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Factors Determining the Development of the Civil Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan

*Aigul Kosherbayeva¹, Baurzhan Bokayev²,
Zulfiya Torebekova³, Aigerim Amirova⁴*

Abstract

The civil service in the Republic of Kazakhstan is undergoing significant transformations in response to emerging demands and challenges. This study investigates the factors influencing civil service development effectiveness, focusing on both internal and external comparative analyses. We identify critical determinants shaping the civil service system, utilizing secondary data and expert interviews (N=24). Key findings highlight that political will is essential for fostering a modern civil service aligned with fundamental principles of transparency, accountability, and efficiency. Despite some progress in anti-corruption measures and regulatory quality, obstacles still need to be addressed, including a lack of transparency in processes and issues related to employee remuneration and work conditions. Furthermore, political stability and social factors, such as the professionalization of the civil service and the attractiveness of public sector careers, significantly impact reform outcomes. Economic

1 Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.

2 The Center for Analytical Research and Evaluation of The Supreme Audit Chamber of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, the Republic of Kazakhstan.

3 The Center for Analytical Research and Evaluation of The Supreme Audit Chamber of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, the Republic of Kazakhstan.

4 The Center for Analytical Research and Evaluation of The Supreme Audit Chamber of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Astana, the Republic of Kazakhstan.

considerations, including wage disparities and budgetary constraints, also play a crucial role. Finally, technological advancements present opportunities and challenges, particularly in digital transformation and e-government initiatives. This study emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies that address these diverse factors to enhance the effectiveness and resilience of Kazakhstan's civil service.

Keywords:

civil service, external environment, PESTL analysis, public administration, public services

JEL Classification: P270, P210

1. Introduction

The study of civil service today points to the overall system and its specific components, making it a complex area of inquiry. The urgency of this issue cannot be overstated, as civil service is fundamental to public administration and influences national development.

Global experience shows that civil service reform is intricate, involving competing interests and numerous external and internal factors. Nonetheless, the core mission of the civil service remains: to serve the interests of society and the population.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan prioritized establishing a robust institutional structure for public administration. The consistent reforms focused on the efficient regulatory framework and management system development staffed with professional civil service employees.

Kazakhstan's institutional infrastructure is diverse and complex, comprising the legislative, executive, and judicial branches that support administrative systems. This framework fosters a professional civil service and upholds governance and accountability.

The World Bank worldwide government effectiveness ranking is a benchmark for assessing public service performance (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2023). Since 2006, Singapore has maintained the top rank, while Kazakhstan has improved significantly, moving from 127th in 2006 to 89th in 2022, reducing its gap with Singapore by 33%.

Kazakhstan is reforming its civil service to enhance governance and align with international standards.

Key elements compared with OECD recommendations include (OECD, 2018):

1. **Governance and Accountability:** Implementing principles of transparency and accountability similar to those in OECD countries.
2. **Personnel Policy and Professionalization:** Transitioning to a merit-based

system with competitive selections and ongoing training for civil servants.

3. **Service Efficiency and Quality:** Assessing public service efficiency and improving quality through new technologies.
4. **Anti-Corruption Efforts:** Establishing anti-corruption agencies and codes of conduct for civil servants.
5. **Citizen Participation:** Increasing citizen engagement in decision-making processes.
6. **Digitalization and Innovation:** Developing digital services to enhance governance accessibility and efficiency.

On February 26, 2021, the President approved the Concept for the Development of Public Administration in Kazakhstan until 2030, emphasizing a 'human-centric' model that prioritizes accountability to society (*Concept for the Development of Public Administration in Kazakhstan, 2021*).

Modernizing the civil service requires addressing challenges outlined in the 2030 Concept, including a decision-making model that allows broad citizen involvement. Legislative expansions of public councils and the recent Law on Public Control underscore this commitment.

Overall, the governance sub-index reflects the structures, enabling the state institutions to maintain the economy and society. Since 2018, Kazakhstan has made significant strides in governance quality, though it still trails behind top-ranking countries.

The purpose of this article is to determine factors influencing civil service performance in Kazakhstan and to answer the main research question:

- What factors contribute to the improvement of the quality of the civil service system of the Republic of Kazakhstan?

In response, we conducted expert interviews with 24 government officials and applied the PEST analysis framework. The research structure includes methodology, findings on civil service performance factors, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature review

The efficiency of the public service system has become an increasingly discussed topic. Research has been conducted on both public service reforms (Repucci, 2012; Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2015; Bokayev et al., 2021) and the measuring of public service performance (Boyne, 2003; Balabonienė & Večerskienė, 2015; Castelo & Gomes, 2023). One of the focuses of this research links to the factors influencing the implementation of the public service system. Studies refer to the ambiguous objectives of government institutions caused by various circumstances and needs (Wisniewski & Stewart, 2004; Peck & Perri, 2006; Bokayev et al., 2023).

Gerston (2004) identified several factors that facilitate public service implementation, including a sufficient budget, boilerplate provisions, agency constraints, and political controls over the bureaucracy. He clarified that having enough resources enables the creation of long-term planning, personnel arrangements, operational strategies, and the accomplishment of policy goals.

According to Peck and Perri (2006), two elements are necessary for public service: sufficient capabilities within and between organizations, including the ability for each organization to coordinate with the others and the willingness of key players to participate in utilizing those capabilities. These competencies could include understanding the nature of the policy and the implementation issue and overcoming the difficulty of adapting a broad policy commitment to particular local circumstances.

In the context of public services, the research on the effectiveness and productivity of civil service systems is also well established. Studies uphold specific characteristics and factors affecting the effectiveness of public service provision. For example, Mukandala and Wangwe (2023) detect four variables that explain the effectiveness of the civil service: capability, conduct and motivation, political interference, and tools and resources. The authors commend that resources and capacity mainly rely on the degree of economic development. From an institutional perspective, the most significant factors are political apparatus and incentive since they determine the guidelines that manage the interactions between the political system, the business sector, and the civil service.

Repucci (2012) argues that developing the civil service system requires an approach with a wide range of variables. The author highlights several common factors that impact the effectiveness of the public service system, including political will, patronage structures, weak institutions, sustainable transformation, and the absence of an analytical framework. According to Repucci (2012), one of the biggest challenges in the civil service system is a weak institutional structure, indicating the need for more technical capacity and champions with sufficient power. Another crucial aspect is that the civil service is a home serving rent-seekers who profit from their power to award contracts, jobs, public funds, and other opportunities.

The literature also emphasizes that people are the most critical resources in the public service system and a key factor for the effective delivery of public services (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, Osborne, S. (2020)). High-performing public institutions tend to have skillful upper-level professionals, strong professional cultures, value employees, and emphasize the importance of public services and policies that empower those public servants (Ali et al., 2021). Studies suggest that factors more crucial for influencing effective public servant performance include employee satisfaction, performance-related pay, and job security (Giauque et al., 2022).

The research also indicates that the effectiveness of the public service system is also determined by the interaction between leadership and staff (Hassan & Hatmaker, 2015). In addition, leadership style, employee development, and motivation, among other

factors, influence public service effectiveness (Amha & Brhane, 2020). Amha and Brhane (2020) suggest various factors, including personnel quality and workplace adaption, also play a role. Other scholars add that the public sector's overall effectiveness is impacted by the employee development system, which centers on career position, field stability, and the employee's professional experience (Saleem & Amin, 2013; Bynner, C., & Terje, A., 2021). Since enhancing staff development would reflect public sector efficiency, there is probably a correlation between government agency performance and the development of public servants (Hameed & Waheed, 2011; Pierre et al., 2024).

Finally, numerous studies have revealed that public service success relates to the effective utilization of resources (Amha & Brhane, 2020). The research refers to a constant demand for cost reduction and increased efficiency (Wright, 2001). The public sector is under increasing pressure to monitor and enhance performance due to issues related to both supply and demand (Curristine, 2013).

Recent studies in the public service system in Kazakhstan revealed that low wages, insufficient motivation, and competency levels are among the top factors affecting the overall performance of the public sector. Problems remain in the monetary support and competency development (Bokayev et al., 2023). Scholars also found that efforts to strengthen the nation's civil service have concentrated on institutional, structural, and legal reforms rather than paying enough attention to how they would affect the standard of public service delivery (Janenova & Knox, 2019).

The literature indicates that no single factor affects public service development and effectiveness; however, a combination of factors may positively impact the overall success of the public service system (Paais & Pattiruhu 2020). It was also suggested that the best way to determine what factors affect the public service system is by conducting empirical among public servants and public service users (Saleem & Amin, 2013).

3. Research design

This research was grounded on qualitative methods: expert interviews and content analysis of normative legal documents, strategic programs, and concepts related to public administration and civil service.

The research design is structured around a PESTL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Legal) analysis framework that examines the impact of various factors on the civil service system and its transformation.

The data for the PESTL analysis was collected from the following sources:

1. Presidential Decree of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Approval of the Concept for the Development of Public Administration in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030, dated February 26, 2021, No. 522. (*Presidential Decree of the*

Republic of Kazakhstan, 2021)

2. *Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2024). On approval of the Concept of development of the civil service of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2024 - 2029 (No. 602). (Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024)*
3. *Government of Kazakhstan. (2022). Ob-utverzhdennii-koncepcii-antikorrupcionnoj-politiki-respubliki-kazahstan-na-2022-2026-gody-i-vnesenii-izmenenij-v-nekotorye-ukazy-prezidenta-respubliki-kazahstan (Ukaz № 802).*
4. *Government of Kazakhstan. (2022). On the approval of the Follow-up Plan for Human Rights and the Rule of Law (No. 258).*
5. *National Report: On the State of Civil Service in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2018-2022. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2023)*
6. *Research Findings: Published on the Astana Hub's website in civil service (ACSH, ACSHa, ACSHb, ACSHc, ACSHd, 2020).*

An expert group was established to conduct the PESTL analysis, assessing each factor through expert interviews. Experts were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Possession of higher education.
2. At least three years of experience in civil service or significant interaction with civil servants (e.g., teaching, participation in work/project groups, collaborative applied research).
3. Publications within the last five years.
4. Experience in conducting PESTL analysis.

Interviews were conducted with 24 representatives from the legislative and executive branches, quasi-public and private sectors, public associations, research organizations, and universities. The expert panel included individuals with extensive experience and academic contributions in civil service and public administration, collectively bringing over 30 years of experience each. Many had held senior leadership roles, and several had published extensively, with publication counts exceeding 20. This diverse panel provided a comprehensive perspective, blending practical insights with scholarly analysis to address complex issues in public administration and governance (Table 1).

The interview guide utilized in this study consists of a comprehensive set of 17 questions, each strategically designed to explore various dimensions of public service in Kazakhstan. The questions are organized into key themes, including the overall state of public service, the effectiveness and necessity of reforms, current challenges, and the prospects for transformation. Respondents are first asked to rate the current state of public service on a scale from 1 to 10, which serves as a quantitative measure of public sentiment. It is followed by qualitative prompts encouraging participants to elaborate on their ratings, identify primary issues, and suggest critical areas for reform. This structured approach allows for a rich collection of insights into the perceptions and expectations surrounding public service in Kazakhstan.

In addition to assessing the interview responses, we applied a PESTL analysis framework (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, and Legal factors) to evaluate the findings comprehensively. Each of these dimensions was explored based on participant feedback, highlighting how political stability, economic conditions, social expectations, technological advancements, and legal frameworks impact the effectiveness of public service reforms. For instance, respondents pointed out the necessity of enhancing transparency and accountability in governance, reflecting a political context where public trust is paramount. Economic factors such as resource allocation and budget constraints were frequently mentioned as significant barriers to effective reform. In contrast, social factors emphasized the importance of community engagement and public perception of governmental efficiency. By integrating the findings from the interviews with the PESTL analysis, we gained a holistic understanding of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing the public service sector in Kazakhstan.

Table 1:
Expert Panel Overview: Fields of Expertise and Experience

Expert	Field of Expertise	Expertise Description
Expert 1	Civil Service, HRM, Public Policy	Over 30 years of experience in civil service, including senior positions. Author of scientific articles on civil service, public administration, and human capital.
Expert 2	Civil Service, Public Administration	Extensive experience in public service with over 50 scientific publications on public service issues.
Expert 3	Public Administration, Strategic Management, Civil Service, Project Management, Anticorruption	Over ten years of experience in civil service, including leadership roles. Author of papers on public administration and civil service. Experience in teaching public administration.
Expert 4	Public Policy, NGO, Civil Service	More than ten years of experience in civil service, including leadership roles. Experience in scientific work.
Expert 5	HRM, Public Policy, Organizational Culture	Over eight years of experience in civil service. Publications on public administration issues. Experience in teaching civil servants human resource management. Lecturer at a higher education institution.
Expert 6	Public Administration, Civil Service	Over ten years of experience as a civil servant. Experience in teaching at a higher educational institution.
Expert 7	Civil Service, Public Policy	Experience working in international organizations. Research issues of public administration and civil service.
Expert 8	HRM, Global Remuneration Professional	Experience in management positions.

Expert 9	Civil Service, Public Administration	Current civil servant and manager. Experience in teaching at a higher educational institution.
Expert 10	Strategic Planning, Public Administration	Current civil servant and manager.
Expert 11	Public Administration, Competencies of Civil Servants	Over 20 publications on training civil servants.
Expert 12	HRM, Public Policy, Organizational Culture	Over 15 years of experience in civil service. Focuses on human capital management within the civil service.
Expert 13	Civil Service, Anticorruption, Ethics	Active civil servant and leader. Publications on civil service development.
Expert 14	Public Policy, Local Governance	Experience in public policy and local governance.
Expert 15	Civil Service, Public Policy, Intergovernmental Communication	Over 15 years of experience in civil service and leadership roles. Experience teaching at higher education institutions.
Expert 16	Civil Service, Public Policy	Over 15 years of experience in civil service, including senior positions. Works with government agencies in an international organization.
Expert 17	Project Management, Civil Service, Public Administration	Over 20 years of experience in civil service. Has held leadership positions and led various projects.
Expert 18	Public Policy, Local Government, Civil Service, Competencies of Civil Servants	Experience in management positions and teaching civil servants.
Expert 19	HRM, Public Policy, Organizational Culture	Experience in management positions. Focus on human capital management.
Expert 20	Project Management, Civil Service	Experience in civil service with leadership roles.
Expert 21	NGO, Civil Service, Civil Society	Over 40 years of experience in civil service. Works with civil society.
Expert 22	Public Policy, Civil Society	Experience in leadership positions. Teaching civil servants and conducting sociological research on public policy issues.
Expert 23	Public Administration, Civil Service, Intergovernmental Communication	Over 30 years of experience in civil service, including senior positions and a parliamentary role.
Expert 24	Sustainable Development, Good Governance, Strategic Management	Focuses on sustainable development and strategic planning in public administration. Actively collaborates with government agencies.

Source: authors' own, 2024

However, one significant limitation of this study is that it may only capture some relevant factors influencing the public service sector in Kazakhstan. While the interview guide and subsequent PESTL analysis provide a structured approach to understanding key dimensions, certain nuanced aspects—such as regional variations in public service implementation and the impact of informal networks and cultural attitudes—may be overlooked. These factors can play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of reforms

and the overall public perception of government institutions. Consequently, the findings may not fully represent the complexity of the challenges faced in public service reform, highlighting the need for further research to explore these additional dimensions comprehensively.

4. Results: factors determining civil service performance in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Our research reveals significant and diverse factors influencing the development and performance of public service in Kazakhstan. Some of these factors reflect the results of previous research in this field.

4.1 Political factors

Political dynamics are crucial in shaping the civil service in Kazakhstan. Both secondary analyses and expert opinions indicate that the effectiveness of this sector hinges on political will, legislative initiatives, and the capacity to adapt to societal and economic changes. A key element is the political support for reforms and the recognition of the need for qualitative improvements. The country's strategic documents outline clear guidelines for civil service development, often informed by best practices from abroad. For instance, the Presidential Decree in July 2024 introduced a New Concept for the Development of the Civil Service until 2029, prioritizing a service-oriented, customer-focused civil service model that emphasizes proactive and results-driven approaches.

"The vision for the development of the civil service covers three main areas: the formation of a civil service model based on the principles of service and customer focus, the professionalization of the civil service, and the improvement and management of HR processes. The potential of the integrated information system 'E-kyzmet' will also be used for digital solutions in the civil service."

Experts have identified two political factors, positive and negative, influencing civil service development. Political stability is a major positive factor, fostering a robust institutional framework that facilitates strategic goals and enhances public trust. As one expert noted,

"Political stability in Kazakhstan plays a vital role in the development of the civil service by supporting the establishment of a strong institutional framework, enabling the pursuit of strategic goals, fostering public trust, and allowing for effective responses to challenges. These factors collectively contribute to a more professional, transparent, and accountable civil service, essential for the country's governance and public administration".

Conversely, concerns have been raised about the risk of falling into a “trap of the short game,” where policymakers focus on quick wins rather than pursuing deeper, systemic changes. This tendency may hinder long-term progress, as highlighted by one expert who stated, *“The trap of the short game and the illusion of quick wins can create conditions for a change in course and a ‘freeze’ of complete changes.”*

4.2 Anti-Corruption initiatives

According to the World Bank, Kazakhstan has undertaken various anti-corruption initiatives, yet their results have been uneven. While the country improved its score in the Control of Corruption dimension from 37.62% in 2018 to 48.58% in 2022, significant obstacles remain. The gap with leading countries has narrowed by almost 11 percentage points during this period, thanks to factors such as:

- The enactment of an anti-corruption strategy for 2022–2026, setting specific goals and institutional requirements.
- Joining the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) in 2020, allowed for external assessments and recommendations for enhancing the anti-corruption framework (Bektenov, O. (2022, October 17).
- Progress made by the Anti-Corruption Agency in promoting standards and fostering an anti-corruption culture.

4.3 Government effectiveness and regulatory quality

Kazakhstan scored 58.49 in government effectiveness, reflecting improved civil service quality and resistance to political pressure. Despite successes, experts highlighted challenges, particularly a need for more transparency in business processes. One interviewee expressed concerns about the opaque nature of operations, stating, *“There is no transparency... it feels like a constant race to complete tasks handed down from supervisors.”*

Regarding regulatory quality, Kazakhstan achieved a modest score of approximately -0.01123, indicating a moderately positive regulatory environment. The country attained a percentile rank of 52.83, suggesting a level of regulatory effectiveness better than around half of the nations evaluated by the World Bank.

4.4 Political stability and economic goals

Kazakhstan’s political stability score was relatively low at 32.55% in 2022, reflecting ongoing concerns about potential unrest. Nonetheless, the government has made strides to enhance stability through various reforms and responses to unrest. The country aims to double its GDP to \$450 billion by 2029, a goal supported by a comprehensive approach to business, infrastructure, and innovation.

Our analysis reaffirms the findings of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) regarding political stability, highlighting issues such as frequent changes in political leadership and insufficient continuity in developmental strategies. The civil

service is both an object and subject of change, as it is through this institution that the government implements its initiatives.

4.5 Social factors

Under social factors determining the development of the civil service in this research, we understand issues like remuneration and career opportunities.

The state acts in these areas. For example, in 2017, the Unified Competency Framework was used for the first time to select and promote civil servants of the Republic of Kazakhstan (OECD, 2018). These processes began to be carried out based on personal competencies assessment and commission decisions with the participation of independent experts and observers.

According to the experts' interview, we can stress the positive and negative social factors influencing the Republic of Kazakhstan's civil service development. The development of human capital, identified by experts as a positively influencing factor, is associated with the professionalization of the state apparatus. The experts also noted that the high proportion of specialists who received their education abroad and at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan demonstrate the highest professional competencies.

Among the negative factors, experts noted the unattractiveness of public service, work-related stress, overwork, and the like. One interviewee mentioned:

Among the negative factors, experts noted the unattractiveness of public service, work-related stress, overwork, etc. One interviewee mentioned: *"high levels of stress and the presence of unpaid overtime, and the like leads to staff turnover in government agencies with an insufficient incentive package."*

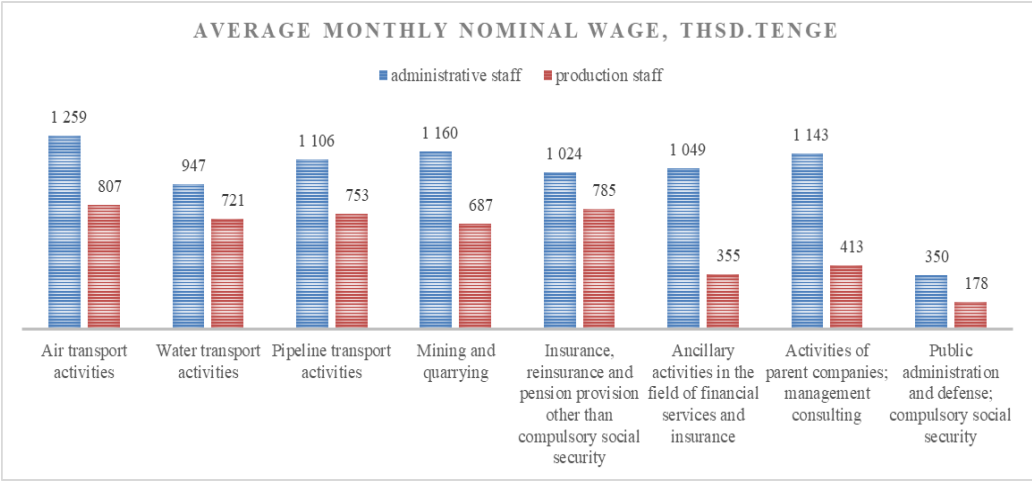
4.6 Economic factors influencing the Republic of Kazakhstan's civil service development

The economic elements that influence the development of the civil service in Kazakhstan include living expenses, pay scales[1], economic transformation, budgetary restrictions, and the overarching objectives of reducing poverty and raising living standards. Addressing these issues is essential for building an efficient and competent civil service.

The negative point is that due to the legislatively established remuneration and social guarantees system, less qualified employees tend to enter the civil service. Highly qualified employees prefer to work in the private sector, where wages depend on the volume of work. An analysis of data from the National Bureau of Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023 shows that the highest salaries are received by employees in the industry, particularly in pipeline and water transport and the country's mining industry. Employees of consulting companies receive the highest salaries. Against this background, the remuneration of

civil servants is 3 times less than the average monthly salary of the noted sectors of the Kazakh economy (Figure 7). In this regard, we can conclude that the public resources are insufficient to pay civil servants well.

Figure 7:
Average Monthly Nominal by type of activity



Source: compiled from <https://stat.gov.kz/ru/industries/labor-and-income/stat-wags/>

In countries with a positional system, various departments determine official salaries, considering allocated budgetary funds by collective agreements between the relevant government agency and the trade unions representing civil servants. It differs from countries with a career civil service system, where job salaries are set by law. Employees in countries with a career civil service system have less flexible and individualized pay systems than in countries with a positional civil service system, such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and some European Union countries.

At the same time, one of the experts noted: *“Development is affected by the lack of analysis of the quality and economic efficiency of individual projects and initiatives in the civil service system.”*

4.7 Technological factors influencing the Republic of Kazakhstan’s civil service development

Various technical variables considerably impact the development of the civil service in

the Republic of Kazakhstan, especially when considering e-government projects and digital transformation methods.

The key aspects investigated here are digital transformation and e-government, capacity building and digital skills, and infrastructure development.

Capacity building. To ensure efficient service delivery, the new civil service model strongly emphasizes human resources management and ongoing professional development for civil officials. One positive factor is the digitalization of recruitment for the civil service.

Digital Transformation and E-Government. The most important factors are the modernization of information systems, optimization of business processes, digital architecture of government agencies, and digitalization of public services. Kazakhstan ranks 24th among 193 countries in e-government development, indicating a high level of digitalization of public services. Improving access to information opens more prospects to civil society (The Astana Times, 2024, November). E-government development also includes initiatives to improve citizen access to information about the activities of government bodies. It helps to increase government transparency and accountability.

However, our analysis shows a technological gap in the development of information systems for government agencies and insufficient readiness of civil servants for the digital transformation of government bodies. At the same time, we can see high costs associated with digitalization in the absence of adequate control over economic efficiency and the like under rapid changes of innovations.

According to experts, in the context of further improvement of the recruitment and selection system of the civil service personnel of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the digital recruitment process has several advantages, including cost reduction and simplification of recruitment. One expert emphasizes:

“The use of digital recruitment makes it more optimal to post vacancies on the job portal before using artificial intelligence to select candidates by the organization requirements.”

The potential for technologization of a personnel reserve for public administration remains insufficiently fully exploited. One interviewee highlighted:

“Since the decisive condition for debureaucratization is the maximum digitalization of the activities of government agencies, it is necessary to pay special attention to the consolidation and growth of digital skills of personnel, primarily through various educational seminars and training within the framework of the general curriculum for all specialized universities “Digital Competencies for Public Administration.” It should consider the needs of individual government agencies and employees (classes according to individual plans). This problem is particularly relevant in connection with the automated

management of the entire operational flow of the civil service using the 'E-kyzmet' information system."

A human-centric approach to the organization of public administration also requires a service legal culture of the bureaucratic apparatus of central and local authorities based on changes in civil servants' legal psychology and ideology. The expert notes:

(...) "that the work carried out in implementing the Presidential Decree "On de-bureaucratization" did not produce the effect expected by society. This tool is not used to its full extent and is limited to the provision of public services. At the same time, insufficient attention is paid to restructuring the work of the state apparatus itself, including establishing internal and interdepartmental communications and transforming the thinking of civil servants (fear of punishment and mistakes). Thus, the expected paradigm shift when the Decree was adopted did not occur".

4.8 Legal factors influencing the Republic of Kazakhstan's civil service development

The civil service in the Republic of Kazakhstan has developed due to several legislative reasons that impact its overall efficacy, functioning, and structure. Key legal frameworks and principles guiding this evolution include legislative framework, principles governing civil service, and institutional framework. In 2018, Kazakhstan approved the Unified Competency Framework for Civil Servants – a personnel policy tool that establishes requirements for the availability of knowledge, skills, and abilities, differentiated for each position. In an attempt to improve accountability and expedite procedures, new hiring and personnel evaluation guidelines were added to the civil service statute in 2023. These modifications show a dedication to bringing civil service procedures up to date and ensuring they satisfy modern requirements.

Under the conditions of the new civil service model, monitoring has become a necessary tool for an objective assessment of the personnel management system's state. Thus, a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the activities of state management bodies and civil servants has become based on the implementation of effectiveness (legality, objectivity, reliability, transparency, and publicity).

A three-stage selection mechanism and mandatory training every three years have been implemented to guarantee that civil personnel are prepared for contemporary issues. Mentorship programs and a Class A management corps also aid professional growth.

A "Follow-up Plan for Human Rights and the Rule of Law," outlining steps to improve human rights safeguards and fortify the rule of law in Kazakhstan, was approved on April 28, 2022 (*Government of Kazakhstan, 2022*). The government's commitment to resolving human rights issues and enhancing the judicial system is reflected in this plan. In this regard, one interviewee highlighted:

“It is necessary to achieve legislative formalization of the regulations for conducting public examination of draft regulatory legal acts and documents of the state planning system. Accredited entities from among civil society organizations must participate in its implementation. It is necessary to legislatively enshrine the mechanisms for ensuring a tripartite partnership of state bodies, business and the non-governmental sector”.

Kazakhstan performed quite moderately in terms of the rule of law, ranking 65th out of 142 nations in the 2023 WJP Rule of Law Index. In the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, the nation ranks 4th out of 15, indicating some progress in the quality of its legal system from years earlier.

Kazakhstan’s rule of law in 2022 demonstrated some positive trends, particularly in civil justice, while facing significant challenges in areas such as high corruption offenses and imbalance between the measures taken to humanize criminal policy and its implementation. Experts also stress attention to the insufficient readiness of law enforcement officials for the service model of interaction with the population and the high level of bureaucracy in the rule-making process, which can lead to a lack of relationship between strategic planning and the budget process.

5. Discussion

Administrative reform and public service delivery effectiveness largely depend on human resources engaged in the civil service (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Ali et al., 2021). It is pivotal that public servants meet the demands placed on them by society. One of the solutions is radically changing approaches to organizing the work of government agencies and forming a corps of managers - developing leaders who can solve the following issues: rational distribution of powers, trust in managers at all levels, and increasing the role of performers (Swedish management model). The complexity of the civil service system, which requires a methodological approach with a wide range of activities, has also been highlighted by previous research (Repucci, 2012).

Contemporary studies emphasize the policies on empowering public servants and implementing performance-related pay that essentially contributes to increasing the overall effectiveness and cost reduction in public service (Amha & Brhane, 2020; Giaouque et al., 2022).

Likewise, leaders of governmental bodies in Kazakhstan have to pay attention to the transition to a market contract and project basis for the work of government agencies, subject to their decentralization and reduction. That can lead to the professionalization of civil service, which affects the governance efficiency and rule of law dimensions.

Experts noted that one tool for professionalizing the civil service could be the

formation and promotion of the employer's value proposition (a set of material and non-material benefits that a company can offer an employee/candidate in exchange for relevant skills) both for the civil service system as a whole and for individual government agencies in particular.

A crucial role in improving the quality of government work is flexible human resources and bureaucratic procedures that adapt to new requirements to ensure the correct implementation of public policies. In this regard, to promote the creation of a flexible public sector with integrated business work processes based on data, it seems appropriate to change the human resource management function, which is traditionally consistent with formal requirements. The public sector must have the ability to develop, attract and retain talent.

Based on the experience of other countries, it is necessary to find funds for reform by (1) reducing the state apparatus and its functions, (2) results-based budgeting, (3) decentralization of powers to provide universal services, (4) wider use of the project approach in public administration (for example, attracting specialists on a contract basis only for a specific project), and the like. Researchers identify two remuneration systems, material incentives and social security for civil servants, depending on the country's civil service model, whether career or positional. In countries with a career system, the civil service is based on the traditional principles of bureaucracy that existed several centuries ago, when the state takes responsibility for the social and material security of its employees (Germany, Japan) (Reichard & Schröter, 2021; Kim, H.-K., 1996; Watanabe, Y., 2017). The salaries of officials in such a system (for example, in Germany) depend mainly on the level of education and status, independent of the amount of work they perform (Demmke & Moilanen, 2021).

The findings suggest that the Kazakh Government must launch a project for rapid and mass training civil servants in the basics of digitalization, working with big data in general and new information systems in particular. It is vital to create a unified architecture of government agencies' information systems integrated with "electronic government." It can improve government-citizen interactions, reflecting the increase in the Voice and Accountability sub-index. Alongside this, the development of professional competencies of public servants is a crucial factor in enhancing the quality of public service delivery (Hameed & Waheed, 2011; Pierre et al., 2024).

At the end of our discussion, we have to note that each governmental body can make systematic and open work on internal analysis of corruption risks in government agencies with the involvement of the public in it. It is necessary to use the experience of creating such institutions in countries that have achieved significant success in combating corruption. The corruption and patronage structures have been detected as the most common factors hindering the effectiveness of the public service in developing states (Repucci, 2012).

Civil servants must avoid manual management of government agency activities through operational orders. There must be a real transition to monitoring government

body activities based on KPIs and project management principles, including resource management.

The preliminary estimates system is crucial because it allows for more rational expense planning (Australian experience, Public Service Reform Act 1984). Budget allocations that do not align with strategic initiatives must be limited by adjusting the budget according to the situation.

Thus, public sector reforms should correspond with the context of strategic socio-political transformations, and their objectives correlate to economic development priorities (Peck & Perri, 2006; Repucci, 2012). It has been the case in virtually all countries that have successfully modernized their civil service.

Finally, a complete audit of the entire civil service legal framework and the development of proposals for a package of legal regulations are needed. This would allow the implementation of systemic reform in the field.

6. Conclusion

Currently, Kazakhstan is implementing reforms in the civil service system, focusing on OECD best practices.

The priority goal of civil service development in the Republic of Kazakhstan, according to the results of the interviews, is the transition to a modern model of public administration adequate to the new conditions of society development. Accordingly, further reform of the civil service system must meet the following criteria:

- the service nature of the civil service combined with a high level of communication skills of civil servants;
- functional mechanisms and tools for interaction between government agencies and citizens;
- a developed infrastructure that allows citizens to access information and control.

Our analysis suggests that the most pivotal factors for the effective civil service system are legal foundation, innovative practices, E-Government initiatives, and human resource management.

A three-stage selection model for civil servants and mandatory training every three years ensure that they are well equipped to meet modern challenges. A Class A management corps and mentoring programs also contribute to the professional development of civil servants in Kazakhstan.

Technology integration in public administration fosters creative approaches that improve the civil service's efficacy and responsiveness. It entails implementing new

tools for service delivery and staff management in accordance with best international practices.

In light of the accomplishments of the civil service of Kazakhstan and the lessons learned, the civil service system should continue to evolve considering the following factors:

- The developing a proactive, goal-oriented, and de-bureaucratic civil service model.
- The professionally managed state apparatus with a practical combination of means and methods;
- The application of HR procedures and tools to the extent necessary to guarantee the proper and diligent performance of civil service duties, motivation, and retention of civil servants;
- The reduction of professional burnout.

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Appendix

Appendix 1:

	Control of Corruption			Government Effectiveness			Political Stability			Regulatory Quality			Rule of Law			Voice and Accountability		
	Country	Rank	Index	Country	Rank	Index	Country	Rank	Index	Country	Rank	Index	Country	Rank	Index	Country	Rank	Index
2018	Finland	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Greenland	1	100	Hong Kong SAR, China	1	100	Finland	1	100	Norway	1	100
	Denmark	2	99.52	Finland	2	99.52	Monaco	2	99.53	Singapore	2	99.52	Norway	2	99.52	New Zealand	2	99.51
	New Zealand	3	99.05	Switzerland	3	99.05	New Zealand	3	99.06	Netherlands	3	99.05	Switzerland	3	99.05	Switzerland	3	99.03
	Kazakhstan	132	37.62	Kazakhstan	104	50.95	Kazakhstan	118	44.81	Kazakhstan	87	59.05	Kazakhstan	141	33.33	Kazakhstan	176	15.05
2019	New Zealand	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Greenland	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Finland	1	100	Norway	1	100
	Denmark	2	99.52	Finland	2	99.52	Iceland	2	99.53	Hong Kong SAR, China	2	99.52	Norway	2	99.52	Finland	2	99.52
	Singapore	3	99.05	Switzerland	3	99.05	Liechtenstein	3	99.06	New Zealand	3	99.05	Switzerland	3	99.05	Sweden	3	99.03
	Kazakhstan	116	45.24	Kazakhstan	96	54.76	Kazakhstan	125	41.51	Kazakhstan	84	60.48	Kazakhstan	142	32.86	Kazakhstan	177	14.49
2020	Denmark	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Greenland	1	100	Singapore	1	100.00	Finland	1	100	Norway	1	100
	Finland	2	99.52	Monaco	2	99.52	Liechtenstein	2	99.53	New Zealand	2	99.52	Norway	2	99.52	Finland	2	99.52
	Singapore	3	99.05	Switzerland	3	99.05	Andorra	3	99.06	Finland	3	99.05	New Zealand	3	99.05	New Zealand	3	99.03
	Kazakhstan	125	40.95	Kazakhstan	94	55.71	Kazakhstan	132	38.21	Kazakhstan	92	56.67	Kazakhstan	135	36.19	Kazakhstan	174	15.94
2021	Denmark	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Greenland	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Finland	1	100	Norway	1	100
	Finland	2	99.52	Monaco	2	99.52	Cayman Islands	2	99.53	Luxembourg	2	99.52	Norway	2	99.52	Finland	2	99.52
	New Zealand	3	99.05	Switzerland	3	99.05	Liechtenstein	3	99.06	Finland	3	99.05	Denmark	3	99.05	New Zealand	3	99.03
	Kazakhstan	112	47.14	Kazakhstan	95	55.24	Kazakhstan	132	38.21	Kazakhstan	94	55.71	Kazakhstan	141	33.33	Kazakhstan	168	18.84
2022	Denmark	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Cayman Islands	1	100	Singapore	1	100	Finland	1	100	Norway	1	100
	Finland	2	99.53	Switzerland	2	99.53	Liechtenstein	2	99.53	Australia	2	99.53	Denmark	2	99.53	New Zealand	2	99.52
	New Zealand	3	99.06	Monaco	3	99.06	Jersey Channel Islands	3	99.06	New Zealand	3	99.06	Singapore	3	99.06	Switzerland	3	99.03
	Kazakhstan	108	48.58	Kazakhstan	88	58.49	Kazakhstan	144	32.55	Kazakhstan	100	52.83	Kazakhstan	137	35.85	Kazakhstan	168	19.81

Source: compiled from Kaufmann and Kraav (2023)