FACTORS AFFECTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING AND RETRAINING VIETNAMESE CIVIL SERVANTS

KIEU QUYNH ANH[1*], NGUYEN QUYNH TRANG[2], LE THI HUONG[3],
LE HOANG OANH[4], LE SON TUNG[5]

[1]Vietnam Social Sciences Review, Hanoi city, Vietnam
*Corresponding author, Email: anh_kieuquynh@yahoo.com
[2]Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, Hanoi city, Vietnam; Email: ngquynhtrang340450@gmail.com
[3]National Academy of Public Administration, Hanoi city, Vietnam; Email: lehuong1888@gmail.com
[4]National Academy of Public Administration, Hanoi city, Vietnam; Email: hoangoanhnapa1981@gmail.com
[5]National Academy of Public Administration, Hanoi city, Vietnam; Email: lesontungdhnv@gmail.com

Abstract: Training is frequently cited as the primary policy strategy to increase the caliber of the civil service contingent in each nation's civil service activities. Despite several variances in the content and methods of educating and retraining civil servants, all countries strive to develop a team of civil servants with strong working abilities to meet the demands of serving the state and the people best. The reality demonstrates that the training and retraining of civil servants are not always as efficient as intended, as it is influenced by numerous elements to which agencies and the state must give attention while implementing such tasks. In this paper, the author examines two factors that directly affect civil servants' training and retraining: state agency training and retraining policies; and civil servants' awareness of and attitudes about training and retraining activities. Based on the theoretical framework that was developed, the author conducted a direct survey of 300 leaders of local government agencies at the commune level in five provinces that represent three regions of Vietnam: Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang (Northern provinces), Nghe An (Central province), Dong Thap, and Long An (Southern provinces). According to research findings, local leaders underestimate the knowledge and skills that civil servants acquire through self-training, retraining, updating, and supplementation. It demonstrates that they do not have a strong understanding of or attitude toward training and retraining operations. From the research findings, the author offers some recommendations for local authorities to consider while researching and modifying training and retraining policies appropriately to improve the quality of civil servants and provide better services to the general public.
Keywords: Civil servants; Quality of civil servants; Training; Retraining.

INTRODUCTION

The administrative reform process in Vietnam has established the task of training and retraining better civil servants to satisfy the demands of serving the state and the people. The administrative reform master program for the period 2011-2020 [11] and 2021-2030 [14] includes goals like creating a contingent of civil servants with the necessary skills, training, and credentials to serve the public and advance the nation; developing a democratic, professional, modern, streamlined, effective, and efficient administrative system that have the ability to create and develop, to have integrity and to serve the people. To achieve this, the Government and the Prime Minister have released specific policy measures on fostering and training civil servants [10], [12], which provide a legal foundation for central and local agencies to conduct training and retraining of civil servants annually.

The implementation of the policy on training and retraining civil servants in the period of 2011-2020 has achieved practical results. As a result, the contingent of civil servants was standardized under the statutory standards of ranks and titles, which is a precondition for continuing to implement administrative reform between 2021 and 2030 [14]. However, the actual quality of civil servants has not been up to the standards of the tasks in the context of administrative reform and international integration; civil servants have limited computer and foreign language skills, which has an impact on the operational effectiveness of the state apparatus.

The above limitations have been causing challenges to leaders at all levels of government. How can training and retraining be successful to develop a contingent of civil servants capable of meeting the demands of public service tasks in the context of administrative reform? It is necessary to promote research on issues related to training and retraining civil servants to assist leaders in resolving the above challenges. The author determines the central topic of this research, which is the factor influencing the training and retraining of Vietnamese civil servants, to provide scientific data for policy-making on training and retraining civil servants in state agencies to promote administrative reform and enhance the contingent of human resources to carry out public duties.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The effectiveness of training and retraining civil servants (ETR)

When comparing the output and the input of a process to complete a task, the term "efficiency" is frequently used to refer to getting the desired outcome. Many linguists define "Effectiveness as the ability to produce a desired outcome or to produce a desired output"; "Effectiveness is the quality of producing the desired outcome or a strong, lasting impression [3]. In management, "effectiveness involves getting things done right" [2]. Many scholars have addressed the model of training and retraining civil servants at four levels, with the focus being on the level of evaluating the effectiveness of training and retraining through the shift in civil servants after training and retraining [1], [8]. That is the change in civil servants' consciousness, attitude, and behavior (capacity) as a result of their training and development. This criterion for assessing the effectiveness of civil servant training and retraining is significant to each state agency through the agency's work performance results and meaningful to civil servants themselves through their work performance outcomes.

The purposes of civil servant training and retraining operations in Vietnam are to create a contingent of public servants with the necessary traits (political, ethical), professional qualifications, and working capacities to carry out official tasks, serve the populace, and develop the nation [12], [14]. As a result, the effectiveness of public servant training and retraining activities is determined by the quality, professional qualifications, and working capacity of trained civil servants; this is also the subject matter that many scholars have noted [7], [9]. To construct a theoretical framework on the effectiveness of training and retraining civil servants, the author of this paper draws on the research and management viewpoints indicated above. This theoretical framework is as follows: Civil servants's professional qualifications are up to par to meet the requirements of the job positions (ETR1); Civil servants's working capacities are maintained and well assessed to meet the demands for job positions (ETR2); Civil servants's political and ethical qualities are well maintained and evaluated to meet the requirements of performing official duties (ETR3).

Factors affecting the effectiveness of civil servant training and retraining

The reality is that civil servant training and retraining are not always as effective as anticipated because they are influenced by many circumstances to which state agencies working to conduct such activities must pay attention. These elements are frequently mentioned in research [1], [2], including Law on training and retraining civil servants; the caliber of training and retraining institutions for civil servants; training and retraining policies of state agencies; awareness and attitude of civil servants towards training and retraining activities. In this study, the author focuses on examining two factors directly impacting the effectiveness of training and retraining activities by state agencies, namely (a) Policies on their training and retraining; and (b) Awareness and attitude of civil servants toward training and retraining activities.

Policies on training and retraining activities by state agencies (PTR)

Each state agency develops policies to address issues that arise in management performance in its areas of expertise; these policies often take the form of binding regulations. In addition to the binding regulations for the management of civil servants, the issuance of such policies also has

directional features for the management, development, and enhancement of their calibers [7], [8]. This directional impact manifests and ensures the following requirements:

- PTR1: The agency's training and retraining policies are compliant with state law. The notion of respect for the law guides all management operations in a society that upholds the rule of law. As a result, each state agency's operations are influenced by its own state's legislation, which means that all general policies, training, and retraining policies issued by state agencies conform to the state's law's general provisions. As a result, the training and retraining of civil servants of each new agency ensure stability and efficiency.

- PTR2. The agency's training and retraining policies correspond with civil servants' actual training and retraining needs. In other words, they must be designed by the realistic expectations of civil servants related to their rank standards and the credentials and abilities necessary for each job position they occupy. This conformity will have a positive effect by satisfying both the objectives of training and retraining to raise the professionalism and qualifications of civil servants and their practical training and retraining requirements in terms of updated, augmented and improved academic credentials and professional skills.

- PTR3. The agency's training and retraining policies encourage and support civil servants to self-train and improve their credentials. Each agency must establish its goals and procedures for training and retraining civil servants as a primary and ongoing strategy to create a contingent of civil servants with high caliber, academic credentials, and the capability to fulfill performance criteria. Each agency must arrange training and retraining while also encouraging and assisting its civil servants in doing so themselves. As a result, interactions between agencies and civil servants contribute to the effectiveness of training and retraining.

Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes regarding training and retraining activities (ATR)

According to numerous academics, the perception and attitude of civil workers significantly affect training and retraining efforts [6], [9], and they are manifested in the following key aspects:

- ATR1. Civil servants are appropriately aware of the value and necessity of continuing their education to advance their professional development. Each civil servant will actively participate in training and retraining if they are fully aware of the value and necessity of doing so to strengthen their credentials. Since then, each agency's training and retraining will be successful;

- ATR2: Civil servants have a favorable attitude toward the agency's training and retraining activities. An element that is particularly significant in determining the success of training and promoting policies is the cooperation and support of civil servants. Although state agencies are responsible for the development, promulgation, and implementation of such policies, they cannot be implemented solely by state agencies but also by civil servants who will be beneficiaries of them.

- ATR3. Civil servants actively study, self-train, and retrain. The training and retraining will be effective if each civil servant actively and voluntarily promotes the spirit of self-training and retraining to improve their academic credentials and professional skills to serve public services. Since then, training and retraining have succeeded in boosting civil servants' self-discipline and equipping and complementing them with knowledge, capabilities, and working methods.

From the above overview, the author builds a research theoretical framework with a 3-factor model. The research scale and model include 2 independent variables and 01 dependent one with a total of 9 observed ones when studying the factors affecting the effectiveness of civil servant training and retraining. The author designed the survey according to these observed variables and measured by the 5-level Likert measure: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No comments; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Research theoretical framework

No	Scales	Code	Degree evaluation				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	**Policies on training and retraining activities by state agencies**	**PTR**					
1	The agency's training and retraining policies are compliant with state law	PTR1					
2	The agency's training and retraining policies correspond with civil servants' actual training and retraining needs	PTR2					
3	The agency's training and retraining policies encourage and support civil servants to self-train and improve their credentials	PTR3					
II	**Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes regarding training and retraining activities**	**ATR**					
1	Civil servants are appropriately aware of the value and necessity of continuing their education to advance their professional development	ATR1					
2	Civil servants have a favorable attitude toward the agency's training and retraining activities	ATR2					
3	Civil servants actively study, self-train, and retrain	ATR3					
III	**The effectiveness of training and retraining civil servants**	**ETR**					
1	Civil servants's professional qualifications are up to par to meet the requirements of the job positions	ETR1					
2	Civil servants's working capacities are maintained and well assessed to meet the demands for job positions	ETR2					
3	Civil servants's political and ethical qualities are well maintained and evaluated to meet the requirements of performing official duties	ETR3					

Source: Compiled by the author through the review
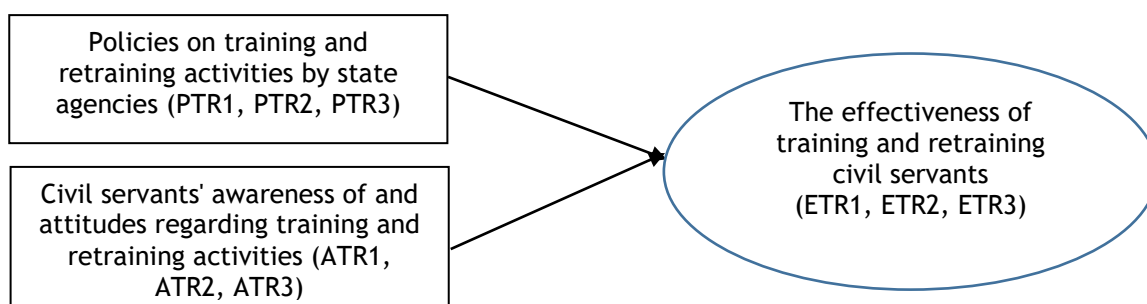
Research models

Figure 1. Research model

Research hypotheses

H1: State agency training and retraining policies correlate with or affect the effectiveness of training and retraining civil servants.

H2: Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes toward training and retraining activities have an impact on how well they are trained and retrained.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

To conducts exploratory factor analysis, the author need the minimal sample size N = 9*5 = 45, when using the 3-scale and 9-variable model [4]. In fact, the author surveyed with a sample size of N = 300 > 45 to assure the reliability of the data collection. The author made a official survey in 6 provinces representing 3 regions of Vietnam: Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang (Northern provinces), Nghe An (Central province), Dong Thap, and Long An (Southern provinces). The survey respondents are leaders in commune-level government organizations at least three years. The survey's findings show that a 100% legitimate response rate was attained with 300/300 respondents who agreed to respond and 300/300 completed answer sheets. According to the study sample's characteristics, the majority of survey respondents had more than five years of leader for commune-level government organizations (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the study sample

Gender * Age * Time Crosstabulation						
Time						
Time			Age			
			< 40	40-50	>50	Total
3-5 years	Gender	Male	25	13		38
		Female	13	5		18
	Total		38	18		56
6-10 years	Gender	Male		99		99
		Female		51		51
	Total			150		150
> 10 years	Gender	Male			46	46
		Female			48	48
	Total				94	94
Total	Gender	Male	25	112	46	183
		Female	13	56	48	117
	Total		38	168	94	300

Source: Author's survey results

Base on the collected data, the author test scale, conducts exploratory factor analysis and regression analysis. Then the author test the research hypothesis and make research conclusion.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The author make a test identify the reliability of the scales; make a test identify the reliability observed variables in the research model throught the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha. The standard conditions for reliability of the scales and observed variables is: Cronbach'alpha > 0.6; Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.3 [5]. The test results show that all 3 scales and 9 observed variables have reliability (Table 3).

Table 3. Scale test results

STT	Scales	Observed variables	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach' Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
1	Policies on training and retraining activities by state agencies (PTR)	PTR1, PTR2, PTR3	.713	PTR3 = .375
2	Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes regarding training and retraining activities (ATR)	ATR1, ATR2, ATR3	.727	ATR3 = .445
3	The effectiveness of training and retraining civil servants (ETR)	ETR1, ETR2, ETR3	.724	ETR3 = .330

Source: Author's survey results

All 3 scales and 9 observed variables in the model meet the standard conditions. The author conducts exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation to preliminarily evaluate the unidirectionality, convergence value, and discriminant value of the scales (Tables 4, Table 5).

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	4.797	53.302	53.302	4.797	53.302	53.302	4.428	49.202	49.202
2	1.237	13.747	67.049	1.237	13.747	67.049	1.557	17.301	66.503
3	1.104	12.264	79.313	1.104	12.264	79.313	1.153	12.810	79.313
4	.734	8.159	87.473						
5	.441	4.905	92.378						
6	.340	3.777	96.155						
7	.240	2.662	98.818						
8	.058	.641	99.459						
9	.049	.541	100.000						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: KMO = .823									
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Approx. Chi-Square = 2251.777; df = 36; Sig. = .000									

Source: Author's survey results

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

Scales	Observed variables	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
		Rotated Component Matrixa		
Policies on training and retraining activities by state agencies (PTR)	PTR1	.893		
	PTR2	.779		
	PTR3	.771		
Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes regarding training and retraining activities (ATR)	ATR1		.824	
	ATR2		.878	
	ATR3		.775	
The effectiveness of training and retraining civil servants (ETR)	ETR1			.808
	ETR2			.766
	ETR3			.692
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.				

Source: Author's survey results

The exploratory factor analysis is accordance with the data set when meeting the standard conditions: $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$; Bartlett's test has the Sig level of significance. < 0.05; Eigenvalue ≥ 1; Total Variance Explained ≥ 50%; Factor Loading ≥ 0.5 [4]. Table 4 and Table 5 data show that the exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the data set (KMO = 0.823 > 0.5); the observed variables are linearly correlated with the representative factor (Bartlett's test with Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05); observed variables explained 79.313% variation of representative factors (Total Variance Explained với Cumulative % = 79.313% > 50%); observed variables have good statistical significance (Factor Loading > 0.5); the observed variables were extracted into 03 factors corresponding to 03 initial factors (with Eigenvalues > 1); so the original research model was kept unchanged, including: 01 dependent variable (ETR), 02 independent variables (PTR, ATR) with a total of 9 observed variables having good statistical significance, it is possible to perform multivariable linear regression analysis to consider the relationship of independent variables (PTR, ATR) with the dependent variable (ETR).

Table 6. Multivariable regression results

Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.048	.112		9.385	.000	
	Policies on training and retraining activities by state agencies (PTR)	.745	.025	.898	30.389	.000	1.000
	Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes regarding training and retraining activities (ATR)	.029	.028	.030	1.027	.005	1.000
a. Dependent Variable: The effectiveness of training and retraining civil servants (ETR) Adjusted R Square: 0.784 Durbin-Watson: 2.106							

Source: Author's survey results

Table 6 data shows that the factors PTR, ATR explain 71.6% of the variation of the factor ETR in the research model (Adjusted R Square = 0.784), so the built multivariate regression model is suitable for the data set; there is no multicollinearity (VIF = 1.000 < 2), there is no autocorrelation [Durbin-Watson = 2.106 (1 < d <3)] in the regression model; the factors PTR, ATR are correlated with the ETR (Sig. < 0.05); the hypotheses H1, H2 are accepted (B > 0). The regression model can be identified the multivariate of this study is as follows:

$$ETR = 1.048 + 0.745*PTR + 0.029*ATR$$

The regression model shows that the correlation level of the independent variables and the dependent variable in increasing order is: Civil servants' awareness of and attitudes regarding training and retraining activities (ATR) and Policies on training and retraining activities by state agencies (PTR).

CONCLUSION

According to the abovementioned research findings, local government agency leaders significantly underestimated civil servants' awareness of and attitude toward training and retraining activities. In other words, civil servants have not encouraged the spirit of self-training and retraining to enhance their professional qualifications and update and supplement their skills and competencies. This has an impact on how well and effectively civil servants and agencies carry out their duties. Local leaders must also take the necessary steps to ensure that civil servants are trained and retrained in a way that fosters their proactive and self-disciplined nature and is effective in content rather than form, which relates to the evaluation of civil servant quality, so it is necessary to evaluate it strictly by the capacity framework of each job title and position so that the civil servant can encourage their proactive spirits and self-study to enhance their academic qualifications as well as update and supplement knowledge and skills to carry out their official duties better.

There are no required requirements for the content of evaluating the quality of public servants under the competency frameworks for each title and job position in the current regulations of Vietnam's law on assessing the quality of civil servants [13]. As a result, the development of the capacity framework and the evaluation of civil servants by the competency framework have received little attention from local government agencies. As a result of the abovementioned conclusion, the author suggests that local authorities develop a competency framework and evaluate civil servants following the competency framework for each job position, which is explained in the following aspects:

- First, standardize the contingent of civil servants under the standards of ranks, titles, and job requirements. At the same time, encourage and motivate them to voluntarily undergo training and retraining to improve their performance of official duties.
- Second, it is simple to quantify the criteria for evaluating the quality of civil servants by the traits and professional standards of each title; this helps to overcome the limitations of assessing the quality of civil servants under the general criteria outlined in the current legal documents.
- Third, reach a consensus on developing a capacity framework and evaluating the quality of civil servants under the competency framework for each job position in the government agencies; this will help Vietnam's civil service institutions to be perfected in terms of developing a capacity framework and evaluating the quality of civil servants under the competency framework for each job position.

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