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## Eastern thought on talents and developing Vietnamese talented civil servants

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### Abstract

Talents are the elite human resources, especially related to the prosperity of the nation and its people. States and organizations clearly realize that gaining a talent advantage means gaining a competitive advantage; all consider talent issues as an important strategy and policy for their development. However, this is a difficult issue because views on talent and policies towards talent are affected by many factors, including political, legal factors, and changing societal trends, especially in the context of digital technology development and the digital society today. This study analyzes the views of some Eastern politicians on talent, including Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam) and Mao Zedong (China). Based on these viewpoints, the author builds a theoretical research model on talented civil servants and conducts a survey of 420 leaders from 210 local government agencies at the commune level, representing three regions of Vietnam: Lang Son province (North), Quang Tri province (Central), and Binh Duong province (South). The survey results serve as the basis for the author to draw research conclusions and discuss policy issues to develop talented civil servants in Vietnam today.

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### 1. Introduction

Vietnam and China are two Asian countries with many similarities in political, social, and ideological characteristics, which many studies refer to as Eastern ideology. Some prominent politicians of modern Vietnam and China include Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam) and Mao Zedong (China). The political lines and development strategies of Vietnam and China are influenced by the thoughts and viewpoints of these outstanding politicians.

In the system of viewpoints of Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong, the viewpoint on talent and talent development is one of the important contents, having profound theoretical and practical significance and greatly influencing the work of civil servant management in each country. In general, these viewpoints have great value and significance for the revolutionary process of building socialism in Vietnam and China. Therefore, the generations of contemporary Vietnamese and Chinese leaders attach great importance to the issue of talent development to build a team of talented civil servants for the civil service.

As leaders of two countries, the development views of Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong are typical of Eastern viewpoints and ideologies on talent and talent development. This attracts the attention of many researchers and managers, and it is also an issue that the author is interested in in this research.

## **2. Ho Chi Minh's Views and Mao Zedong's Views on Talent**

The term "talent" is often mentioned solemnly, implying elite human resources, especially related to the prosperity of the country and the nation. Therefore, states and organizations consider the issue of talent as an important strategy and policy for their development. Through studying many research documents, the author found that the prominent view on talent mentioned by Eastern politicians, typically Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong, is that talent must be a person with both morality and talent.

According to Ho Chi Minh, having talent without morality is a useless person; having morality without talent makes it difficult to do anything [1]. That means Ho Chi Minh affirmed both talent and morality when discussing talent, but morality is more important; morality determines talent. When morality is promoted, the individual's talent is transformed into social value. This point of view was expressed throughout Ho Chi Minh's entire revolutionary activities. Accordingly, before passing away, he still devoted an important content in his will to discuss the issue of morality and required each party member and cadre to truly imbue revolutionary morality: The Party must pay attention to educating revolutionary morality for youth union members, training them to become successors in building socialism who are both red and expert [2]. For Mao Zedong, right from the time of the democratic revolution in China, in 1938, he set out a cadre policy for the Communist Party of China: using people must be selected based on moral qualities and talent [3]. Accordingly, morality is interpreted as having the spirit of firmly following the Party's line, obeying the Party's discipline, having close ties with the masses, being modest, rich in self-criticism, courageously correcting shortcomings, being active in work, and not seeking personal gain; talent is interpreted as having the ability to work independently, being creative, and innovative in the way of working.

Thus, Eastern politicians consider ethics and talent as two main components when discussing talent. Ethics are explained as the political attitude, political qualities and style, and ideology of an individual: firmly pursuing political goals, resolutely supporting the Party's political line and ideological line; strictly maintaining legal discipline. Talent is explained as the working capacity and professional qualifications of an individual to become a talent: an individual has the qualifications and capacity to perform assigned work creatively, achieving high results. This viewpoint has great value and significance for the revolutionary process of building socialism in Vietnam and China. And in the management of civil servants in Vietnam, Vietnamese law stipulates that the recruitment of civil servants is to recruit people with sufficient ethics and talent to perform public duties [4]; Regulations on the assessment of the quality of civil servants are also based on the contents of ethics and talent [5]. Accordingly, civil servants have the obligation to be loyal to the country, dedicated to serving the state and people; strictly comply with the laws and regulations of agencies and organizations (ethics); civil servants must have appropriate professional qualifications and meet the requirements of the recruited and appointed job position; have the ability to work to meet the requirements of the job position (talent). On that basis, the author builds the scale "Developing Talented Civil Servants" (DCS) implying the content of ethics and talent: Civil servants are loyal to the country, steadfast in political goals, strictly abide by the law, and wholeheartedly serve the people (DCS1); Civil servants are knowledgeable about professional work and have the ability to apply professional knowledge and skills to effectively perform public duties (DCS2); Civil servants have the capacity to advise, the capacity to implement work, and the ability to be creative to effectively perform public duties, ensuring the progress and quality of assigned work (DCS3).

The views of Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong on talent are topics that continue to be explored by many Vietnamese and Chinese researchers. Some Chinese researchers affirm the elements of morality and talent, emphasizing that talent implies the outstanding ability of an individual; this outstanding ability is affirmed when the individual has the conditions to demonstrate it and is recognized by the organization [6, 7]. Some Vietnamese researchers, based on the inheritance of the content of morality and talent when discuss talent and analyze it in relation to specific contexts. According to Tham [8] and Hang [9], talent is the outstanding ability of an individual, helping the individual to be creative and complete his/her work well in each specific field and in a specific context. Especially in the context of digital technology development, the current digital society requires digital knowledge and digital skills for the human resources of each organization. In public service activities, civil servants with outstanding abilities are identified as talented civil servants. However, to develop talented civil servants, each civil servant must proactively study and practice to maintain his/her talent. At the same time, the organization must create policies to promote the talent of civil servants. The above researchers explain talent and policies to promote the talent of civil servants as follows.:

- Firstly, the outstanding capacity of civil servants is affirmed by the subject through work practice, called talent. The scale "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC) is explained according to the following contents: Civil servants have the ability to acquire new knowledge, the ability to adapt to new technological development trends; have knowledge and proficiency in digital skills to work effectively in the digital environment (OC1); Civil servants have the ability to work flexibly, the ability to be creative in work to effectively perform public duties and have a positive influence on the development of the organization (OC2); Civil servants have a professional working style; have the spirit of being ready to take on all assigned tasks, ready to work to serve the state and the people (OC3).

- Second, the development and maintenance of civil servants' talents need to be promoted by the organization, which is the policy to promote civil servants' talents. The scale "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP) is explained according to the following contents: Organize arrangements for civil servants to attend, discuss, and advise on professional work in the working programs of the leadership group (PP1); organize priority investment in modern equipment and working facilities for talented civil servants; prioritize the arrangement of special resources to serve scientific research and professional work

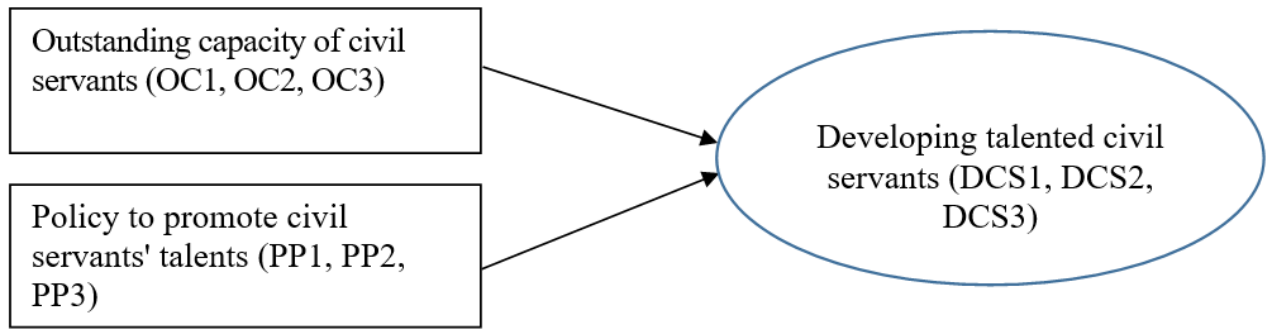
for talented civil servants (PP2); organize favorable conditions for talented civil servants to access important documents, policies, and strategies for research and professional work; create a mechanism for civil servants to proactively propose initiatives and advise on important strategies and policies (PP3).

The above research viewpoints and contents have both theoretical significance, inheriting and developing the viewpoints of Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong on talent, and practical significance in the specific context of public service activities. The author agrees with these viewpoints and intends to build a theoretical research model on developing talented civil servants. Accordingly, the research viewpoint is established that civil servants proactively study and practice to promote their talents; organizations need to have policies to promote the talents of civil servants to always maintain and develop high-quality human resources for the public service. With that meaning, the research hypothesis set out in this study is: *Outstanding capacity of civil servants (H1) and Policy to promote civil servants' talents (H2) are two contents/factors that have a direct impact on the development of talented civil servants for the public service.*

From the research content of Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong's views on human resources, this study builds a theoretical framework on developing talented civil servants for the civil service. The theoretical research model includes two independent scales/variables: "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC) and "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP), and one dependent scale/variable: "Developing talented civil servants" (DCS). The above scales include nine observed variables, designed by the author into nine questions in the survey form, measured by a five-level Likert scale: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No opinion; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1, Figure 1).

**Table 1.**  
Theoretical framework.

No	Scales	Encode	Rating levels				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	Outstanding capacity of civil servants	OC					
1	Civil servants have the ability to acquire new knowledge, adapt to new technological development trends, and possess knowledge and proficiency in digital skills to work effectively in the digital environment.	OC1					
2	Civil servants have the ability to work flexibly, to be creative in their work, to effectively perform public duties, and to positively influence the development of the organization.	OC2					
3	Civil servants have a professional working style; they have the spirit of being ready to take on all assigned tasks and are prepared to work to serve the state and the people.	OC3					
II	Policy to promote civil servants' talents	PP					
4	Organize arrangements for civil servants to attend, discuss, and advise on professional work in the working programs of the leadership group.	PP1					
5	Organize priority investments in modern equipment and working facilities for talented civil servants; prioritize the arrangement of special resources to serve scientific research and professional work for talented civil servants.	PP2					
6	Organize favorable conditions for talented civil servants to access important documents, policies, and strategies for research and professional work; create a mechanism for civil servants to proactively propose initiatives and advise on important strategies and policies.	PP3					
IV	Developing talented civil servants	DCS					
7	Civil servants are loyal to the country, steadfast in political goals, strictly abide by the law, and wholeheartedly serve the people.	DCS1					
8	Civil servants are knowledgeable about their professional work and have the ability to apply their professional knowledge and skills to effectively perform public duties.	DCS2					
9	Civil servants have the capacity to advise, the capacity to implement work, and the ability to be creative in effectively performing public duties, ensuring the progress and quality of assigned work.	DCS3					



**Figure 1.**  
Research model.

### 3. Research Methods

This study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative approach involves the collection and analysis of secondary data to develop a theoretical framework for cultivating talented civil servants. The quantitative approach includes a survey of 420 leaders from 210 local government agencies at the commune level, representing three regions of Vietnam: Lang Son Province (North), Quang Tri Province (Central), and Binh Duong Province (South). The survey is conducted in two phases: a preliminary survey and an official survey.

- Preliminary survey: According to Hair et al. [10] the minimum sample size required in quantitative research for a research model with 3 scales and 9 observed variables is  $N = 9 \times 5 = 45$ . The author conducted a preliminary survey in Lang Son province with a sample size of  $N = 140$  leaders of commune-level government agencies ( $N > 45$ ). The results of the preliminary survey in Lang Son province showed that the scales and observed variables are reliable enough to be used in an official survey on a larger scale.

- Official survey: The official survey was conducted with a sample size of  $N=420$  leaders of commune-level government agencies from 3 localities representing 3 regions of Vietnam, as mentioned above:  $N>45$ , ensuring reliability when conducting survey research. The survey was conducted selectively on leaders of commune-level government agencies who have held leadership positions for 3 years or more. Based on preliminary interviews to capture information and their consent to answer, the author collected 420/420 valid questionnaires, achieving a response rate of 100%.

### 4. Research Results and Discussion

First, the author conducted statistics and tested the reliability of 3 scales and 9 observed variables in the research model. According to Hair et al. [10] the scale ensures reliability when reaching Cronbach's alpha value  $> 0.6$ ; the observed variable has reliability when reaching Corrected Item-Total Correlation value  $> 0.3$ . The statistical and testing results show that all 3 scales and 9 observed variables have reliability to be able to conduct further analysis, shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.**  
Statistical results and testing results of the scale.

Scales	Observed variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. Outstanding capacity of civil servants (OC)	OC1	420	1	5	3.88	0.669	0.651	OC1 = 0.352
	OC2	420	1	5	3.94	0.652		OC2 = 0.424
	OC3	420	1	5	4.03	0.598		OC3 = 0.514
2. Policy to promote civil servants' talents (PP)	PP1	420	1	5	4.13	0.575	0.697	PP1 = 0.582
	PP2	420	1	5	4.19	0.556		PP2 = 0.601
	PP3	420	1	5	4.15	0.499		PP3 = 0.605
3. Developing talented civil servants (DCS)	DCS1	420	1	5	4.11	0.561	0.673	DCS1 = 0.617
	DCS2	420	1	5	4.09	0.548		DCS2 = 0.539
	DCS3	420	1	5	4.14	0.560		DCS3 = 0.494
Valid N (listwise)		420						

Data in Table 2 shows that observations on the scales "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC), "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP), and "Developing talented civil servants" (DCS) are all rated at an average level of Mean  $\geq 3.88$ , which is statistically significant according to the determined Likert scale (1-5). Commune-level government leaders all affirm the outstanding capacity of civil servants, policies to promote civil servants' talents, and the development of talented civil servants in the locality. Accordingly, civil servants are loyal to the country, steadfast in political goals, strictly abide by the law, and wholeheartedly serve the people; they are knowledgeable about professional work and have the ability to apply professional knowledge and skills to effectively perform public duties; they possess the capacity to advise, deploy work, and be creative to perform public duties effectively, ensuring the progress and quality of assigned work. This stems from the capacity of civil servants and the policy of promoting civil servants' capacity, which the organization is interested in implementing, helping civil servants to practice and develop their capacity in practical public service activities.

Among the above scales, the observed variables of the "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC) scale were assessed at a lower level with Mean (OC1) = 3.88, Mean (OC2) = 3.94, Mean (OC3) = 4.03, indicating that local leaders assessed that many civil servants have not demonstrated their superiority to make breakthroughs and be creative in performing public duties. In particular, the lowest is the observed variable Mean (OC1) = 3.88, showing that many civil servants are limited in their ability to absorb new knowledge, adapt to new technological development trends, and possess limited digital knowledge and skills to work effectively in the digital environment. This requires each civil servant to proactively update and supplement digital knowledge and skills, develop digital capacity, and for each organization to implement training and fostering policies to update and enhance digital knowledge and skills for civil servants.

The survey data in Table 2 also contributes to reflecting the current capacity of local civil servants in Vietnam, in which the limitations are clearly shown in the content of digital knowledge and digital skills to work effectively in the digital environment. This issue is also recognized and evaluated similarly by many experts and managers. Dung and Thoa [11] affirmed that many civil servants are limited in digital capacity - digital knowledge and skills do not meet the requirements of the job position, so they are not proficient in transactions and interactions in the digital environment to solve assigned work to ensure progress and quality. Giang et al. [12] also stated that many civil servants are limited in digital knowledge, skills and proficient in transactions and interactions in the digital environment, affecting the progress and quality of assigned work.

With the standard test value, the three scales in the research model continue to be used to conduct exploratory factor analysis to test the theoretical research model. Exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation is performed to preliminarily assess the Unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the scales to provide a more solid basis for drawing research conclusions about the suitability of the initial theoretical model. The results of exploratory factor analysis are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3.

Total Variance Explained.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.755
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2064.142
	df	36
	Sig.	0.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.576	39.732	39.732	3.576	39.732	39.732	2.792	31.023	31.023
2	2.898	32.196	71.928	2.898	32.196	71.928	2.686	29.846	60.869
3	1.073	11.923	83.850	1.073	11.923	83.850	2.068	22.982	83.850
4	.489	5.433	89.283						
5	.420	4.669	93.952						
6	.191	2.123	96.075						
7	.173	1.926	98.001						
8	.124	1.382	99.383						
9	.056	.617	100.000						

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4.

Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

Scales	Observed variables	Component		
		1	2	3
1. Outstanding capacity of civil servants (OC)	OC1	0.742		
	OC2	0.755		
	OC3	0.778		
2. Policy to promote civil servants' talents (PP)	PP1		0.809	
	PP2		0.798	
	PP3		0.794	
3. Developing talented civil servants (DCS)	DCS1			0.801
	DCS2			0.792
	DCS3			0.787

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

In quantitative research, according to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), exploratory factor analysis was performed in accordance with the data set through the values:  $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$ ; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level Sig.

$< 0.05$ ; Eigenvalue  $\geq 1$ ; Total Variance Explained  $\geq 50\%$ ; Factor Loading  $\geq 0.5$ . The data in Table 3 and Table 4 show that:

+ KMO coefficient =  $0.755 > 0.5$ , confirming that exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the data set; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level of  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000 < 0.05$ , showing that the observed variables have a linear correlation with the representative factor. Total Variance Explained with Cumulative% =  $83.850\% > 50\%$  (Table 3), showing that 83.850% of the variation of the representative factors is explained by the observed variables; all observed variables have Factor Loading  $> 0.5$  (Table 4), showing that the observed variables have good statistical significance. The theoretical research model initially proposed is consistent with the survey research practice.

+ The observed variables were extracted into 03 factors corresponding to 03 initial factors with Eigenvalues  $> 1$  (Table 3), continuing to confirm the suitability of the initial research model. The initial research model was kept intact, including: 02 independent variables "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC), "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP), and 01 dependent variable "Developing talented civil servants" (DCS), with 9 observed variables that have good statistical significance, which can perform multivariate linear regression analysis to examine the relationships among variables in the model. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 5, which is the basis for the author to draw research conclusions.

**Table 5.**  
Multivariate regression results.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.108	0.532		12.834	0.000	
	Outstanding capacity of civil servants (OC)	0.565	0.310	0.421	10.316	0.000	1.818
	Policy to promote civil servants' talents (PP)	0.418	0.271	0.384	9.715	0.000	1.834

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Developing talented civil servants (DCS)  
R Square: 0.742; Durbin-Watson: 2.101.

The data in Table 5 shows that:

+ R Square = 0.742, confirming that the scales "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC), "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP) explain 74.2% of the variation in the scale "Developing talented civil servants" (DCS); VIF values = 1.818 and VIF = 1.834 ( $1 < \text{VIF} < 2$ ), showing that the regression model does not have multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2.101 ( $1 < d < 3$ ), showing that the regression model does not have autocorrelation, confirming that the scales "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC) and "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP) are independent and have an impact on the scale "Developing talented civil servants" (DCS), thereby confirming the suitability of the theoretical research model with the survey data set.

+ The regression coefficients of the two independent variables, "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC), "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP), are both statistically significant  $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$  ( $\text{Sig.} < 0.05$ ) and have positive values:  $B(\text{OC}) = 0.565$ ,  $B(\text{PP}) = 0.418$ , confirming the positive relationship between the two independent variables "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC), "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP), and the dependent variable "Developing talented civil servants" (DCS); hypotheses H1 and H2 are accepted; the initial research model continues to be confirmed as appropriate.

Based on the generalized regression model of Hair et al. [10]:  $Y = B_0 + B_1 \cdot X_1 + B_2 \cdot X_2 + \dots + B_i \cdot X_i$ , the author determined the multivariate regression model of this study as follows:  $\text{DCS} = 1.108 + 0.565 \cdot \text{OC} + 0.418 \cdot \text{PP}$

Based on the regression coefficient (B), it can be seen that the correlation level of the independent variables and the dependent variables in ascending order is: "Outstanding capacity of civil servants" (OC), "Policy to promote civil servants' talents" (PP). This contributes to further affirming the results of empirical research in Vietnam, that civil servants are loyal to the country, steadfast in political goals, strictly abide by the law, and wholeheartedly serve the people; they have a good understanding of professional work and the ability to apply professional knowledge and skills to effectively perform public duties; they possess the capacity to advise, deploy work, and be creative to effectively perform public duties, ensuring the progress and quality of assigned work. This stems from the capacity of civil servants and the policy to promote their capacity, which organizations are interested in implementing, helping civil servants to be trained and develop their capacity in the practice of public service activities.

However, many civil servants are limited in their ability to acquire new knowledge, adapt to new technological development trends, and possess sufficient digital knowledge and skills to work effectively in the digital environment. This requires each civil servant to proactively update and supplement their digital knowledge and skills; it also necessitates that each organization implement training and fostering policies to update and enhance digital competencies for civil servants. Based on the above research conclusions, the author suggests that organizations need to carry out training and development tasks to promptly equip, update, and supplement digital knowledge and skills for civil servants in the context of developing a digital society. Digital government is still a new issue but represents a development trend for the future. At the same time, organizations need to research and develop standard content on digital knowledge, digital skills, and proficiency in handling work in the digital environment for civil servants. These are theoretical contents based on inheriting the views of Ho Chi Minh and Mao Zedong on the talent factor to build and implement policies to develop talented civil servants; at the same

time, they are also practical contents associated with the current context when digital technology is developing, countries are promoting the development of digital government and digital society.

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