THE QUALITY OF TRAINING AND RETRAINING CIVIL SERVANTS IN VIETNAM

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Abstract: Training and retraining are recognized as a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the quality of civil servants to satisfy the demands of serving the people in Vietnam and many other nations. However, a variety of variables, both subjective and objective, have a significant impact on the process and outcomes of training and retraining civil servants. This paper focuses on analyzing two factors that have a far-reaching effect on the quality of civil servant training and retraining, namely the policies on training and retraining civil servants (objective factors) and the civil servants' awareness and attitude toward learning (subjective factors). We, the authors of this paper, conducted a survey of 280 civil servants working for 40 commune-level government agencies in four provinces of Vietnam, including Ha Giang and Cao Bang (Northern), and Ca Mau and Bac Lieu (Southern). Research findings indicate that civil servants evaluate the state's training and retraining policies as not in line with their needs. It demonstrates that the training and retraining have not yet attained practicable quality and efficacy. Based on the research findings, we present some recommendations for the enhancement of training and retraining policies so that they are better suited to the requirements of civil servants, helping to perfect the state's institution for training and retraining civil servants.

Keywords: Civil servants, Policies, Quality, Training, Retraining.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The tasks of training and retraining civil servants to satisfy the requirements of serving the people have been established as part of Vietnam's administrative reform and digital transformation goals. Accordingly, to work in the digital environment, they must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills [16]. Additionally, trained and retrained civil servants must possess the appropriate qualities, capabilities, and qualifications to fulfill their obligations to the nation's development and its citizens [19]. Therefore, to accomplish these tasks and goals, the Government has issued a conscious policy on training and retraining civil servants [20], serving as a legal basis for state agencies (both central and local) to implement yearly civil servant training and retraining. The commune is the smallest administrative entity at the local level, and there are 10.599 commune-level government agencies nationwide [3]. The seven titles of communal-level civil servants are Chief police officer, Military chief commander, Administrative-statistics clerk, Land-construction-urban area - agriculture and environment officer, Financial controller-accountant, Justice-civil status officer, and Culture- social affairs officer [18]. According to the Ministry of

Home Affairs' overall assessment, the annual training and retraining of commune-level civil servants conducted by localities has contributed to standardizing each civil servant title and is the basis for continuing to implement administrative reform between the years 2021-2030. However, for several reasons: the feasibility of training and retraining policies, shifting trends of society and technology, the active and proactive learning of civil servants, and so on, the quality and efficacy of training and retraining have not yet met the goals [12].

The above reality presents a challenge for local leaders: How to make training and retraining high-qualified and effective, and how to achieve the objectives of creating a contingent of civil servants with prime qualities, capabilities, and qualifications to meet the needs of serving the people? To assist them in finding an answer to this question, the authors suppose that it is necessary to promote research and practical assessment on training and retraining civil servants. Therefore, within the scope of this research, we identify its primary focus: the impact of state policies and civil servants' awareness of and attitudes toward learning upon the caliber of their training and retraining.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Civil servants' training and retraining quality (TRQ)

Although the terms "training" and "retraining" have distinct meanings, there is an interference in the goal, which is to help learners form and develop their knowledge and skills. According to T.V.Cuong et al. (2018), training refers to picking up new skills while retraining refers to updating and augmenting knowledge and skills for civil servants following the movement and development of society [2]. Similar to this approach, N.T.Can (2020) affirms that training and retraining assist civil servants in acquiring knowledge, comprehending their missions, and proficiently performing their professional skills to perform their functions and tasks well in the present and future following social and technological development trends [1].

Only when the goals, which are to develop, update, and provide civil servants with knowledge and skills, are proven by their actual working results can it be said that training and retraining are deemed successful. In other words, the success of training and retraining is demonstrated by the quality of civil servants, which N.S.Trung (2021) emphasized their quality, qualifications, capacity to meet the requirements of current and future employment positions, and dedication to serving the nation and its citizens [17]. N.T.La (2015) also argued that to determine the effectiveness of training and retraining, it is critical to evaluate the qualifications, aptitudes, and attributes of civil servants who have completed it [10]. Hence, to examine the efficiency of civil servants' training and retraining, we developed the three following criteria:

- TRQ1. Civil servants' qualifications and professions are standardized. To fulfill the demands of their official duties and keep up with the social development trend, they are equipped with new knowledge and skills. It is the standardization of professional qualifications, or rather, providing them with fundamental knowledge, abilities, and working practices under the legal requirements for civil servants.

- TRQ2. The appropriate knowledge and skills are updated and provided to civil servants. Their knowledge and skills must be updated and augmented following the development trend of the specialized field related to their job positions so that they can carry out the assigned responsibilities and tasks effectively.

- TRQ3. Maintaining and developing civil servant capacity is necessary. The training and retraining assist them in promoting their self-discipline and proactive attitude toward learning to maintain and improve their working capacity to meet the demands of carrying out official tasks and serving the public.

Factors affecting civil servants' training and retraining

Numerous factors can influence how well civil servants are trained and retrained, so it is not always as effective as desired. It should be paid special attention to by agencies and organizations in the implementation process to "effectively train and retrain civil servants through their positive changes after being trained and retrained" [14]. Or as it is the progress in their awareness, attitude, and behavior (capacity) when performing professional activities after being trained and retrained [1]. Two fundamental factors - Policies on training and retraining civil servants and their attitude toward learning - expressed in subjective and objective aspects are confirmed by numerous researchers [2].

a) Policies on training and retraining civil servants (PTR)

Each country has a particular law regulating who has the authority to formulate training and retraining policies for civil servants. Many nations grant their localities the power to issue, but in Vietnam, the Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs are the key agencies with this authority. According to the general principle, "Public policies are enacted to address the demands arising in reality and can be implemented according to the principles of conformity with the law" [5]. The training and retraining policies are not an exception. They are issued primarily to address the educational requirements of civil servants, who need to improve their qualifications and skills and to update and augment their professional expertise and practical abilities. Such policies are outlined in the guidelines that specify how participants must perform while abiding by the law. Furthermore, such policies are directional and encourage civil servants to partake in self-study (self-training and retraining) to increase their capacities [15]. As a result, the following requirements must be met when training and retraining policies are adopted:

- PTR1. Legally compliant training and retraining policies. This requirement is considered mandatory and adheres to the rule-of-law principle in state management activities [8]. As a result, the training and retraining of civil servants of each agency and organization will ensure stability, quality, and efficiency.

- PTR2. Policies on training and retraining following civil servants' learning demands. This principle is thought to be objective and guarantees that the policies are effective in reality because they stem from the actual needs of civil servants in terms of learning to enhance their professional qualifications and practical skills to meet the demands of the job positions they undertake [7].

- PTR3. Training and retraining policies encourage self-study by civil servants to develop their capacities. This requirement is regarded as beneficial because it conveys the goals of 'policies positively changing the behaviors of the subjects' [11], [13]. They convey the support given to civil servants to self-train and retrain to improve their professional qualifications and professionalism and to update and augment the knowledge and skills needed for their professional tasks.

Properly promulgated training and retraining policies shall be the legal basis for each agency to implement its operations effectively. They will take on the role of the primary and ongoing measures to develop a contingent of civil servants with good qualities, appropriate qualifications, and potential capabilities to fulfill the demands of performing public duties. Their relevance is objective and stems from the learning requirements of civil servants while upholding the law, and they also motivate them to pursue self-study to advance their capabilities.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The policies on training and retraining developed to assure objective reality and from the learning needs of civil servants will have a beneficial effect and ensure the high quality of training and retraining civil servants.

b) The civil servants' awareness of and attitude toward learning (ATL)

Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes toward learning are subjective factor that dominates and directly affects the outcomes of training and retraining. According to L.T.T.Huyen (2022), society is continuously changing and evolving, creating new demands for civil servants to actively keep up with them to perform their tasks effectively [9]. According to P.T.Hang (2022), the ongoing social

change and development have caused civil servants' specialized knowledge to enlarge and require updating and augmentation [6]. Therefore, they must be aware of them and actively pursue their studies to master the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfill the requirements of their public duties. Their awareness of and attitudes toward learning are examined under the following three contents:

- ATL1. Civil servants are properly aware of the importance of learning for professional tasks. When they are of the right awareness, they will behave appropriately, which means they will actively engage in training and retraining progress and gain desired outcomes.

- ATL2. Civil servants have a positive attitude towards training and retraining activities. Their positive attitude is the agreement and support towards implementing training and retraining policies by agencies and organizations. It is a factor that plays a crucial role in determining the success of training and retraining policies.

- ATL3. Civil servants actively participate in self-training and retraining. Their active learning here means they train themselves and self-educate to update and augment their knowledge and skills to support their assigned work. If they consistently actively study, each agency and organization will be favorable for implementing their training and retraining policies. Such policies will simultaneously promote their positive orientations.

Policies on civil servant training and retraining are promulgated by the state. They are not only executed by state agencies but participated by civil servants. Therefore, the active support of civil servants directly contributes to the success of the issued training and retraining policies. Each individual will actively engage in training and retraining once they are aware of the role and significance of learning. New training and retraining policies have since been implemented successfully.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): When civil servants are conscious of their need to learn and have the right attitudes toward them, they actively update and augment their knowledge and skills. It helps to ensure the high caliber of training and retraining of civil servants.

Through the literature review, we designed a theoretical framework for research on the factors affecting civil servants' training and retraining. The theoretical framework consists of three scales with nine observed variables. We used the 5-level Likert scale to measure these observed variables: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No comments; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1) as we developed the survey.

Table 1. Research theoretical framework

No	Scales	Observed variables
I	Civil servants' training and retraining quality (TRQ)	- TRQ1. Civil servants' qualifications and professions are standardized.
		- TRQ2. The appropriate knowledge and skills are updated and provided to civil servants.
		- TRQ3. Maintaining and developing civil servant capacity is necessary.
II	Policies on training and retraining civil servants (PTR)	- PTR1. Legally compliant training and retraining policies.
		- PTR2. Policies on training and retraining following civil servants' learning demands.
		- PTR3. Training and retraining policies encourage self-study by civil servants to develop their capacities.
III	The civil servants' awareness of and attitude	- ATL1. Civil servants are properly aware of the importance of learning for professional tasks.

	toward learning (ATL)	- ATL2. Civil servants have a positive attitude towards training and retraining activities.
		- ATL3. Civil servants actively participate in self-training and retraining.

Source: Compiled by the author through the review

After defining the study's theoretical framework, we created a research model with three components: two independent variables (policies on training and retraining civil servants and their awareness of and attitudes toward learning) and one dependent variable (Quality of civil servant training and retraining). The research hypotheses H1 and H2 demonstrate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Figure 1).
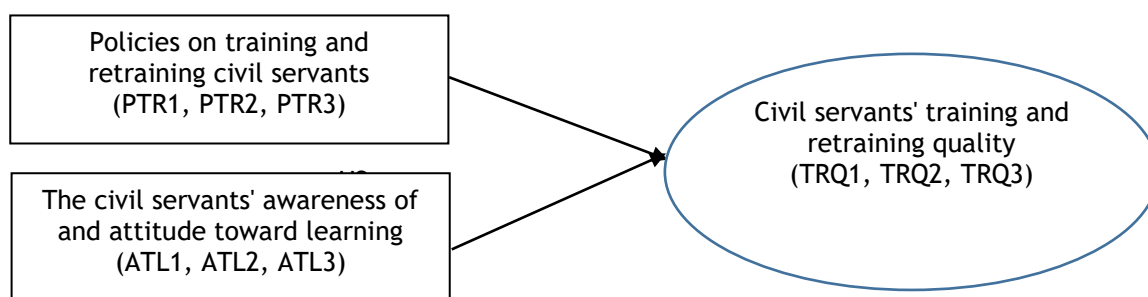
Research models

Figure 1. Research model

3.   RESEARCH METHODS

This study used qualitative and quantitative methods. Whereas the former collected and analyzed the secondary data from published documents, the latter involved gathering and analyzing survey-derived raw data. We did the poll in two steps: Preliminary and Formal surveys.

Preliminary survey

The smallest sample size required for factor analysis in quantitative research is N = m*5 [4]. With the 3-scale and 9-observed models in this research, the minimum sample size required for factor analysis is N = 9*5 = 45. We conducted the poll with a sample size of N = 280 > 45 to guarantee the accuracy of the data gathered. The preliminary survey was designed and then executed in the province of Ha Giang with a sample size of N = 70 civil servants in commune government agencies. Its findings demonstrated the reliability of the observed variables, allowing for their use in the formal survey on a larger scale.

Formal survey

For this research, N = 45 is the minimal sample size determined by the scientific method. We surveyed with a sample size of N = 280 (N > 45) civil servants in 40 commune-level government agencies in four provinces of Vietnam: Ha Giang and Cao Bang (Northern), Ca Mau and Bac Lieu (Southern).

The respondents to the poll were chosen selectively and must have worked for at least three years in commune-level government agencies. To collect their details and obtain their consent, we performed preliminary interviews. The survey's findings showed that 248/280 respondents agreed to respond, and 248/248 of those responses were valid, yielding a 100% legitimate response rate. According to the research sample's characteristics, 80% of survey respondents have worked for commune-level government agencies for more than five years (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the study sample

	Case Processing Summary					
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Time * Gender * Age	248	100.0%	0	0.0%	248	100.0%

Time * Gender * Age Crosstabulation					
Count					
			Gender		
Age			Male	Female	Total
< 30	Time	3-5 years	19	11	30
	Total		19	11	30
30-40	Time	3-5 years	13	5	18
		6-10 years	84	44	128
	Total		97	49	146
>40	Time	> 10 years	34	38	72
	Total		34	38	72
Total	Time	3-5 years	32	16	48
		6-10 years	84	44	128
		> 10 years	34	38	72
	Total		150	98	248

Source: Author's survey results

To test the research hypothesis, we executed scale testing, exploratory factor analysis, and correlation analysis of the collected data.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The reliability of the scales and observed variables in the study model was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. We evaluated Cronbach's Alpha and used descriptive statistics. According to its findings, all three scales and the nine variables observed are reliable when they satisfy the following criteria: Cronbach's alpha > 0.6 and Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.3 [4] (Table 3).

Table 3. Scale test results

Scales	Observed variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. Civil servants' training and retraining quality (TRQ)	TRQ1 TRQ2 TRQ3	248 248 248	2 2 2	5 5 5	3.99 3.92 3.85	.832 .796 .737	.712	TRQ1 = .602 TRQ2 = .682 TRQ3 = .338
2. Policies on training and retraining civil servants (PTR)	PTR1 PTR2 PTR3	248 248 248	2 1 1	5 5 5	3.94 3.73 3.79	.607 .913 .945	.678	PTR1 = .355 PTR2 = .583 PTR3 = .468

3. The civil servants' awareness of and attitude toward learning (ATL)	ATL1	248	2	5	4.04	.826		ATL1 = .624
	ATL2	248	2	5	3.98	.792	.710	ATL2 = .667
	ATL3	248	2	5	4.03	.827		ATL3 = .614
Valid N (listwise)		248						

Source: Author's survey results

All three scales and the nine observed variables in the model have standard test values, according to data in Table 3. They are further employed in exploratory factor analysis. We used exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation to determine the scales' unidirectionality, convergence, and discriminant values. The analysis's findings are displayed in Figures 4 and 5 below.

Table 4. Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.695	52.162	52.162	4.695	52.162	52.162	4.280	47.558	47.558
2	1.344	14.932	67.094	1.344	14.932	67.094	1.694	18.817	66.375
3	1.009	11.209	78.303	1.009	11.209	78.303	1.074	11.928	78.303
4	.753	8.372	86.675						
5	.417	4.637	91.312						
6	.375	4.166	95.478						
7	.282	3.128	98.606						
8	.068	.755	99.360						
9	.058	.640	100.000						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: KMO = .817									
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square = 1726.243; df = 36; Sig. = .000									

Source: Author's survey results

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrixa				
Scales	Observed variables	Component		
		1	2	3
1. Civil servants' training and retraining quality (TRQ)	TRQ1	.749		
	TRQ2	.711		
	TRQ3	.726		
2. Policies on training and retraining civil servants (PTR)	PTR1		.821	
	PTR2		.778	
	PTR3		.765	
3 The civil servants' awareness of and attitude toward learning (ATL)	ATL1			.707
	ATL2			.734
	ATL3			.698
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.				

Source: Author's survey results

According to D.H.Hai et al. (2018), exploratory factor analysis was carried out in quantitative research using the following values: 0.5 ≤ KMO ≤ 1, Bartlett's test has the level of significance Sig. < 0.05, Eigenvalue ≥ 1, Total Variance Explained ≥ 50%, and Factor Loading ≥ 0.5 [4].

Data from Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate that KMO = 0.817 > 0.5, supporting the appropriateness of exploratory factor analysis for the given data collection. With a significance threshold of Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, Bartlett's test demonstrates that the observed variables have a linear relationship with the representative factor. Total Variance Explained with Cumulative% = 78.303% > 50% indicates that observed variables with Factor Loading > 0.5 explain 78.303% of the variation of the representative factors, demonstrating the observed variables' strong statistical importance. With Eigenvalues > 1, the observed variables were divided into three factors that matched the original three factors of the research model: one dependent variable (TRQ), two independent variables (PTR, ATL), and nine observed variables with high statistical significance. Correlation analysis can be used to examine the relationship between the independent variables (PTR, ATL) and the dependent variable (TRQ).

Table 6. Correlation test of the scales

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
PTR	3.8185	.64315	248
ATL	4.0175	.75056	248
TRQ	3.9180	.62846	248

Correlations

		PTR	ATL	TRQ
PTR	Pearson Correlation	1	.412**	.326**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	248	248	248
ATL	Pearson Correlation	.412**	1	.876**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	248	248	248
TRQ	Pearson Correlation	.326**	.876**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	248	248	248

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's survey results

The data presented in Table 6 reveals that the correlation coefficients of the scales reach the value 0 < r < 1. It demonstrates that the two independent (PTR and ATL) and 01 dependent variables (TRQ) have a positive relationship. The theories H1 and H2 are therefore accepted. It is verified that the policies on training and retraining civil servants, the knowledge and attitude toward the learning of civil servants, and the quality of training and retraining civil servants in the scales and research model (Table 1, Figure 1) are appropriate.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of the above correlation test demonstrate that factors like policies on training and retraining civil servants (PTR) and civil servants' awareness of and attitudes toward learning (ATL) have an effect on the quality of training and retraining civil servants (TRQ). The Policies on Training and Retraining Civil Servants (PTR) have a weaker correlation in that relationship (r =.326), demonstrating that civil servants' assessments of present training and retraining policies have not yet satisfied their needs. The training and retraining programs do not adequately equip learners for the demands of their actual jobs. In light of the findings of this study, we suggest the following issues for future research and innovation to help managers better tailor their training policies:
- Developing training and retraining programs for each civil servant position at the commune level (7 civil servant titles). The prerequisites are outlined in this content (1) determining the training

and retraining requirements for each commune-level civil servant title and (2) designing training and retraining programs under each title's employment position. It is significant as it helps standardize each commune-level civil servant title under the standards of ranks and job positions and contributes to perfecting the institution of training and retraining civil servants in Vietnam.

- Establishing policies that encourage commune-level civil servants to actively pursue education to advance their credentials and to update and augment their expertise and skills to fulfill the demands of their performance of public duty. This content provides the necessity to examine and evaluate civil servant quality under the capability framework and employment position by a civil servant title at the commune level. It is the foundation for commune-level civil servants to more accurately assess their actual quality and capacity to encourage initiative, engage in self-study to advance their qualifications, and update and augment their professional knowledge and abilities to perform their tasks better.

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