



Received: 21-05-2023
Accepted: 01-07-2023

ISSN: 2583-049X

Solutions to Enhance the Quality of Human Resources in the Provincial Religious Board of Ba Ria - Vung Tau

Le Van Dung

Ba Ria Vung Tau University, Vũng Tàu, Vietnam

Corresponding Author: **Le Van Dung**

Abstract

Developing human resources for religious management is essential and holds a crucial position in the nation's construction and development, as appropriate policies contribute to motivating the development of human resources in religious management to meet the requirements of industrialization, modernization, and international integration. Through analyzing and evaluating the current state of human resources quality in religious management within the Provincial Religious Board of Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu, this study has established fundamental concepts related to the quality of human resources in religious management. The thesis has clarified the status of human resources in the

Provincial Religious Board and their ability to meet the current requirements of state-level religious management in Bà Rịa-Vũng Tàu province. The study also revealed limitations in the state-level religious management and identified various policy mechanisms that need to be addressed. These shortcomings require a direction and comprehensive solutions to improve the policies for developing human resources in religious management, aligning with the development of a modern society. The research proposes several solutions to enhance the quality of human resources within the Provincial Religious Board of Ba Ria – Vung Tau.

Keywords: Provincial Religious Board, Human Resources, Quality of Human Resources

Introduction

Vietnam is a multi-religious country. Currently, there are 40 registered organizations and 01 religious sect practicing within 15 recognized religions, with approximately 25 million followers (accounting for 27% of the country's population) (Tran Thi Huong, 2017). In the period of promoting industrialization, modernization, and international integration, religious activities and beliefs have been attracting attention both domestically and internationally. In recent years, there has been an increasing number of emerging religious phenomena, resulting in a diverse religious landscape and a complex religious life in Vietnam. This situation poses significant requirements and challenges for the human resources engaged in religious work, demanding the necessary qualities and competencies to carry out their duties (Tran Thi Huong, 2017).

In recent times, the human resources engaged in religious work in Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu province have received increasing attention, from planning to training and development. The level of knowledge has been elevated, and corresponding policies have been established. However, alongside the efforts in building, developing, and managing human resources, there are still several deficiencies in recruitment, utilization, planning, training, and development of the workforce. Moreover, there is a lack of specific and unified policies for the development of human resources engaged in religious work, resulting in varying approaches and implementations at the local level. In reality, places with a correct understanding of religious work prioritize human resources, leading to more effective state-level religious management. Conversely, places with a lack of proper awareness regarding religious work show a lack of attention to human resources and less effective state-level religious management.

Based on Decision No. 174/QĐ-TTg on the "Training Program for Religious Officials and Civil Servants Engaged in Religious Work for the 2017-2020 period," the aim is to enhance the professional competence, expertise, and skills in religious work for officials and civil servants engaged in religious work, meet the prescribed standards for religious officials and civil servants, improve the effectiveness in handling religious matters, and contribute to the successful implementation of the Party's and the State's religious policies.

Given the aforementioned reasons, the topic "Solutions to Enhance the Quality of Human Resources in the Provincial Religious Board of Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu" is crucial and needs to be addressed in the current context.

Literature Review

Quality of Human Resources

According to author Gary Dessler (2013) ^[10], the quality of human resources is defined as the degree of employees' job responsiveness and their ability to adapt to the work environment. Dessler emphasizes that the quality of human resources depends on factors such as educational attainment, experience, skills, and employee commitment to their work.

Authors John M. Ivancevich and Robert Konopaske (2013) ^[11] define the quality of human resources as the extent to which employees meet job requirements and contribute to the organization's success. According to them, factors such as skills, knowledge, experience, and personality of employees all influence the quality of human resources.

Authors Milkovich and Boudreau (1997) ^[13] highlight that the quality of human resources depends on the alignment of employees' skills, knowledge, and experience with the job requirements of the organization. They argue that the quality of human resources also depends on employee commitment to the organization, especially in contributing to its development and success.

Quality of human resources in the public sector is similar to that in the business sector. However, the quality of human resources in the public sector is often valued more due to the importance of the role of workers in the development and success of organizations, especially those related to community interests.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (2019), the quality of human resources in the public sector is defined as "the set of characteristics, qualities, and capabilities of workers focused on serving the state, ensuring the efficiency of the operations of state agencies, units, and the sustainable development of the country."

The quality of human resources in the public sector is particularly important because the success of public organizations is often measured by the contributions of workers. The quality of human resources in the public sector includes various factors such as professional knowledge, skills, ethical qualities, responsibility, dedication, willingness to learn, creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. The quality of human resources in the public sector can be assessed through indicators such as the ratio of competent officials and civil servants with ethical qualities who meet job requirements, the ratio of officials and civil servants participating in training to improve professional knowledge, skills, and ethical qualities, and the ratio of officials and civil servants with outstanding achievements and good performance in their work.

Human resources in the field of state management of religion refer to the officials, civil servants, and personnel engaged in state management of religion. They are the core workforce with important roles in organizing and implementing tasks related to the religious field, with responsibilities for executing public duties, exercising state power, and also serving as advisors and proposing the construction of a legal system on religion to help achieve the effectiveness and high efficiency of state management.

Criteria for Evaluating the Quality of Human Resources in the Religious Field

According to Decision No. 174/QD-TTg, the quality of human resources engaged in religious work reflects the level of professional knowledge, expertise, and skills in religious work for officials and civil servants engaged in religious

work, meeting the standards set for officials and civil servants engaged in religious work, enhancing the effectiveness of handling religious affairs, and contributing to the effective implementation of the Party's and the State's religious policies.

Regarding Political Qualities

Political qualities are crucial and fundamental requirements for officials and civil servants in general. The process of international economic integration, along with the negative aspects of market mechanisms and the daily arising negative impacts, requires officials and civil servants to be absolutely loyal to Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's ideology, the Party's viewpoints, the policies, and laws of the State. They need to have steadfastness and firm principles, transform their political consciousness into the consciousness of the people, create trust, and attract people's participation.

For personnel engaged in state management of religion, the cultivation of political qualities becomes even more important. They must first have a solid grasp of the Party's and the State's viewpoints, policies, and laws on religion. When dealing with religious issues, they must be fair, impartial, and avoid prejudice against religion. They must be able to concretize the Party's and the State's lines, viewpoints, and policies into the content of management, manifested in their work and the results of their work at the unit, local, and national levels. They must also have the ability to self-improve, self-assess their own work results, and evaluate individuals within the organization.

Regarding Ethical Qualities

The ethics of human resources engaged in state management of religion are reflected in their trust in the leadership of the Party. They know how to respect and maintain discipline, have a healthy lifestyle, have a high sense of responsibility in performing their duties, possess compassion, forgiveness, and behave correctly in family, friendship, and social relationships, and have a benevolent attitude.

Their professional ethics are demonstrated in their enthusiasm and dedication to their work.

Results

Gender: There are a total of 13 people, including 8 males (61.54%) and 5 females (38.46%).

Personnel: All of them are civil servants (13 people, 100%).

Length of service: 3 people (23.08%) have less than 5 years of work experience, 1 person (7.69%) has 5 to 10 years of work experience, and 9 people (69.23%) have more than 10 years of work experience.

Educational level: 1 person (7.69%) has education below university level, 9 people (69.23%) have a university degree, and 3 people (23.08%) have a postgraduate degree.

Political level: 6 people (46.15%) have intermediate political level, 3 people (23.08%) have advanced political level, and 4 people (30.77%) have no political level.

Professional qualifications: The training fields are diverse, including Science, Agricultural Economics, Business Administration, Law, Accounting - Auditing, Sociology, Philosophy, Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, Foreign Languages, Administration, and Law. Among them, 1 person (7.69%) is trained in Science, 1 person (7.69%) is trained in Agricultural Economics, Business Administration, Law, 2 people (15.38%) are trained in Accounting - Auditing, 2 people (15.38%) are trained in Law, 1 person

(7.69%) is trained in Economics, 1 person (7.69%) is trained in Sociology, 1 person (7.69%) is trained in Philosophy, 1 person (7.69%) is trained in Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, and 1 person (7.69%) is trained in Foreign Languages. In addition, 1 person (7.69%) is trained in Administrative Law.

Professional qualifications: Among the civil servants, 1 person has an intermediate level of typing, 1 person has an English language proficiency level A2, 9 people have English language proficiency levels B, B1, B2, 2 people have English language proficiency level C, and 1 person has a bachelor's degree. No one has another language. Regarding computer skills, 4 people have level A, 5 people have level B, 1 person has intermediate level, and 3 people have office level.

Personnel changes in the Religious Affairs Board over the years: In 2015, the Religious Affairs Board was assigned 15 civil servant positions and 03 labor contracts by the Provincial People's Committee. In 2017, the Religious Affairs Board was assigned 15 civil servant positions and 03 labor contracts by the Provincial People's Committee. In 2020, the Religious Affairs Board was assigned 14 civil servant positions and 03 labor contracts by the Provincial People's Committee.

As of February 29, 2020, the number of civil servant positions filled was 13 out of 14, with 01 person missing the position of typist. To address this issue, the Religious Affairs Board has registered with the Department of Home Affairs to propose the recruitment of administrative civil servants in 2019. Similarly, the number of labor contracts present at that time was 02 out of 03, with 01 person missing the position of driver.

Based on the information on the number of civil servant positions and labor contracts of the Religious Affairs Board in 2015, 2017, and 2020, we can assess the personnel situation of the Religious Affairs Board as follows 2015 and 2017: The Religious Affairs Board was assigned 15 civil servant positions and 3 labor contracts in both years.

Based on the information provided, the Religious Affairs Board has maintained a stable number of personnel in previous years. However, they are currently facing difficulties in terms of personnel shortage and need to find solutions to improve the situation.

The human resources of the Religious Affairs Board have the following limitations and challenges:

The organizational structure of the religious affairs agency responsible for state management of religious activities is not fully established, and the model and coordination mechanisms are not clearly defined. The personnel working on religious affairs at the commune level are unstable and frequently changing.

The progress in perfecting religious policies and laws is slow. Some related matters such as specialized guidance, professional skills, and timely information on religious situations are not regularly provided. The planning, training, utilization, and welfare of officials and civil servants engaged in state management of religious activities have not been adequately addressed.

Violations of religious activities, deviations from legal regulations, the exploitation of superstitions, and spreading of false information still occur, with some incidents coming to light only after they have happened. Some officials and followers are not fully aware of and committed to implementing the Party's directives and state laws. Some

officials lack the willingness to cooperate with the authorities in resolving disputes, especially when it comes to reclaiming previously donated premises and lands despite multiple explanations by various levels of the Fatherland Front.

Some guidelines for implementing land and construction policies in the religious domain are still inadequate. Additionally, there are limitations and challenges in constructing religious facilities, such as: In practice, there are still cases of unauthorized construction of religious facilities. These constructions are often located in remote and isolated areas, making it difficult for local authorities to detect and address the violations in a timely manner.

According to Article 52 of the Construction Law, religious projects only require an economic-technical report. However, according to the amended and supplemented provisions of the Construction Law dated June 17, 2020, the design evaluation for construction projects is organized by the investor. However, in reality, religious facilities are often places with a high concentration of people, sometimes even a large number of people. Many of these facilities are of significant scale, with heights reaching 30-40 meters. Compared to many other civil constructions (e.g., guardhouses over 6 meters high are classified as level III constructions, requiring specialized construction agencies to evaluate the design), it is unreasonable that many religious facilities of similar or larger scale do not undergo design evaluation by specialized construction agencies.

Solutions to Enhance the Quality of Human Resources The Solution to Improving the Recruitment, Utilization, and Management of Human Resources in State Management of Religion at all Levels Includes the Following Aspects

Recruitment: Recruiting human resources for state management of religion needs to ensure transparency, fairness, and provide opportunities for many individuals. In the near future, recruitment should focus on the following points:

Firstly, the current recruitment criteria lack detailed and specific guidelines, while religious work is a specialized field. Therefore, specific guidelines on the content of recruitment into different positions and professional levels serving the tasks of state management of religion should be developed.

Recently, the recruitment of new personnel has only assessed candidates based on their professional knowledge, while in addition to expertise, they also need to possess skills and attitudes suitable for the job. Therefore, the recruitment process should gradually include assessments of skills such as problem-solving and communication skills.

Secondly, ensuring fairness, democracy, and transparency in the recruitment process for human resources in state management of religion can be achieved through strict implementation of various stages. These include public announcements on mass media regarding the recruitment details, requirements, number of positions, recruitment schedules, and priority criteria.

Thirdly, it is essential to raise awareness among the workforce involved in state management of religion about the importance of the recruitment process. This task should be considered a strategic mission for agencies and units. Consequently, it is crucial to develop scientifically and effectively plans for recruitment, prevent and promptly

handle any violations of the law in the recruitment process. It is important to recruit individuals who genuinely dedicate themselves to this work rather than viewing it as a stepping stone to transfer elsewhere.

Allocation, Utilization, and Management of Human Resources in State Management of Religion: To Build a Qualified Workforce for State Management of Religion that Meets the Requirements of the Tasks, Attention Should be Given to the Following Issues

Firstly, the allocation and utilization of human resources should be based on planning. Workforce planning ensures that the allocation and utilization of human resources are not arbitrary or subjective. Those in charge of personnel allocation and utilization should adhere to the principles of scientific organization and consider the objectives and tasks. The allocation of individuals should be appropriate to their training, capabilities, and qualities, avoiding general and indiscriminate assignments. Given the specific nature of state management of religion, careful attention should be paid to the strengths and weaknesses of each individual to maximize their potential and qualities in their work. Failure to adhere to proper planning in allocation and utilization would disregard democratic principles. This could result in individuals not understanding their responsibilities when carrying out tasks and may lead to an imbalance in the organizational structure within an agency and even the entire sector.

Secondly, it is important to strictly implement human resource management regulations to enhance the quality and efficiency of work. Human resource management should ensure a firm grasp of the workforce, promptly recognize and reward those who excel in their tasks, and at the same time, identify and correct any deviations in their perceptions and behaviors.

In the process of human resource management, the management of personnel records should be closely integrated with practical activities. This involves the following aspects: appropriate assignment and delegation of tasks for each individual; objective, accurate, and fair evaluations following the prescribed procedures, ensuring democracy and transparency; strict implementation of rewards and disciplinary measures for human resources involved in state management of religion; timely resolution of complaints and accusations related to personnel arrangements and adjustments.

A Solution to Improve the Recruitment, Utilization, and Management of Human Resources for State Management of Religion at all Levels Is To

Recruitment: Recruitment for positions in state management of religion should ensure transparency, fairness, and provide equal opportunities for all individuals. In the future, the recruitment process should focus on the following aspects:

- a) Currently, the recruitment criteria lack detailed and specific guidelines for each position. Given the specific nature of religious work, it is necessary to develop specific guidelines for each profession and level of expertise required for the tasks of state management of religion.
- b) Apart from evaluating candidates' professional knowledge, the recruitment process should also include

assessments of their skills and attitudes relevant to the job. Skills such as problem-solving and communication should be included in the selection criteria.

Ensuring Fairness and Transparency in Recruitment

To ensure fairness, democracy, and transparency in the recruitment process, the following measures should be implemented:

- a) Publicly announce recruitment information, requirements, the number of positions available, recruitment schedules, and priority criteria through various public information channels.
- b) Conduct thorough propaganda and awareness campaigns to emphasize the importance of the recruitment process for individuals involved in state management of religion. This should be viewed as a strategic task for agencies and units, with plans and effective implementation. Promptly address and strictly handle any violations of the law in the recruitment process. The selection should focus on recruiting individuals genuinely committed to this work, rather than using it as a stepping stone for future transfers.

Allocation, Utilization, and Management of Human Resources

To build a qualified workforce capable of fulfilling their duties in state management of religion, the following considerations should be taken into account in the allocation, utilization, and management of human resources:

- a) The allocation and utilization of human resources should be based on planning. Planning will prevent arbitrary and subjective decisions. Those in leadership positions should assign personnel based on objectives, tasks, and ensuring the appropriateness of their training, qualifications, and abilities. Avoid using a broad and general approach. Given the specific nature of state management of religion, it is essential to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each individual to maximize their potential and effectiveness in their work. Failure to base decisions on planning and utilization will disregard democratic principles. It may lead to individuals being uncertain of their tasks and responsibilities, as well as an imbalance of positions within an organization and even across the entire sector.
- b) Strictly implement human resource management regulations to improve the quality and effectiveness of work. Effective human resource management ensures a comprehensive understanding of the workforce, promptly recognizes and rewards outstanding performance, and addresses deviations in perception and behavior.
- c) Properly manage personnel records alongside human resource management activities. This includes appropriate allocation and assignment of tasks for each individual, objective and accurate evaluations, adherence to established procedures, democratic and transparent practices, strict rewards and disciplinary measures for human resources involved in state management of religion, and timely resolution of complaints and accusations related to personnel arrangements and deployments.

Solutions to Improve the Training and Development Policies for Human Resources in State Management of Religion Include the Following

Classification of human resources for training and development planning:

The training and development of human resources for state management of religion should be directed towards meeting the requirements and must involve proper classification to create suitable training and development plans.

Training and development should be conducted regularly, with a focus on development to enhance and update knowledge and professional skills to meet the increasing demands of religious work.

Through the training and development process, human resources involved in state management of religion can acquire the appropriate knowledge and qualifications required for their respective positions and ranks, especially for those who have been assigned to positions but still lack the necessary qualifications.

The current workforce involved in state management of religion should be specifically classified, clearly identifying the training and development needs for each group. This includes determining what knowledge needs to be provided, where to conduct training and development, and the methods and approaches to be used. Currently, the workforce involved in state management of religion can be divided into categories such as leadership and management positions, specialist and senior specialist roles for advisory tasks, and administrative support positions.

Based on the classification mentioned above, specific training and development plans should be established as follows:

For leaders and managers, annual training and development plans should be implemented in areas such as professional skills, advanced political theory, knowledge of state management at academies. Additionally, they should receive training on updating information about religious affairs and other topics such as national security and defense.

For specialists and equivalent positions, training and development programs should focus on professional expertise, legal knowledge, and state management at academies to develop a pool of management personnel. Units should also identify individuals with capabilities, practical experience, and professional expertise to send them for specialized training. Moreover, it is essential to provide training in computer literacy.

Furthermore, personnel involved in state religious management in areas with significant ethnic minority populations should be trained in the respective ethnic languages. Specialists and equivalent positions should also receive training in communication skills, dialogue, analytical skills, and problem-solving, as they cannot solely rely on skills acquired through work experience.

Administrative staff should receive training in their specific job roles, such as clerical work, as well as other skills like communication.

Secondly, fundamental changes need to be made in training and development programs and content.

The renewal of training and development programs should be based on human resource classification. To achieve this, a diverse and extensive group of experts should be mobilized to compile programs and curricula. This task is challenging in terms of organization and funding, but it leads to the highest effectiveness. Consistency in principles

and methods should be established to develop specific programs that enhance knowledge and reinforce operational skills.

Efforts have been made to provide religious knowledge training for personnel engaged in state religious management at various levels, based on Decision No. 83/QĐ-TTg dated June 8, 2007, approved by the Prime Minister, outlining the plan "Training and Development of Religious Work Personnel and State Management Personnel in the Religious Field for the 2006-2010 period" (extended until 2012). The Center for Research and Training in Religious Work (now the School for Religious Work) has been gradually developing materials for knowledge and professional training in religious work for personnel involved in religious work from central to local levels.

However, the materials for training and development are not appropriate and lack categorization for specific target groups. The compilation of materials and textbooks for training is limited and does not meet the requirements. The training content is superficial, focusing mainly on religious knowledge without in-depth exploration. Furthermore, the current requirements of state religious management encompass not only professional expertise but also social knowledge, multidisciplinary knowledge, and skills necessary to fulfill duties.

To effectively compile materials and textbooks, the following actions should be taken:

Classify the target groups for training and development and develop appropriate materials and textbooks based on this classification.

Collaborate with research institutes and the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics in compiling materials and textbooks to ensure both theoretical and practical aspects of religious work.

The delayed development of training and development program frameworks has compromised the quality of training and development efforts. In the coming years, it is necessary to establish frameworks for mid-term and short-term development. Specifically:

Individuals newly recruited or transferred from other fields without prior knowledge of religion should receive mid-term training for a period of 3-6 months.

Officials and specialists with experience in state religious management should undergo in-depth training for a period of 1-3 months.

Leaders and managers should receive advanced training, focusing on updating information on religious studies, domestic and international religious situations, and experiences in dealing with religious matters for a period of 5-10 days.

Fundamental changes should be made to the training and development programs and content, aiming for diversity and richness of knowledge while ensuring a balance between theoretical knowledge, skills, and practical experience. It is crucial to provide.

References

1. Hương Diệp. Giải pháp nhằm phát huy nguồn lực các tôn giáo ở Việt Nam tham gia các hoạt động an sinh, xã hội, 2022. Retrieved from: <http://mattran.org.vn/hoat-dong/giai-phap-nham-phat-huy-nguon-luc-cac-ton-giao-o-viet-nam-tham-gia-cac-hoat-dong-an-sinh-xa-hoi-47866.html>

2. Nghiêm Xuân Huy. Quản lý nguồn nhân lực trong các tổ chức tôn giáo ở Việt Nam hiện nay. Tạp chí Nghiên cứu, 2019.
3. Phạm Ngọc Tuấn. Nguồn nhân lực trong tôn giáo và thách thức đối với bảo tồn di sản văn hóa, 2019.
4. Trần Thị Hương. Chính sách phát triển nhân lực làm công tác tôn giáo ở nước ta hiện nay. Viện Hàn Lâm Khoa Học Việt Nam, 2017.
5. Trần Văn Hoàng và Đỗ Xuân Quang. Quản trị nhân lực. Nhà xuất bản Đại học quốc gia Hà Nội, 2016.
6. Armstrong M. A handbook of human resource management practice. Kogan Page, 2006.
7. Cascio WF. Managing human resources: Productivity, quality of work life, profits. McGraw-Hill, 2010.
8. DeCenzo DA, Robbins SP. Human Resource Management. Wiley, 2002.
9. Dessler G. Human Resource Management. Pearson, 2011.
10. Dessler G. Human resource management. Pearson, 2013.
11. Ivancevich JM, Konopaske R. Human resource management (12th ed.). McGraw-Hill, 2013.
12. Mansfield E. Microeconomics: Theory and Applications. W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.
13. Milkovich GT, Boudreau JW. Human resource management (8th ed.). Irwin/McGraw-Hill, 1997.
14. Storey J. Human resource management: A critical text (3rd ed.). Cengage Learning, 2007.
15. Jacobs RA, Cochrane W, Drakeford L. Church staff diversity and professionalization: Effects on human resource quality. Review of Religious Research. 2016; 58(3):379-393. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-016-0261-7>
16. Rahman MA, Hasan MM, Siddiquee NA. Impact of human resource management practices on organizational performance: An empirical study on Islamic religious organizations in Bangladesh. International Journal of Ethics and Systems. 2017; 33(4):450-463. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-05-2016-0092>
17. Ghorbanian S, Ghorbanian E, Bigham M. Investigating the impact of leadership style on human resource quality (case study: Muslim religious organizations of Tehran). Journal of Education and Practice. 2017; 8(5):66-73.
18. Shariati M, Ghanbari M, Jandaghi G. Investigating the impact of religious ethics and education on human resource quality (case study: Muslim religious organizations of Tehran). International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies. 2016; 3(3):15-23.