

The Influence of Job Design on Improving Job Performance of Maldives Civil Service Employees using Structural Equation Modelling

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyze the structural relationship between the various aspects of job characteristics and job performance of employees of Maldives Civil Service, to strengthen and enhance the aspects of job design of Maldives Civil Service employees. The main objective is to help and modernize the jobs of the Maldives Civil Service.

This research used a quantitative design method, and the cross-sectional method was used for data collection. Data collected from 370 employees working in administrative and managerial jobs of Maldives Civil Service are used to analyze the data. A structural equation model was used to test the hypothesis of this research. Among the elements of job characteristics, three were significant, which are skill variety, task identity and task significance. Autonomy and feedback were not significant.

As limited research is undertaken in a different contextual setting, this research presents findings from a South Asian perspective in understating how job characteristics affect job performance among public sector employees. Similarly, limited research was undertaken to explore the usefulness of job design in improving the job performance of public sector employees. Additionally, this research presents important practical implications from a human resource management perspective.

Keywords: Job Characteristics, Job Performance, Task Performance, Adaptive Performance

1. Introduction

The job characteristics model given by Hackman and Oldman (1975) states that positive job outcomes could only be achieved when individuals achieve three psychological states, which are; experiencing the meaningfulness of work, experiencing responsibility for the outcomes of the work, and knowledge of the result of the work activities. Hence researchers argue that jobs that are well designed would motivate employees to be more effective and competitive in their work environment leading to beneficial work outcomes such as improving work engagement and role performance (Han et al., 2021), creative performance (Zhang &

Zhao, 2021), job satisfaction and performance (Kaya & Demirer, 2021). Job designs become particularly significant in the public sector, where extrinsic rewards have been frowned upon, given that Wright (2007) argues that intrinsic rewards become more significant for public sector employees.

In Public Administration, study researchers have paid more attention to the motivation of Public sector employees, than to the motivational value of a job (Johari et al., 2018), or how the job itself becomes a motivating force as it enables one to achieve meaningfulness (Simonet & Castille, 2020). Therefore, this research would provide empirical findings on how various aspects of job design improve the job performance of public sector employees. Additionally, researchers in Public Administration has been calling for research from non-western context (Kiyak & Karkin, 2022), in the field of public administration, therefore this research will address this gap, by analyzing the impact of job design elements on the job performance of those working in the Maldives Civil Service.

Despite the significance of job performance, little attention is paid to how job performance could be improved in the public sector (Johari et al., 2018), henceforth the analysis presented in the context of Maldives, would further address the gap, by looking into various aspects of job design to improve the job performance of Maldives Civil servants. Furthermore, work undertaken by UNDP and Civil Service Commission highlighted concerns relating to job design such as lack of consistency in the job description, titles not matching with actual work done and inappropriate supervision structure (Cote, 2011). Henceforth this provides further validation to analyze how improving job design could enable to improve the job performance of those working in the Maldives Civil Service, and additionally provide important implications and recommendations to Maldives Civil Service to improve matters relating to human resource management of Maldives Civil Service.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Job Characteristics and Job Performance

A job becomes a motivational force when it has five important characteristics; skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy and feedback as per the model given by Hackman and Oldman (1975). In this regard, jobs that have the presence of these important characteristics create three psychological states; experience meaningfulness of work, experience responsibility for the work outcome, and have knowledge of the work undertaken. Meaningfulness is seen as the extent to which employees perceive a job to be “generally meaningful, valuable and worthwhile” (Hackman & Oldman, 1975). Meaningfulness is about achieving the purpose of life. Meaningfulness is achieved through skill verity, task significance and task autonomy. When work becomes meaningful employees are willing to accept lower salaries (Hu & Hirsh, 2017), and it's related to many beneficial outcomes such as achieving organizational commitment, lower turnover intention, less stress and burnout (Simonet & Castille, 2020). Experience responsibility is about taking responsibility for the work outcomes, and taking accountability for the work performed (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Autonomy is expected to create responsibility for the work. Job knowledge is the extent to which an employee “Knows and understands continuously how effectively he or she is performing a job” (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Therefore feedback is essential to create job knowledge. These three important physiological conditions create motivating and enriching jobs, and hence previous research has demonstrated its impact on important outcomes such as job performance (Johari et al., 2018; Johari & Yahya, 2016; Kaya & Demirer, 2021; Kim, 2016; Prasetyaningtyas et al., 2022), work engagement (Han et al., 2021), and creative performance

(Zhang & Zhao, 2021).

Job performance is considered a multidimensional construct (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Viswesvaran, 2002) which may include several dimensions. However, job performance is mostly seen as behaviour that contributes towards achieving organizational goals, hence defined as “the total expected value to an organization of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual carries out over a standard period” (Motowidlo, 2003). In this research job performance is given by two dimensions, which are task performance and adaptive performance. Task performance is defined as “The proficiency with which one performs his/her assigned job that is formally recognized as part of their jobs” (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), and adaptive performance is defined as “the ability of employees to understand and adapt to the changes that happen in the organization and the surrounding environment” (Pavithra & Deepak, 2021). Various aspects of job design such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback are expected to result in a positive impact on job performance and it has a positive impact on employee motivation and productivity (Khan et al., 2021).

Skill variety is seen as the extent to which a job would require the use of different skills and talents. For Civil Servants skill variety is an important element of job designs, as they are constantly required to use different skills which can result in feeling competent (Marić et al., 2019) and more enthusiastic about their work. Quite often public sector jobs don't allow them to use different skills and this is also observed in the Maldives Civil Service (Rifki, 2008). Research undertaken by Uruthirapathy and Grant (2015) has shown that jobs that are designed to use different skills have a beneficial effect on job performance. Similarly, research undertaken by Kaya and Demirer (2021) has also shown that skill variety has a positive effect on employees' task performance. In this regard, we propose the first hypothesis of this study.

H01: Skill Variety has a positive effect on the job performance of Maldives Civil Service Employees.

The next element of job design is task identity, which is according to Hackman and Oldham (1975) “the degree to which the job requires completion of a ‘whole’ and identifiable piece of work, doing a job from beginning to end”. Doing a whole job, rather than part of the job, and being able to provide a complete result, would create the feeling of being worthwhile. In the Maldives, the way jobs are designed, Civil Servants having to report to multiple supervisors, and doing only part of the jobs, may not result in task identity hence feeling worthwhile and significant in the work environment. Task wholeness is important to assess the quality of the job performed by the employees (Faturochman, 1997). According to Uruthirapathy and Grant (2015) employees who had enlarged jobs performed better compared to their colleagues who had very definite jobs. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H02: Task Identity has a positive effect on the job performance of Maldives Civil Service Employees.

To have a meaningful job, it must also have an impact on the lives of other people. Task significance shows the extent to which a job impacts the lives of other people; within the organization and outside the organization (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). For public sector employees task significance is important, and this would result in higher Public Service Motivation as well. Research undertaken by Johari and Yahya (2016) indicated that task significance has an indirect effect on job performance through work involvement. Similarly

study undertaken by Tsamantouridis et al. (2022), shows that task significance was positively related to public sector employees' innovative behaviour. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H03: Task Significance has a positive effect on the job performance of Maldives Civil Service Employees.

For employees to take responsibility for the work outcome Hackman and Oldham (1975) in the job design model indicated that autonomy is present. Autonomy is defined as “the degree to which job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and determining the process of carrying it”. to have autonomy implies that an employee puts his effort, initiative, and decision into carrying out the work, rather than simply following the instructions given by the supervisor. Therefore, a supervisor micromanaging employees' work will not result in autonomy, and therefore failing to take responsibility for the work outcomes. Research shows that individuals who experience a higher level of autonomy in the public sector results in innovative work behaviour (Tsamantouridis et al., 2022), organisational citizenship behaviour (Muldoon et al., 2017) and also employee motivation of public sector employees of Malaysia (Ebrahim et al., 2019). However previous research that studied the impact of autonomy on job performance through work involvement was not significant (Johari et al., 2018). However as public sector employees desire a higher level of autonomy (Hassan, 2014), this research proposes the following hypothesis.

H04: Job Autonomy has a positive effect on the job performance of Maldives Civil Service Employees.

Knowledge of the results of the job comes from feedback. Feedback provides “ direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his/her performance” (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Having information on the job performed will create a sense of achievement and will motivate an employee to put more effort into the job undertaken (Van Dijk & Kluger, 2011). An employee may receive feedback directly from an immediate supervisor or the feedback may be from customers or service recipients. Feedback has shown a positive direct effect on the job performance of public sector employees as per research undertaken by Johari et al. (2018). On the other hand among Greek Public Servants Feedback had a significant positive effect only on front-line public servants (Tsamantouridis et al., 2022). Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis.

H05: Feedback has a positive effect on the job performance of Maldives Civil Service Employees.

Additionally based on the literature and hypothesis of the study the following conceptual framework is proposed.

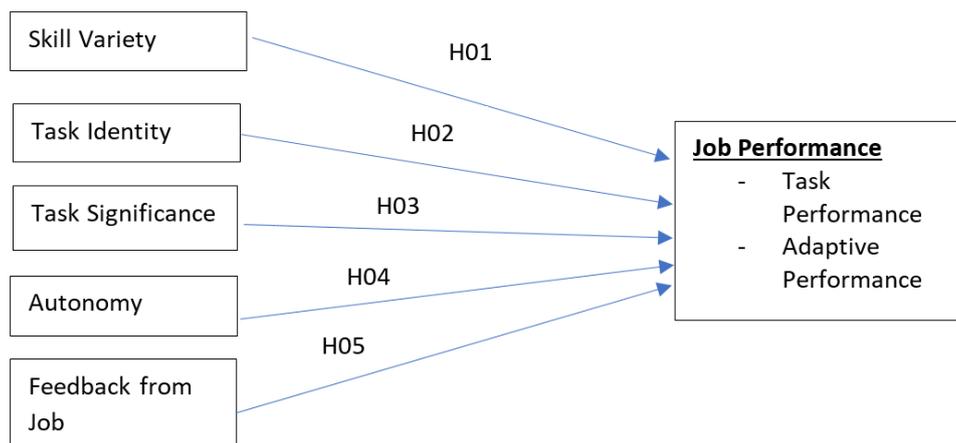


Figure i: Conceptual Framework

3. Methods and Data Collection

The quantitative method was used to analyse the data; thus hypothesis of this research was tested using structural equation modelling. This section discusses how measures were developed. Data collection methods, sample population, and results of the study.

Measures

The work design questionnaire that was developed by Morgeson and Humphrey (2006) was used to measure job characteristics after adapting some of the items. This work design questionnaire was developed from the job diagnostic survey (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) and hence consisted of 24 items with five constructs. In this regard Task independence has four items, feedback from the job consisted of four items, skill variety consisted of four items, task significance consisted of five items and autonomy consisted of seven items. Job Performance which was measured by two dimensions had 13 items which were adopted from Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWQP) 1.0 developed by Koopmans et al. (2013)

Methods

Data were collected from January 2021 to June 2021, based on the statistics available from Maldives Civil Service Commission for the year 2020. Therefore, the total number of Civil Servants working in different government offices representing 662 government offices consisted of 24,516 for the year 2020. This represents those who are working in Male' and those who work outside the capital city. However, among these, only 9,968 was taken as the study population as the health and education sector was excluded (which consisted of those in the medical profession and education profession), as the objective was to focus on the managerial and administrative side of the Civil Service. The sample size for the target population according to the table produced by Krejcie & Morgan (1970) and Cohen (1969) as stated in (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020) is 370. The questionnaire was shared online through the permanent secretaries as direct access to these employees was not given, and the questionnaire was shared among 579 employees, of which 409 employees returned the questionnaire which is a response rate of 70.63%. The total number of responses taken for analysis purposes was 370, after data editing and removing outliers and extreme responses.

4. Results

Data was checked to assess multivariate assumptions such as normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity. After performing important checks on data, demographic analysis was undertaken, followed by a descriptive analysis of the respondents of the study. Exploratory Factor Analysis was undertaken to check the factor structure for this data set, which was followed by the confirmatory factor analysis for the constructs of the study. A measurement model was constructed to check for model validity and reliability, and additionally, structural equation modelling was used to test the hypothesis of the study.

Demographic Analysis

The table below provides a demographic summary of the respondents of this study. The total number of respondents for which analysis was undertaken was 370. The respondents are from Male' and other islands of Maldives. Respondents are engaged in doing administrative and managerial work.

Table I Background of Respondents (n=370)

Variables	Characteristics	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	161	43.5
	Female	209	56.5
Age of Respondents	18 to 24 years	52	14.1
	25 to 35 years	149	40.3
	36 to 46 years	109	29.5
	47 to 55 years	56	15.1
	56 and above	4	1.1
	Completed Grade 10	7	1.9
Education	O level	23	6.2
	A level	23	6.2
	Diploma	103	27.8
	Degree	89	24.1
	Masters	104	28.1
	Postgraduate Level Certificate	18	4.9
Work Experience	PHD	3	0.8
	less than 1 year	15	4.1
	1 to 4 years	96	25.9
	5 to 9 years	80	21.6
	10 to 14 years	65	17.6
	15 to 19 years	40	10.8
	20 to 29 years	53	14.3
30 and above	21	5.7	

Worked in the Private Sector	Yes	145	39.2
	No	225	60.8
Sufficient Skills and Knowledge to Undertake the Work	Yes	346	93.5
	No	24	6.5

Among the respondents 43.5% were males, and 56.5% were females, this represents the population structure of Civil Service, where females dominate. In terms of age, 40.3% of the respondents belong to the 25 to 35 age group, hence we observe a younger workforce in the Maldives Civil Service. Concerning education level more than 50% have a certificate more than a diploma, 28.1% have a master's certificate, which indicates generally a highly qualified workforce in terms of education works in Civil Service jobs. Looking into tenure, and several years worked 25.9% have worked for 1 to 4 years, while 21.5% have worked for 5 to 9 years, and comparatively less percentage work for 10 years and more and other categories, indicating a lower retention rate among civil service jobs. Among those who responded 39.2% have previously worked in the private sector and 93.5% believe that they have sufficient skills and knowledge to undertake the work.

Descriptive Analysis

The following tables provide a descriptive summary of the variables studied, including the Cronbach alpha value showing the reliability of the constructs.

Table i Descriptive Summary

Variables	Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Task Identity	4	3.7541	.87767	0.857
Skill Variety	4	4.1196	.82026	0.914
Task Significance	5	4.1573	.68417	0.853
Feedback from Job	4	3.6453	.90543	0.858
Autonomy	7	3.5726	.88630	0.932
Job Performance	14	4.1359	.53595	0.92

The mean for Task identity is 3.75, which is closer to 4, however, it indicates that to a certain extent, participants agree that there was task identity while some participants remained neutral, hence task identity cannot be established for the jobs of Maldives Civil Service as per the respondents of this research. The Cronbach alpha value is more than 0.8, hence there is excellent internal consistency among the items of this construct (Hair et al., 2010). For Skill variety and Task significance, the mean value is more than 4, which indicates participants agree that there is skill variety and that the task is significant. The Cronbach alpha value is 0.8, and considered excellent, while the alpha value for task significance is more than 0.9, it is less than

0.95 hence there are no redundant items as per Ursachi et al. (2015). For both Autonomy and Feedback mean is less than 4, and most participants were neutral on this, hence autonomy cannot be established in civil service jobs, and participants were not able to agree that continuous feedback was provided on the work done. Meanwhile, Cronbach alpha is more than 0.8 and hence considered as having excellent internal consistency among the items for these two variables (Hair et al., 2010). For job performance which had a total of 14 items consisting of task and adaptive performance, the mean was more than 4, where participants agreed they were able to perform their job and reported alpha value was more than 0.8 and less than 0.95.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

For job characteristics, 24 items were taken for exploratory factor analysis. Principal Components analysis and the Varimax rotation method were used to drive the factor structure. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's value was 0.915 showing sample adequacy and considered meritorious as this was great than 0.8 as per Hair et al. (2010). Similarly, Bartlett's test of sphericity was seen to be significant with a p-value less than 0.05. Meanwhile, Total Cumulative Variance Explained by the factors were 72.040, and this is acceptable as its more than the 60% threshold (Hair et al., 2010). Similarly, the Eigenvalue is 9.72 and >1 . Additionally, factor loadings and communalities were more than 0.6, and there were no cross-loadings. Therefore, none of the items was removed at this stage.

For the construct's job performance, a total of 14 items were taken to drive the factor structure. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.926 while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant. KMO values indicate that it is meritorious. Similarly, Total Cumulative Variance was 59.18%, which is more than 60%, hence acceptable in social science research (Hair et al., 2010). The Eigenvalue is 7, which is greater than 1. None of the items had issues related to cross-loading. Most items had a factor loading of more than 0.6 and one item reported a factor loading of more than 0.5. None of the items was removed in this stage of the analysis

Measurement Model

Measurement was checked for Unidimensionality, validity and reliability. Unidimensionality was checked by considering factor loadings, where factor loadings of 0.6 are considered acceptable for already established constructs (Awang, 2015). To assess validity, construct, convergent and discriminant validity were assessed. Reliability was checked through Cronbach alpha and composite reliability. In the measurement model analysis two items from job performance and one item from Feedback were removed due to items having higher covariance with other items, and hence considered to be redundant. Therefore job performance was reduced from 14 items to 12 items and feedback from the job was reduced from 4 items to three items. The table below provides factor loadings, reliability analysis and fit indices for the measurement model.

Table ii *Confirmatory Factor and Reliability Analysis*

Constructs	Standardized Factor Loading	t-value
Task Independence		
(C.R.=0.853); $\alpha= 0.857$		
The job involves completing a piece of work that has an obvious beginning and an end (TI1)	0.511	10.145
The job is arranged so that I can do an entire piece of work from beginning to end (TI2)	0.747	16.566
The job provides me with the chance to finish the pieces of work I begin (TI3)	0.935	21.467
The job allows me to complete the work I started (TI4)	0.8444	**
Feedback from Job		
(C.R.=0.846); $\alpha= 0.831$		
The job itself provides feedback on my performance (FJ2)	0.898	14.054
The job provides an opportunity to evaluate the work I do on my own (FJ3)	0.835	13.608
The monitoring and feedback mechanism are satisfactory towards my performance appraisal (FJ4)	0.667	**
Skill Variety		
(C.R.=0.910); $\alpha= 0.914$		
The job requires me to use a variety of skills (SV1)	0.921	18.81
The job requires me to utilize a variety of different skills to complete the work (SV2)	0.93	18.972
The job requires me to use several complex or high-level skills (SV3)	0.77	19.17
The job requires me to learn and use new skills (SV4)	0.755	**
Task Significance		
(C.R.=0.838); $\alpha= 0.853$		
The results of my work are likely to significantly affect the lives and well-being of other people (TS1)	0.767	12.445
The job itself is very significant and important in the broader scheme of work done by the organization (TS2)	0.708	11.595
The job has a large impact on people outside the organization (TS3)	0.703	11.366
The work performed on the job has a significant impact on people outside the organization (TS4)	0.708	11.595

How efficiently I perform the work, would significantly affect other people in the organization (TS5)	0.679	**
Autonomy		
(C.R.=0.928); α= 0.932		
The job allows me to make my own decisions about how to schedule my work (AU1)	0.753	15.349
The job allows me to decide on the order in which my work would be arranged (AU2)	0.861	18.235
The job allows me to plan how I do my work (AU3)	0.895	19.142
The job gives me a chance to use my initiative or judgment in carrying out the work (AU4)	0.776	16.025
The job provides me with significant autonomy in making decisions (AU5)	0.798	18.549
The job allows me to make decisions about what methods I would use to complete my work (AU6)	0.761	18.289
The job gives me a considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work (AU7)	0.782	**
Job Performance		
(C.R.=0.933); α= 0.912		
Task Performance		
(C.R.=0.839); α= 0.836		
I was able to plan my work so I was able to finish within the given deadline (TP1)	0.71	**
I kept in mind the work results I needed to achieve my targets while doing the task assigned (TP2)	0.82	14.087
I was able to distinguish main issues from side issues and hence tackle the important ones first (TP3)	0.694	12.162
I was able to carry out my work with minimum time and effort (TP4)	0.662	11.63
I planned my work optimally before actually attempting my task (TP5)	0.678	11.896
Adaptive Performance		
(C.R.=0.899); α= 0.914		
I worked at keeping my job knowledge up-to-date (AP1)	0.709	**
The job allows me to decide on the order in which my work would be arranged (AU2)	0.736	20.493
I have demonstrated flexibility (AP3)	0.769	13.804
I was able to cope well with difficult situations and	0.814	14.546

setbacks at work (AP4)

I recovered fast, after difficult situations or setbacks at work (AP5)	0.742	13.342
I came up with creative solutions to new problems (AP6)	0.691	12.371
I was able to cope well with uncertain and unpredictable situations at work (AP7)	0.773	13.801

Model Fit Statistics ($\chi^2 = 1970.09548$, $df = 97$; $CFI = 0.949$, $TLI = 0.943$, $RMSEA = 0.047$)

**= *Items constrained for identification purposes*

C.R. = Composite Reliability

The measurement model was examined through two forms of reliability, which are indicator reliability using Cronbach alpha and Internal consistency reliability using composite reliability (CR). As per Hair et al. (2010), both should have a value of 0.7 and above to have good internal consistency among items. CR method is preferred in SEM analysis over Cronbach alpha as α assumes that all indicators have equal outer loadings of the constructs and as per Hair et al. (2010) it is sensitive to the number of items as it may underestimate internal consistency. Model validity is assessed through the construct, convergent and discriminant validity. The goodness of fit indices was taken to examine construct validity. As such Marsh and Hocevar (1985) recommend the Chi-square ratio (χ^2 / df) to be less than 5 to have parsimony in the model. Similarly, Bentler (1990) recommends Comparative Fit Index (CFI) be more than 0.90 to have a comparative fit and Browne and Cudeck (1992) suggest Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) be less than 0.08 to have a good absolute fit. The model achieved all these three fits, and therefore construct validity is present in this model. Furthermore, discriminant and convergent validity were assessed. The table below provides a summary of convergent and discriminant validity.

Table iii *Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity*

	Convergent Validity			Discriminant Validity					
	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	JP	TI	FJ	SV	TSF	AU
JP	0.912	0.933	0.539	0.734					
TI	0.857	0.853	0.601	0.386	0.775				
FJ	0.831	0.846	0.649	0.406	0.622	0.805			
SV	0.914	0.91	0.719	0.528	0.267	0.422	0.847		
TSF	0.853	0.838	0.509	0.598	0.332	0.464	0.668	0.713	
AU	0.932	0.928	0.648	0.362	0.571	0.612	0.427	0.486	0.804

Note(s): *CR= Composite Reliability; AVE= Average Variance Extracted; JP= Job Performance, TI=Task Independence, FJ= Feedback from Job SV= Skill Variety, TSF= Task Significance, AU= Autonomy*

To assess convergent validity, α , Composite Reliability Index (CR), and Average Variance Extracted were taken together. Both α and CR are more than 0.7, while AVE is more

than 0.5, and therefore as per Hair et al. (2010) convergent validity is present. To Analyse for discriminant validity Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion is used, which is the square root of AVE of a given construct should be more than the correlation between the constructs. The off-diagonal bold values are the square root of AVE, and the following values are correlated between constructs. As observed discriminant validity is presently based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion.

Structural Model

The diagram below provides a structural model of the study. As previous studies have indicated that there is a correlation between job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Tsamantouridis et al., 2022), job characteristics have been allowed to covary. Additionally, a high modification index between independent variables, which are the dimension of the job characteristics model, which is much higher than the recommended threshold of 15(Awang, 2015), further suggests that independent variables of the model should have covariance drawn to improve model fit statistics.

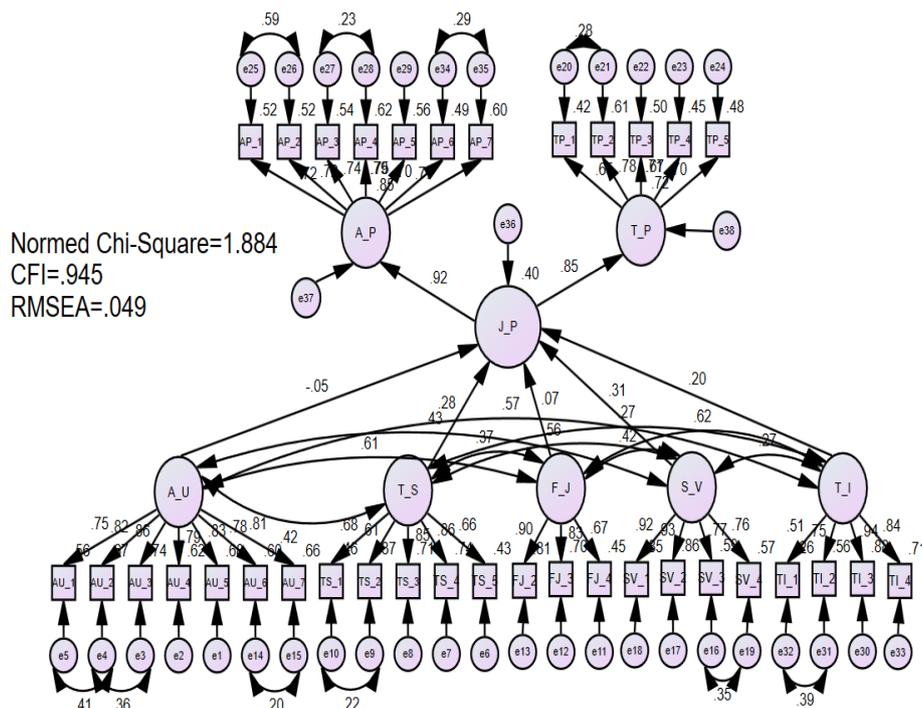


Diagram 1 Structural Model

Model fit statistics such as Normed Chi-Square, Comparative Fit Index(CFI), Incremental Fit Index(IFI), and Root Mean Square Root of Approximation (RMSEA) were checked to assess model fit and threshold value met. RMSEA is 0.49, less than 0.08, CFI is 0.945 and IFI is 0.946, more than 0.90 and the Chi-square ratio (χ^2 / df) is less than 3. The model was assessed for validity and reliability. Furthermore, 40% of the Job performance of the Maldives Civil Service can be explained by job characteristics. The following table provides the results of hypothesis testing for this study.

Table iv *Structural Model Test Results*

Hypothesized Relationship	Standardized Estimate	t-values	Hypothesis Supported
H1: Skill Variety → Job Performance	0.313	4.594	Supported
H2: Task Identity → Job Performance	0.200	2.668	Supported
H3: Task Significance → Job Performance	0.231	4.01	Supported
H4: Autonomy → Job Performance	-0.054	-0.722	Not Supported
H5: Feedback → Job Performance	0.071	0.885	Not Supported
Squared Multiple Correlation (R²):			
Job Performance	0.40		
Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1006.217$, $df = 534$, $p < .001$, CFI = .945, IFI = .9463, RMSEA = .049			

Among the five hypotheses, 3 hypotheses are supported, while two hypotheses are not supported. The first hypothesis is supported by a t-value of more than 1.96, and with every one-unit increase in skill variety job performance is expected to increase by 0.313 units. The second hypothesis of the study is supported, and task identity has a positive direct effect on job performance, and with every one-unit increase in task identity, job performance is expected to increase by 0.231 units. Similarly, the third hypothesis is supported and indicates a direct positive effect of task significance on job performance. Every 1 unit increase in task significance is expected to result in a 0.231 unit increase in job performance. Autonomy and feedback do not affect the job performance of Maldives Civil Service employees.

5. Discussion

The test results of this research indicate the importance of job design in enhancing the job performance of those working in the Maldives Civil Service. The elements of job characteristics can explain 40% of job performance given by the r^2 value. Among the five-hypothesis tested, three elements of job characteristics which are skill variety, task identity and task significance significant, and autonomy and feedback were not significant. These results highlight important theoretical and practical implications

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this research add to empirical evidence of job design on the usefulness of job characteristics in shaping the behaviour of public sector employees. As similar to other research it indicates that skill variety affects job performance, which is parallel to previous research done on Turkish hospitals from the private and public sectors (Kaya & Demirer, 2021) and on the Malaysian public sector (Johari & Yahya, 2016). This result supports the theoretical framework given by the job characteristic model (Hackman & Oldham, 1975), that jobs which are designed to use a variety of skills will result in important psychological condition, that is experience meaningfulness which will positively affect work outcomes such as job performance. Similarly, task significance also had a direct positive effect on job performance, this finding is similar to previous research where task significance was responsible for creative performance (Tsamantouridis et al., 2022). The other element of job characteristics which is responsible for creating meaningfulness, task identity also had a positive direct effect on job performance in Civil Service employees, which is similar to research was done by Tsamantouridis et al. (2022) which shows task identity affects the creative performance of

public sector employees. However, research done by Johari et al. (2018) indicates that task performance is not related to the job performance of public sector employees in Malaysia.

Autonomy and feedback failed to show significance to job performance. While autonomy is expected to create an experience of responsibility for the job, and feedback was expected to create knowledge, these two important psychological conditions given by the job characteristics model, were not able to create an important work-related behavioural outcome in the context of Maldives Civil Service. These findings are in contrast to findings of previous research where Johari et al. (2018) report feedback has a significant impact on job performance, and Hassan (2014) notes autonomy being important for public sector employees.

The analysis of this research indicates that the most important aspect of job design in enhancing the job performance of Maldives Civil Service employees are the elements of job design responsible for creating meaningfulness, value, and significance in one's life. Which are skill variety, task identity and task significance. Therefore among the three psychological conditions, meaningfulness is most useful in creating desired work-related behaviour.

Practical Implications

This research has provided a valuable theoretical contribution to existing research in terms of the usefulness of the job characteristics model in the context of the public sector and the context of South Asian countries. It has also shown how job design itself can be a motivating element in enhancing job performance. In light of the findings of this research human resource practitioners of Maldives Civil Should focus on creating enriching and fulfilling jobs which will have skill variety, task significance and task identity.

In a practical sense this could be done by grouping tasks that are similar so that instead of the feeling of doing bits of work, civil service employees can do a whole job. Similarly, Civil Servants could be given the responsibility to plan and coordinate their work, which will enrich their jobs. This will create the feeling of being valued and having a say in how a job is done. Furthermore, job rotation could be used as a technique to increase the variety of skills.

6. Limitations and Calls for Future Research

One of the most important limitations of this research was using a cross-sectional design and sampling method. Using a cross-sectional design may limit the establishment of a causal relationship between the variables used in this study. Similarly, as simple random sampling was used, it may be difficult to identify how job design affects different groups such as administrative, managerial and support functions.

Therefore, for future research, this research would recommend using a longitudinal study to establish more concrete evidence on strong casual relationships and also using stratified random sampling to see how this affects different groups, so that job design could be enhanced depending on the levels of the organization structure.

7. Conclusion

This research provided practical and theoretical contributions to the effect of job design in enhancing work-related behaviour, especially job performance, which is an important aspect of public administration research. This research demonstrates how meaningfulness in job design is significant to public sector employees, as elements related to meaningfulness had a direct positive effect on job performance. This is a significant finding that further affirms that

public sector employees join for finding value and meaning in their jobs, hence this call for human resource practitioners in public administration to use different human resource strategies to enhance the performance of public sector employees. In this regard to improve efficiency among those working in Maldives Civil Services, it remains vital to improving specific elements of job design such as task identity, skill variety and task significance.

The result of the study demonstrated the significance of aspects related to jobs in enhancing work motivation and attitude which affects the behaviour of Civil Service employees and perhaps the public sector in general. It should also be noted that although the other characteristics feedback and autonomy were not significant this is an area that still needs to be improved. Descriptive analysis reveals that the mean for autonomy and feedback is less than 4, indicating that most of the respondents did not agree that there is autonomy in the work-related aspects, and they are getting regular feedback. This is also a critical aspect that needs to be improved, even though it did not have a significant impact on job performance. Overall to create a modern, efficient public sector in the case of Maldives, this research has demonstrated the significance of redesigning the jobs of Civil Service to achieve this noble cause, hence calling the policymakers to consider the elements of job design redesign civil service jobs.

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