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# Journal of Trade Science

ISSN 1859-3666

Volume 6

Number 1

April 2018

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# BUILDING CAPACITY FRAMEWORK FOR LEADERS OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS IN HOA BINH PROVINCE

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*Received: 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017*

*Received: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

*Approved: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017*

**T**he public sector is facing renewed pressure to improve efficiency and to better meet the needs of people in using public services. To implement one of the four pillars of public administration reform, improving the quality of civil servants is a prior breakthrough solution. The application of the capacity framework to human resource management in the public sector has been adopted by many countries around the world. For the Vietnamese public sector, the use of capacity frameworks in human resource management and the improvement of leadership quality is an urgent and central requirement. In this study, by using quantitative and qualitative research methods with the research objectives are the leaders of departments and sectors in Hoa Binh province, the author has built up a capacity framework for local leaders of the public administration sector, which associates with the province characteristics, as the basis for developing policies, methods of leadership development in the framework of capacity.

**Keywords:** leadership in public sector, competency framework, leadership theory

## 1. Introduction

Competency models had been introduced by David McClelland, the researchers in education field in 1970s (Markus, L., Thomas, H. C., & Allpress, K. (2005), after that, Boyatzis's research was the fundamental and validity for competency framework development (Le Quan, Ta Huy Hung, Mai Hoang Anh, 2015). Competency models had not been implemented in United State, but it also expanded all over the world included public administration (Horton, S. 2000). Some initiative countries which implemented competency based human resource management were United State, United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Belgium, some Asian countries like Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand. Thus, competency models had become the useful tool and new trend for human resource management in public administration.

In line with the trend of new public administration, Vietnam public administration changes their operation to meet the high services quality of customer and the changes of technology, the industrial revolution 4.0. One of the most important changes in public administration is the improvement of human resource, improvement of leaders in the public sector. Enhancing the quality of leader the key point for successful changes in public administration. Government reform requires the advanced approach for human resource development with civil servants and leaders in the public sector, competency based management has been selected as a powerful tool to support the development.

In this research, Hoa Binh province with particular politic, social, cultural factors had been selected for collecting data. In recent years, Hoa Binh province shows many improvement policies, programs, howev-

er, it has many limitations with a low ranking of PAR, PAPI ranking. To sustain development, competency based human resource management with leaders is a critical factor in the next step of province development. In this research, the authors used advance theory as the fundamental to build competency for leaders in public sector.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. New concept of public administration

Public administration in Vietnam and over the world witnessed the high speed of changes in the technology development circumstance, globalization, high demand of citizens. To overcome those difficulties, the public sector must change their operation to become more efficient like the private sector. Nguyen Van Tham confirmed public administration restructure included: restructure organizational structure, system, and human resource management reform, financial management reform. In the context of governance reform, the Party paid more concern to the human resource management and their job reform to get high quality of civil servants to satisfy the high requirement. Because of the limited quality of civil servants and public leaders (unskilled civil servants, unprofessionalism and so on), civil servants cannot meet the higher requirement of new circumstance (Party's requirement, globalization and technological development (Le Nhv Thanh, 2014). As a consequence, it is necessary to enhanced the quality of civil servants, in particular; leaders in public sector by implementing some advance approach for human resource management in this sector.

#### *Public administration in Hoa Binh province*

Hoa Binh is mountain province with many difficulties in nature, society; diversity of ethnic minority people which lead to the low level of economic development, social development. Improving leadership competency is a critical factor to support government reform, economic development, and social development. Hoa Binh public sector operation has many limitations, as shown by their ranking in the governance reform ranking. They got 84.03 points with the 44/63 level in B group in public administra-

tion reform in 2015 (PAR, 2015). Moreover, since 2012, PAR index survey has reflected the Hoa Binh public administration reform changes. With the increasing result in PAR index of Hoa Binh province, leaders in the public sector have played a pivotal role. With some dark points, improving the leadership's competency is required by the governance system in the new context of development.

### 2.2. Competency model in public administration

Markus, Thomas, & Allpress (2005) confirmed the important role of competency framework in human resource management. Moreover, Shippmann et al. (2000) found the trend of competency model implementation on the public sector. When the system implemented competency based management, Markus et al. (2005) said the organization must build their competency for their leaders and employees for each position. Competency model includes necessary competency and the behavior for each level. Boyatzis (1982) defines a competency as "an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job" (p. 97). In the psychological approach, competency included knowledge, skill, attitude, personality, the motivation of a person to finish their job (Markus et al, 2015). For educational approach, competency is an action, behavior, or outcome result which had existed in a person for doing their job. The competency based management implementation has been evaluated as the advance trend for public administration in Vietnam and over the world (Le Quan, Ta Huy Hung, Mai Hoang Anh, 2015). As a result, job competency for each position has knowledge, skill, characteristic and other factors for doing their position's job.

### 2.3. Leadership competency model in public administration

De Beeck & Hondelghem (2010) proposed the competency model for federal government is called the '5+1 competency model'. These models have a technical competency and five cluster of generic competency (interpersonal relations, dealing with information, giving direction and leading and dealing with tasks. Technical competencies are specific skills and knowl-

edge support for the specific job position. Horton (2010) identified the United Kingdom competency model for leader in Senior Civil Service including: (i) thinking strategically; (ii) getting the best from people; (iii) learning and improving; (iv) focusing on delivery; (v) giving purpose and direction; (vi) making personal impact. The effective and ineffective behaviors have been seen in each competency. In Canada public administration, the Key Leadership Competencies had four generic competencies: (1) Values and Ethics; (2) Strategic thinking (with 2 sub-competencies: Analysis and Ideas); (3) Engagement and (4) Management Excellence with 3 sub-competencies: Action Management, People management, and financial management). Based on the competency model, each Department has also established professional or technical competencies.

In Asian countries, it is necessary for them to learn the trend of competency-based management. Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia are the initiative countries implementing competency framework for human resource management in public sector. In Singapore, this model includes core competency and particular competency. Core competencies are (i) holistic thinking (creative thinking, critical thinking and ethics); (ii) social competencies (communication, positive impact to society); (iii) Strategic implementation competency (Planning, management, decision-making); (iv) Development competencies (self-development; teamwork development, organizational development). Each competency has definition and three levels with specific behaviors: strategic level, tactic level, individual level. Malaysia public sector implements competency-based management on remuneration reform to attract high-quality candidate who works for public sectors. Malaysia competency model has three competency clusters: core competency, professional competency, and specific position competency.

In Vietnam public sector, Phung Xuan Nha, Le Quan (2012) proposed competency framework for leaders in public administration which has three clusters named "Tam- Tam- Tai". Mai Thanh Lan et al (2015) conducted the study for middle managers in

public sector (director, vice-director for Department) in Northwest mountain area which proposed 5 cluster competencies with 22 sub-competencies. Five clusters are local awareness; professional competency; management competency, human resource management competency and self-management competency. Thus, competency based management for leaders in public sector have been affirmed as the advanced tool by literature review.

#### ***2.4. Propose leadership competency model for Department in Hoa Binh province***

The authors used three approaches for proposing leadership competency model for Department in Hoa Binh province: leadership competency framework implemented in some countries over the world (United Kingdom; Belgium, Singapore, Malaysia, Korea); (ii) the experience of Home Affair regulations and (iii) Department of some provinces regulation for Director and Deputy Director of Department. With the holistic approach, the author proposes some competency clusters for department's leaders in Hoa Binh province:

*Firstly*, the competency in regional context group includes four sub-competencies: (1) Knowledge of local culture; (2) Knowledge of strategy and policy for local development and (3) Knowledge of local language and (4) Knowledge of local advantage

*Secondly*, the professional competency group includes: (1) Knowledge of public administration sector; (2) Knowledge of organization mission; (3) Building government administration document and (4) Building regulation, policy

*Thirdly*, the management competency group includes: (1) Defining vision and core value; (2) Change management in public organization; (3) Internal information management; (4) Organizational resources management; (5) Planning and organizing; (6) Building organizational culture; (7) Delegation; (8) Decision-making;

*Fourthly*, human resource management group includes: (1) Organizing and using employees; (2) Building workforce, (3) Building employee's trust; (4) Motivating employees; (5) Training and developing employees; and (6) Evaluating employees

Fifthly, self- management competency includes: (1) Creative thinking; (2) Stress management; (3) Time management; (4) Building relationship; (5) Communication skill; (6) Continuous learning; (7) Critical analysis thinking and (8) Task implementation

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research design

There are four steps in the research design in table 1. Based on literature review, the authors proposed five competency clusters with 30 sub-competencies. Moreover, the literature review indicated some accurate and validity methods for building leadership competency framework for leaders in public sector. These methods are in-depth interview and AHP (Analytical Hierarchy Process) method which had seen in research of Nguyen Hong Tin et al (2015), Jeou-Shyan, H., Hsuan, H., Chih-Hsing, L., Lin, L., & Chang-Yen, T. (2011)

#### 3.2. Research method

The combination of quantitative and qualitative was implemented in this research. The qualitative method was conducted by an in-depth interview with 12 director, deputy director of Department in Hoa Binh province and 5 Head of human resource management in People's Committee of Hoa Binh Province. The quantitative was used by Analytical Hierarchy Process which tools were used to build the civil servant in Can Tho Province (Nguyen Hong Tin et al, 2015). Analytical Hierarchy Process was found in the research of Saaty (2008), Bhusan and Rai (2004). With this tool, the Pair-wise Comparison of competency was conducted following the level of importance from 1-9.

After Pair-wise Comparison, author calculated the CR index with the formula: CR (Consistency ratio) = CI/RI. (CI: Consistency Index)

$$CI = (\lambda_{max} - n) / (n - 1)$$

**Table 1:** Research design

Method/ research activities	Scope
Step 1: Review competency framework, leadership competency framework in some countries and Vietnam	Competency framework in some countries, Vietnam and Hoa Binh province
Step 2: In-depth interview	12 director, deputy director of Department in Hoa Binh province
Step 3: Building leadership competency framework	Position: Deputy director of Department in Hoa Binh province
Step 4: Completing leadership competency framework, ranking the important level 1 of necessary competency	Leader in Department

**Table 2:** AHP matrix

	X1	X2	X3	X4	Xn
X1	1	w12	w13	w14	w1n
X2	w21	1	w23	w24	w2n
X3	w31	w32	1	w34	w3n
X4	w41	w42	w43	1	w4n
Xn	wn1	wn2	wn3	wn1	1
Sum	$\sum wn1$	$\sum wn2$	$\sum wn3$	$\sum wn4$	$\sum wnn$

$$\lambda_{\max} = \frac{1}{n} \left[ \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n W_{1i}}{W_{11}} + \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n W_{2i}}{W_{22}} + \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n W_{3i}}{W_{33}} + \dots + \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n W_{ni}}{W_{nn}} \right]$$

RI: Random Index (follow table 3)

**Table 3:** Index RI

n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
RI	0	0	0.52	0.89	1.11	1.25	1.35	1.4	1.45	1.49	1.52	1.54	1.56	1.58

Source: Nguyen Hong Tin et al (2015)

**4. Research result**

Research result reflects the necessity of five competency clusters with the result as below: the competency in regional context clusters (0.273), the management competency clusters (0.271), the professional competency clusters (0.211), human resource management clusters (0.126) and self-management cluster (0.119). All clusters satisfy the rule of thumb with the CR<0.1. The result indicated the most necessary for leaders in public administration is the competency in regional context clusters (the first position in ranking). So, based on leaders in public administration, in order to get their job done well, leaders must understand their specific condition in their province. Based on this competency, they can propose the accurate policies. In the competency in regional context clusters, leaders in Department have required the high level of knowledge of regional culture, in particular, the deeply understanding some specific culture and specific condition (Table 4).

In this research, the management competency clusters are more important than the professional competency clusters because of their role in the organization. In the organization, the director and deputy director should show stronger management competency than their professional competency. The reason for this is due to the scope of the activity, the scope of management (internal departments and external departments with diversified fields) should ask the leaders of the

department to have good management capacity to ensure best perform the role of the department in the local public administration.

Although not highly regarded as a local competency group, the management competency has the high

level of necessary, the professional competency gets the third rank in total. In particular, knowledge of organization mission and knowledge of public administration sector are ranked in the first and the second of the four professional competencies with the department leaders.

Surprisingly, the results from the survey show that the human resource management capacity and self-management capacity group with leaders of Hoa Binh provincial departments are not highly rated (ranked fourth and fifth in total group surveyed). This result reflects the assessment of the need for competency with departmental leaders focusing more on the job rather than on the person doing the job. Modern management theories argue that human resources need to be seen as resources to build competitive advantage with businesses and organizations both public and private (Bonder, A et al. 2011). When analyzing the ranking results of competencies in the human resources team, the result of the building workforce competency confirms that team building and acquiring appropriate people in public organization always receives high attention. However, the results reflect the training and development for employee's competency for leaders of departments are limited. It can cause a great impact is the lack of personnel adjacent to meet the requirements of organizations public office.

In addition, self-management competency is essential for leaders at all levels. However, these are the new

**Table 4:** Leadership competency framework for Hoa Binh province

Comtetence/ Sub-competency	Weigh	Rank	Comtetence/ Sub-competency	Weigh	Rank
<b>The competency in regional context</b>	<b>0.273</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Human resource management competency cluster</b>	<b>0.126</b>	<b>4</b>
Knowledge of local culture	0.093	1	Building workforce	0.032	1
Knowledge of strategy and policy for local development	0.079	2	Evaluating employees	0.027	2
Knowledge of local language	0.064	3	Organizing and using employees	0.022	3
Knowledge of local advantage	0.037	4	Building employee's trust	0.017	4
<b>The management competency clusters</b>	<b>0.271</b>	<b>2</b>	Training and developing employees	0.016	5
Building organizational culture	0.054	1	Motivating employees	0.012	6
Planning and organizing	0.051	2	<b>Self- -management competency cluster</b>	<b>0.119</b>	<b>5</b>
Decision- making	0.042	3	Building relationship	0.021	1
Organizational resources management	0.039	4	Communication skill	0.019	2
Change management in public organization	0.033	5	Stress management	0.015	3
Defining vision and core value	0.021	6	Time management	0.015	4
Delegation	0.019	7	Critical analysis thinking	0.014	5
Internal information management	0.012	8	Creative thinking	0.01	6
<b>The professional competency cluster</b>	<b>0.211</b>	<b>3</b>	Continuous learning	0.008	7
Knowledge of organization mission	0.071	1	Task implementation	0.007	8
Knowledge of public administration sector	0.058	2			
Building regulation, policy	0.043	3			
Building government administration document	0.039	4			

Source: Author (2017)

approach for leaders in public sector. Thus, this is not yet rated in importance (rating 5 with a weight of 0.119). In the self-management group, relationships, communication, time management, and stress management in the workplace are valued by many department leaders more than competencies such as continuous learning, creative thinking. In the new public management and globalization context, self-management is requirement to change their job performance to create the successful change in public administration sector. Thus, the leaders must change their mind to accept and improve their self-management in the near future.

### 5. Conclusion

The author's research synthesizes theoretical foundations and modern approaches in research and development of competency frameworks in public sector. The literature review about competency framework reflects the widely accepted implementation of the competency framework for leaders in public sector. In Vietnam context, the authors uses validity method to build the leader competency framework in Hoa Binh province. Moreover, the authors verify the important ranking of each competency in the competency model. Based on our result, researchers, policy-makers have a fundamental theory for setting their leadership development policies.

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### Summary

Khu vực hành chính công đang phải đối mặt với áp lực đổi mới để nâng cao hiệu quả hoạt động và đáp ứng tốt hơn nhu cầu của người dân trong việc sử

dụng dịch vụ công. Để thực hiện được một trong bốn trụ cột của cải cách khu vực hành chính công, nâng cao chất lượng cán bộ công chức là giải pháp đột phá là tiền đề để thực hiện cải cách hành chính. Xu hướng ứng dụng khung năng lực với hoạt động quản trị nhân lực trong khu vực hành chính công được nhiều quốc gia trên thế giới áp dụng. Đối với khu vực hành chính công Việt Nam, việc sử dụng khung năng lực trong quản trị nhân lực và nâng cao chất lượng lãnh đạo là một đòi hỏi cấp bách và trọng tâm. Trong nghiên cứu này, bằng phương pháp nghiên cứu định lượng kết hợp định tính với đối tượng khảo sát là các lãnh đạo sở, ngành tại tỉnh Hòa Bình, tác giả đã xây dựng được khung năng lực với lãnh đạo khu vực hành chính công cấp sở tại tỉnh Hòa Bình gắn với đặc thù tỉnh làm căn cứ để xây dựng các chính sách, phương pháp phát triển lãnh đạo theo tiếp cận khung năng lực.

## MAI THANH LAN

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