

Completing the public human resource management model based on job position in Vietnam

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Abstract: *The public human resource management model based on job position, also known as the position-based civil service model, represents an approach to arranging personnel according to each specific task in an organization. Compared to the career-based model, implementing this model will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of human resource management activities in the public administration sector.*

Keywords: *Public human resources; civil service; job position; administrative reform; management model; completion; model based on job position.*

1. Introduction

Completing the public human resource management model associated with the job position project in Vietnam nowadays is critically important to meet the needs of managing a diverse workforce with increasingly higher quality. An effective human resource management model will help enhance the search, attraction, and development of talent while simultaneously minimizing disparities, losses, and wastage of human resources.

The job position project is expected to create a fair and transparent evaluation system, encouraging employees to be conscious and responsible and strive to enhance their competencies and competitiveness in the labor market in general. Moreover, developing the job position project also helps increase transparency and

responsibility in human resource management, ensuring fairness, properly using the capabilities and qualifications of the employees, and protecting their rights.

Completing the public human resource management model linked with the job position project in Vietnam not only benefits agencies, units, localities, and employees but also plays a vital role in the sustainable development of the labor market and the entire society.

2. Public human resource management models

Public human resource management plays a crucial role in the state administrative system. Due to political, socio-economic, and cultural differences, each country develops its public human resource management models. Currently, there are two basic public human resource management

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models worldwide: the career-based model (also known as the career civil service system) and the position-based model (also known as the position civil service system).

2.1. Career-based model

In the career-based model, public personnel are managed according to civil service ranks, and entry into a rank is through examinations or a selection process. Each rank has its fixed salary scale, which is stipulated by laws. Furthermore, each rank must ensure their standards for diplomas, educational qualifications, and specific professional competencies. Personnel are recruited and appointed to a rank only when they meet these established standards.

In this system, personnel often work for life in a specific career, and their promotion from lower to higher ranks and grades within the system is strictly regulated by law. Their promotion is based on their length of service, rather than on their work performance.

The career-based civil service system tightly integrates public human resource training and recruitment into ranks; each rank has a specific salary scale. On the one hand, this system creates a stable and orderly working environment, enabling personnel to be assured in their work and develop their capabilities, skills, and ethical qualities for career advancement. On the other hand, it has limitations such as closedness, rigidity, lack of flexibility, and passivity in personnel activities. These limitations are even more apparent in the context of the strong development of the market economy and globalization trends. This system is commonly applied in European countries.

2.2. Position-based management model

The method of managing public human resources based on job positions, also known as the position-based civil service model, represents allocating personnel according to specific jobs within an organization. An organization divides its operations into various

jobs; each personnel (or group of personnel) is assigned to a particular job with a specific salary. This model is called the checkerboard model (or matrix model) since each matrix square represents a job position corresponding to the person or group of people in charge (depending on the intensity and amount of the job). Each job position is assigned to an individual who holds that position until they no longer take on that job.

Unlike the career-based civil service management model, the position-based civil service model does not arrange personnel according to their ranks. Instead, it is organized according to specific employment positions. Thus, the personnel recruitment process is not entirely based on diplomas or certificates but primarily focuses on the actual capabilities of civil servants. This model is based on the concept of “expert,” with each personnel regarded as an expert because each job position requires them to have appropriate standards to meet job requirements. Allocating human resources based on the perspective of “finding people for the job” is a characteristic feature of the position-based civil service model.

The position-based civil service model emphasizes the actual competence of employees to match specific job positions according to the general competency standards of those positions. This model does not require a long-term commitment to a single job like the career-based system; instead, it is regarded as an open civil service system. In this system, all citizens have equal opportunities and rights to be recruited into civil service positions, provided they meet the stipulated standards and conditions. Following a hierarchical system of ranks and salary scales from low to high is unnecessary. Recruitment and utilization of civil servants are based on competence, with a more open and flexible approach to attract talent from all sectors, including the private sector. The

flexibility of this system allows for easy and fluid movement in and out of the civil service.

The position-based civil service model defines job positions based on specific requirements and standards, clearly detailing the complexity, amount of work, target audience, and various management factors. The salary system in this model does not adhere to the salary scale as in the career-based civil service model; instead, it follows a position-based salary structure. As a result, the salary system in the position-based civil service model becomes diverse and complex. Moreover, it is an essential tool for effective human resource management in public organizations. It helps organizations select the right human resources for job requirements and design training programs tailored to specific needs. Additionally, implementing this model assists leaders in assessing the importance of each job within the organization, preventing overlap in the division of functions and tasks among departments. This model also provides a basis for accurate and fair personnel evaluation, serving as a foundation for determining appropriate salaries and bonuses based on the job.

In addition to the advantages of flexibility, specificity, and transparency, as analyzed above, the position-based management model also allows for quantifying the criteria of the civil service process, including recruitment, training, evaluation, and remuneration for public personnel. This is derived from the detailed analysis and description of job positions within the civil service. Therefore, this model enhances dynamism, work efficiency, and adaptability, maximizing the capabilities of public personnel through a competitive environment both inside and outside the civil service, including attracting external talents. Moreover, the position-based civil service model allows for flexible job transitions between the private and public

sectors based on job requirements and the actual capabilities of public personnel. However, the downside of this model is its lack of stability. This model is primarily applied in the United States and countries with civil service systems based on the American model.

3. Requirements of the public human resource management model by job positions

Vietnam has implemented the career-based civil service model for many years and is now gradually transitioning to the position-based one. Accordingly, in recent times, the management regime for cadres and civil servants in Vietnam has seen innovations, reflecting the development needs of the socialist-oriented market economy and proactive integration into the international economy. Job position concepts have been mentioned in the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants (2008) and the Law on Public Employees (2010). Specifically, “working position means a job linked with a civil servant title, post, structure and rank as a basis for determining the payroll of, and arranging jobs for civil servants in an agency, organization or unit” (Article 3, clause 7 of the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants) and “working position is a work or task associated with a corresponding professional title or managerial post, serving as a basis for determining the number and structure of public employees to be recruited, employed and managed in a public non-business unit” (Article 7 of the Law on Public Employees). Furthermore, job position is also one of the principles of the law on civil servants and civil service. The Law on Cadres and Civil Servants (2008) and the Law on Public Employees (2010) (amended and supplemented in 2019) both stipulate principles of management of civil servants and public employees based on job positions (Article 2, clause 5 of the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants and Article 3, clause 6 of the Law on Public Employees).

The model of public human resource management based on job positions requires respect for procedure and quality. It demands a step-by-step implementation with an appropriate roadmap to avoid unnecessary pressure on agencies and localities to complete tasks within short periods.

Additionally, instructions and detailed outlines are necessary to define job positions in agencies and localities. This helps clarify the nature, characteristics, requirements, complexity, and scale of the job, ensuring that equivalent positions are consistently identified across agencies and units.

Completing the job position project is crucial to meet the requirements of the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants and the Law on Public Employees (amended and supplemented in 2019). To ensure that the position-based management model complies with the provisions of the law, agencies and units need to review and adjust human resource procedures and policies to reflect the essence and content of the laws accurately. Specifically, the job position project must clearly define criteria for recruitment, selection, disciplinary actions, salary increases, and promotions according to the provisions of the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants and the Law on Public Employees. Furthermore, establishing a scoring and performance evaluation system must also adhere to legal provisions to ensure transparency and fairness.

Building and applying the position-based civil service model is a complex and challenging process that involves designing organizational models and job descriptions and clearly defining standards and competency frameworks for each position. However, in this model, jobs can fluctuate quickly, leading to the risk of job loss if personnel fail to meet position requirements and standards. This makes it challenging to transfer personnel between positions.

Issues such as recruitment examinations, including exam content, exam subjects, exam formats to select suitable candidates, evaluation criteria, monitoring mechanisms, and sanctions for public personnel activities in specific fields, along with salary system management, all present practical challenges that require thorough research and resolution.

Completing the job position project must be associated with training and capacity building for cadres, civil servants, and public employees according to the goals and principles of legal provisions. This helps them develop themselves and enhance job performance effectively, contributing to organizational development.

4. Solutions to improve the public human resource management model based on job positions

Firstly, reforming the civil service regime, cadres, and civil servants in Vietnam closely relates to integrating positive aspects of the position system into the management of cadres and civil servants. This is especially crucial in reforming the salary regime for leadership and managerial positions to overcome the limitations of the traditional rank-based civil service management system.

Secondly, constructing job descriptions plays a pivotal role. This involves identifying job positions, which is the most crucial step in influencing the implementation of the public human resource management model based on job positions. Job descriptions are critical in public personnel management because their absence would detract from activities such as recruitment, training, task assignment, and evaluation of cadres and civil servants performance. Job descriptions also serve as a basis for selecting suitable personnel for each position, thereby facilitating rational arrangement and allocation of public human resources, contributing to optimizing public human resources.

Thirdly, management is based on job performance. In applying the position-based civil service model, the current management of working hours may reduce the efficiency of public human resources. To manage job positions, applying a management model that focuses on work results, which emphasizes achieving “ultimate results” rather than focusing solely on “intermediate results” or intermediate products, is essential. To achieve ultimate results, intermediate results must be achieved first, and if not, managers will continue to find suitable intermediate activities and solutions to achieve the ultimate results. Completing an ultimate goal requires a process that includes identifying inputs, actions, intermediate results, impacts, outputs (expected results), and a close connection between them. This is illustrated by interconnected pathways and branches, creating a closed-loop system diagram.

The goal is reflected by the outcome of the work implementation process. Result-oriented work management emphasizes “achieving what” rather than “what is being done.” These output results are categorized by work group and implementation sequence. Input resources are the most vital conditions for generating these output results. The timeline or roadmap determines the order of implementation, what needs to be done first, what needs to be done later, and who is responsible for what. Based on this schedule, managers can more easily monitor and evaluate civil servants' work performance and progress toward set goals. This helps managers identify and promptly adjust issues, ensuring flexible operation to achieve higher efficiency.

Fourthly, applying market mechanism factors. The public administration system is increasingly evolving from management to service-oriented, where residents are not just citizens but also customers of the state. With this philosophy, managing a country's public

human resources must continue in different manner than dividing it into ranks and grades. Still, it must be based on the tasks performed by each individual in the public workforce. To build a flexible government that serves the people, state administrative agencies increasingly have characteristics similar to those of organizations in the private sector. Therefore, applying market mechanism factors in managing public human resources is unavoidable. Public administration can apply several market mechanism factors, including applying competition, creating work incentives combined with the market, using competitive bidding methods between state and private organizations in providing public services.

Fifthly, combining positive elements of the career-based system. The relationship between aspects of the position-based system and the career-based system in reforming the civil service regime and civil servants indicates that aspects of the career-based system still hold predominance in the management mechanism of cadres, civil servants, and public employees. Although some elements of the position-based system hold significant positions, they remain secondary factors that support the principles of the career-based system, aiming to address its limitations and shortcomings in managing cadres, civil servants, and public employees. This is reflected in psychology and practical cadre work today, where “easy to get promoted, hard to be demoted” or “easy to get in, hard to get out” persists. Conversely, the general trend in reforming civil service regimes and civil servants in many countries, such as Germany, China, Thailand, etc., has gradually shifted from the career-based system towards the position-based system with certain combinations with the career-based system. In the new civil service laws of these countries, principles of the position-based system have

become dominant ideologies, although still combined with positive aspects of the career-based system.

Sixthly, elements and principles of the position-based system are integrated with the traditional career-based system to ensure the inheritance and necessary stability of civil service in various management stages. This includes applying a traditional position-based system to a specific civil servant position, a group of civil servants, or a field of cadre and civil servant management (such as at the commune level) under various forms like temporary regulations, specific provisions, contract regimes, and fixed-term appointment regimes.

5. Conclusion

Reform implies adopting new approaches, models, and advancements that enhance effectiveness in state management and work performance. However, some individuals will inevitably have their interests affected by these common interests. Habits and personal interest calculations among some personnel in the current state administrative system pose significant challenges to applying the job position-based management model.

Therefore, a firm determination from the entire political system is crucial to achieve results. Although it is not a perfect model, the public human resource management model based on job positions is currently a promising choice with many advantages over other models, and its application in Vietnam is a matter for future consideration. However, transitioning to this new model will face many challenges due to the entrenched nature of the career-based model and the novelty of the position-based model. Therefore, feasible solutions and an appropriate roadmap are necessary to implement this model.

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