



**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS FOR MIDDLE
MANAGERS IN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES**

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PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS FOR MIDDLE MANAGERS IN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES

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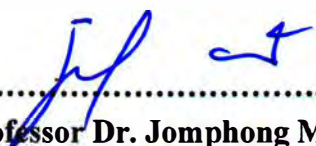
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Abstract

This research studied performance appraisal methods based on analyzing the appraisal situations according to strategic development goals, business goals, specific business processes of the company, and specific work characteristics of middle management positions established by Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. The job description included the establishment of general managers, deputy general managers, and department heads. Secondly, based on post-analysis, the research followed the design principles of the performance appraisal system and specific appraisal content. Key performance indicators were formulated based on the performance of each position, then uses the weight factor method to assign weights to various indicators. Each post's specific performance appraisal form helped formulate specific performance appraisal standards based on attitude and ability items. From the results, this paper selected the appropriate performance appraisal subjects of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. to ensure the accuracy of the company's performance appraisal results. In conclusion, this paper suggests designing a performance appraisal evaluation model, evaluating the effectiveness of the final performance appraisal results, and determining the performance appraisal cycle.

Keywords: performance appraisal, middle managers, Suzhou Construction Engineering Group

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Declaration

I, Zhu Liping, hereby certify that the work embodied in this independent study entitled "Performance Appraisal Systems for Middle Managers in Construction Companies" is result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The construction industry is closely related to China's economic development. With the accelerating process of urbanization and the increasing number of infrastructure projects, construction enterprises have also gained great opportunities. Since the reform and opening up in 1978, with the accelerating process of socialist market system reform, China's construction industry market has basically formed. After more than 40 years of continuous development, it has become increasingly mature (Rony, 2020). At present, the unprecedented opportunities are accompanied by fierce market competition. The number of construction enterprises is increasing, and the industry standards are constantly improving. To gain a foothold in the market, enterprises are required to constantly strengthen themselves. Not only is the industry's hard power constantly improved, but also the internal management of enterprises is crucial. The characteristics of the construction industry determine that the internal structure of enterprises is relatively complex, and the construction sites of projects are relatively scattered, This requires enterprises to have strong internal management ability to ensure efficient daily operation (Cheng, 2018).

1.2 Research problems

As a medium-sized construction enterprise, Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. has realized the importance of performance appraisal for middle managers, but there are still many problems in practical application. Although the enterprise has its own performance appraisal system, to a large extent, it is a mere formality and difficult to play a real role. There are still problems such as brain drain and low enthusiasm of employees. Employees are only assessed for the purpose of assessment. The reason is that we did not fully understand the internal mechanism of performance appraisal, only carried out superficial implementation, and did not design a suitable, scientific and reasonable performance appraisal system based on the enterprise's own characteristics. Therefore, it is urgent to analyze the existing performance

appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd., find out the problems and optimize the performance appraisal process.

1.3 Research purpose

The research object of this paper is the performance appraisal system of middle managers in Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. When analyzing the current situation of performance appraisal of middle managers in Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd., we focus on qualitative research methods. Qualitative analysis is mainly used in the work analysis of middle managers and the determination of key performance indicators. Quantitative research methods combining weight factor method and key performance indicator method are used in the determination of the weight of appraisal indicators. Quantitative research methods of fuzzy evaluation are used in the performance appraisal model. The study first introduced the basic situation of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd., reviewed the development of the company's performance appraisal of middle-level managers since its establishment, based on the relevant theories of performance management, combined with the current situation of performance appraisal of middle-level managers of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd., proposed the company's current problems in performance appraisal, and found out the root of the problem through qualitative analysis methods and put forward suggestions. Three research objectives are set for this article:

1. What are the current problems in the performance appraisal of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd?
2. What is the reason for the performance appraisal problem of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd?
3. What are the suggestions for solving the performance appraisal of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd?

1.4 Scope of study

The article analyzes the work of the heads of the functional departments of the company, clarifies the responsibilities and requirements of each position, determines the assessment

content, uses KPI method to design the performance assessment indicators of each position, uses the weight factor method to determine the weight of each indicator, further selects the assessment subject, and finally establishes the content of the assessment results. Finally, in order to ensure the smooth operation of the appraisal system, a series of safeguard measures are proposed, and the application suggestions are put forward for the performance appraisal results.

1.5 Research significance

By systematically combing the relevant theories of performance appraisal at home and abroad, and combining the characteristics of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd., the study tries to design a scientific, reasonable, fair and personalized performance appraisal system. The significance is mainly reflected in three aspects: first, it is conducive to the in-depth development of existing human resources. By providing a reward and punishment mechanism, it can mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of employees, and through timely assessment feedback, Improve staff training effect and stimulate staff potential; Second, it is conducive to improving the management level of the company. The fierce external competitive environment requires that the enterprise should have a high management level, be able to adjust in time according to environmental changes, and adapt to the market. High level human resource management can enable the enterprise to quickly adjust its personnel structure according to changes and carry out reasonable staffing. (Liu, 2022) Based on the assessment data, determine the salary distribution, position promotion and training plan, improve the overall employment level and employee quality level, and combine the performance assessment with the enterprise's strategic objectives to make the employees' will consistent with the enterprise's will, achieve synchronization, and improve the management efficiency; Third, it is conducive to attracting excellent talents. Now the competition among enterprises has gradually turned into talent competition. Whether it can effectively attract and retain talents is the key to the success of enterprises. A sound employment mechanism can help find talents in enterprises(Becker, Huselid&Ulrich, 2021). At the same time, a scientific and reasonable incentive mechanism is conducive to attracting competent people to join. In particular, the

working conditions of construction enterprises are difficult, and the problem of personnel loss is serious. It is necessary to improve the relevant human resource management system, retain core talents, and attract more talents (Lin&Xin, 2019).

2. Literature review

2.1 Performance and Performance Appraisal

Performance comes from management at first, and most people regard it as a combination of performance and effect. Literally, performance refers to performance, which is often used to reflect the profit objectives of an enterprise in terms of target management and responsibility requirements. Whether it is an individual or an enterprise, there are objective requirements for itself; Efficiency refers to efficiency, effectiveness and other aspects, which are related to enterprise maturity, and to some extent reflect the enterprise maturity goals including discipline and conduct that China intends to achieve in its development process (Masuin, Latief&Zagloel, 2019).

Performance is the product of enterprise operation, and performance appraisal is particularly important for better enterprise operation, which provides enterprises with opportunities for reflection and reference. Performance appraisal is an important part of enterprise performance management. At the beginning of the work, the enterprise first formulated the objectives and performance standards of each work, in order to provide a basis for the subsequent evaluation. As a circular system to measure, evaluate and affect the performance of employees, performance appraisal will play a role of inspection and control. It is the subject of the appraisal who uses scientific appraisal methods to compare the work objectives and performance standards formulated by the enterprise before, The process of checking the quality and degree of work completion of relevant employees, as well as their own development in all aspects(Hartmann,2020). The results of performance appraisal also reveal the potential of employees' future work to a certain extent, and it is also a process of guiding employees' work behavior and performance. Performance appraisal itself is a good way to positively guide employees' behavior and performance (Agrawal, 2022).

2.2 Common Assessment Methods

2.2.1 Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

The key performance indicator method transforms the specific planning at the overall level of the enterprise into specific internal production activities, which increases the practicality. The determination process of key performance indicators is the process of vertical decomposition and horizontal business combination of enterprise strategic objectives, most of which are effective components or support tools of enterprise strategic objectives (Veen-Dirks & Wijn, 2019). Similar to the influencing factors of employee performance, the enterprise performance appraisal result is also the result of the comprehensive influence of internal and external factors. External factors are often uncontrollable. The key performance appraisal indicators exclude others and the impact of external uncontrollable factors is focused on reflecting the directly controllable indicators of employees. Key performance indicators do not measure all practical work tasks of employees, but only the key indicators that best represent the performance center. The key performance indicators are by no means the words of the superior leaders, but are determined after the consensus of employees and relevant managers (Ishfaq, Ahmad, Salahuddin, Alam & Abid, 2020).

2.2.2 360 Degree Assessment Method

The 360 degree performance appraisal method, also known as the all-round appraisal method, is one of the common performance appraisal methods, which is characterized by the diversity of evaluation dimensions (usually 4 or more), and is applicable to the appraisal of personnel above the middle level. The 360 degree assessment method was first proposed and implemented by Intel Corporation. This method refers to understanding the work performance of employees, their superiors, colleagues, subordinates, customers and other different subjects, knowing the opinions of all aspects through comments, and knowing their strengths and weaknesses to achieve the purpose of improving themselves (Song, 2017).

2.3 Purpose of performance appraisal

The purpose of performance appraisal has three aspects, namely strategy, management and development. The formulation of strategy provides a general way for enterprises to achieve the set goals, and performance appraisal plays an important role in it as a supportive tool. Similarly, management and development are no exception. The specific implementation of management objectives and development objectives cannot be separated from regular performance appraisal. The purpose of management is to assess the staged performance of employees, so as to reward and punish employees according to specific results. For example, bonus, certificate of award, promotion or demotion, salary reduction and dismissal. Development is mainly aimed at tapping the potential of employees and maximizing their quality. For example, updating employee knowledge base, training employee skills, encouraging and stimulating employee creativity, etc. Practice shows that the current performance appraisal mainly focuses on management and development. Cleveland and others have investigated the use of performance appraisal (Nwachukwu, Hart, Ezeh, Bridge&Jude Peters, 2019)

2.4 Factors Affecting Employee Performance

Employee performance is the basis of the whole performance appraisal, and the appraisal results of groups, organizations and enterprises are often based on the merits of employee performance appraisal. Therefore, the quality of employee performance measurement will affect the assessment results of group, organization and even enterprise performance level by level, and the assessment results will be magnified level by level, which will ultimately affect the enterprise strategy, management and development performance. Therefore, identifying the factors that affect employee performance is of great benefit to the practice of enterprise performance appraisal. Cardy, Dobbins and Waldman (1994) divided the factors affecting employee performance into two aspects: individual and system. The system generally refers to uncontrollable factors such as production equipment and market environment; Individual factors are more similar to the behavioral factors proposed by Campbell that affect employee

performance, but their main factor is that they do not pay enough attention to environmental factors (Chang Fu, 2017).

Individual factors: Campbell classifies individual factors into preconditions and direct determinants, among which preconditions involve employees' innate factors, such as personality and ability, which are considered as potential prerequisites for other direct determinants; The direct determinants involve the addition of employees' acquired qualities, such as knowledge learned, skills learned and motivation. The combination of the two often constitutes an individual's comprehensive quality, which is often brought into work practice, thus affecting their performance(Yuan,2020).

System factors: The system involves environment to a large extent, and the factors that affect employee performance often come from the environmental factors including material environment, target characteristics and character characteristics. Systematic factors can be divided into inhibition factors and promotion factors. Inhibition factors often hinder the ability of employees, the use of knowledge, and the enthusiasm and effort of employees for their work, thus negatively affecting employee performance, such as equipment, time, and work environment; As the name implies, facilitation factors can promote employee performance, but they indirectly affect performance by influencing some negative aspects of individuals, such as employee training, goal setting and job redesign (Maltz, Shenhar&Reilly, 2013).

3.Finding and conclusion

3.1 Profile of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd

Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. is a typical comprehensive construction enterprise, which was incorporated in 2012 with a registered capital of 20 million yuan. The company now has 18 construction qualifications, including first grade general contracting of housing construction projects, first grade general contracting of municipal public works, and first grade professional contracting of building decoration projects. Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd., a typical comprehensive construction enterprise, was established in 2012 with a registered capital of 20 million yuan. At present, Suzhou

Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. has 872 employees, mainly in management, technology, construction, logistics and other posts, including 87 management posts, accounting for 10% of the total number of employees; 173 technical posts, accounting for 20% of the total number of employees; There are 402 construction posts, accounting for 46% of the total number of employees, and 210 logistics posts, accounting for 24% of the total number of employees.

3.2 Overview of the Company's middle managers

The company has the largest number of construction posts and the smallest number of management posts, which is in line with the characteristics of post allocation in construction enterprises. As the technical, construction and logistics posts of the Company are set up according to the needs of the Project Department, they belong to the implementation level. The middle managers in this paper are the relevant heads of functional departments of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. From the perspective of the education background of middle-level managers, undergraduate education accounts for 53%, junior college education accounts for 27%, and technical secondary education accounts for 20%. The overall knowledge level of middle-level managers is high, which also shows that the reform of the assessment system has a high foundation and can quickly understand and implement high-level decisions.

On the whole, the personnel structure of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. is basically reasonable and the quality level is high, but the company has certain problems in terms of personnel appointment and retention. During the period from 2017 to 2019, 13 people left their jobs, including 2 senior managers, 3 middle managers and 8 others. It can be seen that the problem of personnel turnover in Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. needs to be solved urgently.

3.3 Analysis on the current situation of performance appraisal of middle managers of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd

a. Assessment content

At the beginning of each year, the Company will sign a Letter of Objective Responsibility with middle managers. The Objective Responsibility Statement is mainly used to assess the performance and work management of middle managers, including the realization of management objectives such as routine work, annual important work, and the construction of a clean and honest party. In terms of morality, ability, diligence and performance, common assessment forms are used for assessment. In the assessment, all indicators and rules focus on the completion of business objectives. In terms of work ability, this item accounts for 20% of the total assessment score. It mainly assesses the personal ability of middle managers in their work, focusing on personal communication ability, organizational ability and judgment. Face performance.

b. Application of appraisal results

The overall assessment results are divided into four grades, 90-100 points are excellent, 80-89 points are good, 60-79 points are average, and less than 60 points are unqualified. The company allocates performance pay according to the assessment results of middle managers. Employees with excellent performance will be commended at the year-end summary meeting, and will be given additional bonuses in addition to performance pay. Employees with good performance will be paid performance wages and given appropriate bonuses according to previous commitments. The company pays basic performance salary to employees with ordinary performance. For unqualified employees, the company will have a separate conversation and deduct part of the performance pay. At present, the appraisal results mainly affect the performance salary of middle managers. Although it was stated that the appraisal results would be used for position adjustment and salary adjustment, it was not implemented in the end. Targeted training for employees based on the assessment results is rarely implemented.

3.4 Existing problems and cause analysis

Based on the above analysis, the current performance appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. has played a certain role, but has little effect. Middle managers are not satisfied, and there are many problems in the assessment process.

3.4.1 Unreasonable setting of assessment indicators and weights

The indicators of the current performance appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. are set unreasonably. The indicators are set at random and are determined by senior leaders through consultation. They are not objective, accurate and closely related to the specific work content of employees. The indicators on personal quality and work ability are too general, and the assessment results of middle managers are much the same with little difference, which is not of reference value. There is no distinction between indicators of different positions, and it is impossible to accurately assess the work performance of managers in different positions by using general assessment forms only. Secondly, the weight distribution of each assessment indicator is unscientific, focusing too much on financial indicators such as business completion rate, and not on non-financial indicators. At the same time, the indicators are independent and lack of connection. After the indicators are determined, the weights of different indicators need to be determined according to the importance of the work.

3.4.2 The content of performance appraisal is disconnected from the company's strategic planning

In general practice, the performance appraisal result depends on the task performance content and the surrounding performance content of the appraisee. The task performance appraisal tends to inspect the direct output of explicit work results such as quality, quantity and timeliness, and its indicator development focuses on specific work items(Yahya&Alabdullah,2022); As a tool for the company to achieve its overall strategic objectives, the performance appraisal system should be designed from the strategic objectives. The current performance appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. is designed only according to the job responsibilities and job requirements of employees, which cannot reflect the strategic objectives of the enterprise. It is only used as the basis for performance pay and evaluation, and has lost the role of conveying the company's strategic

objectives and serving the realization of the company's overall strategic objectives. The reason why the performance appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. cannot play a strategic role is that it has not been broken down level by level from the enterprise's strategic objectives, and finally formed scientific and reasonable appraisal indicators.

3.4.3 Lack of communication and motivation in the assessment process

The performance appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. lacked continuous communication with the examinees (middle managers) in the overall design and subsequent implementation process. Lack of communication will cause the whole performance appraisal system to be divorced from reality. On the one hand, it will lead to inaccurate appraisal results, on the other hand, it will cause employees to not understand, not support, or even have resistance to the appraisal.

At present, the performance appraisal results of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. are only used as the basis for performance salary and appraisal, and cannot play the role of performance appraisal in improving employees' personal working ability and enthusiasm. The reason is that the utilization scope of assessment results is too small. On the one hand, performance appraisal should focus on the past performance of employees, on the other hand, it should face the future and propose employee training plans to achieve continuous improvement of performance.

3.5 Finding

The current performance appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. is disconnected from the enterprise strategic planning. At the same time, the performance appraisal indicators cannot truly reflect the actual work of middle managers in different posts. The key performance indicator method (KPI method) has well solved the problem of the implementation of the enterprise's strategic objectives (Hidiroglu, 2020). With the application of this method, the enterprise's strategic objectives and vision have been decomposed into visual practical operations and efforts, and become the key trend of the enterprise's future development. And the study found that the company did not attach importance to non-financial

indicators, which is an important manifestation of employees' personal ability and growth space. The assessment needs to achieve a balance between financial and non-financial indicators. Second, the research also found that the content of the company's performance appraisal was single. On the premise of theoretical and practical research, first of all, it was clear that the single dimension performance appraisal had already lost its representativeness and effectiveness. The company's performance appraisal focused on multi-dimensional performance appraisal, and multi-dimensional performance appraisal continued to show its advantages in practice with its comprehensiveness. Secondly, in the content of performance appraisal, we cannot only consider task performance, while peripheral performance tends to examine the more obscure abstract factors that affect the performance results, focusing on both attitude and ability, and the determination of its indicators focuses on the assessment of behaviors related to the performance results (Lin&Xin, 2019). Third, the lack of communication and motivation in the assessment process, the staff's inadequate understanding of the assessment purpose and concept, and the difficulty in changing their ideas are important obstacles to the implementation of performance assessment. Therefore, it is very important to give ideological education to employees before the implementation of the assessment plan to change their attitudes and actively accept the assessment (Chang Fu, 2017). In addition, assessment training is also an effective way to solve the lack of communication. Through training, the assessment subjects can understand, participate in and support performance assessment. The coaching and communication in the assessment process is an important guarantee to ensure that the assessment is carried out as planned and the results are accurate and referential.

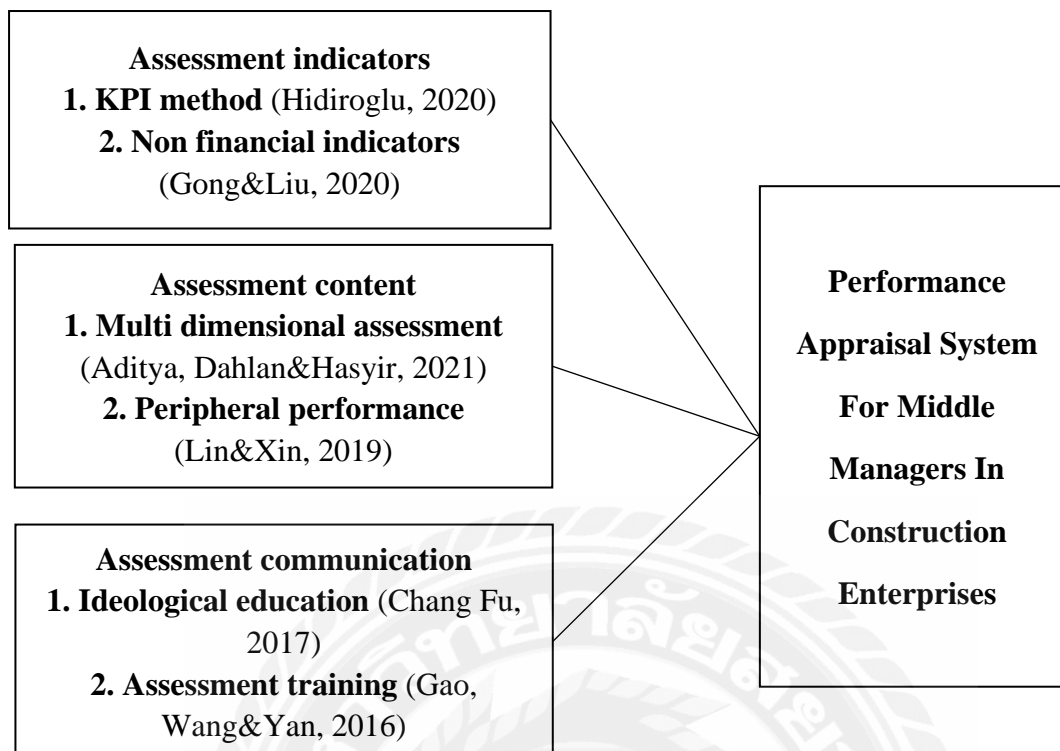


Figure 1

4.Recommendation

This paper first analyzes the current performance appraisal system of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd., summarizes the problems and causes of the performance appraisal system for middle managers on this basis, and designs the performance appraisal content for middle managers of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. in view of the problems and the actual situation of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. Finally, the paper puts forward guidance for each link of performance appraisal implementation. The research conclusions of this paper are as follows:

The current performance appraisal system for middle managers of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. has the following problems: the appraisal indicators and weights are set unreasonably; The performance appraisal system is disconnected from the company's strategic planning; Lack of communication in the assessment process; The role of performance appraisal in motivating and guiding employees is insufficient. There are five reasons for the problem: the appraisal indicators are not broken down level by level according to the company's

strategy when setting; No scientific post analysis; The participation and communication of middle managers are insufficient, and the assessment and training are insufficient; Inadequate and unreasonable use of assessment results.

First of all, based on the analysis of the assessment status, the performance assessment method is determined according to the strategic development objectives, business objectives and specific business processes established by Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd; Secondly, on the basis of post analysis and compliance with the design principles of performance appraisal system, specific appraisal contents and key performance indicators included in the performance of each post are set up; Select the appropriate performance appraisal subject of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. to ensure the accuracy of the company's performance appraisal results; Finally, a performance appraisal result evaluation model is designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the final performance appraisal results and determine the performance appraisal cycle. After establishing the evaluation model, according to the implementation process of performance evaluation, the implementation points of each link and the performance evaluation guarantee measures are proposed.

This article is based on the current situation of the performance appraisal system of middle managers in Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. and the relevant theories of performance management. The definition of the middle management personnel of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. This article refers to the heads of their functional departments. The actual implementation effect of the assessment system needs to be proved by subsequent practice, and the deficiencies and unreasonableness should be followed up and modified in real time. In addition, macro factors such as changes in policies and construction market conditions will have a significant impact on the performance appraisal system of middle managers of Suzhou Construction Engineering Group Co., Ltd. In the future, we need to pay attention to and analyze changes in such factors.

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