

Civil Servant's Ethics In Vietnam

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Abstract

In each country, civil servants are identified as those who exercise State power to serve the people, so public service ethics is considered as one of the criteria for assessing the quality of civil servants, often recognized by law clearly specified. In the field of research and management, public service ethics are mentioned with many contents, but with this study, the author approaches public service ethics according to some key contents as prescribed by law. Vietnam, including: Political ideology; Working style; Administrative discipline. The author researches, builds a scale of public service ethics according to these contents and conducts a survey to identify the reality of public service ethics of commune-level civil servants - who directly deal with administrative records of the people. The survey subjects were 390 government agency leaders from 200 commune-level government agencies in 9 provinces representing three regions of the country. Research results have confirmed: Administrative discipline (AD) of civil servants is assessed at the lowest level affecting the quality and working efficiency of government agencies. From the results of this study, the author suggests to managers a number of contents that need to be researched and adjusted to improve the quality of local civil servants to meet the requirements of serving the people.

Keywords: Civil Servants' Ethics; Civil Servants; Vietnam.

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1. Research overview

Civil Servants' Ethics (CE)

Public service ethics is a political and legal category defined by the laws of each country and analyzed by many researchers.

In the field of research, public service ethics are the ethical standards of civil servants in performing their official duties that civil servants must absolutely abide by and if the concept of public service is a profession, then public service ethics is a form of professional ethics (Thai, PH, 2016). Explained from another perspective, public service ethics is the synthesis of two groups of social ethics and personal ethics of civil servants in performing public duties, it is constituted by public officials' perception of politics values, responsibility in the performance of official duties, attitude to perform official duties (Thoi, HV, 2016). Or, for example, the civil service ethics of civil servants shows the democracy of public service in which civil servants perform their official duties to serve the people (Thang, VN, 2020; Tung, LS, 2021). Many Vietnamese administrative researchers analyze and give a general view on public service ethics, which is a type of social ethics, expressed in a specific and specific way through professional activities in the process of practicing public service official duties (HUHA, 2020; Trung, NS et al., 2022), including many contents:

- Ready to take on assigned tasks (CE1). This quality is both a basic requirement but also a regular requirement, whereby civil servants are obliged to accept tasks and always have to show their willingness to accept assigned tasks.
- Take responsibility for the results of the assigned tasks (CE2). In public service activities, each task assigned to perform has a norm on completion time (schedule) and completed content (quality), so civil servants are obliged to ensure progress and quality perform assigned tasks.
- Ready to serve and dedicated to serving the people (CE3). Civil servants are constitutionally the ones who exercise state power to serve and meet the people's lawful requirements, so they have an obligation to serve the people wholeheartedly.

In the field of management in Vietnam, the ethical scale of civil servants is also detailed into many contents and uniformly applied in public service activities. Law on Cadres and Civil Servants (VNA, 2008) and Decree No. 90/2020/ND-CP of Vietnam (VG, 2020) stipulate the civil service ethics of civil servants associated with the consciousness and responsibilities of civil servants in public service activities, that is: Political ideology; Working style; Administrative discipline. Although public service ethics are analyzed into many research contents according to different approaches. In this study, the author inherits and uses the above legal provisions and inherits and develops many research results (Trung, N.S. et al., 2022) to build 03 scales about civil servant ethics below.

Political Thought (PT)

Civil servants must have good political ideology, which is reflected in the following main contents:

- Loyalty to the Fatherland, to the Constitution, to the people (PT1). This content shows the spirit, the will to strive and dedicate for the country, which is deeply engraved in the awareness of each civil servant.
- To serve the national interests and the people's interests (PT2). This content shows the sense of serving the country, serving the people that each civil servant considers it a mandatory obligation to perform.
- Honesty, not self-interest, no corruption (PT3). This content demonstrates integrity - a necessary quality of civil servants to make the government apparatus transparent and best serve the people.
- Comply with the law in performing official duties (PT4). This content demonstrates the strict observance of the guidelines, lines and regulations of the Party, policies and laws of the State in the process of performing official duties.
- Consistently political goals (PT5). This content represents a firm political opinion and bravery; unwavering in the face of all difficulties and challenges.

Working Style (WS)

Civil servants have good working habits demonstrated through the main contents:

- Responsible for assigned work (WS1). Civil servants have obligations and are willing to accept assigned tasks. This is the content that shows the active and enthusiastic working spirit of the civil servants. Accordingly, civil servants are primarily responsible for the results of the performance of their assigned tasks in order to both ensure that the agency's work is successful and at the same time create people's trust in the government.
- Have a sense of responsibility and coordination in performing tasks (WS2). In addition to independence in performing official duties, civil servants are responsible for coordinating to both build a positive working environment and ensure the effective social management of government agencies.
- Having the right attitude and standard behavior and working style (WS3). This is the content that both shows the criteria of office culture and also shows the criteria of serving the people of civil servants. Accordingly, civil servants must have a courteous attitude in communication, suitable to each object in the administrative hierarchy, suitable to each object of the people, in accordance with the concept and etiquette of contemporary society time.
- Dynamic, creative, flexible in performing tasks (WS4). This is the content that shows the combination of both compliance with the law and the simplification of the stages in solving people's requests while still ensuring results and efficiency in handling professional work of the public office.
- Scientific, democratic and principled working method (WS5). This is the content that demonstrates the democracy in the organization and operation of the constitutional state government agencies, and at the same time demonstrates the practical working capacity of civil servants to meet the requirements of employment positions in the Vietnamese economy equitment.

Administrative Discipline (AD)

Civil servants with good administrative discipline are reflected in the following main contents:

- Comply with the assignment of the organization (AD1). This is the content that shows the willingness to work of civil servants and the administrative principles in the management and administration of state agencies.
- Strictly implement the regulations, rules and regulations of the agency (AD2). This is the content that shows the discipline in public service activities of civil servants, maintaining order and stability in the official activities of government agencies.
- Actively performing official duties (AD3). This content shows the positivity and sense of responsibility of civil servants, which are necessary qualities to create results and work efficiency of civil servants.
- Solidarity and coordination in the performance of official duties (AD4). The content shows the harmony in communication, behavior and close cooperation of civil servants with related departments to solve the common work of the agency.

- Strictly implement the reporting and explanation regime (AD5): Civil servants are responsible for reporting fully, honestly, and providing accurate and objective information on contents related to the performance of their responsibilities. , the assigned task. This content represents the obligation of civil servants to ensure transparency in public service activities.

Table 1. Research scale on public service ethics of civil servants

No	The scale	Encode	Degree evaluation				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	Political Thought	PT					
1	Loyalty to the Fatherland, to the Constitution, to the people	PT1					
2	Serve for the national interest, the people's interest	PT2					
3	Honesty, no profit, no corruption	PT3					
4	Obey the law in the performance of official duties	PT4					
5	Steadfast political goals	PT5					
II	Working Style	WS					
1	Responsible for assigned work	WS1					
2	Have a sense of responsibility and coordination in performing tasks	WS2					
3	Having the right attitude and standard working style and manners	WS3					
4	Dynamic, creative, flexible in performing tasks	WS4					
5	Scientific, democratic and principled working method	WS5					
III	Administrative Discipline	AD					
1	Comply with the organization's assignment	AD1					
2	Strictly comply with the regulations, rules and regulations of the agency	AD2					
3	Actively performing official duties	AD3					
4	Solidarity and coordination in the performance of official duties	AD4					
5	Strictly implement the reporting and explanation regime	AD5					
IV	Civil Servants' Ethics	CE					
1	Ready to take on assigned tasks	CE1					
2	Take responsibility for the results of the assigned tasks	CE2					
3	Ready to serve and dedicated to serving the people	CE3					

Source: The author builds from the review

Through a research review on public service ethics of civil servants, the scales determined according to the research model include: 03 independent variables and 01 dependent variable with a total of 18 observed variables. The author designed a survey consisting of 18 questions and 18 observed variables with a Likert measure of 5 levels: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No comments; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1). Research models and research hypotheses are built below.

Research models

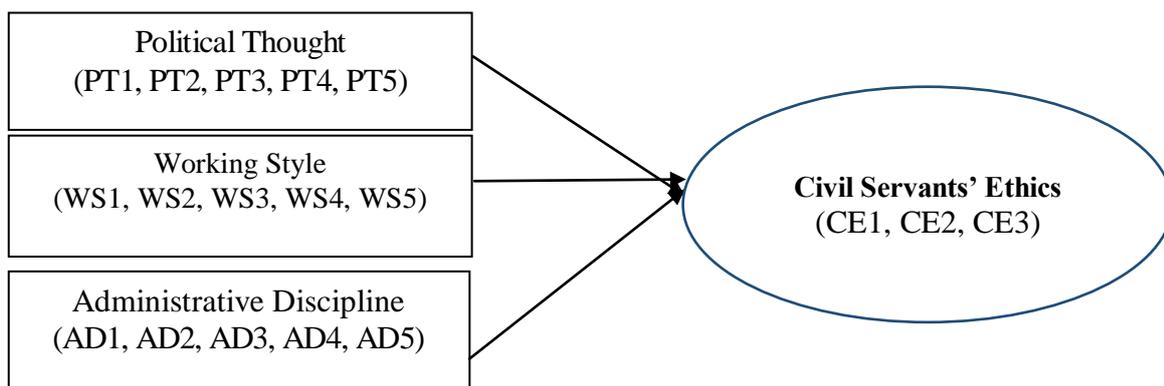


Figure 1. Research model

Research hypothesis

- H1: Political ideology is correlated with civil service ethics of civil servants.
- H2: Working style is correlated with public service ethics of civil servants.
- H3: Administrative discipline is correlated with public service ethics of civil servants.

3. Research Methods

The author uses a qualitative method (collection and analysis of secondary data - published documents) combined with a quantitative method (collection and analysis of primary data in the form of surveys and surveys. close). The investigation and survey is carried out in two steps: Preliminary investigation and official investigation.

Preliminary investigation

The minimum sample size required when doing factor analysis for the 4-scale model and 18 observed variables of this study is $N = 18 \times 5 = 90$ (Hai, DH et al., 2018) . The author carried out the survey with sample size $N = 390 > 90$ to ensure the reliability of data collection. The survey was designed and completed, the author conducted a preliminary survey in Bac Ninh province with a sample size of $N = 120$ managers of 60 commune government agencies. The results of the preliminary survey in Bac Ninh province show that the observed variables are reliable enough to be used in the official survey on a broader scale.

Formal investigation

The author conducted an official survey in 9 localities representing 3 regions of Vietnam, including the provinces: Lang Son, Bac Ninh, Nam Dinh (North), Nghe An, Quang Nam, Binh Dinh (Central region), Binh Duong, Dong Thap, Ca Mau (south). The survey subjects were identified as managers of commune-level government agencies with 3 years or more of management experience. The survey was carried out with the consent of the respondents after the author's preliminary interview. The survey results were: 390/400 managers agreed to answer and 390/390 valid answer sheets, achieving 100% response rate. The characteristics of the research sample show that the majority (75.9%) of the survey respondents are managers with 6 years of experience or more (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the study sample

			Sex		Total
			Male	Female	
Management experience	3-5 years	Count	56	38	94
		%	59.6%	40.4%	100.0%
	6-10 years	Count	115	68	183
		%	62.8%	37.2%	100.0%
	Over 10 years	Count	46	67	113
		%	40.7%	59.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	217	173	390	
	%	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%	

Source: Author's survey results

With the collected data, the author conducts scale testing, exploratory factor analysis, and regression analysis to test the research hypothesis.

4. Research results

The results of the scale testing in Table 3 show that 18 observed variables in the model have reliability when meeting the standard conditions: Cronbach's alpha > 0.6 ; Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.3 (Hair, JF et al., 2009). These observed variables continue to be used to perform exploratory factor analysis.

Table 3. Scale test results

No	Scales	Observed variables	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach' Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
1	Political Thought (TT)	PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4, PT5	.753	PT3 = .667
2	Working Style (WS)	WS1, WS2, WS3, WS4, WS5	.668	WS2 = .613
3	Administrative Discipline (AD)	AD1, AD2, AD3, AD4, AD5	.733	AD3 = .716
4	Civil Servants' Ethics	CE1, CE2, CE3	.672	CE = .627

Source: Author's survey results

Exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was performed to preliminary evaluate the unidirectionality, convergence value, discriminant value of the scales. Table 4, Table 5 shows that exploratory factor analysis was performed in accordance with the data set through the standard values mentioned in quantitative research: Value $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$; Bartlett's test has observed significance level $Sig. < 0.05$; Eigenvalue ≥ 1 ; Total Variance Explained $\geq 50\%$; $0.3 \leq$ Factor Loading is the minimum condition for the observed variable to retain the sample; $0.5 \leq$ Factor Loading exhibits good statistical significance (Hai, DH et al., 2018) . In this study, the author determined the condition $0.5 \leq$ Factor Loading.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test and Total Variance Explained

KMO and Bartlett's Test										
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.								.825		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity								Approx. Chi-Square		9654,965
								DF		143
								Sig.		.000
Total Variance Explained										
Components	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	7.114	39.521	39.521	7.114	39.521	39.521	4.608	25.603	25.603	
2	4,775	26.530	66.050	4,775	26.530	66.050	4.227	23.482	49,085	
3	1,957	10,873	76,923	1,957	10,873	76,923	4.025	22,358	71,443	
4	1.081	6.007	82,931	1.081	6.007	82,931	2.068	11.487	82,931	
5	.652	3,622	86.552							
.....							
18	.003	.014	100,000 won							
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.										

Source: Author's survey results

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a					
Scales	Observed variables	Components			
		first	2	3	4
Working Style (WS)	WS1	.882			
	WS3	.813			
	WS4	.794			
	WS2	.769			
	WS5	.756			
Political Thought (PT)	PT1		.844		
	PT4		.843		
	PT5		.787		
	PT2		.732		
	PT3		.725		
Administrative Discipline (AD)	AD3			.819	
	AD4			.811	
	AD5			.782	
	AD2			.763	
	AD1			.761	
Civil Servants' Ethics (CE)	CE1				.796
	CE3				.765
	CE2				.748
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.					

Source: Author's survey results

The data in Table 4, Table 5: $KMO = 0.825 > 0.5$ shows that exploratory factor analysis is suitable for the data set; Bartlett's test has the Sig level of significance. $= 0.000 < 0.05$ shows that the observed variables are linearly correlated with the representative factor; Total Variance Explained with Cumulative % = 82.931% $> 50\%$ shows that 82.931% variation of representative factors is explained by observed variables; All observed variables have Factor Loading > 0.5 , showing that the observed variables have good statistical significance; The observed variables were extracted into 04 factors corresponding to 04 initial factors with Eigenvalues > 1 , showing that the original research model was kept unchanged, including: 01 dependent variable (mean), 03 independent variables

(TT, LL, KL) with a total of 18 observed variables having good statistical significance, it is possible to perform multivariable linear regression analysis to consider the relationship of independent variables (TT, LL, KL) with the dependent variable (DD).

On the basis of the general regression model $Y = B_0 + B_1 * X_1 + B_2 * X_2 + \dots + B_i * X_i$ (Hair, JF et al., 2009), a regression model can be identified. The multivariate of this study is as follows:

$$CE = B_0 + B_1 * PT + B_2 * WS + B_3 * AD$$

Table 6. Multivariable regression results

Model		Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.587	.218		7.286	.000	1,000 yen
	Political Thought (PT)	.600	.042	.590	14,341	.000	1,000 yen
	Working Style (WS)	.065	.043	.076	1.523	.012	1,000 yen
	Administrative Discipline (AD)	.046	.045	.051	1.032	.030	1,000 yen

a. Dependent Variable: Public service ethics of civil servants (Dependency)
 Adjusted R Square: .735
 Durbin-Watson: 2.102

Source: Author's survey results

The data in Table 6: Adjusted R Square = .735 shows that the factors PT, WS, and AD explain 73.5% of the variation of the factor variables in the research model. fit the data set; The coefficient of variance exaggeration of the factors (VIF = 1,000 < 2) shows that the regression model does not have multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2,102 (1 < d < 3) shows that the regression model does not have autocorrelation. Regression coefficients of 3 independent variables (PT, WS, AD) are statistically significant (Sig. < 0.05) showing that the factors PT, WS, AD are all correlated with CE; The unnormalized regression coefficients have positive values, so the factors in the research model have a positive relationship, the hypotheses H1, H2, H3 are accepted. The regression model of the factors in this study is:

$$CE = 1.587 + 0.600 * PT + 0.065 * WS + 0.046 * AD$$

Based on the standardized regression coefficient, it can be seen that the correlation level of the independent and dependent variables in increasing order is: Administrative Discipline (AD), Working Style (WS), Political Thought (PT).

5. Conclusion

The results of this study confirm that: Administrative Discipline (AD) of commune-level civil servants is rated at the lowest level. From the results of this study, managers need to focus on assessing the administrative discipline of civil servants, including internal evaluations; and external evaluations (Trung, N.S. et al., 2022). This is explained as follows:

- Firstly, the assessment of civil servants in Vietnam is currently carried out in a general way, which is self-assessment of civil servants; The agency approves and recognizes the results of civil servant evaluation of each department every year (VNA, 2008; VG, 2020). This assessment method is unidirectional (one-way) within the agency and in many cases has shown a great limitation, that is, the evaluation results are not objective due to the familiarity and respect. . Therefore, even within government agencies, it is also necessary to have a cross-evaluation between departments and civil servants so that managers can better identify the public service ethics of local civil servants.

- Second, the activities of civil servants and government agencies are social administration activities, serving the people, and meeting the people's lawful requirements. Therefore, it is very necessary to organize the collection of people's opinions on the public service ethics of civil servants in the process of performing official duties and solving the people's requests. This is done annually, which will help managers get objective and multi-dimensional information about local civil servants so that policies can be adjusted in a timely manner.

In fact, the issue of administrative discipline of civil servants is not only a matter of implementing regulations within each government agency, but also an issue related to the effectiveness of local social governance. Therefore, when the administrative discipline of civil servants is strictly implemented, the process, time and content of handling professional work and requirements of the people will be carried out with results and quality. . From here, the effectiveness of social governance of government agencies is ensured; People's satisfaction and trust in government agencies are also maintained.

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