitment was related to factors such as procedural fairness, outcome fairness, interpersonal fairness, and information fairness in performance appraisal. In addition, the dimensions of teachers' work engagement, such as vigor, dedication, and concentration, were all affected by their identity. The findings of the survey showed that the mean value of identity of secondary school teachers in the county was relatively high (3.97), but there were still 4.9% of the teachers interviewed whose identity was at the medium or below level, showing both a weak sense of identity. Individuals with identity will exhibit behaviors and attitudes that are beneficial to the organization, whereas a weaker sense of identity may cause teachers to be passive and find it difficult to devote themselves to their educational work. Thus, whether secondary school teachers can devote themselves to their educational work in a full state depends on the degree of perfection of school performance appraisal rules and regulations, such as procedural fairness, outcome fairness, interpersonal fairness, and information fairness, and is also affected by the degree of affective attachment such as the teachers' sense of belonging to the group to which they belong and their sense of identity.

#### *5.1.2 Fairness of teacher performance appraisal positively predicts secondary school teachers' work engagement*

The results of the study found that the fairness of performance appraisal can directly influence teachers' work engagement. A fair performance appraisal system plays the valuable function of motivating, guiding, and inspiring secondary school teachers to face their teaching work with positive attitudes and behaviors. Especially in less economically developed areas, teachers are more sensitive to changes in performance pay and the degree of fairness, and performance fairness reflects the respect for each teacher's labor and recognition of the results of their work, which intrinsically maintains the "psychological balance" of teachers. Some studies have investigated the implementation of teacher performance reform. However, in the performance pay reform, many factors make its incentive effect can not be fully realized. The lack of implementation of the secondary school teachers' performance system reform restricts the quality and balanced development of compulsory education and is not conducive to the enhancement of teachers' work input.

#### *5.1.3 Teachers' identity has a partial mediating effect*

The study found that teachers' perceptions of fairness in performance have both a direct effect on teachers' commitment to work and an indirect effect on commitment through the mediating effect of identity, which manifests itself in the fact that the stronger teachers' perceptions of the fairness of school performance appraisals, the higher their sense of identity with the school, and thus the higher their commitment to the educational process. Compulsory education schools should adhere to the principles of openness, fairness, and transparency in the design of performance appraisal regulations and processes

and should not "specialize" in appraisal standards so as to create an environment of fair competition to strengthen the identity of teachers as members of the school, and thus stimulate the teaching vitality of teachers. Under clear rules and regulations and a transparent appraisal process, teachers will have a psychological expectation of how well they can complete their tasks. If the appraisal results are basically in line with their psychological expectation, it will help to increase teachers' trust in the appraisal system and motivate them to reflect on themselves in the light of the requirements of the appraisal and to continuously improve their teaching ability. In addition, in a school atmosphere of smooth communication and equality between levels and across levels, teachers have the right to appeal and challenge performance appraisal issues and to express their own views and positions. Such an equal relationship will enhance teachers' sense of ownership, strengthen their sense of belonging to the school, and motivate them to work towards the school's goals. The complete, accurate, and timely transmission of information in the performance appraisal process will give teachers a sense of real-time participation, and they will be motivated to devote themselves to their teaching work.

## **5.2 Suggestions and Recommendations**

In light of the findings from the preceding study, attention to the following two aspects is crucial for improving the work engagement of secondary school teachers.

Firstly, it is imperative to optimize the design of the performance appraisal system to augment teachers' sense of fairness. The design of a fair performance appraisal system is a fundamental element for upholding the fairness of school organizations and serves as a necessary guarantee for fostering the identity of secondary school teachers and intensifying their commitment to their work. Descriptive statistics reveal a prevailing weakness in the overall fairness of secondary school teachers' performance appraisals, with particularly notable deficiencies in the perception of interpersonal fairness and information fairness.

Given these findings, secondary schools should take action on both awareness and operational levels. In terms of awareness, it is crucial to enhance the understanding of the performance pay reform system among secondary school administrators and correct any biases in teachers' comprehension of performance reform. Emphasizing that performance pay reform extends beyond superficial pay increments to include incentivizing effects is essential. Strengthening the publicity of the system, correcting misunderstandings, and building a broad consensus on the value of the performance system are imperative steps.

Simultaneously, the implementation of performance appraisal in schools should adhere to principles of democracy, fairness, and transparency at all stages of the formation of the performance appraisal system and the public announcement of results. This involves executing a program of action to motivate teachers through performance reform. Before formulating the performance appraisal system, a professional job value analysis should be conducted, comprehensive and reasonable appraisal indices should be collected, and input from teachers

should be actively sought. The appraisal process should be carried out in strict accordance with established rules and regulations.

Moreover, schools should proactively disseminate information about the performance appraisal rules, welcome full supervision, grant every teacher the right to appeal, and actively address various issues reflected by teachers. In essence, schools should enhance teachers' perception of the fairness of performance appraisal across dimensions such as procedural fairness, outcome fairness, interpersonal fairness, and information fairness. This approach aims to maximize the incentive effects of the performance system, fostering a healthy and constructive competitive environment to ensure the continued development of educational work.

Secondly, it is crucial to cultivate a positive management environment and enhance teachers' identity. A management culture emphasizing the participation of all staff acts as an emotional bond that sustains teachers' sense of belonging to the school, providing crucial support for fostering teachers' identity and intensifying their commitment to their work. Survey results indicate that the identity of secondary school teachers is relatively optimistic, but there is room for improvement. Therefore, schools can create a conducive environment to cultivate teachers' identity, focusing on enhancing teachers' participation, emotional attachment, and sense of symbiosis.

To achieve this, it is necessary to establish the primary position of teachers in school activities, respecting their professionalism, strengthening their sense of participation in school management, and stimulating their sense of belonging to the school organization. Schools should actively listen to teachers' voices, understand the challenges they face in life and work, foster open emotional channels between teachers and schools, and strengthen teachers' emotional dependence on schools. Additionally, schools should support teachers in laying a sustainable path for professional development, promote knowledge sharing through various experience-sharing meetings, and facilitate the development of teachers' professional abilities.

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