

# Occupational Identity, Organizational Identity and Job Engagement

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#### **Abstract**

The article finds overview teacher recruitment system in China, established for over two decades, has intricately shaped the dynamic interaction between educators and educational institutions. This framework has facilitated the evolution of a modern university personnel system, promoting rational workforce mobility and efficient resource allocation. In the current era marked by a comprehensive reform of teacher team construction, there is a heightened focus on enhancing teacher engagement, which is a key concern for both societal stakeholders and educational administrators. This study employed a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A survey involving 430 teachers from higher education institutions and in-depth interviews with 6 teachers were conducted. The analysis revealed a significant positive impact of occupational identity on both organizational identity and job engagement. Organizational identity was identified as a partial mediator in the relationship between occupational identity and job engagement. Additionally, the study highlighted the moderating role of individual-organizational value fit in the connection between organizational identity and occupational identity. Building upon the aforementioned conclusions, practical recommendations are proposed for targeted interventions focused on elevating levels of occupational identity, organizational identity, and individual-organizational value fit. These concerted efforts are envisaged to collectively advance the overarching goal of augmenting teachers' engagement within the academic milieu. The perspectives considered encompass inputs from school administrators, societal stakeholders, and individual educators. 1)Focus on the Organizational and Cultural Atmosphere in Higher Education Institutions. 2)Improving Teachers' Occupational Image in Society. 3)Developing a Rational Incentive System for Teachers. 4)Building a Harmonious and Equitable Working Environment.

**Keywords:** Occupational Identity, Organizational Identity, Job Engagement, Higher Education Institutions

#### Introduction

As an ethical guideline embedded within China's core socialist values at the individual



level, commitment and engagement have emerged as pivotal subjects in contemporary human resource management. Engagement, denoting the positive energy individuals contribute to their roles, encompasses the integration of job responsibilities, the generation of job performance, and the investment of personal emotions, cognition, and behaviors Fang, J.Z, & Jin, J. D. (2012). Nevertheless, the 2015 Gallup report on college teacher engagement reveals a global engagement rate of approximately 30%, with a majority of educators exhibiting disengagement or lack of engagement, leading to a recognized decline in professional conduct. The engagement of higher education teachers significantly impacts pupil motivation, academic achievements, as well as the successful execution of teaching, research, Sue, J. (2019). and societal functions within academic institutions. Consequently, augmenting the engagement of higher education teachers poses a substantial challenge for both administrators and researchers. In recognition of the pivotal role of engagement, scholars such as Kahn, W. (1990); Zhao, H. J. (2020), both domestic and foreign, have undertaken extensive investigations into its influencing factors, effects, and measurement indicators. While existing research has established connections between engagement and various factors like personality traits, identity, organizational commitment, individual sense of meaning, workload, work environment, job diversity, job autonomy, leadership behavior, organizational justice, and organizational support, the exploration of the relationship between occupational and organizational identity and engagement among higher education institution teachers remains relatively limited. Feng, W. D. (2014); Liu, S., & Ma, J. (2020). Despite some studies focusing on engagement among employees in new generation and dispatching systems, there is a dearth of attention dedicated to comprehending the effects of occupational and organizational identity on engagement among highly educated individuals. (Ashforth, B. E., et al. (2011)

The reform of the appointive employment system has notably altered the professional landscape for teachers, providing them with a two-way choice regarding work access. Policy-wise, ongoing enhancements to mechanisms for teacher career transitions, including the elimination of the tenure system and talent unit ownership, have transpired. Additionally, heightened awareness of personal crises among teachers, increased competition, and the imperative to secure job stability while competing with colleagues in horizontal evaluations have further shaped the dynamics. (Education Department of Sichuan Province. (2022)To bolster competitiveness, schools attract exceptional teachers through enticing packages, albeit at the potential expense of teacher career stability (Feng, W.D.2014). Given this consideration, can the engagement levels of these educators be more accurately anticipated through an exploration of their occupational and organizational identities within the context of the appointive employment system reform? How might the integration of professional and institutional identities contribute to fostering the engagement of educators in higher education institutions? Fang, J.Z, & Jin, J. D. (2012). These questions warrant further inquiry and analysis. Consequently, this investigation will focus on educators in higher education institutions as the research subjects, employing questionnaires and structural equation modeling.



The study aims to scrutinize the impact of occupational identity on the engagement of teachers in higher education institutions and the mediating influence of organizational identity in this process. The objective is to offer valuable insights for enhancing the engagement of teachers in higher education institutions within the current appointive employment system.

### **Research Objectives**

- 1.To study investigate the relationship among teachers' occupational identity, organizational identity, and engagement within the framework of the appointment system in higher education in China.
- 2.To study explain the mediating function of organizational identity in the relationship between teachers' occupational identity and engagement.
- 3. To study seeks to evaluate the moderating impact of individual-organizational value fit on the associations between occupational identity and organizational identity, as well as between occupational identity and engagement.

## **Conceptual Framework and Research Hypothesis**

This study proposes a theoretical model with occupational identity as the antecedent variable, engagement as the outcome variable, and organizational identity as the mediator variable, with individual-organizational value fit as the moderating effect. The research model constructed in this study is shown in Figure 1, where H1, H2, and H3 are the direct effects, H4 is the mediating effect, and H5a and H5b are the moderating effects. Table 1 specifies the content of all assumptions.

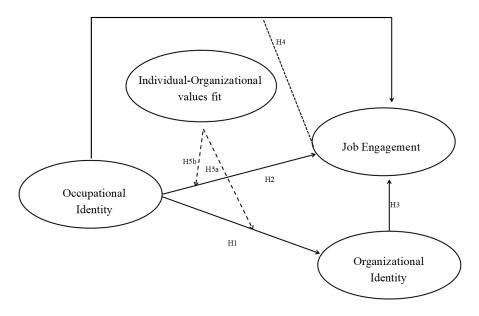


Figure 1 Hypotheses Model of This Research

**Table 1** Summary of Research Hypotheses



HYPOTHESIS	CONTENTS			
H1	Occupational identity has a positive effect on organizational			
П1	identity.			
H2	Occupational identity has a positive effect on engagement.			
Н3	Organizational identify has a positive effect on engagement.			
H4	Organizational identity has a mediating effect between			
П4	occupational identity and engagement.			
H5A	Individual-organizational value fit has a moderating effect on			
пза	occupational identity and organizational identity.			
H5B	Individual-organizational value fit has a moderating effect on			
пэр	occupational identity and engagement.			

#### Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Through semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire survey, the research delves deeply into the relationships among occupational identity, organizational identity, and job engagement. Subsequently, the raw data collected from the sample group is organized, and scientific analysis of the statistical data is conducted using SPSS22. This comprehensive analysis aims to explore the interrelationships between variables.

According to the 2022 Main Results of Sichuan Education Statistics released by the Sichuan Provincial Department of Education, there are 147 higher education institutions in Sichuan, comprising 52 general undergraduate institutions, 1 undergraduate-level vocational school, and 81 higher vocational colleges. These institutions collectively employ 99,800 full-time teachers, resulting in a total study population of 99,800,000. Subsequently, the study's sample size was determined using the Yamane Formula (n = N/(1 + N\*e²)), resulting in a sample size of 399. To ensure a questionnaire distribution of not less than 399, the researchers will employ a random sampling method, distributing 430 questionnaires among 10 higher education institutions in Sichuan Province. These institutions encompass various levels of higher education, including those under the Ministry of Education, institutions co-built by the Ministry of Education, and provincial and municipal institutions. The selection of these institutions and teachers aimed to achieve a certain level of representativeness. Moreover, this study utilizes convenience sampling for qualitative sampling, selecting six participants from two distinct categories of higher education institutions in Chengdu for in-depth interviews.

Reliability analyses utilizing Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the SPSS 22.0 analysis tool were conducted on the items for each dimension of the pilot test questionnaire on occupational identity, engagement, organizational identity, and individual-organizational values fit of Chinese higher education institutions teachers, as shown in Table 2, and the results of the analyses, Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , were all higher than 0.8, indicating that the reliability of all the scales was up to standard and the deletion of the items was not necessary.



 Table 2 Reliability Analyses on each Variable

VARIABLE	NO.	CITC	CRONBACH'S A AFTER DELETION OF TERMS	CRONBACH'S A
	A1	0.788	0.931	
	A2	0.773	0.928	
	A3	0.781	0.934	
	A4	0.878	0.932	
	A5	0.721	0.924	
OCCUPATIONAL	A6	0.781	0.930	0.020
IDENTITY	A7	0.735	0.923	0.930
	A8	0.821	0.933	
	A9	0.701	0.920	
	A10	0.797	0.936	
	A11	0.806	0.928	
	A12	0.742	0.927	
	B1	0.863	0.945	
	B2	0.817	0.952	
	В3	0.797	0.920	
	B4	0.819	0.942	
ENGAGEMENT	В5	0.870	0.951	0.957
	В6	0.833	0.950	
	В7	0.863	0.938	
	В8	0.843	0.942	
	В9	0.888	0.940	
ORGANIZATIONA	C1	0.837	0.833	
L IDENTITY	C2	0.761	0.847	0.880



	C3	0.693	0.859	
	C4	0.708	0.857	
	C5	0.650	0.866	
	C6	0.520	0.890	
	D1	0.720	0.830	
INDIVIDUAL-	D2	0.703	0.834	
ORGANIZATIONA	D3	0.582	0.863	0.866
L VALUES FIT	D4	0.713	0.831	
	D5	0.726	0.828	

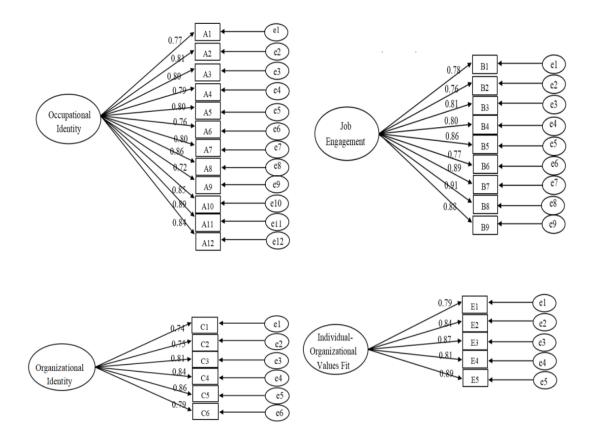
The study analyzed the structural validity of the questionnaire scale using KMO and Bartlett's test. the KMO values of the teacher's occupational identity, organizational identity, personal-organizational value fit, and degree of engagement scale are all higher than 0.8. Bartlett's spherical test values were all significant (Sig.<0.001), indicating that the scale data of this research could be subjected to factor analysis. Specific analysis results are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3** Reliability Analyses Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test.

VARIABLE	КМО	ASYMPTOTIC CHI-SQUARE	DF	SIG.
OCCUPATIONAL	0.918	1140.975	55	.000
IDENTITY	0.510	11100710		.000
ORGANIZATIONAL	0.919	997.219	36	.000
IDENTITY				
INDIVIDUAL-				
ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES	0.861	908.546	32	.000
FIT				
ENGAGEMENT	0.910	1074.281	49	.000

A confirmatory factor analysis of the overall model of each variable was conducted by using AMOS. Figure 2 shows the corresponding analytical models, and Table 3 displays the results of the validated factor analysis for each variable. Based on the confirmatory factor analysis conducted above, it can be concluded that each fitting index of occupational identity, engagement, organizational identity, and individual-organizational value meets the evaluation standard, indicating good construct validity.





Figures 2 Construct Validity of each Variable

**Table 4** Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results on each Variable

<u> </u>					
VARIABLE	X2/DF	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMR
OCCUPATIONAL	4.017	0.010	0.024	0.040	0.051
IDENTITY	4.917	0.918	0.934	0.049	0.051
ENGAGEMENT	4.826	0.946	0.928	0.043	0.062
ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY	4.756	0.923	0.934	0.047	0.045
INDIVIDUAL-	2.859	0.936	0.912	0.041	0.037
ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES FIT	2.839	0.930	0.912	0.041	0.037

# **Research Results**

The formal questionnaires were disseminated through both on-site and online channels, resulting in the issuance of 430 copies, of which 402 were successfully collected. The expansive nature of the questionnaire survey posed challenges to retrieval; however, the final statistics reveal a commendable recovery rate of 93.4%. Following a comprehensive analysis



of the results, 18 invalid questionnaires were identified and subsequently excluded from the data set, yielding a total of 384 valid responses. The resultant validity rate for the recovered survey data stands at 95.5%.

In this investigation, a Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted on a sample of 402 participants to quantify the degree of association among variables posited in the hypotheses. The results demonstrated that the correlation coefficients about organizational identity, occupational identity, individual-organizational values fit, and engagement among Chinese higher education teachers were statistically significant at the 1% level. Specifically, a positive correlation was identified between professional identity and engagement (r=0.43, p<0.01), as well as between occupational identity and organizational identity (r=0.58, p<0.01). These findings indicate that elevated occupational identity among teachers is associated with increased organizational identity and engagement, aligning with the conclusions drawn by Zhang and Zhu (2011) in their empirical study on the relationship between teachers' occupational and organizational identity in Chinese universities.

Their investigation, involving 400 university teachers, substantiated a significant path coefficient (r=0.471, p<0.01), affirming the positive correlation between university teachers' occupational identity and organizational identity. Further analysis using Pearson correlation indicated associations between control variables and occupational identity, encompassing gender (r=0.07), age (r=0.12), educational level (r=0.08), marital status (r=0.09), years of working experience (r=-0.10), and title/position (r= 0.04). Additionally, professional identity displayed a noteworthy negative correlation with years of working experience, signifying a decline in teachers' occupational identity with increasing tenure. This aligns with Tan, Q.,& Wu, M. (2018). observation that teachers may experience a diminution in occupational identity, commitment, and dedication as their years of service progress.

The interrelationships and effects of occupational identity, engagement, organizational identity, and individual-organizational value fit of higher educational institution teachers were examined using structural equation model testing analysis. The mediating role of organizational identity and the moderating role of individual-organizational value fit were also tested.

**Table 5** Regression Analysis of Occupational Identity on Organizational Identity

VARIABLE RELATIONSHIP	STANDARDIZED PATH COEFFICIENT		SUPPORT FOR ASSUMPTIONS		
OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY					
→ ORGANIZATIONAL	0.91***	28.56	Support for H1		
IDENTITY					
MODEL FIT OF PATH ANALYSIS: X2/DF=4.924, CIF=0.91, TLT=0.89, RMSEA=0.38, RMR=0.009					

Note:+p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

Upon scrutinizing the occupational identity through the data presented, it is noteworthy that the path model's fit for organizational identity attains the intended outcome. The residual



assessment criteria for goodness of fit also predominantly adhere to the established standards. Moreover, the standardized path coefficient registers at  $0.91^{***}$  with a T-value of 28.56, and the correlation is statistically significant at p <0.001. Consequently, it can be asserted that occupational identity exerts a positive influence on organizational identity.

Based on the findings presented, this study concludes that the engagement path model significantly influences occupational identity when evaluating the impact of fitting. Moreover, all other post-fitting measures align with recommended values, with  $\chi^2$ //df at 4.568 (<5), RMSEA value at 0.034 (<0.05), and the remaining three fit indicators meeting evaluation standards. A notable correlation is observed between occupational identity and engagement. The standardized path coefficient is 0.93\*\*\* with a T value of 26.34. Consultation of the corresponding distribution table allows for the retrieval of regression coefficients. At a specified significance level, a noteworthy characteristic is discerned, indicating occupational identity has a positive effect on engagement.

The examination of occupational identity reveals its mediator effect by organizational identity, as evidenced and the structural model of engagement. Fit values and indices largely satisfy evaluation criteria, affirming the efficacy of the model. The fitting process for the mediating role of organizational identity attains the intended outcome. Organizational identity assumes a mediating role as an indirect model. Under the assumed regression paths for professional identity and employee engagement, the standardized path coefficient for organizational identity becomes statistically insignificant at 0.07. This observation indicates that organizational identity partially mediates the association between occupational identity and engagement.

In the examination of the matching model, a mediating role model was employed. The comprehensive mediating role model, denoted as (M1), posits a conceptual framework wherein engagement is exclusively influenced by the mediating role of organizational identity. Conversely, the partial mediating role model, labeled as (M2), is an extension of (M1) that incorporates the additional pathway of influence from occupational identity to engagement.

Initially, the complete mediation model was fitted and examined, with the results presented, along with illustrates the fully mediated model, achieving  $\times^2/df$  value of 4.723, below the threshold of 5, and an RMSEA value of 0.04, below the threshold of 0.05, meeting the criteria for model fit indices. All other comparative fit indices surpass the recommended threshold of 0.9, signifying substantial model adequacy. Consequently, a significant correlation is established between occupational identity and engagement under the influence of organizational identity.

M2 was fitted and analyzed, with outcomes presented in Tables 12 and 13, as well as the partially mediated model exhibited a × ²/df value of 4.568 (below 5) and an RMSEA value of 0.04 (below 0.05), satisfying the prescribed criteria for model fit indices. All other relative fit indices surpassed the recommended threshold of 0.9, indicating pronounced model adequacy. Consequently, a significant association between professional identity and commitment was established under the influence of organizational identity. Therefore, the partial mediation model is deemed more suitable based on the obtained results.



**Table 6** Structural Equation Test Results for Partial Mediating Model (M2).

MODEL	X2/DF	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMR
M2	4.568	0.95	0.93	0.03	0.002

**Table 7** Fit Indices for Partial Mediating Model (M2).

VARIABLE RELATIONSHIP	STANDARDIZED PATH	STANDARD	Т
	COEFFICIENT	ERROR	
OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY ->	0 91***	0.015	28.56
ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY	0.91	0.013	28.30
ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY ->	0.92***	0.012	26.34
ENGAGEMENT	0.92	0.012	20.34
OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY ->	0.05	0.038	1.58
ENGAGEMENT	0.03	0.038	1.36

*Note:* +p < 0.1, \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.



Figure 3 Path Analysis Results for Partial Mediating Model (M2).

Furthermore, as can be seen from Table 14, the two models have a better fit for each of the items, with model M2 having a better fit index than model M1. Consequently, this study adopted the partial mediator model (M2) for analysis. Upon incorporating organizational identity, the standardized coefficient for occupational identity and dedication declined from 0.91 to 0.05. Thus, organizational identity partially mediated occupational identity and engagement, and hypothesis H4 was established. After researching 250 knowledge-based employees in the communications industry, Lin and Ma (2020) found a strong positive correlation between the sense of occupational mission and organizational identity of knowledge-based employees in the communications industry of 0.89 (p<0.01), and the correlation coefficient of organizational identity on the degree of employee engagement of 0.90 (p<0.01), and organizational identity partially mediated the relationship between the sense of occupational mission and the degree of employee engagement.

The analysis revealed that individual-organizational values fit were able to simultaneously modulate the correlation between occupational identity and organizational identity. occupational identity and individual-organizational values matching were consecutively centered while incorporating six control variables, including gender and age, into the regression equation. The outcomes were presented in Table 15, where M3 adjusted



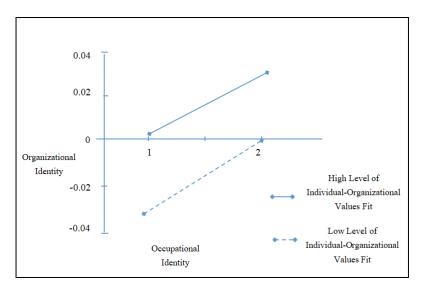
R2 stood at 0.06 and the F-value was significant at the 0.001 level. By incorporating the independent variable occupational identity, M4 demonstrates an adjusted R2 of 0.180 and an F-value that is significant at the 0.001 level compared to M3 - which is a more powerful depiction of organizational identity. After the addition of the product of individual-organizational value matching to M4, M5 was created with an adjusted R2 of 0.24 and an F-value that is significant at the 0.001 level. The standardized regression coefficients for the interaction terms of occupational and organizational identity are 0.291, 0.376, and 0.214. Figures 4 demonstrate the impact of individual-organizational values fit in the interaction between job role and organization.

**Table 8** Inspection of the Moderating Role of Individual-Organizational Values Fit in Occupational Identity and Organizational Identity.

CONTROL VARIABLE		ORGANIZATIONAL IDEN	NTITY
CONTROL VARIABLE	M3	M4	M5
GENDER	-0.05	-0.08	-0.87
AGE	0.06	-0.04	-0.49
EDUCATION LEVEL	-0.18	-0.07	-0.69
MARITAL STATUS	0.07	-0.05	-0.18*
YEARS OF WORKING	0.07	-0.04	-0.14
TITLE/POSITION	-0.16	-0.06	-0.15
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE			
OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY		0.368**	0.421**
MODERATOR			
INDIVIDUAL-ORGANIZATIONAL		0.42**	0.40**
VALUES FIT		0.42***	0.40***
STANDARDIZED REGRESSION			
COEFFICIENT OF THE	0.291	0.376	0.214
INTERACTION TERM			
OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY			
*			0.007
INDIVIDUAL-ORGANIZATIONAL			-0.007
VALUES FIT			
$\mathbb{R}^2$	0.015	0.201	1.245
ADJUSTMENT OF R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	0.180	0.24
F	1.62	12.342	1.71

*Note:* N=402, +p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.





**Figure 4** The Moderating Effect of Individual-Organizational Values Fit Between Occupational Identity and Organizational Identity.

After examining the influence of congruence between personal and organizational values, it was discovered that it had no moderating effect on the correlation between occupational identity and engagement. Table 16 demonstrates that M6 has an adjusted R2 value of 0.025 and a significantly noteworthy F-value at the 0.001 level. By including the independent variable, occupational identity, we can see that the adjusted R2 of model M7 is 0.318, with a significant F value at the 0.001 level when compared with M6, which is a stronger analysis of employee engagement. Following this, we added the product of individual-organization value fit to M7 to create M8, which has an adjusted R2 of 0.319 and a significant F value at the 0.001 level. However, based on the above data, there appears to be no obvious correlation between occupational identity and engagement. This indicates that occupational identity and employee engagement do not play a moderating role.



**Table 9** Inspection of the Moderating Role of Individual-Organizational Values Fit in Occupational Identity and Engagement.

	, ,		
CONTROL VARIABLE		ENGAGEMENT	
23	M3	M4	M5
GENDER	0.156	0.084	0.097
AGE	0.54	0.006	0.07
EDUCATION LEVEL	-0.03	-0.04	-0.12*
MARITAL STATUS	0.07	0.04	0.05
YEARS OF WORKING	0.06	0.05	0.06
TITLE/POSITION	-0.15	-0.03	-0.07
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE			
OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY		0.375	0.384
MODERATOR			
INDIVIDUAL-ORGANIZATION			
AL VALUES FIT			
STANDARDIZED REGRESSION			
COEFFICIENT OF THE	0.025	0.346	0.338
INTERACTION TERM			
OCCUPATIONAL IDENTITY			
**			0.012
INDIVIDUAL-ORGANIZATION			-0.012
AL VALUES FIT			
$\mathbb{R}^2$	0.030	0.425	0.420
ADJUSTMENT OF R <sup>2</sup>	0.025	0.318	0.319
F	4.075***	91.105***	21.260***

*Note:* N=402, +p<0.1, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001.

# **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn: occupational identity has a positive impact on organizational identity. Occupational identity has a positive effect on both organizational identity and engagement. Organizational identity has a positive effect on engagement. Organizational identity plays a partial mediating role in occupational identity and engagement. Individual-organization value fit simultaneously moderates the relationship between organizational identity and occupational identity.

Building upon the aforementioned conclusions, practical recommendations are proposed for targeted interventions focused on elevating levels of occupational identity, organizational



identity, and individual-organizational value fit. These concerted efforts are envisaged to collectively advance the overarching goal of augmenting teachers' engagement within the academic milieu. The perspectives considered encompass inputs from school administrators, societal stakeholders, and individual educators.

- 1. Focus on the Organizational and Cultural Atmosphere in Higher Education Institutions.
  - 2. Improving Teachers' Occupational Image in Society.
  - 3. Developing a Rational Incentive System for Teachers.
  - 4. Building a Harmonious and Equitable Working Environment.
  - 5. Enhancing the Social Reputation and Influence of Schools.
  - 6. Emphasizing Values Fit and Enhancing Communication and Motivation

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