

# The Empirical Study on a Competency Model of Grassroots Public Employment Service Personnel

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**Abstract:** *On the basis of literature research, this paper uses the methods of questionnaire survey and interview to verify the reliability and validity of the evaluation index of the quality of public employment services personnel through factor analysis and structural equation model. Based on the above analysis, a competency model of grassroots public employment service personnel is built to provide a standard for the quality construction of grassroots public employment service personnel. And new ideas and methods will be proposed for the management of public employment service personnel and the innovation of basic services. The competency model provides guidance to improve the level of the grass roots public employment services, and make the status of services better. There will make a significance of the application of the competency model in the recruitment and training of public employment service personnel at the grassroots level.*

**Keywords:** grass roots; public employment services personnel; competency model; empirical study

## 1. Introduction

The public employment service refers to the free service related to the employment matters to both supply side and demand side of the labor force provided by the government. As an important part of human resource service, public employment service plays a leading role in promoting full employment, optimizing labor allocation and promoting employment priority strategy. Especially the grass-roots public employment services directly facing the actual employment service of laborer problems, as the professional information collection and release, affordable services such as employment assistance, support functions, the grassroots public employment service personnel as the executor of the specific, plays an essential role in promoting employment at the grass-roots level. There are 283 prefecture-level cities in our country. If there are at least 400 grassroots public employment service agencies at each prefecture-level city, there will be hundreds of public employment service personnel in the grassroots public employment service agencies nationwide. The quality of staff and workers determines the quality of service and efficiency. At present, our country has not formulated the corresponding norms and regulations and unified norms for this special team. The staff's competency are uneven, and the level of employment service is obviously different. This paper constructs the competency model of grass-roots public employment service personnel through the combination of theory and evidence, and theoretically enriches and details the capacity-building research of public sector staff. Based on the research results, it puts forward corresponding policy suggestions to provide direction guidance and decision support for the comprehensive promotion of our public employment service system. Theoretical basis and research review

The grassroots public employment service personnel refer to the staff members of public employment service agencies at or below the county level. Different from grassroots civil servants in broad sense, the work of grassroots public employment service personnel in our country possesses four typical characteristics: one is the foundation of work, as the frontier of employment service work, directly contact with

workers and employers; the other is the extensive content, The public employment service requires staff not only to be responsible for the basic functions such as employment forecasting and information guidance and the transfer of social insurance relations, but also to provide employment related information such as labor law consultation, job induction training, unemployment warning, etc. Third, job coordination, staff coordination as a bridge between the employer and the laborer, it is necessary to handle the interpersonal relationships between the two and to strengthen cooperation with various departments so as to maintain good communication. Fourthly, the task complexity is that the grass-roots work has always been the ultimate executor of various policies. In practice, there are many trivial and specific problems that need to be solved in combination with specific situations. Its characteristics require public employment service personnel have the appropriate knowledge and skills and quality, to ensure the efficiency and quality of service.

Public employment services emerged in other countries at the beginning of the 20th century and are devoted to improving the living conditions of the unemployed. Theoretical studies mainly focus on institutional setting of public employment services (Wang Liping, 2013) and evaluation and improvement of service performance. A series of reform practices have been carried out in foreign countries, including the "Public Service Charter" in France and the "Quality Customer Service Action" in Ireland. The domestic scholar Zhang Xuedong (2008) pointed out in his research that the public sector construction of human resources mainly manifests in practice as "three-cross" thinking ability, that is, interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral and cross-sectoral. However, the above studies both explore the capacity requirements of public-sector workers from a public-sector perspective and do not provide suggestions on the capacity-building of grass-roots public employment service personnel. The competence of public employment service personnel is mentioned in many suggestions, but it is not analyzed as the main research object. The grassroots public employment service personnel are part of the broad civil servants. Therefore, drawing lessons from the ability

and quality requirements of the grassroots civil servants and combining with the characteristics of public employment services, the capability and quality of grassroots public service workers are studied.

At present, the most extensive way to study the ability and quality of grassroots civil servants is to build a competency model. Competency was first proposed by McLeary, a professor at Harvard University, in 1973. He believes competency refers to the in-depth characteristics of individuals who can differentiate themselves from ordinary people in a specific work and organizational environment, mainly manifested as knowledge, skills, motivation, traits, self-image, attitude or values. The study and application of competency model first appeared in the United States, applied to the selection of diplomats of the U.S. State Department, and later gradually applied to different occupations such as corporate executives, doctors, teachers and civil servants. Different posts have different competency models that match them, and Richard Boyatzis (1982) designed a general competency model for six different signature managers using questionnaire and interview methods. In the 1990s, the competency model was popularized in various administrative departments in the United Kingdom. Australia, Sweden, Italy and other countries also tried their best to make the most of their power. This was mainly done for top civil servants. At present, the competency building of foreign civil servants has established different competency models for different positions and ranks, and the domestic competency construction of civil servants is still at an exploratory stage. Zhang Xiaoyan et al. (2010) carried out an empirical study of the ability and quality of poor township civil servants using the multiple regression analysis method with the five dimensions of achievement orientation, initiative, teamwork, team leadership and organizational perception. Zhang Jian et al. (2011) used the multi-level gray theory to evaluate the competency of grass-roots civil servants in towns and villages. Starting from the three dimensions of quality, skills and knowledge respectively, Hu Yuexing (2012) and Wang Zhigang (2015) constructed the competency model of the three departmental civil servants and the competency model of grassroots government civil servants. The above studies have some theoretical and empirical evidence, but the lack of professional segmentation. Li Chunling et al. (2010) conducted a research on the public employment service personnel. The conclusion shows that the current public employment service personnel generally have a low level of education, only about 10% of them hold bachelor's degrees and above, and their knowledge and professional qualities are relatively low, Cannot guarantee the quality of their employment services. The quality and ability of the grassroots public employment service personnel are related to the successful completion of their work and the administrative efficiency and administrative quality of the grassroots public sector in our country, which is related to the realization of public satisfaction. Therefore, building the competency model of grassroots public employment service personnel, thus strengthening its skills and quality of construction, has important practical significance.

## 2. Questionnaire Design and Preparation

Since the 90s of the 20th century, the level of public employment service in our country has been significantly improved. However, due to the large population in our country, grassroots public employment services started relatively late, and mainly played a management and control role in the beginning of the period. They faced many difficulties in the process of changing service guidance functions. According to the preliminary investigation, the high mobility, lack of quality level and professional ability of public employment service workers are one of the main reasons that affect the quality of public employment services. In 2003, the State promulgated the "Standard Competency Framework for National Civil Servants (Trial)" and put forward nine universal capabilities for state civil servants, including political identification ability, administrative capacity according to law, public service capability, research capability, learning ability, communication and coordination ability, Innovative ability, ability to respond to emergencies and psychological adjustment. This framework lays down the common ability of civil servants, although it lacks of a reference to the quality standards of public employment service capability at the grass-roots level, it still has a certain guiding role on precise positioning of civil servants in different work fields and work types.

Based on the previous literatures, combined with the characteristics of grass-roots public employment services, legal norms and face-to-face structural interview with public employment service personnel and consulting experts, 63 grassroots public employment service personnel were extracted, The combing and integration of various indicators, and finally set the five dimensions, 37 ability and quality, and behavioral description of the way the questionnaire design. Five dimensions are individual ability, attitude, thinking mode, team building, knowledge level. Among them, personal ability includes 10 questions such as written expression ability and interpersonal communication ability. The attitude spirit includes 10 questions such as enthusiasm, patience and initiative. The thinking mode includes 4 issues such as policy sensitivity and orderliness. The team building includes communication and coordination, organizational planning capabilities and other eight issues, the level of knowledge includes professional knowledge, legal knowledge and other five issues. In the aspect of index evaluation, the status and expectation of each index in the organization were respectively scored in the form of Richter scale five.

## 3. Construction of Competency Model of Grassroots Public Service Personnel

Tongchuan City, Shaanxi Province, is a public employment service demonstration unit in China. Taking the grass-roots public employment service personnel in Tongchuan as the target of investigation, through publicized training opportunities, we conducted the questionnaire survey with public employment service personnel in Wangyi District, Yaozhou District, Yijun District and Yintai District, and

conducted interviews with the person in charge of the district public employment service work.

### 3.1 Background data statistics

A total of more than 800 grassroots public service workers in Tongchuan City, the survey sent a total of 705 questionnaires, 547 were recovered, the recovery rate was 76%, of which 544 valid questionnaires, the effective rate of 99%. According to the gender of respondents, there are 89 males and 455 females, with a ratio of 1: 5, as shown in Table 1. This shows that there are more female public service workers in public primary schools in Tongchuan City, which is related to the high stability and low rate of return of the public employment service.

**Table 1: Respondents gender**

		Frequency	Percentage
Effective	Male	89	16.3
	Female	455	83.2
Missing	System	3	0.5
Total		547	100.0

From the age of the respondents, the proportion of people under 20 years of age and those aged 51-60 is 40%, while those who are the main labor force are 39.5% of those aged 20-30 and 35.8% of those aged 31-40 %, 23.8% of 41-50 years old, as shown in Table 2. It reflects that the age structure of grassroots public service workers in Tongchuan City is relatively balanced.

**Table 2: Respondents age**

		Frequency	Percentage
Effective	Under 20 years old	2	0.4
	20-30 years old	216	39.5
	31-40 years old	196	35.8
	41-50 years old	130	23.8
	51-60 years old	2	0.4
	total	546	99.8
Missing	System	1	0.2
Total		547	100.0

According to the educational background of the respondents, the undergraduate degree or college degree occupies 82.3% of the sample number, and the high school or secondary school degree occupies 15.2% of the sample number, as shown in Table 3. Reflects that the undergraduate education is the main educational background level of grass-roots public employment service personnel in Tongchuan, master's and above high-end talent only 0.6%.

**Table 3: Respondents Academic Level**

		Frequency	Percentage
Effective	High school or secondary school	83	15.2
	Undergraduate or college	450	82.3
	Master's degree	2	0.4
	Other	1	0.2
	Total	536	98.0
Missing	System	11	2.0
Total			100.0

According to the working hours of respondents, 3.7% were within 2 years, 31.3% from 2 to 5 years, 36.4% from 6 to 10 years and 27.9% over 10 years, as shown in Table 4. The consistency of the proportion structure between the working time and the age of respondents indicates indirectly the validity of the papers and reflects that most of the public employment service workers in Tongchuan City have certain working experience.

**Table 4: Respondents working hours**

		Frequency	Percentage
Effective	Within 2 years	20	3.7
	2 - 5 years	171	31.3
	6-10 years	199	36.4
	11-15 years	33	6.0
	16-20 years	53	9.7
	More than 20 years	67	12.2
total		543	99.3
Missing	System	4	0.7
Total			100.0

### 3.2 Exploratory factor analysis

Finally 519 valid questionnaires were obtained through the culling of the cases with more missing values and the near-mean-value transformation of single missing values. The KMO value and Bartlett's spherical test were implemented. The test results are shown in Table 5. The KMO value was 0.972 and the sig value was 0.000, which means Bartlett's significance was less than 0.001, which reflected the original competence of the non-grass-roots public employment service personnel in Tongchuan City Data suitable for factor analysis.

**Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's test**

Sampling Sufficient Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin metric		.972
Bartlett's test	X <sup>2</sup>	14513.541
	Df	547
	Sig.	.000

If the common root is greater than 1 by the eigenvalue, 4 common factors can be extracted and the cumulative contribution rate of 63.78% can be obtained. The five factors were forcibly extracted, and the factor loading of each index exceeded 0.5, and there was no cross loading, which further explained the structural validity of the questionnaire. The EFA results of the questionnaire are shown in Table 6, except that the institutionalization (a24) is adjusted from the thinking mode to the attitude and spirit dimension, and the other indicators contained in each factor correspond to the five dimensions of the capability of grass-roots public employment service personnel, explaining total variance of 66.140%. Therefore, the basic public employment service personnel ability and quality questionnaire has good constructive validity.

**Table 6: EFA results**

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Measurement Standard	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Eigenvalues	7.523	5.982	5.361	3.507	2.099
Explanatory degree	20.331	16.168	14.489	9.478	5.674
Cumulative explanation	20.331	36.499	50.988	60.466	66.140
Individual ability					
Execution (a1)		.585			
Language skills (a2)		.619			
Written (a3)		.710			
Administration according to law (a4)		.576			
Innovation ability (a5)		.698			
Information collection ability (a6)		.666			
Research ability (a7)		.779			
Adaptability (a8)		.576			
Analysis and judgment (a9)		.685			
Interpersonal skills (a10)		.445			
Attitude spirit					
Service (a11)	.680				
Passion and patience (a12)	.767				
Principle (a13)	.760				
Careful (a14)	.661				
Learning spirit (a15)	.482				
Professionalism (a16)	.605				
Self-confidence (a17)	.642				
Professional Ethics (a18)	.710				
Initiative (a19)	.679				
Fairness (a20)	.683				
Rationality (a24)	.557				
Thinking mode					
Policy sensitivity (a21)					.604
Comprehension (a22)					.505
Open mind (a23)					.588
Team building					
Communication and coordination (a25)			.485		
Leadership (a26)			.674		
Teamwork (a27)			.600		
Organization planning ability (a28)			.600		
Strategic awareness (a29)			.655		
Knowing workers (a30)			.682		
Influence (a31)			.745		
Relationship maintenance (a32)			.730		
knowledge					
Expertise (a33)				.566	
Legal knowledge (a34)				.635	
Economic management knowledge (a35)				.662	
Entrepreneurial knowledge (a36)				.649	
Human Resource Knowledge (a37)				.651	
Extraction method: the main component. Rotation method: Kaiser-standardized orthogonal rotation method.					

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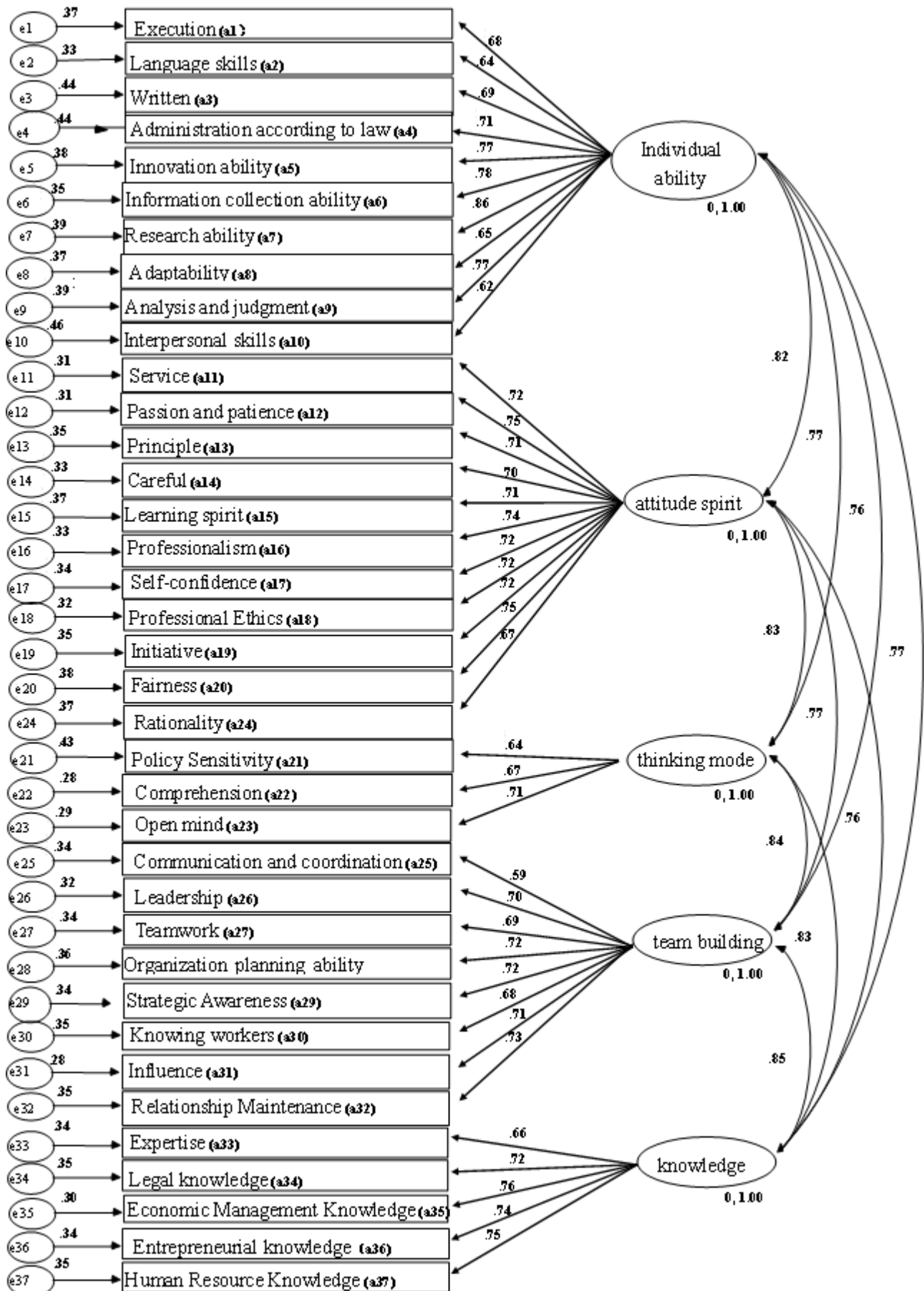
### 3.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Using AMOS7.0 software for confirmatory factor analysis, based on exploratory factor analysis to verify the conclusions. Each index path coefficient is greater than 0.5, less than 1, using ML to fit the model, the fitting index as shown in Table 7. ML is less than 20, the chi-squared value is large because of the large number of samples, so only considering that the

ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom is less than 3, all the other indexes meet the fitting standard, TLI is close to 0.90 and the fitting coefficient can be Accepted, the model is ideal. It can be seen that the grass-roots public employment service personnel explain that the competency questionnaire consists of five dimensions, that is, individual ability, attitude, thinking mode, team building and knowledge.

**Table 7: CFA results**

Factor Description	X <sup>2</sup> /df	IFI	P	RMR	SRMR	RMSEA	TLI	CFI
Personal ability, attitude, thinking mode, team building, knowledge	2.244	.906	.000	.039	.0812	.065	.898	.905



**Figure 1:** Model of the competency structure equation of grassroots public employment service personnel

**3.4 Reliability test analysis**

In this paper, Hotelling T square test and Cronbach method were used to test the consistency level of the questionnaire. The results showed that the T square of Hotelling was 711.783,  $F=18.436$ ,  $P<0.0001$ , which reflected that the average score of the item was equally good, that is, there was

an intrinsic correlation between the items, and had a good repeatability measurement effect. Cronbach alpha = 0.973, which indicates that the reliability of the scale item is very high, and the actual score can be obtained. The reliability parameters of each dimension are shown in table 8.

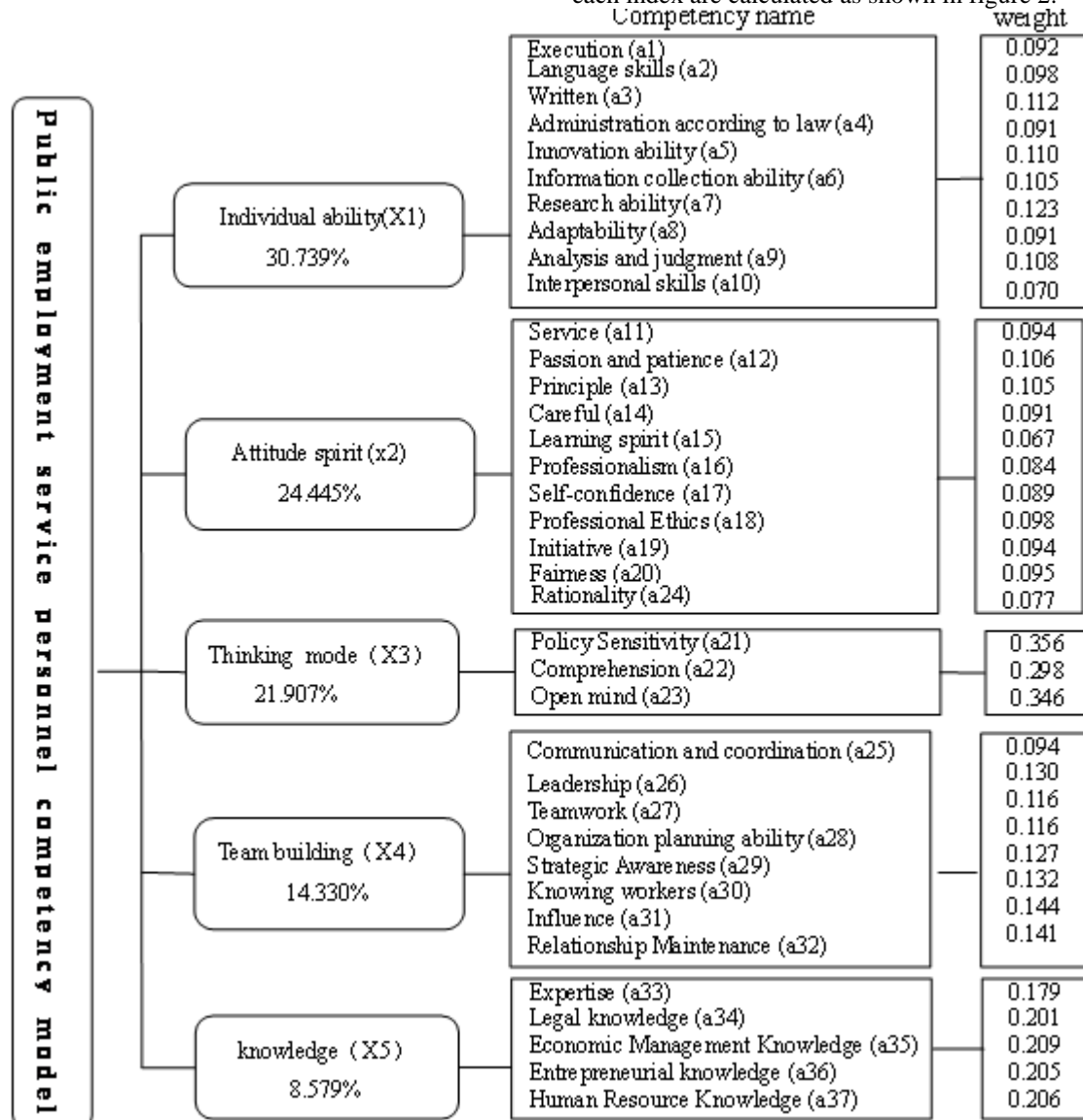
**Table 8:** Analysis of competency questionnaire of grassroots public employment service personnel

The reliability parameters	The competency of grassroots public employment service personnel				
	Individual ability	Attitude spirit	Thinking mode	Teaming building	Knowledge
Cronbach's Alpha	.928	.940	.840	.919	.887
Cronbach's Alpha	.973				

Comprehensive inspection, grassroots public employment service personnel's ability quality questionnaire through qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis, got supports of exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis results, has the high reliability and validity.

**3.5 The weights and examples of each dimension of the competency model of grassroots public employment service personnel**

After the dimensions of the model and the indicators of each dimension are determined, the ability and quality of grassroots public employment service staff can be obtained through the empowerment of each dimension and index. The public factor reflects the influence degree of evaluation index on the evaluation target, and corresponds to the significance of weight value, so the factor loading after orthogonal rotation can be used as the weight of evaluation factor. This method of empowerment guarantees the independence of each dimension and avoids the subjective influence of the Delphi method and analytic hierarchy process. The weights of each index are calculated as shown in figure 2.



According to the weight, the competency score of grassroots public employment service personnel is calculated, as shown in formula (1).

$$Y = \sum_{i=1}^n (w_{ij}X_{ij}) = 30.739\%X_1 + 24.445\%X_2 + 21.907\%X_3 + 14.330\%X_4 + 8.579\%X_5 \quad \text{formula (1)}$$

While Y represents tong chuan city grassroots public employment service personnel the ability quality of the final score,  $w_{ij}$  represents the dimensions I the weight of the first item j ability quality,  $X_{ij}$  represents the dimensions I first j ability quality score.  $X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5$  respectively

represent individual ability, attitude spirit, thinking mode, team building, knowledge and five dimensions. The specific score calculation process of each dimension is as follows, where  $a_{ij}$  represents the specific score of each indicator.

$$\begin{aligned} X_2 &= 0.094a_{11} + 0.106a_{12} + 0.105a_{13} + 0.091a_{14} + 0.067a_{15} + 0.084a_{16} + 0.089a_{17} \\ &\quad + 0.098a_{18} + 0.094a_{19} + 0.095a_{20} + 0.077a_{24} \\ X_2 &= 0.094a_{11} + 0.106a_{12} + 0.105a_{13} + 0.091a_{14} + 0.067a_{15} + 0.084a_{16} + 0.089a_{17} \\ &\quad + 0.098a_{18} + 0.094a_{19} + 0.095a_{20} + 0.077a_{24} \\ X_3 &= 0.356a_{21} + 0.298a_{22} + 0.346a_{23} \\ X_4 &= 0.094a_{25} + 0.130a_{26} + 0.116a_{27} + 0.116a_{28} + 0.127a_{29} + 0.132a_{30} + 0.144a_{31} \\ &\quad + 0.141a_{32} \\ X_5 &= 0.179a_{33} + 0.201a_{34} + 0.209a_{35} + 0.205a_{36} + 0.206a_{37} \end{aligned}$$

formula (2)

For example, the specific scores of each index are shown in table 9. A, B, C three people the competency of the final score were 4.112, 4.343, 3.838, b got the highest score. If

A,B, C at the same time to apply for the public employment service personnel position, should employ B.

**Table 9:** The final score of competency and the score of each index

	a1	a2	a3	a4	a5	a6	a7	a8	a9	a10	a11	a12	a13	a14	a15	a16
A	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	5	4	3
B	5	5	5	5	3	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	4	4
C	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
	a17	a18	a19	a20	a21	a22	a23	a24	a25	a26	a27	a28	a29	a30	a31	a32
A	5	4	5	4	5	4	3	5	5	4	5	4	3	2	5	4
B	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	5
C	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	5	4	5	5	4	4
	a33	a34	a35	a36	a37	Final score Y										
A	5	3	4	5	2	4.112										
B	5	5	4	4	4	4.343										
C	4	4	3	3	3	3.838										

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Grassroots public employment service personnel's competency can be analyzed by individual ability, attitude spirit, thinking mode, team building and knowledge. Much more attention should be paid on the five aspects of cultivation and promotion during the process of selection, training and examination of public employment service personnel .

- 1) One is to focus on personal improvement. To enhance the efficiency of the public employment service personnel, strengthen the ability of writing and document management, and to be administrated in accordance with the law, and to develop and innovate. To deal with related matters according to the laws and regulations, to operate within the permitted scope of law and to enrich the service form and service contents. Improve the

information collection and processing capacity, improve investigate and research ability of public employment service personnel, timely grasp and release relevant information about labor supply and demand, and promote the matching of it. In addition, the public employment service personnel should also pay attention to the development of the analysis judgment ability and interpersonal skills, to provide employment service in the process of better understanding the needs of enterprises and employers, to adapt to the society puts forward new standard of new requirements for employment services.

- 2) Second, pay attention to the attitude spiritual cultivation. The public employment service personnel directly contact with the masses, holding an important task of bearing transmission, its behavior is the direct embodiment of government image, need to be more enthusiastic patience, taking the initiative to solve practical problems of grassroots workers. The triviality of basic public employment service requires the training of

meticulous, methodical, principled work habits and a fair and confident career concept. The learning spirit, as the driving force and source of improving service level, is the main way to improve the ability of grassroots public employment service personnel, and it should arouse enough attention.

- 3) Third, focus on exercise of thinking mode. Grassroots public employment service personnel should pay close attention to national policy and market changes in a timely manner to the influence of labor configuration, keep eyes open, and improve the ability of thinking and understanding, completes the labor flow guide and predict in advance.
- 4) Fourth, focus on team building. Improve the team's leadership and strategic consciousness, and make the macro plan for human resource development. Improve team coordination level and organization's planning ability, maintain team relationship and expand team influence. Raise people's employment level, promote the person-job fit.
- 5) Fifth, pay attention to the improvement of knowledge level. In addition to mastering the necessary professional knowledge and legal knowledge, public employment service personnel should also master relevant knowledge of economic management, entrepreneurship and human resources. Mastering the knowledge of economic management can help service staff better understand the development of labor market, so as to make rational allocation and planning of labor force. Mastering the knowledge of entrepreneurship helps the service personnel to carry out entrepreneurial guidance and training, and promote the implementation and development of "mass entrepreneurship and innovation"; The knowledge of human resources can help the service personnel to provide long-term help for job-seekers in the development of systematic human resources and career planning.

Aiming at the training direction of public employment service personnel competency above, this paper puts forward three feasible Suggestions: first, develop grassroots public employment service personnel service consciousness and the ability of autonomous learning, to strengthen the construction of incentive mechanism and supervision mechanism. Through effective incentive method, the grassroots public employment service staff can keep the enthusiasm of learning and take initiative to improve work performance. We will encourage grassroots public employment service personnel to make continuous progress through the supervision mechanism and administrate according to law. Second, strengthen skills training and promotion, regularly conduct grassroots public employment service personnel training work, improve its level of expertise and legal knowledge, enhance writing, oral expression and information gathering and other professional skills, improve staff's professional quality, encourage analysts qualification examination for professional information, provide professional support to public employment services. Third, give full play to the role of the appraisal feedback, through process management and periodic examination, unceasingly will feedback the result to the grass-roots public employment service personnel, in the process of promoting and improve every details, at the same time to the inspection results as references for salary increase and promotion, and

the whole public employment service quality improvement. From the perspective of competency and build grass-roots public employment service personnel's ability quality model, make the staff capacity building of scalability, and further using the factor analysis method to build up the construction of the public employment service personnel's ability evaluation system, to understand basic ability construction status quo of public employment service staff provides a general evaluation system, competency model in the grass-roots public employment service personnel recruitment and training process, the application of further practice test.

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