



# FACTORS AFFECTING WORK MOTIVATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN THUA THIEN HUE PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the factors affecting the motivation of civil servants at the People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province. The authors processed the data collected from 181 officers at the study site using SPSS with other techniques such as descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, Exploratory Factor Analysis, and Multivariate Regression Analysis. The results show that 6 factors affect the motivation of officers, including (i) Working conditions, (ii) Nature of work, (iii) Career development opportunities, (iv) Income and benefits, (v) Relationship with leaders, and (vi) Relationships with colleagues. On the basis of the results, the authors proposed three solutions to improve the work motivation at the study site.

**Keywords:** work motivation, civil servants, Thua Thien Hue, People's Committee

## 1 Introduction

Work motivation is one of the factors determining the productivity and business efficiency of enterprises [19], as well as the productivity and efficiency of the public sector [15]. However, the public sector with nearly a lifetime working regime, operating by the state budget, closely tied to hierarchy and authority is a region that is prone to stagnation in work, excessive bureaucracy, and psychological dependence [12].

Besides, in recent years, brain drain situation has become more and more widespread as many highly qualified civil servants moved from the public sector to the private sector in many industries and different areas. This situation may be due to a lack of conditions to motivate in the public work environment as well as many other obstacles.

Recognizing their importance in the state administrative apparatus, the People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province (TT-Hue) with 1,324 civil servants always respects and uses effective human resources, and is interested in finding solutions to improve work motivation of civil servants [29]. However, in recent years, the civil servants working at TT-Hue

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Provincial People's Committee still have certain imperfections such as stagnation, private work during working hours, not well complying with the rules of organization [5]. More importantly, these officers lack work motivation to accomplish their job with the highest productivity and efficiency. Therefore, the study of factors affecting the motivation of civil servants is always necessary to promote the working ability of this team.

## **2 Overview of studies, theoretical framework and method**

### **2.1 Overview of studies**

Many domestic and foreign authors have carried out research related to work motivation for employees in general and civil servants in particular. Teck-Hong and Waheed [27] studied the factors affecting work motivation on the basis of a survey with employees in Malaysia. In this work, the authors proposed a research model based on Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory from 1959. From the data collected from 152 questionnaires, they demonstrated the importance of "working conditions" and "recognition" that affect employees' work motivation. Besides, they found that the "maintenance" factors are more effective than the "motivating" factors in motivating employees.

Barzoki et al. [1] conducted research on factors affecting employees' work motivation on the basis of the two-factor theory by Herzberg et al. [10]. The study used the stratified random sampling method, surveying 147 out of 640 employees working at organizations. The authors' research model includes 7 factors: (1) Salary, (2) Personal life, (3) Working conditions, (4) Relationship with management, (5) Relationship with colleagues, (6) Organizational policy, and (7) Work safety.

Safiullah [3] conducted research on employee motivation and the most influential factors regarding employee motivation in Bangladesh. The research model is mainly based on the studies by Herzberg et al. [10], Linder [20], and Hossain et al. [14]. Accordingly, the author's research model includes (1) Salary and other financial incentives, (2) Career development opportunities, (3) Relationship with colleagues, (4) Feeling valuable work, (5) Safety at work, (6) Good working environment, (7) Flexible working hours and (8) Interesting and challenging work.

Suong [15] conducted research to identify factors affecting work motivation at the People's Committee Office of Ho Chi Minh City. The author conducted a survey of all 215 civil servants working at the Office. Her research model was based on Kovach's model of ten motivating factors [18] and then adjusted to six factors to suit the study area. The results show that five of the six factors affect the motivation of civil servants at the Office.

Loc [11] conducted a study that aims to analyze the factors affecting work motivation of cadres, civil servants, and officials in Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City. The author conducted

an empirical investigation from the opinions of 250 officials and civil servants and 36 key officials at 13 state management units, 10 administrative units, and 13 wards in the District. The theoretical framework proposed by the author is based on Maslow demand tower [21] and has been adjusted and supplemented to suit the research subjects of Vietnamese officials and public employees. The results show that four factors, namely “The interest and recognition of leaders and colleagues”, “Public relationship”, “Nature of work”, “Opportunities for learning and advancement” have a positive impact on the employee motivation.

Overall, previous studies often use the model based on Herzberg’s two-factor theory to assess factors affecting employees’ work motivation. However, some studies have limitations concerning non-random sampling, which weakens the universality of research results. In this study, the authors focus on building a model comprising factors that affect work motivation for employees at TT-Hue Provincial People’s Committee on the basis of Herzberg’s theory with an adjustment and supplementation (adding some observed variables through group discussions). The authors also conduct a stratified random sampling (based on the list of civil servants at agencies under TT-Hue Province) to ensure the universality of the results.

## 2.2 Theoretical framework

### The concept of work motivation

Work motivation has been studied for a long time by scientists. They study this field with many famous theories, such as Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg’s two-factor theory, Stacy Adams’ fair theory, and Victor Vroom’s expectation theory. These theories consider work motivation for workers and employees at different angles and approaches.

According to Herzberg et al. [10], work motivation is the desire and willingness of workers to increase efforts towards achieving organizational goals. In order to be motivated to work, employees must be first satisfied with their own needs. The desire to satisfy needs will motivate them to achieve their goals. Therefore, in order to motivate employees, managers must first consider their needs to enable the employees to strive to meet them [31].

Robbins & Judge [26] maintain that work motivation is understood as the willingness to express the high level of effort to reach the goals of the organization on the basis of satisfying individual needs. This view is also acknowledged by Antomioni [2] when he claims that the efforts of people willing to do their job depend on the extent to which they feel their motivation needs will be satisfied. In another aspect, Koontz et al. [17] define work motivation as factors that motivate people to do their jobs well. Motivation is a means by which contradictory needs can be reconciled or prioritized over other needs.

On the whole, motivation can be viewed as a source of personal desires to satisfy their needs. Organizations have to identify motivational and stimulating factors to satisfy employees to encourage them to do their jobs best.

### **Theories of work motivation**

There are many theories about work motivation due to different approaches to motivation. However, it can be said that all the doctrines come to a general conclusion that increasing motivation for employees will lead to improved labor performance and achieving organizational goals.

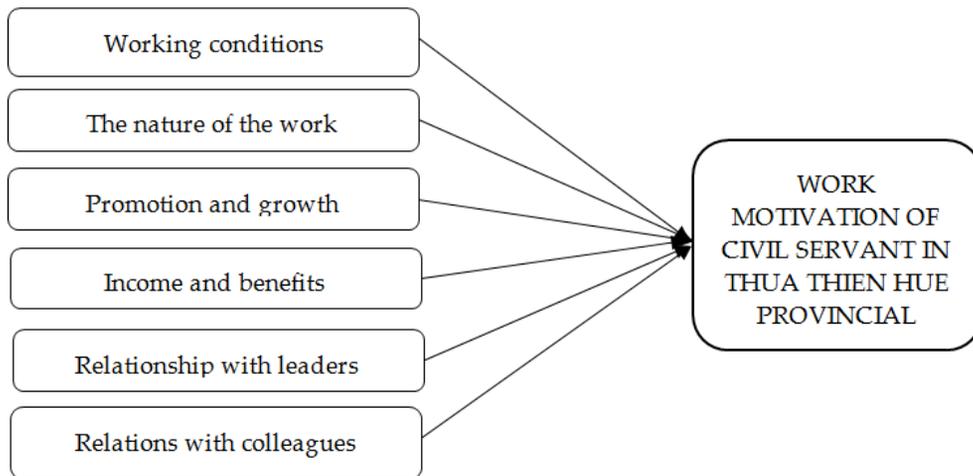
Herzberg's two-factor theory has been applied by many applied scientists such as Safiullah, Barzoki et al., and Teck-Hong and Waheed. Herzberg argues that the "Maintenance" factors and "Motivating" factors primarily affect employee motivation. "Maintenance" factors prevent the loss of motivation, while "Motivating" factors bring satisfaction and motivation [23].

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: According to Maslow [21], human behavior stems from the desire to satisfy individual needs. Human needs are divided into 5 levels from lowest (most urgent) to highest (less urgent), including (i) Biological and Physiological needs, (ii) Safety needs, (iii) Belongingness and Love needs, (iv) Esteem needs, (v) Self-Actualization needs. Next, Kovach's motivation theory [18] develops a questionnaire consisting of ten motivational factors on the basis of the research conducted by The Labor Relations Institute of New York in 1946. These ten factors include (1) Full appreciation of work done, (2) Feeling of being in on things, (3) Sympathetic help with personal problems, (4) Job security, (5) Good wages, (6) Interesting work, (7) Promotion and growth in organization, (8) Personal loyalty to employees, (9) Good working conditions, and (10) Tactful discipline.

## **2.3 Methods**

### **Qualitative methods**

First of all, the authors use qualitative research to adjust the observed variables of the scales of measurement to better suit the subjects and study areas in TT-Hue province. Group discussion (10 civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee) and consult experts were used to build the research model and hypotheses. Accordingly, the research model based on Herzberg's work motivation theory has been proposed (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The proposed research model

Source: Suggested by author group

Research concepts and hypotheses are presented as follows:

**Working conditions:** This can be understood as the workplace status of TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee. Working conditions are those affecting the health and convenience of public servants at work. This factor is used in Herzberg's model, Ayesha Binte Safiullah's research, Barzoki et al., and Teck-Hong & Waheed's papers. When civil servants are able to work in a comfortable environment, full of equipment, clean and comfortable working places, they will partly satisfy their needs. This is an important factor to motivate officers to get better work performance. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is *Working conditions positively affect the work motivation of civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee.*

**The nature of the work:** This concept shows diversity, creativity, challenges and creates opportunities to use and promote personal skills in work [24]. According to Hackman & Oldham [8], arranging work in a reasonable manner will motivate satisfaction and work efficiency from within the employees. Meanwhile, Vy [24] shows that the nature of work has a significant impact on the motivation of full-time employees in Ho Chi Minh City. This factor is also used in Herzberg's model, and by Loc, Suong, and Teck-Hong & Waheed. Hence, hypothesis H2 is *The nature of work will positively impact the motivation of civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee.*

**Promotion and growth opportunity:** This can be expressed through the process of training and promotion at the organization. According to Oosthuizen [25], career development opportunity is a motivating factor and a great encouragement. This study indicates that this is an important factor in whether employees are satisfied. Meanwhile, Bassi & Buren [4] argue that organizations recognize that providing career development opportunities is the key to

stimulating incentives and retaining key human resources for the company. This factor is also used in Herzberg's model, by Safiullah, Teck-Hong & Waheed, Suong, and Loc. Therefore, hypothesis H3 is *Opportunity for development has a positive impact on work motivation of civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee.*

Income and benefits: This factor affects motivation in Herzberg's model and is used Safiullah, Barzoki et al., Teck-Hong & Waheed, Suong, and Loc. This shows that income and benefits play an important role in promoting employee motivation. According to Dung [30], welfare shows the interest of businesses to the lives of workers, which can stimulate employees to work and stick with businesses. Therefore, hypothesis H4 is *Income and welfare positively affect the motivation of civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee.*

Relationship with leaders: The motivation of employees depends much on the relationship with the leader [7]. Every leader's action has a direct or indirect influence on the staff depending on different circumstances. Meanwhile, Nelson [22] emphasized that poor communication in management can reduce employee's motivation to work. When they feel the organization is not interested in them, they lose motivation and do not make much effort at work. This factor is also used in Herzberg's model, and by Safiullah, Barzoki et al., Teck-Hong & Waheed, Suong, and Loc. Therefore, hypothesis H5 is *Good relationship with leaders can positively affect work motivation of civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee.*

Relations with colleagues: The relationship in work is established among employees (co-workers) or it can also be the relationship between upper and lower levels (relationship with leaders) [24]. Employees need to get support from their colleagues when needed and can find comfort and friendliness when working together. At the same time, employees must find their colleagues dedicated to the work to achieve the best results. This factor is also used in Herzberg's model, and by Safiullah, Barzoki et al., Teck-Hong & Waheed, and Loc. Accordingly, hypothesis H6 is *Relationship with colleagues positively impacts the motivation of civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee.*

### **Quantitative methods**

In the quantitative method, the authors developed a survey to collect information from the civil servants. The questionnaire is divided into two parts. Part one contains questions to measure civil servants' assessment of factors affecting work motivation. Accordingly, the observed variables of the measurement scale are adjusted (adding, reducing, adjusting) to match the study area through qualitative research steps. Part two includes questions about the respondents' personal information such as gender, age, education level, and other related issues.

Because the study was conducted using the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), according to Hair et al. [9], the sample size must be at least 4 or 5 times the observed variables in the factor analysis. This study has 26 observed variables, and the sample size should be at least  $5 \times 26 =$

130 observations. In order to guarantee the quality of information, the total number of respondents was 200 civil servants, and 181 valid forms were received. The respondents were selected according to the randomized stratification method from the list of civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee (including 17 professional departments and 3 agencies: Office of Provincial People's Committee, Provincial Inspectorate and Provincial Committee for Ethnic Minorities).

The quantitative data were calibrated, cleaned and processed on SPSS 22.0. The mean, mode, and median are used for descriptive statistics; the reliability test of scales was evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient; EFA was conducted to gather observed variables into factors on the principle of ensuring unity and convergence; the multivariate regression analysis was utilized to test the hypotheses and the model.

### 3 Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Results

##### Reliability test – Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is used to measure the scale reliability, whereby "Corrected Item Total Correlation" less than 0.3 is disqualified, and the scale is selected when Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is greater than 0.6 [16].

Cronbach's Alpha for the 6 components are from 0.786 to 0.898 (Table 1), indicating that the factors are reliable. The correlation coefficients are greater than 0.3, indicating that the scales of these components are highly reliable. In addition, the work motivation scale has Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.738. The lowest correlation coefficient is 0.515. Therefore, all components are satisfactory for the exploratory factor analysis.

**Table 1.** Cronbach's Alpha analysis results

Variable	Variable code
<b>Working conditions (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.862)</b>	
1. Your workplace is equipped with adequate facilities	DKLV1
2. Your workplace is very comfortable and safe	DKLV2
3. You can receive all the information you need to work	DKLV3
4. The working hours are clearly announced	DKLV4
<b>The nature of work (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.860)</b>	
5. Your work is very interesting	BC1
6. The work is suitable for your capacity and expertise	BC2
7. The assignment of work is reasonable	BC3

Variable	Variable code
8. Your job does not have high pressure	BC4
<b>Promotion and growth opportunity (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.869)</b>	
9. TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee creates many opportunities for you in career development	CHPT1
10. You are always encouraged to improve your professional qualifications	CHPT2
11. The promotion policy of TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee is fair to everyone	CHPT3
12. You know the necessary conditions to get promoted	CHPT4
<b>Income and benefits (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.870)</b>	
13. Income is paid commensurate with your work capacity and contribution	TNPL1
14. The organization's welfare policy has ensured full implementation	TNPL2
15. You can fully guarantee the needs of your life from your work income	TNPL3
16. Income and benefits are fair among civil servants	TNPL4
<b>Relationship with leaders (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.786)</b>	
17. Leaders always ask for your opinion on issues related to your work	QHLD1
18. You always receive timely support and guidance from the higher level to complete the job	QHLD2
19. Leaders always respect and trust you in work	QHLD3
20. You believe in the leadership and administration of the superiors	QHLD4
<b>Relations with colleagues (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.898)</b>	
21. Your colleagues are always friendly and sociable	QHDN1
22. Your colleagues always help, support and motivate each other at work	QHDN2
23. Your colleagues are reliable and willing to share their experiences at work	QHDN3
<b>Work motivation (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.738)</b>	
24. You always try your best to complete the assigned work	DLLV1
25. You can maintain your efforts to do the job for a long time	DLLV2
26. You always actively participate in activities at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee	DLLV3

Source: Data processing results

### EFA analysis

Since the scales are developed on the basis of the previous studies and adjusted (adding, reducing, adjusting) after the reliability test, they are included in EFA to check the convergence and distinguish each scale.

EFA was carried out with 4 criteria, namely (1) Factor loading: all factor coefficients of observed variables  $> 0.5$  [9], (2) KMO coefficient = 0.874 (reliability range: 0.5–1) [9]), (3) Sig. =

0.000 (<0.05) [13], and (4) Accumulated variance = 73.311% (>50%) [6], indicating that these 6 factors explain 73.311% of data variability.

Thus, the number of observed variables remains 26 after the analysis (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Rotated Component Matrix

Variable	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
TNPL4	0.765					
TNPL3	0.748					
TNPL2	0.742					
TNPL1	0.696					
CHPT4		0.828				
CHPT3		0.824				
CHPT2		0.822				
CHPT1		0.820				
DKLV3			0.835			
DKLV4			0.785			
DKLV1			0.776			
DKLV2			0.665			
BC1				0.852		
BC4				0.814		
BC2				0.812		
BC3				0.670		
QHLD2					0.801	
QHLD3					0.800	
QHLD1					0.710	
QHLD4					0.665	
QHDN1						0.860
QHDN2						0.841
QHDN3						0.776
<b>Total Variance Explained(%)</b>	<b>13.043</b>	<b>12.859</b>	<b>12.643</b>	<b>12.295</b>	<b>11.249</b>	<b>11.222</b>

Source: Data processing results

**Regression analysis**

The adjusted  $R^2$  coefficient is 0.587 (Table 3). This means that 58.7% of the change in the level of work motivation of civil servants at TT-Hue People's Committee is explained by the independent variables included in the multivariate model.

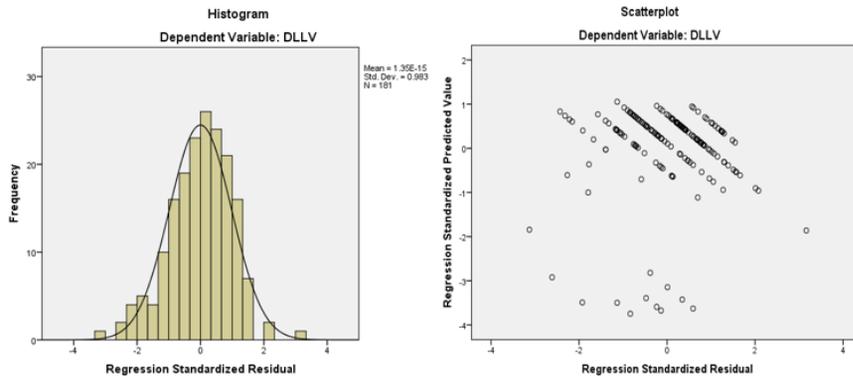
**Table 3.** Regression analysis result

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$				Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.844	0.230			3.668	0.000		
Working conditions	0.150	0.049	0.191		3.074	0.002	0.593	1.686
The nature of work	0.087	0.041	0.118		2.114	0.036	0.736	1.359
Promotion and growth opportunity	0.136	0.039	0.179		3.435	0.001	0.848	1.179
Income and benefits	0.118	0.057	0.143		2.086	0.038	0.489	2.045
Relationship with leaders	0.198	0.054	0.202		3.672	0.000	0.756	1.323
Relations with colleagues	0.191	0.044	0.269		4.338	0.000	0.596	1.678
<b>Adjusted R square = 0.587</b>								
<b>Sig. of F test = 0.000</b>								

Source: Data processing results

Sig. coefficient of the model's conformity test is 0.00, which is less than the 5% significance level, demonstrating the appropriate model. Besides, the regression analysis results using ENTER method show that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of the independent variables is less than 10, and the Tolerance coefficient is greater than 0.1. So, the hypothesis that the model has multicollinearity should be rejected.

The authors checked the normal distribution of residuals using the standardized residual frequency diagram. The diagram has a bell shape (Figure 2) with an average value of nearly 0 and a standard deviation of 0.983 ( $\approx 1$ ). Thus, the residuals approximate the normal distribution. Next, the authors checked the heteroskedasticity. In the residual scatter plot (Figure 2), the points randomly disperse in the area around the zero path, assuming that the linear and equal variance of the regression model is not violated.



**Figure 2.** Standardized residual frequency diagrams and standardized residual scatter plot

Source: Data processing results

Thus, all six independent variables have regression coefficients with Sig. less than the 5% significance level, and hence, they have a positive correlation with the dependent variable. Three of the variables are most correlated with the dependent variable, namely "Relations with colleagues", "Relations with leaders" and "Working conditions" with standardized regression coefficients of 0.269, 0.202 and 0.191, respectively.

**Civil servants' evaluation of factors affecting the work motivation at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee**

The most appreciated factors are "Promotion and growth opportunities", "Relationship with leaders", and "Relationships with colleagues" with an average rating of 4.06, 4.00, and 3.97, respectively (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Results of civil servants' evaluation

No.	Component	Number of Observation	Lowest	Highest	Mean	Std. Error
1	Working conditions	181	1.00	5.00	3.68	0.84
2	The nature of work	181	1.00	5.00	3.80	0.89
3	Promotion and growth opportunity	181	1.00	5.00	4.06	0.87
4	Income and benefits	181	1.00	5.00	3.76	0.80
5	Relationship with leaders	181	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.67
6	Relations with colleagues	181	1.00	5.00	3.97	0.93

Source: Data processing results

### 3.2 Discussion

From the data analysis, some evaluations can be drawn as follows:

All the six factors in the research model have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients greater than 0.5, ensuring the statistical standards for scale reliability. The exploratory factor analysis shows that the statistical standards are guaranteed and the factor analysis is consistent with the data.

The multivariate regression analysis indicates that all 6 independent variables are positively correlated with the work motivation of TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee. The findings are practically similar to those of other research by domestic and foreign authors. Among the six independent variables, the most positively correlated factors with work motivation are "Relationship with colleagues", "Relationship with leaders" and "Working conditions".

The factors affecting work motivation in this research are very similar to those in the previous studies. However, factors "Relationship with colleagues" and "Relationship with leaders" are most influential and relatively different from those studied by Loc and Suong. This could be because of the differences in the subjects and locations of research.

Besides, all the studied factors positively affect the motivation of the civil servants at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee, especially "Promotion and growth opportunities". This is true for the actual situation. In recent years, TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee has regularly organized professional training and retraining courses for civil servants (in the period of 2016–2020, there are about 25,215 turns of domestic training and 252 turns of overseas training) [28]. In addition, TT-Hue province regularly organizes examinations for key leaders publicly to create conditions for capable civil servants to develop and contribute to the organization.

Overall, this research certainly contributes to determining the factors affecting the work motivation at TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee, as well as specific assessments of civil servants about these factors.

## 4 Conclusion

On the basis of domestic and foreign studies, expert consultation, and group discussion, the authors propose a research model on the work motivation of TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee, including 6 main factors: (i) Working conditions, (ii) Nature of work, (iii) Promotion and growth opportunities, (iv) Income and benefits, (v) Relationship with leaders and (vi) Relationships with colleagues.

All the six factors have a positive impact on the work motivation of TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee. In particular, the three most influential factors are "Relations with

colleagues", "Relations with leaders" and "Working conditions". The model explains 58.7% of the change in the dynamics of the work motivation of the TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee. Therefore, this research has specific scientific significance.

Besides, civil servants also appreciate the factors such as "Promotion and growth opportunities", "Relations with leaders", and "Relations with colleagues". From the findings, the authors set out the implications to improve the work motivation of the People's Committee of TT-Hue province (focusing mainly on the three factors mentioned above).

Firstly, regarding "Promotion and growth opportunities", TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee should create promotion opportunities and career development for civil servants, help them assert and express themselves. Accordingly, the People's Committee of TT-Hue Province should (1) make clear regulations on promotion policies, (2) ensure that career promotion must be based on competence and performance, and (3) ensure fairness and equality in access to advancement opportunities.

Secondly, concerning "Relations with leaders", in order to create work motivation for civil servants, leaders need to pay attention to the following aspects: (i) Building a trust and friendly relationship, as well as creating broad cooperation with civil servants, (ii) Leaders must be really open, transparent, and fair when assessing the working capacity, (iii) Leaders need to listen, comment and criticize, guide civil servants in the spirit of construction to adjust and change in a positive way.

Lastly, as for "Relations with colleagues", TT-Hue Provincial People's Committee should build a civilized office culture. Besides, it is necessary to regularly organize collective activities such as arts, sports, and volunteer programs to enhance the solidarity of civil servants at the work place.

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