
LEADERSHIP AND CAPABILITIES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. The article presents an analysis of theoretical and methodological approaches to the development of leadership in the public service. At the same time, the analysis is based on the use of 14 OECD principles for developing leadership and capabilities. The arguments used are data from an in-depth and expert interview conducted by the authors within the framework of the program-targeted financing project IRN BR18574203 "Scientific and methodological substantiation of the processes of development of the civil service and transformation of the activities of government bodies in the context of the construction of the New Kazakhstan." The article concludes that it is important to pay attention to the formation of tools and practices that are directly connected, relational and intertwined with each other, with the structures of public organizations and the positions of leaders in their organizations.

Keywords: leadership, organizational culture, civil service, civil servants, innovations, competencies.

Аңдатпа. Мақалада мемлекеттік қызметтегі көшбасшылықты дамытудың теориялық және әдістемелік тәсілдеріне талдау жасалған. Бұл ретте талдау көшбасшылық пен мүмкіндіктерді дамыту үшін ЭЫДҰ 14 қағидатын пайдалануға негізделген. Пайдаланылған дәлелдер IRN BR18574203 «Мемлекеттік қызметті дамыту және мемлекеттік органдардың қызметін трансформациялау үдерістерін ғылыми-әдістемелік негіздеу» бағдарламалық-мақсаттық қаржыландыру жобасы аясында авторлар жүргізген терең және сарапшылық сұхбат деректері болып табылады. Органдары Жаңа Қазақстан құрылысы жағдайында». Мақалада қоғамдық ұйымдардың құрылымдарымен және олардың ұйымдарындағы басшылардың лауазымдарымен тікелей байланысты, өзара байланыста және бір-бірімен ұштасып жататын құралдар мен тәжірибелерді қалыптастыруға көңіл бөлу маңызды деп қорытындыланады.

Түйін сөздер: көшбасшылық, ұйымдастыру мәдениеті, мемлекеттік қызмет, мемлекеттік қызметкерлер, инновация, құзыреттер.

Аннотация. В статье представлен анализ теоретико-методологических подходов развития лидерства на государственной службе. При этом анализ построен на использовании 14 принципов ОЭСР по развитию лидерства и возможностей. В качестве аргументов используются данные глубинного и экспертного интервью, проведенного авторами в рамках проекта программно-целевого финансирования ИРН BR18574203 «Научно-методологическое обоснование процессов развития государственной службы и трансформация деятельности государственных органов в контексте строительства Нового Казахстана». В статье делается вывод, что важно уделять внимание формированию инструментов и практик, которые напрямую связаны, реляционны и переплетены друг с другом, со структурами общественных организаций и позициями лидеров в их организациях.

Ключевые слова: лидерство, организационная культура, государственная служба, государственные служащие, инновации, компетенции.

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Introduction

Recently, there has been a lot of talk about a new model for the development of the civil service of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The most important condition for the success of civil service reform is the correct choice of method for its implementation.

In general, the civil service of Kazakhstan corresponds to the so-called bureaucratic model of public administration, which is characterized by a hierarchical system of subordination and predictability.

It should be emphasized that the public sector, public policies, and public administration institutions guarantee the value for money accountability of public resources deployed to political decision makers, the media, societal interest groups, and the public. They also play an enabling role in many business life functions and constitute the fundamental conditions of a reasonable living and wellbeing. Finally, they provide public services for service users. Hence, a large portion of the purpose of public administration comes from public sector leadership. This is so because public organizations and institutions are run by leaders and managers in the public sector.

The roles and competencies of public administration leaders and managers, however, need to be rethought and reconceptualized given the new nature of political decision making, the nonlinearity of political processes, and the societal change factors (such as digitalization, the advancement of technology, robotics, ecommerce, the platform economy, and the demands for open government in particular). Additionally, there are numerous co-creation models in use, overwhelming financial constraints, and a multitude of co-creation models. This is because this rethinking is connected to the realities of cultivating leadership in the public sector.

Public value is created, safeguarded, and favorably impacted by civil servants. Nonetheless, there is rising worry that the public sector's operating environment and context are rapidly evolving, implying that public value creation cannot proceed in the

same manner as it has historically. This transition is occurring in several ways at once. On the demand side, the issues that civil services are attempting to resolve are becoming more complex and interconnected, and they are occurring in societies whose expectations and points of view are becoming more diverse. The systems and instruments of governance are becoming more digital, open, and networked on the supply side. It is necessary for civil workers to have the abilities to use new technologies that governments can access to solve increasingly complicated challenges in increasingly pluralistic communities.

Innovation is the lifeblood of organizations seeking to remain competitive and relevant in today's fast-paced world. Innovation leads to growth, makes things better and ensures long-term success. However, innovation does not happen in a vacuum; this requires a culture that supports and inspires creativity. This culture of creativity depends on leadership. In this article, we'll look at several ways that successful leadership can promote and support innovation within a governmental organization.

Leadership and innovation are related in several ways. Leaders set a goal and create a safe environment for employees to take risks. They provide resources, help their teams develop and inspire them. Innovative leaders have the qualities of adaptability, risk tolerance, vision and determination. Leaders must lead by example, support diverse teams, provide training and development, welcome and recognize innovation, and foster a culture of creativity.

Effective leaders that foster creativity frequently have traits like risk-taking, open-mindedness, excellent communication skills, and the capacity to uplift and inspire their colleagues.

By promoting open communication, offering tools and training, praising and rewarding creative solutions, and allocating time for testing and brainstorming, leaders may encourage creativity.

This article's primary research questions are: What are the essential characteristics of a leader who fosters innovation and creativity in the public

service?

How can team leaders foster an atmosphere that encourages innovation in their members?

Literature Review

Many of the objections leveled about New Public Management (NPM) are addressed by the value-based leadership, governance, and performance management paradigm that is presented in article Bao, G. et al. (2012). It offers a place to start when it comes to assisting public servants in addressing the conflicting values at the core of their work in a more deliberate, methodical, and thoughtful manner [1].

Network leadership is referred to as "the most dramatic trend" in public leadership by Morse and Buss [2]. They contend that the conventional view of government as a top-down bureaucracy is being replaced by leadership "across organizations within government as well as across sectors." This interest in network governance [3] evolved to include teamwork and collaboration, and it is this line of inquiry that offers the most insights into leadership. Collaborative governance is described as a method of collective decision-making "where one or more public agencies directly engages non-state stakeholders" in the "formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative" management of public programs or the "implementation of public policy" [4]. Whether competing stakeholders can cooperate with one another is the crucial question.

In the setting of modern administration, the critiques of the bureaucratic model are more apparent. These criticisms are typically connected to administrative changes and the current context's need for greater flexibility and agility. Critiques, however, have been around since the beginning. Robert King Merton [5], one of these writers, asserted that no organization could ever be fully rational, and that formalism falls short of Weber's description of depth. He also listed certain features of the bureaucratic model that he claimed interfered with efficiency by producing "bureaucratic dysfunctions."

According to Merton, these

dysfunctions are caused by internalizing rules and regulations (becoming objective rather than means); an excessive amount of formality and paperwork (because all communications must be documented and formalized); resistance to change (because an employee grows accustomed to stability and repetition of work and becomes resistant to change); the depersonalization of relationships (because impersonality diminishes relationships between members of the organization); categorization as the foundation of the decision-making process (because of the rigid hierarchy of authority, the person who makes the decision will always be the one who has the highest category); the display of signs of authority (using uniforms and tables, among other things, to demonstrate status of hierarchical position); the excessive adherence to routines and procedures (over time, the rules and routines become sacred to employees); and the challenges in providing customer service and resolving conflicts with the public (disregard of the public's specific and personal problems due to the standardization of care).

In the context of public services, the notion of organizational performance pertains to the outcomes attained by the organization considering its strategies, objectives, and goals, all of which are aimed at fulfilling the demands of stakeholders and citizens. Consequently, it appears that an organization's dedication is directly correlated with the user's assessment of the quality of public services. A larger view considers the impact of bureaucratic public administration on state performance.

Certain aspects of bureaucracy - like hiring civil workers based only on merit and exercising power impartially - have been scientifically connected to a few macroeconomic outcomes. The dedication of civil officials can play a critical role in the effective execution of national programs and the high functioning of bureaucracy. Several research were examined in terms of performance from the standpoint of bureaucratic public organizations. Based on individual behavior and organizational structures, these studies treated some aspects of the Weberian bureaucratic model as variables.

Turning to methods and tools for promoting leadership in the public service, we note the approach of Finnish authors Petri Virtanen and Marika Tammeaid. The book outlines the competencies, leadership abilities, and strategies necessary for effective governance, administration, and management of public organizations. It also offers tools, methodologies, and best practices for developing leadership in the public sector [6].

The implications of systemic changes are already present. The issues of communication and dialogue capacity, variety within and between organizational systems, new levels and intensity of machine-machine and machine-human interaction in the fields of ubiquitous robotics, the Internet of Intelligent Things and Artificial Intelligence, and the quality of participatory processes and participatory management skills call for an analytic treatise of the existing body of literature related to organizational and leadership theory - as well as new practical insight into developing and nurturing public sector leadership.

The OECD Working Group on Public Employment and Management (PEM) is responsible for work on leadership and capacity in the public service. PEM is a long-standing subgroup of the Public Management Committee that promotes effective governance by helping governments understand and shape the changing nature of public sector work, and delivering public benefit through skilled, committed and trusted public servants. Recent PEM research examines the skills and competencies required for a high-performing public service, and the types of human resource management (HRM) policies, systems and practices needed to attract, retain, develop and manage a high-quality public workforce. In addition, PEM creates and compiles comparative indicators of public sector employment and human resource management and assists governments by offering specific advice on public service reform [7].

The OECD Council's recommendations make it very evident how important a topic is and how it fits into the larger goals of society. They are founded on aspirational objectives and accepted

standards of good conduct. Recommendations resulting from the substantive work done in the OECD's committees may be adopted by the Council, the organization's governing body. International norms and standards, best practices, and policy guidelines are some of the final deliverables. Although recommendations are not legally enforceable, member nations are expected to make every effort to adopt them, and as such, they are having significant moral significance as statements of their political will.

When it comes to leadership in the media, it is usually about specific people. This is because much of the literature on leadership in general focuses on individual heroes. However, more recent literature has emerged on distributed or dispersed leadership. According to this view, a new type of public sector leadership needs to be created to respond to a changing context in which leadership across boundaries and authority is becoming increasingly important.

The most pressing issues facing society are recognized as complex and span the purview of many different agencies. These problems are now commonly referred to as "vicious" problems. These dire problems cannot be solved by one government agency alone. Collaboration between public and private sector organizations, voluntary organizations, communities and individuals is needed to address them.

Methodology

In carrying out the analysis, we used the methodological approaches of the OECD on Public Service Leadership and Capability.

There are 14 principles for a public service that is appropriate for its purpose, as stated in the OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability (PSLC). One of the recommendations is to build leadership competencies for creative policy and service design [8].

Three primary pillars comprise the Recommendation's 14 principles for a public service that is appropriate for its

intended use:

1. Values-driven culture and leadership,
2. Skilled and effective public

servants,

3. Responsive and adaptive public employment systems.

Table 1 - The OECD Recommendation on Public Service Leadership and Capability

Values-driven culture and leadership

- Define the values of the public service and promote values-based decision-making.
- Build leadership capability in the public service.
- Ensure an inclusive and safe public service that reflects the diversity of the society it represents.
- Build a proactive and innovative public service that takes a long-term perspective in the design and implementation of policy and services.

Skilled and effective public servants

- Continuously identify skills and competencies needed to transform political vision into services which deliver value to society.
- Attract and retain employees with the skills and competencies required from the labour market.
- Recruit, select and promote candidates through transparent, open and merit-based processes, to guarantee fair and equal treatment.
- Develop the necessary skills and competencies by creating a learning culture and environment in the public service.
- Assess, reward and recognise performance, talent and initiative.

Responsive and adaptive public employment systems

- Clarify institutional responsibilities for people management.
- Develop a long-term, strategic and systematic approach to people management based on evidence and inclusive planning.
- Set the necessary conditions for internal and external workforce mobility and adaptability to match skills with demand.
- Determine and offer transparent employment terms and conditions that appropriately match the functions of the position
- Ensure that employees have opportunities to contribute to the improvement of public service delivery and are engaged as partners in public service management issues.

Source: adapted from <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pem/recommendation-on-public-service-leadership-and-capability.htm>

We offer a survey to government employees. 10 942 civil servants took part in the survey (Bokayev&Amirova, 2023 [9], Bokayev et al., 2023 [10]). As part of the project, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with both internal experts from among the senior staff of the civil service. So, it is with external experts representing the academic environment, research, international and non-governmental organizations, consulting agencies and the quasi-public sector. For an objective interpretation of the results, the experts were divided into several groups representing public administration, the quasi-public sector, the private sector, public associations, the Astana hub in the field of civil service, representatives of scientific organizations and universities.

Analysis

Along with the economy, the public service is undergoing rapid changes in what it does and, more importantly, how it does it. This often requires new employees. This can be done either through the recruitment of new staff, training and development of existing staff, or using mobility schemes within the civil service or wider public service. Traditionally, the civil service has used a career model of human resource management that included entry-level recruitment, often using rigorous examinations and other selection procedures, and the development of specialized training for civil servants.

With the advent of new public administration came new skill requirements and long periods of training required to acquire some of these new skills. This has led to an increase in job-based hiring, especially in in-demand positions such as information technology specialists, data

scientists and others. This system has become dominant in many OECD countries.

Who are the leaders in the public sector? This is an essential subject because, when we approach public administration from an international viewpoint, institutional frameworks differ. Leaders in the public sector are no different from individuals who value public institutions differently.

Leaders in the public sector engage in a variety of jobs and activities overall. For example, they are related to predicting changes in the operating environment of public sector institutions (i.e., the balance of supply and demand for public services), planning, implementing, and evaluating public policies, leadership personalities and traits, adapting leadership styles to different situations, achieving organizational goals, fulfilling accountability roles, and assessing their own performance. The variations between national public policy frameworks and public organization structures have already been brought to the attention of management scholars.

Diverse political systems, administrative histories, administrative cultures, and economic environments - from harsh financial constraints and austerity measures to prosperous circumstances - all contribute to the unique characteristics of each nation.

The public administration system of Kazakhstan in this context is no exception. Currently, active work is underway to transform the civil service. The head of state sets clear strategic goals for reforming the civil service model and the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs acts as an active conductor of these processes.

At the same time, within the framework of in-depth and expert interviews, answering the question "What values are important for a civil servant in a fair Kazakhstan?" The following results were obtained. Experts note the need for legislative regulation of issues of values in the public service. Values must be interconnected with all processes of the public service: selection, promotion, assessment, training, talent management, rotation, motivation, remuneration, etc.

Experts identify patriotism as the most key value characteristic of a modern civil servant. In addition, the answers also included customer focus, integrity, empathy, honesty, ethics, professionalism, etc. At the same time, one of the experts suggests considering these values in the prism of three spheres: in relation to the state, the population and oneself.

Leadership theory recognizes the leader's ability to delegate authority. According to experts, civil servants should be managers, not analysts. Thus, analytical and research work is transferred to contract employees and employees of subordinate organizations and the quasi-public sector.

At the same time, within the state apparatus itself, from the political to the administrative level (department director), it is possible to delegate authority to resolve organizational or current issues, while strategic functions remain at the ministerial level.

At the same time, two experts expressed concerns about the unpreparedness of the current public administration system for the full launch of mechanisms for decentralization of functions and delegation of powers.

A range of issues regarding de-bureaucratization of the activities of the state apparatus was also considered. Most experts note that the work carried out did not produce the effect expected by society. This tool is not fully used and is limited to the provision of public services. While not enough attention is paid to restructuring the work of the state apparatus itself, including establishing internal and interdepartmental communications, transforming the thinking of civil servants (fear of punishments and mistakes). Thus, the paradigm shift that was expected when the Decree [11] was adopted did not occur.

Results

If we talk about the second block of OECD principles according to the Recommendation's 14 principles for a public service - Qualified and effective public servants, the results of in-depth and expert interviews show that:

- a significant portion of respondents in both cases (29.2% of respondents)

pointed to the problem of insufficient competence of officials;

- reforms should be carried out on a systematic basis (4.2% of respondents);

- “any reform, in my opinion, needs to be considered as a whole” (4.2% of respondents);

- reforms must be carried out consistently (4.2% of respondents);

- “there is a very good Concept for the development of public administration until 2030, and the leadership of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs just needs to dive in and, using a project approach, ensure the implementation of the Concept” (4.2% of respondents);

- it is necessary to strengthen interaction between government bodies, starting with an audit of legal acts that relate to these issues (4.2% of respondents);

- it is necessary to “create new growth points” (4.2% of respondents);

- we need management decisions that are aimed at a longer term, we have a “very short look into the future”, it is necessary to “scan the future”, as in the UAE and Singapore (4.2% of respondents);

- low quality of strategic planning and low level of strategic thinking of the government apparatus, lack of strategic vision (4.2% of respondents);

- it is necessary to develop the innovative potential of the public service; forecasting tools are not used, for example, foresight studies (4.2% of respondents);

- “it is necessary to change the paradigm of development of the civil service, first of all, the thinking of civil servants,” primarily through de-bureaucratization (8.3% of respondents);

- it is necessary to change the “paradigm of perception of the state apparatus and civil servants” (4.2% of respondents);

- “more implementation is needed” (4.2% of respondents)¹.

The ability to lead is the main distinguishing feature of a leader. In this regard, the main factors for the development of the civil service of the Republic of Kazakhstan are:

- interests of economic development;
- expressed and consistent political will of the country’s leadership;

- level of institutional support for the development of the public sector;

- low level of corruption;

- transparent organizational culture of the civil service;

- making decisions based on data.

29,2%	•a systematic and comprehensive approach to reforms is needed, not partial transformations, there are no institutional changes, the pace of reform is very low
12,5%	•there is a problem of aversion to change and resistance to transformation
16,7%	•insufficiently high quality of human capital, including those associated with shortcomings in the system of training and advanced training of personnel
8,3%	•the possibilities of delegation of powers and transfer of functions to another environment are not used
8,3%	•Poor evidence-based decision-making (research results, reviews of past experience, regular evaluation of industry programs)

Source: compiled by the authors based on an in-depth interview of government officials and experts within the framework of the IRN project BR18574203

Figure 1 - Directions for reforming the civil service: expert opinion

¹ Compiled by the authors based on an in-depth interview of government officials and experts within the framework of the IRN project BR18574203 “Scientific and methodological

substantiation of the processes of development of the civil service and transformation of the activities of government bodies in the context of the construction of New Kazakhstan”.

The third block of OECD principles is the block - Sensitive and adaptive public employment systems. Within the framework of this article, we do not touch upon the issues of professional civil servants but turn to the analysis of the institution of contract civil servants. In our opinion, this institution is more capable of taking on the role of leader and leading other civil servants in terms of clearly defined strategic or operational goals.

First, it should be noted that the contract service was included in five institutional reforms announced in 2015 [12]. The commonality of opinion among experts on this issue is their agreement with the necessity and timeliness of the institution of contract employees for the civil service system. However, its implementation is seen in two different planes: evolutionary and progressive.

The evolutionary approach is to preserve the current interpretation of the rules for attracting contract experts for narrow-profile tasks. This raises concerns:

- effectiveness, due to the limitation of the expert's actions within the framework of previously approved national projects;
- the effectiveness of interaction between such specialists and civil servants, due to the limited time of the contract itself and possible prejudices among government agency employees.

Therefore, one of the results of the work of a contract employee should be the transfer of knowledge to existing civil servants, and one of the necessary conditions should be the right to adjust the parameters of the implementation of a state's program within the approved goal on the principles of project management.

A progressive approach is associated

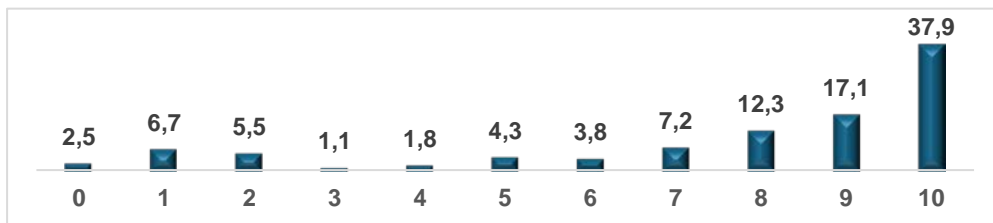
with the possible implementation of the contract system in the work of the civil service everywhere, while experts propose to consider the following aspects:

- transition to matrix structures within the framework of project management. In particular, the principles of agile with a focus on results rather than on process or form were mentioned;
- testing on the example of several government bodies (pilot project);
- grant the right to the government body to determine the qualification requirements for contract employees without the consent of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs;
- collegial and transparent selection process with the possible creation of a pool (personnel reserve);
- personal responsibility of the First heads of state bodies for the selection of personnel;
- recruit mid-level managers (heads of departments in akimats and heads of departments in ministries) to expert positions;

Thus, leadership in the public service can be considered, on the one hand, as evolutionary: the introduction of expertise into narrow-profile areas to achieve national interests.

And on the other hand, as progressive leadership, which is based on a flexible structure of the civil service, providing for a compact government apparatus of key leadership positions and hired project managers and specialists.

At the same time, the survey results show that civil servants highly assess their leadership competencies: more than half of the respondents believe that their level of leadership is very high (67.3%) (Figure 2).



Source: compiled by the authors based on a survey of government officials within the framework of the IRN project BR18574203

Figure 2 - Self-Assessment of Public Servants' Leadership Competence

We developed regression models to explore the associations between leadership and innovation across various categories of public servants: self-assessment, peer assessment, and assessment of the head of the state agency. The findings indicate a strong association between leadership and innovation. Our regression models reveal that increased levels of leadership competencies among civil servants

correspond to greater innovation and creativity.

Three regression models showed strong associations between the variables. At the same time, for the leaders of the organization this association is more pronounced and with each increase of 1 point in the leadership competencies of the head of a government body, his initiative increases by 0.978 points (Table 2).

Table 2 - Regression Models for Leadership and Innovation

	Model 1. Self-Assessment	Model 2. Peer Assessment	Model 3. Assessment of the Head
Initiative	.9177527***	.9712042***	.9782423***
Intercept	.4202252	.1576814	.1600522
R-Squared	0.8169	0.9304	0.9511
Number of Observation	10,942	10,942	10,942

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Source: compiled by the authors based on a survey of government officials within the framework of the IRN project BR18574203

Conclusions

Today's public administration professionals oversee naturally fractal organizations, which are ingrained in society through a range of mutually beneficial collaboration and interest networks as well as dissolved organizational borders.

Public leaders now face new demands and problems as a result of the fractal character of public organizations, overall organizational and policy interdependence, and the gradual replacement of hierarchical organizations. It is imperative that this matter be approached and examined from the standpoint of actual public sector leadership. In the field of public administration, a paradigm shift is taking place that calls for a drastic departure from accepted ideas of organization and leadership. This transformation will also have an impact on effective leadership styles and techniques for developing leaders. The leadership in the civil service that is covered in this article is therefore

viewed as a kind of living organism that is a component of the policy process cycle, transforming the results of political agenda-setting decision-making into the execution of administrative measures and the provision of public services.

There is a well-known phrase "Leaders are not born but made." In this regard, it is important to pay attention to the formation of tools and practices that are directly connected, relational and intertwined with each other, with the structures of public organizations and the positions of leaders in their organizations. These are, for example, principles of hiring, job rotation and change mechanisms, and job-based requirements that provide the operational framework for public sector managers to lead people. Thus, structural learning mechanisms are built into public organizations in the form of rules, norms, and practices associated with organizational by dynamic learning mechanisms we mean the content of leadership development tools derived primarily from the changing operating environment, from leaders' own

experiences, from leaders' personalities, from the learning-by-doing approach to leadership development, and from how leaders learn and are unlearning.

Learning mechanisms are included and embedded in human interaction, communication, learning patterns, and cognitive abilities. In practice, these aspects of development tend to be intertwined.

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