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ASPECTS OF EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF STATE BODIES IN THE DIRECTION OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. This article is devoted to the system of evaluating the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan in terms of personnel management. This assessment makes it possible to identify positive and negative trends in the activities of state bodies, identify systemic problems and develop practical recommendations for improving the efficiency of the activities of state bodies in the direction of personnel management. In Kazakhstan, the main approaches to the effective activities of state bodies are defined at the legislative level. Moreover, a methodology has been developed which states that the evaluation of these results is achieved via an objective assessment of the impact of the activities of central state bodies and local executive bodies on the development of the economy and society, alongside an analysis of the achievement of indicators of the results of the activities of the state body.

Based on the study of international experience and a comparative analysis of criteria and indicators for evaluating efficiency in Kazakhstan and foreign countries, this study substantiates conclusions and recommendations for improving the system for evaluating the effectiveness of government agencies in terms of the direction of personnel management.

Keywords: *methodology; evaluation; efficiency; public authority; personnel management.*

Reikšminiai žodžiai: metodologija; vertinimas; efektyvumas; viešoji valdžia; personalo valdymas.

Introduction

In recent years, many domestic and foreign researchers have confirmed a direct relationship between the efficiency and effectiveness of the activities of state bodies at the organizational development level, their organizational and corporate culture, and the behavior of civil servants. A well-built system of evaluating the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies plays an important role here, which should not be overloaded with a multitude of evaluation criteria and indicators leading to bureaucratic procedures.

State bodies are tasked with the transition from a bureaucratic model of relations between the state and society to a proactive service model (Decree of the President 2021). In this vein, the requirements for civil servants are increasing: they must be effective, adaptable, results-oriented and able to respond to the social needs of the population. The internal environment of the civil service plays an important role here, in which dignity, work and the time of civil servants are the main values which allow them to fully unleash their potent.

As part of the formation of a human-centered model of public administration, improving the quality of human resources and the professionalization of the state apparatus requires improving the corporate culture in public service (Decree of the President 2021).

A change in the quality of public services is directly influenced by organizational norms (culture). It is the behavior of employees serving the population that has a direct impact on the emotional perception of the service and on the assessment of its quality. Therefore, it is important for the state not only to monitor the implementation of regulations, but also to monitor the informal norms that have developed in the provision of services. The experience of departments whose quality of services is traditionally rated highly can later be disseminated in other departments and organizations (Kapoguzov and Lapina 2018).

It should be noted that the Canadian Management Accountability Framework (MAF) (Government of Canada, n.d.) was used in this study to develop an assessment of the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies in Kazakhstan.

This system is a key oversight tool used by the Treasury Canada Secretariat to ensure effective governance, the accountability of federal departments and agencies, and the allocation of resources to achieve results. To assess MAF, an analysis of reporting and the results of a survey of civil servants are used. This survey is conducted every three years on

the condition of anonymity, using a combined method of collecting information.

In the seven management areas of the MAF methodology, there are four main and three specific. In this study, we will focus on the direction of personnel management assessment. Thus, in the MAF system, personnel evaluation is carried out according to nine criteria, each of which can be broken down to contain several performance indicators.

The evaluation criteria for personnel management include various indicators, for example (Soltani et al. 2005; Methodology 2013): 1. involvement of civil servants; 2. senior management/leadership; 3. equality in employment; 4. professionalization of employees; 5. employee performance and talent management; 6. workload and workforce planning; 7. recruitment; 8. use of official languages; and 9. organizational conditions.

A study conducted by the Deloitte consulting company has identified the most important global trends in the field of human resource management, showing the global importance of research and the transformation of corporate culture. The transformation of culture becomes possible due to changes of individuality which transform into a collective value: the proper organization of work, which ensures the well-being of employees; the development of a human resource management strategy based on a deep understanding of the motives and values of people; and encouraging employee involvement through personal contributions (Deloitte 2021).

In order to increase the involvement and efficiency of human resources, the Civil Service of Kazakhstan should also pay attention to the issues of creating a favorable working environment in government agencies, supporting professional development, and protecting the labor rights of civil servants.

The assessment of personnel management is aimed at achieving high labor efficiency, effective use of human resources and the growth of staff involvement. In Canada, the analysis of the reporting and the results of the MAF survey of civil servants, where respondents are offered both an online questionnaire and the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire on paper and send it by mail, are used to conduct the assessment. The MAF survey of civil servants makes it possible to study the level of employee involvement in all state bodies and to identify problematic moments of interaction between management and performers (Aliyeva 2017; Afrasiabi et al. 2022).

Today, the Canadian reporting management system, recognized as one of the most well-known models, is used in the countries of the European Union, Great Britain, New Zealand, India, etc.

According to G. Bukert and D. Khaligan, human resource management implies, first of all, an open communication channel at a senior level with subordinates, and a threeway interaction, where the main actor appears: the consumer of public services, i.e., society. Social dialogue is an indispensable attribute of the development of public service according to European researchers. Results-based management is currently the most important tool for personnel management (Bouckaert and Halligan 2008), which allows a system of employee motivation for effective performance to be built (Clark 2005). According to H. Salem (2003), performance evaluation should be considered within the framework of the overall performance management system and be presented as a process of quantifying the effectiveness of actions. For Kazakhstan, it is also possible to take some tools from the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for evaluation. The European Common Assessment System is a common quality management tool developed for the public sector based on the excellence model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). CAF is a universal model that can be adapted to the specific requirements of the users of the model. In the CAF model, the survey of an organization's activities is carried out on the basis of the self-assessments of public institutions.

The CAF model includes 9 main criteria and 27 sub-criteria for evaluation: leadership; personnel; strategy and planning; cooperation and resources; processes; employee performance; results for consumers/citizens; results for society; and key performance results. In 2019, the CAF 2020 model was adopted, which was developed by the European Network of CAF Correspondents and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA). The new model retains the basic structure of CAF, but focuses on digitalization, sustainable development, innovation, interaction, cooperation (participation) and diversity. The CAF 2020 model aims to ensure that organizations achieve sustainable development by consistently meeting the needs of citizens/customers and the expectations of their stakeholders on a long-term basis (EUPAN 2020). For Kazakhstan, this approach is the highest priority and sets the vector for improving the operational assessment regarding the "interaction of a state body with individuals and legal entities." This also sets us the task of substantiating and allocating the "satisfaction of service recipients with the quality of public services" criterion to one of the main directions.

Since 2010, Kazakhstan has officially introduced a system of annual assessment of the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies. In our opinion, it is necessary to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of each body, taking into account the peculiarities of its functioning in modern conditions (Junusbekova 2015; Decree of the President 2010). In general, the experience of various countries in the formation of evaluation criteria has shown that they are all united by the prevalence of sociological measurements. The strengths of the methods used in foreign practice for assessing the activities of state bodies are the free access of citizens to information, the provision of integrated services based on digital technologies by state bodies, and active dialogue of citizens with state bodies, which leads to confidence-building in the government.

The purpose of this study is to develop recommendations for evaluating the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies in the direction of personnel management based on a study of the current system.

Research methodology

The basis of the research methodology is the analysis of regulatory legal documents concerning aspects of the system of annual assessment of the activities of state bodies in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The method of expert assessments with a sociological survey among civil servants of central state and local executive bodies, as well as the methods of logical and comparative analysis, are also used. Due to the lack of approved standardized questionnaires on the problem under study, as well as the fact that the questionnaire acts as a measuring tool for assessing the system of annual assessment of the activities of state bodies, we carried out an independent standardization of the questionnaire as follows.

We compiled a questionnaire containing 24 questions, of which one question was related to the level of awareness and involvement in the assessment system. Some questions were designed to identify the positive and negative aspects of the current assessment system; some were demographic (gender, age, work experience, field of activity); and some were completed in an open form where respondents had to provide their own answer. There were also questions that had a closed form, where respondents had to choose an answer from those proposed.

The sample size was 300 respondents who take part in the implementation of the assessment system in government bodies.

To ensure the content validity of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted, where 10 respondents from government agencies involved in the system for evaluating the effectiveness of government agencies acted as experts. All experts have participated in the assessment system of state bodies for more than 5 years. As a result of the pretest of the questionnaire, the wording of all questions was corrected. Instead of open-ended options, closed options were given, with respondents instructed to select one option. In addition, the sequence of questions in the questionnaire was changed, and their number was also reduced to 20.

This research methodology is based on a comparative analysis of the survey results. The comparative analysis of objects and phenomena involves the implementation of research on the basis of the existing theory at several levels: collecting and processing all the information received, systematizing information, distributing data into different categories and structuring the collected material, interpreting and evaluating the data obtained, and forming conclusions.

An important place in the study was given to the study of the experience of foreign countries in the practice of evaluating the effectiveness of administrative civil servants and state bodies, which contributed to a more accurate justification of the results obtained.

Research results and their discussion

In order to determine the level of effectiveness of the current assessment of the activities of state bodies in the direction of personnel management, the authors conducted an expert survey among civil servants who encountered the evaluation system in their practical work and employees of personnel management services of state bodies at the central and local levels.

Around 300 people took part in the survey, where: 19.4% of respondents were aged 25–30 years; 21% - 31-36 years; 18.4% - 37-42 years; 11.3% - 43-48 years; 13.9% - 49-54 years; and 16.1% - 55 years and older. Further, 45.8% of respondents had more than 10 years of experience and 77.1% held executive positions. The employees of personnel services of local executive bodies constituted 86.8% of respondents, demonstrating that they took an active part in the survey.

In general, respondents gave a positive assessment of the existing indicators of the methodology for assessing the effectiveness of the activities of state bodies in the direction of personnel management (hereinafter referred to as the evaluation methodology) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Effectiveness of indicators of the evaluation methodology in the direction of personnel management Source: Compiled by the authors

As follows from Figure 1, respondents considered the following to be the most effective indicators: Training of civil servants (73.5%); Quality staff (71.6%); Ethics and relationships in the team (74.8%); and Compliance with the principles of meritocracy (73.5%).

According to respondents, the indicators Net turnover (26.7%) and Exit interview (23.2%) were considered less effective.

In addition, 8% of respondents believed that the following indicators should be excluded from the assessment methodology due to the achievement of maximum points by the state body: Satisfaction with working conditions; Management practices in a state body; Strategic personnel planning; and Transparency of incentives in the state body.

In the form of a new indicator, respondents proposed Training of civil servants, which is also provided for in the assessment methodology. However, within the framework of this indicator, the number of employees trained in due time is estimated from among those subject to the allocated budget funds. At the same time, the effectiveness of training programs is not evaluated – that is, whether the acquired knowledge of the employee is applicable in their professional activity. In this regard, it is proposed to change the content of the indicator and conduct an assessment in this direction.

Along with this, respondents proposed new evaluation indicators: compliance with the rights of civil servants (provision of timely leave, flexible schedule); participation of civil servants in various public service projects; receipt of complaints from the staff of state bodies to the Agency for Civil Service Affairs; staff training; and compliance with meritocracy.

Considering that one of the main sources of information for the assessment is the reporting information provided by government agencies, respondents were asked about the clarity of the forms of reporting information specified in the assessment methodology. The analysis showed that the clarity of the reporting information forms was assessed by HR specialists as follows: very bad – 9.1%, bad – 6.2%; neither bad nor good – 22.7%; good – 26.6%; and very good – 35.4%. It is important to note that a low understanding of the forms of reporting information can lead to distortion of the data provided and, as a result, affect the reliability of the evaluation results. In this regard, we believe that it is necessary to fully automate the process of compiling reporting information in order to avoid these problems.

The survey showed that 10.2% of respondents did not take into account suggestions for improving indicators and evaluation procedures when making changes to the methodology of assessing respondents; 24.2% partially took them into account; 37.7% fully took them into account; and 27.4% did not make any changes. These results indicate that, in general, the proposals of state bodies are taken into account to a greater extent (61.9%) when making changes to the evaluation methodology.

According to the respondents' answers, the reporting information in state bodies is currently formed in the following ways: fully automated – 29.9%; partially automated – 49%; fully manual – 21.1%.

At the same time, on average the formation of reports requires the following length of time from respondents: less than one day – 29.2%; from one to three days – 50.6%; one week – 11.7%; more than one week – 8.4%.

In order to simplify the process of providing reporting information to respondents, an option is proposed in the form of a transition to the evaluating state body receiving reporting information not from the evaluated state bodies, but directly from information systems – 78.3% of respondents reacted positively to this proposal, and 21.7% reacted negatively.

According to the results of the survey, we can see that 40.6% of respondents expressed a desire to increase the frequency of the assessment, while 59.4% believed that it should be carried out on an annual basis. Thus, we can conclude that there is a possibility of using the Kazakhstan model of periodicity of assessment set out in the CAF methodology (EUPAN 2020).

During the survey, respondents noted that they faced a number of problems which eventually affected the results of the assessment of the state body (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Problems in the assessments of state bodies Source: Compiled by the authors

It follows from Figure 2 that, according to the civil servants surveyed, the most common problems in assessing the effectiveness of activities include: providing a large amount of reporting data (32.2%); lack of specialists in the department (27%); and the frequency (annual) of evaluation (25.1%).

The key to the success of any organization is not only the effectiveness of its staff, but also a high level of involvement of management in its activities. According to the survey, the degree of involvement of the management of the state body in the process of improving the efficiency of personnel management activities was assessed as follows (Figure 3):



Figure 3. The degree of management involvement in the evaluation process Source: Compiled by the authors

As the data in Figure 3 show, managers are not properly involved in the process of improving the efficiency of the personnel management process in all state bodies.

Along with this, the level of satisfaction of respondents with conducting explanatory activities and then consulting assistance to clarify the norms of the assessment methodology by the staff of the supervising state body was as follows: completely dissatisfied – 10.4%; dissatisfied – 8.1%; rather satisfied – 17.9%; satisfied – 24%; absolutely satisfied – 39.6%.



Figure 4. Perception of evaluation as an effective tool Source: Compiled by the authors

It should be noted that 48.7% of respondents fully agree with the statement that assessing the activities of state bodies regarding personnel management is an effective tool for improving the activities of state bodies.

The analysis of the results of the survey on the perception of evaluation as an effective tool showed that 13% of the polled civil servants do not agree with the statement that evaluation is an effective tool.

Summing up the results of the study in the direction of personnel management, it can be concluded that there are problems in the current human resource management system that negatively affect the effectiveness of public service. This is especially the case in terms of determining the necessary target indicators, methods for evaluating the effectiveness of government agencies, as well as the lack of strategic planning in the field of human resource management in government agencies.

The results of the analysis showed systemic problems, including those concerning the concept of the evaluation system itself, the current methodology for evaluating the activities of state bodies, and the methods of operational evaluation of a state agency in terms of the direction of personnel management.

According to these criteria, it is necessary to subsequently adjust the methodology of operational assessment of the activities of state bodies. The results of the evaluation system allow us to conclude that the initial goal of building internal processes in government agencies has been practically achieved. The next stage of implementation of the system will be the transition from process evaluation to results evaluation. The emphasis on performance indicators should form the basis of a new evaluation model. This approach is fully consistent with the requirements for the modernization of public administration and has an important socio-political effect. The ultimate goal of the assessment is not only to improve the mechanisms of public administration, but also to ensure the accountability of government agencies to society.

Conclusion

The analysis of the criteria of the methodology for evaluating the activities of state bodies in the direction of personnel management showed that, despite the existing shortcomings, the introduction of the methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of personnel management has significantly expanded the scope of the real picture of the state regarding the processes of personnel management of state bodies. This technique not only allowed us to see the internal processes, but also to concentrate the efforts of government agencies on solving priority tasks, such as the professionalization of personnel and increasing the openness of activities. The assessment of human resources management has contributed to the development of a culture of evaluation and accountability in the public administration system. To date, assessment is perceived by government agencies as an integral element of public administration.

However, despite positive results, there is ground for the further improvement of the organizational development of state bodies in terms of assessing human resources, labor organization, meritocracy and the organizational culture of state bodies:

- There is a formal bureaucratic approach to human resource management in government agencies. Subjectivism prevails over personal qualities in the selection and promotion of personnel. In this regard, the issue of legislative support for ongoing reforms is acute, including the introduction of the obligation of state bodies to develop and approve a human resource management strategy.
- 2. The information obtained during this analysis made it possible to comprehensively consider the existing problem areas in the civil service system at the following stages: adaptation of newly accepted administrative civil servants; mentoring; professional development of civil servants; selection of civil servants; increasing the prestige and competitiveness of the civil service through the formation of the employer's value proposition; and the importance of strategic planning and implementation of management tools based on results.
- 3. The main problem in the assessment, according to respondents, is the provision of a large amount of reporting data and a shortage of specialists. At the same time, it is particularly noted that the approved report forms are difficult to understand, and it takes more than one week for employees to prepare reporting data. The authors believe that these problems can be solved by fully automating the evaluation procedures.
- 4. Considering the fact that expert opinions with recommendations for improving activities in the direction of personnel management are sent to state bodies annually in the middle of the reporting period, the state body does not actually have time to implement them. In this regard, it is proposed to increase the timing and grounds for the assessment.

- 5. Based on Canada's experience with the MAF system, we propose the introduction of an automated data collection system and that an operational assessment of the activities of government agencies in electronic format (e-Assessment) be conducted.
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KAZACHSTANO VALSTYBINIŲ ĮSTAIGŲ PERSONALO VALDYMO VEIKLOS KRYPČIŲ EFEKTYVUMO VERTINIMO ASPEKTAI

Anotacija. Straipsnis skirtas Kazachstano Respublikos valstybinių institucijų veiklos efektyvumo vertinimo sistemai personalo valdymo požiūriu. Vertinimas leidžia nustatyti teigiamas ir neigiamas valstybės įstaigų veiklos tendencijas, išsiaiškinti sistemines problemas ir parengti praktines rekomendacijas valstybės įstaigų personalo valdymo veiklos efektyvumui gerinti. Kazachstane pagrindiniai požiūriai į efektyvią valstybės institucijų veiklą yra apibrėžti įstatymų leidybos lygmeniu, taip pat yra sukurta metodika, kurioje teigiama, kad rezultatų vertinimas sukuria prielaidas objektyviam centrinių valstybės institucijų ir vietos valdžios organizacijų veiklos įvertinimui. Tyrime, remiantis tarptautine patirtimi ir lyginamąja vertinamų kriterijų bei rodiklių analize, pagrindžiamos išvados ir rekomendacijos dėl to, kaip tobulinti Kazachstano valstybės įstaigų veiklos efektyvumo vertinimo sistemą.

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