Impact of Role Self-Distance and Stagnation on Job Alienation among Managers of Public Enterprises in Nepal

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Abstract

Background: This study examines the impact of role self-distance and role stagnation on job alienation experienced by managers in public enterprises of Nepal.

Purpose: The main objective of this study is to investigate to what extent role stagnation and role self-distance, as negative attitudes, adversely affect the occurrences of job alienation among managers of public enterprises.

Methodology: This study applies a quantitative methodology and cross-sectional survey research design together with descriptive, independent T-tests and multiple regression for data analysis with the sample size of 190 managers associated with public enterprises of Nepal.

Findings: The findings from the descriptive and multi-regression analyses indicate that role stagnation has a positive and significant impact on job alienation among employees, whereas the relationship between role self-distance and job alienation is positive yet statistically insignificant.

Implications: Based on the findings, this study suggests that public enterprises in Nepal need to recognize that self-efficacy of managerial-level employees has a crucial role in mitigating job-related individual alienation that arises from feelings of role self-distance and stagnation. Originality/value: It is the first of its kind research that has examined the relationship between role stagnation, role self-distance, and job alienation considering institutional characteristics of Nepalese public enterprises.

Keywords: *Role Self Distance, Role Stagnation, Job Alienation*

Introduction

Job alienation reflects the sense of disengagement employees experience in their job position, and this self-estrangement results in a decline in motivation and productivity, and that it negatively affects the overall job satisfaction of managers in Nepalese public enterprises (Nair & Vohra, 2010; Battal et al., 2024). Although there are several psychological and organizational elements that constitute a sense of job alienation among employees, the role self-distance and stagnation have been considered as critical factors in this study (Kunte et al., 2017; Sharma, 2023). Besides, Pandey and Kingsley (2000) have indicated that the experiences of job alienation among managers are related to the red tape, hazardous political interferences, rigid organizational structures and overly hierarchical and bureaucratic operational mechanisms of public enterprises.

In a study, Sharma (2023) finds that the dismal financial and operational performance of public enterprises in Nepal reflects excessive political interference, lack of adequate autonomy, absence of professionalism, and conflicting goals. Based on these findings, this study argues that in a working environment with excessive political interference, lack of adequate autonomy and accountability, absence of professionalism, rampant financial indiscipline, and conflicting goals, a sense of role self-distance and role stagnation also manifests among managers in Nepali public enterprises (Pandey & Kingsley, 2000; Kunte et al., 2017; Sharma, 2023).

Moreover, the bureaucratic organizational structure of public enterprises aggravates the feelings of role stagnation and self-distance as the rigid hierarchies and slow decision-making processes stifle the work engagements of managers (Hoy et al., 1983; Pandey & Kingsley, 2000; Ramanadham, 2019; Aksakalli, 2025). Comparably, inadequate remuneration policies, lack of transparency, nepotism, and favoritism also contribute to role stagnation and role self-distance among managers in Nepalese public enterprises. Besides, in public enterprises, where promotions are based on seniority rather than merit, managerial-level employees feel that they have to endure prolonged periods in a particular job position without career development, resulting in role self-distance and role stagnation (Thakur & Kumar, 2015).

Furthermore, with reference to role theory, this study conceptualizes role self-distance as psychological detachment an employee feels from their assigned role, and a sense of role stagnation manifests when employees feel trapped in their current roles without opportunities for growth or advancement (Kunte et al., 2017). Here, understanding the dynamics of role stagnation, role self-distance, and job alienation through the lens of role theory indicates that the perceptions of managers in the Nepalese public sector regarding these variables are shaped by their organizational roles in an organization with bureaucratic structure, rigid hierarchies, and limited career growth opportunities (Biddle, 1986). Besides a sense of role self-distance and role stagnation occur among managers because in public enterprises performance evaluations, career advancements, and promotion opportunities are determined by groupism, political affiliations, and cronyism (Pandey & Kingsley, 2000; Sharma, 2023).

After all, when managerial-level employees experience high levels of role self-distance and role stagnation, they perceive their work as unfulfilling or irrelevant, maintaining detachment and disconnection from their job responsibilities. Hence, both role self-distance and role stagnation contribute to job alienation among employees (Nair & Vohra, 2010; Chiaburu et al., 2014; Kunte et al., 2017). Likewise, in a

study Baniamin et al. (2024) have identified transfer scopes, promotion policies, and human resource development programs as causal factors for low job satisfaction in Nepali public sector organizations. However, there is no empirical evidence on how specific organizational role factors, particularly role self-distance and role stagnation, contribute to managerial employees' experiences of job alienation in the Nepalese organizational context.

The existing research on job alienation has focused on issues such as workplace conditions, motivation, or structural inefficiencies, with limited attention to the psychological and role-related dimensions that shape estrangement from work among managers in an organizational context (Kunte et al., 2017). In addition, Vanderstukken and Caniëls (2021) have emphasized that role factors are essential components of job alienation. Hence, there is an empirical gap for context-specific research that investigates the impact of role self-distance and stagnation on job alienation of managerial-level employees in the public sector, where bureaucratic rigidity, political interferences, absence of professionalism, and limited career growth opportunities uniquely shape these dynamics (Pandey & Kingsley, 2000; Sharma, 2023). Hence, the main objective of this study is to investigate impact of role stagnation and role self-distance, as negative attitudes towards job roles, on the occurrences of job alienation among employees of public enterprises in Nepal. Considering different managerial levels in public enterprises, this study also examines whether experiences of role self-distance and role stagnation vary among managers due to their level differentiation.

In the context of public enterprises in Nepal, where bureaucratic structures limit individual agency and career progression, understanding the implications of role-self distance and stagnation on job alienation among managers becomes crucial for improving organizational performance (Battal et al., 2024). After all, job alienation negatively impacts cognitive engagement, work performance, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and work-life quality of managers in public enterprises (Vanderstukken and Caniëls, 2021). Hence, through its empirical analysis, this study offers implications on how public enterprises in Nepal can nurture a committed and engaged human resource with antecedent-based interventions at both policy and practical levels for reducing a sense of job alienation among managers (Nair & Vohra, 2010).

Literature Review
Theoretical and Thematic Review
The theoretical foundation for this study is based on role theory. Role theory indicates that roles of employees in organizational settings are associated with specific job positions that are shaped by normative expectations. As a result, employee performance, engagement and behavior in an organization are influenced by how their roles have been established, designed and defined with reference to organizational structure (Biddle, 1986; Kunte et al., 2017). Role theory argues that individuals have specific expectations and behaviors associated with their roles and these behavior and expectations influence their interactions and experiences in various contexts (Biddle, 1986). Role theory provides the link between determinants such as role stagnation and role self-distance that when individuals perceive a significant gap between their self-concept and their work role coupled with a stagnated career trajectory, employees in any professional context are more likely to experience feelings of alienation in their job roles (Nair & Vohra, 2010).

When it comes to thematic review, in this study role self-distance refers to the degree to which an individual perceives a separation between their personal identity and their professional role. When this distance is substantial, employees feel disconnection from their work, resulting in experiences of job alienation. Besides, when individuals feel that their roles are incongruent with their self-identity, they are more likely to develop role self-distance as a coping mechanism to deal with job alienation (Pareek & Purohit, 2018).

Moreover, this study indicates that role stagnation, pertains to a lack of growth or development within professional roles and responsibilities of employees. This stagnation results in monotony and a sense of being trapped in a position that does not allow for personal or professional advancement (Thakur & Kumar, 2015). Hence, based on thematic review derived from role theory, this study assumes that both these factors contribute to job alienation, a sense of disconnection from the workplace environment and a decline in overall job satisfaction (Biddle, 1986; Pandey & Kingsley, 2000) Furthermore, based on role theory, this study argues that when employees perceive few opportunities for growth, promotion and professional development within their organization, they distance themselves from their roles as a coping mechanism (Pandey & Kingsley, 2000).

Here, it is also necessary to understand that subtle difference between job alienation and role self-distance. Work alienation refers to the psychological condition that reflects an emotional outcome shaped by workplace structures, management practices, and individual experiences. In other words, alienation is less about what employees expect from their roles and more about how they feel toward their actual work (Nair & Vohra, 2010). In contrast, role self-distance is not an emotional outcome but rather a cognitive mismatch between professional aspirations of the managerial-level employees and their actual job experiences (Kunte et al., 2017). Hence, the two concepts are distinct. Role self-distance as a cause captures the misalignment between aspirations and role realities, whereas job alienation as an effect represents the estranged psychological state as a consequence of this misalignment.

Empirical Review

Regarding a review of literature, Miller (1967) indicates that employees in public enterprises experience role stagnation as public sector organizations have strict hierarchies that limit mobility and inflexibility within roles. Besides, Miller (1967) finds a positive and significant relationship between work alienation and the type of organizational structure prevalent in public enterprises. Likewise, Nightingale and Toulouse (1978), in their study, find that the organizational context explains 37% of the variance in job alienation among employees. Similarly, in a study, Zhao et al. (2022) find that both role self-distance and role stagnation are negatively correlated to job satisfaction and the experiences of work alienation have a positive effect on employee turnover intention.

In another study, Hirschi et al. (2015) suggest that role stagnation not only affects individual self-confidence but also impacts overall organizational effectiveness as disengaged employees contribute less to team dynamics and innovation and the experience of role stagnation negatively influences their career adaptability dimensions, decision-making abilities and self-efficacy. Moreover, Mottaz (1981) indicates that job characteristics explain the feelings of self-estrangement among employees. In this study, Mottaz (1981) in particular finds that lack of control over task activities (powerlessness) and lack of meaningful

work (meaninglessness) are the powerful predictors of job alienation in the workplace. Likewise, in a study, Yerushalmi (1993) indicates that due to role stagnation, senior supervisors feel narcissistically threatened in their workplace encounters with young employees as they have spent years occupying the same workplace without any career advancement and professional growth.

Additionally, in their study, Kunte et al. (2017) indicated that both role self-distance and role stagnation are interconnected issues that significantly impact employee turnover intentions and decline in job satisfaction. More importantly, this article also finds that role distance is higher for the senior management in the banking sector, as with the upgrade and adaptation of new technology; there is a possibility that there is a feeling of self-role distance among the seniors, whereas among junior management, technology acceptability is higher (Kunte et al., 2017). Likewise, Ahmady et al. (2007) in their study find that inter-role distance, resource inadequacy, role stagnation, and role isolation are major factors that culminate into experiences of stress and various dimensions of conflict among faculty members in public academic settings.

Similarly, Vimala and Madhavi (2009) find that role stagnation, role erosion, and inter-role distance are related to higher levels of stress, and role stagnation manifests when employees experience occupational stress when there are few opportunities for learning and growth in their current job position. Besides, Thakur and Kumar (2015), in their study, indicate that role distance and stagnation have a negative impact on work-life balance. Additionally, Khan et al. (2019) revealed that work alienation is negatively related to both explorative learning and exploitative learning, and the study also finds that job alienation emerges from the dynamics of the employment relationship within the current regime of organizational structures. Equivalently, Nair and Vohra (2010) in their study indicates that the strongest predictors of work alienation among knowledge workers are the lack of meaningful work, inability of work to allow for self-expression, and poor quality work relationships.

Furthermore, Hoy et al. (1983) indicate that the relationships between bureaucratic structure and alienation are remarkably similar for secondary schools and social welfare agencies. This study further suggests that a bifurcation of professional and administrative domains in schools provides a distinctive organizational structure that reduces structural impact on job alienation experienced by teachers. Besides, Battal et al. (2024) indicate that strong self-efficacy reduces the level of individual alienation, and the increase in individual alienation also increases the levels of emotional exhaustion among workers. Similarly, Chiaburu et al. (2014) find that job alienation is predicted by individual differences, role dimensions, leader styles, and aspects of work formalization, and these factors have a positive influence on outcomes such as employee attitudes, task performance, and withdrawal. Further, in a recent study Aksakalli (2025) indicate that the feelings of alienation in organizational context hinders collaboration, innovation, and collective efficacy and perpetuating cycles of disengagement (role self-distance) and disaffection (role stagnation) among employees.

In the context of Nepalese public enterprise, Baniamin et al. (2024), in their study, indicate that inadequacy of transfer scopes, weak promotion policy, and limited human resource development programs are identified as areas that impacts low satisfaction level among civil servants associated with public enterprises in Nepal. Besides, previous studies have deemed public enterprises in Nepal as

operating under huge losses together with an organizational context where there is rampant favoritism and nepotism, political influence, lack of transparency and accountability, and rigid bureaucratic structure (Sharma, 2023). However, there is a lack of empirical studies that specifically examine the interplay between role self-distance and role stagnation within the context of public enterprises in Nepal as factors that explain the prevalence of job alienation among employees (Nair & Vohra, 2010; Kunte et al., 2017; Sharma, 2023).

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

Based on review of previous literature in this study, conceptualized from the dynamics of self-distance, role Stagnation, and job alienation among managers of public enterprise in Nepal have been conceptualized.

Role self-distance, Role Stagnation & Job alienation

In this study, role self-distance refers to the disconnect an employee feels between their personal identity and their professional role (Pareek & Purohit, 2018; Saa et al., 2019). In the context of public enterprises, this distance results in employees feeling that their work lacks significance or alignment with their professional and personal values (Thakur & Kumar, 2015). Similarly, role stagnation occurs when employees perceive limited opportunities for growth or advancement within their job roles (Harnish & Creamer, 1985). This stagnation is prevalent in many public enterprises where bureaucratic structures often inhibit career progression, further contributing to inefficiency and low morale (Kunte et al., 2017; Pareek & Purohit, 2019).

In this study, operationalizing role stagnation involves assessing factors such as perceived opportunities for advancement, skill development and job detachment levels (Saa et al., 2019). Likewise, job alienation describes a state where employees feel detached from their work due to repetitive tasks or a lack of meaningful contribution, and the experiences of job alienation exacerbate the feelings of discontent and disengagement (Zhao et al., 2022).

Here, based on theoretical references, a review of literature, and operational definitions, the following hypothesis has been developed for this study:

Hypothesis (H1): Role self-distance experienced by employees in public Enterprises in Nepal positively and significantly impacts their sense of job alienation

Hypothesis (H2): Role stagnation experienced by employees in public Enterprises in Nepal positively and significantly impacts their sense of job alienation

Managerial Levels, Role self-distance & Role Stagnation

Moreover, based on the study by Vanderstukken and Caniëls (2021) that different hierarchical groups explicitly delineate the conditions that buffer work alienation for employees, this study also assumes that based on managerial level variations in public enterprises, employees apply role self-distance and role stagnation as a buffer to withdraw themselves from the experiences of job alienation. Hence, levels of managerial positions generate variations in experiences of role self-distance and role stagnation as

a buffer to experiences of job alienation. This study hypothesizes that in higher managerial positions, employees will indicate a greater propensity for role self-distance and role stagnation (Yerushalmi, 1993). Hypothesis (H3): There is significant difference in average experience of role self-distance, and role stagnation due to managerial level variations among employees in public enterprises in Nepal

Hypothesis (H3): There is significant difference in average experience of role self-distance, and role stagnation due to managerial level variations among employees in public enterprises in Nepal

Figure 1
Independent Variables Dependent Variable
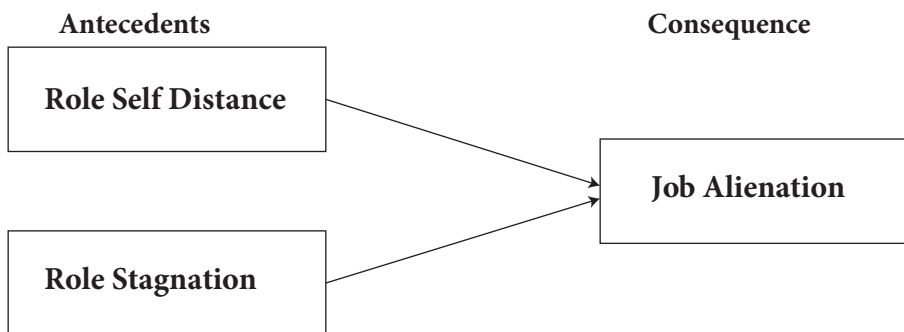
Research Methods

This study used a quantitative research method along with a cross-sectional survey for the collection of data from the employees of public enterprises in Nepal, and the data was conducted in the months of November and December 2024 with a structured questionnaire divided into two sections. In this study, quantitative research methods have been applied for objective measurement and analysis of data. Cross-sectional quantitative research design has been used for description, verification, and evaluation of role self-distance, role stagnation, and job alienation in the context of public enterprises in Nepal.

Survey Instrument

The first section of the survey instrument covers multiple-choice questions for gathering demographic information, and the second section covers four research items for each variable selected in this study utilizing a five-point Likert scale with semantic differences ranging from the scaling values 1-rarely; 2-occasionally; 3- sometimes; 4- frequently; 5- always. The research construct items applied in this study have been adopted from existing literature that has examined the dynamics of role self-distance, role stagnation, and job alienation in different dimensions and professional situations. (Nair & Vohra, 2010; Kunte et al., 2017; Pareek and Purohit, 2018;Vanderstukken & Caniëls, 2021; Singh & Randhawa, 2024). Further, this study has ensured construct validity with internal consistency reliability of the measures by the application Cronbach's alpha coefficient with a pitot test consisting of 50 managerial level employees, expecting larger effects on the Cronbach's Alpha (α) and the alpha coefficients for the scales ranged from role self-distance (0.81), role stagnation (0.83) and job alienation (0.95), indicating satisfactory levels of internal consistency and reliability of the survey instrument.

Here, for each variable, this study used 3 research items to collect and evaluate employee response regarding these variables. Data collected from the survey questionnaire was processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 24.0 software. In this study, multiple regression analysis has been conducted to examine the relationship between the variables, with an equation Y(Job alienation) = α + β1X1 + β2X2 + ε (β1X1= Role Self distance, β2X2=. Role Stagnation) In addition, a paired sample t-test has been conducted in this study to examine the relationship between independent group's managerial level with experiences of role-self distance and role stagnation among managerial level employees.

Participants and Procedures

In this study, data collection has been de-limited from public enterprises that have been established for the purpose of fulfilling social and community utility, and this study has sampled employees from institutions such as (i) Gorkhapatra Sansthan, (ii) Nepal Television, (iii) Nepal Telecom, (iv) Nepal Electricity Authority, and (v) Nepal Water Supply corporation. Here, according to the annual status review of public enterprise in Nepal published by the Ministry of Finance, in the sampled organizations there are altogether 4007 employees working at officer/managerial level. Hence, in these institutions, there are about employees, and questionnaires were distributed to more than 500 managerial level employees in online format, with the support of personnel and professional networks, organizational email addresses, and social media platforms, with the expectation of an n= 351 sample size at a confidence level of 95% for the study. This survey study has also taken the support of the available HR manager of a public enterprise to connect potential survey respondents with the online questionnaire.

However, only about 190 questionnaires with completed information were recollected from the respondents; hence, the sample size for this study remains at n=190. For the purpose of the data collection, the questionnaire was first prepared in English and then translated into Nepali with the use of Google Translate and verified by a professional translator. Due to significant variations in operations modalities, rules and by-laws governing employees in these public enterprises, the response of respondents has been limited to a few demographic profiles. In this study, the sample in this study only includes full-time managerial-level employees with at least 4 years of experience associated with different departments in public enterprises considering job alienation as a manifestation that require a continuing experience of psychological estrangement within organizational context (Vanderstukken & Caniëls, 2021)

Data Analysis and Findings

In this study out of 190 respondents, 132 (70%) are male and 58 (30%) are female and the findings of demographic profile suggests that males employees dominate the managerial level positions in Nepalese public enterprises. Likewise, the age distribution indicates that 24 respondents (13%) are aged between 30-35 years, 60 respondents (32%) fall within the age range of 35-40 years, 74 respondents (39%) are aged between 40-45 years, and 32 respondents (16%) are aged 45 years and above. The data indicates that most managerial-level employees in this sample are middle-aged between the age group of 40 to 45 years. Regarding educational attainment: 74 respondents (39%) have completed graduate studies at the bachelor's level, 98 respondents (52%) have postgraduate degrees and 18 respondents (9%) have achieved an M.Phil. degree.

Table-1
Demographic profile of Respondents

Respondent's character		No. of responses	Percentage (Approx.)
Managerial level employees N=190			
Gender			
Male		132	70%
Female		58	30%
	Total	N=190	100%
Age (in years)			
30-35		24	13%
35-40		60	32%
40-45		74	39%
45-50 & Above		32	16%
	Total	N=190	100%
Academic Qualifications			
Graduate Studies (Bachelors Level)		74	39%
Post-Graduate (Master's Level)		98	52%
Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)		18	9%
	Total	N=190	100%
Organizational Tenure			
4-8 years		48	25%
8-12 years		77	40%
12-16 years and above		65	34 %
	Total	N=190	100%
Managerial Levels			
Senior/executory level officer		50	32%
Supervisory/operative level officer		140	68%
	Total	N=190	100%

Note. Field survey, 2024

When it comes to organizational Tenure, sample in this study indicates that 48 respondents (25%) have been with their organizations for 4 to 8 years, 77 respondents (40%) have served for 8 to 12 years, and 65 respondents (34%) have been employed for more than 12 to 16 years or longer. This indicates that most employees in managerial roles have substantial experience, with nearly three-fourths having worked in public enterprises for more than eight years. Furthermore, the breakdown of employee by managerial

levels indicates that 50 respondents (32%) occupy senior or executive-level officer positions and 140 respondents (68%) of them as supervisory/operative-level officers. Here the data suggests that while there is a significant number of senior executives, supervisory and operative level officers dominate this sample.

Table-2
Descriptive statistics

Variables	Mean	Std.dev
Role Self Distance		
I feel like I am just going through the motions in my job without a personal connection	2.70	0.85
I find it difficult to relate my personal values to my work responsibilities	2.54	0.93
I often feel detached from my role within the organization	2.73	0.87
Overall MEAN($\underline{X}$)	2.65	
Role Stagnation		
I believe there are limited opportunities for career advancement in my current role.	3.72	0.91
I feel that my skills and abilities are not being fully utilized in my position.	3.64	0.89
I feel stuck in my current role with no clear path for growth or development.	3.87	0.91
Overall MEAN($\underline{X}$)	3.74	
Job Alienation		
I feel that my work lacks meaning and purpose	3.58	0.52
I believe that my contributions at work are not recognized or valued	4.12	0.89
I find it difficult to connect with my colleagues and build professional relationships	3.17	0.92
Overall MEAN($\underline{X}$)	3.62	

Note. Field survey, 2024

In this study, weighted mean for role self-distance is 2.65; this value indicates that the perceived distance of employees in relation to their roles is at a moderate level. It also shows that employees maintain certain emotional distances from the roles of working in public enterprises in Nepal as a way to handle stressors associated with work. Similarly, a weighted mean score as 3.72 for role stagnation indicates that public enterprises in Nepal need to focus on areas concerning employee growth, career progression, and involvement policies to try and reduce employees' feelings of stagnation at the workplace (Kunte et al., 2017) With a weighted mean score of 3.62, this result indicates that the managers have been experiencing moderate to high levels of job alienation.

Table-3
Sample Descriptive using T-test for Equality of Mean

Variable	Distribution	Role Self-Distance Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Independent T-Test	Role Stagnation Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Independent T-Test
Managerial level	Senior/executory level managers	2.78	0.977	4.53	2.46*
	Supervisory/operative level of managers	2.42	P value=0.27	3.35	p-value=0.043

*P value significant at <0.05 2 tailed

In this study, the T-test has been used to ascertain whether there is a significant difference in the means scores based on managerial level variation among employees in public enterprises concerning role self-distance and role stagnation. Here, comparing mean scores of managerial level employees regarding role self-distance obtained p-vale which is greater than the level of significance, i.e., 0.05 (95% confidence interval). As the T-Test table above indicates, there is only slight observable difference but not a statistically significant difference perception managerial level employees in public enterprises regarding role-self-distance. However, concerning mean variations in role stagnation generated by differentiations on managerial level of employees, there is significant variations. Hence, in this study H3 has been partially accepted.

Here, the findings of T-test align with Ramanadham (2019) that employee with more than years of experience working in public enterprise indicate role self-distance. Role Stagnation is the result of experiencing lack of growth in the job role of employees. As the finding of T-test suggests, this study also argues that after occupying a role for a long time, managerial level employees keep on stagnating in his old role in which makes them feels more comfortable and secure in an organizational context (Thakur & Kumar, 2015) Hence, with reference to a study by Vanderstukken and Caniëls (2021) this study also suggest that organization hierarchy through the experiences of role stagnation buffers work alienation for senior level manager employees in public enterprises.

Multiple Regression Analysis
In this study multiple regression analysis examines whether role self-distance and role stagnation have positive causal effect on job alienation of managerial level employees associated with public enterprises in Nepal. Regarding Multicollinearity between variables, tolerance values for all for three variables are within accepted threshold of <0.10 together with corresponding VIF values below the critical threshold of 10. Here VIF values for role self-distance, role stagnation and job alienation are as follows; 1.87, 1.68 and 1.79.

Table 4
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error
1	.416	.324	.267	.341249.

a. Predictors: (Constant): **Role Self Distance and Role Stagnation**
b. Dependent Variable: **Job Alienation**

The table 4 indicates that role-self distance and role stagnation together explain 32.4 percent of job alienation manifesting among employees of public enterprises in Nepal. Here, 67.6 remaining 67.6 % of job alienation experienced by employees remains unexplained in this study. This indicates presence of various other role and work- environment related variables that contribute to job alienation have not been considered in this study

Table 5
Regression Analysis for predicting dependent variable job alienation

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	*Sig.*
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.89	0.216		8.07	0.032*
	Role-Self Distance	0.193	0.129	0.173	1.83	0.078
	Role Stagnation	0.394	0.103	0.368	4.79	0 .015*

*Note: Note: F = 16.072, *Significant at p value <0.05 level*

A multiple regression analysis conducted in this study to assess the effect of role self-distance and stagnation on job alienation reveales that role stagnation has positive and significant impact on job alienation. Based on the coefficient values presented in the above table indicate the regression coefficient for role stagnation was found to be 0.393, with a corresponding t-value of 4.79 and a significance value of 0.015. Hence, H2 in this study has been accepted. However, the standardized coefficients, in the table above indicates that role self-distance has positive yet insignificant relationship with job alienation with a regression coefficient of 0.193 and with a p-value ≥ 0.05. This higher p-value suggests that any relationship between role self-distance and job alienation is a matter of random chance. Hence, H1 in this study has been rejected.

Based on the above table, the following equation can be used to predict job alirnation using the regression model applied in this study: Job alienation= .193 (role self-distance) + .394 (role stagnation) + 1.89.

Based on the multiple regression, this study estimates that independent variables predict a sense of job alienation among managerial level employees in public enterprises in Nepal. Among role related sources of job alienation, the result indicates job stagnation as the main predictor of sense of job alienation as compared to role self-distance. The overall finding of regression analysis is consistent with Kunte et al. (2017) that role stagnation is positively related with increasing disconnection between employees and organizational goals.

Discussions

This research has presented a nuanced analysis of role-based-psychological factors that influence job alienation among managerial level employees in Nepalese public enterprise. Here, the findings regression analysis indicate that role stagnation has a positive and significant impact on job alienation experienced by managerial level employees. Hence, the findings of this study indicate that when employees feel stuck in their roles without opportunities for growth or change, they experience alienation from job roles in their organizational setting.

More importantly, the findings of this study also support Harnish and Creamer (1985) that due to role stagnation, employees developed negative attitudes towards their jobs and feel alienated in their job role. Likewise, the results of the independent T-test concerning this study also align with the findings of Thakur and Kumar (2015). In comparison to lower level managers, senior level managers in Nepalese public enterprises experience higher levels of role stagnation as the role occupant keeps on stagnating in the old job roles which are secure, familiar and comfortable (Thakur & Kumar, 2015).

Similarly, this study indicates that role self-distance has a positive but insignificant impact on job alienation, indicating that while there may be some correlation between an employee's ability to distance themselves from their role and feelings of alienation, this relationship is not strong enough to be statistically significant. Hence, any relation between relationship self-distance and job alienation may be attributed to random chance. Besides, the findings of this study also indicate that public enterprises also need to actively consider the broader implications of self-distance and other role-based factors that negatively influence employee engagement in these organizations (Kunte et al., 2017).

Moreover, the findings of this study also confirm with Mottaz (1981) that job conditions are significantly more important than professional background of employees for explaining the prevalence of self-estrangement and job alienation among employees. Similarly, when it comes to role stagnation, this study also relates with Yerushalmi (1993) that senior level officers are more aware of their role stagnation in comparison with operative level managerial employees as they have spent years occupying the same job position without extensive career growth and professional achievement in the organization. Similarly, this study also confirms with Hoy et al. (1983) that role stagnation and job alienation manifest in organizational context due to rigid organizational structures and lack of clear career progression paths. Moreover, the findings of this study indicate, as compared with Khan et al. (2019), that different dimensions of working conditions create a sense of role stagnation and work alienation among employees. In addition, among different factors, this study also confirms with Chiaburu et al. (2014) that role stressors such as role stagnation and role self-distance are related with experiences of job alienation.

Likewise, in line with Nair and Vohra (2010), this study also finds that important predators of work alienation are the inability to find clear pathways for self-expression, promotion and professional growth within an organization. In addition, the findings of this study also align with the role theory that although employees associate themselves with various roles in their professional context, role stagnation occurs when employees feel confined within their designated roles without opportunities for growth or change (Biddle, 1986). This explains why managers in public enterprises experience job alienation due to role stagnation, which has resulted from limited opportunities for growth, skill utilization, or career advancement.

Here, the finding of this study also aligns with Demerouti and Bakker (2011) based on the JD-R model that low job demands and low job resources results into individual job alienation due to role self-distance and role stagnation. Demerouti and Bakker (2011) elaborate on their Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, that low job demands combined with low job resources results into individual alienation in the workplace due to role stagnation when there are insufficient resources such as support, feedback, or opportunities for job growth that prevent employees from developing both professionally or personally in organization context. Besides, the findings of this study also support the JD-R model that stagnation due to low job resources intensifies the feelings of alienation as employees perceive their roles as unfulfilling and lacking progression (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

Moreover, based on Vanderstukken and Caniëls (2021), this study also indicates feelings of autonomy and development of psychological capital can be improved by adopting HR practices that emphasize individualism and independence, in order to engender feelings of empowerment, meaning and significance. Employees who perceive autonomy at the workplace will experience meaningfulness in their work, which counteracts feelings of alienation. More importantly, together with Baniamin et al. (2024), this study suggests that among factors such as transfer scopes, promotion policy, and human resource development programs that result in low satisfaction among employees working in public enterprises in Nepal, future studies need also consider role stagnation as a prominent factor that negatively influences job satisfaction of employees associated with public enterprises in Nepal.

Conclusion & Implications

The research article highlights the positive and significant relationship between role stagnation and job alienation among employees in Nepalese public enterprises. The findings suggest that when employees experience stagnation in their job roles, such as lack of professional growth, job challenge, or career advancement, they are likely to feel alienated from their work. The positive association between role stagnation and job alienation also indicates that public enterprises need to address role stagnation among managerial-level employees to mitigate its adverse effects on employee confidence, work engagement, and productivity.

As Khan et al. (2019) indicates job alienation among managerial level employees negatively influences their work-related attitudes, behaviors and performance outcomes, such as employees' motivation, commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, well-being, work effort, and job performance. Hence, this study recommends that to effectively reduce job alienation among managerial-level employees working in public enterprises, these institutions need to implement organizational strategies that

enhance employee engagement. Here, public enterprises in Nepal can enhance employee engagement through participatory decision-making processes, where employees are actively involved in shaping their work environment and policies. Besides, this study also recommends public enterprises to develop a supportive organizational culture that encourages and provides ample opportunities for managerial-level employees to interact, share knowledge, and act together in a way that nurtures collective commitment to an organization.

Furthermore, creating a supportive organizational culture that emphasizes teamwork, recognition, and work-life balance significantly mitigates feelings of estrangement from the work context. By focusing on these areas, public enterprises can indeed cultivate a more inclusive and motivating workplace atmosphere. Additionally, this study also suggests that involving employees in decision-making processes and ensuring that their roles align with their skills and interests also mitigates feelings of estrangement among managerial-level employees.

Role theory argues that employees develop expectations about their professional roles and when these expectations are not met, psychological distress they experience results into job alienation. Within the context of Nepalese public enterprises, role self-distance creates a misalignment between the professional self and the enacted role within organization context. Similarly, role stagnation intensifies this strain by signaling blocked role progression and unmet future professional expectations. Together, these conditions undermine sense of purpose and belonging among managerial level employees culminating into an experience of job alienation, where they feel estranged from both their roles and the broader organizational mission. Hence as a theoretical implication based on role theory, this study recommends that public enterprises to develop specific interventions that provide specific role clarity to managerial-level employees, provide opportunities for their professional development, and enhance their work engagement.

Moreover, public enterprises in Nepal can also achieve role enhancement even within a structured bureaucratic system through mentorship programs, offering training opportunities, or creating pathways for internal mobility within the organization. By actively engaging employees in their professional growth, Nepalese public enterprises can indeed reduce job alienation and nurture a more committed managerial-level workforce. Besides, to overcome the issues related to role stagnation, this study also recommends public enterprise in Nepal to bring forth renewed focus on job redesign initiatives. Through job redesign initiatives, public enterprises can effectively reduce role stagnation by identifying inefficiencies between employee skills and job requirements and restructuring existing managerial-level job roles to enhance clarity, optimize workflows, and incorporate the latest technology. In addition, to reduce job alienation among employees, public enterprises in Nepal also need to provide adequate support resources, including work support and emotional support, and promote mentorship (Liu et al., 2024).

In addition to structural reforms, cultivating a positive organizational culture is crucial for reducing job alienation. Again, as Khan et al. (2019) indicate, encouraging open communication between management and staff can help bridge gaps created by bureaucratic structures. By addressing both structural issues and cultural dynamics within public enterprises in Nepal, it is possible to reduce self-distance, role stagnation,

and job alienation among employees. Furthermore, this study also argues that public enterprise sector in Nepal needs to realize that the self-efficacy of managerial-level employees has a crucial role in mitigating job-related individual alienation that arises from feelings of self-distance and stagnation. (Singh & Randhawa, 2024) When employees possess a strong belief in their ability to perform tasks effectively, they are more likely to engage proactively with their work environment, which can counteract feelings of detachment and lack of progress.(Battal et al., 2024; Singh & Randhawa, 2024). Likewise, this study also recommends managerial-level employees in public enterprises to become more proactive in their roles and become more engaged in self-initiated professional development and collaboration, thereby improving the dismal performance of public enterprises in Nepal (Singh & Randhawa, 2024).

Limitations and Future Research Scope

This research consists of only 190 managerial-level employees from only five different public enterprises established for the purpose of social and community utility among 44 public enterprises with two variables under consideration for evaluating job alienation. To overcome this limitation, further study is necessary to examine different factors that impact job alienation based on the operating environments of public enterprises. This study has focused only on role-related factors that induce job alienation. Here, future studies can expand the scope of this research with the inclusion of other factors as determinants of job alienation such as experiences of lack of autonomy, powerlessness and meaninglessness in workplace. Despite limitations, this study contributes to the existing literature that job alienation is significantly influenced by role-based factors within rigid organizational structures within public enterprises, and factors such as role stagnation create an environment where employees feel disconnected from their work.

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