



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Experience in developing human resources for market surveillance and lessons learned for the South Central Coast, Vietnam

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 21(01), 2125–2130

Publication history: Received on 09 December 2023; revised on 18 January 2024; accepted on 20 January 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.21.1.0148>

Abstract

Human resources are always regarded as a crucial key with determining characteristics for the success of an organization. Therefore, the development of human resources is an important task that needs attention in any organization, particularly in the current context of the Vietnamese civil service. The human resources responsible for market surveillance in the South Central Coast are a vital part of the public service workforce in Vietnam. The significant role of this workforce in minimizing fraudulent trade practices and contributing to market stability cannot be denied, especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, during their operations, the human resources for market surveillance in the South Central Coast reveal many limitations in both quantity and quality. Based on the research and experience in developing human resources market surveillance in similar regions in Vietnam, this study draws lessons and insights for the future development of human resources market surveillance in the South Central Coast.

Keywords: Developing human resources; Market surveillance; South Central Coast; Vietnam

1. Introduction

The market surveillance force operates with high specificity, wielding significant authority and responsibility, yet maintains a level of independence, even individuality. Therefore, overseeing and managing this force requires self-awareness from officials and public servants in market surveillance; the seriousness of organizational commitment; the exemplary behavior of leaders, both individual and collective; the leadership and guidance of local government authorities; and the supervision of the public.

In recent years, recognizing the importance of market surveillance human resources, the market surveillance Sub-departments in the South Central Coast have been attentive to developing and enhancing the quality of this workforce to meet administrative reform requirements. Annually, these sub-departments send a considerable number of state officials to participate in training and development programs, both domestically and internationally. Simultaneously, there are policies encouraging and motivating the market surveillance officials to actively engage in continuous learning, self-improvement, and further education to constantly enhance their knowledge and capabilities. Thanks to these measures, the competence and skills of market surveillance officials have been significantly elevated.

After a period of research, it is observed that a segment of public servants in the Market surveillance Sub-departments of the South Central Coast has been standardized in terms of knowledge, aligning with their official ranks and assigned tasks. However, there remains a group of officials who do not meet the requirements in terms of skills and attitudes. The number of officials is also insufficient to meet the workload demands. Therefore, the development of market

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surveillance human resources is crucial, particularly drawing insights from the experiences of equivalent regions. This will serve as a foundation for recruitment, training, and development of administrative personnel to better fulfill their duties, contributing to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of state administrative management and, specifically, market surveillance activities.

2. Material and methods

Secondary data was collected from the Administrative Organization Department in the sub-departments of various provinces, including documents and other materials sourced from books, newspapers, reports from departments and agencies, as well as summaries of market surveillance activities. Additionally, references were made to materials available on the internet. The study utilized descriptive and comparative statistical methods to assess the strengths and limitations in the development of human resources for regional market surveillance. The aim is to draw valuable lessons and experiences for the South South Central Coast.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Experience in developing human resources for market surveillance

3.1.1. In the Southeast Region

The Southeast Region comprises six provinces: Ho Chi Minh City, Tay Ninh, Binh Phuoc, Binh Duong, Dong Nai, and Ba Ria - Vung Tau. It not only plays a pivotal role as the nucleus of the Southern Key Economic Zone but also holds a particularly crucial position in the overall development of the country. As of 2020, the total product scale in the region increased 4.9 times compared to 2005, contributing 32% to the national total income and 44.7% to the total state budget revenue. The per capita income in 2020 for the region was the highest nationwide (Nha Man, 2022) [1].

Among them, Ho Chi Minh City is the largest economic, financial, commercial, scientific and technological, and innovation hub in both the region and the country. In recent times, the situation of producing and trading counterfeit, prohibited, smuggled goods, and fraudulent trade has become more complex after the Covid-19 pandemic, with activities taking more sophisticated and harder-to-detect forms. Particularly, the sale of goods with unclear origins, smuggled goods, and low-quality products through online platforms and social media is on the rise, making it difficult to control.

The Market surveillance Sub-department in the Southeast has intensified surveillance and territorial management efforts, coordinating with relevant authorities under the coordination framework to promptly detect and address violations. The department continues to collaborate effectively with departments and sectors to inspect specialized areas. These achievements are attributed to the leadership of the Market surveillance Sub-department in each province, particularly emphasizing the development of human resources for market surveillance .

The Market surveillance Sub-departments in the Southeast are among the leading units in the country in developing and enhancing the quality of their market surveillance workforce. One of the consistently prioritized policies is the attraction and utilization of high-quality human resources for positions within the department. Emphasis on career advancement based on political task completion results is applied in the form of competitive recruitment for leadership and management positions to increase competitiveness and create opportunities for young officials to demonstrate their capabilities. Furthermore, the Market surveillance Sub-departments in the Southeast Region frequently collaborate with the Central Business Administration Training School and the Internal Affairs Department to organize training courses, fostering specialized knowledge, and skill development according to job titles and positions.

In addition, to innovate the training of officials, the Market surveillance Sub-departments in the Southeast have implemented a comprehensive set of solutions related to training management, such as:

- Establishing a periodic examination cycle for officials to assess their capacities (typically every 3 to 5 years).
- Determining the number of officials by profession within the agency.
- Specifying the types of degrees and certificates for each job title.
- Developing regulations to guide training programs aimed at improving qualifications, specialized skills, and, especially, the practical execution of duties. This approach aims to prevent situations where promotions are solely based on formal qualifications and degrees, ensuring alignment with the standards of job titles and professional ranks.

Reorganizing the team of officials according to the requirements of enhancing quality, streamlining administrative structure, and meeting the strategic development demands for the 2020-2025 economic and social development phase. This aims to ensure a reasonable composition among leadership positions, management roles, professional ranks, and levels of officials, as well as considering age groups, geographical locations, gender, ethnicities, and job sectors. The objective is to address the imbalances in terms of surplus and shortages in the workforce.

Initiating a profound transformation in the training and development of officials in accordance with the planned hierarchy and title standards. Emphasis is placed on fostering and updating new knowledge for leadership and management officials. Strengthening and improving the quality of the training and development system for officials.

Implementing personnel planning with the principles of "Dynamic" and "Open." Annually reviewing, supplementing, or removing officials from the plan who no longer meet the standards or conditions. Adding new elements to the plan to ensure a continuous, inheritable, and sustainable leadership and management workforce at the departmental, divisional, and bureau levels across generations. This ensures an adequate quantity and meets the quality requirements.

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Developing recruitment and training plans, as well as plans for implementing mobilization and changing work locations for officials holding leadership positions in departments and divisions. Ensuring key officers at the team level do not stay in one position or location for too long to overcome subjective satisfaction leading to conservatism, authoritarianism, and favoritism.

Annually reviewing and transitioning work positions according to the regulations specified in Decree No. 158/2007/ND-CP dated October 27, 2007 [2], by the Government, which outlines the list of work positions and periodic transition deadlines for officials and civil servants. Decree No. 150/2013/ND-CP dated November 01, 2013 [3], amended and supplemented some provisions of Decree No. 158/2007/ND-CP [4], aiming to prevent corruption, limit negative behaviors, and unleash the potential of officials in new positions.

Thanks to the implementation of these comprehensive measures, currently, the Market surveillance Sub-department in Ho Chi Minh City has more than 90% of its officials meeting the specialized qualifications according to the regulations of the Ministry of Home Affairs, while the Market surveillance Sub-department in Binh Duong province has over 85% of officials meeting the standard. The overall quality of the workforce has been enhanced, better meeting the requirements and tasks of the market surveillance forces

3.2. In the Red River Delta Region

The Red River Delta region comprises 11 provinces and cities: Hanoi, Hai Phong, Quang Ninh, Hai Duong, Hung Yen, Bac Ninh, Vinh Phuc, Thai Binh, Nam Dinh, Ninh Binh, and Ha Nam. The Red River Delta is a strategically important area in terms of politics, economy, culture, society, environment, defense, security, and foreign affairs. It is considered a region with significant economic development potential but also presents complexities in market surveillance.

In recent times, the Market surveillance Department in the provinces of the Red River Delta region has consistently strived to fulfill its missions promptly. This includes detecting and combating smuggling activities, preventing the illegal transportation of goods across borders, through sea routes, and leveraging e-commerce activities and express delivery services provided by postal enterprises to trade and transport prohibited goods, counterfeit goods, and items that violate intellectual property rights. The department conducts rigorous inspections, identifies, and handles organized groups, as well as individuals who mastermind these activities, to prevent the formation of smuggling networks and the unauthorized transportation of goods within the province.

To meet the requirements and tasks of stabilizing the market, promoting socio-economic development in the new phase of market-oriented economy and international economic integration, in recent years, the Market surveillance Departments have focused on implementing various measures to enhance the quality of the workforce. This ensures that officials are well-versed in professional skills, understand all market dynamics, and maintain transparency in inspecting and controlling the circulation of goods, as well as handling violations in commercial activities. This contributes to stabilizing the market, ensuring social welfare, and protecting the legal rights and interests of individuals, business organizations, and consumers.

In the Market surveillance Departments of the Red River Delta region, officials and staff must possess high-level professional knowledge. These departments in the Red River Delta region pay significant attention to training and developing the skills of market surveillance officials. Therefore, newly recruited officials and staff are required to undergo training courses to enhance their professional competence.

Training programs include:

- Long-term training: consisting of courses lasting 2 months or more, primarily providing theoretical foundations for new officials entering the profession.
- Short-term training: directly equipping knowledge for specific job tasks.
- Distance learning: (both short-term and long-term) providing advanced knowledge in market surveillance for officials working remotely.

The Market surveillance Departments in the Red River Delta region also emphasize the recognition and implementation of policies for officials and staff. Annual evaluations are conducted, assessing the results of task completion, the qualities of officials and staff, training, and selection of officials are based on criteria, focusing on political qualities, ethics, and capabilities of officials and staff.

In addition, regarding the task of developing and enhancing the competence of the Market surveillance Department personnel, the Market surveillance Departments in the Red River Delta region pay great attention to skills training to supplement professionalism in their work. This includes knowledge in areas such as information technology, foreign languages, state management, economic management, etc. After the theoretical programs, practical training is organized through competitions, such as document drafting contests or language exchange events, fostering habits of English communication in the workplace.

The Market surveillance Departments in the Red River Delta region are also taking a proactive step by preparing to build a high-quality workforce by selecting students while they are still in secondary education. These students must have outstanding academic achievements and participate in and achieve awards in national and international student competitions. If these students voluntarily commit to long-term service for the city, they will be provided with full funding for training at high-quality domestic and international institutions. This represents a unique policy in the strategic development of human resources.

Furthermore, with a serious and thorough spirit to implement the contents of Directive No. 14/CT-BCT dated September 4, 2012 [5], of the Ministry of Industry and Trade on implementing several measures to enhance the quality and efficiency of public service activities of the Market surveillance Department officials, aiming to deeply instill and improve the sense of responsibility, rectify conduct, attitude, working methods, and enhance the professional competence of the Market surveillance Department officials, the Market surveillance Departments in the Red River Delta region have implemented and disseminated this Directive throughout the entire Department. Each official is expected to grasp and fully understand the purposes and requirements stated in the Directive for effective implementation.

The Market surveillance Departments in the Red River Delta region regularly focus on political education, ideology for public servants. They organize training sessions with the theme "Cultivating proper conduct, refining cultural behavior" to conduct training comprehensively across the workforce. The goal is to further enhance the sense of responsibility for assigned tasks, rectify conduct, working methods, and attitudes in inspection, control, and handling. This effort aims to elevate the level of political ideology, professional competence, and professional ethics, creating a powerful transformation in quality to meet the requirements and tasks in the current situation, and building a friendly and trustworthy image of the market surveillance force in the eyes of society.

In the management and operation of the market surveillance offices in the Red River Delta Region, the leadership has focused on reviewing, improving, and strictly enforcing the internal regulations, working procedures, performance criteria, and rules of conduct when performing duties by the officials and public servants of the Market surveillance Department. The department has also issued inspection plans for internal affairs and conducted regular or unscheduled inspections of the official duties of officials and Market surveillance Teams to rectify, prevent, detect, and promptly handle any legal violations.

3.3. The lesson learned from the development of human resources for market surveillance in the South Central Coast

Based on the research on the experience of developing human resources for market surveillance in the provinces of the South Central and Red River Delta, the author draws lessons for the market surveillance sub-departments in the South Central Coast as follows:

Firstly, enhance awareness for the team, officials, especially the leadership team at all levels, and sectors about the role and impact of training, fostering officials to make necessary efforts and specific measures to improve the quality and effectiveness of this work. Accurate and sufficient understanding of the role, importance, strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of state management for the development of human resources in market surveillance .

Secondly, recruitment and attraction work should be carried out through fair and transparent competitions, openly as a key factor in finding talented market surveillance officials for the provinces. Research should be conducted to establish an independent recruitment agency with practical tests through essays, multiple-choice exams, and direct interviews.

Thirdly, there should be a reasonable training and development plan to improve the competency of human resources, building a management and use regime in a way that attracts high-quality human resources through a combination of recruitment exams and prioritizes local recruitment to solve employment issues for local residents. Initial and long-term training courses should be organized, followed by a focus on short-term training courses for capacity building within the jurisdiction of the Market surveillance Department. Training and development activities need to start immediately upon recruitment through on-the-job training, as well as organizing focused training courses in which theoretical content should only account for 30-50%. Training should be conducted regularly with different non-repetitive content, with the goal of improving and meeting the capacity requirements of the job rather than achieving degrees or certificates. During the training period, learners should be released from their current duties. Training should be carried out based on a planned framework, decentralized through specialized training units or national civil service training institutions, and should continuously absorb scientific and technological knowledge and management from abroad. Strengthening training and skill development for human resources, especially the skills needed to manage regional markets. Organize courses related to management skills, effective communication, and problem-solving.

Fourthly, the use and appointment of personnel should have incentives for those who strive for advancement. In cases where, after a certain period of 3-5 years, they cannot advance, they should be encouraged to give up their position to others who are more competent and experienced candidates from the local ethnic minority areas after passing the exams will take over. The evaluation of officials should be valued to ensure transparency with clear criteria. Optimize the allocation of talent resources between provinces and sectors.

Fifthly, there should be reasonable and fair treatment, commensurate with the work capacity. Pay attention to cultural needs, team spirit, timely encouragement for individuals who contribute a lot to the Department. Salary and benefits policies for market surveillance officials should follow the market, ensuring fairness with the salary level of the civil service in the civilian sector, as well as being suitable for the economic development situation. There should be a separate policy of high salaries for exceptional talents, high-ranking and high-responsibility positions.

Finally, maintain strict management, supervision, and reward-punishment regimes for officials; conduct annual inspections and evaluations rigorously, according to specific standards to detect talent, promote and use them. For transfers or resignations, apply strictly to those who do not meet the standards or violate regulations. On the other hand, this is an opportunity for officials to reflect on themselves, promote strengths, and address limitations and weaknesses...

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4. Conclusion

People are considered a crucial and foremost factor in the development of every nation, every ethnic group, and every business/organization. In the current era of fierce market competition, for businesses to survive and achieve sustainable development, it is essential to prioritize the capacity of executing official duties by public servants at market surveillance offices. Research has explored the experience in developing human resources for market surveillance in

neighboring regions, drawing lessons to enhance both the quantity and quality of the market surveillance workforce in the coastal provinces of Central Vietnam.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of Conflict of interest

No Conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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