



**University of Wales**  
**Master of Business Administration**

**Research Proposal**

**On**

Impact of Perceived Sense of Fairness on Teachers' Work Performance in Large  
Government Schools in the City of Male'

By

Ahmed Zaki

USN: 0611866732095

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## INTRODUCTION

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### **Republic of Maldives – An overview**

The Maldivian Islands, officially the Republic of Maldives, is an island nation consisting of a group of atolls in the Indian Ocean. The Maldives are located south of India's Lakshadweep islands, and about seven hundred kilometres south-west of Sri Lanka. The Maldives comprises of twenty - six atolls with a flat territory of 1,192 islands and around two hundred islands are inhabited. Maldives has a population of 298,968 people as according to Population and Housing Census of Maldives 2006. The current population is around 300,000 people. It is the smallest Asian country in terms of population and is the smallest predominantly Muslim nation in the whole world.

### **Male'**

Male' is a single island which is the capital city of the Republic of Maldives. This capital island has a very high density as one-third of the total population lives in this island. In city of Male', there are four large public secondary schools which people consider the best secondary education providers in the Maldives. For this reason, people migrate in from other islands to obtain quality education for their children.

### **History of Education in Maldives**

Early history has enough evidence that children aged three and up in the Maldives were educated in Islamic "*Makthab*" classes. These classes were single large rooms or the shelter of trees. During which the children learn simple arithmetic, Dhivehi and little Arabic, and learnt to recite the Qur'an. These classes merely exist today. The modern education has established and has become more pervasive for the people due to expanding interactions with the rest of the world.

### **Establishment of Secondary Education in Maldives**

There was a population explosion during 80's and early 90's which created an alarming demand for expansion of the secondary education across the nation (*Developing Education Master Plan 2006 - 2015*). The first modern educational school developed in

the Maldives is Majeediyya School which is a public secondary school established in year 1927. Initially, it was co-educational but later formed a school for girls that it was named Aminiyya School in 1944.

The formal schooling was concentrated in city of Male' until 1978 but later the government put up a primary school in every Maldivian island with the international financial assistance. On achievement of primary education target, expansion of secondary & higher secondary education were paid immense importance from the year 2000 onwards. Secondary education is a rapidly growing sector in the Maldives, today. There are secondary schools in every atoll (total of 26 atolls) with modern facilities for better education. As a result, flow of people migrates into Male' for education has dropped down after 2005. There are four large public secondary schools in city of Male' providing western-style education in the Maldives. This rapid growth requires a large number of trained secondary teachers for the schools. Critically, there is a shortage of local secondary teachers in the Maldives which is then compensated by recruitment from overseas. The current teacher training capacity does not meet the teacher requirements of the schools and hence this gap is still on the increase. A new branch of problem has emerged in secondary schools from recent 2005 onwards. The level of teacher motivation claims to be declining in schools. Substantially, teachers often complain that they are not fairly treated by the schools in terms of pay, working hours and workload, promotion and professional development, age and gender.

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

Over the last few years, teachers in public secondary schools have been showing some kind of unhappiness towards their schools in terms of fairness. So there could be a motivation problem constituted by teachers' perception of justice measures in those schools.

Parents have complaints as their children are not guided enough by the teachers. Students come home from the school without even knowing what to do for the next class. So that parents often have to send children to private tuition centers to compensate for the gap (*The Parent Teacher Association 2007, Ameeniyya School*). Some of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) officials said that they suspect that there could be a problem with regard to motivation. However, reasons have not been figured out yet. They noted that this trend has been there for the past five years. Therefore, apparently it shows that the issue has been noticed by the authorities.

Supervisors say that the teachers' resistance to undertake relief duty is increasing over the recent years for some reasons. It is also sometimes difficult to convince teachers to offer support for substitute periods in case of leave of absence. The Supervisor, *Mr. Zakariyya Abdul Rahman*, from Male' Dharumavantha School shared commonly received teacher complaints to his department. Over the recent years, teachers expel a high degree of unhappiness with regard to distribution of professional development opportunities, gender difference in the administration of monetary benefits, resource allocation disparity among departments and lack of authority to command over the students in classroom management related areas.

A few teachers from two different schools have been interviewed by telephone said that the school management does not appreciate their valuable suggestions, there is discrimination among teachers in providing printing facility, there is no proper work distribution among same level staff, there is no welcoming communication channel to voice their grievances, and there is very few participative management approaches towards people down the line. Apparently, this shows that there has been a behaviour change among the teachers working in these schools. This study intends to study the impact of sense of perceived fairness of secondary teachers with regard to their schools.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

Public secondary schools are organisations, education providers who have a great deal of contributions to the future of any country. We all depend on the valuable output of these schools. In schools, the teachers educate children, next generation and the future workforce, for the national economic development. Therefore, teachers' motivation and commitment is so vital that it has an impact on the national framework of the future. Schooling of different levels is very crucial as to mould our children into competent citizens ready to face the diverse challenges of the fast moving world. The teachers train the children, widen their knowledge, expand their thinking paradigms, inculcate discipline in them, and develop several other important competences in them. Therefore, a persistent occurrence of a serious problem should be attended as soon as it is being noticed.

If there is a motivation level problem in school staff, especially teachers, that is ignored and left for further deteriorations it is grave because it will impact the entire spectrum of the national development in the long run. Quality education builds people for the nation's future. Enriched- labour-market, availability of potential workers is so important for the national economy as well as individual organizations. These are very valid reasons for a researcher to attempt to conduct a study on impact of perceived fairness on the level of motivation of the teachers, and therefore, employee performance could be assessed against their motivation.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- 1] To understand perceived sense of fairness in large public secondary schools in city of Male’.
- 2] To assess the impact of perceived sense of fairness that it has on the current behaviour of secondary teachers in those schools in city of Male’.
- 3] To make recommendations to fairness in schools helps improve the relationship between teachers and the school.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

Research on the role of fairness in organisations has the potential to widen our understanding of the elements influencing the well-being of the actors involved. The main actors are the employees. In schools, majority of them are teachers.

There has been merely or no research conducted yet in the Maldivian context of fairness measures especially in public schools. This study could be very useful for educational administrative authorities, policy makers, employees and other organisations in terms of better human resource management. Those basic fairness measures namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice and informational justice findings could find out valid causal relationship between the people and the organisation. This could contribute to improve the whole school system, the organisational culture, human resource environment and therefore employee motivation. This research work could be useful particularly for the Ministry of Education of Maldives in educational development plans and improvement programmes.

This study could also provide good insights to other organisations in terms of human resource management and organisational behaviour especially justice measures and its impact on employee motivation. Today, large organisations are in realisation of the need for people in organisations. This type of empirical study could provide a lot of contextual

evidences for the degree of impact on organisation and its employees. Therefore, human resource managers can make newest human resource practices implementable effectively in their respective organisations.

## **RESEARCH SCOPE**

This study focuses on the large public secondary schools in city of Male' in terms of student enrolment and employment. Therefore, the following schools are the largest three schools in city of Male' in which this research be carried out.

*Aminiya School*

*Majeediya School*

*Dharumavantha School*

Among the three schools listed, the largest organisation is Ameeniyya School which is the only secondary school for only girls. The other two schools; Majeedhiyya School and Dharumavantha School are almost equal in size both for only boys.

## **SAMPLE**

A sample of 30 employees from each school would be taken into consideration for the purpose of this study. Apart from teachers, the school heads of these four schools and a random sample of 10 educational policy makers from Ministry of Education and Educational Development Centre would be interviewed that together adds up the population sample for this research.

## LITERATURE SURVEY

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In today's context of organisational behaviour and human resource management, fairness and justice have become extremely important to motivate people for work. The story of perceived fairness has come into management agendas a long time back and the importance grew higher and wider having several literature works available on perceived fairness today. Especially, those research papers carried out over the last few years. On the other hand, there are plenty of literature works done on area of motivation. Several theories of motivation have been developed by researchers and motivation is still a common concern in relation to people in organisations. It is strongly believed that people should be motivated for work to achieve competitive advantage. Therefore, human resource management itself has evolved so much in the past history. Most recently, people talk about human resource management function as a strategic partner in especially large organisations such as multinationals.

The literature on organisational justice often focuses on perceived sense of fairness of the employees in organisations as according to Greenberg, 1987. There are several seminal works that had been done from a long time back on organisational justice and fairness among people in organisations. Over the period of time, some useful theories have been developed to understand different aspects of fairness.

Adam's (1965) equity theory is a widely used theory on distributive justice in organisational context. The key proposition of the theory states that when individuals work for an organisation, they present some inputs such as ability, effort and performance. Therefore, Adam has expressed it as a ratio of outcomes to inputs. In order to see the fairness, individuals compare their ratio with similar other such as co-workers. The major two components of the theory are the determinants of perceived equity and the methods to restore inequity.

*Equity Theory focuses on the outcome of a decision. This means that it is based on the fairness of ends to be achieved. Therefore, the theory mainly makes predictions on how people react to outcomes and resource allocation decisions.*

Greenberg (2001) had found out a criterion on outcome distribution as an important perspective to look into when it comes to fairness in organisational distributive



measures. The Equity theory advocates use equity rules especially in relation to reward allocation and distribution decisions. On the other hand, the principle of equality suggests ways to distribute outcomes equally among individuals. Therefore, equity and equality are different in its meaning. The next criterion is the need which will vary widely among individuals. The same idea was explained by Deutsch back in 1975.

*Equity Theory advocates claim that the people are motivated to avoid tension while comparing the individual's outcome with similar other. Also, equity theory apparently shows that equity among individuals matters in employee motivation for work. Nevertheless, it does not describe the other three components of perceived fairness as highlighted above.*

Herzberg's two – factor model explains independent consequences; procedural justice is in relation to system satisfaction and distributive justice is linked to outcome satisfaction. McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) also have expressed the same argument in a different form. Distributive justice focuses on personal outcomes and on the other hand, procedural justice is explained in relation to organisational outcomes.

In relation to some of the HR practices, procedural justice is a better predictor than distributive justice. There have been some research papers on this matter emphasizing on the significance of the fact that procedural equity needs to be maintained to make people satisfied about the organisation. For example, Fryxell and Gorden (1989) had researched grievance systems in organisations and they found that procedural justice as a better predictor of employees' satisfaction than distributive justice towards grievance systems.

Byrne and Cropanzano (2000) had found out that procedural justice and interactional justice predict attitudes and behaviour of the employees towards the organisation. The level of commitment to the organisation; organisational citizenship largely varies as according to the sense of equity and fairness among the people.

Skarliki and Folger (1997) had investigated the interactions between different components of perceived fairness in organisations. The impact of inequity had shown a high degree of retaliations in organisations. Some of the unproductive behaviours identified include, taking supplies home, wasting out company resources, calling in sick when not ill, failing to provide information, and taking extended break time, dealing with too many personal matters while at work, disobeying the immediate superiors and

so forth. This study had highlighted the importance of maintaining equity in relation to procedures in the process of decision making. It had also found that the relationship between unfair outcomes and retaliation is significant when people perceive there to be low level of procedural and interactional justice.

In Folger and Cropanzano (1998) had identified several adverse consequences of perceived unfairness in relation to selection procedures. So, unfair selection has a lot of negative impacts such as poorer attitudes towards organisation, declined likelihood of a job offer plus poor subsequent job performance. Similarly, Grover (1991) had studied a primary consideration in evaluating fairness in the distribution of resources as a relationship between employees with those resources. However, this does not discuss about interpersonal and informational equity in the distribution of resource materials in a school situation. Also, Maldivian context of resource allocation and distribution in public secondary schools is very different when it is compared with several other countries as according to many of the research papers being reviewed in this section.

Uncertainty Management Theory (Van den Bos, 2001) indicates that people prefer high procedural fairness because it addresses their concerns about being exploited by decision making authorities. Similarly, relational theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler et al., 1996) argues that people react more favourably to higher procedural fairness as fair treatment leads them highly regarded by enacting parties. In addition, relational theory (Lind & Tyler, 1992) indicates that procedural fairness could impact more or less positively based on their level of self-esteem and other self-related motives for work. Further, (Batia, M. W. et al., 2007) employees are more committed to organisations when they are fairly treated and there is a relationship between procedural justice and employee commitment to organisations. On the other hand, they have also found that people may not respond to procedural fairness in the same way they may respond to self-evaluative implications due to instrumental reasons which was also suggested by Thibaut and Walker back in 1975.

Johansson et al. (2007) two experiments on resource allocation decision suggest that fairness impacts negatively on the efficient outcomes of resource allocation decisions, counteracting preservation of the resource. This study proves that a higher use of resource is found when fairness is low than when it is high.

Evelien's (2007) study on trust and fairness found that trust and fairness become important when a drastic change in the context of relationship occurs. When we cannot

foresee the future in a relationship, an important element of trust is the expectation held by one partner that the other will treat just and fairly. This involves fairness perception of all justice measures indicated as antecedents for this proposed research theme.

There have been several motivation theories as an outcome of some crucial seminal research works done by world class authors. Researchers have looked into different aspects of employee motivation as it has been recognised an important issue in relation to organisational competitiveness.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a popular hierarchy very applicable to people in organisations to a great extent. Despite, there are several exceptions when it is applied in different contexts. For example, self-actualisation level group in schools in the Maldives is just a minority. In addition, as there is an issue in terms of how fairly employees are being treated in schools, they attribute anything and everything to perceived sense of fairness. According Frederick Herzberg's Motivation Theory, people are motivated by some things and not all by others. It is very interesting and true in most cases. However, when equity comes into play in Hygiene factors, for example, it might have a greater impact on level of motivation. Similarly, Expectancy Theory that separates out expectancy, valence and instrumentality. In rewarding based on performance that is a fair way might have several implications worthwhile to look into by the researchers? (MacLeod, PhD, 2004).

*However, these specific researches and theories might not provide a full range of justice measures in relation to employees' citizenship behaviour to be committed and motivated for work. Therefore, a comprehensive study collectively with all the main components of perceived fairness and the impact on employee motivation could be very useful especially for those ideal human resource leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

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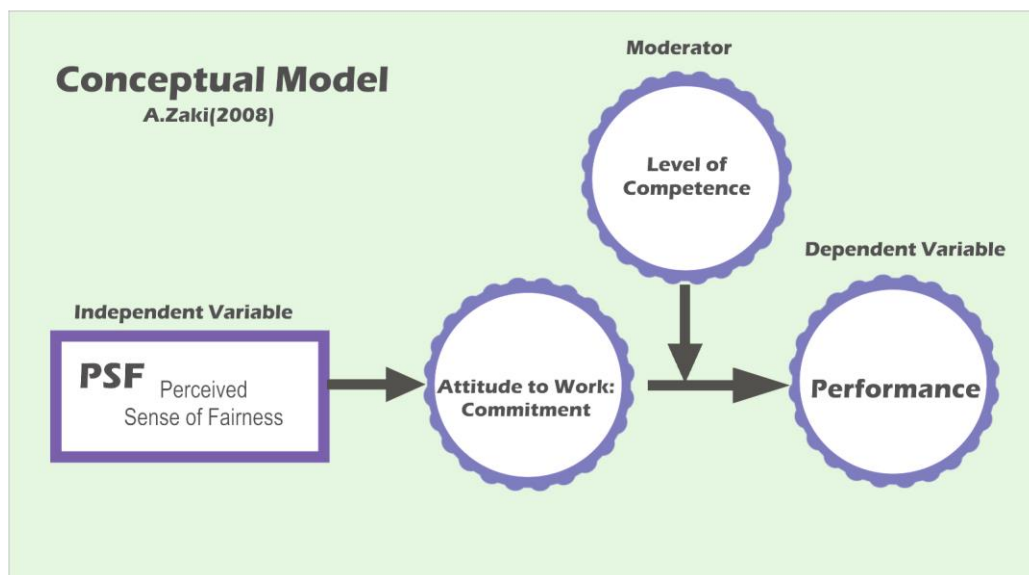
1. To what extent, does perceived sense of fairness exist in large government secondary schools in the city of Male?
2. Do employees perceive the sense of fairness having an impact on their performance?
3. If so, what is the nature of the impact?

## CONCEPTUALIZATION

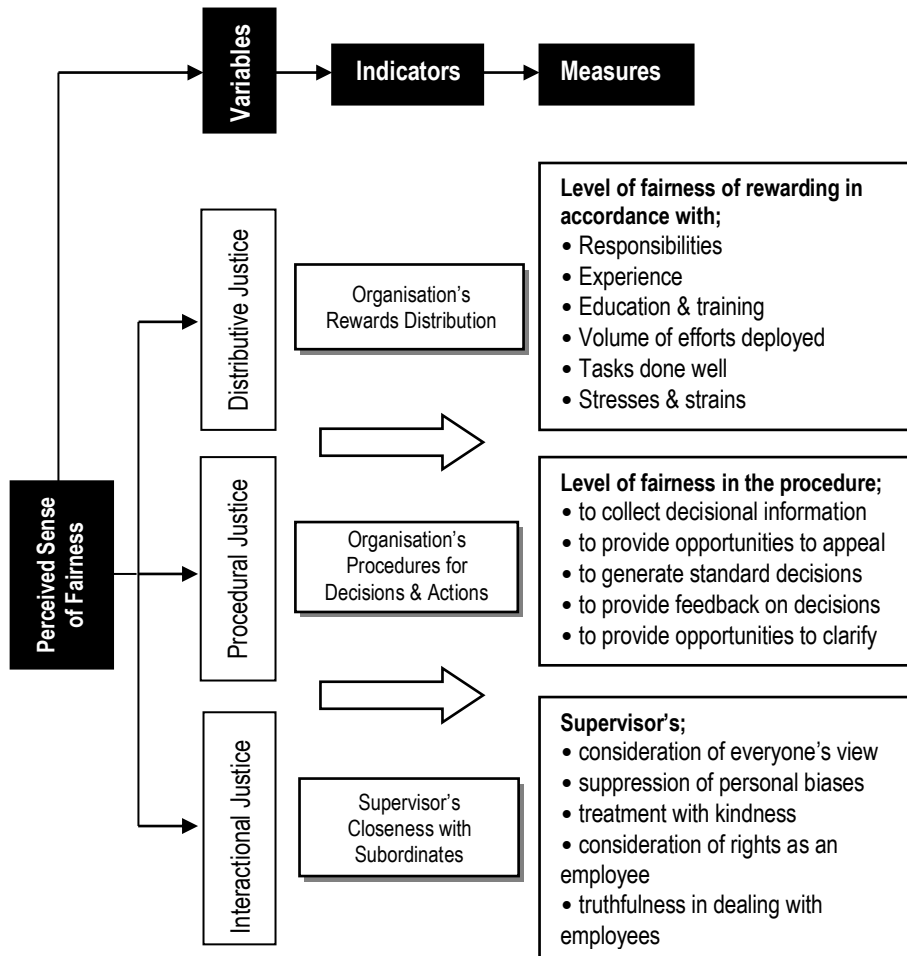
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The concept of perceived sense of fairness has been conceptualised based on the fundamental justice measures as shown as independent variables. These justice measures or the antecedents would be evaluated to see the degree of impact and the relationship to the given consequent. Self-esteem is considered a moderator variable to see if it moderates the expected relationship.

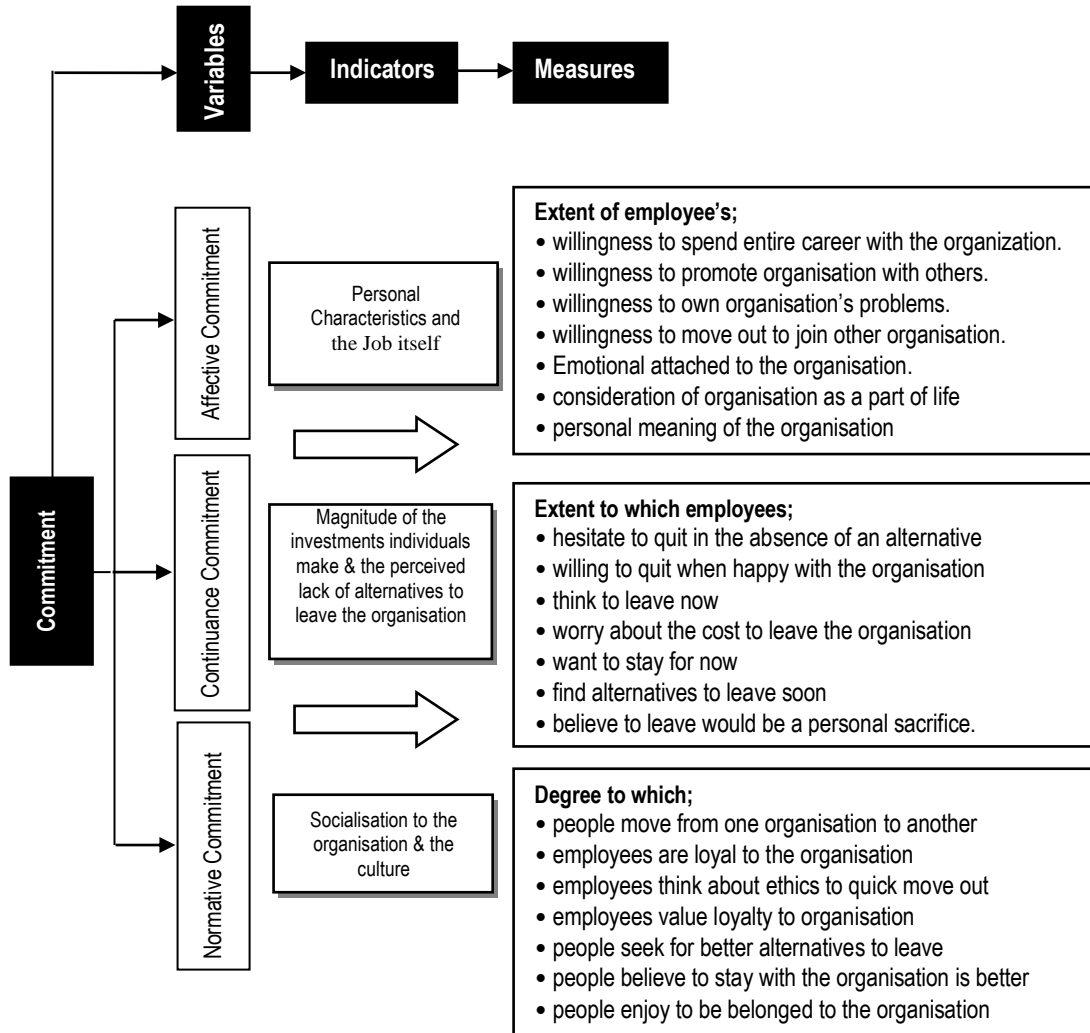
The expected relationship & the related concepts are operationalized based on the most common indicators observable in Maldivian schools which will be used to measure the impact of perceived sense of fairness on employee level of motivation.



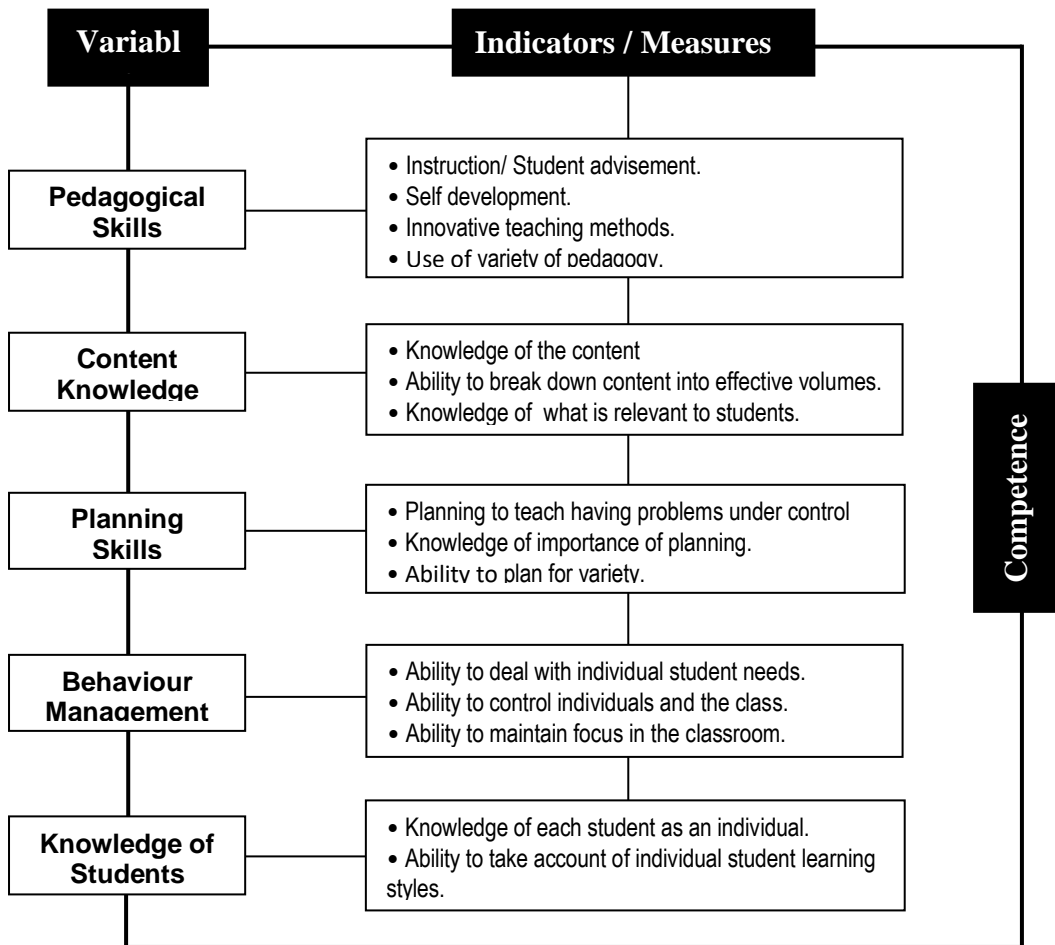
## PSF Variables



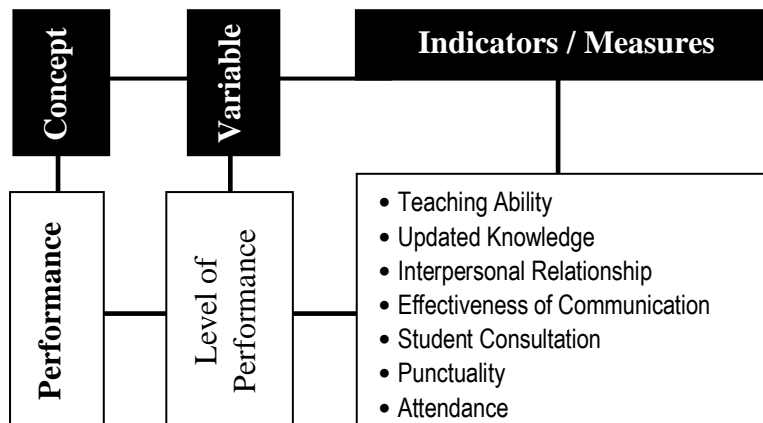
## Commitment Variables



## Competence Variables



## Performance Variables



## METHODOLOGY

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*The researcher intends to do a primary survey for collecting relevant data from the chosen schools from the Maldives. The deductive method is preferred to be used for this research study.*

An instrument will be developed to be used for the primary survey to collect data which comprises of all possible indicators in relation to conceptualised variables. The instrument will be designed in such a way to get quantitative as well as some qualitative data. Main concepts that are taken for testing need qualitative data to some extent to draw valid conclusions. The instrument comprises of a comprehensive questionnaire and evaluation forms would be used for better data collection and analysis process.

Any required adjustments would be made at times to eliminate any biases that might impact on the results.

It is intended to carry out a multiple regression analysis for the three independent variables (considering them as x-axis) and dependent variable (considering as y-axis). This is to quantify establishment of the relationship between the conceptualised variables.

The establishment of the relationship will be then tested with the actual data to arrive at the predicted figures from the empirical study. This could enable to trace any possible error in the analysis.

The correlation coefficient will be calculated between the variables to understand the correlation between the variables independently. This could help to understand the degree of impact on employee level of motivation as the dependent variable and collectively the justice measures as independent variables.

Any useful statistical software could be used for the purpose of evaluating the raw data collected via the data collection instrument.



## SOURCES OF DATA

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### **Secondary data:**

- Educational master plan of Maldives, policy sources, statistics and any relevant information available at Ministry of Education's archive would be collected for reference. This could provide an insight into problems associated with the distribution of resources in schools challenged by issue of fairness.
- Resource distribution plan for the Teacher Resource Centre and teacher feedback reports and workshop materials from Educational Development Centre of Maldives that could be used to enrich study coverage and depth.
- Last five year records of teacher performance and complaints from the chosen three schools in city of Male' .

### **Primary data:**

- Responses obtained through the field survey in schools are the main source of data for the purpose of this research analysis.
- In depth interviews with educational policy makers chosen from Educational Quality Improvement Section of the Ministry of Education as well as the interview findings from Educational Development Centre of Maldives would be used in this research.

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