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Development of the proposed specific functional competency of HR officers in Thai government agencies

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Article Info

Abstract

This study aims to investigate prospective human resource officers' specific functional competencies and behavioral indicators in the public sector. This study used in-depth interviews with human resource management personnel within and outside the central human resource management agencies of the Thai public sector, and the data were analyzed using content analysis and confirmed by the Delphi technique. The results revealed that the prospective human resource officers' specific functional competencies and behavioral indicators were from the public sector. Moreover, the researcher suggests that the central human resource management agencies of the public sector can use the results of this study as a guideline in practice to enhance the potential of human resource officers, leading to higher professional standards in the Thai government's human resource management in the future.

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Introduction

Human resource officers were once compared to "Personnel Administrators" (Nigro & Nigro, 1981), whose roles include providing personal information to executives and implementing orders or acts using the rules and regulations of the central human resource management agencies (Wongsarasri, 1995). Thus, human resource officers' performance is determined by their specific tasks (Vitayaudom, 2014). When the national context changed, it affected the bureaucracy. The roles of human resource officers changed from being supporters in the agency to being responsible for work in human resource management (Alfes et al., 2010). They are also responsible for the success or failure of agencies. Consequently, the former roles are no longer needed. However, the new roles require knowledge, competencies, and skills in human resource management (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005), along with the ability to develop a concept and maintain a professional vision in human resource management to effectively drive work in line with the strategic plan of the agency. Competencies can be considered as characteristics hidden in an individual (Klendauer et al., 2012). These characteristics can drive an individual to achieve performance in the assigned tasks beyond the criteria or goals (McClelland, 1973).

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In Thai bureaucracy, the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) is the central human resource management agency of the public sector (Office of the Civil Service Commission [OCSC], 2017). It constitutes a policy maker in human resource management of the public sector, including positioning and compensation, human resource planning, recruitment, performance management and development, comprising human resource management under a human resource management framework. Those responsible for driving the policy are employees working in human resource management or as human resource officers (Sikora & Ferris, 2014). Policies include determining that all public servants must have core competencies with a specific competency to put people in the right job and encourage them to perform the assigned tasks, also known as functional competency (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). They are considered a key variable in determining approaches or effective human resource management models so that all public sectors can manage human resources in the same direction. Thus, to measure the potential of human resource officers, they could be evaluated by their knowledge level, skills and competencies expressed through their workplace behaviors (Yossomsak, 1994). Moreover, in the context of the public sector's central human resource management agencies, the roles of human resource officers should be identified. Regarding human resource management under the changing trends in Thailand, the public sector needs changes to enhance efficiency (Alford & Hughes, 2008). Additionally, the central human resource management agency of the public sector, or the OCSC, must establish human resource management in the public sector based on the relevant changes, driving the bureaucracy to compete effectively with other countries (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). Applying specific functional competencies to the agency can shift the conceptual framework, behaviors, beliefs and attitudes of people in the agency in the same direction to successfully drive the vision, mission and strategy according to the agency's goals. Indeed, specific functional competencies needed in performing duties in line with the direction of the roles of human resource management, which have been changed according to the shifted context of the country, were determined. Therefore, the researcher focused on studying human resource officers under the central human resource management agencies of the public sector and what specific functional competencies they need to design human resource management in the public sector, as well as developing knowledge level, skills and competencies in performing duties in line with the direction of the role of human resource management that has changed according to the context of the country that has shifted.

Literature Review

Competency

Competency can be used as a tool to determine the operational behavior of personnel in the organization. It can be regarded as a reflection through behaviors or minimum performance standards (Strebler et al., 1997), constituting a significant relationship (June & Mahmood, 2011). However, it could be considered that competency is like a standard that determines the knowledge level and skills necessary to perform tasks (Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006). Therefore, developing the competency of personnel in the organization is considered necessary to respond to shifts in the changing world that meet the conditions or needs of service users (Mohd-Noor & Dola, 2009). However, many government and private organizations are developing competency-based human resource management systems (HRM) to meet the needs of organizations based on core competencies that cover the vision and mission of the organization. Notably, the study on the concept of competency reflected the importance of competency. When any agency or organization uses competency to formulate an approach for human resource management, it results in the efficiency of each individual's work performance. It also comprises a chain reflecting the efficiency of the work and the organization as well (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003). Principles in building competency models for positions in organizations or the public sector can be used in many ways. It depends on the needs to determine the competency's direction of the organization. Therefore, scholars or the public sector have defined principles and competency models in many ways. Dave Ulrich (1997) explained that the organization with the potential to compete with others depends on the capabilities of the organization, consisting of skills, abilities, and expertise in the organization. A competency model is like a tool for organizational development. Therefore, skills, abilities and expertise in the organization affect the development of individuals' competencies, reflected in behavioral expressions developed into competency of the organization. When the organization has core competencies, it creates competitiveness among organizations. Therefore, identifying and using core competencies in operations must start from planning, integration in work tasks, working system improvement, and involvement in every step of the human resource process. Furthermore, Dave Ulrich also suggests that challenges in the development of a competency model in the future will cause major obstacles. Rastgoo (2016)

conducted a study on the Role of Human Resources Competency in Improving Management Performance. The results indicated a positive and significant relationship between structures of human resource competencies and performances of the managers of human resources in all the dimensions of competencies including knowledge level, attitudes, skills, characteristics and performance according to the competency framework.

Key Features of Indicators

The main features of indicators are to assess or reflect what is measured, whether quantitatively or qualitatively. Therefore, the key features of indicators are shown as follows (Johnstone, 1981):

1. Indicators must identify broad information about items or conditions in a study, and must be relatively accurate in forwarding information (Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research, 1998);

2. Indicators differ from variables. This is because indicators will reveal characteristics of what is being studied just like variables, but the difference is that variables provide information about items or conditions in a study only in one area without concluding all aspects, while indicators combine related variables and present them as a broad overview of items or conditions in a study;

3. Indicators must provide quantitative outputs, and reveal conditions in a study in the form of numerical values or quantities only, regardless of whether they are quantitative or qualitative. Indicators' values must be interpreted and compared with the criteria or standards in place at the time they were created;

4. Indicators reveal the values of items or conditions in a study at a specific time or over a specific period. Some indicators may provide information for a specific month or year, while other indicators may provide information on development or operational conditions over the past three or five years;

5. Indicators are the basic units from which to develop research theories.

Thus, indicators are variables or values expressed in characteristics or quantities in a study that can be compared. In this study, behavioral indicators were used to provide value or characterize what is measured in quantity or nature under the conditions of time and place (Hughes & Bartlett, 2022). Therefore, evaluating indicators were developed from the issues that need to be evaluated to know the situation in various issues. The development of indicators must be appropriate for the selected issues to ensure accuracy in the evaluation (Liakopoulou, 2011).

Methodology

Participants

The research sample consisted of 54 individuals from the central human resource management agencies of the Thai public sector. Key informants participated in in-depth interviews on prospective human resource officers' specific functional competencies for those working at the central human resource management agencies of the Thai public sector. The key informants were divided into four group. Group 1 comprised senior executives consisting of the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General. Group 2 included human resource officers comprised of the Director, Advisory, Expert, Senior Professional, Professional, and Practitioner Levels. Group 3 was composed of scholars with expertise in competency. Group 4 comprised human resource officers outside of the central human resource management agencies of the Thai public sector who have passed the High Performance and Potential System Program (HiPPS). Moreover, the New Wave Leader Development Program in the Thai Civil Service was used to acquire opinions on human resource officers' competencies.

Research Design

To achieve the study's main objectives, qualitative research was conducted on the prospective human resource officers' specific functional competencies and behavioral indicators of the public sector using a mixed method data collection to cover the content and the sample. Therefore, the Delphi technique was used to identify the results. The steps are shown below.

Step 1: In-depth interviews were conducted with the subjects about human resource officers' competencies.

Step 2: From in-depth interviews, content was analyzed to draw conclusions concerning prospective human resource officers' specific functional competencies in the central human resource management agencies of the Thai public sector. The data were systematically classified, categorized, and analyzed to obtain results as prospective human resource officers' competencies by looking for common features and keywords to draw theoretical conclusions.

Step 3: The Delphi technique was employed to identify (Linstone & Turoff, 1975) prospective human resource officers' specific functional competencies in the central human resource management agencies of the Thai public sector, and the researcher compiled them as competencies for seventeen experts to consider using questionnaires.

Step 4: A behavioral indicator was studied through documents based on a conceptual framework of competency and verified using the Delphi technique. After that, the researcher compiled them as a behavioral indicator for seventeen experts to consider using questionnaires.

Results

According to in-depth interview data from the four groups of key informants about specific functional competencies suitable for working at the OCSC, the interviews were synthesized into twenty-eight specific functional competencies in the public sector, namely, (1) conceptual thinking, (2) digital expertise and technology, (3) expertise in human resource management, (4) analytical thinking, (5) communication, (6) knowledge acquisition, (7) creativity, (8) consulting, (9) change agent, (10) teamwork, (11) management, (12) coordination, (13) presentation, (14) adaptability and flexibility, (15) integrity, (16) innovation, (17) good service, (18) networker, (19) problem solving and decision making, (20) strategic thinking, (21) negotiation, (22) strategic alliance, (23) difference acceptance, (24) critical assessment, (25) business acumen, (26) lifelong learning, (27) creative problem solving, and (28) interactive listening. This constituted the integration of open and unified opinions with reliability and accuracy from a group of experts or people with experience related to human resource officers' competency to confirm that human resource officers' specific functional competencies can appropriately be applied to OCSC. Moreover, questionnaires were used to collect data twice, and the difference between median and mode was analyzed. On all questions, the difference between median and mode was less than 1.00, meaning that the experts' opinions on human resource officers' specific functional competencies were consistent. Determining the interquartile range, quartile range, or quartile deviation, which is the difference between the first quartile and the third quartile, questions were found with a quartile deviation less than 1.50, meaning that the opinions of the experts on human resource officers' specific functional competencies were consistent.

After the study results on human resource officers' competencies were identified using the Delphi technique, human resource officers' behavioral indicators were studied through documents. Then the study results were synthesized as behavioral indicators of each human resource officer's competency. Moreover, competency was divided into five levels based on human resource officers' positions: practitioner level refers to the basic

level; professional level refers to the performance level; senior professional level refers to the development level; expert level refers to the advanced level and advisory level refers to the expert level. After that, the study results were identified using the Delphi technique twice. Therefore, the results of specific functional competency and behavioral indicators can be summarized below.

1. Conceptual thinking refers to systematic thinking leading to a conceptual framework or new concepts that are consistent with human resource management by identifying main ideas, summarizing patterns, linking, or applying knowledge for the benefits of situations, information, or attitudes. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person describes various internal and external factors affecting human resource management, explains situations linked to the impact on human resource management, and summarizes basic information on situations in the present that affect human resource management.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and applies information linked to human resource management with the explanation that the information received is deflective, incomplete, or can be linked to human resource management. The person is also expected to apply information from various situations linked to human resource management. Basic knowledge, regulations, rules, and guidelines can be used to categorize problems according to the context.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and applies complex theories or concepts. Moreover, the person proposes new theories or conceptual frameworks related to human resource management to adapt to the context, including applying knowledge from complex theories or conceptual frameworks from current and past situations to resolve problems related to human resource management.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and synthesizes knowledge, as well as explains or categorizes complex ideas or situations related to human resource management for easy understanding. Additionally, complex information, theories, concepts, and knowledge were synthesized and summarized for easy understanding of the benefits of the human resource management process.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors and creates new knowledge by considering or expressing opinions on various thinking processes that are beneficial to human resource management. Additionally, the person proposes and invents new methods or knowledge about human resource management.

2. Analytical thinking refers to understanding, identifying problems, and analyzing situations by categorizing issues into classes or step-by-step plans. This includes systematic classification, the comparison of various aspects, priority, timing, and cause and effect until the facts and opinions of problems are identified to be applied in human resource management. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person explains the situation and the problems related to human resource management, analyzes the situation, or classifies problems in human resource management into smaller parts. Moreover, the person determines the extent of the situation and desired outcomes from the analyzed data.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors, classified in categories or priorities, by specifying causes and effects in each situation or problem, including the impact on human resource management. The situation is classified based on the priority affecting human resource management and proposed approaches or activities to handle the situation or solve problems affecting human resource management under the assigned responsibility.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and plans to solve uncomplicated problems by explaining the relation of uncomplicated factors to problems or tasks related to human resource management from issues or situations. Further, the person provides examples of principles, theories, techniques, or basic analysis in classifying uncomplicated problems related to human resource management and analyzes steps and methods to solve uncomplicated problems related to human resource management in the organization.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and analyzes complicated problems by explaining the relation of complicated factors to problems or tasks in human resource management from issues or situations with other parties involved. The person clearly explains the complexity of human resource management problems to many stakeholders and classifies or analyzes complicated problems and the impact of planning, activities, procedures, and operating procedures affecting the human resource management process.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors and plans to solve complicated problems by using principles, theories, techniques, or advanced analytical methods related to human resource management to classify complicated problems or situations. Moreover, the person plans to solve complicated problems with other parties involved by explaining the cause and identifying solutions to problems affecting the human resource management process.

3. Consulting refers to providing knowledge, understanding, and academic information related to human resource management with the psychology of understanding others to advise sectors and personnel. Moreover, the person answers questions on various issues related to human resource management and effectively develops the consulting process. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person listens to essential information from those seeking advice without bias and instant judgment, collects information and accurately identifies issues or needs from those seeking advice regarding human resource management. Moreover, people asking for advice receive explanations, clarifications, and basic solutions.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and understands the problems or needs of those seeking advice more deeply by listening and identifying the cause of the problem or the needs of those seeking advice that is consistent with human resource management. In addition, the person analyzes, classifies, and identifies problems or needs of those seeking advice that is consistent with human resource management. This includes explaining or exemplifying approaches or alternatives regarding human resource management to meet the needs of those seeking advice.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and comes up with a variety of alternatives by offering good alternatives or methods for working on or solving problems based on regulations, rules, or approaches to human resource management in the sector. Additionally, the person explains the pros and cons of each alternative for those seeking advice to make decisions on human resource management wisely.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and advises on more complicated problems by reviewing difficult matters or situations that cannot be easily solved in human resource management. In addition, the person offers alternative solutions to complicated problems that are consistent with human resource management. This includes clarifying, explaining, and analyzing the pros and cons of each alternative before deciding.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors and advises on policies regarding human resource management by suggesting guidelines for solving problems for internal and external personnel. Furthermore, the person consults for other agencies in the private and public sectors concerning human resource management. This includes being able to advise and offer opinions on developing policies, systems, laws, and standards for solving problems in human resource management in the public sector.

4. Communication and coordination refer to the ability to use language in words and sentences through listening, speaking, reading, writing, gestures, tone, eye contact, or the use of objects, signs, and environments. Additionally, other expressions include the exchange of information, news, and opinions between people or agencies accurately and clearly regarding human resource management. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person describes the nature of communication and coordination regarding human resource management and summarizes needs in communication and coordination related to human resource management. Moreover, the person explains techniques, methods, and communication channels through various means, such as speaking, reading, and writing, using internal and external personnel and agencies.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and builds relationships with others and agencies both internally and externally. In addition, the person applies knowledge, techniques, methods, and communication channels by various means to communicate and coordinate regarding human resource management. This includes effectively summarizing goals and desired outcomes from communication and coordination without redundancy and being able to present information about less complicated human resource management.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors, analyzes data, and identifies issues related to communication affecting human resource management. Additionally, the person analyzes data, identifies issues regarding communication and coordination related to human resource management, and explains the meaning of items that need to be communicated and coordinated regarding human resource management. This includes offering communication channels or alternatives and coordinating to create awareness or knowledge for those involved in human resource management.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and maintains effective communication and coordination by creating and developing a communication and coordination model for benefits based on human resource management approaches, changing or improving communication and coordination methods to always meet needs. Moreover, the person provides opinions on communicating effectively and coordinating solutions to problems.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors as strategies in communication and policy by explaining or planning the strategy in communication and coordination related to human resource management by building cooperation with relevant agencies or network

partners. Further, the person expresses opinions or plans for communication and coordination in the human resource management process by considering the most appropriate roles of the public sector.

5. Expertise in Human Resource Management refers to interest, curiosity, knowledge, and competence in human resource management acquired through study, research, and self-development until one can apply a variety of academic and technological knowledge to work in the public sector to achieve results. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person can identify interesting issues regarding the current and future direction of human resource management and process new knowledge in human resource management by experimenting with new working methods of working to improve efficiency and knowledge.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and possesses knowledge and understanding of human resource management by applying laws, regulations, and new trends in human resource management to work or link work to other work to create efficiency. Moreover, the person identifies and summarizes problems or errors in human resource management by proposing basic solutions.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and advises and coaches human resource management by explaining and providing information to others to understand the processes and methods of work based on the principles of human resource management. Additionally, the person explains, advises, or answers questions from internal and external personnel and agencies to properly comply with the processes and methods of human resource management.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and links or creates a human resource management system by analyzing, expressing opinions, and proposing approaches for linking or creating operational processes according to human resource management. Further, the person manages human resources by continuously and effectively integrating deep and broad knowledge regarding human resource management. This includes revising approaches, measures, rules, and procedures in management and development in human resources to prepare and propose opinions to the Cabinet and committees.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behavior and supports the work of personnel in agencies with a focus on expertise in human resource management by transferring knowledge and experience, fostering a learning environment, and advising and consulting on human resource management techniques for internal and external personnel and agencies to clearly understand

and apply them. In addition, the person expresses opinions on human resource management or development or suggests directions, strategies, and missions to improve the human resource management system of the public sector with effectiveness, worthiness, quality, morality, and a high quality of life.

6. Knowledge acquisition refers to the desire and eagerness to constantly learn new knowledge or new sciences independently, using an open mind and a pure heart to share knowledge and experience gained in human resource management and other related fields. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person identifies self-interests, needs, and aptitudes regarding human resource management or other related fields. In addition, the person accesses those sources of information and knowledge.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and searches for knowledge for self-development using various development methods to achieve the goal of human resource management. Additionally, the person explains the goals, directions, and guidelines for self-development in accordance with human resource management.

- Development Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and seeks knowledge for self-development by describing the source of knowledge to improve and develop works in human resource management to make the process more efficient. Moreover, the person seeks knowledge in human resource management and other related fields in addition to routine tasks assigned. This includes applying and linking what has been learned to improve the work's performance in human resource management.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors that are transferred to others by conveying what has been learned or what has been discovered to internal and external personnel and agencies for the benefit of self-development, job development, or agency development. Further, the person studies, researches, and accumulates knowledge or interdisciplinary studies as approaches for officers or those interested in applying them for their own benefit.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors and uses knowledge to develop policies and structures by bringing new knowledge and sciences to create visions and policies for future human resource management. Further, the person brings new knowledge and sciences to integrate or exchange with other agencies to develop knowledge or practice guidelines on human resource management. This includes applying new knowledge and sciences regarding human resource management to support the organization's vision.

7. Change agent refers to the intention and ability to drive personnel in the organization to create a need for change regarding human resource management for the organization's benefit and communicate to others to know, understand, and make the change happen. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person explains the need for change or adjusting working behaviors according to changes in the organization regarding human resource management both internally and externally. Also, the person explains the impact of the change and how to adapt to the change.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and communicates with others to build an understanding of the need for change by explaining the need and the expected benefits from the change. Furthermore, the person supports them when the change in the new approach to human resource management occurs.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and makes others aware of the need for change by taking the first step in stimulating and motivating others to recognize the importance of change in new approaches related to human resource management and other related fields. Additionally, the person analyzes, explains, and compares the difference between the current situation and the goals of change in human resource management approaches and other related approaches.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and acts as the one to plan, manage, and facilitate such change by explaining or pointing out the benefits of change to systematically formulate planning in various fields, including human resource management. In addition, the person plans activities and priorities to create change, allocates sufficient resources for change, and monitor the performance at each step to resolve problems effectively.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors as a vision for developing the agency by driving change in human resource management and other related fields to operate and achieve sustainable success effectively. Moreover, the person builds confidence or courage to drive effective change according to human resource management approaches. This includes creating and managing change based on complicated human resource management approaches affecting policy making or a national human resource management plan.

8. Adaptability and flexibility refer to the ability to adapt to diverse situations and groups of people. This includes accepting the opinions of others and changing the method when the situation in the human resource management environment and other related

situations have changed while effectively maintaining the goal. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person can adapt to and accept difficult working situations that might not be helpful to their performance in human resource management.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and shifts the way to work with an explanation. In addition, the person offers relevant views on the changes in human resource management and other related fields affecting operations by listening to and understanding the opinions of others concerning the changes that occur.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and applies proper rules, regulations, principles, and methods by analyzing human resource management situations and applying proper rules and regulations based on the situation to achieve the objectives of the human resource management of the agency.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and modifies the steps and methods of the agency based on the situation by adjusting rules, regulations, and procedures to be up-to-date and consistent with the human resource management process to boost operational efficiency. Additionally, the person modifies methods of working or procedures according to the situation and prior goals, monitoring and evaluating the results of the changes in the methods of working or procedures, and developing standardized methods or procedures in human resource management.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors and structural/policy modification by modifying structures, working plans, strategy plans, goals, projects, or work procedures in human resource management to be appropriate and consistent with the situation of the agency. Moreover, the person plans or jointly implements various human resource management strategies based on the situation by integrating strategic projects of the public sector at the ministry level, monitoring and evaluating overall results, and achieving goals and targets.

9. Integrity refers to proper behavior according to the law, morality, professional ethics, and civil servant ethics to retain the dignity of being a civil servant. The behavioral indicators include:

- Basic Level: A person knows about rules, disciplines of civil servants, professional ethics, and ethical standards of the agency and explains them to others to understand. In addition, the person identifies laws, rules, and regulations in the performance of human resource management and explains them to others to understand as well.

- Doing Level: A person expresses basic level behaviors and complies with regulations, the disciplines of civil servants, professional ethics, and active ethics standards by behaving and performing duties with honesty and without discrimination according to the law. Additionally, the person behaves and performs duties according to the disciplines of civil servants, keeping promises, being truthful and reliable, and expressing opinions based on professional principles with transparency.

- Developing Level: A person expresses doing level behaviors and does not make mistakes or commit corruption when given the opportunity or persuaded by adhering to the principles, professional ethics, and civil servant ethics. The person does not deviate due to bias or benefits or dare to take responsibility while also sacrificing personal happiness for the benefit of the public sector.

- Advanced Level: A person expresses developing level behaviors and adheres to the truth by retaining the interests of the public sector even in difficult situations caused by the human resource management process, including the courage to perform duties with rightness and justice even when it may cause dissatisfaction among the disadvantaged.

- Expert Level: A person expresses advanced level behaviors and is committed to justice by protecting the interests and reputation of the organization and the nation in the right way, even in situations where the human resource management process may jeopardize job security or life.

Discussion

The purpose of the study concerning specific functional competencies and behavioral indicators of prospective public sector human resource officers was to identify the knowledge level, skills, and attitudes of human resource officers working in Thailand's central human resource management agencies to prepare for raising the potential of human resource officers to a higher level until becoming a professional standard in human resource management. From the results of this study and the use of in-depth interviews and identification using the Delphi technique, nine necessary competencies were identified for the operation of the central human resource management agencies. This study had a starting point that was consistent with the study by Rastgoo (2016) on "The Role of Human Resources Competency in Improving Management Performance." The results of the study found that the performance of human resource managers was related to knowledge, attitudes, skills, and attributes based on the competency framework. Therefore, this study on competency reflected the readiness for changes to occur among prospective human resource officers.

The OCSC had determined job competency within the OCSC in the position of human resource officers. Altogether, four competencies consisted of analytical thinking, conceptual thinking, persuasion, and validation. From the results of this study, with the use of in-depth interviews and identification using the Delphi technique, nine competencies were necessary for the operation of the central human resource management agencies, namely, conceptual thinking, analytical thinking, consulting, communication and coordination, expertise in human resources management, knowledge acquisition, change agents, adaptability and flexibility, and integrity, which are in line with the two original competencies of the Office of the OCSC, consisting of conceptual thinking and analytical thinking. It emphasized that human resource officers must be able to conceptualize ideas and think analytically. Due to being the central human resource management agency of the public sector, the agency must formulate human resource management policies to cover various public sectors. It became necessary to understand various issues until being able to synthesize them as new approaches or frameworks in human resource management, which can be applied or linked to the different situations of each public sector under the same human resource management framework. This finding was consistent with that of the study by Ramlall (2006) on Identifying and Understanding HR Competencies and Their Relationship to Organizational Practices, with the objectives of determining whether competency determines success in the HR profession in different contexts and at each level of the HR position and examining the relationship between specific competencies and responsibilities of professional human resource officers linked to experiences in human resource management, competencies and compensation. The results revealed that human resource management specialists had competency in conceptual thinking about human resource management and were able to think analytically about issues related to human resource management within the organization. Therefore, conceptual thinking and analytical thinking were not new competencies but original competencies that were necessary for human resource officers working in the OCSC.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Human resource officers in the public sector's central human resource management agencies play a role in other public sectors. They must design the public sector's human resource management and develop knowledge, skills, and competencies in performing duties in line with the direction of the role of human resource management that has shifted due to the country's changing context. Further, they should use the results of this study as guidelines to enhance the potential of human resource officers as professionals, leading to higher professional standards in the government's human resource management in the future.

According to the results, and from the perspective of human resource officers, nine specific functional competencies were acknowledged for human resource officers working at the OCSC. If they were to be identified as nine specific functional competencies for human resource officers, they might appear too numerous. Therefore, competencies can be divided into levels to suit each position level of human resource officers, or a competency might cover all position levels. Responsibilities may be used to divide competencies as discussed below.

- Human resource officers, practitioner level, work as entry-level practitioners that require academic knowledge to work in human resource management or development under supervision, recommendation, monitoring, and other tasks as assigned. They must have competencies at the position level, namely (1) knowledge acquisition, and (2) adaptability and flexibility, and mutual core competencies at all levels, namely (1) expertise in human resource management, and (2) integrity.

- Human resource officers at the professional level work as highly experienced practitioners or are assigned to work as supervisors. In doing so, it requires knowledge, skills and experience in human resource management or development to make decisions or solve problems. They must have competencies at the position level, namely (1) communication and coordination, and (2) consulting, as well as mutual core competencies at all levels, namely (1) expertise in human resource management, and (2) integrity.

- Human resource officers, at the senior professional level, work as supervisors responsible for supervising, suggesting and monitoring the performance of their coworkers by using knowledge, skills, experience and very high expertise in human resource management or development to make decisions or solve problems. They must have competencies at the position level, namely (1) analytical thinking, and (2) change agents, as well as mutual core competencies at all levels, namely (1) expertise in human resource management, and (2) integrity.

- Human resource officers, at the expert level, work as personnel with expertise in the job or give advice to the

public sector, such as ministries or departments, using knowledge, skills, experience, and expertise in human resource management or development or being assigned to tasks requiring decision-making or solving difficult and very complicated academic problems with a broad impact. They must have competencies at the position level, namely (1) conceptual thinking, and (2) change agents, as well as mutual core competencies at all levels, namely (1) expertise in human resource management, and (2) integrity.

    - Human resource officers, at the advisory level, work as senior practitioners and advise public sectors, such as ministries, by possessing knowledge, skills, experience, and internationally accepted works in human resource management as well as performing tasks requiring decision-making or solving difficult and complicated academic problems with a broad impact at the ministry or national policy level. They must have the following competencies for the position: (1) conceptual thinking, and (2) consulting and mutual core competencies at all levels including (1) expertise in human resource management, and (2) integrity.

Conflict of Interest

    The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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