

The Issue of Talent Development in Vietnam in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

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Abstract: In the trend of integration and the fourth industrial revolution (revolution 4.0), countries and organizations consider talent development as a strategy for the national competence and development. However, the talent development faces a lot of difficulties because of different perspectives and policies affected by many factors, including political, legal factors and social changes. The study presents the issue of talent development in the public agencies in connection with the fourth industrial revolution. Analysis and synthesis of secondary data are employed as research methods in this study to build a research perspective, analyze characteristics and requirements of the revolution 4.0 and discuss about talent development policy in the public sector in Vietnam.

Keywords: *Talent development; The fourth industrial revolution; Viet Nam.*

1. Perspectives on talent

It is popularly believed that talents are related to the prosperity or decline of a country and a nation. The development history of each country has proven that the government putting talents into much consideration could take huge steps in competition and development. However, the term ‘talents’ still has no consensus and is still a matter of much debate in the scientific community. Among various opinions, there are two following prominent perspectives on talents, mentioned by different researchers, politicians, and leaders:

- Firstly, talented people must have both ethical qualities and talent. Some politicians and communist leaders of Vietnam such as Ho Chi Minh and of China such as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping emphasized ethical qualities and talent when discussing about talented people. Ho Chi Minh’s opinion that is “the person having talent without ethical qualities is a useless one; the person having ethical qualities but not having competences, it will be difficult for him to do anything successfully” (Vuong, D., 2010), has affirmed the necessity of both talent and ethical qualities, but the ethical qualities is more important and decisive. This point of view was applied throughout Ho Chi Minh’s revolutionary activities and at the end of his life, in his will, he still devoted a solemn part to discuss ethical issues, asking each communist party member and cadre to be truly imbued with revolutionary ethics: “The Party must pay attention to educating revolutionary ethics for youth union members, training them to become successors in building socialism that is both ethical and professional” (Trung, N.S. et al., 2017).

In the same viewpoint, Mao Zedong, at the beginning of the democratic revolution period in 1938, set out the cadre policy orientation for the Communist Party of China: Recruiting people must be based on ethical qualities and competences (PP, 1991). This means (1) the “ethical” qualities must be expressed in determination of strictly following the Party’s guidelines, obeying the Party’s discipline, having close contact with the masses, being modest, rich in the spirit of self-criticism, courageous in

correcting shortcomings, active in work performance and not seeking self – interest at all costs; (2) The "talent" factor is expressed in competence of job performance, the ability to work independently, be creative, and innovate in working methods. In addition, Chinese reformer Deng Xiaoping affirmed that of the two factors, ethical qualities are specially emphasized: Talented people need to have both ethical qualities and talent; however, it is ethical qualities which govern talent. Only by promoting ethical qualities of talented people can their talent be devoted to build up social values (PP, 1983).

Thus, many politicians and communist leaders think about ethical qualities and talent when discussing on talented people. In this case, "ethical qualities" mainly refer to talented civil servants' political attitudes, political qualities and behavior and thoughts; "Talent" mainly refers to the individual's excellent working capacities and professional qualifications. This perspective has great value and significance for the revolutionary process of building socialism in Vietnam and China.

- Secondly, a talented person is an elite with outstanding capacities in each field. Some researchers in the field of psychology emphasize the qualities and capacities of a person in the progress of becoming a talented one. According to Tham, H.B. (2006), talented people are people with excellent competences, expressed in creative completion of certain activities. In addition, Luong, N.H. et al. (2008) also emphasizes a person's contribution to his organization and society. He stated that it is difficult to recognize a person's talent if he doesn't use his talent to serve his organization, community and country that nurtured the talent. Only by serving the people will that talent shine and be honored in the hearts of the nation. The perspective is quite comprehensive in which a talented person must both have talent and serve and contribute to social development. In this case, talent is explained as the most perfect combination of personal qualities and capacities enabling the person creatively and conveniently complete his or her duties to serve society. This perspective on talent tends to be about work results, which is the creative completion of certain activities. In other words, an individual is considered a talented person when society confirms his talent based on his working performance and achieved results.

In terms of administrative science and human resource management science, researchers also have similar views of talents with researchers in the field of psychology. According to Nam, N.V. et al. (2011) and Hoa, T.V. et al. (2008), a talented person is the person owning outstanding competences in a certain field and being recognized by society. Under this approach, individual's talent is defined specifically, but not generally, associated with their professional field. In other words, there is no one talented in all fields because human working competence is a combination of physical capacities and mental capacities and an individual may be talented in this field, but ordinary even worse at others.

In spite the fact that politicians, leaders, and researchers may be in different approaches and perspectives, but they all agree that a talented person is the person who have ethical qualities, working capacities and contributions to the development of their organization and society. In terms of increasingly higher requirements of specialization in each sector in the current social context, these views of talented people themselves show pros and cons which are necessary for further discussions. In details:

(1) In terms of politicians and communist leaders' view, a talented person has been clearly identified with ethical qualities and talent; however, in the current context of international integration, professional activities are more and more specialized, the definition is too general in sense to determine who is truly a talented person. Supposing that the "ethical qualities" were expressed in determination of strictly following the Party's guidelines, obeying the Party's discipline, having close contact with the masses and "talent" factor was expressed in competence of working independently,

being creative, and innovating in working methods, then in today's society, there would be millions or tens of thousands of talented civil servants in Vietnam and China because their ethical qualities and working competence were all thoroughly examined for a certain period of time by the communist party's grassroots organization before they were admitted to the party.

(2) The view considering talented people as people with outstanding capacities in each field, seems to be more practical and more appropriate in the current context of international integration and higher and higher requirements of specialization. Each sector in social life has its own characteristics and each person is talented in their professional field. Therefore, there is hardly anyone talented in all field, but only in each specific and certain area. In terms of research, the study supports this view. However, this definition still reveals certain limitations because it does not mention a person's adaptation to social changes affecting his or her professional activities. In the current context, social changes refer to the integration, especially digital technology development - an inseparable part of the revolution 4.0. If an individual can both develop his or her outstanding capacities and adapt to those social changes, his or her can be seen comprehensively as a talented person.

2. Revolution 4.0 and requirements for talent development

In 2016, the revolution 4.0 was initiated and officially announced as a revolution in smart manufacturing, based on the achievements of artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, biotechnology and nanotechnology (Klaus, S., 2016). Nowadays, after nearly a decade, the revolution has developed with the explosion of digital technology and is expected to completely change the way people live, work and interact with each other (Phuong, L.Q., 2017), specifically: (1) Mass production is instead of single-piece production, meeting customer needs of products good at both form and quality at the lowest cost; (2) internet connection system helps manufacturers and customers flexibly and conveniently interact with each other so that the needs of both parties can be satisfied; (3) Artificial intelligence is used to replace manual labor, both reducing production costs and increasing productivity. The development of the revolution 4.0 poses a requirement to innovate the organization's human resource management, including those identified as the organization's talents. This is because digital technology and artificial intelligence can now perform difficult tasks and complete them in a quick time that previously only carried out by talented employees.

In just a short time, the revolution 4.0 has had influence on every sector, not only in the manufacturing sector, but also in public service activities. That leads to changes to public agencies' management firstly in terms of civil servants' awareness and skills; changes to talent development management or talented civil servant development management as it is called in Vietnam (VNA, 2008) so that the civil servants can truly improve their high professional capacities as well as master new skills in accordance with development trends of technology and the revolution 4.0. This not only brings an opportunity to the operational improvement of public agencies, but also sets requirements for talented civil servants, which are: (1) collect, analyze and evaluate and synthesize policy needs from the people in time in the context of digital technology and digital society; (2) master digital skills to well perform in professional tasks in the digital environment. These requirements are explained as follows:

- First, digital technology and society are developing at a rapid pace; needs of information and the nature of social information are diverse and flexibly changeable, putting pressure on government agencies' management activities. When civil servants update, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize policy needs from the people timely, they will well perform their advisory duties and propose appropriate policies to meet increasingly diverse legal needs of citizens. In particular, talented civil servants are

placed in priority positions in recruitment and incentive activities and play a special role in groups of civil servants to carry out public service duties; therefore, understanding the needs and aspirations of the people is the responsibility that they must always carry out to deserve to their positions they are taking in charge of. Therefore, developing policies on talented civil servants, in addition to high and outstanding professional standards, requires skills of updating, analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing policy needs from the people in time in the context of digital technology and society. This is a necessary condition for talented civil servants to improve their capacities, from which they always have multi-dimensional, objective, and timely information to synthesize and research to serve political planning advisory duties in the context of the digital technology and society.

- Secondly, the revolution 4.0 opens a new context of a modern civil service and e-government becomes more and more popular; Digital transformation is an inevitable trend, building a digital culture in public service activities. That poses a requirement that talented civil servants, in addition to outstanding professional competence, need to be proficient in digital skills to well perform their public duties in the digital environment. It is the talented civil servants who will bring digital transformation into public service activities to develop a digital government; actively contact and interact with their customers – citizens with a diversity of awareness, culture, ethnicity, and religion, so that they could satisfy both the legal needs of the citizens as well as the needs of innovating management efficiency. Therefore, requirements of digital skills to have better public duty performance in the digital environment need to be mentioned into policies on developing talented civil servants in public service activities.

The performance of public agencies is evaluated through the quickest and best qualified responses to people's requests. In addition to outstanding professional competence, that talented civil servants are proficient in digital skills play an important role to enable public duties to be performed efficiently. The requirement of digital skill leads to change of civil servants' working methods and the management of public bodies. Accordingly, talented civil servants must truly master digital technology to handle their professional activities quickly and accurately to meet citizens' requirements in the digital age and to become an effective connector between citizens and state organizations. In this situation, talented civil servants can both conveniently promote their outstanding professional capacities and conveniently interact with citizens in the digital environment. Moreover, citizens' comments on policies will be transmitted quickly and promptly, supporting the national and local social development policy planning.

3. Discussion on Vietnam's talent development policies in the revolution 4.0

In Vietnam, the implementation of talent development policies, also known as policies for talented civil servants, is decentralized, according to the provisions of law, to each organization and locality in the public sector: "The head of the agency with authority to recruit civil servants decides on recruitment policies, professional performance standards and the merit for talented civil servants in public units under their management. The Provincial People's Council regulates policies to talent acquisition to serve public duties in agencies, organizations, and units managed by the province" (VNA, 2019). It is the fact that the revolution 4.0 poses requirements on civil servants, especially digital knowledge and skills to work in the digital environment. This is a new issue and an unprecedented social change led by the rapid development of digital technology; therefore, it is necessary for Vietnamese public bodies to research and adjust their policies on talented public employee development in accordance with improving digital knowledge and skills so that talented civil servants can both promote outstanding professional capacities and well perform their advisory activities in the context of digital technology and digital society:

- Firstly, standards on digital skills proficiency outstanding professional capacities should be mentioned at the same time in talented civil servant development policies. The policies will be requirements for talented civil servants to promote not only their outstanding professional capacities but also skills of collecting, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information of policy needs from citizens in time in the context of digital technology and digital society. This helps them actively gather multi-dimensional, objective, and updated information to synthesize and research to serve policy-making advisory duties.

- Secondly, it is necessary for talented civil servants to take part in training courses of digital knowledge and skills to have proficient working performance in the digital environment. For civil servants considered to be talented, in order to help them develop their outstanding capacities, public agencies should implement training policies to help them improve their digital transformation skills serving better for their public duty performance. It is clear that the revolution 4.0 is being widely developed and digital transformation is a popular trend. Therefore, digital knowledge and skills are inevitable requirements for civil servants. The quality of public service activities and the working efficiency of civil servants are evaluated through the quickest and best responses to citizen's requests. When civil servants are trained to master digital skills, they will play key roles in performing public service activities in the digital environment, which is important to facilitate the operation of public bodies.

It can be affirmed that the revolution 4.0 with the development of digital technology has changed thinking, management methods and is requiring the adaptation from public organizations and civil servant to the new context. On the basis of analyzing the characteristics and requirements of the revolution 4.0 for talented civil servant development, the study suggests innovative issues which should be considered when policies for talented civil servants are developed. This not only promote civil servants' outstanding professional capacities, but also enable them to better perform their advisory duties in the context of digital society. Some main issues discussed are: developing standards on digital skills proficiency for talented civil servants; organizing training courses of digital knowledge and skills to have proficient public duty performance in the digital environment. The study results are narrow in scope, but meaningful to provide useful information for managers in public agencies to synthesize and promptly evaluate talented civil servant policies in Vietnam.

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