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# **The Responsibility for Performing Civil Service of the Local Civil Servants in Vietnam**

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**Abstract**--The study was carried out by qualitative method through collecting secondary data, combined with quantitative method through surveying opinions of 450 managers of 250 representative commune-level government agencies for three regions of the country. Research results have confirmed: Attitude to serve the people (ASP) plays the most important role and has the strongest influence on the responsibilities for performing civil service of civil servants; next is work responsibility (WR) and work consciousness (WC). From the results of this study, the author suggests some contents that need to be researched and adjusted for managers to improve the quality of local civil servants to meet the requirements of serving the people.

**Keywords**--local civil servants, local government, performing civil service, responsibility, Vietnam.

## **Introduction**

In Vietnam, local government consists of three levels: provincial, district, and commune level. In that system, the commune level is the grassroots level of government - the level of government closest to the people, regularly directly contacting and dealing with people's requests. According to the statistics figures in 2021, Vietnam has 11,372 local government agencies, of which: 63 provincial level governments, 705 district level governments, 10,604 commune level governments (GSO, 2021). The number of commune-level civil servants is generally regulated with 7 titles/commune (01 person/1 title), with the exception of some localities with complicated management areas, especially with separate regulations with a larger number of civil servants (Achterbosch et al., 2007; Spiller & Urbiztundo, 1994).

In general assessment of the contingent of local civil servants in Vietnam in the 2016-2020 period, commune-level civil servants have changed in a positive direction: Basically standardized on professional qualifications; efficiency in performing assigned duties of civil servants and management efficiency of

commune-level government agencies are improved. However, there is still a situation of civil servants who lack responsibility for performing civil service and have not yet created the satisfaction of the people in the locality (Moha, 2020). This reality is posing challenges for managers in improving the quality and performance efficiency of civil servants and local government agencies (Baker et al., 2012; Afonso & Fernandes, 2008).

As for helping to solve the above problem, it is very necessary to have research and survey on the contents related to local civil servants, including content on the responsibility for performing civil service of commune-level civil servants. With that meaning, the author conducts research, surveying the opinions of local government agency managers about the responsibilities for performing civil service of commune level civil servants. The study sample size was determined to include 450 managers from 250 commune-level government agencies in 10 provinces representing three regions of Vietnam (Rauch & Evans, 2000; Asch et al., 2005).

### **Research overview on the responsibilities for performing civil service of local civil servants (RCS)**

In the field of research, the term "performing civil service" means that civil servants perform their assigned work on the basis of their political qualities and capabilities to meet the requirements of the job position of the agency or organization in the public sector (Lan, 2006). The responsibilities for performing civil service are defined as civil service politics and ethics categories stipulated by Vietnamese law and analyzed by many researchers. In the legal aspect, civil servants are defined as public servants of the people and are responsible for "devoted to serve the people" (VNA, 2008). In terms of research, in the process of performing tasks, the organization's human resources in general and civil servants in particular must be responsible for the assigned tasks both in terms of progress and quality (Ha, 2011; Thu & Ngan, 2013; Hai, 2014). From this basis, the author summarizes the main content of the responsibilities for performing civil service of local civil servants, including:

- RCS1. Devoted to serving the people. The State of Vietnam is constitutionally a state ruled by law, of the people, by the people, for the people; State power belongs to the people, so civil servants have the responsibility to wholeheartedly serve the people, putting the people's interests above personal interests.
- RCS2. Ensuring the progress of the assigned work. In civil service activities, each assigned task to perform has a deadline for completion, so civil servants must be responsible for ensuring the timely implementation of their tasks.
- RCS3. Ensuring the quality of the assigned work. In the organization in general, each assigned civil service task to perform has a quality of product goal to be achieved. And therefore, in the process of performing civil service, civil servants must be responsible for ensuring the quality of their assigned work.

The research scale on the responsibilities for performing civil service of civil servants is also detailed into many contents both in the legal aspect and in the research aspect. The Vietnamese Law on Cadres and Civil Servants and a number of related documents stipulate the responsibilities for performing civil service of civil servants associated with the issue of civil service ethics and capacity and performance results: The spirit of responsibility for work, service attitude, take responsibility for the results of the assigned tasks (VNA, 2008; VG, 2020). Some researchers approach and analyze the responsibility for performing civil service in the direction of combining political, legal, and social ethical factors, and they consider the work consciousness and the attitude to serve the people as ethical quality that each civil servant must be responsible for implementing strictly to realize the political goals of the state, realizing the goals of local social development management (Thai & Van Hung, 2004; Trung et al., 2021; Tung 2021). Others approach the administrative and legal aspects and emphasize the responsibilities for performing civil service of civil servants according to the results of the performance of their assigned tasks, both in terms of progress and quality (Tam, 2011; Mai, 2016). Many researchers in the field of human resource management refer to and analyze the general principles of responsibility for performing tasks of human resources (including human resources in private organizations and human resources in public organizations) associated objectives and mission of each organization, including the issue of responsibility for professional ethics, responsibility for implementing tasks and responsibility for the results of performing assigned tasks (Dung & Anh, 2020; Ha, 2011; Thu & Ngan, 2013).

Thus, the issue of responsibility for performing civil service of civil servant analyzed into many research contents (scales) according to different approaches. In this study, the author inherits, adjusts and develops the scales of responsibility for performing civil service of civil servant from the legal regulations and research results mentioned above. From this, it is possible to generalize the main content (scale) related to the responsibility for performing civil service of civil servants, including: work consciousness, work responsibility, attitude to serve the people (Burke & Logsdon, 1996; Bauman & Skitka, 2012).

### **Work consciousness (WC)**

- WC1. Complying with the law in performing professional duties. Civil servants strictly implement this content, they will both ensure the discipline for performing civil service and ensure that they do not infringe upon the legitimate rights and interests of the people.
- WC2. Complying with the agency's regulations on working time: The feature of local government agencies is to serve the people on a regular manner, so civil servants must adhere to working hours to serve the people continuously and in the best way.
- WC3. Complying with the agency's regulations on work handling procedures. Civil servants must comply with the order of performance of work to ensure order and discipline as well as to ensure professionalism in performing professional duties and management activities of government agencies.

- WC4. The spirit of cooperation and sharing at work. This content is reflected in the integration, sharing, understanding, concern of civil servants with the people when they come to the government office to ask for solving a problem, thereby capturing a lot of information of feedback as well as the will of the people.
- WC5. The spirit of service for the people's interests: Civil servants are constitutionally serving the people, so they must always show the spirit of serving the people, must put the interests of the people above their own interests.

### **Work responsibility (WR)**

- WR1. Responsibility for receiving assigned tasks. Civil servants must show their willingness to accept assigned tasks, not only professional tasks, but also support and serve the people to solve their requirements in the best way.
- WR2. Responsibility for coordinating to solve work. Activities of government agencies are carried out under the one-stop- mechanism, so civil servants must have the responsibility to closely coordinate with relevant departments in the process of performing their tasks to resolve requirements of the people quickly and accurately.
- WR3. Responsibility for work progress. Civil servants must be responsible for ensuring on-time settlement of professional work and on-time settlement of people's requests.
- WR4. Responsibility for the quality of work. Civil servants must be responsible for ensuring the quality of performing their assigned work, and for the results of solving the people's requests.
- WR5. Accountability. Civil servants are responsible for strictly implementing the work reporting regime: Report fully, honestly, provide accurate and objective information on contents related to the performance of assigned responsibilities and tasks.

### **Attitude to serve the people (ASP)**

- ASP1. Respect the people. To serve the people well, civil servants must first respect the people, show courtesy and politeness in their communication with the people; guide people in a dedicated and thoughtful way.
- ASP2. Listening to people's opinions. The fact that civil servants listen to the people's opinions not only shows the spirit of serving the people, but also has the responsibility of synthesizing, absorbing opinions, reflecting and criticizing policies from the people, becoming a direct bridge link between the people and the government.
- ASP3. Fair treatment with all citizens. This content shows the humanity and legality of public service activities. It is the responsibility that each civil servant must show when dealing with the requests of the people to avoid conflicts from the people with the government agencies.
- ASP4. Protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the people. This content is both the responsibility and the political goal of state government agencies when performing social management tasks. Therefore, civil

servants must always uphold their responsibility to protect the rights and interests of the people when dealing with their requests.

- ASP5. Creating satisfaction for the people. In the process of contacting and resolving people's requests, civil servants must be responsible for satisfying the subjects that they serve with specific products - quality, progress in solving people's requests, harmony in communication and behavior.

Table 1  
Summary of the scale of the responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants

STT	The scale	Encode	Degree evaluation				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	Work consciousness	WC					
1	Complying with the law in performing professional duties	WC1					
2	Complying with the agency's regulations on working time	WC2					
3	Complying with the agency's regulations on work handling procedures	WC3					
4	The spirit of cooperation and sharing at work	WC4					
5	The spirit of service for the people's interests	WC5					
II	Work responsibility	WR					
1	Responsibility for receiving assigned tasks	WR1					
2	Responsibility for coordinating to solve work	WR2					
3	Responsibility for work progress	WR3					
4	Responsibility for the quality of work	WR4					
5	Accountability	WR5					
III	Attitude to serve the people	ASP					
1	Respect the people	ASP1					
2	Listening to people's opinions	ASP2					
3	Fair treatment with all citizens	ASP3					
4	Protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the people	ASP4					
5	Creating satisfaction for the people	ASP5					
IV	The responsibilities for performing civil service of local civil servants	RCS					
1	Devoted to serving the people	RCS1					
2	Ensuring the progress of the assigned work	RCS2					
3	Ensuring the quality of the assigned work	RCS3					

Source: Compiled by the author, base on the results from overview study

From the research overview on the responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants, the research scales were determined including: 03 independent variables with 15 observed variables and 01 dependent variables with 03 observed variables. The author designed a survey form consisting of 18 questions and 18 observed variables. All observed variables are measured using a 5-level Liker measure: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No comments; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly

agree (Table 1). From here, the author builds a research model and research hypothesis.

### Research models

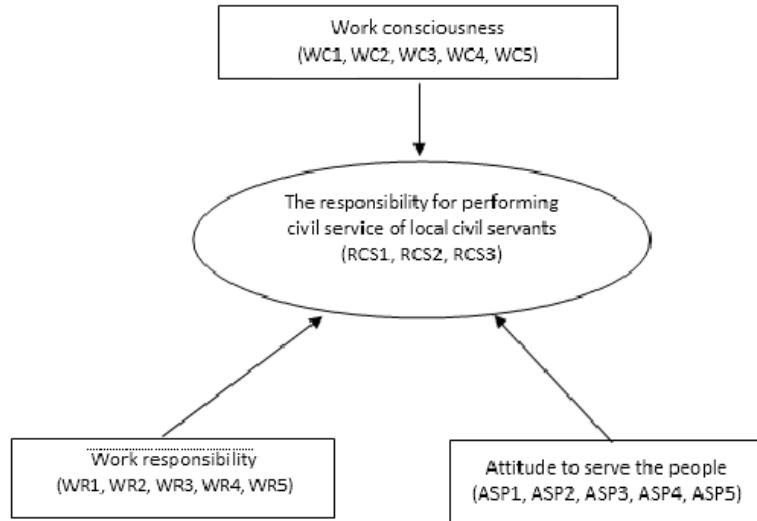


Figure 1. Research model

### Research hypothesis

- H1: Work consciousness is correlated with the responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants.
- H2: Work responsibility are correlated with the responsibilities for performing civil service of local civil servants.
- H3: Attitude to serve the people is correlated with the responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants.

### Research Methods

In order to conduct this study, the author uses a qualitative method combined with a quantitative method. The qualitative method is carried out through the collection and analysis of secondary data - published documents. Quantitative methods are carried out through collecting and analyzing primary data in the form of investigation and surveys, including: Preliminary investigation and official investigation (Vuong et al., 2012; Singer et al., 2014).

### Preliminary investigation

The research model includes 4 scales and 18 observed variable, so the minimum sample size needed for factor analysis is  $N = 18 * 5 = 90$  (Hai & Ngoc, 2018). In this study, the author performed with sample size  $N = 450 > 90$  to increase the high reliability when conducting survey research. After designing and completing the survey form, the author conducted a preliminary survey in Nam Dinh

province with a sample size of  $N = 100$  managers of 50 commune-level government agencies. Preliminary survey results in Nam Dinh province show that the observed variables are reliable so that they can be used in the official survey on a broader scale ([Diegtiar et al., 2021](#); [Siombo, 2021](#)).

### Official investigation

The official investigation will be conducted in 2021 in 10 localities representing 3 regions of Vietnam, including the provinces: Lai Chau, Hoa Binh, Bac Ninh, Lang Son (Northern region), Nghe An, Quang Tri (Central region), Soc Trang, Dong Thap, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau (Southern region). The survey subjects were identified as managers of commune-level government agencies. The author conducted a preliminary interview to capture information about the respondents' standards and distributes the survey form on the basis of their consent. There were 450 managers who agreed to answer and the survey results obtained 450/450 valid votes, reaching 100% response rate. The characteristics of the research sample show that the majority (73.1%) of the survey respondents are managers with 5 years of experience or more (Table 2).

Table 2  
Descriptive statistics of the study sample

			Sex		
			Male	Female	Total
Time in management position	Less than 5 years	Count	73	48	121
		%	29.1%	24.1%	26.9%
	5-10 years	Count	129	81	210
		%	51.4%	40.7%	46.7%
	Over 10 years	Count	49	70	119
		%	19.5%	35.2%	26.4%
Total		Count	251	199	450
		%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Author's survey results in 2021

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

### Research results

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

Table 3  
The results of scale testing

STT	Scales	Observed variables	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach' Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
1	Work consciousness (WC)	WC1, WC2, WC3, WC4, WC5	.845	.501
2	Work responsibility (WR)	WR1, WR2, WR3, WR4, WR5	.837	.642
3	Attitude to serve the people (ASP)	ASP1, ASP2, ASP3, ASP4, ASP5	.830	.629
4	The responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants (RCS)	RCS1, RCS2, RCS3	.824	.593

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Source: Author's survey results in 2021

Explore factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to evaluate unidirectional preliminary calculation, convergence value, value discriminant value of scale. 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  $\geq 1$ ; Total Variance Explained  $\geq 50\%$ ;  $0.3 \leq \text{Factor Loading}$  is the minimum condition for the observed variables to retain the sample; Loading Factor  $\leq 0.5$  shows observed variables have statistically significant better (Hai & Ngoc, 2018). In this study, the author determined the condition  $0.5 \leq \text{Factor Loading}$ .

Table 4  
KMO and bartlett's test and total variance explained

KMO and Bartlett's Test														
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				.883										
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Approx. Chi-Square			11107.708									
df				153										
Sig.				.000										
Total Variance Explained														
Initial Eigenvalues					Extraction Sums of Squared		Rotation Sums of Squared							
Component		% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	Loadings		Loadings		Cumulative %					
1	7.656	42.535	42.535	7.656	42.535	42.535	4.983	27.686	27.686					
2	4.519	25.103	67.638	4.519	25.103	67.638	3.983	22.126	49.811					
3	1.661	9.229	76.867	1.661	9.229	76.867	3.943	21.905	71.717					
4	1.314	7.301	84.168	1.314	7.301	84.168	2.241	12.452	84.168					

5	.609	3.385	87.553
.....	.....	.....	.....
18	.013	.071	100.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Author's survey results in 2021

Table 5  
Rotated component matrix

	Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>			
	1	2	3	4
WR1	.929			
WR4	.923			
WR3	.900			
WR2	.879			
WR5	.868			
WC1		.856		
WC2		.854		
WC5		.854		
WC4		.849		
WC3		.792		
ASP4			.920	
ASP2			.899	
ASP1			.831	
ASP5			.825	
ASP3			.825	
RCS2				.840
RCS1				.797
RCS3				.789

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Source: Author's survey results in 2021

The data in Table 4, Table 5: KMO = 0.883 > 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 % = 84.168% > 50% shows that 84.168% variation of the 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 (RCS), 03 independent variables (WC, WR, ASP) with a total of 18 observed variables with good statistical significance, multivariable linear regression analysis can be performed to consider the relationship of independent variables (WC, WR, ASP) with the dependent variable (RCS). Based on the generalized regression model Y =

$Bo + B_1 * X_1 + B_2 * X_2 + \dots + B_i * X_i$  [Hai & Ngoc \(2018\)](#), the multivariable regression model of this study can be determined as follows:

$$RCS = Bo + B_1 * WC + B_2 * WR + B_3 * ASP$$

Table 6  
Multivariable regression results

Model		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	1.281	.145			5.939	.000	1.000
	Work consciousness (WC)	.072	.031	.077	2.349	.019		1.000
	Work responsibility (WR)	.160	.029	.180	5.486	.000		1.000
	Attitude to serve the people (ASP)	.216	.030	.197	7.185	.000		1.000

a. Dependent Variable: The responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants (RCS)  
Adjusted R Square: .716  
Durbin-Watson: 1.918

Source: Author's survey results in 2021

The data in Table 6: Adjusted R Square = .716 shows that the factors WC, WR, ASP explain 71.6% of the variation of the RCS factor 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 multi collinearity; Durbin-Watson = 1.918 (1 < d < 3) shows that the regression model does not have autocorrelation. The regression coefficients of 3 independent variables are statistically significant (Sig.<0.05) showing that the factors WC, WR, ASP are all correlated with RCS; The unstandardized 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:

$$RCS = 1.281 + 0.072 * WC + 0.160 * WR + 0.216 * ASP$$

Based on the standardized regression coefficients, it can be seen that the correlation level of the independent and dependent variables in descending order is: Attitude to serve the people (ASP), Work responsibility (WR), Work consciousness (WC) [\(Suardiana, 2016; Lukman et al., 2016\)](#).

## Conclusion

From the above research results, it can be asserted that: Attitude to serve the people (ASP) has the most influence on the responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants (RCS); Next is Work Responsibility (WR), Work consciousness (WC). In fact, the issue of the responsibility for performing civil service of local civil servants is not only a matter of implementing regulations

within each government agency, but also a big problem, ultimately serving the people, meeting the requirement of the people in the best way. Therefore, it is necessary to have the active participation of the people in assessing the responsibility of implementing the tool of civil servants, while the assessment of civil servants is carried out annually according to the law with the main form of internal assessment: Self-assessment by civil servants; The agency approves and recognizes the results of the evaluation of civil servants according to each department (Wong, 2021; Suwija et al., 2019).

From the above research results, the author suggests a number of contents to research and adjust the management policy of local civil servants in Vietnam that is: Focus on organizing the collection of opinions and evaluations from the people. external assessment) about the working consciousness, work responsibility and service attitude of civil servants to obtain objective and regular information, thereby making appropriate adjustments to serve the people in the best way. That's because local civil servants are the ones who regularly contact and directly deal with people's requests; In addition to professional capacity, the working sense, work responsibility and service attitude of civil servants have greatly effect, determine the quality and performance efficient of government agencies, and create the trust of the people to the local government. Based on the correlation of the observed variables with the representative factor through the factor loading coefficient (Table 5), the scales of this study are reliable to use as external assessment of responsibility for performing civil service of civil servants. This is an affirmation of the meaning from the author's research results.

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