



ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 15, Issue, 06, pp. 68539-68543, June, 2025
<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.29663.06.2025>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

RESEARCH ON THE PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th March, 2025
Received in revised form
17th April, 2025
Accepted 19th May, 2025
Published online 28th June, 2025

Key Words:

Performance-Based Assessment, Assessment Tests, Research, Teacher, Student.

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to evaluate the performance of secondary school teachers and provide research-based conclusions regarding the decision to implement performance-based salary adjustments. Since the 2022–2023 academic year, the Ministry of Education in our country has introduced performance-based assessments to evaluate secondary school teachers' work and determine their salaries. This initiative is now in its third year. However, many teachers are dissatisfied with the assessment process and its results, criticizing the absence of a salary incentive system. This has led to a psychological burden on the teachers. The main criteria for evaluating a teacher's performance include: 1) Progress in child development and protection activities; 2) Teachers' professional development results; and 3) Participation in organizational and community activities. Of these, 45%, or the majority, is based on students' exam performance. However, our country's performance-based assessment system differs from international standards, with many teachers suggesting that linking student performance with teacher salaries has yielded more negative than positive consequences. To explore the root causes of this issue, this paper presents conclusions drawn from surveys conducted with Mongolian language and literature teachers and high school students.

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Citation: Erdenesan Dashdamba, Ankhiluun Otgonbayar, Tsog-Ochir Avirmed, Gurragchaа Tsetsegdari, Sarangerel Ravjir, Tserenchimed Luvsantseren, Erdenechimeg Lkhagvatseren, Oyuntsetseg Bold and WUYUNQIQIGE, 2025. "Research on the Performance-Based Assessment of Secondary school Teachers". *International Journal of Development Research*, 15, (06), 68539-68543.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, our country introduced performance-based assessments for teachers. The Ministry of Education outlined the purpose of this evaluation as follows: "The evaluation aims to assess the quality and outcomes of educational activities, determine teachers' professional development needs, monitor and manage their performance, and enhance the training system for cultivating a culture of responsible consumption. Additionally, it seeks to identify effective incentives."

This paper examines how the goals and principles of the performance evaluation introduced in our country align with real-world practices and explores ways to improve them. In Mongolian, the English term "Performance-based assessment" is referred to as "Гүйцэтгэлд суурилсан үнэлгээ." International researchers have interpreted performance-based assessment differently, yet the core concept significantly differs from its application in our country. For example, Antoni, J., Nitko, S. M., and Brookhart, S. M (2011, p. 283) define a performance task as an assessment activity requiring students to provide detailed written or oral responses, participate in projects, or

produce a specific outcome. Such assessments demand that students directly demonstrate mastery of learning objectives. In contrast, indirect assessments—such as multiple-choice or short-answer questions—do not. Despite efforts to develop a system that supports teacher development and salary incentives, the results remain suboptimal. On April 12, 2019, under section 2.2 of Mongolian Government Resolution No. 145, measures were introduced to support the development of teachers, including the implementation of a “results-based” salary system (Ministry of Education, 2024). This system, which began in the 2022–2023 academic year, links teacher salary incentives to the outcomes of performance evaluations. However, researchers have criticized this approach, calling it a suboptimal solution and raising concerns about the appropriateness of tying teacher pay to performance-based assessments. To address these concerns, an analysis was conducted to examine the organizational issues and reliability of the evaluation process. This included surveys of teachers and students from both public and private secondary schools in urban and rural areas, as well as observations of general performance evaluation tasks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a combination of methodological approaches, including the questionnaire method, document analysis, and thematic analysis of social network comments. Additionally, statistical analysis and metacognitive methodologies were integrated to derive analytical conclusions. Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The teacher questionnaire was designed to assess their level of satisfaction with the performance evaluation system and to compare their perspectives with discourse on social networks. The student questionnaire was developed following the core principles of metacognitive methodology, aiming to examine students' self-assessment of their academic performance. For document analysis, selected materials and tasks from the performance evaluation test were examined to determine their alignment with curriculum content, learning objectives, and evaluation criteria. Furthermore, a total of 42 comments from a discussion thread titled “Performance Evaluation” on the “Mongolian Teachers’ Union” Facebook page were thematically analyzed to identify recurring patterns and key insights. By employing these mixed-method approaches, the study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evaluation process and its perceived effectiveness among different stakeholders.

Rationale: In recent years, the salary of Mongolian elementary school teachers—far below international standards—has been a frequent topic of discussion on social networks and in conferences. To address this issue, the government has introduced various measures, including a policy to adjust teacher salaries and incentives based on performance evaluation results. This initiative, which began in the 2022–2023 academic year, is now entering its third year. However, many teachers remain dissatisfied with the process and outcomes of the evaluations, and they criticize the lack of a systematic remuneration structure. This research focuses on the performance evaluation process and its results, particularly in relation to the Mongolian language course.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a combination of methods, including questionnaires, document analysis, and observations. Additionally, text analysis of social media comments related to the topic was conducted. Statistical methods and metacognitive approaches were also used to draw conclusions from the survey data. The surveys were conducted using an online platform (Google Forms) and targeted both teachers and students. The teacher survey was designed primarily to assess satisfaction with performance-based assessments and to identify discrepancies between social media feedback and actual research findings. Student questionnaires were developed based on metacognitive methodology, aiming to understand how students

evaluate their own performance. In addition, document analysis was conducted to determine whether the materials and tasks used in the performance evaluation test aligned with curriculum content, learning objectives, and evaluation criteria. For this purpose, 42 comments on the topic of “Performance-based assessment” from the “Mongolian Teachers' Union” Facebook page were also analyzed.

Process: A total of 80 teachers and 176 students from grades 9–12 participated in this study. Among the teachers, the largest age group (35%) was between 25–35 years old, followed by 32.5% aged 40–50, 13.8% aged 35–40, 12.5% aged 20–25, and 6.3% aged over 50. In terms of work experience, 30% of the respondents had 1–5 years of experience, while 22.5% had worked for 6–10 years. Nearly all participants (98.8%) were female, with 97.5% teaching in public schools. Geographically, 37.5% worked in soums (rural districts), 33.8% in provincial centers, and 28.7% in the capital or other cities. Students from grades 9–12 were selected based on their ability to participate in the survey. The student breakdown was as follows: 26.7% were in grade IX, 31.3% in grade X, 27.8% in grade XI, and 14.2% in grade XII. In terms of gender, 37.5% were male, and 62.5% were female. Regarding the type of school, 86.4% of students attended public schools, and 13.6% attended private schools. Geographically, 59.1% were from the capital and other cities, 21.6% from provincial centers, and 19.3% from soums. Of the 176 students surveyed, 4% had participated in the performance evaluation five times, 6.2% four times, 21% three times, 30.7% twice, and 38.1% only once. Regarding their assessment of the Mongolian language course, 50.6% of students reported receiving an 'A,' 39.8% a 'B,' 8.5% a 'C,' and 1.1% a 'D.' In addition to this general information, teachers were asked to analyze and draw conclusions based on key questions, which included the following:

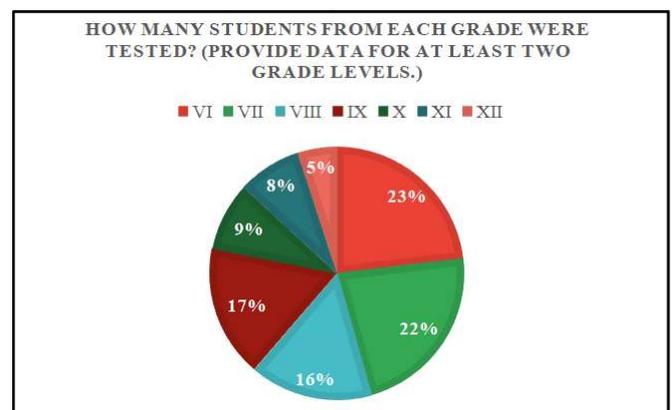


Figure 1. Survey Results of the Teachers Who Participated in the Study

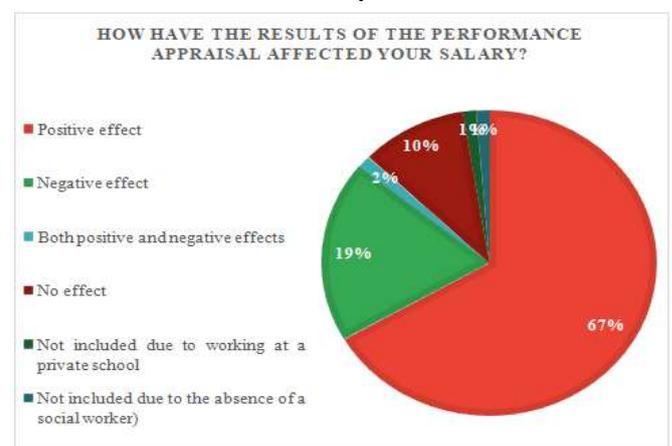


Figure 2. Research on the Impact of Performance-Based Assessment on the Salaries of Teachers Participating in the Study

65.8% of the teachers who participated in the survey believe that performance appraisal has a positive effect on their salaries. However, 45.6% feel that it is better not to maintain this assessment. This

indicates that many subjective factors influence teachers regarding this evaluation. Therefore, further refinement is necessary.

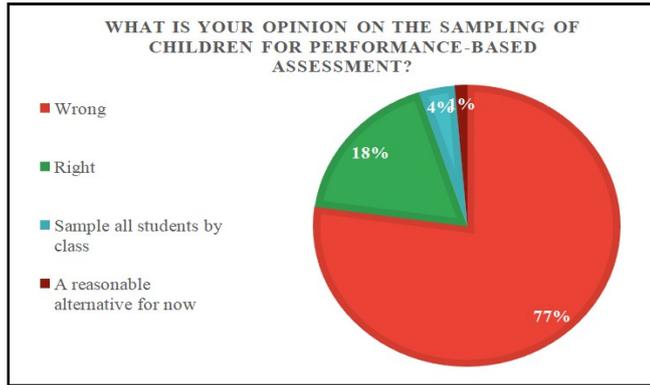


Figure 3. A Study Evaluating How Teachers Select Children for Testing Using Sampling Methods

Additionally, 77.2% of all teachers expressed the opinion that the sampling of students is incorrect, indicating flaws in the organization and management of the examination.

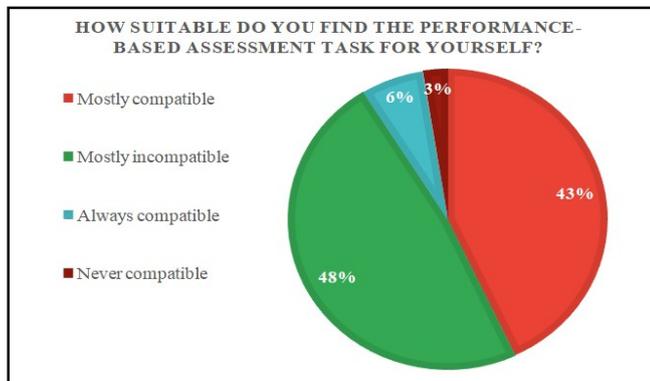


Figure 3. A Survey of Teachers Evaluating the Development of Test Tasks in the Study

The similar number of teachers who found the task setting to be compatible and incompatible suggests that this research requires further investigation. This aspect will be explored in greater detail in the subsequent study.

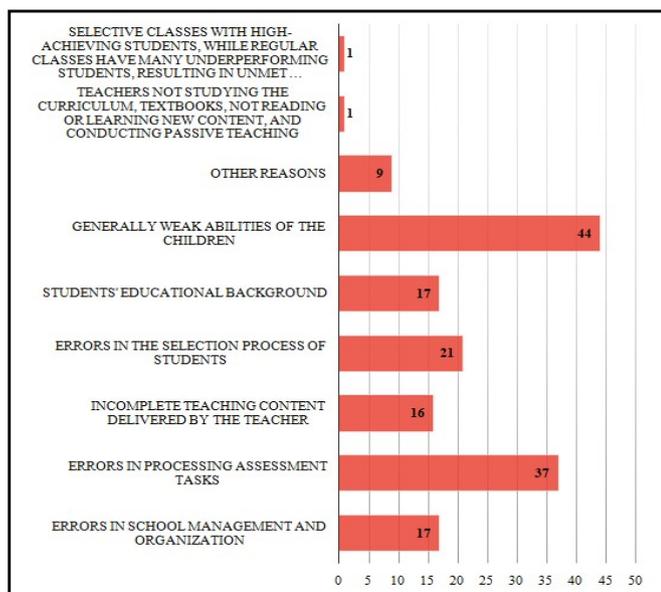


Figure 5. A Study Clarifying the Reasons for Inconsistencies Among Teachers in Performance-Based Assessment

The majority of the poor performance results in the assessment were attributed to weak student abilities, inconsistent evaluation tasks,

student selection, and issues in management and organization. This indicates that the four most critical criteria for the test were rated as unsatisfactory by the highest percentage of participants, suggesting that the test requires serious reconsideration.

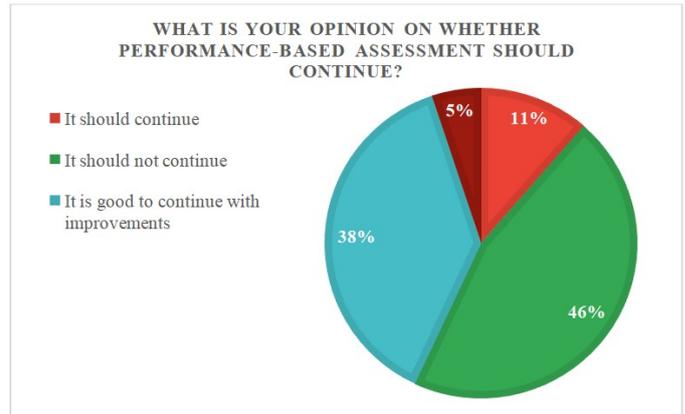


Figure 6. Research on Whether Teachers Participating in the Study Believe Performance-Based Assessment Should Continue

In addition to the lack of support for performance-based assessment, 45.6% of teachers provided the following reasons for their opposition:

- School administrations organize the assessment unfairly.
- Forgery and cheating lead to higher test grades.
- Inconsistent approaches are used when selecting students for sampling.
- The assessment does not reflect reality; dishonesty results in false outcomes.
- Copying receives higher ratings.
- School management and parent survey assessments are false.
- A majority expressed that the organization of the examination was poorly managed. Among the teachers who believe the assessment should no longer be conducted, their primary concern lies with management's organizational issues, highlighting flaws in the administration of the examination. Furthermore, 77.2% of teachers indicated that sampling students is inappropriate, which is also an organizational issue.

When examining why 49.4% of teachers voted for the improvement and continuation of performance-based assessment in the future, the following reasons were highlighted:

- It will improve the teacher's ability.
- Job performance will stand out.
- It will motivate teachers for self-development.
- It will provide insights into student progress.
- Teachers will become more responsible.
- The quality of education will improve.
- Teachers will deliver higher-quality daily lessons.

Research from Students:The research questions for students were developed using 25 indicators based on the metacognitive assessment method. Observations were categorized into the following five main groups, aligned with the stages of metacognitive analysis:

- **Category 1:** Determining students' psychological state during the exam (Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 9).
- **Category 2:** Evaluating the appropriateness of the performance appraisal tasks (Questions 5, 6, 13, 14, 23, 24).
- **Category 3:** Understanding students' attitudes towards the teacher after the test (Questions 11, 12, 15, 16).
- **Category 4:** Assessing students' ability to perform the test tasks (Questions 7, 8, 10).

- **Category 5:** Identifying students' positive and negative attitudes toward the purpose of the performance evaluation test (Questions 19, 20, 21, 22, 25).

According to the research, students' general attitude towards their performance evaluation showed that positive evaluations were more prevalent than negative ones.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Teachers' opinions were divided between those who supported and those who opposed performance-based assessment. When comparing these two opposing viewpoints, many teachers who argued against retaining the assessment raised concerns about unfair school management and decisions being overly influenced by the discretion of principals and managers.

Table 1. Survey Assessing Students' Attitudes Toward Performance Evaluation Tests

No	Query	Never 1	Occasionally 2	More than occasionally and less than often3	Often 4	Don't know
1	I believe you need a lot of luck to do well in the exam.	64	68	27	11	16
2	I think about the exam and usually get good grades.	4	29	38	107	7
3	I am not afraid of performance-based assessment tests because they are not very relevant to me.	90	37	29	13	12
4	I dread performance-based assessment tests.	50	59	27	32	16
5	A lot of unknowns come up during performance-based assessment tests.	32	97	31	16	8
6	The performance-based assessment test questions are reasonably easy.	20	68	41	45	13
7	I don't think I understand most of the performance-based assessment tasks.	71	58	26	17	11
8	I find performance-based assessment tasks quite easy.	40	60	42	28	11
9	Every time I take this exam, I feel very emotional.	68	57	27	19	13
10	I love this test.	46	53	36	33	12
11	In this test, only the material taught by the teacher is included.	10	38	42	86	12
12	This test includes content that the teacher did not cover.	68	71	21	10	13
13	It's unclear what will appear on this exam.	26	48	44	50	15
14	There are many questions in this exam that I didn't even consider.	50	70	28	24	15
15	We prepare for this exam with the understanding of what types of questions will appear.	17	52	51	56	9
16	Most of the content we prepare for aligns with the exam.	18	57	56	46	10
17	Some things on the exam are very different from what we prepared for.	64	66	24	21	12
18	I think if this exam continues, we will improve in our studies.	37	41	41	44	15
19	Even if we don't take this exam, I think our studies won't suffer.	30	44	43	41	22
20	I don't understand the exam questions.	56	67	27	20	13
21	The tasks in this exam are too difficult.	57	73	21	19	12
22	There are more unclear tasks than difficult ones.	35	76	38	22	12
23	The exam is very easy because it's a test.	18	59	42	47	14
24	I wonder why such difficult tasks appear.	62	65	31	18	8
25	This performance-based assessment test benefits my learning.	30	55	42	42	17

The psychological state of students during the examination was compared with teachers' responses from the following research. Among the students, 18.1% selected the response, "I am afraid of performance evaluation tests," and 10.7% chose, "Every time I take this exam, I feel very emotional." In contrast, 15.2% of teachers selected "Very scared and anxious," while 38% chose "More nervous than scared, worried about the teacher." This highlights a notable difference in how students and teachers perceive the emotional impact of performance evaluation tests.

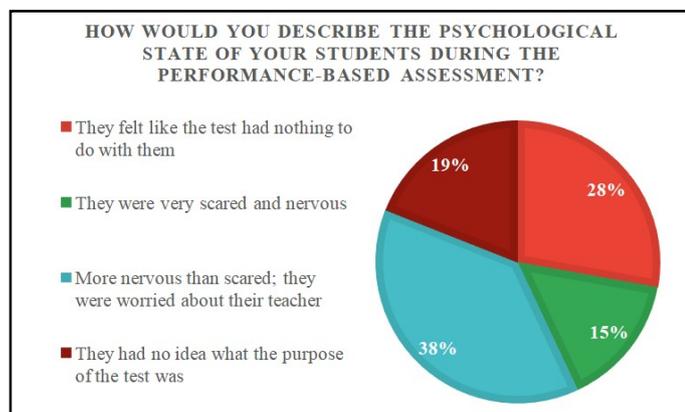


Figure 7. Survey of Teachers Evaluating the Psychological State of Their Students During the Examination

In contrast, most teachers who supported keeping the assessment emphasized practical benefits, such as improving the quality of teaching and fostering teacher development. These findings were compared to comments from a Facebook discussion. While 8,686 people supported the idea that the additional salary provided by the assessment should be integrated into teachers' base salary, only 133 people favored continuing the assessment in its current form. This example demonstrates a significant discrepancy between social media comments and actual research. It suggests that many of the comments on the Facebook page may be politically motivated, aiming to criticize or defend certain parties.

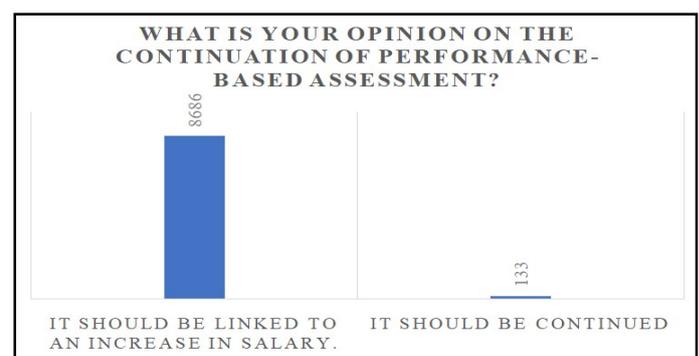


Figure 8. Research on Whether Teachers Participating in the Study Believe Performance-Based Assessment Should Continue (Observation from comments of Facebook)

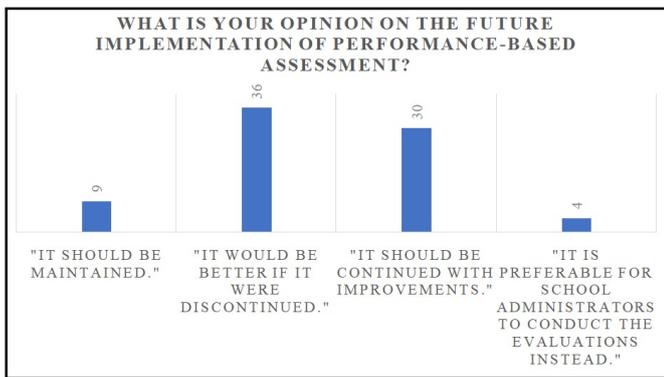


Figure 9. Research on Whether Teachers Participating in the Study Believe Performance-Based Assessment Should Continue (From survey)

From the teachers' survey, there is a consensus that the organizational process of performance-based assessment needs to become more fair, transparent, and refined. Additionally, it is noted that students generally have a more positive than negative attitude toward the evaluation of their performance.

DISCUSSION

Improving students' performance in daily classroom assessments, group subject evaluations, and standardized tests is widely recognized as one of the most crucial aspects of a teacher's role. According to Order A/115 of the Minister of Education and Science of Mongolia, dated March 11, 2024, the following principles must be adhered to when organizing performance evaluations:

The principles to be followed for organizing performance evaluations are:

- Transparency, fairness, and objectivity
- Results should be evidence-based
- Respect for the teacher's reputation
- Encouraging self-development
- Openness and the use of multiple assessment methods
- Adherence to the principle of freedom from interference

The main evaluation criteria include:

- Child development and protection activities
- Professional development of teachers
- Participation and contributions to organizational and community activities (Ministry of Education, 2024).

Of these criteria, 45% (the majority) is determined by student exam performance. However, the "performance-based assessment" model in Mongolia differs from international standards. Linking student evaluations to teacher salaries, while having some positive effects, also poses significant challenges. One major issue is the inconsistency in the assessment structure—grades 1-5 use a combination of tests and open-ended tasks, while grades 6-12 rely on a single test. According to Nancy P. Gallavan (2009, p.8), assessment should not be used solely to collect information about students or to inform external stakeholders. Instead, before an assessment, students and their parents should be fully informed about its purpose, timing, content, and methodology. Gallavan emphasizes that assessment should not be used as a tool for salary calculation, but as an activity that supports teachers in guiding instruction based on the curriculum. It should focus on revealing achievements and identifying areas for improvement, leading to more engaging learning and teaching experiences (Gallavan, 2009, p.10).

Unfortunately, this principle seems to have been lost in the current evaluation process in Mongolia. Performance-based assessments, which allow students to showcase their knowledge through tasks or projects, can better reflect their abilities and support the development of their skills. As Antoni, J., Nitko, S. M., and Brookhart, S. M. (2011, p. 283) explain, performance tasks require students to provide detailed written or oral responses, participate in projects, and produce specific outcomes. Such tasks directly demonstrate that students have met learning objectives, unlike traditional assessments that rely on short-answer or multiple-choice questions, which only indirectly assess student learning. In Mongolia, however, the approach to assessment is different. Local scholars have also provided valuable insights into this topic. Monkhor, D (1999) defines assessment as having four key roles: diagnosing, teaching, guiding, and developing. This reflects the idea that, like teaching, assessment should employ varied methods to engage and benefit students. Tasks such as short answers, correcting responses, or multiple-choice selections often fall short in fully capturing students' learning achievements. In subjects like the Mongolian language, for instance, assessing student performance can be better demonstrated through writing essays, where students apply their linguistic knowledge and skills. Essays provide a more comprehensive way for students to showcase their understanding and abilities (Erdenesan, 2021, p.240). Therefore, performance evaluation should be seen as a learning activity that encourages students to create, demonstrate their knowledge, and develop their skills further.

CONCLUSION

The research reveals insufficient implementation of the principles outlined in the teacher performance-based assessment procedure. A detailed analysis of both the performance evaluation results and task development in Mongolia is essential. While creating assessment criteria for evaluating teacher performance is a positive step, linking student performance-based assessment tests to teacher salaries may have unintended negative consequences for the future of education. To ensure fairness and effectiveness, the performance evaluation process needs to be thoroughly revised, taking into account international standards, the specific conditions of Mongolia, and the research findings of scholars. The distribution of classes under evaluation is uneven and influenced by various subjective factors, suggesting a need for refinement in this area as well. Many teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the flawed organization of the assessment process, indicating that the procedure's principles are not being fully implemented. Additionally, task development requires further investigation to ensure its appropriateness. The most common reasons for poor performance results were identified as weak student abilities, inconsistent evaluation tasks, student selection, and management issues. The fact that the four key criteria expected in the exam were rated as insufficient by the highest percentage of respondents highlights the need to reassess and reconsider the entire performance evaluation framework.

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