

The Impact of Job Satisfaction on Employees' Organizational Commitment in Local Councils in the Maldives

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of job satisfaction on employees' organizational commitment within the local councils of the Maldives. The research was motivated by the critical role of satisfied and committed staff in delivering effective public services, especially in small island developing states facing unique human resource challenges. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed, collecting data from local council employees using a structured questionnaire. Statistical analyses (including correlation and regression) were conducted to evaluate the relationship between job satisfaction (the independent variable) and organizational commitment (the dependent variable). Guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model, the conceptual framework posited that higher job satisfaction – driven by both intrinsic motivators and extrinsic hygiene factors – would lead to stronger organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative). The findings supported this expectation: job satisfaction was positively and significantly associated with organizational commitment. However, the effect size was modest, indicating that while greater job satisfaction tends to boost commitment, other factors also contribute to employees' commitment levels. These results underscore the importance of enhancing both the intrinsic aspects of work (e.g. recognition, meaningful tasks) and extrinsic conditions (e.g. fair pay, job security) to foster a more committed local government workforce. The study offers empirical evidence in the Maldivian context, filling a gap in the literature on public sector employees in small island settings. It also provides practical implications for policymakers and local council management, suggesting that initiatives to improve employee job satisfaction can strengthen organizational commitment, thereby potentially improving retention, performance, and service delivery at the grassroots level.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Employee commitment, Local Councils, Maldives

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Resource Constraints and Employee Burnout

Local councils in the Maldives operate under severe resource constraints, with limited finances and understaffing delaying their mandate of community development. Decentralization empowered councils to drive local development, but inadequate budgets and shortages of staff or equipment have shortened their impact (Azim, 2023). Many councils struggle to deliver services effectively due to these shortfalls, which overloads existing employees. As responsibilities grow while resources shrink, council staff often shoulder extra duties under unrealistic workloads that erode job satisfaction and lead to burnout (Springbrook Software, 2023). This strain is not unique to the Maldives only. Generally, when organizations manage "greater responsibilities with shrinking resources," heavy workloads and high stress follow. Empirical research confirms that resource availability is a significant predictor of job satisfaction. Employees who lack the necessary support and tools tend to feel less satisfied at (Asamani et al., 2025). In other words, inadequate funding and staffing not only impede service delivery but also undermine employee morale, making it harder for council workers to stay committed to organizational goals.

Political Pressure, Role Conflict, and Fear of Retribution

Employees in Maldivian local councils are frequently caught between political pressure and bureaucratic rules,

leading to damaging role conflict. Elected council members may push staff to act in favor of political interests, even when those actions conflict with formal regulations and procedures. Studies of municipal governance show that such improper political interference in administration strains relations between political leaders and officials, becoming “the order of the day” in many local governments (*AMH International*, n.d.). In the Maldives, council staff have reported fearing blacklisting or disciplinary transfers if they refuse to carry out orders that violate rules, yet they also risk audit sanctions if they comply with those improper directives. This no-win situation creates intense stress and role conflict for employees. Dependable with public-sector research, role conflict has a negative impact on job satisfaction (PLOS, 2025), when workers are torn between incompatible demands, their workplace happiness declines. Moreover, a climate of fear can erode organizational commitment: evidence indicates that when employees worry about retaliation or job loss, their satisfaction drops and their commitment to the organization weakens (*Scandinavian Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2023). For instance, a recent study found that job insecurity or the fear of losing one’s job is associated with significantly lower work satisfaction and reduced commitment (*Scandinavian Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 2023). The pervasive fear of political retribution in local councils exacerbates this problem. As a Transparency Maldives statement stressed, councils and staff must be able to operate independently “without fear of censorship or retribution,” underscoring how damaging a politicized, fear-based environment can be (MV+, n.d.). When council employees constantly fear retribution for following rules or speaking out, their job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization inevitably suffer (Wang et al., 2022).

Erosion of Administrative Autonomy and Its Impact on Satisfaction

Political interference not only pressures lower-level staff but also erodes the autonomy of senior administrators in local councils. Council Secretaries-General and other executives often lack the freedom to implement plans or use their professional judgment because elected councilors or higher authorities intervene in day-to-day administration. In many cases, politicians override management decisions or even attempt to perform administrative tasks themselves, blurring the lines of authority in the council. A study from South Africa illustrates the consequence: persistent political-administrative interference hampers service delivery and normalizes a breakdown of the professional chain of command (*AMH International*, n.d.-b). Similar patterns have been observed in Maldivian councils, where councilors sometimes intrude on the functions of the civil service staff, hampering the council secretariat’s effectiveness. This loss of administrative autonomy is problematic because job autonomy is a key driver of employee satisfaction. Research shows that employees with a high degree of autonomy; control over their work scheduling, decisions, and methods, feel significantly more satisfied in their jobs (*Economics and Finance Research / IDEAS/REPEC*, n.d.). Conversely, when skilled officials are micromanaged or their decisions constantly overturned due to political meddling, their sense of autonomy and purpose diminishes. This likely drains their job satisfaction and weakens their commitment to the council. Over time, experienced staff become demotivated and may disengage or leave, undermining the council’s capacity. In sum, persistent political interference not only undermines good governance but also negatively affects employees’ morale and organizational commitment. Ensuring clear boundaries and protecting administrative autonomy would help improve job satisfaction among council employees (Zychová *et al.*, 2024) and bolster the overall effectiveness of local councils.

Problem Statement

Employees of local councils in the Maldives face increasing strain due to persistent resource shortages, including inadequate budgets, limited staffing, and insufficient infrastructure. These conditions leave staff overwhelmed with responsibilities and unable to perform their roles effectively. Over time, the lack of support fosters chronic stress, fatigue, and disengagement, particularly among employees who feel their efforts are neither acknowledged nor impactful. As frustration builds, staff may become emotionally detached from their work, leading to reduced job satisfaction and a diminished sense of commitment to the council.

Alongside resource constraints, council employees must navigate complex political dynamics that often force them into ethically and professionally compromising situations. Elected council members may issue directives that contradict administrative rules, creating a dilemma for employees who must choose between job security and procedural integrity. This conflict produces an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty, where staff worry about retribution, blacklisting, or disciplinary action. Such role conflict and job insecurity erode trust in the institution

and contribute to emotional exhaustion, reducing motivation and the willingness to stay engaged in long-term organizational goals.

For senior staff and executives, frequent political interference undermines professional autonomy and disempowers leadership. When elected officials override technical expertise or block the implementation of strategic work plans, experienced professionals are left feeling ineffective and demoralized. The inability to apply their skills independently or make decisions aligned with organizational objectives leads to frustration and a loss of purpose in their roles. This erosion of autonomy reduces intrinsic motivation and weakens organizational commitment, particularly among skilled staff who may consider exiting the public sector altogether.

Given these conditions, employee dissatisfaction and weakened commitment within local councils are not only personal issues but also institutional threats. Without immediate attention to the root causes and consequences of these challenges, councils risk losing valuable human capital, diminishing service quality, and weakening the foundation of local governance.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of job satisfaction on employees' organizational commitment in local councils in the Maldives. Specifically, the research aims to:

1. To determine the extent to which job satisfaction influences employees' organizational commitment within the local councils of the Maldives.
2. To examine the impact of job satisfaction on organizational commitment among employees of local councils in the Maldives.

Significance of the Study

Local councils in the Maldives operate under severe constraints, making employee attitudes especially important for effective governance. As Adam Azim notes, local councils are responsible for community development plans but face "resource limitations, particularly in financing," and "limited expertise in local council administration" (Azim, 2023). In practice, this means council staff must often do more with less – longer hours, multi-tasking, and navigating unclear policies – which can undermine job satisfaction. In small island states, such constraints are compounded by systemic challenges. Everest-Phillips (2014) and Chittoo (2011) report that public services in SIDS frequently suffer from limited career opportunities, inadequate pay, and overextended personnel, leading to "low job satisfaction" and "high level of fear and frustration" among employees (Everest-Phillips, 2014) (Chittoo, 2011). These factors can depress morale and weaken commitment.

Improving job satisfaction and commitment is therefore crucial for local councils. Satisfied, committed employees are more engaged and productive, which can help councils deliver services despite budgetary and staffing shortages. Organizational psychology research finds a strong link between these attitudes: employees who are committed to their organization are more likely to stay and perform well, whereas low satisfaction tends to erode loyalty (Čulibrk, Delić*, Mitrović, & Čulibrk, 2018). In the Maldives, this connection has practical implications. For example, Lee Chin and Leow (2022) stress that supporting public servants' job satisfaction (through better work environment and training) is key to maintaining an "engaged workforce" even under crisis conditions (Chin & Leow, 2022). Analogously, enhancing satisfaction in local councils could improve retention and service quality.

Moreover, political interference and pressure from elected officials are acute concerns in Maldives local government. Azim highlights that "party politics and its impact on [councils]" is a current challenge (Azim, 2023). In many Small Island Development States (SIDS), blurred lines between political appointees and civil service create "bureaupathology" – alienation, insecurity, and frustration when employees feel their professional roles are undermined by politics (Everest-Phillips, 2014). These dynamics can lower job satisfaction and weaken commitment. Understanding how political pressure and administrative role conflict affect employees is therefore vital. Insights from this research will help local leaders and policymakers craft reforms – for instance, clarifying roles or insulating staff from political interference – to bolster motivation and commitment among council

employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical relationship between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are closely linked work attitudes that influence employee performance and retention. Research consistently shows a positive relationship between these variables, suggesting that satisfied employees tend to exhibit stronger commitment to their organization (Aziz, et al., 2021) (Lee, Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2022). This link has been observed across diverse sectors and countries – for example, Aziz et al. (2021) found in Iraqi universities that higher job satisfaction significantly predicted greater employee commitment (Aziz, et al., 2021). However, public sector contexts like local councils often involve unique challenges (such as limited budgets and political oversight) that can alter this relationship. Studies note that public-sector work motivations differ (e.g. public employees emphasize the “common good” and job security, unlike private-sector profit orientation) (Caoagdan, Millalos, Grino, Vigonte, & Abante, 2023). In resource-constrained local councils, factors like limited infrastructure and political interference may affect morale; similarly, issues of job insecurity and administrative stress can undermine satisfaction, ultimately weakening commitment. The current review integrates classic theories and recent findings (2020–2025) to understand how job satisfaction impacts organizational commitment in this setting, considering these sector-specific pressures.

Definitions

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction refers to the employee’s affective evaluation of their job and work environment. It encompasses feelings about various job facets (e.g. pay, work conditions, autonomy) and is often defined as a positive emotional state resulting from appraisal of one’s work (Lee, Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2022). For instance, Herzberg’s research classifies factors that increase satisfaction (motivators like achievement, recognition, responsibility) versus factors whose absence causes dissatisfaction (hygiene issues like poor salary, insecurity). In public/local council contexts, satisfaction may hinge on factors such as workload, autonomy in decision-making, and adequacy of resources. When these needs are met, employees feel content; if they face chronic shortages or bureaucratic constraints, satisfaction tends to fall.

Organizational Commitment: Organizational commitment is the psychological attachment and loyalty an employee feels toward their organization. It is commonly described by Meyer and Allen’s three-component model: (1) **Affective commitment** – emotional attachment and identification with the organization; (2) **Continuance commitment** – awareness of costs or losses associated with leaving (e.g. pensions or seniority); and (3) **Normative commitment** – a feeling of obligation to remain (often based on personal values or reciprocity) (Todorovic, et al., 2024). Employees high in commitment typically believe in the organization’s goals, want to stay with it, and see it as a good place to work. In the public sector, continuing employment (job security) often boosts continuance commitment, while factors like identification with public service values or perceived fairness influence the affective and normative dimensions.

Decentralized Local Governance: Decentralized local governance refers to the system in which decision-making authority, responsibilities, and resources are transferred from central government to local government bodies, allowing those local entities a degree of autonomy in managing their affairs. In a decentralized governance structure, elected local councils or authorities are empowered to govern local matters such as community development, service delivery, and resource allocation, in closer contact with the citizens they serve. According to the OECD, decentralization involves shifting powers and functions “from the central government to elected authorities at the subnational level, with some degree of autonomy” (OECD, 2020). The intention behind decentralized local governance is to deepen democracy and improve efficiency by bringing government closer to the people. In the Maldives, for example, a Decentralization Act in 2010 established island, atoll, and city councils as local governance units tasked with managing community services and development at the local level (Transparency Maldives, 2020). This reform was aimed at empowering local communities and improving public service delivery through greater local decision-making. Decentralized local governance in practice means that local councils have defined powers to plan and execute local policies, though they must still coordinate with national authorities and operate within national frameworks. Effective decentralized governance

requires not only legal autonomy but also adequate resources and capacity at the local level. Challenges such as limited funding, capacity gaps, or unclear delineation of responsibilities can affect how well local councils in a decentralized system perform (Transparency Maldives, 2020).

Employee Management in Local Councils: Employee management in local councils refers to the strategies and processes through which local government bodies handle their human resources. This concept encompasses the full range of human resource management (HRM) functions — including recruiting and selecting staff, training and developing employees, managing performance, and retaining talent — within the context of a local council (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Effective employee management in councils is crucial because the performance of local governments largely depends on the competence and commitment of their employees. Key elements of managing council employees involve ensuring that staff roles are clearly defined, providing necessary training and professional development, evaluating performance fairly, and maintaining motivation and job satisfaction through appropriate incentives and work conditions. Because local councils operate in the public sector, their HR practices must often align with public service regulations and may be influenced by central civil service rules or oversight agencies. Moreover, local councils in a decentralized system can face particular challenges in HR management, such as limited administrative capacity or resources for employee development (Transparency Maldives, 2020). For instance, studies of Maldives local councils have noted gaps in formal training and human resource capacity, which can hinder effective service delivery (Transparency Maldives, 2020). Therefore, robust employee management—grounded in principles of good governance and best HRM practices—is essential for local councils to build a skilled, satisfied, and committed workforce that can meet the needs of the community.

Theoretical Frameworks

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: Herzberg's model distinguishes between **motivators** (intrinsic factors) and **hygiene factors** (extrinsic conditions) that affect job satisfaction. Motivators (such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and autonomy) lead to higher satisfaction when present, while poor hygiene factors (such as low pay, poor working conditions, inadequate supervision) cause dissatisfaction if absent (Lee, Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2022). Research affirms this distinction: Lee et al. (2022) analyzed 355,199 South Korean job reviews and found that both motivational and hygiene factors had significant positive effects on overall job satisfaction (Lee, Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2022). In the context of local councils, this theory suggests that increasing employee autonomy, recognizing good performance, and providing meaningful work (motivators) should boost satisfaction and, by extension, commitment. Conversely, addressing hygiene issues – for example ensuring fair pay, job security, and adequate facilities – is necessary to prevent dissatisfaction. When hygiene needs are unmet, employees may become disengaged; when motivators are absent (even if hygiene needs are met), satisfaction and commitment may plateau.

Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model: According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organizational commitment consists of three distinct components (Todorovic, et al., 2024). Affective commitment arises from an emotional bond with the organization (employees *want* to stay); continuance commitment is based on weighing losses vs. gains of leaving (employees *need* to stay, often due to job security or tenure); and normative commitment derives from feelings of obligation (employees *ought* to stay, out of loyalty or gratitude) (Todorovic, et al., 2024). This framework helps interpret how job satisfaction influences commitment. For example, satisfaction in meaningful work and supportive leadership may strengthen affective commitment, because employees feel valued and aligned with organizational goals. Satisfaction with pay and benefits contributes to continuance commitment, as employees realize tangible gains they would forfeit if they left. Normative commitment may be reinforced when the organization's HRM (through training or fair treatment) inculcates a sense of duty. In local councils, where turnover is often low, continuance and normative commitment are typically high. However, to foster strong affective commitment, councils must ensure that employees are satisfied in their daily roles.

Social Exchange Theory (SET): SET posits that employment relationships are built on reciprocal exchange: when an organization provides support and benefits, employees feel obliged to reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors (Todorovic, et al., 2024). In practice, this means that fair treatment, trust, and organizational support (e.g. providing adequate resources or career development) will encourage employees to be more

committed. For instance, Öztürk et al. (2017) found that a supportive organizational environment helped employees buffer stressors (like job insecurity) and maintain commitment (Todorovic, et al., 2024). In other words, if local councils demonstrate concern for their workers (through transparent decision-making, opportunities for autonomy, and job stability), employees are more likely to “repay” that support by staying committed. SET thus implies that boosting job satisfaction through fair exchanges will engender higher commitment (and vice versa).

Gaps related to issue/problems

While prior research has established a strong link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in various sectors and countries (Aziz et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2022), few studies have examined how this relationship functions within decentralized local councils facing systemic constraints. Public sector environments; particularly in developing island nations introduce unique challenges such as political interference, constrained budgets, administrative overlap, and job insecurity, which can distort this satisfaction–commitment dynamic. In the Maldives, local councils must navigate unclear boundaries between political and administrative roles, limited autonomy, and persistent staffing and resource shortages. Despite these realities, empirical studies that investigate the psychological and organizational impact of these stressors on council employees remain scarce. This study addresses that gap by analyzing how job satisfaction influences organizational commitment among employees in Maldivian local councils, accounting for sector-specific pressures such as role conflict, autonomy loss, and resource constraints.

Conceptual Frameworks

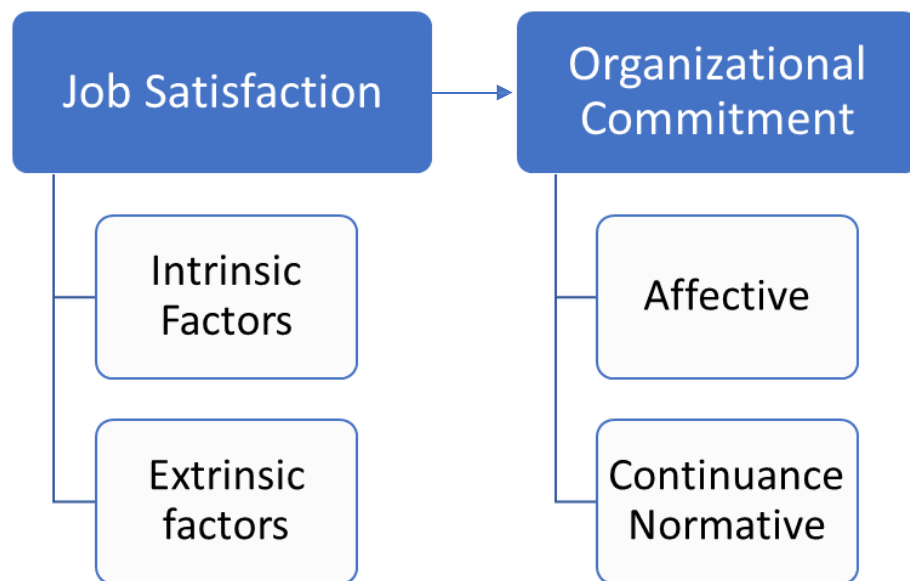


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework linking job satisfaction and organizational commitment

The figure illustrates how the independent variable, **job satisfaction**, influences the dependent variable, **organizational commitment**. Specifically, job satisfaction in this study is viewed as a function of both **intrinsic factors** (motivators such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement) and **extrinsic factors** (hygiene conditions such as salary, job security, working conditions, and supervision). According to Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, the presence of motivators leads to higher satisfaction, while the absence of adequate hygiene factors causes dissatisfaction (Miah & Hasan, 2022). Thus, local council employees’ overall job satisfaction can be raised by providing enriching, meaningful work and recognition (to activate intrinsic motivation) as well as by ensuring fair pay, stable conditions, and supportive management (to meet extrinsic needs).

Drawing on Meyer and Allen’s Commitment Theory, organizational commitment is understood as a multi-dimensional construct with **affective**, **continuance**, and **normative** components (MAYDIANTORO, et al., 2021). Affective commitment refers to an emotional attachment (employees *want* to stay with the organization),

continuance commitment refers to awareness of costs associated with leaving (employees *need* to stay), and normative commitment refers to a sense of obligation (employees feel they *ought* to stay) (Todorovic, et al., 2024). In the conceptual framework, higher job satisfaction is hypothesized to positively influence organizational commitment across all these components. When council employees are satisfied in their jobs, they are more likely to develop a stronger emotional bond with the organization (higher affective commitment) and a greater desire to remain, as supported by prior studies in various contexts. For example, if employees feel a sense of achievement and receive recognition at work (intrinsic satisfaction), they may become more emotionally committed to the council's goals and values. Satisfaction with extrinsic conditions, such as salary or job security, can increase continuance commitment by making the prospect of leaving less attractive due to potential losses in benefits. Additionally, a fair and supportive work environment can foster a sense of loyalty, bolstering normative commitment as employees feel grateful and obligated to reciprocate with dedication.

Overall, the conceptual framework proposes that intrinsic motivators and extrinsic hygiene factors are key antecedents of job satisfaction, which in turn drives higher organizational commitment. In the Maldivian local councils, this means that efforts to enrich employees' jobs (e.g. through professional development and recognition) and to improve work conditions (e.g. fair compensation, adequate resources) should translate into more committed employees. The framework is guided by Herzberg's theory in understanding how job satisfaction is formed and by Meyer & Allen's model in understanding how commitment is manifested, providing a theoretical basis for expecting a positive relationship between the two main constructs.

SYNTHESIS OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE

Recent studies continue to confirm that higher job satisfaction generally translates into stronger organizational commitment across sectors and cultures. For example, Aziz et al. (2021) surveyed faculty at Iraqi private universities and reported that employees with greater job satisfaction were significantly more committed; they concluded that satisfied staff naturally tend to develop affective and normative bonds with the organization. Similarly, several studies in Asian and Middle Eastern contexts have found positive JS–OC links. In Saudi banks, Cherif (2020) showed that HR practices improving job satisfaction strongly predict organizational commitment. Studies in Indonesia and the Philippines echo this pattern: (Basalamah & As'ad, 2021) and (Yanti, Simanjuntak, & Sulistio, 2024) found that when bank and utility employees, respectively, felt satisfied (through recognition and supportive management), their commitment and performance rose. In Myanmar, Thant and Chang (2021) applied Herzberg's model and found that both motivators and hygiene factors drove public-sector workers' job satisfaction, implying that satisfaction-enhancing changes (e.g. more autonomy or better conditions) would strengthen commitment as well. Degef and Kidane (2024) examined Ethiopian public polytechnic colleges and found a positive (though modest) correlation between faculty job satisfaction and their organizational commitment. They suggested that improvements in workplace communication, team cohesion, and professional development opportunities could strengthen this relationship (*ERIC - Education Resources Information Center*, n.d.). In public healthcare, Fantahun et al. (2023) reported that Ethiopian hospital employees who felt satisfied with key factors – such as recognition, supervisor support, a positive work climate, and reasonable workload – showed significantly higher commitment levels. By contrast, overall commitment among staff lacking these satisfiers was notably low (mean score of 49%) reinforcing the need for managers to boost employee morale through “evidence-based satisfaction strategies” and empowerment initiatives. These findings indicate that even in resource-constrained public services, basic drivers like fair recognition and supportive leadership are crucial for cultivating committed employees (*BMC Health Services Research*, 2025).

Similarly, in a Nigerian local government context, Kachalla et al. (2024) demonstrated that a supportive work environment can boost commitment via its positive impact on job satisfaction. In their study, the “social” dimension of the work environment (e.g. collegial support and good supervisor relationships) had a significant uplifting effect on employees' satisfaction, which in turn strongly predicted greater organizational commitment. This mediating role of satisfaction underscores the importance of a positive, holistic work climate for public-sector employee commitment.

Large-scale and cross-cultural analyses reinforce these findings. (Lee, Lee, Choi, & Kim, 2022) using massive job-review data from South Korea, confirmed that key two-factor elements (such as career advancement opportunities and company culture) have broad positive effects on satisfaction, which is known to correlate with

commitment (Caoagdan, Millalos, Grino, Vigonte, & Abante, 2023). A Chinese survey of state-owned enterprise employees (Guo, 2023) similarly found a significant positive effect of overall job satisfaction on all dimensions of commitment.

Likewise, comparative research (Caoagdan et al., 2023) shows that public-sector workers tend to value non-financial satisfiers (e.g. meaningful work, recognition) more than private-sector counterparts (Caoagdan, Millalos, Grino, Vigonte, & Abante, 2023), suggesting different levers for commitment in the two sectors. Across these studies, common stressors have been noted: job insecurity and stressors consistently undermine both satisfaction and commitment. For instance, Praptingstyas et al. (2021) and others report that employees facing greater job uncertainty exhibit lower job satisfaction and commitment (Caoagdan, Millalos, Grino, Vigonte, & Abante, 2023). In contrast, perceptions of organizational support and fair treatment can buffer these effects (as Öztürk et al. found (Caoagdan, Millalos, Grino, Vigonte, & Abante, 2023).

Leadership quality and employee needs also play pivotal roles. In an Ethiopian public hospital study, Fantahun et al. (2023) observed that employees who were more satisfied with recognition, work climate, and supervisory support tended to exhibit higher organizational commitment (*BMC Health Services Research*, 2025b). They further noted that practicing supportive leadership (e.g. transformational behaviors) and empowering staff (enhancing autonomy) were associated with stronger commitment levels among public health workers. Likewise, Aunin et al. (2024) showed that in German public organizations, ethical leadership positively influenced employees' job satisfaction and affective commitment – and importantly, this leadership effect on satisfaction was more pronounced for employees with a high need for autonomy (Aunin et al., 2024). In other words, public servants who crave greater autonomy gain even more satisfaction from ethical, supportive leaders, highlighting autonomy as a moderating factor in the satisfaction–commitment dynamic. Another contextual factor is job security: in a comparative study, Todorović et al. (2024) found that public-sector employees in a transitional economy (Serbia) reported higher continuance commitment than their private-sector counterparts, likely due to the greater job security in government jobs (Todorović et al., 2024). This indicates that the stability inherent in many public- sector roles can strengthen employees' ongoing commitment by reducing turnover incentives.

Overall, the latest evidence from diverse developing and municipal settings reinforces that while job satisfaction and organizational commitment are tightly linked, factors such as supportive work environments, effective leadership (with ethical and transformational qualities), employee recognition, perceived autonomy, and secure employment conditions critically shape the depth and durability of public employees' commitment to their organizations.

Literature Gap

Despite its practical importance, the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Maldivian local councils is largely unstudied. In fact, there is almost no published research on these topics in the context of small-island governance. Most existing studies focus on larger countries or general public sectors, not the unique SIDS environment. For example, one recent study examined determinants of Maldives civil servants' job satisfaction during the COVID- 19 pandemic (Chin & Leow, 2022), but it did not address organizational commitment or the wider factors affecting local government work. To our knowledge, no empirical study has specifically surveyed local council employees in the Maldives or similar island states about their job attitudes.

Scholars note a similar void in other small developing states; even in Pacific microstates, the conditions and attitudes of local government workers have been largely overlooked in the literature (Naidu, Chand, & Nanau, 2022). This lack of context-specific research is a critical gap given the distinctive challenges faced by island administrations.

This empirical gap is mirrored by theoretical omissions. Standard models of job satisfaction/commitment rarely incorporate the political-administrative dynamics that SIDS scholars identify as critical. Island public services are often characterized by intense politicization of the bureaucracy and blurred boundaries between elected officials and career administrators. These factors contribute to what Chittoo (2011) describes as “bureaupathology” – a condition of anxiety, alienation, and powerlessness among civil servants due to eroding professionalism and constant political interference (Chittoo, 2011). Yet organizational commitment research has

seldom tested how such factors influence motivation or loyalty. In particular, the impact of political pressure on local government staff attitudes remains underexplored. Recent evidence from outside the SIDS context suggests politicization can indeed undermine work attitudes: when politicians interfere in personnel and disregard bureaucratic expertise, senior officials report lower job satisfaction and commitment (Everest-Phillips, 2014; Naidu et al., 2022). However, such influences (e.g. patronage pressures or ambiguous role boundaries) have not been integrated into prevailing job attitude frameworks. Likewise, the notion of administrative role conflict – when council employees juggle conflicting demands from politicians versus bureaucratic rules – is absent from mainstream models of job satisfaction/commitment, despite its salience in island governance (Chittoo, 2011; Everest-Phillips, 2014).

In particular, the impact of political pressure on employee attitudes in local councils remains underexplored. Likewise, the concept of administrative role conflict (when council employees juggle conflicting demands from politicians and bureaucracy) has not been integrated into job attitudes theory. Few studies have empirically tested how such context-specific factors—like political interference, role ambiguity, or resource shortages—affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment. For instance, while politicization has been found to negatively impact civil servants' work attitudes in European and East Asian countries (Kim, Jung, & Kim, 2022), this relationship has not been examined in SIDS local government environments.

There are also theoretical gaps. Mainstream organizational behavior models often do not account for the unique political-administrative dynamics found in SIDS. Concepts such as *bureaupathology*—describing alienation, dysfunction, and political manipulation in public bureaucracies—are well-documented in small-state governance literature (Chittoo, 2011) but rarely integrated into job attitude theories. Likewise, administrative role conflict, a known stressor in politicized settings, has been largely excluded from frameworks explaining organizational commitment. This disconnection between theory and context limits the explanatory power of existing models when applied to small-island local councils.

In summary, there is a clear disconnect between the lived realities of local government employees in the Maldives and the focus of existing scholarship. Political interference, limited resources, and structural role ambiguity are real and persistent challenges. Yet, their effects on public servants' motivation and organizational commitment remain underexplored. By focusing on these issues in the Maldivian local council setting, this study aims to bridge a critical empirical and theoretical gap in both the public administration and organizational behavior literature.

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive-explanatory research design to investigate the impact of job satisfaction on organizational commitment among employees of local councils in the Maldives. The descriptive component provides a statistical overview of current job satisfaction and commitment levels, while the explanatory component examines how variations in job satisfaction influence levels of organizational commitment.

Given that the variables under study cannot be manipulated experimentally, the research employs a **non-experimental (ex post facto)** design. This approach is well-suited for studying naturally occurring phenomena where causal relationships are inferred through statistical analysis rather than controlled interventions.

To analyze the predictive relationship between the variables, the study utilizes **multiple linear regression analysis**. This method allows for estimating the extent to which different aspects of job satisfaction (such as intrinsic and extrinsic factors) contribute to employees' organizational commitment. The use of regression enhances the explanatory power of the research by identifying statistically significant predictors and measuring their individual effects.

This design ensures objectivity, replicability, and practical relevance—making it appropriate for informing evidence-based HR practices and policy decisions in the context of decentralized public administration in SIDS like the Maldives.

Research Approach

The study follows a **deductive approach**, where theoretical constructs and previously established models are used to form hypotheses, which are then tested using empirical data.

A **cross-sectional survey method** was adopted to collect data at a single point in time from a diverse population of local council employees. The rationale behind using a **survey-based approach** includes:

- Efficiency in collecting large amounts of data
- Cost-effectiveness
- The ability to ensure anonymity and reduce response bias
- Accessibility to geographically dispersed council employees across islands and atolls

Given the dispersed nature of the Maldivian population, an **online questionnaire** was selected as the primary data collection tool. The survey was developed using **Google Forms**, ensuring accessibility through various digital platforms and devices. It was designed to collect structured, numerical responses using validated measurement scales, allowing for robust statistical analysis.

Target Population And Sample Size

Target Population

The target population for this study includes **all employees working in local councils across the Maldives**, covering the full range of administrative units established under the Decentralization Act. These councils operate at three levels:

- Island Councils
- Atoll Councils
- City Councils

The target population includes both technical and administrative personnel, such as council secretaries, finance officers, development officers, HR officers, clerks, and support staff. This diversity is essential for capturing the varying perceptions and experiences related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The rationale for selecting this population is based on the crucial role these employees play in delivering public services, managing local resources, and ensuring democratic governance at the grassroots level. Understanding their job satisfaction and commitment levels is therefore central to strengthening institutional performance and policy effectiveness in the local government sector.

Sample Size

To determine the sample size, the researcher applied a rule-of-thumb method suggested by **Mumtaz and Hiram (Memon, et al., 2020)** which recommends multiplying the number of items in the questionnaire by 5. Given that the survey instrument consists of 30 items, a total sample size of **150 respondents** was determined to be adequate for this study. The final sample size is 157 respondents.

Survey Instrument: Validity & Reliability

To ensure both validity and reliability of this study, the data was collected via a **structured questionnaire** adapted from the validated instrument used from an independent study on “The Impact of Job Satisfaction on Employees’ Organizational Commitment in State-Owned Enterprises” (Shah, 2023).

The instruments were **pilot-tested** to assess their reliability and validity in the Maldivian context. The feedback and results from the pilot informed necessary revisions prior to the full-scale survey distribution.

The questionnaire is structured as follows:

- Section A: Demographics – Questions on age, gender, education qualifications, Job title, length of service. These items allow characterization of the sample.
- Section B: Job Satisfaction scale (13 items), measured on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).
- Section C: Organizational Commitment (12 items), measured on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

In total, the instrument comprises 30 structured items for analysis.

Responses from Sections B and C will be scored to produce overall satisfaction and commitment indices. Section A items will be used to explore demographic effects and to describe the sample

Data Collection

Upon ethical clearance and instrument approval data was collected **through a Google Form** distributed via official council communication channels, social media groups, and direct emails. Participants were given a two-week period to respond. Reminders were sent to encourage participation and increase the response rate. Responses were automatically recorded in a spreadsheet, then exported to Microsoft Excel for initial cleaning, coding, and formatting. The cleaned dataset was then imported into SPSS for analysis

Sampling Technique

This study employed a **non-probability sampling approach**, specifically a voluntary response sampling method (convenient sampling techniques) to collect data from employees of local councils across the Maldives. The questionnaire was distributed electronically—via official council email addresses and through WhatsApp to several Secretary Generals from randomly selected local councils—to enhance accessibility and encourage broad participation across geographically dispersed locations.

While a complete list of council employees was available, individual respondents were not selected through formal randomization. Instead, all eligible employees were invited to participate, and data were collected from those who voluntarily completed the survey. This method was selected due to the logistical challenges of conducting research in a multi-island context and the need to maximize reach within a limited timeframe.

Although voluntary response sampling introduces the potential for self-selection bias, the survey was widely distributed across various administrative units to ensure diversity in organizational roles, locations, and work experiences. This strategy enabled the collection of rich, contextually relevant data while capturing insights from staff working under different conditions within the decentralized governance system of the Maldives.

Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed using **IBM SPSS** Statistics software. The analysis will align with the research questions as follows:

- **Research Question 1: To what extent does job satisfaction influence organizational commitment among employees of local councils in the Maldives?** A multiple linear regression analysis will be performed to assess the predictive effect of job satisfaction on organizational commitment. This method will indicate how much variation in commitment can be explained by satisfaction scores, while accounting for relevant demographic variables.

○ Research Question 2: What is the impact of job satisfaction on organizational commitment among employees of local councils in the Maldives?

A multiple linear regression analysis will be conducted to further examine the impact of job satisfaction on organizational commitment. This analysis will quantify how changes in job satisfaction levels contribute to variations in organizational commitment. Additionally, it will assess the strength and statistical significance of this relationship, offering insights into the practical implications of enhancing job satisfaction within local councils.

Descriptive statistics (such as means, frequencies, and standard deviations) will also be computed to summarize the demographic profile and response trends across key variables. These steps ensure both research questions are answered using appropriate statistical techniques.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were rigorously observed throughout the study. Key considerations include:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants were provided with an explanation of the research purpose, assurance of confidentiality, and a consent section at the beginning of the online form.
- **Confidentiality:** Responses were anonymous, and no personal identifiers were collected.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Respondents were informed that participation was entirely voluntary, and they could withdraw at any point without any consequences.
- **Data Security:** All data was securely stored in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researcher.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Analysis

Table 1: Analysis of Demographic Variables

Demographic Variables		Number of samples	Percentage
Gender	Male	56	64.3
	Female	101	35.7
	Total	157	100
Age	25-34	55	35.0
	35-44	57	36.3
	45-54	19	12.1
	55 and above	5	3.2
	Under 25	21	13.4
	Total	157	100
Education	A'Level	8	5.1

Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	53	33.8
	Diploma	39	24.8
	Master's Degree	30	19.1
	O'Level or below	27	17.2
	Total	157	100
Job Title	Administrative / Support Staff	59	37.6
	Officer Level	43	27.4
	Secretary General	20	12.7
	Senior Manager /Manager	35	22.3
	Total	157	100
Length of Service	1-3 years	63	40.1
	4-6 years	19	12.1
	7-10 years	15	9.6
	Less than 1 year	25	15.9
	More than 10 years	35	22.3
	Total	157	100

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 157 respondents who participated in the study. In terms of gender, the majority were female (64.3%), while males accounted for 35.7%. The largest age group was 35–44 years (36.3%), followed by those aged 25–34 years (35.0%). A smaller portion of respondents were under 25 (13.4%), aged 45–54 (12.1%), or 55 and above (3.2%).

Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of participants held a Bachelor's degree (33.8%), followed by Diploma holders (24.8%), Master's degree holders (19.1%), O'Level or below (17.2%), and A'Level (5.1%). In terms of job title, most respondents were Administrative or Support Staff (37.6%), followed by Officer Level (27.4%), Senior Managers/Managers (22.3%), and Secretary Generals (12.7%).

Length of service data shows that a large portion of participants had 1–3 years of experience (40.1%), followed by those with more than 10 years (22.3%), less than 1 year (15.9%), 4–6 years (12.1%), and 7–10 years (9.6%).

This demographic breakdown provides insight into the diversity of the respondents and helps contextualize their perspectives on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Descriptive Statistics					
N		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Satisfaction	157	1	5	3.09	.689

Organizational Commitment	157	1	4	3.09	.489
Valid N (listwise)	157				

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the two main variables in this study: Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment. Both variables were measured using Likert-type scales, and responses were gathered from 157 participants.

For Job Satisfaction, the mean score was **3.09** with a standard deviation of **0.689**, on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This indicates a moderate level of job satisfaction among local council employees, with some variation in responses.

RQ 1- To what extent does job satisfaction influence organizational commitment among employees of local councils in the Maldives

Table 2: Frequency Table

Item No	Items	Total Agreement		Total Disagreement		Mean	Std. Deviation
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
1	I have the opportunity to take things my own way	50	31.9	50	31.9	2.96	1.154
2	I am satisfied with the way the council is currently implementing the policy	48	30.5	55	35.1	2.9	1.133
3	Satisfied with the way superiors make decisions	46	29.3	62	39.4	2.82	1.146
4	Good work performance will be praised by superiors	66	42	46	29.3	3.15	1.219
5	I am satisfied with the way I am treated by my superiors	77	49	40	25.5	3.34	1.233
6	I sometimes receive instructions from council members that conflict with official regulations	67	42.7	59	37.5	3.04	1.358
7	My current job gives me the opportunity to advance	66	42	44	28	3.18	1.233
8	My council will provide me with training opportunities	81	51.6	31	19.8	3.45	1.184
9	I am satisfied with the salary of my current job	28	17.9	94	59.9	2.27	1.206
10	Political influences in the council affect my ability to perform my job properly.	51	32.4	65	41.4	2.82	1.372

11	In my work, I can use professional knowledge and judgment	83	52.9	26	16.6	3.48	1.01
12	I have access to sufficient resources (budget, staff, tools) to perform my work effectively.	79	50.3	33	21	3.39	1.164
13	I have sufficient freedom to implement my work duties without political interference.	74	47.2	36	23	3.35	1.226

With growing attention on employee satisfaction in the public sector, this study explores how job satisfaction influences organizational commitment within local councils in the Maldives. Analyzing respondent demographics provides context for understanding how different employee groups experience their work and contribute to organizational effectiveness.

This study surveyed 157 employees from various local councils to assess their level of job satisfaction. The table presents the frequency and percentage of agreement and disagreement across 13 job satisfaction items.

Overall, the findings indicate that while employees express satisfaction in some key areas, several aspects of the work environment present concerns. For example, a relatively high level of agreement was observed in **Item 11 (“In my work, I can use professional knowledge and judgment”)**, with **52.9% agreeing** and a mean score of **3.48**, suggesting that many employees feel trusted to use their skills. Similarly, **Item 8 (“My council will provide me with training opportunities”)** had **51.6% agreement**, also indicating a positive perception of professional development opportunities.

However, **Item 9 (“I am satisfied with the salary of my current job”)** received the lowest mean score (**2.27**) with **59.9% of respondents disagreeing**, highlighting widespread dissatisfaction with salary. Other items such as **Item 2 (policy implementation)** and **Item 3 (superiors' decision- making)** also received relatively low agreement percentages and mean scores, indicating room for improvement in leadership and organizational processes.

These findings suggest that while council employees appreciate aspects of their roles that allow autonomy and skill application, concerns remain around compensation, leadership, and clarity in council policy implementation.

Assumption Testing for Normality of Data

Linearity

The Normal P–P Plot of regression standardized residuals (Figure 1) shows that the data points lie close to the diagonal line, indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed. This suggests that the assumption of linearity is reasonably met, and the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment can be considered linear.

Additionally, the scatterplot of standardized residuals versus predicted values (Figure 2) reveals a random pattern of points scattered around zero, without any clear curve or trend. This randomness confirms that the residuals are evenly distributed across all levels of the predicted values, further supporting the assumption of linearity.

Figure 2: Normality Assessment Using P.P Plot

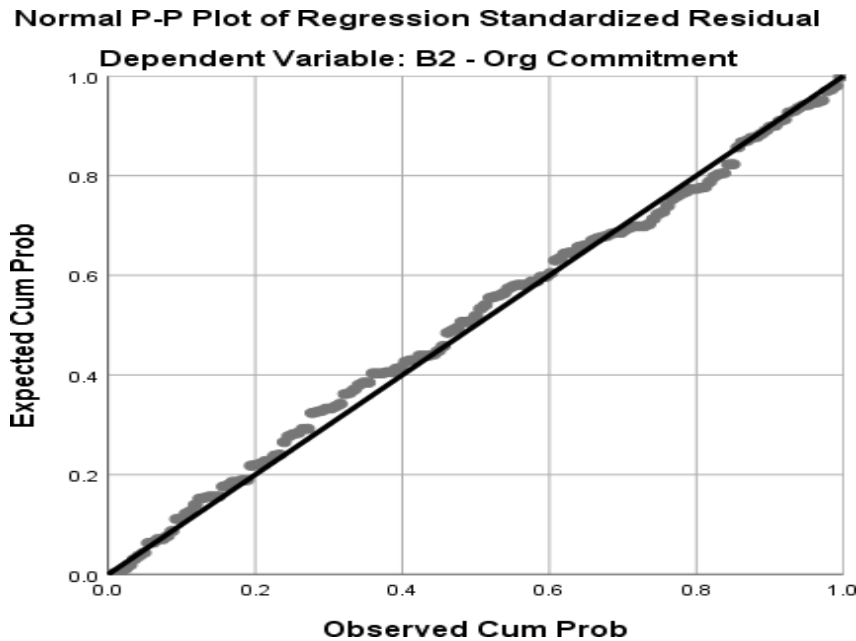
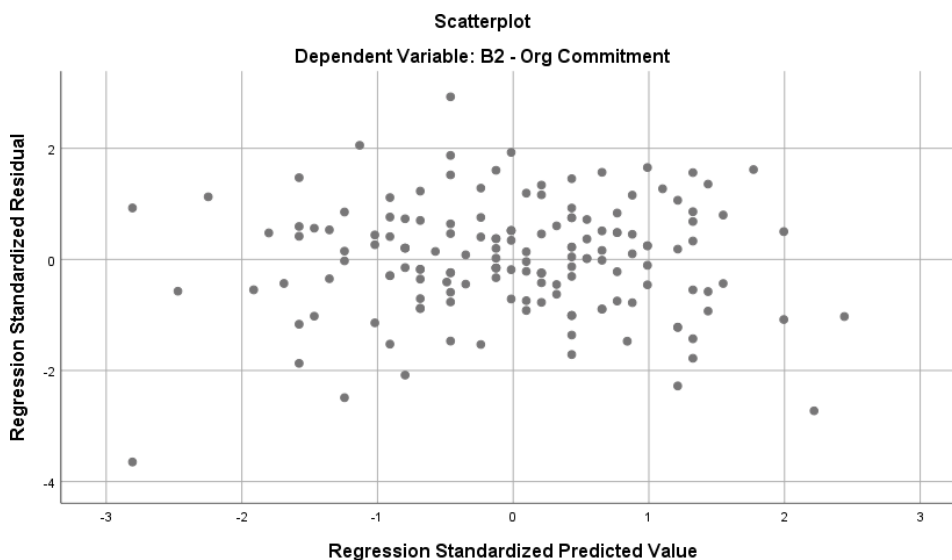


Figure 3: Residual Plot



Normality of Residuals

Table 3: Shapiro-Wilk test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Organizational Commitment	.067	157	.083	.977	157	.011
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

To assess whether the residuals are normally distributed, the **Shapiro-Wilk** and **Kolmogorov- Smirnov** tests were conducted. The **Shapiro-Wilk test** is particularly suitable for smaller sample sizes ($n < 200$). In this test, a value above **0.9** typically indicates acceptable normality, and a **p- value greater than 0.001** suggests that the deviation from normality is not statistically significant.

In this study, the **Shapiro-Wilk statistic was 0.977** with a **p-value of 0.011**, and the **Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a p-value of 0.083**. While the Shapiro-Wilk p-value is slightly below the conventional 0.05 threshold, it remains above 0.001, indicating that the deviation from normality is minor and not severe. Additionally, the **Kolmogorov-Smirnov test supports the assumption of normality**.

Given these results, along with supporting evidence from the normal P-P plot and histogram (see Figures), the **assumption of normality of residuals is considered reasonably satisfied** for the purposes of linear regression.

Homoscedasticity

To evaluate the assumption of homoscedasticity, the distribution and spread of regression residuals were examined. The **histogram of standardized residuals** appears relatively symmetric and bell-shaped, supporting the assumption that residuals are evenly distributed. Likewise, the **Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals** shows that the data points follow the diagonal line closely, further indicating that the residuals are approximately normally distributed.

The **scatterplot of standardized residuals versus standardized predicted values** demonstrates a random spread of data points around the horizontal axis (zero line), without any visible curvature, clustering, or funnel-shaped pattern. This randomness suggests that the variance of residuals remains constant across all levels of the predicted values.

Together, these graphical assessments provide evidence that the **assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied**, supporting the validity of the regression results.

Figure 4: Histogram and P-P Plot for Normal of Residuals

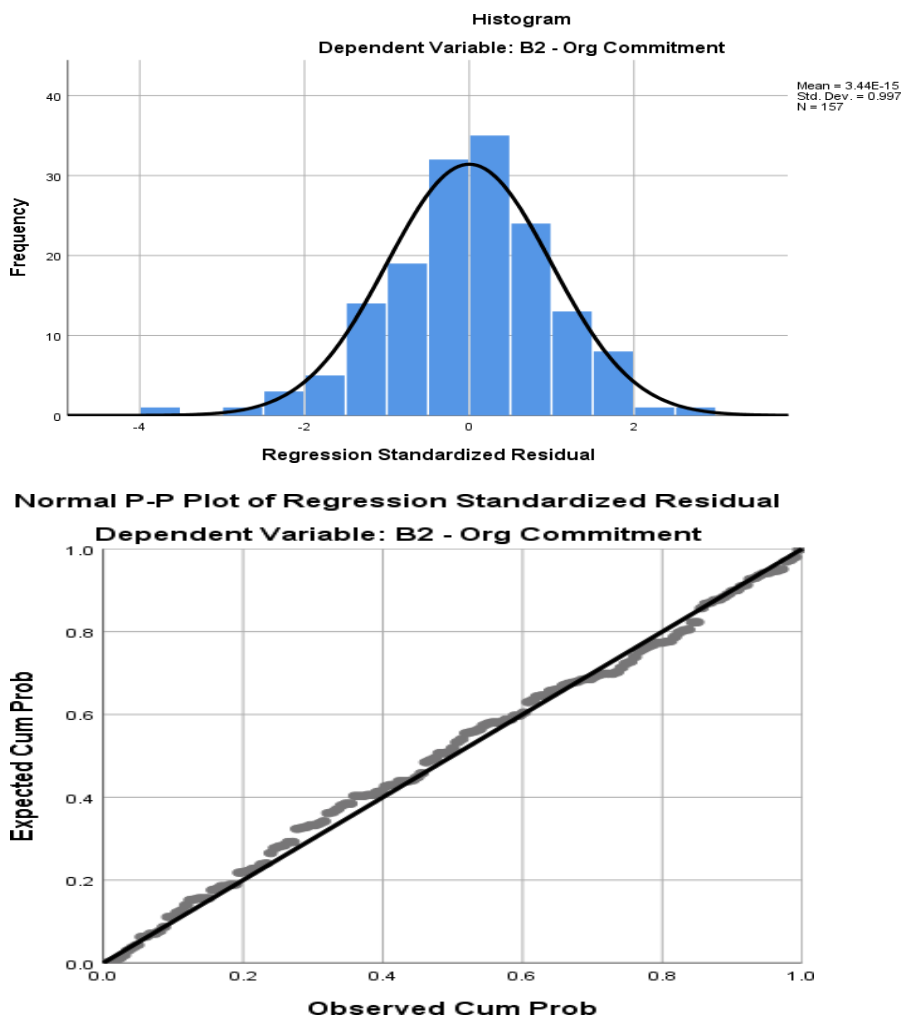
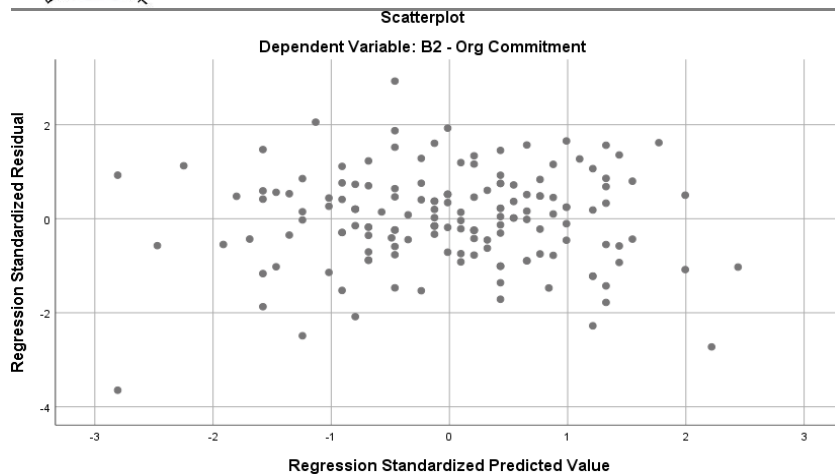


Figure 5: Residual Scatterplot for Homoscedasticity Check



Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was assessed using **Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)** and **tolerance** values. The VIF for the independent variable (job satisfaction) was **1.000**, and the corresponding tolerance value was also **1.000**. According to standard guidelines, **VIF values below 10** and **tolerance values above 0.1** indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern.

Since both the VIF and tolerance values fall well within acceptable limits, it can be concluded that the **assumption of no multicollinearity is satisfied** in this model.

Table 4: Coefficients

Coefficients								
Model		Jnstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.507	.173		14.526	.000		
	Job Satisfaction	.189	.055	.267	3.454	.001	1.000	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment								

Independence of errors

Table 5: Model Summary Table

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.267 ^a	.071	.065	.473	.071	11.933	1	155	.001	2.261
a. Predictors: (Constant), B1 - Job Satisfaction										
b. Dependent Variable: B2 - Org Commitment										

The Model Summary table shows that the regression model has an **R-squared value of 0.071**, indicating that job satisfaction explains approximately **7.1% of the variance** in organizational commitment among local council employees. The **Adjusted R-squared value of 0.065** accounts for sample size and provides a slightly more conservative estimate of model fit.

Most importantly, the **Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.261**, which falls within the acceptable range of **1.5 to 2.5**. This indicates that the residuals are not significantly autocorrelated, and therefore, the **assumption of independence of errors is met** in this regression model.

Outliers

Outliers were assessed using **Mahalanobis Distance** and **Cook's Distance**. Mahalanobis distances were calculated for the 13 job satisfaction items, and evaluated against the chi-square critical value of **16.27** (df = 13, $p < 0.001$). Based on the results, **153 out of 155 cases exceeded the threshold**, indicating a high number of potential multivariate outliers.

However, further analysis using **Cook's Distance** revealed that all values were **well below the threshold of 1.0** (maximum value = 0.425), suggesting that **no single case had undue influence** on the regression model.

Given the low Cook's Distance values, the influence of these outliers on the regression is minimal. Therefore, the assumption regarding outliers and influential cases is **considered reasonably satisfied**, and all cases were retained in the analysis.

Assumption Testing and Model Diagnostics for Research Question 2

Model Summary and Fit

The regression model produced statistically significant results, as indicated by the **F Change value of 11.933** and a **p-value of .001**, which is well below the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that the model is a good fit for the data and that job satisfaction significantly predicts organizational commitment among local council employees.

The **R value of 0.267** indicates a **weak to moderate positive correlation** between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The **R-squared value of 0.071** shows that job satisfaction accounts for approximately **7.1% of the variance** in organizational commitment. Although this percentage is relatively modest, it still demonstrates a meaningful and statistically significant relationship.

The **Adjusted R-squared value of 0.065** accounts for model complexity and sample size, reaffirming that the model explains a consistent portion of the variance. Lastly, the **Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.261** falls within the acceptable range (1.5 to 2.5), confirming that the assumption of independence of residuals is satisfied.

Table 6: Model Summary for Assumption testing of RQ2

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	
1	.267 ^a	.071	.065	.473	.071	11.933	1	155	.001	2.261
a. Predictors: (Constant), B1 - Job Satisfaction										
b. Dependent Variable: B2 - Org Commitment										

ANOVA Summary

The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table shows that the regression model is statistically significant, with an **F-value of 11.933** and a **p-value of .001**. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, this indicates that the model provides a good fit to the data.

This result confirms that job satisfaction explains a **statistically significant portion of the variance** in organizational commitment among local council employees. It also supports the conclusion that the regression model is valid and the findings are likely to generalize beyond the study sample.

Table 7: ANOVA Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.671	1	2.671	11.933	.001 ^b
	Residual	34.692	155	.224		
	Total	37.363	156			
a. Dependent Variable: B2 - Org Commitment						
b. Predictors: (Constant), B1 - Job Satisfaction						

Regression Coefficients

The coefficients table includes one predictor: Job Satisfaction. The regression results show that Job Satisfaction is a statistically significant predictor of Organizational Commitment, with a p-value of .001, which is well below the commonly used threshold of 0.05. This indicates that job satisfaction makes a meaningful contribution to the model and significantly influences employees' commitment to their local councils.

The standardized beta coefficient is 0.267, which shows a positive relationship between the variables—higher job satisfaction is associated with greater organizational commitment. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.189$) indicates that for every one-unit increase in job satisfaction, organizational commitment increases by 0.189 units, holding all else constant.

Additionally, the t-value of 3.454 further supports the statistical significance of the predictor. Since the model includes only one independent variable, there are no competing predictors, and the significance of job satisfaction reflects its direct and independent impact on organizational commitment.

Table 8: Coefficients Table for Assumption Testing of RQ2

Coefficients^a

Unstandardized Coefficients				Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.512	.174			14.430	.000
	B1 - Job Satisfaction	.187	.055	.263		3.396	.001

a. Dependent Variable: B2 - Org Commitment

Summary of Research Findings

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that **job satisfaction has a significant positive impact on organizational commitment** among employees of local councils in the Maldives. The regression model was statistically significant ($p = .001$), indicating that the relationship observed between the variables is unlikely to be due to chance.

Although the **R-squared value (0.071)** suggests that job satisfaction explains a modest portion (7.1%) of the variance in organizational commitment, the finding is meaningful and supports the overall purpose of the study. The model also met key assumptions for linear regression, including normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of errors, and no major outliers or multicollinearity issues were found.

These results highlight the importance of enhancing job satisfaction in order to strengthen employees' commitment within local government settings, which may, in turn, contribute to more stable and effective council operations.

DISCUSSIONS

This study found that job satisfaction has a statistically significant yet modest impact on organizational commitment among local council employees in the Maldives. The regression analysis indicated that job satisfaction explained only about 7.1% of the variance in organizational commitment ($R^2 = 0.071$), suggesting that while higher job satisfaction is associated with higher commitment, the effect size is small. In practical terms, many other factors beyond job satisfaction likely influence how committed employees feel to their councils. Nevertheless, the positive relationship observed is consistent with prior research in various contexts, which generally finds that more satisfied employees exhibit greater organizational commitment. For example, a study in Nigeria's public healthcare sector (Adeniji et al., 2019) reported that job satisfaction was positively correlated with workers' commitment to their organization (Wang, et al., 2022). Similarly, recent research in the education sector has shown that factors which improve job satisfaction can also boost organizational commitment among teachers (Muñoz-Fernández G. A., Toala-Mendoza, González-Mohino, & Félix-López, 2025). These parallel findings reinforce that the satisfaction– commitment link, albeit modest in this case, aligns with broader trends in organizational behavior literature.

The modest strength of this relationship in our findings is notable and invites explanation through the study's theoretical frameworks. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Meyer and Allen's Commitment Theory provide a lens to interpret why the impact of job satisfaction on commitment might be limited in this context. According to Herzberg, job satisfaction is driven by **intrinsic motivators** (e.g. achievement, recognition, growth opportunities) and **extrinsic hygiene factors** (e.g. salary, work conditions, job security). Intrinsic factors are "true motivators" that foster genuine satisfaction and engagement, whereas extrinsic factors primarily prevent dissatisfaction but do not by themselves create deep satisfaction (Muñoz-Fernández G. A., Toala-Mendoza, González-Mohino, & Félix-López, 2025). This distinction is crucial: extrinsic needs, when met, ensure a conducive work environment but "do not directly generate satisfaction" on their own (Muñoz-Fernández A. G., Toala-Mendoza, R.D, Mohino, & Félix-López, 2025). In the context of Maldivian local councils, it is possible that much of employees' job satisfaction stems from extrinsic conditions (such as stable pay or workplace policies, given the civil service setting), which would lead to only a mild increase in commitment. In contrast, if employees experience more intrinsic fulfillment – for instance, feeling that their work is meaningful to their community or receiving personal recognition – those aspects could strengthen their commitment more substantially. This interpretation is supported by findings in other studies: Pehlivanoğlu et al. (2022) found that internal job satisfaction (deriving from intrinsic factors) had a direct positive effect on employees' affective and normative commitment, whereas external job satisfaction (extrinsic factors) had no significant direct effect on commitment (Pehlivanoğlu, Eymür, & Civelek, 2022). Thus, if local council employees' satisfaction is largely extrinsic, it would translate only weakly into organizational commitment, helping to explain the low R^2 in our results.

Meyer and Allen's three-component model of organizational commitment further contextualizes these findings. Their theory differentiates **affective commitment** (emotional attachment, "want to stay"), **continuance**

commitment (perceived costs of leaving, “have to stay”), and **normative commitment** (sense of obligation, “should stay”) (Godbersen, Dudek, & Fernández, 2024) Job satisfaction is generally theorized to influence primarily the affective form of commitment – employees who enjoy their job and feel fulfilled are more likely to develop an emotional bond with the organization. The modest impact observed here may indicate that job satisfaction indeed contributes to affective commitment, but other forms of commitment in this public-sector context are driven by different forces. Local council employees might remain with their organizations due to continuance factors (e.g. job security, lack of alternative employment in a small island community) or normative factors (e.g. a strong sense of duty to serve the public), which do not necessarily depend on daily job satisfaction. In other words, an employee might be committed to the council out of loyalty or economic necessity even if they are not highly satisfied with aspects of their job. This nuance is important – it suggests the relationship between satisfaction and **overall** organizational commitment is diluted by the presence of continuance and normative commitments that are less related to personal satisfaction. It aligns with Meyer and Allen’s framework by highlighting that commitment is a multi-faceted construct; enhancing job satisfaction mainly bolsters the desire-based (affective) commitment but may not sway commitment based on obligation or need. Therefore, the significant but low R^2 in our study underscores that improving job satisfaction can only go so far in raising commitment – other variables and forms of commitment must be considered to fully understand employees’ attachment to their organization.

In summary, the findings support the hypothesis that higher job satisfaction tends to promote greater organizational commitment among local council employees, but they also reveal that this effect is quite limited in magnitude. This outcome is in line with Herzberg’s two-factor theory, which would predict that only the satisfaction stemming from true motivators can strongly engage employees’ loyalty, and with commitment theory, which reminds us that not all commitment is rooted in satisfaction. It suggests that while satisfied employees in Maldivian local councils are **somewhat** more likely to be committed, a large proportion of commitment is influenced by other factors (such as personal values, community ties, job security, or organizational culture). This insight sets the stage for targeted improvements and further research into what those other factors might be, as discussed below.

RECOMMENDATION

Given the above findings, local councils in the Maldives should adopt a multi-faceted strategy to enhance employee job satisfaction and, by extension, strengthen organizational commitment. A key recommendation is to focus on intrinsic motivational factors in the workplace. Councils should provide employees with opportunities for personal growth, achievement, and recognition. For instance, offering professional development programs, acknowledging outstanding work publicly, and creating pathways for career advancement can fulfill employees’ higher-order needs. Such intrinsic rewards serve as true motivators that increase job satisfaction and foster stronger commitment (Muñoz-Fernández A. G., Toala-Mendoza, R.D, Mohíno, & Félix-López, 2025) Management should cultivate a work environment where employees feel their contributions are valued and impactful for their community. This might include involving staff in decision-making processes, delegating meaningful responsibilities, and celebrating successes. By aligning with Herzberg’s insight that intrinsic factors drive satisfaction, councils can tap into employees’ internal motivation to excel, which in turn is likely to deepen their emotional commitment to the organization. At the same time, local councils must not neglect the extrinsic or hygiene factors that, if inadequate, can erode job satisfaction and commitment. Addressing basic employment conditions is foundational: compensation, benefits, job security, and workplace conditions should meet reasonable standards. Currently, there are known challenges in the Maldivian public sector regarding pay and progression. For example, a national assessment highlighted “inadequate remuneration packages and [lack of] promotion guidelines” for council staff, alongside bureaucratic hurdles in hiring competent personnel (Azim, 2023). These issues can lead to frustration and lower morale. It is recommended that the central civil service authorities and local councils review and improve the salary scales and promotion criteria for council employees. Offering competitive and fair pay, as well as clear, merit-based promotion pathways, would reduce dissatisfaction stemming from financial and career concerns. While improving extrinsic factors alone may not instantly create high commitment, it will remove barriers to satisfaction and signal to employees that they are valued, thereby creating an environment more conducive to commitment (Pehlivanoglu, Eymür, & Civelek, 2022). In addition, councils should advocate for greater flexibility in recruitment and staffing, so that vacancies can be filled in a

timely manner with qualified candidates. Easing the “restrictions in hiring competent staff due to Civil Service bureaucracy” (Azim, 2023) would alleviate the workload on current employees and improve overall organizational efficacy, which can positively influence both satisfaction and commitment. Another important recommendation is to invest in capacity building and empowerment of council employees. Many local councils, especially those in smaller or remote islands, face skill gaps and limited staff capacity. Providing ongoing training and development opportunities will not only enhance employees’ competencies but also their job satisfaction, as it fulfills their needs for growth and self-improvement. According to local governance reports, Maldivian councils “need empowerment through awareness, training, data handling, and advocacy” to effectively fulfill their roles (Azim, 2023). Councils should implement regular training programs (e.g., in public administration, project management, leadership skills) and consider mentorship or job-rotation schemes that allow employees to learn new skills. Empowerment also involves giving employees more autonomy and voice in their work. When staff are trusted to make decisions in their areas of expertise and have clarity in their roles, they are more likely to feel ownership of their work and satisfied with their jobs. This, in turn, can increase their commitment to the council’s mission. Efforts to clarify the delineation of powers between the central government and local councils would further support employee autonomy – current ambiguities in authority can be demotivating if employees feel constrained or undermined by overlapping jurisdictions (Azim, 2023). Therefore, reforms or guidelines that clearly define the responsibilities of local councils (vis-à-vis central agencies) would help employees feel more secure and purposeful in their roles, enhancing satisfaction and loyalty.

Improving the leadership and organizational culture within local councils is another critical recommendation. How employees are managed on a day-to-day basis greatly influences their job satisfaction and commitment. Council leaders and supervisors should strive to practice a supportive, transparent, and participative leadership style. Research has shown that effective leadership boosts both employee satisfaction and commitment – leaders who engage and support their employees can “facilitate increased employee organizational commitment... and job satisfaction” (Sedrine et al., 2020; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Kelloway & Gilbert, 2017) (Morais, Queirós, Couto, Gomes, & Simões, 2024). In the Maldivian local council context, this means council presidents, directors, and department heads should communicate a clear vision, involve employees in goal-setting, provide regular feedback, and show appreciation for employees’ contributions. Reducing political interference and favoritism in council management would also strengthen organizational culture; employees need to perceive that promotions and opportunities are based on merit and performance rather than political affiliations. Fostering a culture of fairness, teamwork, and mutual respect can significantly raise morale. When employees trust their leadership and feel treated with respect, their job satisfaction rises, and they develop a stronger emotional bond with the organization. Practical steps could include leadership training for council managers, instituting formal recognition programs, and creating feedback channels where employees can voice concerns or suggestions safely. Over time, a positive organizational climate will reinforce employees’ commitment as they identify with the council’s values and feel proud to be part of it.

Finally, it is recommended that local councils capitalize on employees’ public service motivation – the intrinsic reward of serving the community. Many council employees may be motivated by a sense of duty and desire to contribute to local development (a factor particularly relevant in the Maldives, where communities are tight-knit and public roles are seen as important service). Councils should nurture this by clearly communicating how each employee’s work benefits the community or nation. When staff can see the impact of their efforts – for example, how their projects improve island infrastructure or community well-being – it can enhance their job satisfaction through a sense of accomplishment and meaning. Management can hold regular meetings or publish newsletters highlighting successes and community feedback, linking employees’ day-to-day tasks to larger, worthwhile outcomes. By strengthening this line of sight between an employee’s work and positive social impact, councils may boost the affective and normative commitment of staff (i.e., they want to stay because the work is meaningful, and feel they should stay to continue contributing). In summary, a combination of improving work conditions, supporting personal growth, fair leadership practices, and reinforcing the mission-driven nature of council work should be employed. These tailored recommendations acknowledge the current challenges in Maldives local councils and aim to create an environment in which higher job satisfaction can flourish – thereby gradually lifting organizational commitment levels.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional design prevents causal inferences between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Second, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability or response biases. Third, the study focused only on employees from selected local councils in the Maldives, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions or public sectors. Additionally, the modest R^2 value indicates that other important predictors were not captured in this study. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the results and designing future research.

Implications

Practical implications: The findings of this study carry important implications for public sector management in the Maldives. On a practical level, the significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, although modest, indicates that efforts to improve employees' job satisfaction can have tangible benefits for local councils. Even a small increase in commitment can be valuable – highly committed employees are known to demonstrate better work attendance, higher performance, and more proactive organizational citizenship behaviors (Godbersen, Dudek, & Fernández, 2024). In the context of local councils, this could translate into more reliable service delivery, increased productivity in council projects, and reduced employee turnover. It is noteworthy that organizational commitment has been positively linked to job performance in recent studies (Wang, et al., 2022); thus, raising commitment through greater satisfaction could indirectly lead to improved outcomes for the communities served by these councils. Council administrators and policymakers should therefore consider employee satisfaction as a strategic factor, not just an HR issue. Initiatives such as staff development programs, improving office conditions, or introducing employee recognition awards might incur costs, but they are investments in building a more dedicated and effective workforce. Moreover, addressing job satisfaction is crucial for retention: if council employees feel dissatisfied and uncommitted, they may seek transfers to central government or leave public service entirely, exacerbating talent shortages in local governance. By contrast, if councils foster an environment where employees are happy and engaged, those employees are more likely to remain and go above and beyond in their roles. In sum, the practical message is that improving job satisfaction is a viable lever for strengthening the workforce's commitment, but it should be part of a broader strategy including other factors, given that satisfaction alone accounts for a limited portion of commitment. Managers should regularly assess employee satisfaction (through surveys or feedback sessions) and address concerns promptly, as a means to sustain organizational commitment and by extension, improve council performance and public trust in local government.

Theoretical implications: From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on how employee attitudes translate into commitment within organizations, especially in the public sector and developing country context. The results lend partial support to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in that they highlight the nuanced role of different types of job satisfaction in influencing commitment. The modest overall effect of job satisfaction on commitment suggests that simply having "any satisfaction" is not enough – the **quality** of that satisfaction matters. In line with Herzberg's theory, it appears that only when job satisfaction is driven by true motivators (intrinsic factors) does it meaningfully enhance organizational commitment (Muñoz-Fernández A. G., Toala-Mendoza, R.D, Mohíno, & Félix-López, 2025). This underscores the theoretical proposition that extrinsic factors (hygiene factors) by themselves will not engender strong commitment; organizations must fulfill employees' higher-level psychological needs to foster genuine loyalty. Our context (local councils in a small-island nation) also provides a valuable case for testing Herzberg's theory: it indicates that the two-factor distinction holds relevance, as extrinsic conditions (pay, job security, etc.) in a public service job may keep employees from being dissatisfied but do not automatically create a sense of organizational attachment. The findings also engage with Meyer and Allen's Commitment Theory. They affirm the idea that organizational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct and that its antecedents need to be examined through that lens. The weak correlation observed suggests that researchers and practitioners should be careful about treating commitment as a single unified outcome of job attitudes. Our study implies that job satisfaction predominantly feeds into **affective commitment** (emotional attachment), which is just one component of the three-component model (Godbersen, Dudek, & Fernández, 2024). Theoretical models of employee commitment in the public sector might need to incorporate additional variables to predict the other components – for example, continuance commitment might be better explained by economic factors or tenure, and normative commitment

by cultural or institutional norms. Thus, one theoretical implication is that a combined framework may be necessary: Herzberg's theory can explain how to improve affective commitment (through motivators that increase satisfaction), while other theories (such as social exchange, public service motivation, or organizational justice) might be required to fully explain normative and continuance commitment in this setting.

Furthermore, this study expands the literature by providing data from the Maldivian context, which has been under-represented in organizational research. It supports the generalizability of well-established theories (Herzberg, Meyer & Allen) to a different cultural and institutional setting, but also hints at contextual nuances. For instance, the traditional theories do not explicitly account for factors like small community dynamics or centralized governance structures, which could influence commitment in local councils. The modest R^2 raises a theoretical point for discussion: it suggests that comprehensive models of organizational commitment should include a broader array of predictors. Our findings encourage scholars to integrate multiple theoretical perspectives – for example, combining motivation-hygiene theory with commitment theory and public service motivation theory – to better understand how and why public employees become committed. In doing so, future research can build on our results to refine theories: perhaps by identifying which specific facets of job satisfaction (e.g., satisfaction with supervisor, with work itself, with pay) are most predictive of the affective commitment in the public sector, and why other facets might not translate to commitment. Lastly, the use of Meyer and Allen's framework here demonstrates its usefulness in diagnosing the nature of commitment in an organization. The evidence that satisfaction's impact is limited implies that a one-size-fits-all approach to improving commitment (based solely on increasing satisfaction) is theoretically inadequate. Commitment is complex, and our study reinforces theoretical models that treat employee commitment as the product of multiple interrelated factors – some attitudinal (like satisfaction), some calculative, and some normative. For theorists, these findings highlight the importance of context and the interplay of different motivational forces, suggesting that future models of organizational commitment should be both multi-dimensional and context-sensitive.

Future Studies

While this research provides insight into the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Maldivian local councils, it also opens several avenues for further inquiry.

Future research should:

- Include other predictors such as leadership style, organizational culture, or public service motivation.
- Distinguish between different facets of job satisfaction and types of commitment.
- Use qualitative or mixed-method approaches to uncover deeper insights.
- Apply longitudinal designs to assess causality.
- Explore contextual factors specific to the Maldives, like island size or community ties.

These directions would offer a fuller picture of what drives organizational commitment in local councils and help tailor more effective management strategies.

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