

**Stakeholder's Mental Model on the Causality and Priority of the Civil Service
Reform Agenda in the Maldives**

By

AHMED, Shahumeel

THESIS

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Abstract

This research paper is based on stakeholder's mental models on the civil service human resource management reform in the Maldives based on causality and priorities of the Human resource management reform agenda. Due to the lack of intervention on the civil service human resource reform process, lack of morality and lack of motivation, lack of services in different organization within this sector had multiple issues in the Maldives for the last three decades.

This research paper was conducted based on the civil service employee's interviews from employees holding different positions across Human resource departments and other functional departments. Key stakeholder ideas are incorporated on their views on Government's focus on reforming civil sector of Maldives. I have approached this research due to lack of studies done including employees' opinion and suggestions. In the public sector most of the researches had been done by experts with their opinion on ensuring reform in the civil service sector.

This research paper is based on interviewed civil servant's ideas and suggestions of the reform agenda on the priorities of the seven factors. The stakeholder's mental model in the civil service human resource reform, can be done based on this research paper's final model, which is entirely focused on the stakeholders' priorities and their orders. Those priorities are given by the interview of the civil servants of the Maldives. Interviewed employees has given the priorities based on the following factors:

- 1) Accountability,
- 2) Employees Satisfaction,
- 3) Performance Management System,
- 4) Customer Satisfaction,
- 5) Compensation Equality,
- 6) Training Opportunities and
- 7) Transparency.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Every nation has their own successful stories on public sector. In Maldives, the Government can play an important role in the civil service sector or public service sector reform agenda. Public service employees provide important services to the general public. The current Government regime follows a democratic system. Though every five-years the Government is re-elected, the civil servants remain and would be supporting the new policies and projects of the successive Governments. This is one of the reasons to explore the findings of this research paper using the stakeholder's mental model based on responses from the interviews. Furthermore, the research paper will focus on the causality and priorities from the data collected during the interviews from the Government's point of view public sector is an essential sector in the Maldives. The public sector is often referred by general citizens as the "Civil Service sector" and is managed by an independent Government body. This organization is called the Civil Service Commission of the Maldives.

In Maldives, the Civil service sector is one of the most important sectors. Because civil service sector is the sector which brings the development of the nation through effective and interactive development projects and policies. Civil service sector is an independent sector formed and enforced by law. This sector is aimed at providing leading contribution to the national developments of the country to cooperate with the Government. Since the Government changes every 5 years, it is the responsibility of the civil sector to ensure continuity of all associated services without any gap. This role of the civil sector reinforces the importance of the sector in all countries.

Public sector reform agenda is based on employees who are the key stakeholders of this sector. This research is based on employees from different line ministries and Government agencies of the Maldives. Interviews has proven certain priorities they have given on different areas including accountability, employee's satisfaction, performance management, customer satisfaction, compensation equality, training opportunities and more transparency. These factors were given priority based on the data collection.

Accountability of public service officials is one the biggest challenges faced in Maldives. This is especially evident in finance professionals who handle all financial management operations of an organization. All, ministries employ Heads in their respective financial departments appointed by

the Ministry of Finance, who is responsible for key financial decisions according to the rules and regulations. Due to this reason accountability is essential in these staff to reduce corruption at both individual and organizational level. Accountability is important to provide for democratic control, to prevent or reduce the corruption and abusing power of employees, to enforce the constitutional law and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness in the civil service organizations (Boyle and MacCarthaigh, 2011). To ensure accountability of Government officials, two independent authorities were established. The two bodies actively regulating such matters include the Anticorruption Commission of the Maldives (ACC) and The Auditor General's Office (AGO). The ACC was established by law on the 16th of October 2008 with a vision to minimize corruption offenses of all forms in the public sector as well as in the private sector. The mandate of ACC includes investigation of probable corruption, creating public awareness, and promotion of integrity. This institution is open to the public to report any form of suspicious corruption activity within the Government projects. This has led to a reduction in corruption offenses within the Government organizations.

Transparency is one of the key components needed in the Maldives public sector. Every Government after election, when they commence office try to ensure transparency in all projects carried out under their administration. However, this effort is not continued as planned and all Governments have fallen short on disclosure of information. The degree of the Government administration transparency is more involved in a legal construction and a perception. Transparency will assist the Government to improve the public administration effectiveness as well as their policies' effectiveness. This will lead the administration to gain more information for effective decision making and subsequently acquire support from the citizens on important policy decisions.

Performance appraisal provides an avenue to assess employee satisfaction and performance. This is very important because employees are one of the most important resources for any Government. In Maldives, more than 24,000 employees serve in the public sector, which approximates to 1 civil servant available to serve 16 citizens. Maldives has the highest number of employees working in the public sector in the world. As Maldives, is geographically dispersed into groups of islands, the Government has to employ more people to provide services across the nation. There is a duplication of services, and each island has to cater for schools, hospitals, mosques, social center,

etc. This ensures reach to the all citizens, to ensure public satisfaction in each island. The Government is dependent on the civil service employees to provide continued uninterrupted service to the community. Unfortunately, in Maldives few researches have been conducted to measure the service excellency of the public sector. The latest research was done by the Civil Service Commission. The findings of this study highlights that very few are satisfied with the services provided by the public sector.

Compensation and Training to employees are also very crucial two factors in the Maldives public sector. Quality of services are not only tied to motivating employees in the public sector through higher remuneration and compensation. A more balanced approach is required with both financial and non-financial rewards. A combination of such rewards will assist in motivating the public sector employees in Maldives. Monetary compensation in the public sector was introduced in year 2015. This continued for two years consecutively and ceased in the third year due to financial difficulties faced by the Government. Additionally, there were no proper performance appraisal mechanisms established during that time. Yearly bonuses were given to employees based on individual perform evaluations. Each employee who achieved a score of 85% and above on a given year on their performance appraisals were entitled to yearly bonuses. The Government ensured to compensate one month's full basic salary as a bonus to employees who scored above the threshold of 85% in their respective performance appraisals. It is important to note that there were very few employees who received a score below 85% in both Civil Service Commission and the Government. Thus, many complains were raised on how the appraisals were carried out in different offices. This led the Government to pull out from this mechanism of compensating yearly bonuses from the year 2017. But at the same time, the Government introduced a new method of compensation through technical core allowances. This allowance was specific to technical skills and knowledge. For instance, employees in accounting profession, with a degree in the respective field is entitled to a technical core allowance. Thus, such an employee may earn 28% of basic salary as allowance each month.

Apart from compensation, training and development share equal importance in motivating and developing the civil service employees in Maldives. Training and development lead to improving both knowledge and efficiency of employees. These training sessions maybe short-term or long-term and maybe in the form of on-the-job training. Government must follow best practices in

human resource management to ensure employees in public sector adapt to perform their respective job (Bianca, 2017).

1.1 Background of the Study

The Maldives Civil Service Commission (CSC) was formed by an act of parliament in 2007 (CSC, 2020). It is an independent commission formed after bringing several changes to the new constitution. Formerly prior to CSC, all public administrative office was handled through the Public Service Division under the President Office. After establishing CSC all matters relating to public administration and human resource management were transferred to CSC. This was an important milestone of separating civil service and political service. Each Ministry appointed a Permanent Secretary to be the Head of the Ministries to report and support the CSC and to implement the Government policies and public policies related to civil servants. The constitution was amended to form the Civil Service Commission consisting of five members appointed by the Parliament with a 5-year term. Civil Service Commission commenced on 23rd October 2007. After formation, CSC has taken over all the challenging tasks to establish a modern professional civil service in the Maldives. Additionally, the Constitution requires CSC establish a Civil Service Training Institute to provide short-term training to all the civil servants of public sector of the Maldives.

Vision of the CSC is to develop a motivated, competent and proficient civil service sector in the Maldives (CSC, 2020).

Mission of the CSC is to ensure efficient service with integrity and timeliness and an inspired workforce that emphasizes a collaborative and innovative and working tenet to support national development (CSC, 2020).

Core Values of CSC: Integrity, Discipline, Competence, Dedication and Timeliness (CSC, 2020).

Currently, the Maldives civil service work force is dominated by female employees. September 2021 statistics show that there are a total of 24,516 civil servants. The gender specifics of the work force is 13,705 female to 10,811 male staffs. Civil Service Commission has the main responsibility to bring the best out of their civil servants working in the public sector of the Maldives. As some

of the services provided by the public service offices tend to be slow and not efficient, it is essential to reform the civil service human resource management based on the stakeholder ideas and experiences. On the other hand, corruption is another problem faced in the public sector. Specifically, the public sector procurement is the recipient of most corruption related allegations. To reduce corruption offenses, modern civil services need effective and accountable approaches introduced within the public sector. This will lead to multiple benefits for the public sector and encourage transparency in all projects and policies. Such reforms can only be brought by providing benefits to public staff to reduce any corruption offenses in this sector. This is evident as basic remuneration of public staff is very low in comparison of private sector employees (CSC, 2020).

1.2 Research Questions

This research paper is done based on one of the major stakeholder's mental models on the civil service human resource management reform in the Maldives. The topic was selected using a causality and priority of the human resource reform agenda. In Maldives, civil service sector employs 100% Local employees. The following research questions will be addressed in this research paper:

- 1) What are the most important challenges faced to reform human resource management in the Maldives Civil Service sector by employee's priority?
- 2) Is there a need to reform based on the stakeholder's priorities?
- 3) Why does the performance of civil servants not match the Government's expectation?
- 4) Is it necessary to reward in order to motivate civil service sector employees?
- 5) Why does changes on civil service sector developments not match in last decades?
- 6) Will these reforms boost the civil service sector employee's performance and how can we adopt this reform agenda?

This research paper concerns all stakeholders of civil service, especially Government and employees of this sector. This paper would be of interest for the Civil Service Commission to bring positive changes after evaluating the findings of the study. As CSC did not carry out any such

surveys on employee's priorities most of the researches by far has been done based on expertise knowledge and theory. Another important aspect is that this research paper is based on complete primary data, which have been collected via employee interviews and feedback on the research questions. But in some areas data from the Civil Service Commission is used which is crucial to this research paper.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The primary purpose of is to analyze and examine how the Stakeholder's mental model on civil service human resource management reform in the Maldives is shaped by various contextual factors. More specifically it aims to identify.

- If there is a need for reform based on stakeholder's priorities
- Realistic Performance issues within civil services and its causes
- If there is a need for performance appraisal and rewards within civil service sector
- Changes in civil service sector
- The effect of reforms on employee performances

1.4 Key Terms

ACC	Anticorruption Commission
AGO	Auditor General's Office
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSS	Civil Service Sector
HRM	Human Resource Management
NPM	New Public Management
ROI	Return On Investment

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is organized into six chapters.

Chapter 1: The first chapter of the thesis briefly presents an introduction; then a background to the research, analysis of research questions and purpose.

Chapter 2: Provides a literature review on the main research streams of this Thesis.

Chapter 3: Discusses the research methodology adopted for this research and an explanation of the research method adopted.

Chapter 4: Presents the results of the research through context through documentary and literature sources.

Chapter 5: Describes an in-depth discussion on the results of the research.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the research along with the theoretical and practical contributions of this research, the research limitations and proposed future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A broad overview of HRM's contribution to performance and its connecting mechanisms is presented before looking at people management in the public sector in this literature study.

HRM is not particularly addressed in these theoretical and empirical discoveries. In reality, research on HRM in the private sector is predominate. Many studies have been done on how HRM contributes to performance and in this section, I will present the conceptual framework, the human resources management value chain. I will also discuss three key concepts in HRM-performance research: the vertical alignment, horizontal aligning and implementation. Second, I'll go over the most important findings of more than three decades of empirical study on the connection between HRM and performance.

As soon as the academic subject of HRM was born, the issue of whether or not HRM improves performance has been a top priority for researchers ever since. When HRM was originally being studied, the focus was on proving that investments in HRM have a positive return on investment (ROI) and decreased turnover. Over time, study focus moved to how human resource management (HRM) affects performance. The HRM value chain is a theoretical model that depicts the interrelationships (Wright & Nishii, 2013). This approach tries to explain performance variations across units and organizations. This concept is based on the idea that how workers perceive HRM has an influence on their characteristics and behaviors, and hence on the overall success of the business. This study, conducted by Jiang et al. (2012), delineates between two different theoretical logics: one that considers social interaction and another that looks at resources as a whole. According to the former, HRM has an effect on performance because of the attitudes and behaviors of employees. Here I am utilizing concepts like reciprocity, which comes from social exchange theory (Settoon et al., 1996). The business generates a sense of duty in its workers by investing in them via HRM, which makes them feel obligated to reciprocate by acting in a way that furthers the organization's aims. The resource-based approach emphasizes the value of individual employees' skills. Human capital (the knowledge, skills, and talents of people) is the primary motivator for success, according to this logic (Lepak & Snell, 1999).

Human resource management literature acknowledges that the influence of HRM on performance depends on three factors: the degree of (a) vertical integration or alignment; the degree of (b)

horizontal integration or alignment; and the degree of (c) successful action or execution. Vertical alignment means that the HRM strategy is in line with the organization's objectives and goals. In other words, only if the HRM strategy "reflects, reinforces, and supports" the company goals can it have a significant influence (Paauwe et al., 2013). Employees will know what level of work is required of them if this is the case with the HRM strategy. Horizontal alignment refers to how well the various HRM policy areas mesh together (so-called HRM bundles). When diverse HRM methods come together to produce a unified system, that's when you've found a good horizontal match. Having done this, a company may communicate consistently with its employees about the behaviors that are required of them (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Since optimal results can only be obtained when designed policies are effectively implemented (Wright and Nishii, 2013), the third dimension (action or implementation) is added by Gratton and Truss (2003), which puts line managers' responsibility for HRM implementation in the spotlight (Knies & Leisink, 2014). Line managers are increasingly being tasked with HRM duties. Organizations in Nordic economies, coordinated economies, and liberal market economies all allocate HRM duties differently. Also, other institutional factors such as the size, unionization, and location of the HRM department influence the degree to which power is devolved (Brewster et al., 2014). Line managers have a significant impact on how workers perceive HRM when they are in charge of putting it into practice. In addition to workers' views of planned HRM policies, the idea of people management implies that their supervisors' actual execution of these policies and their leadership actions affect employees' opinions.

Many empirical research on the connection between human resource management (HRM) and performance have been carried out since the mid-1990s. Huselid's (1995) research is a trailblazer in this sector. This research found that High Performance Work Systems (a collection of HRM practices designed to improve performance) had an important impact on an organization's financial health. It was also found by Becker and Gerhart (1996) that HRM investments can lead to a competitive advantage over the long run. Numerous researches have been conducted since these findings were published in order to verify them. The results of more than two decades of empirical research have been summarized in many meta-analyses done in the last few years. A meta-analysis conducted by Liu et al., (2007) included data from over 19,000 organizations. They came to the conclusion that HRM is highly beneficial to businesses. According to their findings, the benefits of HRM on performance are greater when human resource systems are prioritized above individual

practices, and when HRM choices are linked to strategy. In their meta-analysis, Combs et al. (2006) examined 92 studies and found a modest but significant link between HRM and performance. They also came to the conclusion that a collection of HRM practices had a greater impact on performance than any one practice. Studies on HRM and performance indicate a strong correlation between the two, according to a review by Paauwe's (2009), which show that HRM practices have a mediocre relationship to performance. Wall and Wood (2005), on the other hand, are more pessimistic about the current status of scientific investigation. They say that because of methodological constraints, it is too early to make any conclusions regarding the nature of the link between HRM and performance (cross-sectional data, common source bias, etc.). Data from 31,263 organizations was included in the meta-analysis done by Jiang et al (2012). HRM and performance were investigated using both the social exchange and resource-based hypotheses. Both explanations were judged to be valid. Personnel management strategies such as skill development, motivating work and creating opportunities for employees all have a direct and indirect influence on the company's financial performance, the researchers discovered (voluntary turnover and operational outcomes). These findings highlight the significance of effective people management as a key factor in attaining desired objectives.

Meta-analyses like the ones cited above don't distinguish between data from public and private sector organizations. If the sample includes any public sector entities, the gathered data is combined with data from other settings to create a more comprehensive picture. There isn't many research looking at the connection between HRM and public sector performance, as previously said (Knies et al., 2015). According to preliminary research, strategic HRM has a beneficial impact on public sector employee motivation and performance (Messersmith et al., 2011). Studies have shown, however, that the public and private sectors diverge in a number of ways. Following that, we'll look at how people management differs in public sector firms.

Beer et al. (1984), a fundamental conceptual work on strategic HRM, employed a multi-stakeholder viewpoint and defined performance outcomes distinguishing between organizational effectiveness, employee well-being, and society well-being. HRM-performance research, on the other hand, largely focused on the performance of organizations as evaluated by financial performance indicators (Boselie et al., 2005). There are indications that show that profit maximization or maximizing stakeholder value is the primary objective of private organizations,

which are the focus of most research (Grant, 2002). The lack of a balanced approach to HRM outcomes was criticized by European HRM academics (Boselie 2014; Paauwe 2004), thus subsequent HRM studies (e.g. Van de Voorde et al. 2012) have incorporated employee outcomes as well as organizational results.

Organizational objectives have been mostly missing as an intentional HRM result in public companies, where personnel policies have served the aim of serving as a role model for other employers. NPM, on the other hand, has made efficiency performance for public sector enterprises increasingly crucial (Goldfinch & Wallis 2009; Pollitt & Bouckaert 2004). HRM value chains based on private sector profit maximization do not apply to public organizations, which are defined by many aims, many of which are unclear or even contradictory (Chun & Rainey 2005; Rainey 2009). As a result, a public sector HRM value chain model must begin with the organization's goal. Dahl and Lindblom (1953) recognized the job, purpose, or mission of the organization as a way to distinguish between public and private organizations. Public value management research in the last few years have acknowledged their insights (Alford & O'Flynn, 2009; Benington & Moore, 2011).

According to Moore (1995, 2000), the purpose of a non-profit or governmental organization specifies the value that the organization wants to generate for its shareholders and society at large. According to Moore (2000), government organizations provide the most value when they "accomplish the politically mandated mission of the organization and fulfill the citizen expectations that were more or less represented in that mandate." Moore (1995) created a public value chain on the basis of these concepts, directing managerial attention to a variety of aspects, including the value proposition that leads the company and whether the organization has the know-how and capacity to accomplish the intended objectives. According to HRM, Moore works with the notion of vertical integration, which is connecting organizational value creation with managers' desire to deploy the resources of the workforce. In spite of the fact that Moore (2000) noted that his public value creation model "challenges them [managers] to lay out the logic chain that connects their activities to valued social results," he did not elaborate on the logic chain and the mechanisms linking managers' management activities to the mission's performance.

The fact that public enterprises must begin their HRM value chain from their purpose presents two important issues. First, how can a mission with numerous objectives be operationalized such that concrete public service goals may serve as a guide for managerial action, if not for performance

management? If a purpose of a public organization might include various and even contradictory aims, what does this mean for the management agency when there are conflicts? They will be addressed in the parts that follow.

To put it another way: The goal idea is complicated since it's usually one of several related but frequently incompatible objectives, as noted by Rainey (2009). Generally speaking, this concept applies to all organizations. Even if we use the work of Boxall and Purcell (2011) as an example, it's telling to see how they distinguish between four different types of strategic HRM goals (cost-effectiveness, organizational flexibility, social legitimacy, and managerial power), and how they stress the importance of managing the strategic tensions between these goals. As a result of politicians' and the public's differing viewpoints, which drive the compromise formulations for government organization objectives, public management academics (Rainey, 2009) consider public organizations as unique. They see them as having numerous, ambiguous purposes.

Prisons, for example, must punish offenders while also rehabilitating them, while police commanders must strike a balance between upholding the law, managing crime, preventing crime, and guaranteeing fairness and respect for people's rights while still working effectively, as illustrated by Rainey. A number of public organizations have different aims, and this raises the challenge of how to assess how well they are doing their jobs.

Efficacy of organizations has been proposed as a generic metric, including characteristics such as productivity, efficiency, adaptability and adaptability of organizations. To better understand public service performance, Boyne (2002) developed a five-dimensional model, separating it into five distinct conceptual categories: outputs; efficiency; service outcomes; responsiveness; and democratic outcomes (response). An important starting point for some research is to consider public service performance from multiple angles (Boyne et al. 2006; Walker et al. 2010). It appears as though this multidimensional notion may be used to compare the performance of various sorts of public organizations. This does not mean that it cannot be used to assess context-specific mission success since school outcomes and results differ from those of municipalities. For example, educators' views disagree on whether school outputs should be equated with students' scores in basic cognitive domains like language and mathematics, or if they should also include soft skills performance related to citizenship competencies and 21st century abilities (Kennedy 2008). For a general assessment of outputs or any other generic aspect of public service performance, a complementary measure of mission accomplishment specific to the type of public

organization, like a school or a municipality, would appear to be necessary in order to capture the full scope of public service performance in general.

In order to distinguish between different aspects of public service performance, we must look at each one's HRM value chain separately. Human resource management operations must be aligned with the performance goals of managers for each aim. Boxall and Purcell (2011) recognized numerous bottom lines in HRM when they proposed multiple HRM value chains for different public service performance goals. Instead of criticizing Kaplan and Norton for including social legitimacy in their balanced score card, Boxall and Purcell argue that social legitimacy should be viewed as a goal unto itself and an HRM strategy should be developed that serves both the strategic goals of cost effectiveness and social legitimacy. Managers in the public sector will have to think about public service goals like providing accessible and effective education and develop an HRM strategy to help them meet those goals as well. There will be conflicts in the organization's HRM strategy, as noted by Boxall and Purcell (2011). It's necessary for profit-making businesses to balance economic drivers with the firm's ethical duty. A similar trade-off may be seen in public organizations, as illustrated by the trade-off between educational quality and organizational efficiency. Public companies, on the other hand, would need managers to deal with additional challenges due to the limitations of their administrative authority. A common problem is that the authorizing environment interferes with the managerial responsibility for deploying organizational resources in order to achieve desired results, even though the authorizing environment has no authority to decide on organizational mission or operational resource availability. To summarize, public managers' efforts are not only more difficult because of the need to organize and maintain political backing and legitimacy for their business, but they also have to secure the value chain connecting their operations to highly valued societal benefits (Moore, 2000).

Democratic societies are governed by a setting that decides the public value that public entities must provide, most notably elected politicians. Public opinion shifts that are reflected in elections may, therefore, have a direct influence on organizational goals, even though they are dependent on the institutional framework (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004).

As NPM gained traction, the issue arose as to whether or not the values that govern decision-making in public organizations were likely to come together as well.

While it's apparent that the NPM movement has resulted in a focus on efficiency and service quality, it's also clear that different countries have taken different approaches. Many western governments are confronted with demographic and ecological issues, which have reignited the discussion regarding possible convergence of public sector policies as a result of the current economic and budgetary crises. There has been a significant impact on public services and labor relations due to various governments' austerity measures (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2013). Once again, efficiency is the most important performance indicator, but quality of the public service also takes precedence, even if budgets are limited. Welfare state services have been decreased in many nations, which has had a negative impact on their quality and availability to residents. As a result of austerity measures, several nations have seen job losses and salary freezes, if not outright cuts, for government personnel. Even Nevertheless, countries' austerity measures and public sector reform strategies varied significantly (Leisink & Bach, 2014). They show that for public organizations, organizational results (such as efficiency) are strongly linked to client and societal outcomes (such as the quality of services and accessibility). These authors argue that the stakeholder approach developed by Beer et al. (1984) is still relevant today in conceptualizing performance objectives.

Next, I will review literature on issues and challenges faced in current HRM system in the Maldives.

1.1 Human Resource Management System.

Differences in remuneration has always been evident between private and public sector. Similarly, there are noticeable gaps in salaries between civil servants with same position levels in different offices. Maldives Civil Service human resource management system has caused lot of issues relating to salary structure and varying allowances between different offices. For instance, a nurse with a first degree maybe able to earn a higher salary in a particular civil service office. Furthermore, some of the offices provide additional allowances such as living allowance, whilst others do not. This has caused inequality between the public service offices and in turn affects the performance of the employees. This may also cause the employees to be less motivated and deliver poor service. For example, employees in offices with better pay tend to offer better service in

comparison to their counterparts. It is evident that higher salaried Government independent agencies perform better than the Line Ministry, which offer relatively less compensation.

To increase the motivation of the public sector employees, Government should harmonize the salary differences between public sector employees holding same academic qualification and same level of experiences. This issue has been identified from year 2015. This is one of the reason that the Government has formed the National Pay Commission under the Ministry of Finance to adjust issues relating to salary structure and allowances across all civil service offices and Government agencies in Maldives. Furthermore, in the current human resource management system, there are no avenues for promotion of civil servants, unless there are new vacancies.

According to the some of the offices there are numerous employees who have held position for almost 09 years without any promotion. They continue to work at same position levels even though they have completed further education be it undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications. This has resulted in employees shifting to private sector or other civil service offices that offer more job benefits. This is an unresolved issue creating ample loss for the public sector. At the end, Government of public sector offices are unable to recruit and retain experienced employees.

1.2 Job Classification & Grading Framework

In the civil service human resource management system there are two common ways for classification and grading positions within the civil service offices in the Maldives. The two ways are job-based system and a person-based system (UNDP, 2008).

	Job Based System	Person Based System
Classification and Grades	Accountability level of Position	Qualification and length of service
Promotion	Followed by significant increment	Progression in qualification
Job Size	Bigger job size	Same job size
Salary Level	Determine by job size	Determine by incumbent qualification

Most of the civil service offices are following these two systems. However, it is evident that currently they are following a hybrid of mixed systems. Most of the employees with higher education joining the public sector face difficulties to adopt a career path in public offices. Due to career-based system, new comers are not able to compete existing experienced staff. Most of the staffs in public sector have long serving tenures and a lengthy track record of experience. But in some cases, public sector offices have no option, but to recruit fresh graduates due to lack of human resource capital available in the market. It works well for the fresh graduates, to use this opportunity in the public sector to earn ample job experience before transferring to private sector. With time, there has been an exponential increment in graduates in the market, however, they hesitate to join public sector because of job classification and job grading framework amongst many other reasons.

Today, in Maldives private sector offers much attractive remuneration packages and benefits. And private sector also tends to recruit fresh graduates. Concurrently, experienced staff of public sector also shifts to private sector due the offered attractive employee welfare options. These, are all issues that public sector will continue to face in hiring and retaining a solid workforce.

1.3 Political Influence

Political influence is another key issue in the Maldives public service sector. Generally, all administrations may exert influence to Civil Service Commission in selecting civil service officers to different Ministries. Last year, Parliament has amended the Civil Services Act, 2007, which allows Permanent Secretaries to be appointed based on Minister's request or recommendation. Although, the CSC makes the selection process according to the laid-out recruitment policy, applications can be subject to political influence. Ministers disagree to recruit Permanent Secretaries who would not cooperate and align with identified political agendas of the existing Government. Such political influence has enabled public offices to recruit supporters and activists of the current regime. Even new jobs have been created including coordinators to fill such allocated positions.

Reforming salary structures and allowance is difficult when there is a limited availability of funds allocated in the State Budget. Recently, the current administration has publicly announced that it

will only be able to harmonize salary structures and allowances of civil service offices in year 2023. With all these limitations, political influence worsens the existing situation.

1.4 Training on-the-job & of-the-job.

Training and development is a key area to focus in public sector. However, there were no specialized training institute for public service personnel, until recently. In year 2008, Civil Service Training Institute was established in the hope of developing a skilled workforce in the public sector. Yet, the training institute did not have sufficient resources to provide training to all the civil servants of the Maldives. It is also more challenging because Maldives is widely scattered with more than 300 islands all with civil service offices. The Civil Service Training Institute is unable to provide on-the-job training that they carry out in the Capital, to the staff employed at the islands. It is very difficult for the staff to participate in such training sessions when they have to travel every time for such short trainings. Budget limitations also add as a hinderance to compensate for the travels to participate in trainings conducted at the Capital. On the other hand, it is not economically feasible to travel to the islands to conduct trainings at island level, as there are very few staff in each island.

Civil servants of Maldives are given very few opportunities to travel abroad to get essential training. One of the reasons is due to lack of bilateral agreements between the Civil Service Commission and similar authorities in foreign jurisdictions. There was progress in 2014, with the CSC signing bilateral agreements with identified countries tabulated in Table 1. This amplifies its mission to provide foreign training to public servants through such arrangements. Such trainings will help public service offices as well as civil servants to perform to international best practices. According to CSC in year 2016, 66 civil servants had completed short term foreign training (CSC, 2021). Although it is progress, it is not sufficient training in comparison to the amount of public servants. Also, Civil Service Training Institute is only able to train less than 4,000 employees, due to lack of resources.

1.5 Stakeholder mental model

The main framework for the research paper is formed with the main stakeholder's mental model on the civil service human resource reform in the Maldives based on the causality and priorities given by public employees. The six models including original and final model are attached in the appendix of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data is mainly used in this research paper, through collection of data, by form of interviewing different ministries and public agencies. Some secondary data is also incorporated from previous scholar's articles, journals and researches. The form of the model is based on the interviewer's choice. There were different employees recommended areas but to standardize, this paper will focus on the key 7 factors most widely agreed that are required for the human resource reform in Maldives public sector. They are namely:

- Accountability;
- Employees Satisfaction;
- Performance Management System;
- Customer Satisfaction;
- Compensation Equality;
- Training Opportunities, and;
- Transparency.

The literature review is based on previous scholars' books, articles, journals and research papers. Findings is based on the employees' interviews and their suggestions. They are the main stakeholders who work in this sector and their ideas are important to human resource management reform in the public sector of the Maldives. So far, few studies have been done based on the main stakeholders' ideas. Most of the researchers suggest their own idea to reform the civil service sector. Therefore, this research paper is mainly focused on the ideas of the employees on how they perceive regarding reform needs and how to progress a reform agenda of the public sector in the Maldives. The main recommendations that are included were identified through the stakeholders suggested areas.

1.6 Data Collection process

This research paper is done using primary data, collected through interviewing the employees. The thesis was based on the stakeholder's (employees) interviews and researches done previously. Data collection is composed of qualitative methods

Interviewing

This research paper topic is stakeholder's mental model on the civil service Human resource reform in the Maldives, based on the causality and priorities on the employees. This subject is based on the targeted main stakeholder; the civil servants of the Maldives public sector. Employees have been selected for interview from different public sector ministries and agencies. First batch included staff who had human resource knowledge, to provide their informed opinion on reforming the public sector. Second batch was selected from middle management holding supervisory level positions who had knowledge of their subordinates and teams performance. Third batch interviewed were staff working at the front who engages in customer services to the public.

1.7 Population and Research Sample

This research paper is completely based on the main stakeholders who are involved in the public sector. Data is collected on their opinion on areas that need to be developed to reform the public sector human resource management. Samples were taken from Ministries and Government Agencies. There are no limitations as the sample group were willing to share their opinion on factors to focus on a reform agenda. Sample group includes employees with experience in human resource management, senior employees responsible for performance of their team, and employees dealing with every day customer service at the front.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This research paper topic is based on the interviewed civil service employees and the priority-based factors which may be needed to reform the human resource management in the civil sector of the Maldives. Findings were based on two important questions.

- a. What are the barriers to reform from the given variables from the chart:
 - Accountability;
 - Employees Satisfaction;
 - Performance Management System;
 - Customer Satisfaction;
 - Compensation Equality;
 - Training Opportunities, and;
 - Transparency.
- b. What are the views on overcoming the barriers to reform the civil service human resource management?

Based on the interview responses there are several barriers that may be faced by the reform process. Most agree that employees are willing to adapt to changes, although minority of employees may face difficulty due their educational background and fear of losing their job positions. Overall, all employees are willing to change with the human resources reform agenda.

Some employees suspect that the Government will not be able to bring the required reform due to the impact on economic and financial limitations. The Government requires more than MVR 300 million per month to re-adjust the salary structure to harmonize with the expectations. This is especially difficult when the highest portion of recurrent expenditure for the Government are salary and wages. It is also important to note that increased salary may lead to increase in purchasing power and spikes in prices of goods and services and overall inflation.

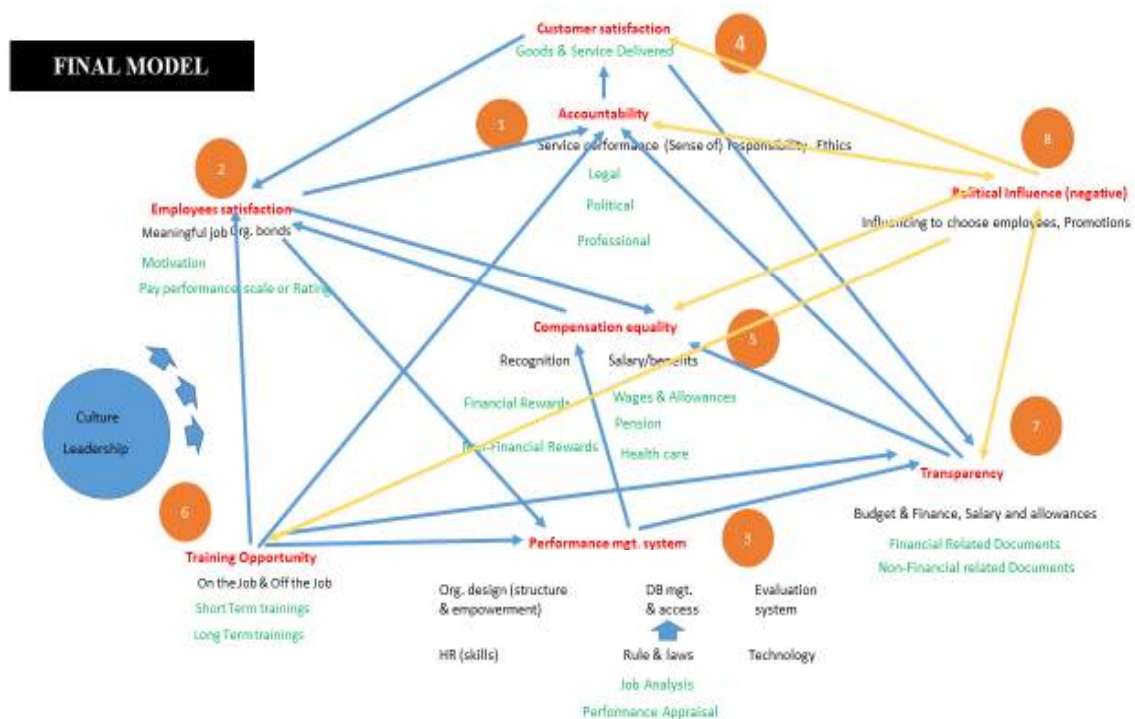
Another finding was that political influences are evident in the public sector. Even after establishing an independent commission, the operations of the Civil Service Commission is not completely protected from political influence. The Parliament has power to change members of the Commission and make the authority accountable. This allows political influence over hiring and promoting staffs. Furthermore, even though CSC is established as an independent commission,

the President Office supersedes and have power to change any decision made by CSC. For instance, last year the Government has amended the constitution which states the recruitment of Permanent Secretaries should be based on academic qualification and experience. However, the Parliament has changed the process to include selection only after consultations and approvals of the respective Ministers. This affects recruiting qualified and well-experienced Permanent Secretaries in the public sector offices.

Furthermore, some of the long-term serving employees in public sector organizations are not physically and mentally ready or willing to bring changes to existing structures. The main reason is that such employees did not have higher academic qualifications. Most of them have been holding high positions only because of the lengthy tenure at the public sector administration. Thus, it is evident that 35% of the staff holding supervisory level and management level positions do not have a first-degree qualification. This also shows that the CSC was not able to bring about the best results through performance evaluations. Most of the supervisors are not willing to get expertise knowledge and are not willing to participate in the programs conducted at the Civil Service Training Institute. Even though, all the training is free there is very low participation, due to personal travel costs to travel and stay at the Capital. Due to these reasons, CSC has changed such development session to online-based trainings. Most of the trainings are now conducted via Zoom or Google Meet. This helps accessibility to all without need for associated costs of travel. This digitization efforts have been done very recently with the proliferation of the Covid-19 situation.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

On the basis of the finding of this research, the following recommendations are put forth for the public sector in the Maldives. Some of the viewpoints and priorities highlighted in the paper are areas that clearly need reform. The recommendations and policy suggestions to be adopted and implemented within the public sector offices are:



1. Accountability & Transparency.

The concept of good governance is very much interlinked with institutionalized values such as democracy, observance of human rights, accountability, transparency and great efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector. Public sector accountability is about taking responsibility of one's action; about being able to explain, clarify and justify actions. It implies that someone has a right to know and hold an organization to account; and that the organization has a duty to explain and account for its actions. Therefore, accountability is a very important component of good governance at any country in the world.

Transparency is ensured through leadership in delivering operations in an open, easy to understand and explicit manner in accordance with the rules and policies of the Government. This goes hand-in-hand with proper disclosures of Government activities that makes it easier for the general public to follow and remain up-to-date. Unfortunately, this is lacking in the public domain in the Maldives public service sector.

Whereas, accountability implies public organizations conduct matters, manage the public funds and guarantee the public that every single penny is spent in a professional manner. As accountability is mostly disregarded this leads to corruption offenses in the public sector in the Maldives. The term of public sector accountability usually relates to the relationship between the politicians and citizens as well as public managers.

In Maldives, public sector corruption is mostly accounted in the procurement divisions. Even though Government introduced SAP system to public sector financial management the issue is not resolved. This system is a centralized system granting each office with certain limits of authority to approve finance related activities. Main approvals or approvals for activities with certain thresholds are authorized by the Ministry of Finance. This SAP system is from a German company which is used by more than 190 countries world-wide. Even though this system is introduced in 2014 still relatively similar amount of corruption cases are recorded in the public sector. Therefore, modern systems may not be the solution for the issue. Rather Government perhaps could have come up with critical rules and legislation to implement accountability in public offices.

To improve on accountability in public sector in the Maldives the Government could also attempt more transparency of the financials of respective offices. So far, the Government does not have any form of transparency law for the public sector. Therefore, it is recommended that the Government make rules that every public office publish their financial statements annually including all revenue collections in respective websites. This would allow gaining trust from the public and it will help to develop the public sector in the Maldives to the next level. To reduce corruption, transparency and accountability of public employees is utmost important. For example, Singapore enacted comprehensive accountability and transparency laws that allowed them to be the country with least corruption offenses in the world within the public sector; achieved at a relatively short period of time.

On the other hand, public offices should introduce official job scopes clearly identifying the responsibilities and job description. Moreover, in public sector, few offices have their employees job description and job scope clearly written and documented in HRM personal file. Even the offices which have these details do not renew them every year. Therefore, it is recommended to commence written job descriptions and job scopes and acquire signature from employees for their respective positions. These should be renewed annually and communicated to employees on their individual responsibilities that they would remain accountable for. Accountability is essential for the stakeholder in this case for citizens in the Maldives. To reduce those issues 21st-century countries have started to adopt New Public Management (NPM). NPM is introduced as an alternative built on market –based solutions and customer-driven management. This has evolved on how the public sector should be managed and worked to something more achievable.

2. Employees Satisfaction:

Employees are the most important resources for any organization. Their attitudes & behavior typically reflect the public organization's goodwill and perception for the general public. Especially services provided by the front desk is connected to customer satisfaction, and this would only be possible with employees with job satisfaction. Therefore, this would be extremely important because they are representing the whole organization to the citizens. Sure, a raise or benefits will probably improve employee contentment, at least temporarily, but small, inexpensive changes can have a long-term impact on any organization in public sector.

In a public sector employee's satisfaction or not satisfaction affects directly to their work efficiency and work effectiveness. If the employees are happy and contented are fulfilling their desires and needs at work depends on the organizational arrangements. then the employees are satisfied, then he/she works hard to achieve the organizational goals. This kind of the motivation plays an important role in employee's satisfaction. Sometimes money may not be the very important factor to motivate employees of the organization. If any public organization to give effective and efficient service to the Public both kinds of rewards are very important, those two factors are the Financial reward and no-financial reward. According to the interview of the civil servant in the Maldives, they have highlighted that consistency rewards did not provide the civil service sector in the

Maldives. In the year 2014 reward has given but the year 2015 didn't provide. Therefore, consistency of rewards would be very important.

In this employee's satisfaction, I would like to suggest the civil service commission must need to introduce some of the ways which can help to improve the employee's satisfaction. First, I would have recommended that more empowerment and more controls on their works to the employees based on their job levels. Because satisfaction or happiness is affected by employee's sense of control over their works. In the Maldives, public sector employees are looking for the control their schedules, environment and their work habits. For instance, public offices could offer alternative work schedules for such employees who really need, such as like pregnant women. In the Maldives public sector, the big percentage of women are currently working. Therefore, some of their career time they need flextime. So why not introduce this kind of policy for those who needed on flexi time then this would be the very good test of how well employee's satisfaction increases.

Another important recommendation on this employee's satisfaction is recognized employee's contribution to the organization at the different level. This can have provided based on the performance of each employee. In the public sector at Maldives has not gifted to provide this kind of recognition due to the difficulty of the budget, but Government offices must find ways to recognize their employees in non-financial ways. Based on any occasion's offices can provide certificates in front of all employees based on the best performing employees. This will give motivation to all employees. Other than this some of the ways can recognize employees at a staff meeting, surprising an employee with a post-it notes of thanks, and putting a thank you on the department bulletin board each month as the best employee.

Another important thing is that public sector offices should give chances to the employees to enhance employees' prospects for career growth and counseling. The desired outcome of a Career Development Program is to match the needs of the employee with those of the organization. Employees must have the opportunity to identify career needs and the organization should assist them in achieving those needs within organizational realities. A Career Development Program does not require to elaborate procedures. The essential components are counseling and training. Career counseling provides an avenue for the employee to assess their career needs. The training component assists employees in growth and development by enhancing their knowledge, skills, and abilities in their present job assignments or prepares them for future opportunities. Proficient

in-service training and career specialty training can accomplish this. Each of these components is vital to the success of the career development initiative. Therefore, I would have recommended civil service commission create more policies to give employees more opportunities in this area to motivate employees and increase their satisfaction.

3. Performance Management & Compensation Equity.

Performance management is an ongoing process that involves both managers and the employees in identifying the strategic vision, goals, and objectives of the organization; identifying and describing essential job functions and relating them to the mission and goals of the organization; developing realistic and appropriate target standards of performance; implementing ways of measuring actual, compared with target performance; communicating constructive performance evaluations; and planning development opportunities to sustain, improve or build on employee work performance (Neely et al., 1996). Therefore, need to give consistent incentives for the performance of the public sector is important at Maldives. this will lead to employee's motivations.

In public sector in the Maldives, performance management has not been implemented its best ways. Best Performance measurements will give employees of their roles, responsibilities, and expectation. When measure the employee's performance will able to supervisors to give employees best advice which area they need to improve and same time supervisors can encourage and support employees to strive to develop their capabilities within the organization. Therefore, I would recommend civil service commission implement the performance management its most effective ways. Every positive performance-management practice should have reviewed is employed more widely in high engagement agencies than in low-engagement agencies. Specifically, managers should ensure that employees understand their work expectations and see the link between their jobs and the organization's mission, meet regularly with staff members, provide feedback on performance, as well as opportunities to grow and develop (and even fail as a way to learn); and, hold employees accountable for performance, including dealing with poor performers in the organization.

In this area, I would like to recommend civil service commission focus on those areas when the performance management most effective ways to implement in a public organization. Firstly, Commission connects the performance management system to the public service motivation. The goal of any performance management system is to improve performance by creating the culture that thrives on the incredible performance of individual employees. The systems, processes, and procedures that commonly accompany any performance management system are intended to help frame it. The appeal to the motivation that public servants have to help others through their work and this is the secret to effective performance in Government agencies. I recommend select clear goals that motivate employees, make goals become the glue that holds networks together, connect each employee's job to program beneficiaries, celebrate success, and link to employee incentive systems. Each of these elements is the job of mission leaders and immediate supervisors of the organization.

Secondly, I would recommend that public organization in the Maldives should balance top-down targets with bottom-up innovations. In this process three actions can be focused, those are learning from network members who are from multiple levels in the organization, use benchmarking to identify what works and spread it and disseminate lesson, not just data on how to improve performance. Thirdly, I would recommend that in a performance management in public sector ensure leaders are committed to performance management. As this research paper initial interview was very much clear that most of the supervisor level employees are not committed to the performance system which introduces civil service commissions due to the different reasons. This has affected directly to the performance management system. Another point is that every public sector office in the Maldives should implement the build a learning culture. Successful performance systems thrive when an organizational culture supports performance management. Doing this in practice, however, means creating an environment where there is continuous learning process each and every day within organization employees.

4. Customer satisfaction:

Good customer service may be seen as a crucial asset for most of the public sector organization in any country in the world. But how do we know we are delivering good customer service and, more importantly, delivering it to meet and exceed your customer's expectations? Customer service is an intangible thing; it is perishable and it is personal so measuring it can be complicated and less than straightforward. In a current civil service sector in the Maldives, they're not much way public offices measures customer satisfaction. Therefore, I would have recommended ways to implement to check customer satisfaction: First thing csc have to introduce an integrated customer service center for all the public service offices. In this customer service center should clearly mention their goals. Such as like more efficient, comprehensive access to service, increase customer education leading enhanced decision making, measurements of effectiveness including impacts on customer satisfaction. So far in public sector, none of the offices has customer awareness activity. At least Clearly given information to citizens will get service more effectively. In integrated customer service center should be a focus and collect the continues customer feedbacks. This will help to improve public service at all the organizations.

Another important recommendation is that front office employees training and development. From the front office staff's attitudes and behaviors effects the customer satisfaction. So far most of the successful private organization have very much front office arrangement at its best. Therefore, I would recommend public offices staff moral changes by training and development. This can carry on focus groups and training session. Although some of the staff focused their frustrations on the customers, others blamed high caseloads and workloads for interfering with their ability to spend time interacting with customers. They commented that unrealistic demands are placed on them, that the focus is on the number of customers served, and that they must constantly rush through their time with customers.

Customer service focus groups can decide by civil service commission that can form a committee with each public office can appoint 1 employee for that committee. This committee will make

research on the customer satisfaction. Firstly, physical focus group, this can do by inviting some of the customers to attend an informal gathering at service provides the specific office to express their opinions on the quality of customer service provided. In this meeting, if possible, as much as employees can attend that meeting and hear customer's views and opinions. Secondly can decide online focus group, this would be one of the most effective ways to ask customers satisfaction surveys. Because every citizen is using a smart mobile phone in the Maldives. In this experiment, open discussions on the web about service conducting among an individual organization customer can often be more fruitful than those which are carried out face to face. In this process can find out the customer complaints against the individual services with an individual organization that customer who cannot get the satisfactory answer through it.

Another recommendation is that every office must have the hotline that can customer contact at any time free. That hotline should provide all the information to the customers. In the public sector very often issue for all the offices that not answering phone calls. If having hotline will help to solve this problem. Another thing which public office can conduct the survey by calling customers list based on the monthly service provided. In monthly services provided customers randomly can call and ask satisfactory level of the services. This will be very effective ways to improve the public office's services to the citizens.

5. Training & Developments:

Training and developments to the public official are one of the very important areas that Maldives civil service commission should focus. Even though commission wants to be focused on this issue but they are unable to implement training programs due to the budget constraint. The Government did not provide enough money for the public official training. Specially atolls public official rarely gets opportunities to have training and developments. Currently, civil service commission had not any rule that every public official must have minimum hours of training. Due to this reason, there are some of the public officials they are working without single training more than 10 to 15 years. The limited budget also can do a lot of training programs on a well strategic plan on Training and

Developments. Therefore, I would recommend civil service commission to adopt plans on training and developments in the civil service sector.

Firstly, the commission should identify the employees who have less education with longer years' service the public organization and give them first priorities to get training based on their job-related training. This will reduce the cost of the training because every employee will only get the training that they really needed on their job-related. Secondly, I want to recommend that Public Service optimize the existing skills of staff through multi-skill management. Competency management facilitates the identification of employee development needs that may impact on efficiency and effectiveness. In these circumstances, competency-based management can help ensure employees get targeted training that is required to handle increased service delivery demands in the Public Service. My recommended new system of Public Service education, training and development should be like, the public sector should focus on Demand-driven, needs- and competency based. This will benefit the all the public organizations. Another is that can focus on Supportive of work performance and career development for all Public Service employees. Furthermore, strategically linked to the broader process of transformation and institution building within the Public Service; and linked to the Maldives National Qualification (MQA) their frameworks as well as the National Skills Development Strategy and the Civil Service HRD Strategy for the Maldives.

6. Political Influences:

Political influences in the public sector in the Maldives very much negative impacts on the services sector. Due to the political appointees in a different public office with the higher salary, public official with the same qualification with lower salary then political appointees was the big issue in the Maldives public sector offices. The Government of the Maldives should not appoint other than ministers and deputy ministers in the public offices. This will help to reduce public sector offices total salary and It can provide more other kind of beneficial things to the Public officials. This will motivate them to work more effectively & efficiently to achieve the organizational goals.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study examined the mental models of stakeholders in the Maldives' public service human resource management reform, looking at causation and reform agenda goals. For the last three decades, the Maldives has faced several problems as a result of the absence of intervention in the country's civil service human resource reform process, as well as a lack of morals and motivation on the part of employees.

Human resource departments and other functional divisions in the public service conducted interviews for this study, which formed the basis for the research. Stakeholders' comments on the government's focus on improving the Maldives' civil sector are taken into account. Due to a dearth of studies, including the views and ideas of employees, I decided to conduct my own. Experts in the public sector conducted much of the study with an eye on guaranteeing reform in the civil service sector.

According to the findings of this study, which drew on the opinions of public servants who were questioned, the reform agenda should focus on the seven criteria. An effective stakeholder mental model is one that is based on the final model of this study article, which is fully centered on the priorities and orders of stakeholders. The Maldives public workers' interview reveals these priorities. The following considerations have been cited by the interviewed personnel for determining the priorities: accountability, satisfaction of the staffs, system of performance management, customer satisfaction, equality of compensation, opportunities for training, and transparency.

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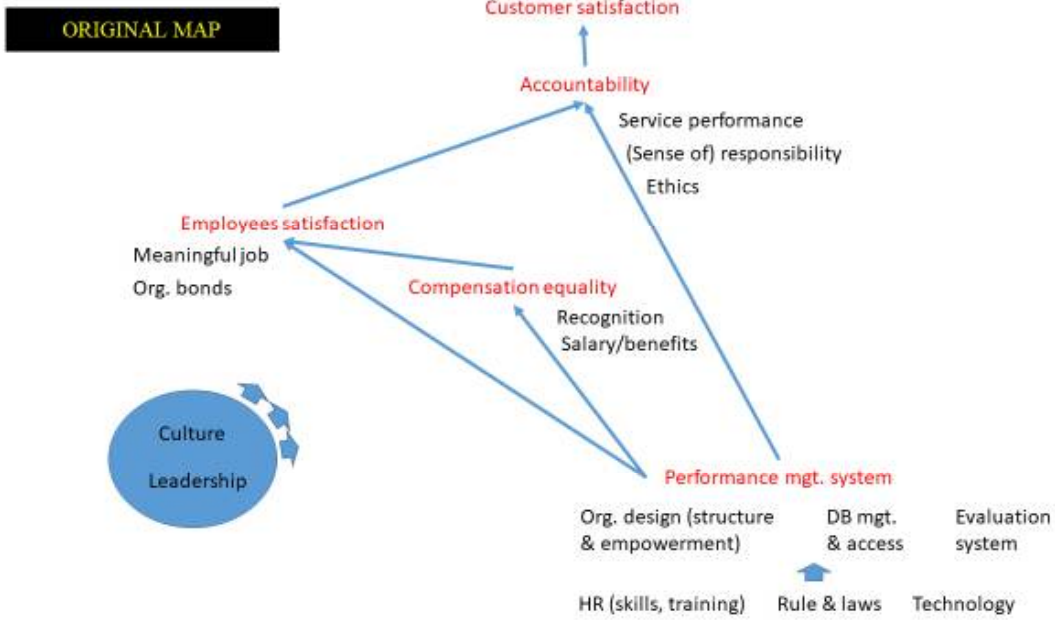
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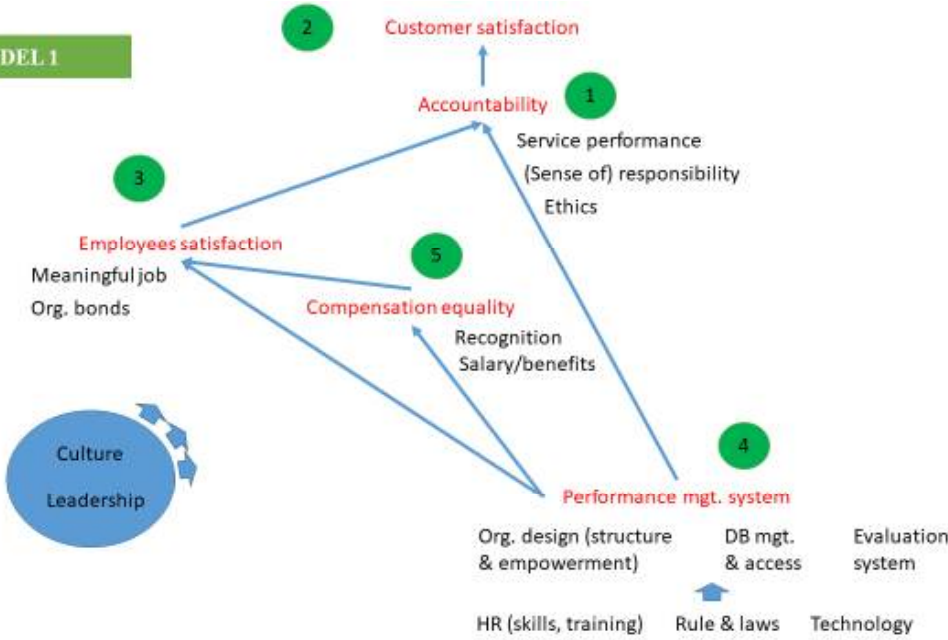
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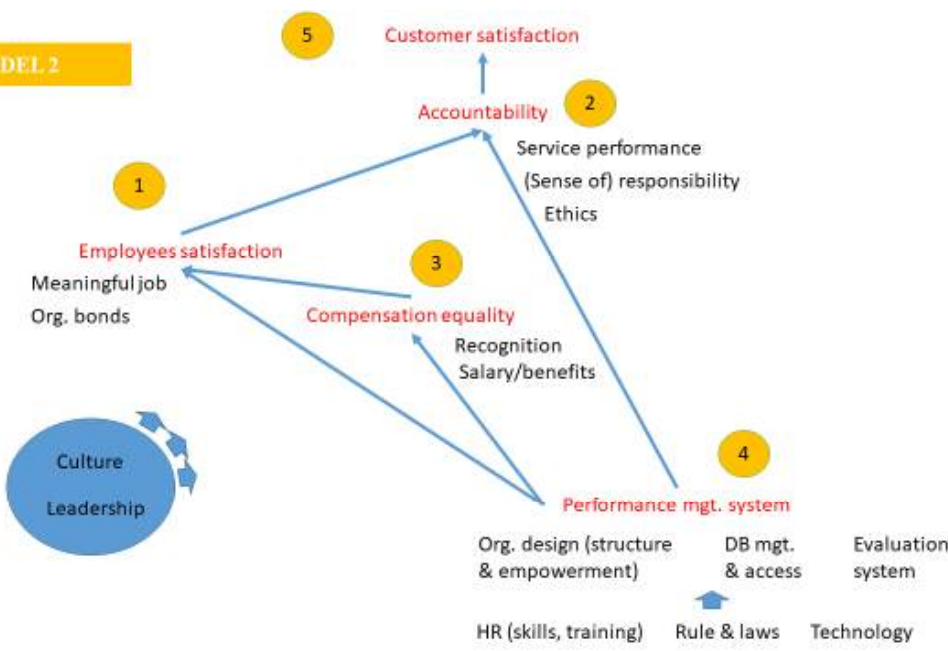
Appendices

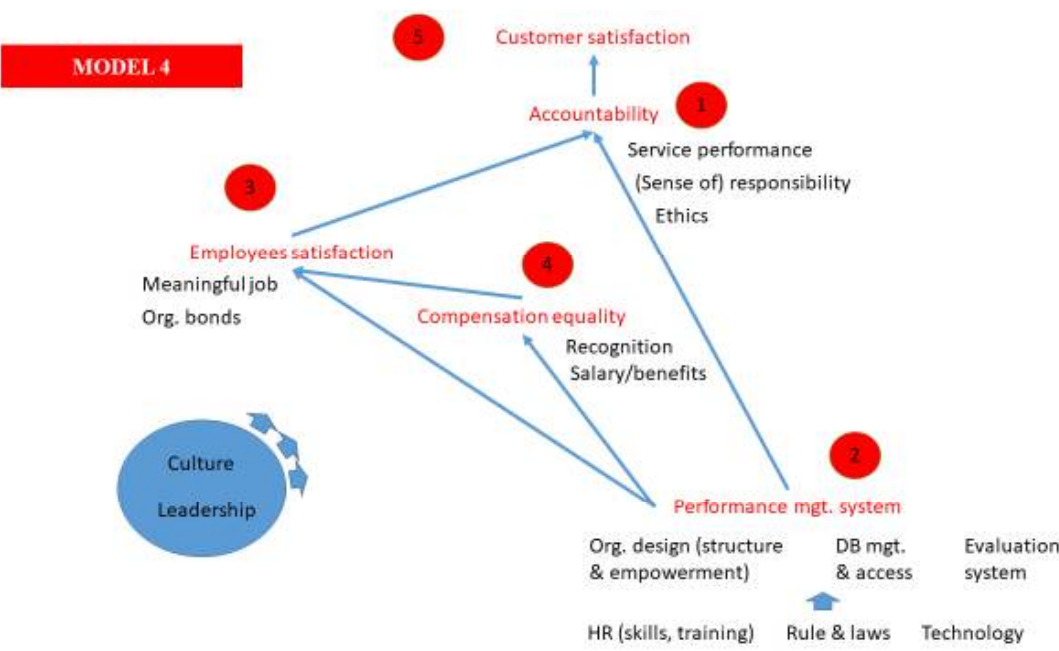
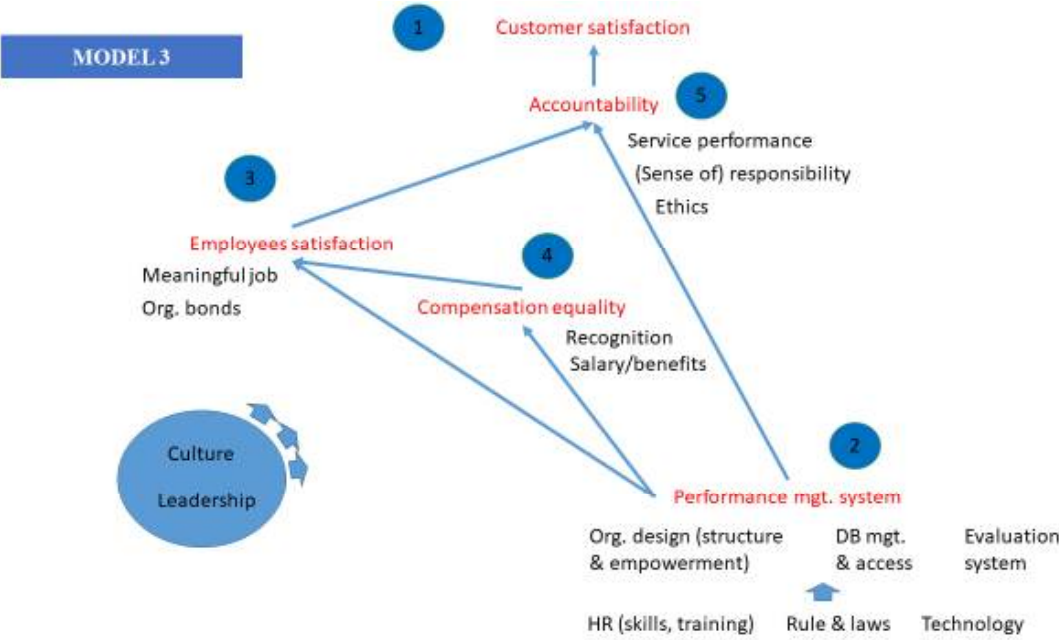


MODEL 1



MODEL 2





FINAL MODEL

