

A Study of the Relationship Between Work Personality and Leadership Competencies of Secondary School Principals in Hunan Province

HE PIWU

Abstract

At present, social development and educational reform have put forward higher requirements for scientific management and high-quality educational services in secondary schools. This study conducts an in-depth investigation and research on the current situation of the competency of secondary school principals in Hunan Province. It explores how the influencing factors interact with the competency of secondary school principals through quantitative and qualitative analysis, and then puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for further improving the competency of secondary school principals. Firstly, through literature review and theoretical analysis, the research framework of "work personality - teachers' trust - perceived superior support-competency level" is constructed, and research hypotheses are put forward. After referring to mature models and scales at home and abroad, combining in-depth interviews with experts and secondary school principals to revise and validate the measurement of the secondary dimensions, and re-developing the secondary school principal competency questionnaire (Self report version), a questionnaire was conducted among the secondary school principals in Hunan Province. Then, using SPSS23.0 for statistical analysis, it focuses on the relationship between influencing factors and analyzes the mediating role of teachers' trust and perceived superior support between work personality and competency. The study found that work personality is mainly summarized as four dimensions: planning, management quality, personal achievement motivation, innovation and change; teachers' trust is mainly summarized as emotional trust and cognitive trust; perceived superior support is mainly summarized as development support and value recognition.



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Introduction

The level of secondary education in Hunan Province is among the highest in China. The province has not only produced many greats, but its secondary schools are also representatives of the school of strength, having achieved excellent results in the ranking of Chinese secondary schools and in the five major subject competitions (Jia et al. 2021; Han 2020; Hua et al. 2017; Fan et al. 2017). In 2020, a total of 5 secondary schools in Hunan Province were selected as the top 100 high schools in China, namely Changjun secondary school, Yali secondary school, Hunan Normal University Affiliated secondary school, Changsha No. 1 secondary school, and Changsha Mingde secondary school, among which the first four are very famous in the country. And there are two Hunan secondary schools in the top 10 of the top 100, which can be described as powerful. There are 3,331 junior secondary schools in Hunan Province in 2019, an increase of 27 over the previous year; the number of students recruited was 842,600, 51,100 more than the previous year, an increase of 6.45%; the number of graduates was 724,900, 0.77 million less than the previous year, a decrease of 1.05%; the number of students enrolled was 2,404,600, 108,400 more than the previous year, an increase of 4.72%. The average size of junior secondary school was 722 students, an increase of 27 students over the previous year. As shown in Table 1-1:

Table 1-1 Number of enrollment, school attendance and graduation of Junior High Schools in Hunan Province from 2014 to 2019 (10,000 people)

Year	Students recruited	Students enrolled	Graduates
2014	74.54	220.63	65.24
2015	73.86	222.41	69.98
2016	78.01	225.05	73.99
2017	79.15	229.63	73.26
2018	84.26	240.46	72.49
2019	85.13	248.25	76.95

Data source: Hunan Provincial Department of Education, Zhiyan consulting

There are 642 regular senior secondary schools in Hunan Province, an increase of 16 over the previous year; the number of students recruited was 437,300, 30,600 more than the previous year, an increase of 7.52%; the number of students enrolled was 1,221,400, 45,900 more than the previous year, an increase of 3.90%; the number of graduates was 377,600, an increase of 13,100 or 3.59% over the previous year. As shown in Table 1-2:

Table 1-2 Number of enrollment, school attendance and graduation of ordinary high schools in Hunan Province from 2014 to 2019 (10,000 people)

Year	Students recruited	Students enrolled	Graduates
2014	36.55	105.7	32.04
2015	38.03	107.44	33.5

2016	39.39	110.91	34.2
2017	39.81	114.63	34.41
2018	40.67	117.55	36.45
2019	43.73	122.14	37.96

Data source: Hunan Provincial Department of Education, Zhiyan consulting

There are 487 secondary vocational schools in Hunan Province, an increase of 15 over the previous year; the number of students recruited was 251,000, 23,400 more than the previous year, an increase of 10.28%; the number of students enrolled was 667,400, 13,400 more than the previous year, an increase of 2.05%; the number of graduates was 209,900, an increase of 7,200 or 3.55% over the previous year. As shown in Table 1-3:

Table 1-3 Enrollment, Enrollment, and Graduates of Secondary Vocational Education in Hunan Province from 2014 to 2019 (10,000 people)

Year	Students recruited	Students enrolled	Graduates
2014	22.71	64.48	20.51
2015	23.78	64.8	20.41
2016	25.13	66.09	19.96
2017	25.02	68.65	19.49
2018	22.91	65.82	20.45
2019	25.35	67	20.99

Problem Statement

The quality of secondary school principals directly affects the effectiveness of school management and the quality of education. The "China Education Modernization 2035" issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council (2019) clearly stated that by 2035, the overall modernization of education will be realized and the country will become an educational power. The development of basic education is related to the realization of China's strategic goal of strengthening our country's education. Therefore, it is imperative to run basic education schools well and improve the scientific level of management. The quality of secondary school principals directly affects school management efficiency and education quality (Pu et al. 2020; Fan et al. 2017). Therefore, the principals of secondary schools in Hunan Province are used as the target of our survey to understand the current status of the secondary school principal team. The new era puts forward more requirements and challenges for the team of secondary school principals. Different stages and different types of schools carry the mission of "benefiting the society" with their different school-running tasks, school-running methods, and school-running goals (Jia et al. 2021). As a secondary school principal, the specific way to realize his "benefiting the society" is "running schools and educating people". And "running a school and educating people" always reflects the specific requirements of a specific society and a specific era. Therefore, in the specific practice of the

principal's "running a school and educating people", to test whether it can achieve the true meaning of "benefiting the society", There is a very definite criterion—whether it can meet the requirements of a certain society and era. To promote the high-quality development of basic education in the new era, there is an urgent need for secondary school principals to improve their quality and professionalism. Therefore, this study is based on the analysis of the existing problems and influencing factors of the competency of secondary school principals, thus establishing an internal mechanism to enhance the competency of secondary school principals (Han 2020).

Research question

According to the problem statement, the research question is as follow: What is the structure of the competency of secondary school principals? 2. What is the structure of the influencing factors?

Objective of the research

Based on the existing research, this research aims to explore the competency elements that secondary school principals should possess under the complex and changing background through mixed research methods, analyze the current competency level of secondary school principals, and introduce work personality, teachers' trust, and perceived superior support. Based on the three key factors, it intends to explore the influence mechanism on the competency of secondary school principals from different perspectives of self, subordinates, and superiors, and finally find out an effective way to improve the competency of secondary school principals. Specifically, the objective of the study is: To investigate the competency model of secondary school principals.

Theoretical significance

At present, most of the research on the development and research of the principal competency model focuses on the principal in a specific region and builds a specific object model, while the research on the universal model is very scarce. The only research results of the universal model of principal competency are the six major competency groups (achievement characteristics, service characteristics, influence characteristics, management characteristics, cognitive characteristics, and personal efficacy characteristics) of basic education principals proposed by Zhang (2007) and the twenty core competency traits (desire to achieve, focus on quality, initiative, etc.). Liu (2015) extracted eight characteristics through meta-analysis (leadership, nurturing others, innovation), and so on. In contrast, foreign research is relatively early, and a general-purpose principal competency model has basically been formed. Therefore, this study attempts to construct a commonly used competency model for secondary school principals in the context of the principal accountability system and basic education reform, which is important for us to think deeply about how to cultivate a high-quality and professional secondary school principal team and promote the construction of secondary school principal team to a higher and better level, in addition, it can also provide some reference and inspiration for people to study the competency of secondary school principal team subsequently. Han (2021) proposed that the principal's teaching leadership refers to the principal's comprehensive ability to organize, implement, manage, and motivate the teacher team to carry out teaching reform with an educational belief and dream and in accordance with the national education reform spirit.

Practical significance

Deriving a competency model for secondary school principals can provide a standard reference for the introduction, training, selection and cultivation, and assessment and evaluation of education cadres. To run a satisfactory education for the people, it is necessary to further

promote educational reform and activate educational innovation, which depends on comprehensively improving the competency and the professional level of the secondary school principals. This study makes an in-depth analysis of the competency structure, influencing factors, and impact mechanism of secondary school principals, and provides new thinking directions for the active exploration of education administrative departments, strengthening the team of education management cadres, and improving the selection and training mechanism of education management cadres.

Literature Review

Secondary school principal competencies are defined as a combination of individual characteristics that can be measured and used to significantly differentiate excellence from average performance, including the knowledge, skills, and talents required to be competent in the position of the secondary school principal. And this research mainly analyzes the competency of secondary school principals from the perspective of skills and talents.

The concept and connotation of competency

The proposal of competency can be traced back to the ancient Roman era, when people tried to construct a competency profile to illustrate the attributes of "a good Roman warrior", which is regarded as the earliest prototype of competency. Taylor (2019), the "father of scientific management", defined the factors that prompt excellent workers to complete their work efficiently and with high quality through the "time-motion study" on workers, and provided targeted training based on this to improve workers' work level. This is seen as the beginning of competency research. In "Testing for competency Rather Than for 'Intelligence'", Professor McClelland of Harvard University (1973) emphasized that competency is not the same as traditional intelligence and aptitude tests, and that some potential factors (such as attitude, cognition, emotion, etc.) will also affect individual work performance. This is regarded as a truly and systematically complete presentation of the concept of competency and true promotion of empirical research on competency. At present, the mainstream academic understanding of competency mainly includes three perspectives: characteristic, behavior, and synthesis. Those who hold the characteristic view are divided into two categories. One type believes that competency has the function of distinguishing excellent people from ordinary people. For example, the scholar Boyatzis (1982) stated that competency is an invisible feature that an individual produces excellent job performance, and it may be knowledge, skills, social roles, etc. Another example is the Chinese scholar Wang (2015) who proposed that competency refers to the knowledge, skills, motivation, and other characteristics for acquiring high performance; the other type believes that competency focuses on the ability that a person's job or role should possess. Pan (2021) emphasizes that "competency refers to any objectively measurable personal trait possessed by those who have excellent performance in a specific job position, organizational environment, and cultural atmosphere. Scholars Dong and Ma (2013) believe that competency refers to the sum of the abilities, knowledge, and skills required to perform well in a specific task role. Supporters of the behavioral view regard competency as the specific behavioral performance of individuals, such as the scholar Fletcher (1992) who proposed that competency refers to those specific, observable, and verifiable series of behaviors related to job requirements; Cockerill(1995) defined competency as the stable behavior that enables the organization to be familiar with and adapt to the requirements of the new environment. Chinese scholars Zhong and Shi (2003) defined competency as the work behavior of employees in order to obtain excellent performance. McClelland (1973) believes that competencies are knowledge, skills, abilities, traits, or motivations that are directly related to job performance. Spencer (1993) believes that competencies are latent traits that individuals have, which are related to their performance at work, including five levels: knowledge, skill, self-image, traits,

and motives, which can predict the good or bad of their behavior and performance. . Sparrow (2000) believes that competency refers to the ability to significantly predict the future job performance of employees and to distinguish the performance differences between excellent employees and average employees. Boyatzis (1982) conducted a comprehensive competency analysis of more than 2,000 managers in 41 managerial positions in 12 industrial sectors, using behavioral event interviews and learning style questionnaires, and obtained a general competency model for managers including six characteristics groups: goal and action management, leadership, human resource management, directing subordinates, attention to others, and knowledge. These six feature groups consist of 19 competency features. Piercy, Craven, & Lane (2012) studied the control competency and organizational citizenship behavior of sales executives, constructed a control competency model, and studied its impact on salesperson performance. Brian et al. (2014) developed a competency model for service salespersons in enterprises, and recruited, screened, and trained service salespersons through the competency model, thus achieving the purpose of improving corporate performance. It is well known that the competency of secondary school principals is affected by many factors, but little research has been conducted on it. Some scholars believe that the personality traits of secondary school principals in the work situation have the most direct and important influence on the competency of secondary school principals, but they actually ignore the influence of external environmental factors. Studies have shown that the influence of environmental factors exceeds the influence of personal and job factors to some extent. By reviewing the existing literature, it is found that the trust from subordinates, namely teachers' trust, and the support from superiors are very important situational factors that affect the competency of secondary school principals. Therefore, based on the theoretical view that competency must be linked to the work context, this section intends to sort out the studies related to the personality traits embodied by secondary school principals and environmental factors related to teachers' trust and perceived superior support in specific work contexts and lay the foundation for the theoretical structure of this study. As shown in Table 2-14:

Table 2-4 Structure of influencing factors of competency of secondary school principals

Category	Index	Connotation
Work personality	Personal achievement motivation	Refers to the internal drive to strive for excellence with appropriate standards and desire to succeed
	Planning	On the one hand, scientifically and methodically arrange daily educational activities, and regularly check the progress of various work to ensure the efficiency of educational activities; On the other hand, in response to the uncertainty of the external environment, independently and flexibly allocate and arrange various materials required for educational activities, realize the freedom and openness of educational activities
	Management quality	It refers to stimulating and releasing the inner potential of teachers, completing education and teaching, and pursuing the realization of school goals by creating a good cooperative atmosphere and delegating power, rather than manipulating and controlling methods such as threats and inducements.
	Innovation and change	On the basis of reality, rationally examine changes in the environment, explore ways to improve the quality of education, prudently make risky decisions worth taking, and creatively carry out education and teaching reforms, rather than rashly taking actions or reforms with unpredictable risks
Teachers' trust	Cognitive trust	Gaining the trust of teachers at an objective level with "legitimate", "just" and "open" behaviors
	Emotional trust	Gaining the trust of teachers in subjective emotions with behaviors full of "benevolence affection" and "teacher-centered value orientation"
Perceived superior support	Development support	Solving existing problems in life, providing work guidance, work feedback, and work training, sharing experience, conveying organizational information, etc.

Value recognition	Recognizing their work potential, expressing expectations, affirming their contributions, listening to their teaching management opinions, etc.
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Previous research on work personality

Modern human resource theory believes that the key to talent recruitment and selection lies in "selecting the right person", and in order to "select the right person", in addition to examining professional abilities, it is more important to pay attention to the work personality that may appear in the future. Work personality is not innate, but is continuously formed in the living environment, education process, and work activities. Once a good work personality is formed, it can often make practitioners more devoted to their work in professional activities and have a higher professional identity. That is to say, if a secondary school principal has a work personality that matches his job role and has high adaptability, the more he can achieve career development and professional growth, the easier it is to achieve good results. Based on the research of Hong Kong scholar Xu et al. (2000), combined with interview data, this study divides work personality into personal achievement motivation, planning, management quality, and innovation and change. In the 1920s, foreign researchers began to explore the personality characteristics of leaders, trying to use the personality characteristics of leaders as a standard to describe and predict the effectiveness of leadership. Although it is still inconclusive, it has become a consensus that a leader's personality traits can effectively reflect his competent behavior. From the literature review, it can be seen that most of the current research on leaders' personality traits focuses on enterprises and administrative agencies, while there are few theoretical and empirical studies on school leaders, especially secondary school principals.

Methodology

Research design

In order to investigate the question more thoroughly, this study adopted a mixed research method. This study makes full use of qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure the feasibility and operability of the research. On the one hand, the Bootstrap method, which is widely used in education and has high reliability, is used to analyze the mediating effect, and the results are accurate and reliable; On the other hand, this study adopts a case study method, and the characteristics of the selected subjects and the workplace they are in distinctly correspond to the three key influencing factors, which are typical and helpful for this study to gain a deeper understanding of the complex influencing mechanisms of secondary school principals' competency from a qualitative perspective, to understand the real practice logic of front-line secondary school principals, and to make an important complement to the quantitative research results. The details are as follows:

1. Literature review method.

By sorting out, analyzing, and summarizing relevant literature, this research constructs a research framework of "work personality-teachers' trust-perceived superior support-competency level" and re-develops the "Secondary school principal competency questionnaire" (self report version) by referring to the mature scale. It includes five subscales: competency level, work personality, teacher's trust, perceived superior support, and basic information.

2. Questionnaire survey

This study investigated the principals (principals and vice-principals) of secondary schools in Hunan Province with the help of the "Secondary school principal competency questionnaire" (self report version). The questionnaire survey was administered in two stages: a pre-test and a formal survey. For the convenience of the location, principals from the "Advanced Seminar On Job Training For Primary And Secondary School Principals In Hunan Province" organized by

the Basic Education Division of the Hunan Provincial Department of Education were randomly selected for the survey, and several experts, commissioners of basic education management departments and principals of secondary schools were interviewed. The content and structure of the questionnaire were optimized to ensure that the final questionnaire would fit the language and context of secondary school principals' work. 570 questionnaires were officially distributed, and a total of 540 were returned, with a return rate of 94.74%; invalid questionnaires with incomplete answers or single content were deleted, and 500 valid questionnaires were obtained, with a response rate of 87.72% and a completion rate of 92.6%.

3. Interview method

The purpose of the interview method is to complement the scientific nature and integrity of the research. This study mainly uses the interview method in two aspects. First, the competency structure based on the literature review and the revised competency scale have not been applied and tested, and whether the structure and scales of work personality, teachers' trust, and perceived superior support that was adjusted and revised based on established research is applicable to research on groups of secondary school principals in the field of education, which require interviews with frontline secondary school principals and relevant research experts to obtain a more valid model structure and questionnaire items. Second, quantitative analysis is limited, and qualitative interviews can more comprehensively reveal the real needs of secondary school principals, which is conducive to drawing more specific and comprehensive suggestions for improving the competency of secondary school principals.

4. Statistical analysis method

The main statistical software used in this study is SPSS23.0 and AMOS23.0. The main applications include: Firstly, SPSS23.0 is used to analyze the overall characteristics of the respondents, observe the overall status of the current secondary school principals' competency, work personality, teachers' trust, and perceived superior support, and explore the influence of background variables on the competency of high school principals, specifically including gender, age, educational background and other individual characteristics, as well as position, management level, the number of teachers and students and other school characteristics; secondly, the correlation analysis method and regression analysis method is used to explore whether there is a correlation and the direction of the relationship between the competency of secondary school principals, work personality, teachers' trust and perceived superior support; thirdly, the widely used Bootstrap method is used to test the mediating effect of teacher trust and perceived superior support in the relationship between work personality and the competency of middle school principals. So far, the revised questionnaire has fitness for use in the field of education. The specific questionnaire structure and number of items are as follows:

Table 3-5 Structure and item table of the competency questionnaire for secondary school principals in Hunan Province

Questionnaire	Dimensions/Content	Number of items after revision
Secondary school principal competency questionnaire	Work attitude, vision and target incentive, emergency response and disposition, personal traits	25
Work personality	Personal achievement motivation, planning, management quality, innovation and change	16
Teachers' trust	Cognitive trust, emotional trust	6
Perceived superior support	Development support, value recognition	6
	Gender, age, current management grade (multiple choices), political adherence, educational background, professional title,	9

Background questionnaire	position, nature of the unit, and the number of teachers and students in the school	
	Total	62

The KMO values of the four sub-questionnaires are all greater than 0.8, and the cumulative variance explained is greater than 60%, indicating that the four sub-questionnaires have good construct validity. The specific results are as follows:

Table 3-6 Validity analysis of the four sub-questionnaires

Sub-questionnaire	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of	Number of Factors	Cumulative variance explained
Secondary School Principal	.937	4	81.116
Work Personality	.905	4	78.311
Teachers' Trust	.898	2	88.973
Perceived Superior Support	.874	2	84.294

Reliability analysis

The reliability test results show that the reliability of the total scale and each factor of the adapted secondary school principal's competency questionnaire, work personality questionnaire, teachers' trust questionnaire and perceived superior support questionnaire are all above 0.8, indicating that the four sub-questionnaires have relatively high reliability, the specific results are as follows:

Table 3-7 Reliability analysis of the four sub-questionnaires

Sub-questionnaire	Factors	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Secondary School Principal Competency	Total scale	.980	25
	Factor 1: Work Attitude	.891	6
	Factor 2: Vision and Target Incentive	.952	7
	Factor 3: Emergency Response and Disposition	.955	6
	Factor 4: Personal Traits	.938	6
	Total scale	.950	16
Work Personality	Factor 1: Personal Achievement Motivation	.862	4
	Factor 2: Planning	.895	4
	Factor 3: Management Quality	.892	4
	Factor 4: Innovation and change	.831	4
	Total scale	.962	6
Teachers' Trust	Factor 1: Cognitive Trust	.936	3
	Factor 2: Emotional trust	.926	3
	Total scale	.937	6
Perceived Superior Support	Factor 1: Development Support	.871	3
	Factor 2: Value Recognition	.912	3
	Total scale	.937	6

Research samples and data collection method

The research objects of this study are mainly selected from secondary school principals in Hunan Province, including principals and vice-principals, with an estimated coverage of 550

people. The secondary school principals in Hunan Province were chosen as the research object because, on the one hand, they are a representative group that can provide statistically useful results, and on the other hand, the schools where they work enjoy similar educational policies, which can help to eliminate some external interference factors, such as huge material incentives. Moreover, in order to better validate the analytical framework, this study purposefully selected three principals (senior principals from Changsha, Zhuzhou, and Hengyang) to conduct in-depth interviews in an attempt to sort out, summarize, and conclude the principals' relevant experiences from the perspective of a case study, thereby deeply analyzing the mechanism of the impact of factors influencing secondary school principals' competency.

Data collection method

The questionnaire survey of this study is divided into two stages: pre-test and formal test. The purpose of the pre-test is to test the scientificity of the questionnaire preparation, to ensure the validity of the follow-up research results, and to revise the questionnaire based on the results of the pre-test. Both surveys were conducted with the help of the supervisor. The pre-test was conducted in October 2021, using a random sampling method, and 80 questionnaires were distributed to the secondary school principals of several classes who came to participate in the training, 75 valid questionnaires were returned, with a return rate of 93.75%, and the ratio of question items to sample size was 1:3, in line with the principle that sample size of the pre-test should be 3~5 times of the maximum number of sub-scale questions in the pre-test. By testing the reliability and validity of the pre-test questionnaire, the items were revised again to form a valid formal measurement questionnaire. Considering the limited number of the group and the busy level, it was difficult to collect relevant data on a large scale, so the formal test was conducted in November 2021, and questionnaires were distributed to 550 secondary school principals (principals and vice-principals) in Hunan secondary schools, and 500 valid questionnaires were returned, with a response rate of 87.72% and a completion rate of 92.6%.

Findings

From the perspective of whether they still undertake teaching tasks, more than 75.20% of secondary school principals still undertake teaching tasks. Of the 376 principals who still undertake teaching tasks, 45.74% are mainly responsible for the teaching of conventional subjects, such as Chinese and mathematics, while 54.25% are the organizers and teachers of extracurricular activities such as teaching and research activities, school-based outreach activities, training, lectures and career planning. It means that the principal of the secondary school still actively participates in the relevant teaching tasks and activities of the school in addition to the relevant management work.

Table 4-8 Survey sample characteristics

Background variables	Classification	Number of people	Proportion	Background variables	Classification	Number of people	Proportion
Gender	Male	208	41.60%	Number of school students	Under 500	210	42.00%
	Female	292	58.40%		500-1000	156	31.20%
Age	30 years old and below	0	0.00%		1000-1500	62	12.40%
	31-39 years old	54	10.80%		1500-2000	42	8.40%
	40-49 years old	188	37.60%		2000-2500	24	4.80%
	50-59 years old	256	51.20%		2500-3000	6	1.20%
	60 years old and above	2	0.40%		More than 3000	0	0.00%
Educational Background	College	32	6.40%	Number of school staff	Under 50	90	18.4%
	Bachelor's degree	424	84.80%		50-100	228	45.6%

Professional Title	Master	44	8.80%	Whether or not they still undertake teaching duties	100-150	118	23.6%
	PhD	0	0.00%		150-200	34	6.8%
	Other	0	0.00%		200-500	24	4.8%
	Third-Grade	0	0.00%		More than 500	4	0.8%
	Second-Grade	2	0.40%		Yes	376	75.20%
	First-Grade	166	33.20%		No	124	24.80%
	Senior	326	65.20%		(Regular subjects: Chinese, etc.)	172	45.74%
	Senior professional	2	0.40%		(Extracurricular activities: lectures, etc.)	56	14.89%
	None	4	0.80%		(Other)	148	39.36%

Analysis of the current situation of competency of secondary school principals and its influencing factors

1. Demonstration of competency: the overall level is relatively high, and the score of high-level skills such as emergency response and disposition is relatively low

Table 4-9 Descriptive analysis of competency of secondary school principals (N=500)

	Minimum value	Maximum value	Mean	Standard deviation	Comparison of mean values
Secondary School Principal Competency	1.00	5.00	4.382	0.507	
Work Attitude	1.00	5.00	4.369	0.592	Personal Traits> Work Attitude> Vision and Target Incentive> Emergency Response and Disposition
Vision and Target Incentive	1.00	5.00	4.322	0.558	
Emergency Response and Disposition	1.00	5.00	4.297	0.567	
Personal Traits	1.00	5.00	4.550	0.514	

The analysis results show that the overall level of competency of the secondary school principals participating in the survey is relatively high, with an average value of more than 4 points.

2. Performance of work personality: attention to the planning of the work, a lack of innovation and change

Table 4-10 Descriptive analysis of work personality (N=500)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard	Comparison of mean values
Work Personality	1.00	5.00	4.349	0.482	
Personal	1.00	5.00	4.181	0.619	Personal Traits> Work Attitude> Vision and Target Incentive> Emergency Response and Disposition
Planning	1.00	5.00	4.420	0.503	
Management Quality	1.00	5.00	4.543	0.489	
Innovation and	1.00	5.00	4.253	0.590	

The sample mean and results of the variance analysis of the work personality questionnaire show that the secondary school principals participating in the survey generally exhibit good work personality, with a mean value higher than 3 points. Relatively speaking, secondary school principals are better at playing the role of managers. This is because school management mainly involves regular teaching activities, logistics management, etc., and is inherently planned and organized. Following certain procedures is very important to maintain the normal operation of the school. In addition, various assessments by higher authorities and various social affairs (such as reception of temporary visitors, etc.) crowd out the time of secondary school principals. Most second school principals are busy as administrators and dealing with

affairs, so they have no time to think about the development plan and cultural construction of the school, let alone refine educational ideas and lead the development of the school.

3. Teachers' trust acquisition: good at emotional stimulation to gain trust, weaker at professional guidance

Table 4-11 Descriptive analysis of teachers' trust (N=500)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard	Comparison of mean values
Teachers' Trust	1.00	5.00	4.545	0.516	Emotional trust > Cognitive Trust
Cognitive Trust	1.00	5.00	4.521	0.547	
Emotional trust	1.00	5.00	4.569	0.527	

The sample mean and variance analysis results of the teachers' trust questionnaire show that the secondary school principals who participated in the survey perceived a high level of trust from their subordinates (teachers). And relatively speaking, secondary school principals believe that teachers' trust in them is mainly based on emotion (believing that leaders will take special care of them and consider the interests of both parties), followed by cognitive trust (professional ability, etc.). As Mr. Fei Xiaotong believes, there is also a pattern of differential order in schools. The interpersonal relationship in schools is based on the network relationship between the principal of the secondary school, the superiors, and subordinates of the teachers. That is, because secondary school principals have limited capacity for action, they prefer to be self-centered and follow reciprocal human interaction principles, allowing all teachers to rotate with them as a way to weave a small, safe system of shared development. Therefore, under the influence of the traditional Confucian culture of "human relations", secondary school principals spontaneously used emotional care to gain the trust of teachers, to stimulate their self-consciousness of action. A principal who participated in the interview even stated the logic behind the action, "The purpose of trust is to simplify the collaborative relationship between people and better achieve common goals. Therefore, every time I go to a new school, I prioritize emotional care to gain teachers' trust, because it is the fastest and most effective way." However, it is not enough to make good use of emotional care to stimulate teachers' conscious action. On the basis of teachers' action consciousness, it is more necessary to awaken teachers' awareness of professional growth. President Xi has always attached great importance to education, and once delivered a speech, proposing that teachers should become "great teachers" who shape students' character, conduct and taste, rather than just being a teaching craftsman who carries knowledge, and a great teacher is a "Four Haves" good teacher. Therefore, for secondary school principals, in addition to the charisma that teachers like, what is more needed is professional knowledge and skills that teachers admire, can help teachers set career development goals, formulate professional growth plans, and help teachers put them into action.

Conclusion

Empirical research shows that the competency of secondary school principals is the result of the combined action of internal and external factors, and the self-improvement drive plays a greater role (Wang 2019). Therefore, the education administrative department should create a positive self-improvement environment for secondary school principals, attach importance to guiding secondary school principals to use various resources to improve their competency, and make continuous efforts for the high-quality development of education. The Hunan Provincial Department of Education also proposed to create a team of high-quality principals, improve the management level of schools, and promote the reform and development of primary and secondary education. From the recruitment, training, management and system of principals, it is necessary to further improve the system, clarify the school governance structure, the basic system, and operation mechanism of school management (Wang 2022).

1. The role of the principal requires the principal to be competent: The school implements the principal accountability system. The principal is the legal representative of the school and is fully responsible for the work of the school. The vice-principal assists the principal in his assigned work and is entrusted by the principal to take charge of the special work. Principals must correctly implement the educational policies of the party and the state, stick to the direction of socialist school running, adhere to national and public interests, actively implement quality education, and manage schools in accordance with laws and regulations. The principal should implement the national education and teaching standards, follow the laws of education, implement quality education, and improve the quality of education and teaching; accept the leadership, management, and supervision of the government and the competent education authorities, abide by and implement the school regulations; safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the school, the educatees and the teaching staffs; stick to national and public interests, and accept social supervision. A successful principal should have principal competency, which refers to the inherent factors that principals often use in school work, such as the relevant innate temperament and the intrinsic factors formed through acquired learning, exercise and education, i.e., the conditions that principals should have in terms of morality, talent, learning, timing, and physical fitness, etc. The necessary qualities for work mainly include character cultivation, business ability, psychological quality, and in terms of knowledge structure (Pu et al. 2020).

2. Improving and perfect the selection and appointment system of principals of primary and secondary schools: Actively promoting the appointment system of school principals. At present, the principals of secondary schools in Hunan Province adopt two methods of appointment and recruitment. It is necessary to expand democracy, introduce a competition mechanism, gradually adopt the methods of open recruitment in the system or for the society, and take equal competition, strict assessment, merit-based appointment methods for the selection and appointment of secondary school principals. Secondary school principals should love education and have the spirit of reform and innovation; they should have the professional knowledge and strong organizational management ability needed to perform the duties; they should have the correct idea of running a school; they should have good character; they should abide by the law, and be honest and self-discipline; they should have unity and cooperation spirit, and democratic style (Han 2021).

3. Further improving the principal training system: New principals must go through training and obtain a "Qualification Certificate" before they can take up their posts; in-service principals must receive an improvement training every 5 years and obtain a "Certificate of Improvement Training" before they can continue to serve; where conditions permit, new principals should be actively organized to serve temporary positions in similar schools with high management level and outstanding school performance for training. Before deciding the recruitment or appointment, the agency for the appointment or dismissal of the principal of a secondary school shall carefully examine the relevant personnel's participation in training. If it is indeed necessary for work needs to enter the post in advance, they can only serve as the acting principal (counted within the term of office). When serving as the acting principal, within one year from the date of acting principal, they can participate in the corresponding training and obtain the corresponding qualification certificate, then they can officially serve as formal principal.

4. Establishing a principal post management system: Further straighten out the management system of middle school principals. The post of middle school principals should implement a post management system. The position can go up and down, and the treatment should be adjusted accordingly with the change of the post; actively create conditions and gradually

abolish the administrative level of principals. Annual assessment, midterm assessment and end-of-term target assessment should be implemented for the principals of secondary schools, and the results of the assessments are used as the main basis for the principal's rewards and punishments, post allowances, renewal or dismissal, and appointment and removal. It is necessary to establish a principal evaluation committee, which is composed of leaders of the principal's management department, relevant experts, and teacher representatives. The principal evaluation committee collectively studies and makes an evaluation conclusion for the principal. The assessment results are divided into four grades: excellent, competent, basically competent, and incompetent. Those who are determined to be incompetent through the assessment must be dismissed or removed from their posts; those who are determined to be basically competent, will be admonished by the hiring or dismissing authorities, and those who are assessed to be basically competent twice must be dismissed or removed from their duties (Chen 2020).

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