

Organization and operation of public service providers in centrally-run cities

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Abstract: The article analyzes the current status of organization and operation of public service providers in centrally-run cities in Vietnam in the context of administrative reform and urban governance model transformation. Through reviewing the legal framework, organizational model, and evaluating the effectiveness of service provision in essential areas such as education, health, environment, transportation, etc., the article points out prominent shortcomings such as overlapping functions, lack of financial autonomy, and limited management capacity. Based on international experience, the author proposes a number of solutions to improve the effectiveness of public service providers, including institutional improvement, organizational structure innovation, increased autonomy, and digital technology application. These recommendations contribute to orienting public service reform in line with the requirements of sustainable development and international integration of large cities in Vietnam.

Keywords: Public services; Central cities; Public service units; Administrative reform; Digital transformation.

1. Introduction

In the process of modernizing the state administration and developing sustainable urban areas, the quality of public services is increasingly becoming a key factor in strengthening people's trust, improving the competitiveness of the urban economy, and ensuring social equity (Nguyen Thi Thu & Le Van Hung, 2020). Especially in centrally-run cities - where the population is dense, the economy is dynamic and the pressure of urbanization is great - the effective organization and operation of public service providers is an important task of the local government apparatus.

According to the Party and State of Vietnam, public service units are an "extended arm" in providing essential services to society such as education, health care, culture, environment, transportation, etc. (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). However, in the context of economic institutional innovation and deep international integration, the organizational model and operation methods of these units reveal many limitations: lack of autonomy, low operational efficiency, subsidized financial mechanisms and lack of transparency in governance (Nguyen Minh Anh, 2022). In addition, the overlap of functions between state management agencies

and public service units also causes difficulties in defining responsibilities and controlling service quality (World Bank, 2020).

In developed countries, public service reform does not stop at “minimizing the role of the state”, but aims at the model of “developmental state”, where public services are provided under a controlled competitive mechanism, transparent operating procedures and subject to public supervision (OECD, 2019). Therefore, re-studying the organizational model and operating mechanism of public service providers in central cities of Vietnam is an urgent requirement, in order to clearly define the reform orientation in the coming period.

The objective of the article is to clarify the current situation of organization and operation of public service providers in centrally-run cities, analyze existing problems, and propose solutions to innovate the organization and improve the efficiency of public service provision in the context of digital transformation and international integration. The article will contribute to supplementing the theoretical and practical basis for public policy making as well as administrative reform in major cities of Vietnam.

2. Overview of the organization and structure of public service organizations

2.1. Size and characteristics of public service organizations

From small to large scale, from commune to national level, public service organizations play an important role in service provision and administrative management. The size and characteristics of public service organizations are diverse and unique, directly affecting the service and progress of countries. In this essay, we will learn about the size and characteristics of public service organizations, in order to better understand their role in society and the administrative system.

Public Management

Public service organizations are public management in nature, that is, their activities and decisions directly affect the common interests of the community. They must comply with legal regulations, ethical standards and public policies to ensure fairness, transparency and honesty in their operations.

Community Service

The main objective of public service organizations is to serve the community and provide necessary public services to the people. They must meet the needs and demands of the people, solve administrative problems and ensure the rights of even the most disadvantaged people in society.

Professionalism and innovation

Public service organizations must demonstrate professionalism and innovation in their operations. This includes applying information technology, improving management capacity and creating creative solutions to improve efficiency and service quality.

2.2. Organizational structure of public service organizations

Hierarchical organizational structure

Public service organizations are usually organized in a hierarchical system, from commune/district, provincial/municipal to national levels. Each level has specific organizational units such as government agencies, ministries, departments, offices, research institutes, bureaus and divisions. This organizational structure helps to divide responsibilities and powers, and at the same time creates an effective administrative management network from the grassroots level to the central level.

Functional organizational structure

Public service organizations are often organized according to specific functions or areas of management. For example, there are specialized organizations for finance, health, education, security, economics, environment, and urban planning. This functional organizational structure helps to concentrate expertise and knowledge, ensuring professionalism in the provision of public services and the management of specific areas.

2.3. Functions of public service organizations

Providing public services

The main function of public service organizations is to provide necessary public services to the community and people. This includes providing information, receiving and processing requests, administrative procedures, licensing, financial management and other services such as health, education, culture and transportation. This function ensures convenience and progress for the community, improving the quality of life of the people.

Administrative management

Public service organizations have the function of managing and implementing administrative activities. This includes setting public policy, directing and coordinating the activities of units within the system, managing finances and resources, monitoring and controlling, ensuring compliance with laws and ethical standards, and performing public management functions.

2.4. Public service organization management process

Define management goals and strategies

The process of managing a public service organization begins with defining management goals and strategies. This requires careful analysis and assessment of the current situation, challenges and opportunities, setting specific goals and identifying appropriate management directions and measures.

Design organizational structure and work processes

After defining the management goals and strategies, the public service organization management process continues with the design of the organizational structure and work processes. This includes defining the units, departments, roles and responsibilities of each member of the organization, as well as establishing clear and transparent work processes to ensure connectivity and efficiency in operations.

Human resource and resource management

The process of managing a public service organization also includes the management of human resources and resources. This requires the recruitment, training and development of competent and professional staff, as well as the management of financial, physical and information technology resources to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of the organization.

2.5. Regulations on management of public service organizations

Law and public policy

Regulations on the management of public service organizations include compliance with laws and public policies. Public service organizations must comply with legal regulations related to administrative management, rights and obligations of citizens, and protect the rights and common interests of the community.

Ethical standards and social responsibility

The regulations governing public service organizations also address the ethical standards and social responsibilities of these organizations. This ensures honesty, transparency and trustworthiness in operations, while demonstrating the protection of the rights and needs of the people and the community.

3. Activities of public service organizations in the city

3.1. Public services provided to the people

Provide information and advice

Public service organizations in the city play an important role in providing information and advice to citizens. This includes providing information on legal regulations, administrative procedures, public programs and services. At the same time, public service organizations also provide advice on issues related to health, education, employment, and other areas, to help citizens understand and meet their needs.

Licensing and administrative procedures

Public service organizations take on the role of managing and processing administrative procedures such as licensing, registration, notarization and certification. People can access these services at offices or online through information technology platforms. Thereby, public service organizations help ensure transparency, efficiency and save time for people in carrying out administrative procedures.

Social support and assistance

Public service organizations in the city often provide social assistance and support services to meet the special needs of groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, children and disadvantaged families. This may include health care, education, financial assistance, care and protection of the rights of these groups.

3.2. Management and operation of public service organizations

Resource Management

Public service organizations in the city must manage and use resources effectively. This includes managing human resources, material resources, financial resources and information resources. Public service organizations must ensure that resources are allocated appropriately and used for the right purposes, in order to meet the needs of the people and achieve efficiency in operations.

Management process

Public service organizations need to establish management processes to ensure accuracy, transparency and efficiency in their operations. This includes establishing information recording systems, defining individual tasks and responsibilities, and evaluating performance to improve work processes.

Technological innovation and progress

Public service organizations need to update and apply new technology to improve operational efficiency. This may include developing online public service management systems, using artificial intelligence and data mining to optimize workflows.

4. Difficulties and challenges in the organization and operation of public service organizations

4.1. Challenges for public service organizations

The complexity of community requirements and needs

Communities are increasingly diverse culturally, geographically, economically and socially. This creates diversity and complexity in the community's requirements and demands for public services. Public service organizations face the challenge of meeting a range of different requirements and demands, ensuring that public services are delivered in the best possible way for all members of the community.

Limited finance

Finance is always a challenge for public service organizations. With the increasing demands and needs of the community, public service organizations often face limited resources to meet these demands. This can make it difficult to improve service quality, improve infrastructure and train human resources.

Information and data technology

The rapid development of information technology has created opportunities and challenges for public service organizations. However, the application of information technology and data management requires investment and improvement of the organization's technological capacity. Data management and security are also important challenges in the operation of public service organizations.

4.2. Some difficulties of public service organizations

Limited finance

One of the major challenges faced by public service organizations is limited funding. With the increasing demands and needs of the community, public service organizations often find it difficult to secure sufficient financial resources to meet these demands. This can affect the quality of service and the organization's ability to expand its operations.

The complexity of administrative procedures

Complicated administrative procedures are another challenge that public service organizations face. Approval, processing and licensing processes are often cumbersome and time-consuming, making it difficult for citizens and businesses to access and use public services. This requires public service organizations to find ways to simplify administrative processes, increase transparency and quickly respond to people's requests.

Organizational and management reform

Public service organizations also face the challenge of organizational and management reform. These organizations often need to change the way they operate and organize to respond quickly to new societal demands. Organizational and management reform requires flexibility and change in the organization's culture and way of working, as well as the participation and support of leaders and employees.

Technological development and digitalization

The development of technology and digitalization also creates new difficulties for public service organizations. The application of technology and data management requires investment and improvement of the organization's technological capacity. At the same time, this development also requires public service organizations to be able to train and adapt to new technologies, to maximize the potential of digitalization in public service delivery.

5. Some issues arising from the organization and operation of public services in centrally-run cities

5.1. Service quality issues

Suitability to people's needs

An important issue facing public service organizations is ensuring that they are relevant to the actual needs of the people in the city. This requires public service organizations to understand, evaluate and accurately respond to the needs and desires of residents, ensuring that the public services provided meet the right purpose and bring practical benefits to the community.

Improve service quality and efficiency

To meet the growing demand for public services, organizations need to focus on improving the quality and efficiency of services. This includes optimizing work processes, applying information technology and process automation, training and developing professional human resources, along with promoting transparency, trustworthiness and dedicated service to the people.

5.2. Effective management issues

Strengthening coordination between authorities

Effective management of public service organizations requires close coordination between functional agencies in the city. However, sometimes the fragmentation and lack of information between agencies can cause difficulties in ensuring the connection and interaction between public services. To solve this problem, it is necessary to build cooperation mechanisms, share information and create a consensus working environment between relevant agencies.

Resource and resource management

Resource and resource management is a significant issue in the operations of public service organizations. Limited financial and human resources can affect the ability to provide services and meet community needs. Managing resources and resources effectively and efficiently is a major challenge for public service organizations.

5.3. Sustainable development issues

Protecting the environment and resources

In the process of development, public service organizations need to ensure that their operations do not cause harm to the environment and natural resources. This requires attention to the development and implementation of policies, regulations and procedures related to environmental protection, sustainable use of resources and promotion of green development.

Synchronizing economic and social development

Sustainable development requires the synchronization of economic and social development. Public service organizations need to ensure that their activities not only generate economic benefits but also bring about equity, social development and improved quality of life for the community.

6. Innovation in organization and operation of public services in centrally-run cities

6.1. Innovation in the process of providing public services in the public service area

Modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, process automation, electronic communications and blockchain have opened up many opportunities to improve the efficiency and quality of public processes and operations.

One of the key benefits of adopting technology is the ability to reduce paperwork and speed up the processing of documents. With the use of automated information and data management systems, the process from information collection to document processing can be done more quickly and efficiently. This saves time and effort for both civil servants and citizens, while reducing the hassle and inconvenience of dealing with government agencies.

In addition, technology also provides the ability to provide accurate and timely information to citizens. With automation in data collection, processing and analysis, technology systems can ensure the accuracy and reliability of information. This helps citizens get complete and accurate information about their processes, services and rights, thereby enhancing the transparency and reliability of government agencies.

Furthermore, the application of new technology also creates opportunities to develop online public services, bringing convenience and easy access to citizens. Online applications and platforms allow citizens to access and use public services conveniently from anywhere and at any time. This saves citizens time, effort and costs, while reducing the pressure and complexity of traveling and waiting in traditional government agencies.

In general, technological and process innovation plays an important role in optimizing public service operations. The use of modern technology and the application of new processes help to reduce procedures, increase the speed of processing records, provide accurate and timely information to citizens, and develop online public services to increase convenience and access for citizens. This contributes to the improvement and sustainable development of the civil service and public service system, towards a more modern and advanced society.

6.2. Improve the quality of public services

Improving the quality of public services is a core factor in meeting the growing needs of the people and creating sustainable development in society. In this context, the application of scientific principles and methods in the management and provision of public services becomes an important and necessary task.

To achieve the goal of improving the quality of public services, ensuring that services are delivered on time is a core element. This requires effective management in planning, assigning and monitoring public activities. Organizations need to establish standards and evaluation indicators to measure and ensure the punctuality of services. The use of information and electronic communication technology also plays an important role in improving work processes and optimizing the distribution of information between departments and stakeholders.

In addition, equity and efficiency are also two indispensable factors in ensuring the quality of public services. Public organizations and activities need to ensure that all citizens are treated fairly and equally in the process of using public services. This requires the development of open, clear and non-discriminatory processes, and monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance and equitable implementation. At the same time, efficiency in public service delivery means optimizing the use of resources and ensuring that services meet the goals and expectations of citizens.

In the process of improving the quality of public services, transparency and honesty play an important role. Access to information and public management processes help create

people's trust and confidence in public services. Public organizations and activities need to create mechanisms to collect, store and share information in a transparent and confidential manner. At the same time, honesty in announcing and publicizing the results, progress and capacity of public services is an essential factor in building people's trust and satisfaction.

To achieve these elements, it is important to focus on improving work processes and service spirit. Public organizations and activities need to promote professionalism and competence of employees, and ensure that they are fully trained in procedures and communication skills. In addition, promoting service spirit, respecting and listening to people's opinions also contributes significantly to creating a positive working environment and meeting people's needs.

In conclusion, improving the quality of public services is a complex and multi-faceted process. Applying scientific principles and methods, putting the interests of citizens first, focusing on improving work processes and service spirit, and ensuring that staff are trained and competent are important steps to achieve this goal.

6.3. Enhance community interaction and participation

Enhancing community engagement and participation is an important aspect in building and developing an effective public service system that is responsive to the diverse needs of the people. Community engagement brings many important benefits, including transparency, credibility and added value to the decision-making and implementation of public service policies and projects.

Local communities, with their knowledge and understanding of specific local issues, play an important role in providing valuable information and input into decisions regarding public services. Community participation not only helps ensure that decisions are made on the basis of sound information and knowledge, but also helps build public trust and acceptance of decisions and projects.

To enhance community engagement and participation, it is necessary to develop mechanisms and channels for listening to and responding to community opinions in an open and effective manner. Public organizations and activities need to create an environment where communities can share their views, opinions and knowledge. This can be done through organizing consultations, workshops and public meetings to discuss and exchange information with the community.

Furthermore, encouraging the participation of community representatives in the decision-making process is an important factor. Public organizations and activities need to ensure that communities have adequate opportunities and capabilities to participate in the decision-making process, from participating in policy formulation to implementing and evaluating public service projects. This can be done through the establishment of representative mechanisms, facilitating the participation of community representatives in relevant committees

and councils, and encouraging the creation of draft policies and decisions together with the community before they are implemented.

In summary, enhancing community interaction and participation in the development of public service systems requires facilitating and encouraging community participation and contributions. Establishing mechanisms and channels to listen to and respond to community opinions, organizing public consultations and workshops, and encouraging the participation of community representatives are effective ways to achieve this goal.

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