Comparison of Lecturers' Competency in Maldives Higher Education Institutes

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Researchers in the past have found that instructors' levels of competence have an important effect on their ability to teach. This research aims to determine if there is a quality gap in Maldives' higher education institutions between public and private institutions and between full-time and part-time lecturers. An online structured questionnaire was used to conduct a cross-sectional survey as part of the quantitative research strategy. Lecturers from both public and private universities took part in this investigation. The Mann-Whitney U test found a statistically significant difference between public (M=67.52) and private (M=48.07) institution lecturers in terms of competency; U=829.50, p=0.021. However, lecturers' competency mean rank scores of full-time lecturers (M=64.82) and part-time lecturers (M=59.34) indicate the difference of mean scores of lecturers' competency was not statistically significant, U=937.50, p=0.55. It is likely better recruitment and in-service professional development policies at public institutes are established at the institutional level, thereby improving lecturers' competency compared to private institutes.

Keywords: education, education policy, competency, public vs. private, part-time vs. full-time, Maldives

INTRODUCTION

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of competence. Competency generally refers to a lecturer's abilities, knowledge, and personal traits. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, 2017), competence is a collection of abilities, knowledge, and skills that enable a person to successfully carry out a task or activity within a certain role or position. Based on the description of the competency mentioned in the development of Romania's national qualification framework for higher education (HE), Duta and Rafaila (2014) defined competency in three dimensions. They are knowledge, skills, and individual's autonomy and responsibility in exercising professional competence. Similarly, Imron et al. (2019) argued there are numerous competence criteria such as pedagogic, personality, professional and social competence. In their study of competency, Chouhan and Srivastava (2014) identified five significant components of competency: knowledge, skills, self-concepts, traits and motives. It is important to assess lecturers' competency because there is evidence that it correlates favorably with

student happiness, motivation, and performance (Long, Ibrahim, & Kowang, 2014; Rahardja et al., 2017; Gani, Nur, Mallongi & Rusjdin, 2018; Gee, 2018) thus, enhancing the quality of HE.

Past researchers have found competence to profoundly affect lecturer performance, thereby affecting student performance as well. According to Pynes (2009), organizations must perform training and development initiatives to ensure they have the necessary abilities, information, and other qualities. Furthermore, Mulvey (2013) mentioned that skills are not innate and could be acquired, and knowledge could be gained by learning. This indicates that lecturers can develop their skills, knowledge and improve their characteristics through professional development (PD) activities.

Due to the growing number of public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Maldives and the variety of programs they provide, the Maldives HE sector lacks minimal norms and guidelines for its quality assurance system (Hannan, 2013). Thus, there may have been differences in institutional policies established on PD depending on the institution's governing body, thereby producing differences in lecturers' competency among institutions. The appointment of a sizable number of part-time teachers is another problem. At HEIs in the Maldives, there are often more part-time lecturers (PTLs) than full-time lecturers (FTLs). Most PTLs have other full-time jobs (Waheeda, 2019). They lack commitment to the institution because teaching is not their primary occupation. With this in mind, it is expected to have lecturers' competency differences among types of institutions and among FTLs and PTLs. However, Zuha, Omar, and Waheeda (2021) found that structured, collaborative, and individual professional development activities were positively correlated to professional and ICT competency, while the correlation between accredited professional development activities (such as professional certificates) and core competencies was very weak and statistically insignificant. However, literature is not been published, identifying lecturers' competency differences among type of institutions and lecturers in Maldives. To narrow this research gap, it is crucial to research lecturers' competency and find new information in this area.

The problem under investigation is the assessment and comparison of lecturer competency in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in the Maldives. The goal is to ensure the delivery of high-quality education by evaluating and identifying variations in lecturer competency across different institutions. The study aims to determine if there are significant differences in competency levels among lecturers in the HEIs using the Mann-Whitney test as a statistical tool. By analyzing and comparing lecturer competency, the research aims to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of higher education in the Maldives. The findings will provide valuable insights to HEIs, enabling them to implement targeted measures for improving lecturer competency and promoting excellence in teaching and learning.

Additionally, the study focuses on comparing the competency levels of full-time and part-time lecturers to understand the impact of employment status on lecturer effectiveness. The results will inform HEIs about potential variations in performance and effectiveness based on employment status, aiding them in making informed decisions regarding recruitment, employment policies, and professional development programs to further improve the quality of higher education in the Maldives. Hence, this study aims to examine whether there is a difference in lecturers' competency between public and private institutes and between FTLs and PTLs in HEIs of the Maldives. Based on this purpose, the following two hypotheses are tested. One, there is no significant difference in lecturers' competency between public and private HEI of the Maldives. Second, there is no significant difference in lecturers' competency between FTLs and PTLs, at HEIs of the Maldives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Full-Time and Part-Time Lecturers

PTLs now make up about half, and occasionally even more, of the lecturers at HEIs, proving their importance for institutional success is on par with that of FTLs. Despite the HEIs' growing reliance on PTLs, the literature on their professional conduct, experience with how they portray themselves and their sense of professional status, performances, and talents is lacking (Levin & Hernandez, 2014; Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017).

PTLs' sense of isolation from the academic environment or their alienation from their department or institution have been noted as a prevalent issue across studies (Levin & Hernandez, 2014; Kimmel & Fairchild, 2017; Bickerstaff & Chavarrán, 2018). Institutions and PTLs both contribute to this issue. Some PTLs don't appreciate the extra connection and are happy with a small participation (Bickerstaff & Chavarrán, 2018); others don't prioritize seeking leadership positions (Chung et al., 2020). On the other hand, even though PTLs teach a sizable number of HEI courses, Bickerstaff and Chavarn (2018) claim that they are not involved in HEIs curriculum selection, instructional design, or evaluation. PTLs also indicated in the survey that they would appreciate the institution's guidance and assistance because being cut off from resources could hurt their ability to teach. Many PTLs would like to participate in PD events, but they are often scheduled during work hours, making it impossible for them to participate. According to Xu (2019), PTLs' instructional effectiveness may be diminished if they do not receive enough support.

In addition, Adiningrum et al.'s (2019) research on Indonesian HE discovered that PTLs' PD experiences are influenced by their relationship with their department, with PTLs anticipating that FTLs and their head of department would foster an accepting atmosphere rich with PD opportunities and increased employee engagement. Participants in the survey were confident in their topic knowledge. Still, they also saw research skills as both unnecessary and a waste of time, and they saw the ability to improve their teaching as more of a "nice-to-have" than a need. On the other hand, FTLs had a passion for research and thought that pursuing a PhD would help them advance their careers (Adiningrum et al., 2019). Despite differences in interest for PD activities among PTLs and FTLs, and PTLs limited inclusion and access to resources from the institutions, Landrum (2009) found no significant difference in the employment status of the lecturer in their teaching. Further, this finding was against his expected results.

Like other HEIs worldwide, most lecturers at HEIs in the Maldives are PTLs. But the literature on FTLs and PTLs concerning the Maldives is distressingly deficient. According to Waheeda (2019), most PTLs in the Maldives have other full-time jobs, which limits their access to and influence over various elements of the institution due to their lack of dedication and potential conflicts of interest. Hence, PTLs are "granted autonomy only in teaching and learning modules; their suggestions are rarely considered, and they are expected to follow the rules and regulations restricted by the faculty" (Waheeda, 2019, p6). Due to their lack of dedication, PTLs also fall short of expectations in academic research and student support, in contrast to other FTLs who are passionate about their work (MOE, 2019).

It is clear from the studies mentioned above that HEIs and PTLs interact less favorably than FTLs. Due to the poor relationship between HEIs and PTLs, PTLs are unaware of institutional operations and crucial knowledge and the opportunities to improve their competence. Previous research shows the positive impact of PD activities on lecturers' competency (Yuan, Wu, Chen, & Li, 2017; Zuha, Omar & Waheeda, 2021). Given that PTLs have fewer possibilities to participate in institutional and professional development activities, it is expected that PTLs may be less competent than FTLs. Therefore, investigating and contrasting the proficiency of FTLs and PTLs is one of the main goals of this study.

Public and Private Higher Education Institutes

A higher education institution may be public or private. While private HEIs are sponsored and run by third parties, public HEIs are often funded and run by the government. It is crucial to emphasize that some private HEIs receive government funding in part. As a result, private universities are more expensive than public ones. There are variations between public and private HEIs regarding other factors, including management, professional development activities, leadership, competency, and effectiveness.

In 2017, Singh and Sahin analyzed the capacity of public and private universities to develop students into future leaders. Their study contrasted 19 elements that characterized leadership qualities, such as encouraging meaningful support and collaboration, giving teachers more influence over decisions, and empowering them to make those decisions. According to research, public universities are better able to produce future leaders than private universities. Leadership positions play a significant and influential role in many facets of educational institutions. Al-Husseini (2018), for instance, looked at the effects of transformative leadership on knowledge sharing and the distinctions between private and public Iraqi HEIs. The goal was to determine how much knowledge-sharing sessions, workshops, formal or informal

conversations, and other PD activities are promoted by transformational leaders to academic employees. According to research, public HEIs significantly outperform private colleges in terms of the influence of transformative leadership on such activities (Al-Husseini, 2019).

Khan, Aajiz, and Ali (2018) gathered information about management techniques from three renowned public and three private universities in Pakistan. In contrast to public universities, the data showed that private universities had ambiguous evaluation systems, poor wage packages, and limited managerial freedom. They also lacked effective staff vacancy marketing and induction regulations. The monitoring, staff induction on merit-based policies ,political meddling, and collegiality between academic offices are areas where public institutions fall short. Although there are variations, Khan et al. (2018) noted that both public and private universities have the necessary workers, managers, and offices.

PD initiatives are typically carried out to enhance lecturers' fundamental skills. These activities are crucial to HEIs; they are planned and carried out by the institutions' vision and mission. According to the type of HEI, lecturers' involvement in these activities varies. De Oliveira, Ferreira, Nunes, and Ribeiro (2019) found that among basic health science faculty members from private and public HEIs, 64.2% reported attending pedagogical training events while 57.6% of public HEIs did not. Private HEIs spend more time on those training programs than public HEIs. Most academic staff spend 80–360 hours and 40 hours learning. Another study that polled 316 lecturers from two public universities and two private universities discovered that leadership and self-management abilities greatly impact how well students learn (Jani, Shahid, Thomas, & Francis, 2015). Additionally, this study discovered that private universities have a marginally greater influence.

In this study, the competency of lecturers at public and private HEIs will be compared. However, the absence of research focusing exclusively on the competency variable restricts the validity of the study's reasonable assumptions. The results of the many studies mentioned above indicate some areas where both public and private HEIs outperform one another. It can depend on the nation's economy, the growth of the education sector, or the financial resources of the HEIs. Competency may differ greatly or somewhat between public and private HEIs in the context of the Maldives HEIs, or it may be the same.

Competency Models

Successful performance in a given job family (i.e., a group of related tasks) requires skills and knowledge that can be captured by a competence model, as defined by Chauhan and Srivastava (2014). David McClelland, a psychologist, is widely recognized as the founder of competency research in management with the publication of "Testing for Competence Rather than Intelligence" in the early 1970s. McClelland (1973) argues that standardized test scores do not reliably predict adult success. Businesses and industries showed more enthusiasm for his research than academic institutions did (Chouhan & Srivasta, 2014). "The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance" by Richard Boyatzis is a great place to start for those interested in a comprehensive competency framework for managing positions. Boyatzis define work competency as "an underlying attribute of a person" (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 21) and can be anything from a person's motivations and traits to their abilities and knowledge. Competence is "an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation" (Spenser & Spencer, 1993, p.9), as defined by Lyle Spenser and Signe Spencer. In both senses, a person's fundamental characteristics reveal aspects of their inner nature that can help you predict their actions in certain situations. Spencer & Spencer (1993) grouped the aspects of competence into five categories, mirroring those proposed by Boyatzis (1982): motivations, attributes, self-concept, knowledge, and talents. Knowledge and talent are both readily apparent and easy to pick up. In contrast, self-concept, characteristic, and motivational abilities are more deeply embedded and thus more challenging to cultivate (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
SPENCER AND SPENCER'S ICEBERG MODEL
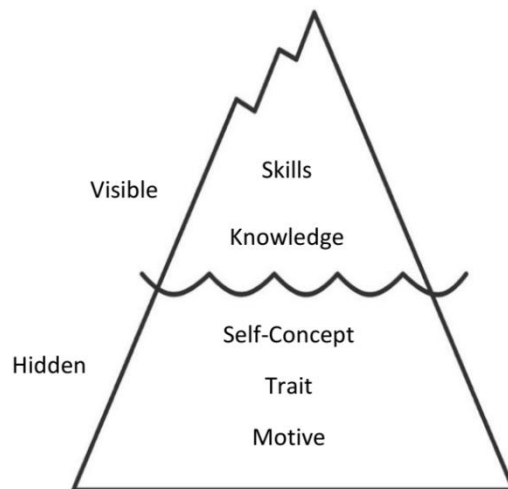
Source: Competence at Work: Models for Superior Performance (1993)

Existing competency frameworks are essential for maintaining and developing HEI quality, expertise, and knowledge. Competence frameworks are frequently used in this setting due to the perennial importance of high-quality higher education. Since the competency frameworks are tailored to each employee's unique set of skills, they are also used in professional development (PD) and in creating new jobs. To aid countries in constructing frameworks for the enhancement, measurement, and assurance of quality, worldwide and regional quality assurance networks have established competency frameworks. Some examples of these kinds of networks are the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA), the Asia-Pacific Quality Network in Higher Education, and other institutions like the UNESCO and the World Bank. Two prominent examples of such models are the ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), which was established in 2013, and Cheung's (2015) competency framework model for external quality assurance agencies, which consists of 58 competencies arranged into six categories (Table 1). These two models were both released to the public in 2015. Although Cheung claims that his 58 competencies have a specific set of knowledge, skills, and attitude, he did not specify which of his competencies are part of the group that includes knowledge, skills, and attitude, which, according to Nguyen (2016), makes it difficult for stakeholders to put them into practice. According to Nguyen, the difficulty for stakeholders in putting these competencies into effect stems from their sheer quantity. According to Nguyen (2016), the key qualities of a competence framework are "knowledge, skills, and attitude," and the ideal framework will cover all of the professional competencies he proposed under those headings (Table 1). This is based on prior competency models used in the profession. He adds that networks and institutes are the intended audiences for competency frameworks and that individual institutions should pick and focus on the frameworks that are best suited to their personnel.

TABLE 1
COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS SUMMARIZED

Cheung (2015)	Nguyen (2016)
	Knowledge
1. Professional practice (Consisting of 7 competencies)	Quality assurance and quality enhancement (terms, concepts, theories, assumptions); quality assurance models (assessment, accreditation, audit); external quality assurance (roles and responsibilities, structure, management, and operation of an external quality assurance agency, networks of external quality assurance agencies); internal quality assurance (the quality cycle, maintaining quality within a higher education institution); and higher education (policy, management, and administration).
2. Systematic inquiry (Consisting of 16 competencies)	
3. Situational analysis (Consisting of 12 competencies)	
4. Project management (Consisting of 12 competencies)	**Skills** IT and data skills, problem-solving abilities, lifelong learning abilities, communication (written, verbal, listening) abilities, report-writing abilities, conflict-resolution abilities, document review abilities, leadership abilities, management abilities, negotiation abilities, and teamwork abilities are among the organizational, planning, and management skills that are necessary for project management.
5. Reflective practice (Consisting of 5 competencies)	
6. Interpersonal competence (Consisting of 7 competencies)	**Attitude** Responsibility, honesty, autonomy, accountability, transparency, and commitment.

Nguyen, 2016

It is essential to stress that incorporating ICT into the newest models of competency frameworks is a direct outcome of the widespread use of technology in classrooms since the turn of the century. It was in 2011 when UNESCO, in conjunction with other industry leaders and experts, released version two of their ICT competency framework for educators. The skills and knowledge outlined in this framework represent a minimum standard for competent educators. The three main goals of the framework are knowledge creation, knowledge consolidation, and technology fluency. These plans addressed six areas of education: pedagogy, ICT literacy, curriculum and assessment, school administration, and teacher training and development. UNESCO (2011) states that 18 modules were created to educate policymakers, teacher educators, providers of professional learning, and classroom teachers on the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) in education.

Theoretical Framework
The ENQA's quality assurance professional competency framework, created by their staff development team and released in 2016, is used as the theoretical foundation for this study. The competency framework creates three main competencies—knowledge, systemic/technical, and interpersonal—. Table 2 provides specifics on these competencies. This competency framework is determined to be suitable for use as the theoretical underpinning for this study since these core competencies serve as the foundation for recruitment, job design, and staff development activities (ENQA, 2016).

TABLE 2
COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Core Competencies

Knowledge	Systemic/Technical	Interpersonal
• Knowledge of the higher education industry • National framework for quality assurance and enhancement, and institution-specific internal quality practices	• Planning and organizing abilities • Control own workload and collaborate and work well with others. • Data and information technology capabilities • Analytical and problem-solving abilities and ongoing learning	• Political sensitivity • Oral and written communication, teamwork and adaptability. • Responsibility and commitment • Resilience and autonomy

Source: ENQA quality assurance professional competency framework (2016)

Conceptual Framework

As Grant and Osanloo (2014) described, conceptual frameworks integrate a theoretical framework with prior research to lay out a researcher's working hypotheses and methods. From a quantitative perspective, a conceptual framework depicts the interrelationships of the study's variables and concepts. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that a conceptual framework "can describe, either graphically or narratively, the main things to be studied—the key factors, constructs, or variables" (p. 18). Figure 2 depicts the conceptual framework of this study by comparing the competence of lecturers at public and private, full-time and part-time institutions of higher education. Professors' Competence development focuses mostly on professional and information and communication technology. Table 2 presents this study's theoretical foundation, the ENQA competency framework.

FIGURE 2
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY
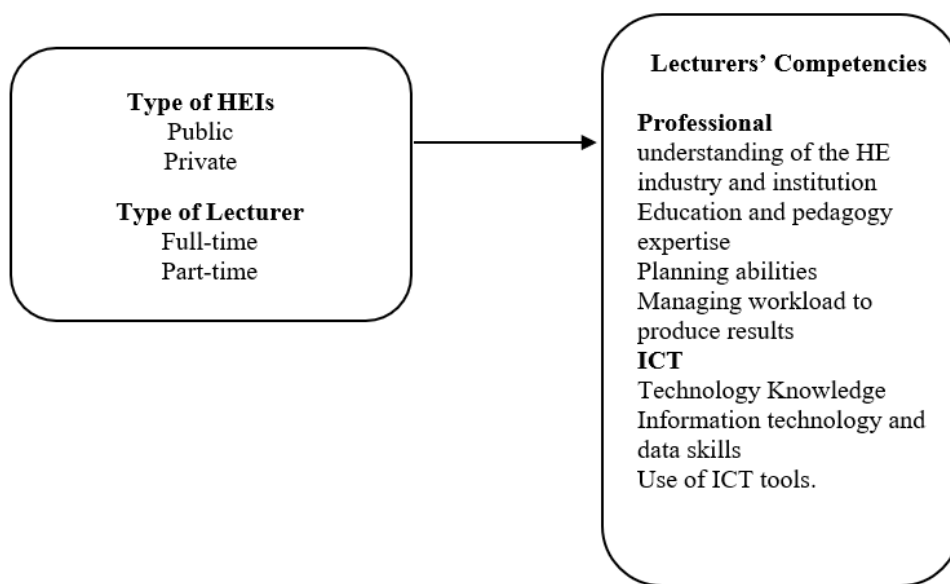
METHODOLOGY

To carry out this investigation, a quantitative research methodology was employed. A structured study instrument was used to administer an online cross-sectional survey. The study used a Likert-scale question on a five-point scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" to assess the ability of lecturers. To gauge participants' level of proficiency, a Likert-scale question with 10 competencies separated into two aspects was used. The competency items were adopted from past studies that measured the competency of lecturers (see Verbeke, 2014; Gee, 2018; and Knezek, Christensen, & Furuta,2019). Permission was taken from the authors to use items from their study instrument.

Cronbach's alpha value from the pilot research for the lecturers' competency items was 0.907, indicating good instrument reliability. A total of 171 lecturers from two public and two private institutions in the Maldives participated, both full-time and part-time. However, only 127 of the responses were usable for this study.

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Mann-Whitney Given that the competency variable was not normally distributed, the U test was used to compare lecturers' competency across different institutions and lecturers. The Mann-Whitney U test, or the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, is a nonparametric statistical test used to compare two independent groups. Compared to the independent t-test, a parametric test that presumes normality and homogeneity of variances, it has several advantages. The Mann-Whitney U test has several advantages over the t-test, including no parametricity, resistance to outliers, suitability for ordinal data, applicability to smaller sample sizes, independence assumption, and perhaps greater statistical power. The decision between the two tests will depend on the data's properties and the specific research topic at hand, yet the t-test may still be useful if its assumptions may be regarded as reasonable (Nachar, 2008).

FINDINGS

Characteristics of Respondents

The majority of the respondents are female with 63.5% and the remaining 36.5% are male. Almost all respondents are over the age of 26. Out of all respondents, 126 (80.8%) are from public institutions, whereas 30 (19.2%) respondents are from private institutions. Of the total respondents, 129 (82.7%) are FTLs, while 27 (17.3%) are PTLs (Table 3). Among the PTL respondents, 20 stated that teaching is not their primary employment, and only 4 PTLs stated it is their primary employment. This suggests that most of the PTLs work full-time elsewhere.

TABLE 3
CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	99	63.5%
Male	57	36.5%
Age		
18 to 25	3	1.9%
26 to 35	46	29.5%
35 to 45	78	50.0%
46 and above	29	18.6%

Type of Institution		
Public institute	126	80.8%
Private institute	30	19.2%

Employment Status		
Full-time lecturer	129	82.7%
Part-time lecturer	27	17.3%

Comparison of Lecturers' Competency Between Public and Private HEIs

A Mann-Whitney U-test is conducted to compare the dependent variable lecturers' competency among public and private HEIs, as the lecturers' competency variable is not normally distributed. Other assumptions of the Mann-Whitney U-test are met, since the lecturers' competency variable is an ordinal and independent variable for this statistical test, and the type of institution is categorical. Moreover, the difference in sample sizes of the two groups (public and private) are huge. However, past experimental studies recommended that when the samples size of the two are unequal, or either one or two groups' sample sizes are less than 30, the Mann-Whitney U-test is more powerful and should be performed. (Zimmerman, 1987; Gibbons & Chakraborti, 1991).

Ranks table (Table 4) of the Mann-Whitney U-test shows that the lecturers' competency mean rank of public institutions (M=67.52) is higher than private institutions (M=48.07). Table 5 shows the difference of mean scores of lecturers' competency is statistically significant, U=829.50, p=0.02. As p<0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference in lecturers' competency between public and private HEIs of Maldives, is rejected. These results suggest that there is a significant difference in lecturers' competency among public and private HEIs.

TABLE 4
RANKS

	Type of Lecturer	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Lecturers' competency	Public	104	67.52	7022.50
	Private	23	48.07	1105.50
	Total	127		

TABLE 5
TEST STATISTICS U

	Lecturers' competency
Mann-Whitney U	829.50
Wilcoxon W	1105.50
Z	-2.30
Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed)	0.021

Comparison of Lecturers' Competency Between FTLs and PTLs

Due to the non-normal distribution of the lecturers' competency variable, a Mann-Whitney U-test was used to compare the competency of FTLs and PTLs at Maldives HEIs. The conditions for a valid Mann-Whitney U-test have been checked off. The Mann-Whitney U test's Ranks in table 6 demonstrates that FTLs had higher mean scores (M=64.82) on competency questions than PTLs (M=59.34). Table 7 shows that the mean competency scores for each lecturer did not differ significantly (U=937.50, p=0.55). As p

>0.05. As a result, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no difference between FTLs and PTLs in terms of competence at HEIs in the Maldives. These findings show that FTLs and PTLs are equally competent in their lecture delivery.

TABLE 6
RANKS

	Type of Lecturer	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Lecturers' competency	FTLs	108	64.82	7000.50
	PTLs	19	59.34	1127.50
	Total	127		

TABLE 7
TEST STATISTICS U

	Lecturers' competency
Mann-Whitney U	937.50
Wilcoxon W	1127.50
Z	-0.600
Asymp. Sig.(2-tailed)	0.549

DISCUSSION

The research disproved the null hypothesis, which claimed no significant difference in the instructors' competency scores between public and private HEIs. It suggests a difference between the pattern of lecturers' competency in public and private HEIs, with lecturers' competency in public HEIs being higher than in private HEIs. According to Singh and Sahin's (2017) research, public universities are better at producing future leaders than private universities. Also stated by Al-Husseini (2019) also states that transformational leaders urge academic staff at public HEIs to participate in PD activities more so than at private institutions. However, Jani et al. (2015) noted that leadership and self-management abilities considerably impacted teaching effectiveness, with the impact being slightly greater for private universities.

There is limited literature specifically on lecturers' competency comparison among institutes. However, past studies mentioned above suggest that public HEIs are sometimes better than private HEIs, while other studies suggest otherwise. In the context of Maldives HEIs, it appears that the differences in lecturers' competency among public and private HEIs could be due to several factors as well. For instance, at public HEIs, better recruitment, workload and in-service PD policies are likely established at the institutional level, which encourage and support lecturers to enhance their skills, knowledge and professional experience, thereby improving lecturers' competency compared to private HEIs. It is also important to highlight that there will be other underlying extrinsic and intrinsic factors that influence lecturers' competency, which will not be discussed here, as it is beyond the scope of this study.

The research found no statistically significant distinction between FTL and PTL competence in Maldives HEIs. This indicates that both full-time teachers of languages (FTLs) and part-time teachers of languages (PTLs) are qualified in respective fields of instruction. This result agrees with research by Landrum (2009) that revealed no distinction between part-time and full-time faculty in teaching evaluations. This result was unexpected, but it appears that PTLs at HEIs have access to the same professional development options as their full-time counterparts or that PTLs have taken the initiative to engage in their professional development. This study suggests that PTLs in the Maldives are as competent as FTLs, despite the fact that the vast majority of PTLs work full-time outside of teaching (Waheeda, 2019) and are therefore unable to meet expectations in academic research and student support due to a lack of

commitment. Both Chung et al. (2020) and Bickerstaff and Chavarn, (2018) point out that PTLs are not necessarily eager for leadership roles and might be fine with less involvement. This is also true for the higher education system in the Maldives. Some PTLs in the Maldives may be doing so only to supplement their income, while others may have a genuine interest in passing on their knowledge to the next generation.

CONCLUSION

The Maldives' higher education system has prioritized meeting the needs of an ever-growing student body with top-notch programs and facilities. Long-term effects on lecturers' competence and performance depend on implementing effective PD policies and programs that meet the needs and demands of both FTLs and PTLs.

This study has some methodological flaws, including a lack of parity in the number of replies from different types of HEIs and lecturers and the sample size. The number of responses from PTLs is low compared to FTLs. Similarly, the number of lecturers from private institutes are lower compared to public. It is important to highlight that the lecturer population in public HEIs is large compared to small private institutions in Maldives. Similarly, the PTLs may be FTLs in another institution, so when filling the questionnaire, they might have filled the questionnaire as an FTL. Hence, the generalization of results and its interpretation should be accepted with caution and with this limitation in mind. Another limitation is the lack of empirical literature comparing lecturers' competency. Further skills include the road map for educators as proposed by Rasli et al. (2022) on post-Covid-19.

Therefore, this study not only contributes to limited literature in terms of lecturers' competency in the context of Maldives, but also to the overall development of the HE sector. Additionally, this study adds value to the international studies done on PD in small island nations like the Maldives.

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