

Impact of Political Influence in Recruitment and Selection Practice; Evidence from Maldives Civil Servants

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Abstract

Orientation: In developed countries, organizations struggle with staffing challenges and become highly competitive regardless of the increasing number of college graduates. Also, the process of staffing inherent in any organizational performance. There are allegations in the Maldivian Civil Servants that recruitment and selection process is being manipulated by political influence, and employees are hired based on Political Appointee's preference rather than hiring a competent employee.

Research Purpose: The purpose of the study is to analyze how political factors impact the recruitment and selection practices of the Civil Service Organization in the Maldives.

Motivation for the Study: The study determines the allegations drawn from the responses of the study.

Research Design: The quantitative research and Stratified Probability sampling method used in the study. The adopted questionnaire was used to collect data from individual employees in the Civil Service in the Maldives. The pilot study evaluates the reliability analysis and feasibility of implementing a study on larger scale and analyzes factors affecting recruitment and selection practices on the performance of the Civil Service in the Maldives.

Main Findings: As shown from the outcome of the analysis, the results indicate that sometimes leaders use their power to influence the recruitment and selection practice by recruiting, family members and friends in the Civil Service organization. From the reliability analysis of the study Cronbach's Alpha value <0.728 was significant to research the broad aspect. The descriptive and inferential analysis revealed that political influence does impact recruitment and selection practices. Even though, the respondents believe that recruitment process is based on Merit-Base System, the service delivered by Civil Servants deemed inefficient.

Practical/Management Implications: The study highlights the fact; HR leaders, Practitioners, HR team, and Policy Makers of Maldives Civil Service Organization need to make fair recruitment and selection decisions to sustain the service quality. If the organization has fair and better recruitment and selection practices employees will be more satisfied to deliver efficient service.

Contribution/Value Add: The finding from this study contributes new understanding to current literature and lays the groundwork for future research on the Civil Service Sector.

Index Terms— Civil Servants, Civil Service Organization, Human Resource Management, HR Strategies, Merit System, Organizational Performance, Political Influence, Recruitment and Selection practice

I. INTRODUCTION

Every organization strives to have effective recruitment and selection practices to retain

well qualified, experienced, and skilled employees for specific positions, but then again in a competitive job market, applicants

struggled to find a suitable job for their career (Santos et al., 2020). In today's competitive global community, it is essential to select qualified applicants for the continuous success of an organization (Joy et al., 2015). An effective Human Resource Management (HRM) practices should identify Human Resource (HR) needs in the organization to enable the recruitment exercise to determine the potential candidates for actual or anticipated organizational vacancies (Selase, 2018). Human Capital is directly linked to continuous development, overall performance, and the success or failure of any organization (Omisore et al., Okofu, 2014). Therefore, it is important to have effective recruitment and selection practices. Adequate performance such as the quality and fairness for the delivery of services is significant for the organizational objective (Luballo et al., Simon, 2017). To achieve organizational strategic goals, recruitment and selection practice ensure that the organization hires the right number of employees with the capability, knowledge, experience, and skills (Eva, 2018). Service delivery and quality of work depend on the organizational workforce. For this reason organizations should ensure that the recruitment and selection are conducted without any discrimination (Selase, 2018). Most of the researches have indicated that the employees without any essential skill or harsh attitude would not perform effectively (Gamage, 2014; Pahos et al., Galanaki, 2019). Hiring the wrong candidate or failing to hire suitable candidates would result in low performance and workplace failure. Santos et al., (2020) stated that in recent years, the Civil Service organization performance level has been decreasing. According to Omisore et al., (2014) the service quality practices have slowed down and outcomes were difficult to measure in civil service organizations. Importantly, Santos et al., (2020) emphasizes that there is a huge impact in the Job Market of the civil service sector across the globe.

Available evidence indicated that recruitment and selection practices connected by way of networking and political preference to some

extent exist in public organizations (Omisore et al., 2014). By the same token, Rahmany (2018) asserted in Afghanistan's recruitment and selection practices are influenced by political pressure, and this has influenced the organizational performance of the country. According to Tella & Ibinaiye (2019) the employees' skills and abilities not only affect individual performance, but also it will impact overall organizational performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of service delivery. Luballo & Simo (2017) asserted that staffing decisions that are made based on corrupt process, favoritism, and discrimination results in selecting unqualified employee who does not have the right knowledge, skill, and abilities to add value to the organization. Conversely, Sarah et al., (2018) stated negative characteristics of recruitment and selection practice would lead to undue frustration an eventual increase in employee turnover. The objective of the recruitment and selection criteria would improve organizational performance and efficiency (Okusanya et al., Oseji, 2012). The study highlights that political influence affects the recruitment and selection practice of Civil Service Organizations in the Maldives. Since there is limited publication carried out, but to increase the studies on this topic with regards to the Maldives, there is a great demand to explore the existing phenomenon that will reduce the current gap in the literature (Ashraf, 2017). Therefore, this study focuses on how political influence impacts recruitment and selection practices within the Maldives Civil Service.

Although, Civil Servants are expected to deliver better and quality service to the community. The Maldivian Civil Service has often been criticized by the public for the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of recruitment and selection practices as well as their performance because recruitment and selection practice has been manipulated by political influence (Setyowati, 2016). Currently, recruitment and selection practice faces several issues related to working performance, political pressure, recruitment process, etc. (Alhassan et al., 2014). Public

criticism is still there for the Civil Service organizational performance of all the ministries and other respective authorities. Available research indicated that Civil Servants do not show adequate performance in their organization ([Santos et. al., 2020](#)). According to the literature, the organization has conducted fair recruitment and selection practices with less discrimination and they perform better. On the other hand, a few of the civil service organizations abuse their power through nepotism and favoritism (Otoo et. al., 2018). Perhaps, management uses its power to influence the recruitment and selection practice by recruiting family and friends rather than selecting qualified applicants. In the Merit System of recruitment and selection practice, applicants are selected based on their qualifications ([Otoo et. al., 2018](#)). Therefore, this study attempts to use empirical evidence to ascertain the allegation derived from the responses of civil servants. The objective of the study is to identify how political factor impacts recruitment and selection practice in the Maldives Civil Service, and provide a better reinforcement for further study to the broader perspective

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Recruitment and Selection Practice*

According to Oaya Ogbu, & Remilekun, (2020) recruitment and selection is the first step in HRM, and employees' performance appraisal is the last step that identifying the successes or failures as a result of the process. Organizational service delivery depends on individual candidates and their performance. The purpose of recruitment and selection is to hire and place the best people to meet the need of the workplace to develop and maintain service quality ([Ashraf, 2017](#)). Recruitment and selection further play a vital role in the successful functioning, effectiveness, and performance of an organization ([Harky, 2018](#)). It is therefore important that recruitment and selection are conducted in an honest, successful, and independent manner throughout the entire process.

Based on Armanu et.al., (2020) improper HR planning creates problems in recruitment and selection policies and practice. Generally, HR planning interprets organizational strategies into specific HRM policies and practices. The recruitment and selection process fail when an organization has insufficient job analysis data, absence of key information and inappropriate selection strategies, etc. [Usmani \(2020\)](#) in his empirical study stated that HR practitioners need to understand the factors necessary for recruitment and selection that would not violate the rights of potential candidates. The study indicates that it is important to select or hire candidates based on their knowledge, qualifications, relevant skills, and confidence level of the applicants. When selecting applicants, organizations should be cautious and adhere to established processes to avoid unfair discrimination, and the negligent hiring of incompetent applicants ([Otoo et. al., 2018](#))

Gamage (2014) asserted that recruitment and selection have a positive correlation with organizational performances. This is supported by Ekwoaba et al., (2015) who stated that knowledgeable recruitment and selection procedures have a positive impact on organizational performance. However, Darkoh (2014) emphasized that organizations that are less selective and who hire lower-skilled employees are more likely to experience significantly negative impacts to service delivery caused by the employees they hire. According to Rahmany (2018) it is important to have the correct HRM structure of recruitment and selection practice to ensure employees are skilled, motivated, well-trained, and enthusiastic workforce in an organization. Hence, if the organization practices fair and systematic Recruitment and Selection and hires potential candidates based on skills and knowledge, no doubt the organization would perform better (Eva, 2018). Also, organizations should have unbiased recruitment and selection practices without discriminating to adopt the Merit-Base system in the organization ([Pahos et. al., 2019](#)). When the employees are reliant on the system, when highly potential candidates

been selected, they would be self-motivated to perform better. Respectively, fair recruitment and selection practices would create more opportunities to make the right choice for the right job and enhanced organizational performance. The recruitment and selection practice are politically influenced, corrupted, manipulated by favoring someone, the hired staff may not have the independence in performing his/her job (Eva, 2018). When the organization selects the right candidates with proper staffing criteria, the employees would perform well, increasing organizational efficiency (Anyango et al., 2018). However, organizational performance may suffer when employees are selected through manipulation, political influence, or the corruption practice (Otoo, et al., 2018). If an organization has the staff with the right skilled, qualified, and experienced the organization could improve its service delivery (Alhassan et. al., 2014). This can lead to a decrease in staff turnover, High organizational achievement, low dissatisfied customers, and it would mutually benefit both employer-employee relations and create high job commitments among the staff ([Akuamoah, Kofi, Yao et. al., Kafui, 2017](#)).

B. An overview of Political Influence on Recruitment and Selection Practice

Civil service recruitment and selection are important aspects that determine civil service system characteristics, however political influence in the recruitment and selection process is widespread ([Usmani, 2020](#)). The literature shows that most Asian Pacific countries have merit-based systems to select the civil service staff ([Setyowati, 2016](#)). Unfortunately, patronage and nepotism are still major problems hindering the improvement of the quality of civil service systems ([Setyowati, 2016](#)). Countries differ in their educational requirements for civil service employment. Although Australia, New Zealand, and the United States emphasize merit-based recruitment, they do not have an educational requirement for the civil service. ([Setyowati, 2016](#)). The study by Usmani (2020) addresses

the research gap of the effects of the political influence of recruitment and selection practices are based on employability skills, knowledge, experience, strategic policies, and other political pressure and contextual performance of Civil servants. The employability skill can be divided into various categories such as basic academic skill, high thinking skill, personal qualities, and other various skill sets ([Abas et. al., Imam, 2016](#)). When hiring a new employee, most employers demand these skills from candidates as it plays a vital role in both employment and organizational success ([Oaya, Ogbu et. al., Remilekun, 2017](#)). [Ekwoaba et al., \(2015\)](#) emphasize that both organizational weakness and strength can be traced back to the recruitment and selection practice, and if the recruitment and selection practices are violated by political pressure could impact organizational performance. Ultimately, strategic policies facilitate getting better-qualified employees which would lead to organizational performance. Abas & Imam (2016) noted that Organizational development and growth depend on the ability of recruitment and selection practice. Employee performance is an indication of how well the staff performs in their job and the success of any organization. The key factors of employee performance are integrity, reliability, and honesty to discharge their job responsibilities. Therefore, it is vital to conduct a staffing process without any pressure or political influence ([Santos et. al., 2020](#)). From the case study conducted by Rahmany (2018) it was highlighted that Afghanistan's newly hired civil servants are not well qualified to carry out duties assigned to them. [Ashraf \(2017\)](#) asserted that the recruitment and selection practice in civil service applicants were shortlisted based on networking, bribery, political influence, and nepotism. Similarly, the author stated that if the recruitment and selection process is abused, it would create a negative impact on organizations which would ultimately lead to poor administrative performance. In fact, current recruitment and selection practices are not effective as required in Ethiopian Region. Procedures are violated

because there is inadequate monitoring and evaluation system. [Ferede et. al., Sidemo \(2018\)](#) indicated recruitment and selection practice Merit-Based principles are not strictly considered which has led to the poor performance of the civil service sector. [Ashraf \(2017\)](#) asserted that in Pakistan public sector there is high political pressure and influence when selecting the candidates based on the merit - system and it has negative impacts on organizational morale and well-being. Filling job vacancies in the public sector higher education institute in Ghana, mostly rely on friends and family members, leading to favoritism of biased recruitment; as a result of this, in public sector institution of Ghana recruitment and selection practice are not effective and they are not able to attract potential candidates ([Otoo et. al., 2018](#)). [González \(2019\)](#) noted that there is an acceptable limit of balancing between political nominations and merit-based appointments. Pahos et al., (2019) stated that since the age of an employee can have a significant impact on the overall performance of an organization, recruitment, and selection practices should consider eliminating stereotypes to older and younger employees ([Al-Jubari, 2014](#)). [Anyango et. al., \(2018\)](#) stated that Kenya Kisii University does not have fair and transparent recruitment and selection policies; to have a fair recruitment system the university should publically advertise all available vacancies to develop a competitive advantage and increase the pool of talented individuals for selection. HRM professionals and practitioners acknowledge that older employees are a valuable asset because of their work experience, and retaining and attracting mature employees can influence the organization positively ([Hassan et. al., Jubari, 2010](#)). According to Matolo et.al., (2019) when the organization has less political pressure the Proper recruitment and selection practices would enhance low turnover for staff which is affirmed analytically examined to have better performance. Gamage (2014), stated that it is essential to know the objectives, policies, and practices used for selection. Recruitment

and selection practice adhered to rules, regulations, and code of conduct that ensures to keep fair and justice treatment to all the applicants and alleviate the political pressure in any stage of recruitment and selection practice ([Rahmany, 2018](#)).

C. The Situation of Recruitment and Selection Practices: A view from The Maldives

In fact, in the Maldives, the public Service Sector represents the largest employee. Maldives Civil Service Organization is consisting of government officers (Civil Servants), Ministers, Deputy Ministers, executive secretary to the president (Non-Civil Servants). Civil Servants are government employees that are dedicated to providing professional and respective public service to the community. Maldives Civil Servants power-driven to the government policies, establish modern professional Civil Service, and democratic governance in the Maldives ([Authority, 2020](#)). But then again several issues occur in the recruitment and selection practice of Civil Service organizations in Maldives ([Ikleela et. al., Aishath, 2019](#)). According to [Ikleela et. al., \(2019\)](#) different authorities showed that there is a distinct level of political pressure, corruption, and nepotism in recruitment and selection practice in the civil service. Recruitment and selection practices are influenced by the elected ministers and other political appointees who have a high impact on the employees' duties ([Oluoch et. al., Mbugua, 2018](#)). When political peoples' service term is completed another party is chosen to occupy important positions regardless of their quality and capability and this has become a concern. The semi-professional with no affiliation to any party usually becomes mere spectators as they do not have the necessary authority to carry their job effectively. Based on this reality the recruitment and selection in the Maldivian Civil Service continuously face many different problems. In a study conducted by Ali Shameem (2018) the following was found in Maldives Civil Service:

- 67.16% of the respondents believed that the Civil Service is not sure of the services that they provide.
- 53.19% of respondents believe that Civil Service work is biased and politically influenced when delivering the service.
- 24% of respondents agreed that civil service organization abuses their power in recruitment and selections and promotion of their staff.

Ali Shameem (2018) highlights the poor performance of the civil service in the Maldives. According to Ali Shameem (2018) 1/3 of the respondents unfortunately, have negative perceptions of civil service performance. His report indicates that the civil service failed to achieve organizational objectives due to violations and political interference of politicians and unqualified individuals responsible for providing professional service. Ultimately, it is believed that improving recruitment and selection processes could provide better service and organizational performance ([Santos et. al., 2020](#)).

[Ikleela et. al., \(2019\)](#) indicates that 19% in 2015, 11% in 2016, and 13.5% in 2017 officially registered cases were related to recruitment and selection practices. 73% of employees from respondent's believed that their respective atolls and islands, most of the recruited candidates were those who have a family connection with influential people and who hold high positions in the government. [Transparency \(2015\)](#) indicates that political influence has resulted in the unfair selection process of high-rank positions in both government and public organizations in the Maldives. Also, civil service actions have been violated due to a lack of transparency and accountability in a public organization in the Maldives ([Transparency, 2015](#)). Based on [Tribunal \(2018\)](#), 42% of registered cases were associated with the government sector and 64% of them are related to employment. Similarly, in the year 2018, 241 cases registered related to employment (Tribunal, E. 2018). This reveals that this trend has been ongoing, and no

solution has been found to resolve this issue. This clearly shows that significant influences are occurring in the Job Market of Civil Service Organization in the Maldives. Therefore, it is clear that improvements to the recruitment and selection process could be the solution to better service and it will have a high impact on Organizational Performance.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used in the cross-sectional study. The quantitative method of a correlational analysis was also included. The deductive research approach of this empirical study used an analytical approach to investigate the correlations. An adopted structured questionnaire was designed to get the data. This questionnaire was used to collect data from individual employees in the civil service in the Maldives. A probability sampling method was used to ensure the generalizability of the study. ([Sekaran et. al., Bougie, 2016](#)). The study reviewed past literature and made use of secondary data. To strengthen the evidence gathered for this study, data were collected from different sources; official websites and other published documents and critical literature were reviewed to identify political influences that impact recruitment and selection practice of Maldives Civil Servants to expand the scope in this context. Based on this Pilot study and critical literature review the researcher would conduct a qualitative survey on a large scale ([Beatty, 2005](#)). Using a theoretical framework for this empirical study helped provide a clear understanding of how political factors affect recruitment and selection practices, and how it impacts the nature of the performance of the civil service. The reliability of a measurement instrument used for this study was established by testing for both internal consistency and stability by using the Cronbach's Alpha test. Generally, the closer Cronbach's Alpha is to 1, the higher the internal consistency reliability. If the Cronbach's Alpha is less than 0.60, reliability is considered to be

poor, and the value of 0.70 and higher is acceptable (James, 2019). The main objective of this pilot study was to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a study on a larger scale and to analyze factors affecting recruitment and selection practices on the performance of the Civil Service in the Maldives.

B. Sampling Design

A Stratified Random Probability Sampling method was used as a basis for obtaining respondents needed to ensure efficiency in gathering data from the population of interest. To measure the reliability item scale was used in the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two sections to obtain the information and measure the variables (Political Influence and recruitment and selection practice) of the study. Section A consists of items measuring demographic characteristics of respondents while Section B consists of 5 point Likert-type scale questions to measure the level of agreement of respondents towards the question item. evaluate the Respondents' level of agreement on a statement. The scales range from 1-5, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

The target population of the study was Civil Servants within the Maldives, within the national government. The population was drawn from employees who work in Ministries, Atoll Council, Island Council, and Institutional Departments of the Civil Service. The sampling frame of responses was drawn from HR practitioners, Strategic Leaders, and Tactical Level Staff. A sample population of the pilot study consisted of 50 respondents. The quantitative sampling in the pilot study aimed at generating statistical data collected from Civil Servants (individual). After the pilot study, the questionnaire will be modified and the researcher intended the study to examine the feasibility of the questionnaire research on a larger scale. The questionnaire for this Pilot study was distributed to Civil Servants throughout the Maldives. Collected data was validated for the analysis of the study. However, the sample size was adequate for the

desired level and the result of the study was accurate and useful to meet the objectives set by the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Besides, to minimize the errors accurate sampling size was used in the study.

C. Data Analysis

For the nature of this study, the research instrument (questionnaire) was used to collect primary data. For the pilot study, an adopted structured questionnaire was used which was written in the English language. An electronic Google doc questionnaire link was distributed through an online method via Social platforms (Gmail, WhatsApp, Viber, Messenger, etc). The questionnaire of this study was adopted from measurement items found in past literature (Chungyalpa, 2016; Eva, 2018). This questionnaire measured from two latent variables; Recruitment and selection practice as a dependent variable and Political influence as an independent variable that consisting of 27 items. No item was deleted from this pilot test. The data for this pilot study was collected from 50 respondents.

Descriptive and inferential statistics including standard deviation and percentages were used to analyze the data. The Statistical Package for Social Survey (SPSS) software was used for the quantitative statistical data analysis. SPSS (version 23) software was used to test the reliability of the scales. The scale reliability consistency validity was used and for a scale to be deemed reliable, Cronbach's Alpha should have value of at least 0.7. To achieve the research objectives, both the variables were subjected to test the reliability using the Cronbach Alpha value. The statistical data were presented using, tables, and illustrate with percentages.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Demographic Characteristic

The section describes the outcomes of the descriptive analysis of the demographic variables using the Pilot study data. The

analysis outline the descriptive distributions of respondents based on Gender, Age Group, Marital Status, Current Organization, level of Education, Income level, and years of Working Experience of the respondents.

Pilot study; Gender, Age, Marital Status, Education and Income Level

The empirical result shows that 50 respondents of the Pilot study. Referring to results 52% of the respondents were female while 48% were male. It was further observed from the analysis that 68% of respondents were married and 32% were single. The results showed that 22% of respondents were in the 18-24 years and 35- 44 years' age group. 52% are in the age group between 25 – 34 years. The highest frequency based on age group (52%) is the group between 25-34 years. Only 4% of respondents were male whose age group is between 45-54 years. Evidence from the pilot study resulted that, 64% of respondents are employed at the Ministries, 24% of employees work at the Institutional Department and 10% of the employees work at Island Council while only 2% are employed at the Atoll Council. The majority of respondents (44%) of this study holds bachelor's degree while 28% of respondents have completed a Diploma. Only 8% of the respondents have completed their A Level qualification, while 10% of respondents completed their O'Level, and 10% have a Master's Degree. Considering the pilot study 38% of respondents currently earn a salary range between 7,001 to 10,000 (MVR) and 24% of them earned between 10,001 to 15,000 (MVR). However, 18% of the respondents earn a salary between 5,000 to 7, 000 (MVR). Only 4% of the respondents of Civils Servants earning the highest salary range of more than 19,001 (MVR). In this study 28% of respondents works at the Middle Management Service, level and have been working for 10-15 years in the same organization. 24% of the respondents have been working at the Professional Level and only 22% of respondents are working at the Senior Civil Service Level. Of all the job rank categories, Support Service employee has the smallest

representation. 30% of the respondents claimed they have been working for only 1-2 years in their current organization. Only 2% of respondents work over 15 years in the same organization.

B. Reliability analysis of Political Influence and Recruitment and Selection Practice

The outcome of the reliability analysis questionnaire consisted of 27 items to measure two 2 constructs. In the study overall standard deviation of the construct was 9.370. The alpha value for the scale political influence was 0.750 while the recruitment and selection practice was 0.786. Since the results of the Cronbach Alpha values for two variables were above 0.7, they were deemed reliable ([James, 2019](#)).

C. Impacts of Political Influence on Recruitment and Selection practices

Respondents view of Political influence on recruitment and selection practices

The results showed that 28% of respondents agree that organizational recruitment and selection practices are influenced by political pressure, while 18% disagree with the statement. 24% of the respondents agree that the Civil Service's political pressure is inconsistent with their recruitment and selection practice, while 32% neutral and other 16% disagree with this statement. Conversely, 28% of the respondents agree with regards to recruitment and selection practice that political pressure is high on managerial posts while 10% disagree. Similarly, 28% of respondents agree that recruitment and selection practice influences in favor of specific applicants while 30% neutral and 16% disagree. 34% of respondents agree that civil service organization, political pressure influences recruitment and selection practice while 16% disagree. 40% of the respondents agree that the recruitment and selection practice are carried out professionally without any political pressure, while only 6% disagreed with this statement. Interestingly, 42% of respondents agree that recruitment and selection practice in the organizations they work for is fair, while

only 2% disagreed with this statement. 44% agree that their organizational recruitment and selection void bias and discrimination while 10% disagree. Substantially, 36% of the respondents agree that their organization leaders sometimes use their position power to influence the recruitment their friends and family members and while 8% disagree. Based on the objective outcomes of this pilot study, results from the empirical data shows that there is a significant impact of political influence on recruitment and selection practices. These findings are to some extent similar to results reported in the Pakistan public sector ([Ashraf, 2017](#)). However, the majority of the civil service respondents believe that there is a relationship between political influence and recruitment and selection practice.

Respondents view of Recruitment and Selection practices

The results from this pilot study revealed that 40% of respondents agree that the civil service conducts job analysis to ensure meeting the organizational needs while 38% are neutral and the other 22% of respondents have disagreed. A high number of respondents (60%) believed that recruitment and selection practices have a high impact on organizational performance, while only 4% disagree with this statement. However, 58% of respondents agree that the employee's confidence level within the civil service is low, because of poor recruitment and selection processes, 36% were neutral while 6% disagree with the statement. The study indicates 22% of respondents agree HR team does not have adequate experience to select the most qualified candidates for the right position and following that 48% disagree. The results show 34% of respondents agree that HR management team decisions are fair in recruitment and selection practice and 30% disagree while 36% are neutral on this matter. 48% of respondents agree that their organization conducts an appropriate interview while 36% neutral and another 16% disagreed. However, 34% agree that written exams were conducted in the selection process while 26% disagreed and 40%

were natural with the statement. Conversely, 40% of respondents agree that organizations do not make use of Application Software in recruitment and selection to help them make the best employee selection while 16% agreed and 44% were neutral with the statement. 38% of respondents believe that advanced technology would enhance the success rate of recruitment and selection practice while 46% were neutral and the other 16% of respondents strongly disagree with the statement. A significant number of respondents (90%) agree recruitment and selection policies are related to organizational strategic goals and only 2% disagree. Most importantly 72% of respondents agree candidates are selected based on Merit-System and selection methods are used to measure job-specific knowledge, skills, and ability while 14% of respondents disagree with this statement.

The results of this pilot study indicate that there is a significant impact of political influence on recruitment and selection practices. The findings of this study are similar to the study of Ashraf (2017) within the Pakistan public sector. Based on the literature and findings; though the Maldives Civil Service organization follows a Merit-based recruitment system, selection criteria on (knowledge, abilities, and experience) still there are significant impacts on Political Influence. Considering the results, it could believe that the political pressure positively impacts Recruitment and selection practice in the Maldives Civil Service Organization

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to find out how political influence impacts the recruitment and selection practices of the Civil Service in the Maldives. The finding of this study; descriptive and inferential analysis revealed that political influence does impact recruitment and selection practices. Findings of the study reveal that this questionnaire is significantly reliable to conduct on large scale with the Cronbach's Alpha value

<0.728. As shown from the outcome of the analysis, the results indicate that sometimes leaders use their power to influence the recruitment and selection practice by recruiting family and friends in the Civil Service organization. The finding clearly showed that political influence has a significant impact on recruitment and selection practice in favor of the specific candidate. Notably, this study identified that political influence does impact recruiting potential candidates, and more importantly, there is high pressure on recruitment and selection practice in a managerial post. Based on the analysis of this study 60% of respondents agree that recruitment and selection practices have a high impact on organizational performance. In fact, 72% of respondents agree that their organization adopts Merit-based recruitment and selection system and candidates are selected based on skills, knowledge, and experience. However, the study highlighted that most of the civil service do not conduct job analysis and written exams to pass the recruitment and selection process. Then again when organizations have proper recruitment and selection system it would increase the probability to hire the best candidate. The results of this pilot study indicated similar results reported in the Pakistan public sector. Base on the findings of this study political pressure has positive impacts on Recruitment and selection practice in the Maldives Civil Service Organization. Hence, sophisticated recruitment and selection practices are positively related to organizational performance.

B. Recommendation

This study contributes to a clear understanding of how political influence impacts the recruitment and selection practice in the Maldivian Civil Servants. Considering the outcomes of this study recommends the following:

- I. Maldives Civil Service organization needs to ensure they meet the organizational needs and should be more

committed to performing Job Analysis. This is because job analysis is one of the most important activities and techniques used in HRM which would ultimately effect organizational performance.

- II. This study also highly recommends civil service organizations to conduct written exams as part of the selection process to make the best choice of candidates to hire. It is important to adopt a fair recruitment and selection practice.
- III. The study also recommends that civil service organizations use employ applicant software and advanced technology which will enable them to select the best suitable candidates. Applicant software is a software that could simplify the hiring practice and would guide to recruit the best candidate based on candidates screening assessments. However, applicant software would minimize an inefficient host community influence and ensures improvement in the hiring process of recruiting a potential candidate for the organization. This also will mitigate wrong selection decisions and ensure a more reliable and valid to collect and analyze data.
- IV. Finally, it is important to address all the issue highlighted in this study and conduct further research at a broader perspective for the better understanding of how factor affects recruitment and selection practice effect on the performance of Civil Service Organizations.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

During the study, no potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since this study is not a clinical assessment no ethical clearance was needed/required for this study, but still, the study followed ethical considerations together with the data.

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