



BALTIC JOURNAL OF LAW & POLITICS

A Journal of Vytautas Magnus University
VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2 (2022)
ISSN 2029-0454



Cite: *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics* 15:2 (2022): 339-349
DOI: 10.2478/bjlp-2022-001020

The current state of public administration reform and issues raised, research in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in the period 2016 - 2020

Dr. Vo Van That

Saigon University, Vietnam

Email: yovanthat@squ.edu.vn

Dr. Mai Quoc Dung*

University of Food Industry Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

*Email: dungmq@hufi.edu.vn

Received: July 12, 2022; reviews: 2; accepted: October 13, 2022.

Abstract

Administrative reform is implemented on many contents: Institutional reform, organizational reform of the administrative apparatus, building and improving the quality of cadres and civil servants, public finance reform and administrative modernization, in which administrative procedure reform, handling administrative procedures according to the one-stop-shop mechanism, the one-stop-shop mechanism is an important step and was set out at the very beginning of the administrative reform process. In the process of construction and development of Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), administrative reform is considered as one of the important solutions to achieve socio-economic development goals.

Key Words

Status; public administration reform; Ho Chi Minh City; 2016-2020

I. Introduce

In the 1980s many developing and newly industrializing countries in Asia expressed great interest in administrative reform. Compelling reasons for public reform in these nations arise from causes different from those in developed nations. Among Asian developing nations, government reform is intrinsic to and inextricable from crises in governance. Within the context of developing politics, a reliable and competent government is sine qua non of national stability; and, more importantly, this largely decides the tenure of a governing group. Its ability to remain in power will be determined by the efficaciousness of public authority. Against these backgrounds, this article discusses the five conference papers of the Eastern

Regional Organization of Public Administration (EROPA) of 1991. It examines both similarities and differences among four countries in their efforts to reform public administration. This review suggests that in developing Asia, the quest for administrative reform emanates from crises in governance. Reform goes beyond exploring ways to improve the quality of public management (Akira Nakamura, Osamu Koike, 1992; Asaad & Shabdin, 2021; Butt et al., 2021).

Gerald E. Caiden (1979) thinks recent studies of administrative reform reveal how underdeveloped still is the state of the art. Although improving, it suffers from serious limitations. Consequently, many reforms fail or fall below expectations. Available administrative tools have a decidedly authoritarian technocratic ring to them, enshrining values beloved to mandarins and social engineers but not necessarily acceptable to social democracies. Here, several current issues such as renewed interest, disputed definition and scope, contrasting approaches and lack of success, are surveyed together with suggestions for a new agenda.

Jamil E. Jreisat (1988) this study investigates administrative reform in seven Arab states, delineates common problems and describes general tendencies via content analysis of official statements. The study deals with reform in three major phases: defining administrative problems and needs; developing strategies for reform; and developing instruments of action for implementation. Appraisal of reform efforts discloses mediocre results based on a poor implementation record attributable to incongruities of methods and objectives of reform. Among such incongruities are the conventional limitations of bureaucracy, the copying of Western administrative rationality in form if not in substance, and insufficient attention paid to traditional, cultural, religious, and political contexts of administration. Recognizing the difficulties involved in conceptualizing and implementing reform in any society, the analysis offers several recommendations to improve the outcome of reform efforts, among them: encouraging employee involvement in reform decisions; improving collected diagnostic data; providing special training for employees responsible for managing reform; soliciting unwavering political commitment; developing incentive systems; and replacing the piecemeal approach with reliance on a systems perspective.

National administration plays a very important role in the operation of the state apparatus, which is unified from the central government to communes, wards and townships. The development and stability of politics, security, national defense and socio-economic development depend a lot on the effectiveness and efficiency of the national administration. Therefore, in some countries, administrative reform is always carried out regularly according to specific objectives and contents. Vietnam identifies administrative reform as an important task in the process of national construction (Tran Anh Tuan, 2022; Çağatay & Erten, 2020).

In order for guidelines and policies to be highly effective in the implementation process, Ho Chi Minh City always identifies administrative reform as an objective requirement, creating a premise and promoting economic development. Currently, the City is actively building a smart city. Therefore, if

administrative procedures are not reformed well or reform is slow, it will lose its advantages and opportunities, becoming a huge barrier to the city's socio-economic development (Lam Quan, 2019).

II. Research Methods

The research team conducted a survey to find out about people's evaluations of the City's PAR policies. In order to ensure the representativeness of the survey results, the research team decided to choose a convenient method of determining the sample size in combination with the judgment usually applied by the researchers to the general case of survey subjects of large size. The study area is large and the study area is as large as Ho Chi Minh City with a sample size of 385 samples.

The survey subjects are people living in Ho Chi Minh City aged 18 years or older who have citizenship, are affected by policies and laws, have working relationships with the government system and relationships other social relations in the social community. The research team determined to select samples according to randomness with classification so that the number of selected samples was distributed to ensure representativeness of the specificity of the survey subjects and the research content of the topic.

The research team conducted a survey to screen out enough of the minimum number of samples as determined as required (385 minimum samples + 40 redundant samples = 425 samples). The research team has conducted surveys of individuals at universities, colleges, administrative agencies, and non-businesses; the ward-level one-stop offices, the 1st offices of specialized administrative units at district and district levels; residential areas throughout the city according to the distribution of survey samples from December 2019 to December 2020. Results after removing invalid answer sheets, the research team obtained 405 survey questionnaires valid for use in quantitative analyses.

Regarding the survey results statistical tool, the research team used SPSS software version 22 to perform descriptive statistics of the survey results.

In addition to using survey results, the research team also uses the data system, statistical data of the Ho Chi Minh City Statistical Office and summary reports of agencies and units to serve the purpose of the research, the study and evaluation of the results of the process of building a charitable lifestyle in Ho Chi Minh City.

III. Research results

Implementing the policy of building Ho Chi Minh City with a good quality of life, civilization, modernity and gratitude of the Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee, the city government has stepped up the review and simplification of administrative procedures in all areas of management related to people and businesses. In particular, focus is on reducing the processing time, reducing the composition of the dossier, saving the cost of complying with administrative procedures in the fields of investment - business registration; On the other hand, some agencies and

units have actively shortened the processing time for administrative dossiers, diversifying the way of carrying out administrative procedures in the direction of creating favorable conditions for people and businesses. At the grassroots level, chairpersons of People's Committees of wards, communes and townships periodically receive citizens to dialogue, listen to and absorb people's opinions. Timely solve the pressing, legitimate and legitimate aspirations of the people. People's committees of wards, communes and townships must quickly solve pressing local problems, especially encroachment on roadways, illegal and unauthorized construction, environmental pollution, complaints and lawsuits.

On June 28, 2016, the City People's Committee issued Decision No. 3292/QĐ-UBND on the plan to implement the main tasks and solutions to improve the Provincial Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) (**), in Ho Chi Minh City in the 2016-2020 period in sync with the State Administrative Reform Master Program for the 2011-2020 period and Breakthrough Programs under the Resolution of the City Party Congress with the aim of destination:

Building a government close to the people, for the people, serving the people and businesses unconditionally, in the spirit of great demand, ready to admit mistakes and overcome to better serve;

Focus on improving and raising the scores of all six evaluation contents of the PAPI Index, striving to make the following year's indicators higher than the previous year to show the government's efforts to rise;

Clearly define the responsibilities of the head of the State agency, of each cadre, civil servant and public employee in an effort to improve the City's PAPI Index (Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, 2016).

To create impetus to promote administrative reform activities, on March 16, 2018, the People's Council of Ho Chi Minh City passed Resolution No. 03/2018/NQ-HĐND, promulgating "*Regulations on expenditures additional income for cadres, civil servants and public employees in the state management sector, political organizations, socio-political organizations and public non-business units managed by the City*". According to this Resolution, cadres, civil servants and public employees working in the system of public administrative and non-business agencies managed by the City will be paid an additional income according to the specific schedule and coefficient: In 2018, the maximum increase in income payment is 0.6 times, in 2019 it will increase by 1.2 times, and in 2020 it will increase by 1.8 times at most compared to the ranks and positions of civil servants and public employees (Ho Chi Minh City People's Council, 2018).

According to the assessment of the Department of Home Affairs of Ho Chi Minh City:

After 3 years of implementing Resolution No. 03/2018, cadres, civil servants and public employees have shown their enthusiasm and enthusiasm to participate in the work. The policy of spending extra income has contributed to alleviating difficulties and improving the lives of cadres, civil servants and public employees; evoking creative labor spirit, improving working efficiency, consolidating and

improving work efficiency, the quality of the state apparatus in various fields, thereby helping the city to achieve many socio-economic development achievements in recent years (Mai Hoa, 2021).

It can be seen that this policy is a great determination of the City in promoting the reform of the state administrative apparatus to improve the quality of service to the people.

The data reported at the Conferences summarizing the administrative reform work of Ho Chi Minh City also showed many positive changes. From 2016 to 2019, the City reviewed and proposed a simplification plan (reducing the number, composition of documents, processing time...) for 44 administrative procedures and connecting/combining 3 groups of administrative procedures (S. Hai, 2020).

A number of agencies and units have proactively shortened the processing time for administrative dossiers, diversified the methods of carrying out procedures in the direction of creating the most favorable conditions for people and businesses; coordinate with relevant agencies to handle administrative procedures; provide services to serve people and businesses

The city has organized the application of "one-stop-shop" according to regulations, issued 38 decisions approving 702 internal processes to handle administrative procedures under the receiving authority, settlement of 3 levels in the city and deploying connection and software operation between relevant departments, departments and branches with the City People's Committee Office in resolving 21 approved internal processes.

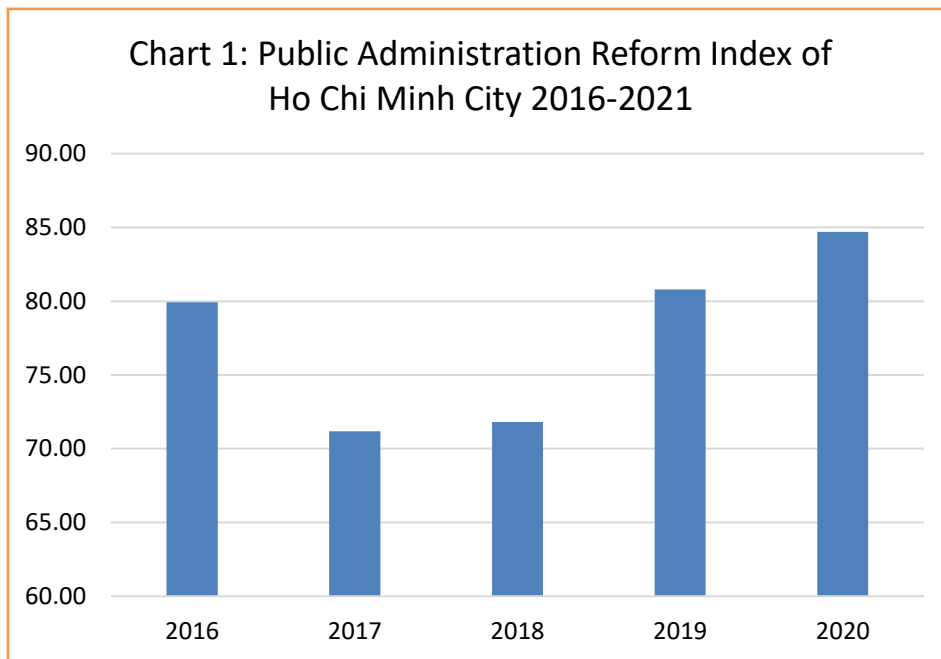
Regarding the handling of administrative procedures, from 2015 to 2019, departments, agencies, district-level People's Committees and commune-level People's Committees received 84,012,611 dossiers (average more than 16 million records/year). The rate of on-time processing of dossiers each year in departments/sectors ranges from 97.52% to 99.93%; district/district from 98.16% to 99.92%; People's Committees of communes, wards and townships from 99.97% to 99.99%. The city has deployed to provide online public services for people and businesses. Up to now, the total number of online public services at level 3 and level 4 is 668/1,776 administrative procedures. Most agencies and units deploy the receipt and return of results at home via postal service. Along with that is the publication of 100% of administrative procedures/list of administrative procedures and over 1,776 administrative procedures on the National Public Service Portal, the City's Portal (S. Hai, 2020).

A number of effective models and solutions have been applied, such as the electronic tax linkage model between natural resources and environment agencies and tax authorities; perform the service of appointment registration for making people's identity cards and citizen's identity cards via the 1080 switchboard; piloting the electronic one-stop-shop mechanism for construction licensing procedures under the authority of the Department of Construction to help reduce the implementation time from 122 days to 42 days... Thereby, helping the rate of

correct administrative procedures the term is enhanced and created satisfaction, consensus and sharing from individuals and organizations. The rate of on-time processing of dossiers for the total number of administrative procedures at 3 levels of the City reached an average (2016 - 2019) of 99.47% (Dinh Ly, 2020).

In order to monitor and evaluate the satisfaction of agencies, organizations and people with the service of state administrative agencies, in 2020, the City has implemented measuring the satisfaction of people and organizations for the service of state administrative agencies through survey. The result of the satisfaction index for administrative services is calculated for all 26 evaluation criteria, calculated in the whole city is 82.33% (S. Hai, 2020). The City's survey results are equivalent to those of the Government's Administrative Reform Steering Committee.

According to the assessment of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Administrative Reform Index - PAR INDEX in the period 2016 - 2020 of Ho Chi Minh City is as follows: in 2016: 79.93%, ranked 15/63; 2017: 71.19%, ranked 10/63; 2018: 71.81%, ranked 10/63; in 2019: 80.80%, ranked 7/63 and in 2020: 84.70%, ranked 23/63 (Ministry of Interior, 2021).

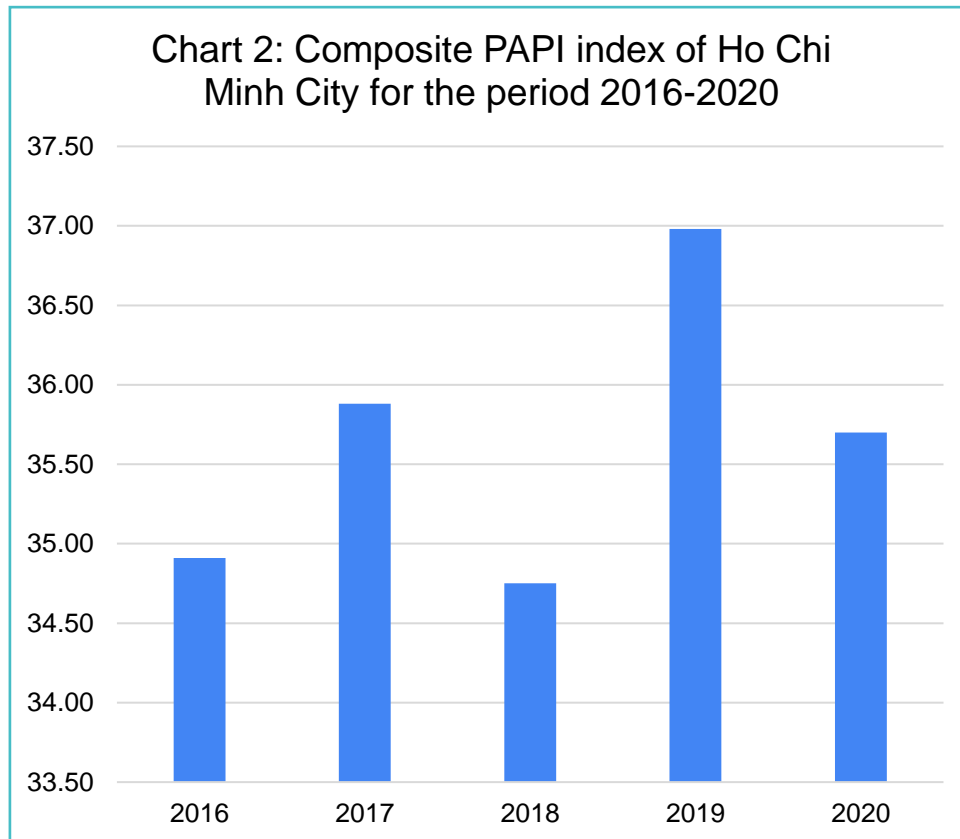


Source: PAR INDEX Annual Publication of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Vietnam.

Although the PAR Index of the City in the 2016-2020 period is quite good, it is improved every year and at the same time belongs to the above group compared to other localities in the country (except for 2020). 23), but the people's satisfaction index on administrative services of Ho Chi Minh City is only good and ranked at a low position compared to other localities: in 2017 reached 71.19%, ranked 59/63; in 2018 reached 67.92, ranked 60/63 and in 2020 reached 83.74%, ranked 43/63 (Ministry of Interior, 2021).

According to the PAPI index on the effectiveness and quality of policy implementation and public service delivery of local governments in 63

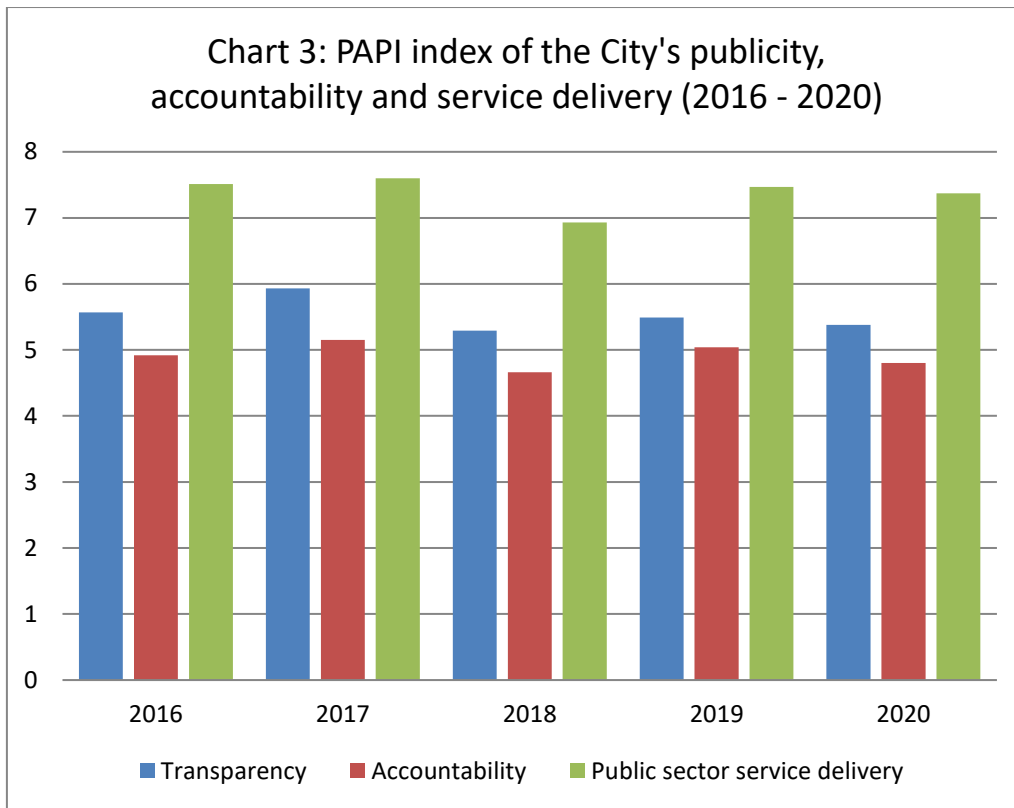
provinces/cities in Vietnam conducted by the United Nations Development Program in Vietnam, period 2016-2020, Ho Chi Minh City's PAPI index has increased every year, but the growth rate is slow (see Chart 2) and is always in the low group compared to other localities in the country: 2016 and 2017 belong to the middle group. low average (ranked position ranges from 33 to 47/63 provinces), in 2017 fell to the lowest group (ranked position ranges from 50 to 63/63 provinces), in 2019 to the middle group medium-high (ranked position is between 17 and 31/63 provinces), by 2020 it will fall to the middle-low group (ranked position is between 33 and 47/63 provinces).



Source: Annual PAPI Index Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, Vietnam.

People's assessment of the effectiveness of publicity, transparency and the culture of interaction, accountability and public service delivery by state agencies to the people through the PAPI Index for the years from 2016 to 2020 (see Chart 3) shows that the publicity and transparency of the government has not improved and is rated at a high average level (the City's ranking position ranges from 17 to 33/63 provinces of Vietnam). This result also reflects the survey of the Research Group.

In terms of accountability, the PAPI index is 1 level lower than transparency, the index is volatile, unstable and showing signs of going down, the average result is only low average (ranking position of The city ranges from 33 to 48/63 provinces of the country). The field with the highest PAPI index, showing the advantages of the city's administration, is Public service provision with an average score of over 7.0 points, Ho Chi Minh City is in the group of 16 best localities.



Source: Annual PAPI Index Report, Ministry of Home Affairs, Vietnam.

The research team surveyed people's opinions on the level of satisfaction of the public, transparent and accessible status of administrative procedures also gave similar results to the survey results of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Specifically, 62.47% of the respondents agree that administrative procedures are open, transparent and accessible to the people (Table below), the average rating of the survey results achieved 3.77 points, indicating that the satisfaction level is at a normal level.

People's assessment of the openness, transparency and accessibility of administrative procedures

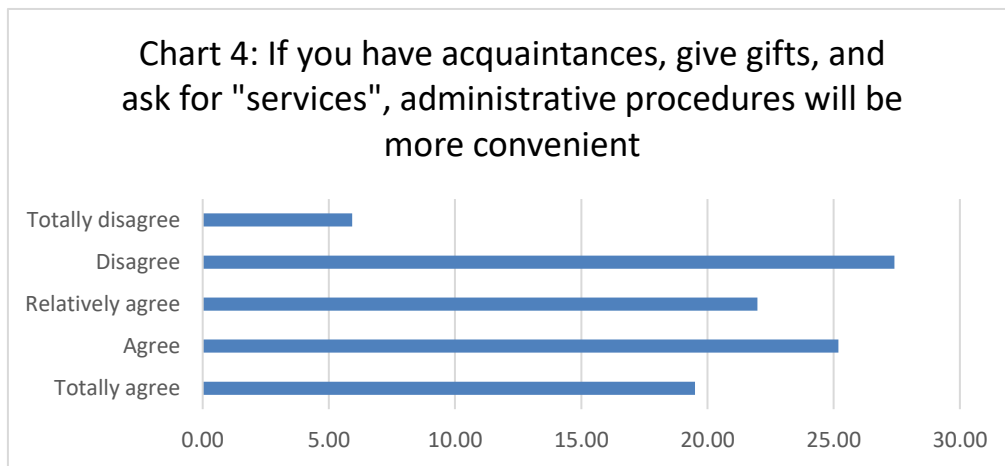
Degree evaluation	Amount	Ratio	Medium score
Totally agree	106	26.17	3.77
Agree	147	36.30	
Relatively agree	113	27.90	
Disagree	32	7.90	
Totally disagree	7	1.73	
Total	405	100.00	

The above survey results are also consistent with the comments and survey results of the Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee of Ho Chi Minh City in 2019: Unsatisfied people and businesses are very diverse. but most still related to the

issue of administrative procedures that are not streamlined, unclear, the attitude of serving the people as well as the guidance and expertise of officials and civil servants is not high. Most people and businesses have to travel at least twice to complete administrative procedures in 16 departments and districts in the city. At the district level, the number of times people and businesses travel to complete administrative procedures is not less than twice. Particularly at the ward/commune level, there are cases where people have to travel seven times to complete administrative procedures (Ta Lam, 2020).

According to the component indexes, the satisfaction index on administrative procedures only reached 69.72%, the satisfaction index on receiving and handling comments, feedback and complaints reached 77.63%, 80% below target. In terms of fields, the land and construction licensing sectors have the lowest satisfaction index of administrative services. Besides calculating the satisfaction index on 26 detailed indicators, only 56% of people and organizations gave a score of 9, 10 when asked about their overall satisfaction with the service of administrative agencies. Enterprises are still not satisfied with administrative reform. Many stages of procedures; especially in the field of investment, construction, real estate... still causing troubles and difficulties for businesses (Dinh Ly, 2019).

When asked about transparency in public administrative services, 44.69% of respondents believe that if they know, give gifts or ask for "services", doing administrative procedures will be convenient.



Through self-assessment data of state agencies and comments from the people, it shows that in the period 2016-2020, the Ho Chi Minh City government has a lot of determination, promulgating many policies and plans, measures towards building an administration for the people following the policy of building a civilized, modern and loving city and has achieved many results in administrative reform. However, the survey results of the government and the research team show that people still face certain obstacles and troubles. In order for the values of the philanthropic lifestyle to be incorporated into policies and become activities of the government apparatus, there are still many contents and areas that need more efforts in administrative reform.

IV. Conclusion

Administrative reform has been identified as one of three important solutions to implement the socio-economic development strategy, with the correct, grounded and appropriate administrative reform objectives and solutions with the fact has created a fundamental change in perception of the contingent of cadres, civil servants and public employees in the entire system of administrative agencies from central to local levels. In recent years, administrative reform in Ho Chi Minh City has been implemented synchronously on all 6 contents: Institutional reform; Administrative reform; Organizational reform of the state administrative apparatus; to renew and improve the quality of the contingent of cadres and civil servants; Public finance reform; administrative modernization.

In the coming time, Ho Chi Minh City will continue to streamline and streamline the organizational apparatus; the focus is on promoting the socialization of public services to private services, shifting public non-business units to operate under the financial autonomy mechanism to streamline payroll and budgetary payroll. Arrange the organizational apparatus in association with regulations on functions, tasks and working relationships that are consistent, close, avoid overlapping, suitable to the characteristics of the city.

(**) The PAPI index is evaluated based on people's experiences and assessments when interacting with local government levels to measure the effectiveness of governance and public administration at the provincial level. This indicator is evaluated through 8 contents: People's participation at grassroots level; transparency; accountability to the people; control corruption in the public sector; public administrative procedures; provision of public services; environmental management; electronic administration.

References

- Akira Nakamura, Osamu Koike (1992). *Responsible Governance and Problems of Administrative Reform: Experiences of Developing Countries in Asia*. Journal Governance, Vol 5(4), pp. 484-492. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.1992.tb00054.x>
- Asaad, H. Q. M., & Shabdin, A. A. (2021). The predictive role of morphological awareness and productive vocabulary knowledge in L2 postgraduate students' academic writing. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 24-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.911149>
- Butt, B., Khan, M. A., Mahmood, S., Hamid, A., & Hussain, A. (2021). Serial Verb Construction vs Complex Predicates in Punjabi: An Integrated Analysis of Event Structure. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 1-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.911501>
- Çağatay, S., & Erten, İ. H. (2020). The relationship between ideal L2 self, achievement attributions and L2 achievement. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6(3), 337-359. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.834642>
- Dinh Ly (2019). *More than 82% of people and organizations are satisfied with the administrative service of state administrative agencies*. Website of the Party

- Committee of Ho Chi Minh City. <https://www.thanhuytphcm.vn/tin-tuc/hon-82-nguoi-dan-to-chuc-hai-long-ve-su-phuc-vu-hanh-chinh-cua-co-quan-hanh-chinh-nha-nuoc-1491860037>
- Dinh Ly (2020). *Ho Chi Minh City: Many good and creative ways of doing things, administrative reform has made positive changes*. Website of the Party Committee of Ho Chi Minh City. <https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tin-tuc/tphcm-nhieu-cach-lam-hay-va-sang-tao-cong-tac-cai-cach-hanh-chinh-co-chuyen-bien-tich-cuc-1491870144>
- Gerald E. Caiden (1979). *Administrative reform: A view from the field*. Policy Studies Journal, Vol 8(3), pp. 456-462. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.1979.tb01252.x>
- Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee (2016). *Decision No. 3292/QĐ-UBND on the plan to implement the main tasks and solutions to improve the Provincial Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) in Ho Chi Minh City in the 2016-2020 period*. Vietnam
- Ho Chi Minh City People's Council (2018). *Resolution No. 03/2018/NQ-HĐND, Regulations on spending additional income for cadres, civil servants and public employees in the state management sector, political organizations, socio-political organizations and units public service managed by the City*. Vietnam
- Jamil E. Jreisat (1988). *Administrative reform in developing countries: A comparative perspective*. Public Administration and Development, Vol 8 (1), pp. 85-97. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.4230080108>
- Lâm Quân (2019). *Administrative reform in Ho Chi Minh City: Taking the human factor as the center to synchronize and accelerate*. <https://www.tapchiconsan.org.vn/web/guest/thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh/-/2018/54779/cai-cach-hanh-chinh-o-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh--lay-yeu-to-con-nguoi-lam-trong-tam-de-dong-bo-va-tang-toc.aspx>
- Mai Hoa (2021). *Spending extra income, Ho Chi Minh City achieved many development achievements*. Saigon Liberation Newspaper, April 21, 2021.
- Ministry of Interior (2021). *Publication of the annual PAR Index*. Vietnam
- Ta Lam (2020). *80% of people are satisfied with the service attitude of officials*. Ho Chi Minh City Law Newspaper, Friday, January 3, 2020.
- Trần Anh Tuấn (2022). *Renovating thinking on administrative reform - building a national administration to meet the requirements of perfecting the Socialist rule of law State of Vietnam*. <https://hdl.vn/vi/nghien-cuu---trao-doi/doi-moi-tu-duy-ve-cai-cach-hanh-chinh-xay-dung-nen-hanh-chinh-quoc-gia-dap-ung-yeu-cau-hoan-thien-nha-nuoc-phap-quyen-xhcn-viet-nam.html>
- S. Hai (2020). *Building the image of the city's government serving the People, friendly, modern, solidarity and gratitude*. Website of the Party Committee of Ho Chi Minh City. <https://www.hcmcpv.org.vn/tin-tuc/xay-dung-hinh-anh-chinh-quyen-tp-phuc-vu-nhan-dan-than-thien-hien-dai-doan-ket-Nghia Tinh-1491871232>