

# Policy to Retain Civil Servants at Provincial Professional Agencies in Ca Mau

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## ARTICLE INFO

Received: 29 Dec 2024

Revised: 12 Feb 2025

Accepted: 27 Feb 2025

## ABSTRACT

Retaining competent civil servants in provincial professional agencies is an urgent requirement to ensure the efficiency, stability, and sustainable development of the state administrative apparatus. This study aims to identify and measure the impact of organizational factors on work motivation and the intention to remain of civil servants in provincial professional agencies in Ca Mau province. Based on the foundational theories such as Herzberg, Maslow, and Public Service Motivation, combined with domestic and international empirical evidence, the research model is built with eight groups of factors: social welfare policies, job characteristics, working conditions, promotion opportunities, recognition, salary regime, relationships with colleagues, and relationships with superiors. The study uses a mixed-method approach, in which quantitative analysis is the primary method, through a survey of 200 civil servants and data analysis using modern statistical techniques such as EFA, multivariate regression, and PLS-SEM. The results show that all eight factors have a positive impact on work motivation, among which social welfare policies and job characteristics are the two most influential. At the same time, work motivation is identified as a mediating variable, playing a key role in the relationship between organizational factors and intention to remain. On that basis, the study proposes practical policy implications to improve the compensation system, enhance the working environment, and strengthen the effectiveness of public human resource management at the local level.

**Keywords:** Work motivation; Retaining civil servants; Human resource policy; Provincial professional agencies; Public administration; Human resource management in the public sector; Ca Mau.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of increasingly fierce competition for human resources and increasing demands for administrative reform, With the high unemployment rate, the public sector is facing many challenges in maintaining and developing a team of competent and long-term civil servants. Retaining civil servants is not only a human resource goal, but also a prerequisite to ensure the continuity, efficiency and sustainability of the state administrative apparatus. According to Salsabila et al. (2021), human resources are the central asset of every public organization, playing a key role in realizing public administration goals and improving the quality of service delivery to citizens.

However, unlike the private sector, which has flexible mechanisms for adjusting salaries and career development opportunities, the public sector is constrained by administrative regulations, budget frameworks, and strict appointment and rotation mechanisms. This leads to a situation where the turnover rate in the public sector not only reflects the problem of attracting and retaining employees, but also is a sign of instability in the public administration system. As Waskito & Hello (2022) noted, financial constraints, rigid civil service culture, and inflexible administrative processes are common causes of increased turnover intentions in the public sector. This leads to many consequences such as operational disruption, increased retraining costs, and especially loss of organizational knowledge (Rostandi & Senen, 2021).

In Ca Mau province, a locality in the Mekong Delta region, this situation is clearly evident in provincial-level professional agencies - which are under pressure to implement central policies, while facing scarce human resources and a limited working environment. In management practice, many units have recorded the phenomenon of civil

servants requesting job transfers, quitting their jobs or not having long-term commitments, directly affecting organizational efficiency and the quality of administrative services.

Notably, recent studies have shown that job satisfaction is a key factor influencing employee retention behavior in the public sector (Djajasinga et al., 2021). This satisfaction is influenced not only by financial factors, but also by working conditions, workplace relations, career development opportunities, and recognition within the organization. Salman & Olawale (2021) and Amadi et al. (2021) both assert that appropriate reward systems – a combination of pay, recognition, and non-financial benefits – can significantly reduce turnover intentions.

In addition, green human resource management (GHRM) activities are also considered a modern and sustainable approach in the public sector. Bhatti et al. (2022) argue that GHRM not only helps raise environmental awareness but also contributes to shaping a positive organizational culture, thereby improving work motivation and social responsibility of civil servants. Training and capacity development programs with a sustainable and environmentally friendly orientation are proven to have a positive impact on employee engagement (Maskuroh et al., 2023).

On that basis, this study was conducted with the aim of identifying and measuring the impact of organizational factors - including welfare policies, job characteristics, working conditions, promotion opportunities, recognition, salary, and workplace relations - on work motivation, and at the same time testing the mediating role of motivation in the relationship with the intention to stay of civil servants. The case study was conducted at provincial-level professional agencies in Ca Mau province - a typical place for localities that are making efforts to both stabilize the administrative apparatus and improve the quality of human resources. Through that, the study is expected to contribute more empirical evidence to the field of public human resource management, and at the same time propose appropriate policy implications to improve the effectiveness of the strategy to retain civil servants in the current public sector.

## **2. THEORETICAL BASIS**

### **2.1. The concept of civil servant retention and its importance in the public sector**

Employee retention is understood as the process of organizing, developing and implementing strategies to maintain a team of competent civil servants, limiting the situation of voluntary resignation, uncontrolled turnover or loss of resources. In the public sector, retaining human resources plays an essential role because civil servants are the force that directly performs public duties, ensuring the stable, effective and continuous operation of the state apparatus (Bossaert, 2003; Perry & Wise, 1990).

Unlike the private sector, retaining civil servants often faces more challenges because the public sector often has financial constraints, rigid reward and punishment policies, less flexibility in promotion paths, and lack of factors that promote innovation (Boyne, 2002). Ciobanu and Androniceanu (2015) in their study in Romania pointed out that the work environment that does not encourage career development and the disproportionate treatment policies compared to the private sector are major barriers to civil servant retention strategies.

According to Hausknecht, Rodda, and Howard (2009), important factors influencing the intention to stay in an organization include: career development opportunities, recognition, congruence between personal and organizational values, and relationships with superiors. These factors are applicable and need to be given more attention in the public sector, which has been considered to be stagnant in improving organizational culture and working conditions (Kellough & Osuna, 1995).

Furthermore, according to the World Bank (2020), in the context of administrative reform and digitalization of public services, retaining competent civil servants with technological skills and innovative thinking is a prerequisite for improving the quality of state governance and citizen satisfaction. This requires governments to not only focus on job stability but also improve training, reward policies and create conditions for professional development.

In short, retaining civil servants is not just a single human resource strategy, but part of modern public human resource management, linked to institutional capacity and long-term public administration effectiveness.

### **2.2. Fundamental theories of work motivation and commitment**

Work motivation and organizational commitment are two central factors in human resource management, especially in the public sector, which is influenced by budget constraints, high stability and expectations of serving the social interest. Many classical and modern theories have been developed to explain the causes, mechanisms and impacts of factors that promote positive work behavior and organizational commitment of employees.

*a. Herzberg's two-factor theory*

Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory divides the factors that influence job satisfaction into two groups: hygiene factors *such as* salary, working conditions, company policies, and motivators *such as* recognition, responsibility, advancement opportunities, and the nature of the work. According to Herzberg, a lack of hygiene factors will create dissatisfaction, but only motivators are capable of increasing actual work motivation.

In the public sector – where many maintenance factors are constrained by policy or budget – intrinsic motivators such as job meaning, career development opportunities, and recognition are found to have a greater influence on organizational commitment (Androniceanu & Ciobanu, 2015; Buelens & Van den Broeck, 2007). This approach is consistent with the practice in many countries where civil servants work not for direct material benefits but for the value their work brings to society.

*b. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory*

Maslow (1943) built a hierarchy of needs model with five levels: physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs. He believed that only when basic needs are met, people will seek and pursue higher needs. Applied in the public sector, civil servants are often guaranteed basic needs such as living standards and career stability. However, if their needs for personal development, respect and autonomy are not met, they are likely to feel passive or tend to leave the organization.

Modern studies such as Liu and Perry (2016), or Cho and Perry (2012), show that satisfying higher-level needs such as autonomy, recognition of competence, and contribution are strongly associated with organizational commitment and job motivation.

*c. Public Service Motivation (PSM) Theory*

The concept of Public Service Motivation (PSM), initiated by Perry and Wise (1990), refers to the intrinsic motivation that drives individuals to serve the public interest and contribute to society. Unlike the private sector – where work motivation largely comes from personal interests – the public sector relies heavily on PSM as a foundation for commitment and performance.

Wright (2007) found that PSM is an important mediating variable between the congruence between personal values and organizational mission and job performance. Moynihan and Pandey (2007) also found that PSM has the ability to reduce turnover intentions and increase job satisfaction. Vandenabeele's (2008) cross-national study also confirmed the universality of PSM, showing a consistent relationship between PSM, organizational commitment and overachievement in the public sector.

In addition, modern quantitative studies such as Kim (2012) and Ritz, Brewer & Neumann (2016) emphasize the role of a fair working environment, inspirational leadership and appropriate recognition mechanisms in maximizing PSM, thereby improving the quality of public human resource management.

### **2.3. Factors affecting civil servant retention**

From the synthesis of domestic and international studies, it can be seen that the decision to stay with civil servants is influenced by many groups of factors, from material to immaterial, from job characteristics to evaluation systems and career development opportunities. Clearly identifying these factors is an important basis for building effective and sustainable retention policies in the public sector.

*(1) Material factors*

Material factors include basic salary, allowances, periodic bonuses and other financial support such as housing support, travel expenses, health insurance, etc. According to Aly, Fekry and Galal (2020), in the context of developing

countries such as Egypt, improving financial compensation has a positive impact on the retention rate of health care staff - a special group of civil servants. Similarly, Othman (2020) in his study in Brunei emphasized that reasonable salaries, along with transparent bonus policies, contribute to improving satisfaction and reducing the intention to leave the public sector. Although not the only factor, material compensation is still a necessary condition to create stability and attract talent to the public sector.

### *(2) Intangible factors*

Non-material factors include organizational culture, positive work environment, inspirational leadership style, development opportunities and recognition of achievements. Colquitt (2001) pointed out that fairness in resource distribution and in the evaluation process (organizational justice) is one of the most important factors affecting employees' perception of fairness and motivation.

In Vietnam, research by Doan Van Tinh et al. (2024) confirmed that satisfaction with the evaluation process, fairness and transparency are factors that strongly influence the intrinsic motivation of civil servants, surpassing financial factors in some cases. This shows that, to retain human resources effectively, state agencies need to pay attention to designing organizations in a fair, transparent manner, encouraging contributions and feedback.

### *(3) Characteristics and working conditions*

Working conditions such as job-professional fit, level of autonomy, challenge, creativity, and on-the-job learning opportunities are considered to be factors that positively influence organizational commitment and sustained work motivation (Wright, 2007 ; Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). A survey in Romania showed that more than 85% of civil servants highly appreciated the role of the working environment and the nature of the job in maintaining organizational commitment, even surpassing factors such as salary or training policy (Ciobanu & Androniceanu, 2015).

### *(4) Evaluation and promotion system*

An effective appraisal system should ensure fairness, transparency, two-way feedback, and alignment with human resource development strategies. Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007) argue that procedural fairness in appraisal not only increases employee acceptance but also improves organizational loyalty. When employees perceive that the appraisal process accurately reflects their abilities and is used as a basis for promotion, they are more likely to put in more effort and stay longer.

Research in Vietnam by Doan Van Tinh et al. (2024) reinforced this argument by confirming that satisfaction with the appraisal system is the factor that has the strongest influence on work motivation in the public administration sector. This is especially important in the context of administrative reform, when the pressure to improve the efficiency of public service activities is increasing.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

### **3.1. Approach**

This study applies a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure reliability, generalizability, and analytical depth in assessing factors affecting work motivation and the intention to remain among civil servants at provincial-level professional agencies in Ca Mau province.

Quantitative analysis serves as the primary method in this study. Through surveys and data processing using statistical tools, this method allows the researcher to test the relationships between variables in the research model, measure the influence of each independent factor on the mediating variable (work motivation), and the dependent variable (intention to remain). This approach aligns with a positivist paradigm in social science research, allowing results to be generalized from the sample to the population (Creswell, 2014).

In addition, exploratory qualitative research was conducted during the initial phase to develop and refine the theoretical model and measurement scales. Qualitative methods included literature review, expert interviews, and content analysis of domestic and international practice reports. This helped enhance the content validity of the survey instrument and ensured contextual appropriateness (Hair et al., 2021).

Integrating both methods enables the study to leverage breadth through large-scale data and depth through expert insights, thereby strengthening the reliability and feasibility of the resulting policy recommendations.

### **3.2. Research model and hypothesis**

Based on the synthesis of fundamental theories such as Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959), Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), Public Service Motivation theory (PSM - Perry & Wise, 1990), along with domestic (Nguyen Be Sau, 2022; Doan et al., 2024) and international (Androniceanu & Ciobanu, 2015; Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013) empirical studies, a research model was built to explain the relationship between organizational factors and the intention to stay of provincial civil servants in Ca Mau, through the mediating role of work motivation.

The model assumes that work motivation is not only influenced by organizational conditions (physical and non-physical) but also acts as a mediating mechanism transforming these influences into long-term commitment. This logic is consistent with the argument of Wright (2007) and Moynihan & Pandey (2007), who suggest that organizational conditions influence turnover indirectly through intrinsic motivation

Model components:

Independent variables: Includes 8 organizational factors:

1. Social welfare policy (PL)
2. Job Description (CV)
3. Working conditions (DKLV)
4. Promotion opportunities (TT)
5. Recognition (CN)
6. Salary regime (TL)
7. Relationship with superiors (QHCT)
8. Relationship with colleagues (QHDN)

Mediating variable: Work motivation (MOTV)

Dependent variable: Intention to stay with the organization (YGBO)

### **3.3. Design of scales and questionnaires**

The scales used in the study were built on the basis of inheriting and adjusting from quantitative studies published domestically and internationally, to ensure scientificity, reliability and suitability to the context of public administration in Vietnam. Specifically: The work motivation scale is inherited from the study of Doan et al. (2024), including 8 observed variables reflecting the intrinsic aspects that motivate civil servants to work in the state administrative sector. The scale measuring organizational factors such as social welfare policy, job characteristics, promotion opportunities, working conditions, recognition, salary, relationship with superiors and relationship with colleagues was developed based on the study of Nguyen Be Sau (2022) in Cai Nuoc, Ca Mau province. These scales were semantically calibrated and their reliability was preliminarily tested through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

All scales were designed on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Before conducting the official survey, the questionnaire was tested with 30 local civil servants to calibrate the content, ensure clarity and suitability to the practical context.

### **3.4. Objects and methods of data collection**

The survey subjects of the study were civil servants working at provincial-level departments, agencies and branches of Ca Mau province - a place chosen as a typical case for localities with average development conditions in the Mekong Delta region. The sample selection criteria required civil servants to have worked for at least one year or more to ensure a level of understanding of the working environment and organizational factors.



The inclusion criterion was that respondents must have worked at least one year to ensure adequate familiarity with the organizational environment. A stratified convenience sampling approach was adopted to ensure diversity in gender, age, tenure, and sector. After screening, a total of 200 valid responses were retained, satisfying the minimum threshold for multivariate statistical analysis

### 3.5. Data processing and analysis methods

After completing the collection process, the survey data was encoded and processed using SPSS version 25 and SmartPLS version 4 software to serve the in-depth quantitative analysis steps. First, the reliability of the scales was tested through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to eliminate observed variables that did not meet the requirements for internal stability. Next, the study conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to determine the latent structure of the variable groups, test the convergence and distinction between the components in the model. After the factors were established, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the linear relationship between the main variables in the study, as a basis for the regression analysis step.

Next, multiple linear regression was implemented to test the simultaneous influence of organizational factors on work motivation (mediating variable), as well as from work motivation to commitment intention (dependent variable). Regression analysis was performed in two separate models: the first model assessed the impact of eight organizational factors on work motivation; the second model tested the role of work motivation in forming the commitment intention of civil servants.

In addition, to comprehensively evaluate the theoretical model and test the mediating role of work motivation, the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method was used. The choice of PLS-SEM is suitable for the characteristics of studies with moderate samples and complex models with many structures. According to the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021), the technical criteria applied to assess the suitability of the model include: factor loadings (Outer Loadings) greater than 0.70, composite reliability (Composite Reliability) above 0.70, average variance extracted (AVE) exceeding 0.50, VIF index less than 5 to control multicollinearity, and statistical t value greater than 1.96 at the significance level  $p < 0.05$ . Strict adherence to these standards helps ensure the accuracy of the model. accuracy, objectivity and high reliability for conclusions drawn from the research model.

## 4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics of variables

To provide an overview of the survey participants' response trends to the components in the theoretical model, the study conducted a descriptive analysis of the main measurement variables. A total of 10 variables were considered, including eight groups of organizational factors (independent variables), one mediating variable (work motivation) and one outcome variable (intention to stay). These variables were assessed based on the survey data using a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting the level of consensus from the lowest (1 - Completely disagree) to the highest (5 - Completely agree). The descriptive analysis not only reveals general response trends among civil servants but also provides an initial foundation for evaluating the reliability and relevance of the variables for further analysis.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of variables in the model

Variable	Medium	Standard deviation	Smallest	Biggest
Social welfare	3.84	0.60	2.26	5.00
Job Characteristics	3.74	0.68	2.01	5.00
Promotion opportunities	3.59	0.77	1.93	5.00
Recognition	3.65	0.69	2.07	5.00
Working conditions	3.47	0.64	2.04	5.00
Salary regime	3.24	0.69	1.90	5.00
Relationship with superiors	3.80	0.62	2.32	5.00
Relationship with colleagues	3.90	0.51	2.46	5.00
Motivation to work	3.71	0.53	2.24	5.00
Intention to stay	3.65	0.58	2.13	5.00

*Source: Author's survey data processing results, 2025*

The results show that the average scores of organizational factors are all between 3.2 and 3.9, reflecting a relatively positive but not outstanding assessment of provincial civil servants in Ca Mau. In which:

Relationships with colleagues and social welfare were the two most highly rated factors, indicating that civil servants felt supported by the organization and colleagues.

Salary is the factor with the lowest rating (average = 3.24), confirming the reality of the challenge of remuneration in the public sector in southwestern provinces such as Ca Mau.

Work motivation (Mean = 3.71) and intention to stay (Mean = 3.65) show that civil servants tend to be loyal, but not at an absolutely high level.

These descriptive results reflect a typical situation in the public sector in disadvantaged provinces: moderate satisfaction, trust in the working environment, but personal income remains a major barrier to long-term retention.

#### 4.2. Correlation matrix between variables

To determine the degree of linear relationship between variables in the model, the study conducted Pearson correlation analysis. The results presented in Table 4.2 show that most variables have positive and significant correlations with each other, reflecting the logical connection of the components in the theoretical model.

**Table 2 : Pearson correlation matrix**

Variable	Motivation to work	Intention to stay
Social welfare	0.49	0.41
Job Characteristics	0.46	0.39
Promotion opportunities	0.40	0.34
Recognition	0.42	0.35
Working conditions	0.38	0.33
Salary regime	0.31	0.29
Superior relationship	0.44	0.37
Colleague Relationship	0.40	0.36
Motivation to work	1.00	0.61

*Source: Author's survey data processing results, 2025*

Work motivation is strongly correlated with commitment intention ( $r = 0.61$ ) → This is a strong indication for the hypothesis that motivation is the mediating variable in the SEM model.

Social benefits, relationships with superiors, and job characteristics all had moderate correlations with intention to stay, suggesting that organizational factors have indirect effects, often through psychological mediation.

Some seemingly “secondary” factors such as colleague relationships and working conditions also have  $r$  coefficients ranging from 0.33–0.40, implying that the social environment in the workplace is one of the factors that maintain work commitment.

This finding is consistent with research on the PSM and Herzberg models - “behind the scenes” factors such as peer relationships, recognition and leadership transparency can have a greater emotional impact than salary or promotion.

#### 4.3. Regression analysis and testing of research hypotheses

Based on the proposed research model, the study conducted multivariate linear regression analysis to test the relationships between variables in the model, and at the same time evaluate the suitability of hypotheses H1 to H9. Two regression models were established corresponding to the theoretical structure: the first model tested the influence of eight organizational factors on work motivation; the second model tested the impact of work motivation on the intention to stay of civil servants.

**Model 1: Organizational factors affecting work motivation (testing H1–H8)**

The regression results show that all eight organizational factors have a positive and statistically significant effect on work motivation ( $p < 0.01$ ). The table below summarizes the results of hypothesis testing from H1 to H8.

**Table 3.** Regression results of organizational factors affecting work motivation

Hypothesis	Organizational variables	$\beta$ coefficient	t value	p-value	Conclude
H1	Social welfare policy (PL)	0.251	5.161	0.000	Accept
H2	Job Description (CV)	0.246	4.690	0.000	Accept
H3	Working conditions (DKLV)	0.170	3.717	0.000	Accept
H4	Promotion opportunities (TT)	0.164	3.796	0.000	Accept
H5	Recognition (CN)	0.133	3.164	0.002	Accept
H6	Salary regime (TL)	0.112	3.014	0.003	Accept
H7	Relationship with superiors (QHCT)	0.096	2.770	0.006	Accept
H8	Relationship with colleagues (QHDN)	0.090	2.728	0.007	Accept

Source: Author's survey data processing results, 2025

Social welfare policy (H1) and job characteristics (H2) are the two factors with the strongest impact on work motivation, confirming the fundamental role of life support factors and job content suitable for expertise in creating intrinsic motivation.

Working conditions (H3), promotion opportunities (H4) and recognition (H5) also showed significant influence, emphasizing the importance of a modern working environment, clear development paths and a culture of recognition in public administration.

Although the salary regime (H6), relationship with superiors (H7) and colleagues (H8) have lower  $\beta$  coefficients, they are still statistically significant, reflecting the supporting role of these factors in maintaining psychological stability and work performance.

This result reinforces the argument of Herzberg (1959) and Perry & Wise (1990), that public servant motivation is not formed by a single factor, but is a combination of material and immaterial conditions in the organization.

**Model 2: Work motivation affects intention to stay (testing H9)**

The table below presents the regression results testing hypothesis H9:

**Table 4.** Regression results of work motivation affecting intention to stay

Hypothesis	Intermediate variable	Dependent variable	$\beta$ coefficient	t value	p-value	Conclude
H9	Motivation to work (MOTV)	Intention to stay (YGBO)	0.520	9.410	0.000	Accept

Source: Author's survey data processing results, 2025

The high regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.520$ ) and p value  $< 0.001$  indicate that work motivation has a strong and direct influence on the intention to stay of public employees. This result confirms the mediating role of work motivation, and also strengthens the theoretical hypothesis of the Public Service Motivation model – that social service motivation and intrinsic satisfaction are the sustainable foundation of commitment behavior in the public sector (Wright, 2007; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007).

All nine hypotheses (H1–H9) were confirmed with high statistical significance, demonstrating that: Organizational factors have a positive and multidimensional influence on work motivation ; and Work motivation plays a key mediating role, a "bridge" between organizational conditions and long-term commitment intention.

This test result not only validates the proposed research model, but also provides a valuable empirical basis for policy making to retain civil servants in the public sector, especially in localities with limited resources such as Ca Mau province.



## **5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1. Conclusion**

Based on the systematization of fundamental theories such as Herzberg, Maslow and Public Service Motivation (PSM), along with domestic and foreign empirical evidence, this study has built and tested an analytical model of organizational factors affecting work motivation and commitment intention of civil servants at provincial professional agencies in Ca Mau province. The research model was deployed with survey data from 200 civil servants, allowing quantitative assessment of the influence of eight organizational factors, and at the same time determining the mediating role of work motivation.

The results of the study showed that all eight organizational factors had a positive and statistically significant influence on work motivation, in which social welfare policy and job characteristics were the two factors with the greatest impact. Factors such as working conditions, promotion opportunities, recognition, salary regime, superior-superior relations and colleague relations also showed a positive influence, confirming the multidimensional and systematic nature of organizational conditions in maintaining and increasing intrinsic motivation.

In particular, the test results show that work motivation has a strong influence on the intention to stay of civil servants ( $\beta = 0.520$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), thereby confirming the key mediating role of this factor in the theoretical model. This reinforces the argument that, in the public administration environment – where financial factors are often limited – positive feelings about work value, development opportunities, fairness and a supportive working environment are the prerequisites to promote loyalty and long-term commitment of civil servants.

Overall, the study not only successfully tested the proposed theoretical model, but also provided valuable practical evidence in the context of administrative reform and scarcity of high-quality human resources in localities such as Ca Mau, while opening up a new approach in building policies to retain human resources in the public sector in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

### **5.2. Policy implications**

Based on quantitative findings and underlying theoretical frameworks, the study proposes some practical policy implications to improve the ability to retain civil servants in the public sector, especially in provinces with limited socio-economic conditions such as Ca Mau.

First of all, local authorities need to prioritize investment and diversify social welfare policies. Welfare is considered the most powerful factor influencing both work motivation and intention to stay, not only in terms of material aspects but also in terms of humanity, demonstrating the organization's concern for the lives of its staff. Expanding support programs such as health care, scholarships for children, vacation regimes, and flexible welfare according to life stages is necessary in the context of increasing competition for human resources.

Second, designing clear job content that is consistent with the capacity and career expectations of civil servants is a key condition to increase intrinsic motivation. Each position should have a specific job description, quantitative goals, authority and responsibility, thereby creating a oriented working environment, helping civil servants see the value of their contributions and their career development path.

Third, to enhance fairness and encourage dedication, the government needs to build an evaluation and promotion system based on specific outputs and work behaviors. The evaluation process must ensure transparency, objectivity, a two-way feedback mechanism, and integration into personnel planning. Civil servants with outstanding achievements should be recognized and given appropriate development opportunities, instead of letting the system be biased by seniority or administrative relationships.

Fourth, research also shows that internal relationships, especially between civil servants and their superiors and colleagues, have a significant impact on work motivation. Therefore, agencies should focus on building a supportive, open and democratic working environment that encourages sharing, cooperation and respect in internal communication. Leaders need to play a central role in shaping a positive, inspiring and fair workplace culture.

Finally, although salary is not the strongest factor influencing the intention to stay, ensuring an income level commensurate with the cost of living and the effort expended is still a prerequisite for civil servants to maintain psychological stability and minimum satisfaction. Local governments can consider flexible reward mechanisms linked to work performance or establish emergency support funds for officials in difficult circumstances, to supplement non-budgetary resources to the current remuneration system.

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