



The Current State of Personnel Administration of Souphanouvong University

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Abstract

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The main purpose of this research was to investigate the current state of personnel administration at Souphanouvong University. The descriptive survey method was employed in this study to collect the data from the sample group. The population included administrators, staff and teachers at Souphanouvong University with a total number of 415 people. The sample group was selected by using a purposive sampling method with a total number of 324 participants. The instrument used for data collection is the 5-likert-scale questionnaire which was validated by five experts in the area and then tested for reliability with the value of 0.979. The data were analyzed to find percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The findings reveal that the state of the personnel administration at Souphanouvong University was at the high level with a mean of 3.38 and standard deviation of 0.54 ($\bar{X} = 3.83$, S.D = 0.54). When considering each aspect, it was found to be practiced at a high level with a mean range from 3.60 to 3.97. The most practiced aspect is staff employment and management ($\bar{X} = 3.97$, S.D = 0.60), followed by the selection process ($\bar{X} = 3.96$, S.D = 0.65) and development ($\bar{X} = 3.95$, S.D = 0.63) and the retirement from government officials ($\bar{X} = 3.95$, S.D = 0.65) respectively.

Keywords: Personnel Administration, Souphanouvong University, Government Officials.

1. Introduction

One of the crucial aspects for the socioeconomic development of Lao PDR is upgrading human resources in order to graduate the country from a least developed country status in 2025 and strive for an industrialized and modern country. According the five year education development sector plan (2021-2025), the focus is on developing the education system in order to equip human resources with knowledge, skills, ability, ethics, appropriate values, national passion, honesty, good health, stable emotion, and firm solidarity (Ministry of Education and Sports, Strategic Plan on Education Development 5 years IX (2021-2025), 2020, pp. 17-18).

The XI Party Congress of the Lao PDR firmly concluded and stated that the strategy on upgrading and training government officials is crucial and pointed that the government officials play a vital role in executing and performing the party policy and government work as related to the current situation of the country.

It is now important to achieve the training and upgrading of government officials at all levels by paying close attention to the quantity or sufficient number, increased quality and administration principles. This could be achieved through establishing a free and fair system regarding the selection processes, using and administrating staff with effective result.

Additionally, it is important to achieve the 5 aspects such as: considering the plan, staff management, training and upgrading, and implementing policy (Party Central Committee, 2021, pp. 31-32).

The current state of economic cooperation in the world has rapidly expanding and in all forms of various levels as well as a high competition. Several countries have become a member state of the international organizations, especially the Asian Free Trade Areas, World Trade Organization, ASEA Economic Association and others. This leads to increased trading and investment as a result of human resource development which is prioritized and has become the main driver of development to serve human and has become an important factor for production which is important for social and economic development of the nation (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2020).

As 2030 Vision states, “Developing human resource to become a main production force which provides for the development of socioeconomic in alignment with sustainable, industrialized and modern, being able to integrate into and compete with the regional and international stages in terms of quantity and quality, ensuring people access to services and improving the quality of life”. In addition, the government has a plan to upgrade and manage government officials with efficiency, with the aim of developing leadership officials in various administration sectors to possess ethics, knowledge, and ability in management. The plan is also aimed to develop government officials which is mandated terms of sectors, ensuring new leaders in a professional skills and to improve the administration system, monitoring, inspecting, policies for officials such as: management, development, promotion, rewards, and welfares in alignment with the current social and economic growth and to enforce law and orders for those who commit violation and regulations (Ministry of

Education and Sports, 2016; National Essembly, 2015).

According to the report on the implementation of the education and sports development plan as well as the personnel development, the constraints and challenges of recruiting new staff due to a restricted number of quotas given by the government. There is a large number of newly graduates and volunteer teachers. The newly graduated teachers are not recruited because the main focus is given to the volunteer teachers who have served for several years. Also, the management and placement of teachers are not properly monitored and ineffective. Drafting new policy and revising existing regulations are slow and time consuming due to limited budget and staff inexperience (Personnel Department, 2020; Prime Minister's Office, 2023).

Furthermore, the state of developing teachers and educational staff of the education and sports sector is more generalized and inappropriate with the real situation in terms of knowledge, lesson learned, experience, responsibility, which resulted in a lack of teachers at each level and subject area.

Although the personnel administration at Souphanouvong University has performed better in various aspects, there are still problems and challenges that need to be improved and solved such as the management and assignment of staff are not appropriate with field of study, not enough staff for each sector, the selection system is not transparent, evaluation and promotion of staff are still problematic, leading to a delay in promoting staff, the policy lacks of focus and not conductive and many staff are left out every year (Souphanouvong University, 2022).

From the above stated problem and challenges, the author of this paper who is serving at Souphanouvong University is interested in and motivated to conduct research on personnel administration of the university by focusing on 7 aspects: planning, selecting,

managing, developing, maintaining, evaluating and retiring from government officials.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Scope of Research

The main purposes of this investigation is to examine the current state of personnel administration at Souphanouvong University. It is conceptualized by synthesising the concept from the decree on national teacher qualification framework, Government of Laos (2012), Decree on teacher eductors (2012), decree on teacher ethics (2018), Castetter (1996), Beach (1980), Mondy etal (1990), Story (1991), Cascio (1992), Armstrong (1995), Santivong (2012), Kinnavong (2006), Vongsansy (2010), Bounchitda (1984), Makonphon (2016), Hiyanto (2007). Drawing from the initial conceptualization, the researcher was able to summarize important and relevant aspects as follows: planning, selecting, managing, developing, maintaining, evaluating and retiring/abstaining from government officials.

2.2 Popuation and sample group

The population of this study included administrators, administrative staff and teachers at Souphvnouvong University in total of 415 people. The sample group was selected by using a purposive sampling method which was 324 people.

2.3 Methods

There are three main phases of this research:

Phase 1 addresses synthesizing documents, concepts, theories and studies related to personnel administration.

Phase 2 is a survey on aspects of personnel administration was conducted in this phase to collect data from administrators, administrative staff and teachers (324 people) from the sample group, selected from two tiers (adminstration and academic sections) at Souphanouvong University.

2.4 Research instruments

As stated earlier, a survey questionnaire was employed to collect the data, the questionnaire is 5-rating scale and is about the current situation of personnel administration. It is divided into two sections:

Section 1 is about demographic information of respondents in terms of gender, age, education qualification, work experience and responsibilities.

Section 2 is about the current state of personnel adminstration at Souphanouvong University in form of 5 rating scale as follows:

5 means the current state of personnel adminstration is the most appropreate

4 means the current state of personnel adminstration is appropreate

3 means the current state of personnel adminstration is moderate

2 means the current state of personnel adminstration is lesson appropriate

1 means the current state of personnel adminstration is the least appropreate

2.5 Instrument design and validation

The survey questinnaire was developed according the results of the survey, concepts, theories and related studies. It was then evaluated to find construct validity, format and wording by 5 experts in the areas of personnel administration to find Indext of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) by using the criteria as follows:

+ 1 means that the item is consistent with the objective

0 means not sure

-1 means that the item is not consistent with the objective

The score was then run by using computer program to find IOC value. The IOC of all items ranged from 0.6-1.0, which is acceptable. The questionnaire was tried out with a group of administrators, administrative staff, and teachers at Souphanvong University (60 people) to find reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The result is 0.979.

After the validation was completed, the survey questionnaire was distributed to the sample group (administrators, administrative staff

and teachers). The total is 324 people as indicated earlier.

2.6 Data analysis

A statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to collect the data as follows:

1) A frequency and percentages were used to analyse demographic information of respondents.

2) An analysis for mean and standard deviation was run for section 2 of the questionnaire which is about the current state of personnel administration of Souphanouvong University by using SPSS program. The results were then interpreted based on the criteria below (SisaArt, 2010) as follows:

4.51 - 5.00 means personnel administration is the most appropriate

3.51 - 4.50 means personnel administration is appropriate

2.51 - 3.50 means personnel administration is moderate

1.51 - 2.50 means personnel administration is less appropriate

1.00 - 1.50 means personnel administration is the least appropriate

2.7 Symbols for data analysis

In order to ensure a clear understanding of the data analysis, the following symbols are used:

\bar{X} refers to Mean

S.D refers to Standard Deviation

Mdn refers to Median

I.R refers to Interquartile Range

3. Findings

3.1 Respondents' demographic information

From Table 1, it was found that the majority of respondents was male (66.40%) while 109 (33.60%) of them was female. Regarding the age, 167 (51.50%) of respondents were between 36-45 years of age, followed by 42.00% of them were less than 35 years and 6.50% of them was more than 46 years old. With reference to education qualification, 182 (56.20%) of respondents had a master's degree,

130 (40.10%) had a bachelor's degree and 12 (3.70%) of them had a doctoral degree. In terms of the work experience, the majority of respondents (202) 62.30% had 11-12 years of work experience, (109 people) or 33.00% had less than 10 years of work experience and (15 people) or 4.70% had more than 21 years of work experience. Regarding the responsibility aspect, the majority of respondents was the heads of divisions and deputy heads of divisions (47) or 14.50%, followed by heads of department (28) or 8.60% and deputy heads of department (11) or 3.40% and the highest position respondent is vice-rector of the university (1) or 0.30%.

3.2 Results of personnel administration

It can be noted from Table 2 that the overall state of the personnel administration at Souphanouvong University was at a high level with a mean of 3.83 and standard deviation at 0.54 ($\bar{X} = 3.83$, S.D = 0.54). When closely looking at each aspect, it was found that all aspects were at a high level with a mean score between 3.60 and 3.97. The highest aspect was the management of staff ($\bar{X} = 3.97$, S.D = 0.60), followed by the selection aspect ($\bar{X} = 3.96$, S.D = 0.65) and development ($\bar{X} = 3.95$, S.D = 0.63) and the retirement aspect ($\bar{X} = 3.95$, S.D = 0.65) respectively.

4. Discussion

Drawing from the findings of the present research the current state of personnel administration at Souphanouvong University, it can be discussed in terms of the 7 aspects of administration namely: 1) Planning aspect, 2) selecting aspect, 3) management aspect, 4) development aspect, 5) maintaining aspect, 6) evaluation aspect and 7) retirement aspect. The findings found that, in terms of the planning aspect, there are needs analysis meetings on personnel to be planned in the strategies of Souphanouvong University and in alignment with the guidelines and regulations of the Ministry of Education and Sports. The plan was ambitious in terms of the personnel requirement; however, the quotas given by the government is

limited to address the issue of a personnel shortage. At this process, the data about student enrollment was considered to help decide the amount of personnel management and recruitment. The plan on recruiting new personnel largely depends on the quotas given by the government in each year which should be aligned with the real needs of the faculty and this partly depends on the decision made by the top leaders in considering the gap which corresponds to the real needs. The findings here are related to a study by Santivong (2012) who found that there are five steps for personnel development plan such as considering the target and organization planning, considering the current state of humans, prediction of human in the future, action plans and inspection and improvement. The analysis of personnel administration found that it was in accordance with the model of PDCA such as planning, implementing plans, inspecting and improving.

In terms of aspect 2, selecting, the process should be aligned with the rules and regulations which are suitable for recruiting personnel, there are examinations, interviews by focusing on all aspect such as: knowledge, abilities, education level, background and work experience. The most important thing is to strictly follow the selection process, appointing a committee for education administration as approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports through using various social media channels for announcement such as: newspapers, television, radio, and online media to reach the target audience. The selection should be in line with the regulations to ensure transparency and fairness, avoid criticism from society. This is consistent with Vongsansy (2010), who found that personnel selection is a process which is an ongoing after having applicants or target audience designated by the organization and should follow the criteria as follows: age, gender, friendliness, work experience, intelligence which is one of the criteria for selecting personnel.

With reference to aspect 3, personnel management, priority should be allocated to a

vacant position and a subject area that is needed most, and this practice should be consistent with knowledge, skills, abilities and academic major obtained, should be appointed accordingly with transparency. The findings here are related to a research conducted by Kinnavong (2006) who found that the management of personnel for vacant position is a sensitive issue and should strictly follow the rules and regulations and processed with fairness and transparency.

For aspect 4, personnel development, it was found that there should be a clear and feasible plan to upgrade important skills for personnel and there should be a plan to approve budget for personnel development, especially in areas of academic, should draft and make a plan for personnel needs like (ID-Plan), should have a system to store data on personnel who have been trained from overseas and domestic, promoting cooperation to attract investment for teacher assistance, integrate the TEPE Online system, using online system for developing personnel which is quick and modern approach to ensure better accessibility and learning. The results are consistent with a study by Chaipol (2022) who found that the most important process for personnel development of Souphanouly province, Thailand, include: training, seminar, rotation of responsibilities, work instruction, self-learning and further education.

Regarding aspect 5, maintaining, there should be an increased implementation of policy plan with fairness according to the standard and conditions consistent with the party and state regulations, basic salary should be increased as well as other welfares according to the real world situation. This is to foster living conditions of the personnel. There should be an annual health check for personnel and look after them when they are ill or pass away. There should establish a system of fostering incentives both by rewards and intrinsic motivation which is related to an investigation of Chunnu (2016) who examine

personnel attitudes to working and organization in terms of work aspect, being accepted by organization and good wellfares.

The sixth aspect is evaluation which should include more indicators for personnel evaluation to be prevalent and real, the process of evaluating should be conducted according to the selection criteria, consistent with real situation, transparency, fairness and flexibility to ensure that personnel are concentrated in work conditions, promotion and appreciations. Promotion should be based on the results of evaluation and real performance. The 70/30 criteria should be terminated. This findings are related to the study of Wipada Saram (2019) who found that the evaluation of educational personnel should be monitored, inspected and evaluated and the data should be stored for guidelines in order to address the problems or for developing the weak issues.

The final aspect, retirement, focus on identifying and considering strategies to replace which in consistency with the regulations and system, there should be a suitable policy, provide the opportunity for personnel to serve with private and international sectors. There should be a regulation in reenforcing the law on those who have violated the principles and rules, there should be a training on attracting personnel. There should be standardized criteria for Souphanouvong University that is consistent with regulations and law of Lao PDR. The findings here are supported by a study conducted by Anunnavy (2014) who found that there are various types of retirements such as leaving work, retirement, lost of nationalities, and propose to the higher level as appropriate.

5. Conclusion

Drawing from the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the overall results of the personnel administration of Souphanouvong University was at a high level. When considering each aspect, the findings reveal that the highest aspect is the personnel management, followed by the selection aspect and development and the retirement aspect respectively. Specially, the findings show that

the planning aspect was at the high level and the highest item is organizing meetings of at administrative level and personnel administration, followed by the item about the needs for personnel and identifying the target personnel in consistency with the regulations and the item about improving the personnel administration. In terms of the selection aspect, the findings reveal a high level of practice. When considering closely, it was found that the most practiced item is identifying the conditions of applicants in terms of age, health, characteristics, and morality, followed appointing the committee for selection process, and using a variety of announcement channels. Regarding the management aspect, the findings show a high level of practice. The highest item is about issuing appointments for managing personnel according to position and qualification. Regarding the development aspect, the findings indicated a high level of practice. The highest item is encouraging staff to conduct research, publish, and disseminate research findings. In terms of maintenance, the findings indicated a high level of practice. What is interesting to note is that the provision of salary and social welfare, followed by the implementation of teacher fund policy, and developing professional experience. For the evaluation aspect, the findings illustrate a high level of practice. The highest item is about appointing the committee for work, followed by the evaluation of work and indicators respectively. With reference to the retirement aspect, the findings reveal a high level of practice. When considering closely, it can be noted that the retiring from work is considered highly practice, followed by proposing to leave work prior to meeting retirement criteria.

6. Conflict of interest

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any other authors and organizations regarding the material discussed and presented in this manuscript.

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Table 1: Demographic Information of respondents

	Items	(N = 324)	Percentage (100%)
Gender			
Female		109	33.60
Male		215	66.40

Age			
Less than 35 years	136	42.00	
35 - 45 years	167	51.50	
More than 45 years	21	6.50	
Education Qualification			
Bachelor degree	130	40.10	
Master degree	182	56.20	
Doctoral degree	12	3.70	
Work experience			
Less than 10 years	107	33.00	
11-20 years	202	62.30	
More than 21 years	15	4.70	
Responsibility			
Rector	0	0.00	
Vice-Rector	1	0.30	
Dean	2	0.60	
Vice-Dean	4	1.20	
Head: Offices, Institute, Centre and Library	2	0.60	
Deputy Head: Offices, Institute, Centre and Library	7	2.30	
Head of Departments	11	3.40	
Deputy Head of Department	28	8.60	
Head of Division	47	14.50	
Deputy Head of Division	47	14.50	
Head of Course Section	55	17.00	
Administrative and academic staff (without positions)	120	37.00	

Table 2. Results of Mean and Standard deviations regarding personnel administration

Description		S. D	Meaning
1	Planning	3.83	High
2	Selecting	3.96	High
3	Managing	3.97	High
4	Developing	3.95	High
5	Maintaining	3.60	High
6	Evaluating	3.63	High
7	Retiring	3.95	High
Total		3.83	0.54
			High