



Job Characteristics and Task Performance of Public Sector Employees in Sri Lanka: Mediating Role Work Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of the current study is to examine whether job characteristics and task performance of public sector employees in Sri Lanka's Western Province are mediated by employee work engagement. A quantitative research design was used in the study and data were collected using structured questionnaire from public sector employees by using stratified random sample. Reliability testing, correlation, multiple regression, moderation analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were used in the analysis of 361 valid responses using SPSS Version 25. The results showed that employee task performance is much improved by both job characteristics and work engagement. Additionally, the association between job characteristic and employee task performance is partially mediated by work engagement. As a result, job characteristics have an impact on employees' task performance both directly and indirectly through work engagement. As a result, each effect is considerable. According to the current study's findings in order to sustain and improve employee task performance, public sector organizations must adopt tactics that foster both job characteristic and work engagement. The findings support the job demand resources theory and the job characteristic theory, which contend that employees are more engaged at work and perform better on tasks when they have more interesting and fulfilling employment.

Keywords: Job characteristic, Public sector, Sri Lanka, Task performance, Work engagement

INTRODUCTION

Employee work engagement has been a popular research area among scholars over the last few decades due to its significance in business settings; though, empirical research on the mediating role of employee work engagement between job characteristics and employee task performance remains limited. However, there is still a dearth of empirical study on how employee work engagement mediates the relationship between job characteristics and task performance. The term "employee job performance" describes how well a person carries out their job obligations and responsibilities, including the caliber, volume, and effectiveness of the work they generate. It includes an employee's acts and behaviors that are valuable to the company, whether they are good or bad. More specifically, job performance includes: task performance, behavior performance, and characteristic performance (Koopman et al., 2014). Because employee task performance directly affects productivity, goal achievement, and overall business results, it is essential for organizational success. Fostering positive worker engagement is crucial for long-term success in today's organization environment. "A positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" is the definition of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Research by Wollaard and Shuck (2011) emphasizes significant elements driving engagement, including resilience, corporate culture, motivation, job characteristics, and leadership. According to a number of researchers (Mugo et al., 2014; Adierani, 2019) that show their significant influence on employee engagement, job characteristics stand out among these as a crucial motivator. Three categories of outcomes in work engagement: individual, organizational, and intangible outcomes. Individual-level outcomes include job involvement, affective commitment, job performance, motivation, organization citizenship behaviour, and task performance (Bakker and Demerout, 2007; Xanthopoulou and Bakker, 2009a).

Problem and Problem Justification

Task performance is known as degree to which an employee's job tasks meet organizational requirements in terms of quality, quantity, and timeliness (Adekiya, 2023). Chu et al (2024) stated that task performance refers

to behavioral patterns involved directly with manufacturing commodities or providing services closely linked to those outputs. In order to determine areas for improvement, offer possibilities for growth, and decide on awards and promotions, organizations frequently evaluate employees' task performance. Poor employee task performance can have wide-ranging negative impacts on both the individual, the team, and the overall organization. In addition, it includes decreased productivity, lower quality of work, reduced morale, disruptive behavior, non-compliance with policies, increased absenteeism and turnover, negative impact on management, damage to company image, potential legal and financial consequences, unfair performance management, and financial costs and organizational success, making it essential for employers to address performance issues promptly and effectively.

Job design is the process of arranging, structuring, and defining the duties, responsibilities, and relationships connected with a specific job to achieve both organizational goals and improve employee satisfaction, productivity, and work performance. Effective job design maximizes performance and adds value by incorporating the responsibilities, credentials, and techniques required to carry out certain activities or projects. In essence, job design is a key human resource and management process that determines how work is carried out and perceived within an organization, thereby affecting both employee job performance and organizational success. Organizational psychologists Hackman and Oldham created the Job Characteristics Model (JCM), a theory of work design (Hackman, 1976). By concentrating on efficient job design, it offers a foundation for comprehending how particular job elements might improve employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance. The JCM lists five essential job qualities that might boost motivation and job satisfaction when they are present in a position: Five key job characteristics are Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy and Feedback. These five characteristics influence three crucial psychological states among employees: meaningfulness of the task, responsibility for outcomes, and understanding of the actual results of their effort. Employees are more likely to feel increased motivation, job satisfaction, and performance as well as decreased absenteeism and turnover when these psychological states are present.

Kahn (1990) first introduced the idea of work engagement. He stated work engagement as "a psychological state of mind and it is explained as" the harnessing of an organization's members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employees express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during job performance. There are many antecedents (Wollaard and Shuck, 2011) and consequences (Sack, 2006) of work engagement. Further, several scholars have noted that work engagement influences employees' job performance, including task performance (Mugo et al., 2014; Mustasa, 2016).

The research context and sample for the current study are public-sector employees in the Western Province in Sri Lanka. Over the last decade, public sector employees have faced several challenges, including structural and cultural issues that influence employee efficiency, outcomes, accountability, and reform in Sri Lanka. Following the country's bankruptcy, the Sri Lankan government entered into an arrangement with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to obtain credit facilities to exit the predicament. They researched the state of the nation from various perspectives and they requested that several requirements be fulfilled to obtain financial assistance, paying particular attention to the performance of public sector employees and organizations.

Furthermore, World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have lately made remarks regarding the structure and performance of Sri Lankan public sector workers, particularly in light of the nation's budgetary adjustment and economic reform initiatives since 2022. Their analysis, which focuses in particular on efficiency, productivity, wage competitiveness, and the need for ongoing change, indicates both advancements and difficulties in public sector performance. As part of larger economic and governance changes, the IMF and World Bank support reforms that redefine responsibilities, bolster accountability, modernize procedures, and foster a merit- and results-based workplace, all of which influence the job functions of Sri Lanka's public sector workers.

Effective job performance among Sri Lankan public sector workers is crucial for the country's financial stability and improved services, according to the IMF and World Bank. However, accomplishing these calls for significant changes to compensation, incentives, hiring, and evaluation procedures—moving toward a more accountable, competitive, and results-driven public sector (<https://www.elibrary.imf.org>). Both groups emphasize the importance of recognizing key job characteristics, particularly regarding compensation and incentives, to boost

public sector productivity and attract and retain talented individuals in Sri Lankan public sector.

In the literature review, researcher has identified that numerous scholars (Ali & Zia-Ur-Rehman, 2014; Johari and Yahya, 2016; Johari et al., 2019) examined the influence of job characteristic on job performance including task performance. Researchers point out the significant influence of job characteristic on work engagement (Adiarani, 2019; Mugo et al., 2014). Already scholars (Dajani 2015; Demerouti and Cropanzano; 2010) revealed that the influence on work engagement on job performance including task performance.

In light of this, the public sector employees' needs to pay close attention to improving workers task performance through job characteristic and work engagement. Therefore, researchers strongly argue that enhancing employees' task performance in the public sector employees in Sri Lanka is possible by improving their job characteristics and work engagement. Therefore, the research problem is: Do job characteristics impact employees' task performance, with work engagement as the mediating variable among public sector employees in western province in Sri Lanka?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review presents under three sub categories such as conceptualization on task performance, conceptualization on work engagement and conceptualization on job characteristic.

Conceptualization Task Performance

Koopman et al. (2014) emphasized that task performance is a significant dimension of job performance. Task performance is the process by which workers directly assist or contribute to the conversion of input into output. For example, performance includes strategic planning and successfully accomplishing the defined aim. Scholars mentioned that task performance refers to the outcome of the independent task that differentiates one employment from another (Chu et al., 2024). Many academics (Ali and Zia-ur-Rehman, 2014; Hackman and Oldham, 1980) underlined that the work characteristics model plays a significant part in predicting employee job performance, among other variables. An individual's work performance has a key impact in an organization's growth. On the other hand, job performance is considered one of the most essential concepts in human resource research. Employee job performance is the measure of how effectively and efficiently an employee fulfills their role in contributing to organizational objectives, evaluated through task completion, behaviors, and overall impact on the workplace (Koopmans et al., 2014). Other researchers (Motowidlo et al., 1997; Campbell, 1990) also identified task performance as the primary dimension of job performance.

Task performance means the activities that directly assist the transformation of inputs into outputs. Further, they emphasized that task performance includes strategic planning, implementing, carrying out the supervisory orders, and operating machinery (Borman and Motowidl, 1993). Further they stressed that task performance relates to the outcome of the independent task that differentiates one job from another. The employees' task performance contributes to enhancing productivity and profitability, improving customer satisfaction and retention, enhancing innovation and adaptability, improving financial returns, and improving operational excellence.

Conceptualization of Job Characteristics

Organizational psychologists Hackman and Oldham (1976) created the Job Characteristics Model (JCM), a theory of work design. By concentrating on efficient job design, it offers a foundation for comprehending how particular job elements might improve employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance. The JCM lists five essential job qualities that might boost motivation and job satisfaction when they are present in a position: Five core job characteristics are Skill variety ((The amount to which a career demands a range of diverse activities and talents) , Task identity (The extent to which a job includes completing a whole and identifiable piece of work from start to end), Task significance (The impact a job has on other individuals, both within and beyond the business), Autonomy (An employee's degree of freedom of choice in planning and carrying out their task), Feedback (The degree to which employees receive clear and straightforward information regarding their job

performance). The JCM is essential to the job design process because it offers an organized framework for developing positions that support organizational objectives and are both rewarding and inspiring for workers. JCM influences job design in a number of ways, such as directing role structuring, emphasizing psychological states, influencing workable job design techniques, coordinating organizational and employee needs, and minimizing unfavorable results. The JCM is a fundamental tool in contemporary job design techniques because it allows firms to create or restructure employment to improve employee engagement, satisfaction, and overall effectiveness.

Conceptualization of Work Engagement

Kahn (1990) introduced the idea of employee work engagement in an article called "Psychological conditions of personal engagement and job disengagement in an Academy of Management Journal" (Saks, 2006; Simpson, 2009a). According to Kahn, engagement is a psychological state of mind and is defined as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance" (Kahn, 1990). The concept of engagement arises from trends in Occupational Health Psychology (OHP). It indicates that organizations require healthy and motivated employees to continue to survive and thrive in a changing environment (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2013). Furthermore, Work engagement is defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Vigor represents energy in handling the work; dedication refers to high involvement in the job, and absorption refers to strong attachment to the work and the difficulty of separating the worker from it (Schaufeli et al., 2002). One of the main scales is the Utrecht work engagement scale, developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). Today, more than ever, organizations need to manage their employees effectively amid the harsh, unforgiving environment they face. By implication, organizations require inventive, proactive, responsive, devoted, and cooperative personnel who are focused on high-quality performance (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2013). In brief, organizations require engaged workers to reach their organizational goals and objectives. Throughout the development of employee work engagement, it was found that meaningfulness, safety, and availability are closely tied to employee engagement (Mayetal., 2004). The employee's engagement with the organization and its values can also be described as a positive attitude (Robinson et al., 2004). Engage workers who understand the company's context and needs, either managers or followers. There is a two-way relationship that resembles psychological contracts. The connection is trust-based, but it can be broken at any time. The organization must promote and enhance employee employee's relationship (Robinson et al., 2004).

Literature Gap

The structural relationship between three constructs of JC, employees' work engagement, and task performance, as presented in previous part, validates the mediating role of work engagement in the JC and employee task performance association. To the author's knowledge, the role of work engagement as a mediator between JC and employee task performance has not been established/a small number of studies have been conducted with rigorous statistical analyses to date. This section provides new insights into the impact of JC on work engagement and employee task performance.

The majority of research studies focused on the causes and effects of work engagement while ignoring how employee engagement mediates or moderates certain variables (Li Sun, 2019). The present investigation bridges the current research gap.

While scholars (Dajani, 2015; Demerouti and Croppenzano, 2010; Ali and Zia-ur-Rehaman, 2014; Johari and Yahya, 2016) have shown an association among JC, work engagement, and job performance, including task performance, the literature does not offer guidance on how work engagement mediates five dimensions of JC and task performance. Scholars (Li sun, 2019; Madhyvadany & Panboli, 2019) emphasized the need for new research to examine the mediating effect of work engagement between new antecedents and its outcomes. The current research contributes to the JC, WE, and task performance literature by providing information on the mediating role of work engagement in the association between JC and task performance as well as mediating role of work engagement in the association between five dimensions of JC and task performance, and it helps to minimize one of the identified empirical gaps.

Hypotheses Development

Relationship between job characteristics and task performance

The job characteristic theory (Hackman and Oldham, 1976) mentioned that three psychological states—meaningfulness of work, responsibility, and feedback or awareness of outcomes—are associated with high motivation. Attractive and motivating job design gives employees the chance to use a variety of skills and talents to complete tasks, associate or identify closely with the task, feel empowered to perform the job through the autonomy and it provides, and receive sufficient feedback from the job completed (Johari, 2019). Ali and Zia-Ur-Rehman (2014) and Johari and Yahya (2016) reported that job characteristics have a positive impact on the employee's job performance, including task performance. Based on the above evidence, it is hypothesized that the:

H₁- Job characteristics positively impact the task performance of public sector employees of Western Province in Sri Lanka.

Relationship between job characteristics and work engagement

In the words of Hackman and Oldham (1976), job characteristics are a collection of factors related to the type of work and circumstances that are typically considered the primary drivers of employees' behavior. Numerous scholars (Saks, 2006; Mugo et al., 2014) have reported an association between job characteristics and work engagement. Based on the findings of the above-mentioned authors and JCM, the researcher developed the following hypothesis:

H₂- Job characteristics positively impact the work engagement of public sector employees of Western Province in Sri Lanka.

Relationship between work engagement and task performance

Numerous studies (Demerouti and Cropenzano, 2010; Dajani, 2015) have revealed a relationship between work engagement and job performance including task performance. The view of Job Demand resource theory also emphasized the above relationship (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) Based on the findings of the previous studies; the researcher formulated the hypothesis as;

H₃ - Work engagement impact on task performance of public sector employees of Western Province in Sri Lanka.

Mediator role of Work Engagement

As demonstrated in this study, the links between job characteristics and task performance are considerably mediated by work engagement. Based on Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics theory, the degree of meaningfulness, responsibility, and feedback results in a particular psychological state, which in turn leads to job-relevant behavior. For example, Rotenberry and Moberg (2007) found that highly involved individuals will work harder to accomplish corporate goals (Johari and yahya, 2016).

As noted by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), the Job Demand Resources model demonstrates that job resources (Autonomy, social support, supervisory coaching, and performance feedback) and personal resources (Hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism) help employees maintain their endurance and influence on work engagement. This cycle is called the motivational mechanism. It may take the form of performance reviews, the level of influence one has over one's work, and the essence of colleagues' social support. Furthermore, according to this model, work engagement influences work outcomes, including in-role performance, organizational citizenship behavior (extra-role performance), creativity, and financial success.

Additionally, Johari and Yahya (2016) found that attitudinal factors such as job involvement exert a significant mediating effect on job characteristic and job performance. According to Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics theory, a particular psychological state is preceded by job-relevant attitudes and behaviors, such

as work engagement. As a result, researcher firmly contend that work engagement serves as a mediator in the association between task performance and job characteristics. Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4- Work engagement mediates between job characteristics and task performance.

Furthermore, the researcher strongly suggested a mediating role for work engagement in each dimension of job characteristics and task performance, based on the Job Demand Resources model and JCM (Bakker and Demorouti, 2007; 2008; Bakker and Leiter, 2010; Hackman and Oldham's ,1975) and the previously mentioned empirical evidence.

H4 -The mediating role of work engagement relationship between job characteristics and task performance (Derived sub hypotheses of **H4a- H4e**: The mediating role of work engagement relationship between each dimension of job characteristics and task performance) of public sector employees of Western Province in Sri Lanka. This hypothesis was tested through five sub-hypotheses (H4a – H4e) as follows:

H4a: Work engagement mediates the relationship between task identity and task performance among public sector employees in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

H4b: Work engagement mediates the relationship between task significance and task performance among public sector employees in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

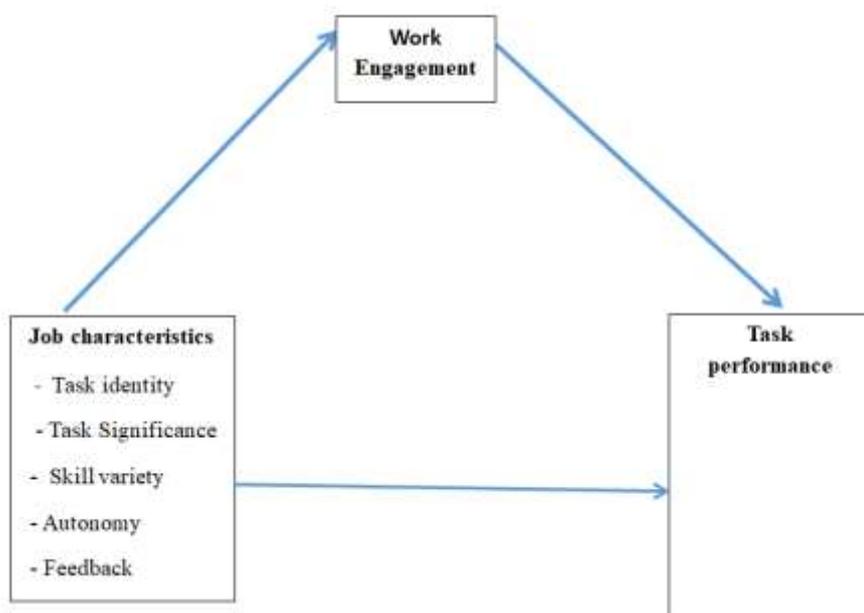
H4c: Work engagement mediates the relationship between skill variety and task performance among public sector employees in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

H4d: Work engagement mediates the relationship between autonomy and task performance among public sector employees in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

H4e: Work engagement mediates the relationship between feedback and task performance among public sector employees in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

This study offers a theoretical model that combines task performance, work engagement, and job characteristics, building on the literature review. Figure 1 provides a detailed description of the model. In particular, the job characteristics predictor of task performance and work engagement mediate the relationship.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Author Compilation (2025)

Material and Method

The research philosophy used in this study is positivistic, which is common in the literature. The positivist paradigm includes quantitative research (Saunders et al., 2015). Because the deductive approach better fits the positivist paradigm, the researcher has chosen to base the study's philosophy on it. The research design was causal link, and the research type was explanatory. This study demonstrates the mediator role of work engagement between job characteristics and task performance.

The study looked at mainly four hypotheses including (H_{4a} - H_{4e}) based on the quantitative information obtained from a structured survey in order to validate the hypotheses. Because of this, the study mostly employs a quantitative methodology. The deductive method was usually associated with survey research, according to Saunders et al. (2015). It also makes it feasible to collect a substantial amount of data from a large population. The data for this study was collected at a particular moment in time between June and September of 2025. The duration of the investigation is hence cross-sectional. The primary data was used in the research environment of the ten public sector organizations' employees in western province in Sri Lanka to address the research questions in the current study.

The analysis process involved three steps. As a first step, the dependability analysis was completed. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to validate the factor structure of a set of observed variables (Saunders et al., 2015). In the second step, descriptive statistical measures such as mean, frequencies, and categorization tables were employed. To further ascertain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, cross tabulations were employed. Regression and correlation analysis were then used to explain the relationship between the variables.

Sampling Procedure and Measures

Researcher is requesting a letter to get approval to carry out the survey were issued to head of administration of selected 10 organizations of the public sector in western province in Sri Lanka during the first phase of data collection. The letter included a brief clarification of the study's methodology and research objectives. Just ten organizations indicated that they would be willing to take part in the study. This study employed a stratified sample technique based on the number of organizations that replied. Following the stratification of the population, a specific proportion of respondents were selected from each stratum.

Total 450 questionnaires were distributed among employees in selected ten public sector organizations in western province in Sri Lanka. 376 completed questionnaires were returned. Finally, only 361 questionnaires were used for data analysis due to discarded of 15 questionnaires. Required sample size was 380 and respondent rate was 95%.

Public sector employees in the corresponding organizations were given self-administered questionnaires and asked to rate their agreement with the issues on a seven-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 strongly disagree, 7 strongly agree). The questionnaires include items that measure task performance, work engagement, and job characteristics.

The job diagnostic survey (JDS) by Hackman and Oldham (1975) was used to measure job characteristics. A total of 15 items were used to evaluate the job characteristics construct under five main dimensions and each was gauged by three items. Skill variety (e.g., I get to use a number of complex skills on this job), task identity (e.g., I do a complete task from start to finish), task significance (e.g., My job is an integral part of the organization), autonomy (e.g., I control the content of my job) and feedback (e.g., The work shows me with information about my performance).

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which was created by Schaufeli et al. (2003) and included three subscales—vigor, dedication, and absorption—was used to measure work engagement. According to earlier psychometric research, the work engagement scale has fair construct validity. The construct's (cross-national) validity, reliability, and stability were determined by additional research (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003). Vigor was measured using six items (e.g., "At my job, I feel strong and vigorous"). Five items measured the dedication (e.g., 'I am enthusiastic about my job'). The absorption assessment included six items (e.g., 'Time flies when

I'm working'). The responses are rated on a seven-point Likert scale as follows: 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

In this study, task performance was rated by supervisors. Seven items modified from Williams and Anderson (1991) were used to gauge respondents' task performance. "He/she tries to adopt the improved procedures for this department" is one such item for this supervisory ratings metric.

Data Analysis and Result

The suggested model, shown in Figure 1, was examined using correlation and regression analysis in SPSS Version 25.0. Confirmatory factor analysis, used to determine the factor structure of the data set, was employed for all scales in the current study. The validity of the questionnaire was assessed by the researcher using the KMO and Bartlett's test, and the KMO value for each variable was higher than 0.5. The researcher assessed the internal reliability of each variable through an internal reliability test, and the results showed that the Cronbach's alpha for every variable was greater than 0.7. Correlation between all variables is measured through correlation analysis and all independent variables were substantially correlated; job characteristic ($r = .860$, $P 0.01$) with task performance and work engagement ($r = .834$, $P 0.00$) with task performance.

Regression Analysis of the Study

Adjusted R Square (R^2)

According to Field (2009), the R Square (R^2) value indicates how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables in the model. The Adjusted R^2 provides a more accurate estimate by adjusting for the number of predictors used in the analysis. As shown in Table 01 the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.746 indicates that 75% of the variation in task performance is explained by the independent variables of job characteristic and work engagement. The remaining 25% of variation is influenced by other factors not included in this model.

Table :01 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.865 ^a	.748	.746	.773
a. Predictors: (Constant), EWE, JCM				

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The result shows that the regression model has a strong explanatory power and is suitable for predicting task performance among public sector employee in western province in Sri Lanka.

ANOVA Table

The ANOVA test assessed the overall significance of the regression model. As shown in Table 2, the F-value of 527.975 with $p = 0.000$ (< 0.05) confirms that the model significantly predicts task performance. Job characteristic and work engagement should be a strong influence on task performance among public sector employee in western province in Sri Lanka.

Table: 02 Results of ANOVA for Regression Model

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	631.533	2	315.766	527.975	.000 ^b

	Residual	212.913	356	.598		
	Total	844.446	358			
a. Dependent Variable: ETP						
b. Predictors: (Constant), EWE, JCM						

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the regression model is statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

Result of Hypotheses Testing

The below table presents the result of hypotheses testing:

Table 03: Result of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta value	t-statistic	Effect type (99% CL)
H ₁	Job Characteristic-Task Performance	1.0651	31.8468	Significant positive effect
H ₂	Job Characteristic-Work Engagement	1.130	48.3191	Significant positive effect
H ₃	Work Engagement- Task Performance	0.8514	28.5575	Significant positive effect

Source: Survey Data -2025

H₁- Job characteristics positively impact on task performance of public sector employees of western province in Sri Lanka.

The data analysis revealed a substantial association ($r=.860$, $p=0.000$) at 99% confidence level between job characteristic and task performance of public sector employees of western province in Sri Lanka. The regression output ($\beta=1.0651$), $p=0.000$, indicates this. public sector employees task performance was revealed to be positively and significantly impacted by job characteristic. The research's conclusions are consistent with the main premises of several scholars (Johari and Yahya,2016; Ali and Zia-Ur-Rehaman,2014; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Hackman and Oldham,1976).

H₂- Job characteristics positively impact on employee work engagement of public sector employees of western province in Sri Lanka.

Job characteristics have a positive impact on employees' work engagement in public sector employees. At 99% confidence, there was a significant positive correlation ($r=.931$, $p=0.000$) between employee work engagement and job characteristics. The model output ($\beta=1.130$, $p=0.000$), indicated that public sector employees' work engagement was positively impacted by job characteristics. The results of the current investigation corroborate those of earlier investigations (Adiarani,2019; Saks,2006; Hackman and Oldham,1976). The study comes to the conclusion that public sector employees' work engagement is correlated and influenced by job characteristics.

H₃ - Work engagement impact on task performance of public sector employees of western province in Sri Lanka.

The data analysis revealed a substantial association ($r=.834$, $p=0.000$) between work engagement and task performance of public sector employees of western province in Sri Lanka. In the table 03, the model output ($\beta=0.8514$, $p=0.000$), indicated that public sector employees' task performance was revealed to be positively and significantly impacted by work engagement. Numerous researchers (Dajani,2015; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Hackman and Oldham, 1976) found strong impact of employee work engagement on job performance including task performance. therefor current study findings were aligned with previous research findings.

H₄ - Work engagement mediate with job characteristic and task performance of public sector employees of western province in Sri Lanka.

Table 04: Mediator Analysis

	Relationship	Coefficient	P-value	Decision (99% CL)
H₁	JC – ETP	1.065	0.000	Direct, Significant
H₂	JC-WE	1.130	0.000	Direct, Significant
H₃	WE- ETP	0.851	0.000	Direct, Significant
H₄	JC-WE-ETP	0.287	-	Indirect-mediate

Source: Survey Data -2025

Employees' task performance and job characteristics are mediated by work engagement. It is stressed that improved job design helps boost employee work engagement, which, in turn, boosts task performance. Both job characteristics and work engagement play significant roles in determining an employee's task performance, as evidenced by the considerable and favorable direct and indirect associations. The current study's findings align with JD-R theory and job characteristics theory.

Mediator Analysis with dimensions of job characteristics

The below table is present; supporting hypotheses (H4: H4a, H4b, H4c, H4d and H4e) the mediation test was used to examine the impact of employee work engagement on association between job characteristic dimensions (task identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy and feedback) with employee task performance using Sobel Test.

Table 04: Mediator Analysis based on each dimension of JC

	Relationship	Indirect effects	Direct effects	Total effect	P-value	Effect 99% CL
H4a	Task identity-WE-ETP	0.5300	0.2978	0.8278	0.000	Partial Mediation
H4b	Task significance-WE-ETP	0.6092	0.1285	0.7377	0.009	Partial Mediation
H4c	Skill variety-WE-ETP	0.5433	0.2938	0.8371	0.000	Partial Mediation
H4d	Autonomy-WE-ETP	0.7554	0.7554	0.328	0.000	Partial Mediation
H4e	Feedback-WE-ETP	0.3644	0.485	0.850	0.000	Partial Mediation

Source: Survey Data -2025

The result of table 04 clearly display the mediator effect of work engagement as mediator between job characteristic dimensions (task identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy and feedback) and employee task performance; task identity (H4a, $\beta = 0.5300$, $p < 0.000$), task significance (H4b, $\beta = 0.6092$, $p < 0.009$), skill variety (H4c, $\beta = 0.5433$, $p < 0.000$) autonomy (H4d $\beta = 0.7554$, $p < 0.000$) and feedback (H4e, $\beta = 0.3644$, $p < 0.000$) respectively. The indirect effects for each of the five hypotheses are statistically significant at the 1% level ($P < 0.01$), indicating that employee work engagement mediates each association between the corresponding core dimensions of job characteristics and employee task performance. Zhao et al. (2010), this is a partial mediation, as the results demonstrate that job characteristic impact task performance both directly and indirectly through work engagement.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE RESEARCH

This investigation demonstrates that both job characteristic and work engagement, significantly enhance employee task performance. Additionally, the association between job characteristic and employee task performance is partially mediated by work engagement. Therefore, job characteristics affect employee task performance both such as direct and indirectly via work engagement. As a result, each effect is significant. Therefore, the current study's findings emphasize that it is vital for public sector institution to implement strategies that cultivate both job design and work engagement to maintain and boost employee task performance. The results align with the job demand resources (JDR) theory, which states that when workers have more appealing and meaningful jobs, they are more engaged at work and their task performance improves.

In addition, the current study revealed that each dimension of job characteristics influences employees' work engagement and task outcomes. This study confirms and extends existing knowledge on job characteristic theory by empirically demonstrating the mediating effect of work engagement in the association between each dimension of job characteristic and task performance. In practice, public sector human resource professionals should focus on providing meaningful work, creating more satisfying and enriching jobs with high levels of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. This focus could serve as a helpful foundation for improving both the work engagement and employee task performance with public sector employees.

In conclusion, to sustain satisfactory levels of employee engagement and task performance, management must create effective job designs, assign meaningful jobs to employees, and motivate them to perform in their job roles successfully. That strategy will encourage motivated, committed, and effective employees who align with public sector objectives.

These suggestions can be forwarded for additional research; future studies could compare workers in the public and private sectors to see if the associations found are sector-specific. Deeper understanding of the boundary conditions of the mediation model might also be possible by looking into potential demographic moderators, such as role type or employment tenure. A more thorough and reliable test of the entire theoretical framework and its direct and indirect pathways would be possible from a methodological standpoint by using structural equation modeling.

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