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## PATIENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE QUALITY OF OBSTETRIC SERVICES IN A TERTIARY LEVEL OBSTETRIC FACILITY UNIT

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**Abstract.** *The growing recognition of patients' roles as key evaluators of service quality in the healthcare quality improvement process – as well as periodic media coverage of adverse birth experiences, such as postpartum depression, that place burdens on mothers and society in general – encourages a broader examination of the aspects that form the quality of midwifery services. The relevance of this topic is also determined by the emphasis on the role of the obstetric service sector in the Lithuanian Health Programme, which provides long-term directions for improving the quality of services provided to mothers. Quality assurance of maternity services is also one of the main scopes of the World Health Organization's activity. The aim of this study is to evaluate the attitudes of patients towards the quality of obstetric services provided. A quantitative survey was conducted at a tertiary level obstetric facility unit involving 309 women who had given birth. Respondents participated in the study by submitting a service quality evaluation questionnaire, and the total internal reliability of the questionnaire was 0.966. The research revealed that, although the quality of maternity services in the institution where the research was conducted was assessed as high, the need for women to actively participate in their health care process is not ensured sufficiently and communicative aspects of the provision of services can be improved. Women who undergo vaginal delivery and have episiotomies, as well as women who are not guaranteed early contact with the newborn immediately after giving birth, require special attention on behalf of the medical staff. This is first ensured by realizing the need for effective communication between the patient and healthcare specialists in order to improve the quality of the services provided. Assessing rapid changes in the healthcare service quality field and the constant emergence of new factors defining quality of services, it becomes obvious that standard quality assessment questionnaires for obstetric situations must be constantly reviewed, and quality assessment must be carried out periodically using questionnaires focused specifically on obstetrical practice.*

**Keywords:** *quality of services, patient, maternity care, quality assessment.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *paslaugų kokybė, pacientas, akušerija, kokybės vertinimas.*

## 1. Introduction

One of the criteria defining the quality of services as formulated by the World Health Organization (WHO) is a patient-oriented approach in accordance with the individual preferences, needs, and values of the patient (World Health Organization 2018a). In fact, the personal experience of patients receiving healthcare services is one of the three main components that define the quality of healthcare, along with the assessment of patient safety and clinical effectiveness. Moreover, the inclusion of patients and the public in the healthcare quality research process is essential for quality improvement and is a well-established principle (Locock et al. 2019). The role of the patient as the main evaluator of the quality of services, as well as the importance of a patient-oriented approach when providing them, is established in a number of legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania as one of the objectives for improving the quality of healthcare services in our country (LR SAM įsakymas, 2017).

Recently, it has become extremely important to examine the attitudes of pregnant women and mothers – as they are the main quality evaluators of obstetric services – after observing extremely high rates of postpartum depression and dissatisfaction with the quality of maternity services provided all over the country. Globally, the incidence of postpartum depression is 17.22%; however, significant cross-border and cross-cultural variations are recorded (Wang et al. 2021). There are no reliable statistics of postpartum depression cases in Lithuania. In response to this and other problems associated with the quality of obstetric services (a high incidence of obstetric violence, which is a fairly new concept in obstetrics and was first mentioned in the year 2010; an increase in home births, etc.), in 2018 the WHO published 12 principles of respectful maternity care (Table 1) aimed at improving both the technical and functional quality of the service, prioritizing a holistic, human rights-based approach. The WHO also provided recommendations necessary to ensure a positive birth experience (Table 1) (World Health Organization 2018b).

**Table 1.** The 12 WHO principles of respectful maternity care and recommendations for ensuring a positive birth experience

<b><i>Principles of respectful maternity care</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Being free from harm and mistreatment</li> <li>2. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality</li> <li>3. Preserving women's dignity</li> <li>4. Prospective provision of information and seeking informed consent</li> <li>5. Ensuring continuous access to family and community support</li> <li>6. Enhancing quality of physical environment and resources</li> <li>7. Providing equitable maternity care</li> <li>8. Engaging with effective communication</li> <li>9. Respecting women's choices that strengthen their capabilities to give birth</li> <li>10. Availability of competent and motivated human resources</li> <li>11. Provision of efficient and effective care</li> <li>12. Continuity of care</li> </ol>
<b><i>Recommendations for ensuring a positive birth experience</i></b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect-based maternity care</li> <li>2. Effective communication</li> <li>3. The possibility of having an attendant/attendants during the birth</li> <li>4. Continuity of care including antenatal, intranatal, postnatal care (provided by obstetricians)</li> </ol>

However, despite the fact that the recommendations provided by the WHO are widely available and should be applied in all health care systems and institutions (taking into account the obstetrical facilities of each country), the majority of obstetricians and obstetrician-gynecologists in Lithuania are not familiar with these provisions. Although compliance with many of these provisions can sometimes be taken for granted in obstetrical practice, some aspects, from the perspective of patients, require special attention in order to comprehensively improve the quality of services.

The main factor complicating the provision of healthcare services and causing dissatisfaction with the quality of services among patients in general is the lack of effective communication between patients and medical staff (Hudson Smith and Smith 2018; Chmiel 2019; Lilleheie et al. 2020; Odai-Afotey et al. 2020). Although there are some studies on the evaluation of the quality of services from the patient's perspective in obstetrics, aspects of communication between staff and pregnant women are also emphasized as causing the most problems (Lippke et al. 2019; Rowe et al. 2002). Considering the influence of negative childbirth experiences on the quality of life of mothers and the impact on the newborn – especially if the mother suffers from postpartum depression, which is often aggravated by factors related to childbirth care – research on this topic is certainly not sufficient. There is a lack of a complex assessment of the technical and functional quality-defining factors observed. It should also be mentioned that there is an increasing amount of evidence confirming the correlation between patients' experiences when receiving healthcare services and health outcomes (Hudson Smith and Smith 2018). Therefore, research on patient satisfaction with the quality of services directed towards a specific health care field must be conducted more often.

**Research aim:** to assess patients' (pregnant women) attitudes towards the quality of obstetric services provided.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research organization

Quantitative research using the questionnaire survey method was conducted in a health care facility unit providing tertiary obstetric services. In total, 364 completed questionnaires were received – a return rate of 91% – from which 309 questionnaires were used (55 questionnaires, or 15%, were not suitable due to the exclusion criteria).

### 2.2. Inclusion/exclusion criteria

The study included women who gave birth vaginally and by caesarean section (C-section). All respondents expressed their consent to participate in the study. Due to the circumstances complicating the assessment and determining a higher level of subjectivity, this study did not include patients who were diagnosed with coronavirus infection on admission or during hospitalization, did not speak/understand the Lithuanian language, or delivered a non-viable fetus (death of the fetus in the womb or during childbirth).

### 2.3. Research instrument

The questionnaire for the quality assessment of obstetric services was compiled by the authors of this research based on one of the most widely used questionnaires for assessing the quality of services provided by healthcare institutions – Ferguson et al. (1999). This form of questionnaire is used to evaluate technical (an external expression of quality related to available resources and the technological process of service provision) and functional (describing how the service

is provided and the circumstances of its provision) quality aspects as well as external efficiency, and allows researchers to estimate the overall quality of services. According to this questionnaire, four main blocks of questions were formed. However, although the components assessed by the Ferguson questionnaire are versatile and include the main factors of the service provision process, modifications to the study instrument taking into account the specifics of obstetrical practice were necessary. A number of studies investigating the satisfaction of pregnant women with the quality of services in maternity units use Prof. Bodil Wilde-Larsson's structured questionnaire "An intra-partial-specific QPP-questionnaire (QPP-1)." This questionnaire is specifically adapted for the evaluation of the quality of care during childbirth (Wilde-Larsson et al. 2010). However, although this questionnaire includes some of the main quality aspects in obstetrical practice (staff competence, physical environment, person-oriented approach, assessment of socio-cultural environment), since 2010, with the rapid development and evolution of patient-oriented, value-based healthcare and the respect-based concepts of maternity care, instruments for assessing satisfaction with the quality of services must also evolve. Moreover, taking into account the differences between various health systems even in the same geographical region and the specific nuances of clinical practice in each country or even in each healthcare unit, each country and healthcare organization should have its own service quality assessment instruments (Endeshaw 2021). Therefore, in this study, maintaining the structure of the questionnaires used in healthcare quality research (based on the Ferguson questionnaire), and taking into account the quality aspects prevailing in the questionnaires focused specifically on maternity care (based on the QPP-1 questionnaire), a 50-question survey was compiled by the authors, with a focus on the latest aspects that determine service quality. The instrument of this study consists of technical quality indicators (10 questions), functional quality indicators (24 questions), indicators allowing the evaluation of external efficiency (6 questions), and analysis of certain specific factors affecting patients' assessments (10 questions).

A five-point Likert scale was used to mark the statements related to aspects of service quality assessment in the questionnaire given to patients, where 0 represented "did not evaluate/did not apply to me"; 1 "completely disagree"; 2 "partially agree"; 3 "agree"; and 4 "completely agree". The internal reliability of the questionnaire scale was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each block of questions (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each block of questions

<b>Quantitative Research Questionnaire Scales and Subscales</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
TECHNICAL QUALITY	0.936
Environment of the maternity unit	0.878
Arrangement of the premises	0.858
Availability of services	0.768
Staff qualification/competence	0.976
FUNCTIONAL QUALITY	0.950
Communication with medical staff	0.950
Provision of information	0.912
Participation in decision-making (patient empowerment)	0.838

Staff empathy	0.885
Communication with other medical staff	0.759
SPECIFIC FACTORS AFFECTING THE ASSESSMENT	0.704
EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS	0.953

In all cases, Cronbach's alpha was  $>0.7$ , indicating the eligible internal compatibility of the questionnaire. The total internal reliability of the questionnaire was 0.966, so the research instrument was valid and suitable for this type of research. In order to check the comprehensibility of the questionnaire for the respondents participating in the study, a pilot study (10 forms) was conducted.

#### 2.4. Research ethics

Permission was obtained from the bioethics committee of the healthcare institution to conduct a survey of patients in the maternity department. Respondents were free to decide on their participation in the study. During the research, the anonymity of all respondents was ensured: information identifying the participants was not required, and during data analysis each respondent was given a unique number. The questionnaire was compiled so as not to violate the cultural, moral, or religious values of the participants.

#### 2.5. Data analysis methods

All research data was calculated using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software (version 20) and Microsoft Office Excel. Means and standard deviations (SD) were calculated for data expressed on an interval (Likert) scale, and frequencies in percent (%) were calculated for data expressed on an ordinal scale. In order to compare how the obtained results differed in different groups of respondents, the Mann–Whitney U criteria (when data distribution differed significantly from normal distribution and results were compared between two groups – two independent samples) and the Kruskal–Wallis H criteria (when data distribution from normal distribution differed significantly and results were compared between three or more groups – three or more independent samples) were calculated. In all cases, a difference with a reliability greater than 95% ( $p < 0.05$ ) was considered statistically significant.

### 3. Results and discussion

Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

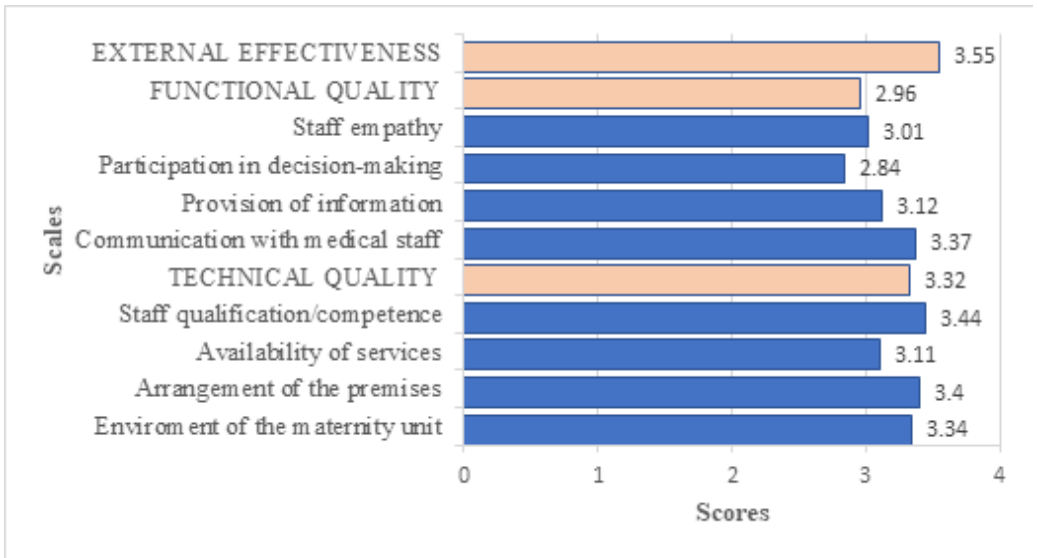
The research sample consisted of 309 pregnant women aged 19 to 47 (an average age of 32). Most of the respondents were urban residents (96%), had higher university education (84%), were employed (97%) and were married (73%) (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

<b>Characteristics</b>		<b>Patients (N = 309)</b>	
<b>Age</b>		19–47 years old 32.0 ± 5.6 years	
–		N, unit.	%
<b>Place of residence</b>	Countryside	12	3.9%
	Urban district	297	96.1%
<b>Education</b>	Unfinished high school	0	0.0%
	High school	4	1.3%
	Higher non-university	44	14.2%
	University	261	84.5%
<b>Social status</b>	Student (school or university)	5	1.6%
	Employed	299	96.8%
	Unemployed	5	1.6%
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	1	0.3%
	Partnership	81	26.2%
	Married	227	73.5%
	Divorced	0	0.0%

#### General evaluation of research scales from patients' perspectives

Of the three main blocks of questions, the respondents rated external efficiency (mean 3.55) and technical quality of services (mean 3.32) highest. Among the subscale of technical quality, staff qualification (mean 3.44) and arrangement of the premises (mean 3.40) were rated best. The lowest-rated subscale was the availability of services (mean 3.11) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Evaluating research scales from the patients’ perspective

According to many studies conducted both in Lithuania and worldwide, patients tend to rate aspects of technical quality better than those of functional quality (Panth and Kafle 2018; Mahfouz et al. 2020), especially in developed countries. After reviewing various research works in a global context, it was expected that respondents of this study rated functional quality of services (mean 2.96) less favorably than technical. Among the separate functional quality subscales, communication with medical staff (mean 3.37) and provision of information (mean 3.12) were rated highest, and participation in decision-making (mean 2.84) was rated lowest.

Evaluation of technical quality of services from patients’ perspective

When evaluating each of the analyzed aspects of technical quality (Table 4), with the exception of such indicators as hospital food, waiting time in the emergency department (availability of services) and the number of staff in a certain department, the vast majority of respondents evaluated statements defining aspects of technical quality favorably (“agree”) and very favorably (“completely agree”).

**Table 4.** Evaluation of technical quality indicators from patients’ perspectives

	M	SD	Not evaluated, not applicable	Completely disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Completely agree
<b>TECHNICAL QUALITY</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.49</b>					
<b>Environment of the maternity unit</b>	<b>3.34</b>	<b>0.52</b>					



The maternity unit has clear instructions (signs) helping patients to orient themselves	3.39	0.62	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%	46.3%	46.1%
Facilities enabling free movement in the maternity unit premises, depending on the condition, are provided (elevator, wheelchair, stairs)	3.48	0.51	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	51.2%	48.1%
The maternity unit is equipped with all the necessary treatment and care facilities	3.48	0.51	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	51.6%	47.8%
I am satisfied with the hospital food	3.01	0.73	0.0%	0.7%	24.2%	49.9%	25.2%
Arrangement of the premises	3.40	0.53					
Patients' privacy is ensured (screens, curtains, separate space in the emergency department, maternity wards)	3.39	0.59	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	50.2%	44.1%
Examination equipment and the hospital premises are kept clean	3.40	0.54	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	55.7%	42.0%
Availability of services	3.11	0.62					
I am satisfied with the waiting time in the emergency department (from arrival to examination)	2.98	0.74	0.0%	0.7%	26.7%	47.4%	25.2%
There are enough staff in the department	3.23	0.70	0.0%	0.0%	14.8%	46.8%	38.5%
Staff qualification/competence	3.44	0.52					
The staff (doctors) perform their professional duties perfectly	3.44	0.52	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	54.2%	44.8%
The staff (midwives) perform their professional duties perfectly	3.43	0.52	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	54.6%	44.1%

*M – mean; SD – standard deviation.*

It should be emphasized that respondents did not point out the lack of staff as a possible problematic aspect, although the lack of obstetrical staff is noticeable in many maternity units (including the one investigated in this case study). Of course, it is difficult for patients to assess such internal nuances of the institutions' activity during a short hospital stay, and the fact that women in labor do not notice a lack of staff indicates that the available resources in the particular maternity unit are distributed efficiently. It was established that, while assessing the environment of the obstetric unit, provision of the necessary treatment and care facilities along with those ensuring free movement in the unit were rated highest. Analyzing the subscale of the arrangement of the premises, cleanliness of medical equipment and premises (mean 3.40) was rated highest.

While analyzing the results of staff qualification and competence evaluation, no significant difference between the work quality of doctors and midwives was found – 99% of respondents

“agreed” and “completely agreed” with the statement that doctors perform their professional duties perfectly; in the case of midwives, 98.7% of respondents had the same opinion.

### 3.4. Evaluation of functional quality of services from patients’ perspectives

In this study, among the subscales of functional quality, patients rated communication with medical staff highest, while participation in decision-making was rated lowest (Table 5). Such findings do not oppose those of other researches, in which decision-making was evaluated poorly or worse compared to other quality indicators (Donate-Manzanares 2019). However, without undermining the importance of patient empowerment in decision-making, taking into account obstetric specifics, it is necessary to evaluate each clinical situation separately. Complex clinical situations need to be kept in mind, and principles such as patient welfare, timeliness of decisions, and benefit/harm assessment need to be taken into account. Patients in certain situations are not able to make an appropriate decision due to the need for specific knowledge or conditions complicating decision-making, which occur quite often in obstetrics.

**Table 5.** Evaluation of functional quality indicators from patients’ perspectives

	M	SD	Not evaluated, not applicable	Completely disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Completely agree
<b>FUNCTIONAL QUALITY</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>0.46</b>					
<b>Communication with medical staff</b>	<b>3.37</b>	<b>0.48</b>					
Doctors introduced themselves during the first visit and were kind	3.41	0.52	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	56.2%	42.1%
Midwives introduced themselves during the first visit and were kind	3.42	0.53	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	55.6%	42.8%
Doctors were respectful	3.40	0.55	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	54.9%	42.1%
Midwives were respectful	3.41	0.54	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	54.6%	42.8%
Doctors listened to me and did not interrupt me when I spoke	3.34	0.60	0.0%	0.0%	6.6%	53.4%	40.0%
Midwives listened to me and did not interrupt me when I spoke	3.36	0.56	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	56.1%	39.6%
The staff took into account the needs of the birth attendant during labor	3.34	0.49	10.0%	0.0%	0.7%	59.4%	30.0%
The staff were quick to respond to my complaints and needs during labor	3.32	0.51	0.7%	0.0%	2.3%	63.5%	33.5%
Provision of information	3.12	0.55					
Doctors answered all my questions	3.07	0.72	0.0%	0.0%	23.2%	47.1%	29.7%
Midwives answered all my questions	3.18	0.65	0.0%	0.0%	13.9%	55.1%	31.0%
I was informed before each examination	3.36	0.57	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	55.7%	39.6%
I was provided with information about the procedures	3.19	0.69	0.0%	0.0%	16.3%	49.6%	34.2%

I was informed about the steps taken during the procedures	3.27	0.61	0.0%	0.0%	9.0%	55.7%	35.3%
I was provided with information about the results of the examinations and procedures	3.04	0.70	0.0%	0.0%	23.2%	50.6%	26.2%
I was informed about the possibility of giving birth in different labor positions	2.61	0.80	11.6%	6.6%	33.2%	38.5%	10.1%
Participation in decision-making (patient empowerment)	2.84	0.63					
I was able to take an active role in making decisions about my maternity care	3.17	0.62	2.0%	0.0%	12.3%	58.0%	27.7%
I could choose the method of pain relief during labor	2.82	0.72	13.3%	1.3%	27.7%	43.9%	13.8%
I could choose to give birth in my preferred labor position	2.62	0.78	20.1%	5.3%	30.2%	36.0%	8.5%
It was possible to move freely during labor	2.52	0.87	16.9%	10.6%	30.3%	32.3%	9.8%
Staff empathy	3.01	0.49					
I felt safe during labor	3.22	0.58	0.0%	0.0%	8.1%	61.5%	30.3%
Doctors tried to understand my experience during labor	2.90	0.64	0.3%	0.0%	25.9%	58.4%	15.4%
Midwives tried to understand my experience during labor	2.91	0.63	0.3%	0.0%	25.4%	58.5%	15.8%
Doctors provided emotional support during labor	2.96	0.58	0.3%	0.0%	18.6%	66.2%	14.9%
Midwives provided emotional support during labor	3.03	0.54	0.3%	0.0%	12.8%	70.6%	16.3%

Women participating in this study rated communication with midwives slightly better than with doctors, but this difference was minimal. In general, over 93% of respondents evaluated communication with medical staff favorably (“agreed” and “completely agreed”), which leads to the conclusion that the situation in Lithuanian maternity units is better than observed on a global scale. For comparison, according to a study conducted in Poland, when assessing the aspects of communication between the patient and the staff, in 25% of cases inappropriate comments of staff towards pregnant women were reported (Baranowska et al. 2019). In Asian countries, according to various studies, verbal disrespectful communication is even more common – although the majority of women indicated that services were provided with respect, disrespectful behavior such as shouting (30%) and a lack of positive communication regarding pain relief (28%) was reported (Pathak and Ghimire 2020). In developing countries, the lack of respect in communication between women in labor and doctors is even more relevant, which is why some women even avoid giving birth in healthcare facilities (Okonofua et al. 2017).

Provision of information is another problematic aspect that often leads to patient dissatisfac-

tion with the quality of services. In this study, although women rated provision of information before examinations highest in this particular subscale, the worst score on the entire functional quality scale (mean 2.61) was assigned to the provision of information about the possibility to choose different labor positions. Regarding this possibility, 6.6% of the respondents completely disagreed that they were adequately informed, and 33.2% only partially agreed with the statement. It should be mentioned that the answer “I do not evaluate/it did not apply to me” was marked by women who gave birth surgically (most often via planned C-section, less often via urgent C-section), in which case providing such information makes no difference. Also, 23.2% of respondents only partially agreed that they were informed about the results of examinations and procedures. Such a score, taking into account the principle of fully informed consent, is more than high enough. These results presuppose that patients (in this case pregnant women) must actively ask staff about possible labor positions themselves and take an active interest in the results of their examinations. However, the principle of effective communication, especially taking into account the possible complexity of both the physical and psychological condition of women during labor, would be implemented only if the staff ensured the better awareness of the pregnant women on their own initiative. Of course, as mentioned before, it is necessary to evaluate the specific clinical situation, but the provision of information remains mandatory. Since fully informed consent as well as the ability to make decisions related to one's healthcare are emphasized in the twelve principles of respectful maternity care, these results should be taken into account when communicating with pregnant women as this would contribute to improving the quality of services.

When analyzing the worst rated aspect of the functional quality of services scale – participation in decision-making – we can see that women rated participation in decision-making quite well in general (mean 3.17). However, other statements were rated poorly (Table 5). Unfortunately, analyzing this aspect, it is especially important to take into account the clinical picture in each case, because the situation may not allow free movement during labor or giving birth in the desired labor position, even if the patient insists on it. The communication skills of the staff and the ability to clearly, patiently, and respectfully provide women with detailed information on why certain actions are impossible due to certain risk conditions for mother or fetus could and should help here. When maintaining necessary communication with women in such situations, it is imperative that women are actively included in the healthcare process, which would ensure the much-desired participation of pregnant women in decision-making by itself, and would allow dissatisfaction which may be caused by not meeting certain expectations related to the course of labor to be avoided. It should always be kept in mind when communicating with not only women in labor but also with patients in general that this research aspect is extremely important for them, because, as indicated in this study, most patients (95.2%) wanted to be the main decision makers in the healthcare process (Vedam et al. 2019).

The final investigated aspect of functional quality – staff empathy – is no less significant for patients, especially in obstetrics, and is often one of the final determinants of the quality of services received. Staff empathy is necessary to ensure effective communication between women in labor and doctors/midwives. According to this study, the feeling of safety during labor was evaluated highest. Women rated the level of empathy of doctors somewhat worse than of midwives (Table 5). A quarter of women participating in the study only partially agreed that both doctors and midwives try to understand what they experience during labor. As in other cases, when evaluating respondents' answers, the psychological state of each woman should be kept in mind, especially in the later stages of labor. The impact of pain on the evaluation of the quality of services must

also be taken into account, because the more pain a woman in labor experiences, and the longer the recovery period lasts, the more it affects satisfaction with the quality of services (Lippke et al. 2019). As a result, the assessment of the level of empathy experienced is extremely subjective; therefore, in order to achieve more reliable results, it is necessary to study the correlations with pain relief and factors of the postpartum period.

### 3.5. Evaluation of external effectiveness from patients' perspectives

In patient surveys, this indicator is usually one of the most important, as it indicates the overall level of patient satisfaction with the services and summarizes patients' experiences at the health facility. According to this study, 90.8% of respondents would recommend the obstetrics department of the investigated medical institution to a close acquaintance. Slightly fewer respondents would choose the same facility for their next birth, with 87.7% of respondents "agreeing" and "completely agreeing" with this statement (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Evaluation of external effectiveness from patients' perspectives

	M	SD	Not evaluated, not applicable	Completely disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Completely agrees
<b>EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>0.51</b>					
I am satisfied with the work quality of doctors in this maternity unit	3.59	0.51	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	40.3%	59.0%
I am satisfied with the work quality of midwives in this maternity unit	3.58	0.51	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	40.3%	58.7%
I am satisfied with the services in this maternity unit	3.61	0.52	0.3%	0.0%	1.7%	36.0%	62.0%
The quality of services in this maternity unit is high	3.66	0.49	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	32.3%	67.0%
I would choose this maternity unit for my next childbirth	3.42	0.70	0.0%	0.0%	12.3%	32.8%	54.9%
I would recommend this maternity unit to my relatives/friends	3.46	0.66	0.0%	0.0%	9.3%	35.2%	55.6%

The quality of the services at the maternity unit were rated highly by 99.3% of participants. Over 99% of respondents were also satisfied with the work of both doctors and midwives. Slightly more women reported higher satisfaction with the services provided by midwives.

### 3.6. The significance of specific factors affecting assessment when evaluating the quality of services

Assessment of the quality of services can be influenced by both factors directly (mode of delivery, duration of pregnancy, method of pain relief) and not directly (age of pregnant woman, various social factors) related to pregnancy and labor. For this research, factors that can be objectively assessed, that are analyzed in other scientific sources (providing the possibility of comparative analysis), and that are important for ensuring respectful maternity care were selected.

### **3.6.1. The influence of socio-demographic factors on the assessment of the quality of services**

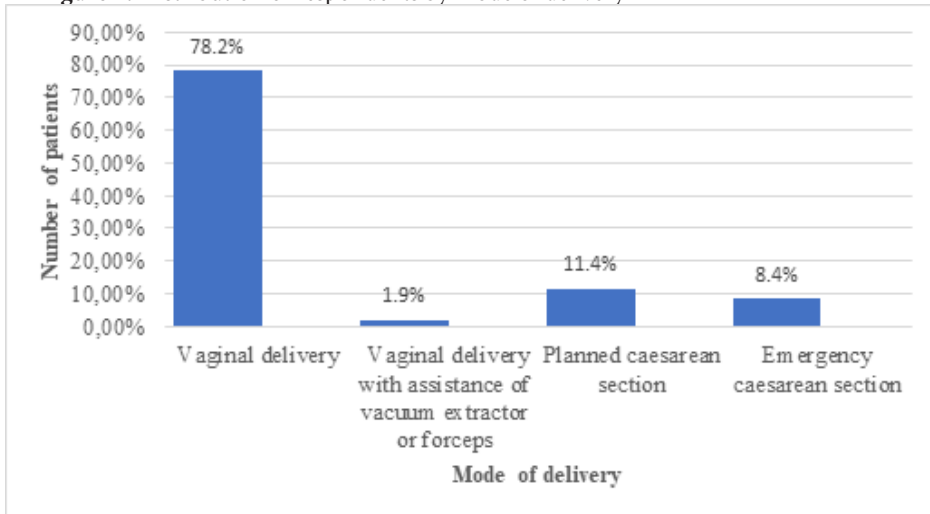
The results of studies examining the influence of socio-demographic factors on satisfaction with the quality of obstetric services are contradictory. Panth and Kafle (2018) found no statistically significant differences between women's satisfaction with the quality of maternity services and socio-demographic factors. Similarly, no differences were found in research conducted on the Italian population by Fumagalli et al. (2021), with a sample of 277 women. In contrast, other research also conducted on the Italian population revealed that although age did not affect satisfaction, more highly educated women reported higher satisfaction with quality of services (Tocchioni et al. 2018). In this study, no significant differences between women's age, marital status, and education level were detected.

### **3.6.2. The influence of the number of pregnancies on service quality assessment**

Among the women who participated in the study, 61.5% were pregnant for the first time, while 38.5% had had multiple pregnancies. According to the study of Fumagalli et al. (2021), women who were pregnant for the second time or more were more satisfied with the quality of services. Pathak and Ghimire (2020) found that women who had had multiple pregnancies reported receiving more timely care and were treated with more respect during labor. Women who were pregnant for the second time or more were also more satisfied with the quality of services according to a study conducted by Panth and Kafle (2018), although research results are also contradictory in this regard. Tocchioni et al. (2018), for example, found no significant correlation between the number of pregnancies and satisfaction with the quality of services. In this study, a statistically significant correlation between the number of pregnancies and the assessment of the quality of services was not observed.

### **3.6.3. The impact of mode of delivery on the assessment of the quality of services**

In this study, the majority of respondents underwent vaginal delivery (80.1%), of which in 1.9% of cases labor was terminated using instrumental labor assistance. C-sections occurred in 19.8% of the sample (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Distribution of respondents by mode of delivery

The results of this study show that women who underwent a planned C-section evaluated the qualifications and competence of the staff (aspects of technical quality), the provision of information, participation in decision-making, and staff empathy (aspects of functional quality) significantly higher than those who gave birth by other modes of delivery (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Satisfaction with the quality of services according to the mode of delivery

	Mode of delivery								H	p
	Vaginal delivery		Vaginal delivery with the assistance of a vacuum extractor or forceps		Planned caesarean section		Emergency caesarean section			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
TECHNICAL QUALITY	3.30	0.48	3.26	0.71	3.53	0.50	3.23	0.45	6.899	0.075
Environment of the health facility	3.32	0.52	3.38	0.70	3.50	0.54	3.28	0.47	3.514	0.319
Arrangement of the premises	3.39	0.53	3.33	0.75	3.57	0.53	3.31	0.49	4.621	0.202
Availability of services	3.08	0.61	2.83	0.93	3.37	0.62	3.02	0.56	7.541	0.057
Staff qualification/competence	3.41	0.52	3.50	0.55	3.66	0.48	3.33	0.47	8.118	0.044
FUNCTIONAL QUALITY	3.04	0.44	2.88	0.71	2.61	0.32	2.63	0.39	43.628	0.000
Communication with medical staff	3.37	0.47	3.34	0.76	3.54	0.45	3.23	0.48	7.350	0.062
Provision of information	3.06	0.53	2.95	0.87	3.51	0.52	3.09	0.53	20.719	0.000
Participation in decision-making (patient empowerment)	2.80	0.63	2.50	0.59	3.30	0.53	2.67	0.49	18.752	0.000

Staff empathy	2.98	0.49	2.83	0.63	3.28	0.49	2.90	0.41	12.975	0.005
EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS	3.52	0.52	3.56	0.70	3.73	0.44	3.62	0.48	6.061	0.109

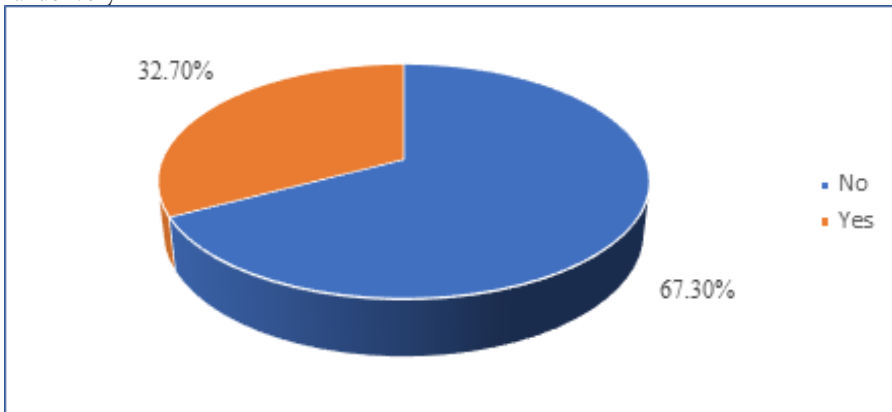
*H* – Kruskal–Wallis *H* test; *p* < 0.05.

A more positive assessment of functional quality and its individual aspects among women who had a planned C-section can be caused by psychological factors related to childbirth and its course. Women who are expected to have a planned C-section know the date of delivery in advance. Often, they have met the doctor performing the surgery during previous appointments and they clearly know the indications for surgical delivery. Therefore, compared to other groups of pregnant women, they are more likely to experience less anxiety and feelings of uncertainty before and during labor, which also leads to a more positive assessment of functional quality.

**3.6.4. The impact of birth canal condition after labor on the assessment of the quality of services**

In this study, perineal injuries (both episiotomy and rupture) were observed in 32.7% of cases (Figure 3). The frequency of episiotomy varies worldwide – 8% in the Netherlands, 14% in Great Britain, 50% in the USA – and in 14.9% of cases the incision tears further than the length of the cut (*Metodika*, 2019). We can see that this particular procedure is performed quite often in obstetrics, so it is necessary to determine its impact on the assessment of the quality of services.

**Figure 3.** Distribution of respondents according to the frequency of perineal injuries during vaginal delivery



Women who did not experience perineal injuries evaluated the general functional quality and communication with the medical staff significantly more positively compared to those who had perineal injuries during labor (Table 8).



**Table 8.** Satisfaction with the quality of services according to the frequency of perineal injuries among women who underwent vaginal delivery

	In case of vaginal delivery, were there any injuries to the birth canal?				<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
	No		Yes			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
TECHNICAL QUALITY	3.32	0.48	3.27	0.49	6943.0	0.434
Environment of the maternity unit	3.33	0.53	3.31	0.52	7182.5	0.723
Arrangement of the premises	3.37	0.55	3.40	0.52	7205.0	0.740
Availability of services	3.13	0.58	3.00	0.65	6559.0	0.128
Staff qualification/competence	3.46	0.50	3.36	0.54	6786.5	0.221
FUNCTIONAL QUALITY	3.09	0.40	2.97	0.50	6190.5	0.032
Communication with medical staff	3.42	0.45	3.29	0.50	6251.0	0.034
Provision of information	3.12	0.52	2.97	0.56	6183.0	0.030
Participation in decision-making (patient empowerment)	2.85	0.59	2.72	0.68	6331.5	0.056
Staff empathy	2.99	0.47	2.95	0.52	6921.0	0.402
EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS	3.57	0.50	3.45	0.55	6387.5	0.057

*U* – Mann–Whitney *U* criteria; *p* < 0.05.

It can be expected that pain and discomfort after labor associated with perineal injuries and certain restrictions after an episiotomy in order to speed up the healing process of the wound might undoubtedly lead to a less favorable quality assessment, taking into account the psychological and physical discomfort suffered. Fumagalli et al. (2021) also found that women who did not have labor-related perineal injuries evaluated the quality of services more positively. It should be remembered, however, that the very fact of tearing or cutting of the perineum is determined by the incongruity between perineal tissue elasticity and fetal body dimensions, so it does not by itself correlate with the quality of services, especially functional ones.

### 3.6.5. The impact of ensuring an early bond between mother and child immediately after delivery on the assessment of the quality of services

According to this study, the newborn was placed on the mother's chest immediately after birth in 75% of cases. After analyzing the results, it was found that the general functional quality was evaluated significantly more positively by women who had their newborn placed on their chest, compared to those who were not provided with this opportunity. Therefore, there is a need to improve communication between staff and pregnant women in order to reduce dissatisfaction with the quality of services related to the lack of early contact between mother and newborn, assuming that in all cases contact was limited because of medical reasons. It should be noted that studies on the impact of these certain circumstances on satisfaction with the quality of services

could not be found. Therefore, the importance of this aspect and its impact on the satisfaction with services should be included in research conducted in the future.

#### 4. Conclusions

1. This study revealed that technical quality of services was rated better than functional quality by women who gave birth. Of the functional quality subscales, the level of participation in decision-making was rated lowest, and this data does not oppose the results published by other authors. The growing role of patients as independent participants in the healthcare system determines the increasing need for patients to be actively engaged in all stages of their treatment process.

2. During this research, the importance of such universal aspects of healthcare as the fully informed consent of the patient, which is necessary for effective communication, and enabling the patient to participate in decision-making were highlighted. Participation in decision making was evaluated poorly in this study compared to other analyzed indicators, although evaluation was quite positive in the global context. These mentioned aspects should be guaranteed by staff on all occasions, as their provision is necessary for the implementation of the principles of respectful maternity care established by the WHO. Moreover, they are essential in order to improve the quality of maternity services in general.

3. This research allowed for the identification of groups of women who, given the circumstances, would probably rate the quality of services, especially functional ones, poorly. These are women who underwent vaginal delivery, women who had an episiotomy, and women who were not granted early contact with their newborn immediately after giving birth. Another important aspect is the likelihood of these groups of women to evaluate the quality of services more positively if they were more satisfied with the communication between themselves and the staff providing services. However, the impact of effective communication on the groups of women mentioned earlier should be further investigated.

4. Considering the great importance of subjective factors in the evaluation of the quality of services and with the emergence of new guidelines defining the quality of care, it is obvious that standard quality assessment questionnaires for assessing the quality of obstetric services do not provide sufficiently accurate information about the quality of services provided. Quality assessment questionnaires intended for obstetric facility units must be revised and supplemented with questions focused on obstetric specifics.

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Justina Katinaitė-Vaitkevičienė, Aleksandras Patapas

## PACIENČIŲ POŽIŪRIS Į AKUŠERINIŲ PASLAUGŲ KOKYBĘ TREČIOJO LYGIO AKUŠERINES PASLAUGAS TEIKIANČIAME STACIONARE

**Anotacija.** Augantis paciento kaip pagrindinio paslaugų kokybės vertintojo vaidmens pripažinimas kokybės gerinimo procese ir nuolatinis neigiamos gimdymo patirties (būklės, susijusios su neigiama patirtimi, pvz., pogimdyminė depresija ar kitokia našta) eskalavimas žiniasklaidoje tiek atskiriems individams, tiek visuomenei skatina plačiau nagrinėti su akušerinių paslaugų teikimo kokybe susijusius, ją formuojančius aspektus. Akušerinių paslaugų sektoriaus vaidmuo pabrėžiamas Lietuvos sveikatos programoje, kurioje numatomos ilgalaikės gimdyvėms teikiamų paslaugų kokybės tobulinimo kryptys. Akušerinių paslaugų kokybės užtikrinimo tematika yra viena prioritetinių Pasaulio sveikatos organizacijos veiklos kryptų. Šio tyrimo tikslas – įvertinti pacienčių (gimdyvių) požiūrį į teikiamų akušerinių paslaugų kokybę. Trečiojo lygio akušerines paslaugas teikiančioje sveikatos priežiūros įstaigoje buvo atliktas kiekybinis anketinis apklausos tyrimas. Tyrime dalyvavo 309 pagimdžiusios moterys, joms pateikta 50 klausimų paslaugų kokybės vertinimo anketa. Suminis vidinis klausimyno patikimumas – 0,966. Nustatyta, kad nors tiriamos įstaigos paslaugų kokybė vertinama kaip aukšta, tačiau moterų poreikis aktyviai dalyvauti savo sveikatos priežiūros procese realizuojamas nepakankamai, tobulintini komunikaciniai paslaugų teikimo aspektai. Išskirtos pa-

*cientių grupės, kurių priežiūrai, siekiant gerinti teikiamų paslaugų kokybę iš paciento perspektyvos, skirtinas ypatingas personalo dėmesys, pirmiausia realizuojant efektyvios komunikacijos tarp paciento ir paslaugas teikiančio personalo poreikį. Tai natūraliais gimdymo takais gimdžiusios moterys, kurioms atlikta epiziotomija, ir moterys, kurioms nebuvo užtikrintas ankstyvas kontaktas su naujagimiui iškart pagimdžius. Vertinant greitą paslaugų kokybę apibūdinančių veiksnių kaitą, atsirandant naujų kokybišką paslaugų teikimą apibrėžiančių faktorių, tampa akivaizdu, kad standartinės kokybės vertinimo anketos, skirtos vertinti akušerinių situacijų paslaugų kokybei, turi būti nuolat atnaujinamos, o kokybės vertinimas turi būti atliekamas periodiškai, pasitelkus vertinimo klausimynus, orientuotus į akušerijos kokybės specifiką.*

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## THE SOCIAL EFFICIENCY OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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**Abstract.** *This article considers the role and importance of public administration in the higher education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan as the main factor in socio-economic progress necessary to support a competitive research base on a global scale and to disseminate knowledge for the benefit of society. Education and science play an increasingly important role in the development of modern Kazakhstan. The number of years people spend on education is growing steadily, and this phenomenon is associated with the development of a knowledge-based economy. This article discusses development indicators and satisfaction with the public administration system of higher education based on sociological diagnostics. In many aspects, a paradoxical situation has developed regarding the attitudes of Kazakhstani society towards the state of the education system, which is reflected in the desire to provide children (or grandchildren) with a high level of education combined with the very low level of assessment of this education. In this paper, the measurement of indicators of the development of science and education is conducted based on the level of satisfaction, which is considered as an indicator of social quality based on sociological diagnostics. As a result of sociological diagnostics, problematic issues of the development of the higher education system in Kazakhstan are identified.*

**Keywords:** *education system, sociological diagnostics, public administration, state program.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *švietimo sistema, sociologinė diagnostika, viešasis administravimas, valstybinė programa.*

## **Introduction**

The evolution of the higher education system over the past several decades has been characterized by a particular focus on the topic of “efficiency,” defined as the ability to provide the maximum amount of educational services for a given budget. This discourse is gaining momentum at a time when government budgets are increasingly shrinking and, consequently, public investment in areas such as higher education is suffering from a sharp decline in the public resources allocated to it. At the same time, the expectations of citizens regarding the activities of higher education institutions are even higher than in the past (Hazelkorn 2015, 31–32). Societies believe that higher education institutions must educate their students to be great citizens of tomorrow’s world, a world characterized by the need for more sophisticated skills, the interaction between research and socioeconomic development, and a continuous cycle of innovation and transfer of knowledge from academia to external stakeholders. From this point of view, “doing more with less” is now an imperative that characterizes all public sector activities, including funding for higher education institutions. The implementation of one of the first experiments in complex sociological research and social diagnostics in the system of modern public administration of higher education made it possible to: (a) demonstrate the multidimensional nature of social technologies as a field of applied sociological knowledge, a way of implementing state management activities based on their rationalization and operationalization, and a method of state management of higher education institutions at the macro, meso and micro levels; (b) identify general and specific elements in the design and implementation of social technologies; and (c) substantiate the possibilities of the socio-technological approach in combining methods and developing tactics and strategies for transforming social objects in institutional, organizational and group parameters. These aspects contribute to the emergence of new positions in the understanding of theoretical, methodological and praxeological issues of social and technological support for the modern public administration of higher education.

## **Materials and Methods**

There is an extensive array of literature on measuring the performance of educational institutions, including various types of higher education. For detailed reviews, see De Witte and López-Torres (2017, 28–29), Johnes (2004) and Worthington (2001, 6–8). Despite the differences in the methods used for this purpose (i.e., parametric and non-parametric) and in the details of models’ specifications, all existing studies share common approaches to viewing higher education activities as using key resources (human and financial resources, facilities) for the “production” of important outputs such as education (graduates), research (publications) and knowledge transfer (patents, additional businesses, community events, etc.). Many studies have focused on the determinants of effectiveness – that is, looking at those factors which are statistically correlated with measured levels. However, the social effectiveness of this area remains unattended. In this regard, this study is aimed at determining the social effectiveness of the public administration of the higher education system.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate the importance of quantitative and qualitative methods of sociological diagnostics as tools for assessing the effectiveness of public administration

in the higher education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan

## Results

The sociological effectiveness of the public administration of higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan is determined by contradictions between the requirements of modern society that are implemented by state policy in the field of modernization of higher education, the need for the formation and implementation of education quality management systems, and the objective of forming the managerial competence of university leaders focusing on existing sciences. Research and the activities of higher education institutions in the solution of this problem indicate the presence in such activities of a number of the above-mentioned problems caused by the lack of effectiveness of public administration. The aim of this research is to substantiate the importance of quantitative and qualitative methods of sociological diagnostics as tools for assessing the effectiveness of public administration in the higher education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In the course of the study, methods of social diagnostics were carried out to study the opinions and suggested improvements of leaders and specialists in the field of the public administration of the higher education system. To ensure the effective public administration of higher education in the context of the formation of a knowledge economy, it is important to canvass opinion on a number of issues for a comprehensive assessment of the current state of management and the development of specific proposals for its improvement. To determine the volume of selection required to assess the mathematical forecast of the main population of the sociological survey, it is necessary to conduct a sample study and multiply the value of the deviation of the reliability level. In addition, more information is needed regarding the standardized deviation volume. It is necessary to derive a formula that will help to calculate the volume of selection, i.e. (1):

$$(1) \bar{X} \pm Z \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$$

where the mean value of selection  $Z$  is the value of a standardized, normally distributed random variable corresponding to the integral probability equal to  $1 - \alpha / 2$ ;  $\sigma$  is the standard deviation of the main population; and  $n$  is the volume of selection.

The values included according to this formula are equal to half of the interval. This determines the size of the estimation error, determined by the symbol  $e$  and the following formula, which arises on the basis of sampling errors:

$$(2) e = Z \frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}$$

Thus, the selection of this questionnaire of social diagnostics consisted of 100 people, selected from among the teaching staff and heads of higher educational institutions in the region. The sample was composed of 43 men and 57 women. To conduct an audit examination of the social diagnostics of the 100 interviewed people, the author created an interval of mathematical expectation of the main set, the reliability level of which was 95%. In consultation with experts and sociologists, the author found a deviation of admissible errors in selection research equal to  $\pm 5$  ("deviation"  $\pm\%$ ), and the level of confidence was 95%. As a result of further research, the standard deviation of the main population is around 25. Thus,  $e = 5$ ,  $\sigma = 25$  and  $Z = 1.96$  (the confidence level is 95%). According to the form of calculating the volume of selection:



$$n = \left(\frac{1,96*25}{5}\right)^2 = 96$$

Accordingly,  $n = 96$ . Thus, a selection volume equal to 100 was successfully selected and fully met the requirements of mathematical validity.

As a result of a questionnaire survey, it was revealed that the most important life goals, values and ideals of respondents determine their uneven approach to building life plans and affect their future choice of activities. For 29% of respondents, it was important to receive a high salary, taking into account labor and qualifications; for 16%, to achieve a good education and to temporarily work abroad; for 14%, to earn a PhD; for 10%, to achieve a good education and move to a permanent place of residence abroad (currently, there is a predominant trend of youth leakage from Kazakhstan abroad, which is mainly due to the demographic situation, innovative activity, and the “quality” of science and high-tech industries, and furthermore acts as a catalyst for negative trends in these areas); for 9%, to have good health; for 8%, to have the honor and respect of colleagues and others; and for 7%, to achieve a good level of higher education and live in abundance. There was a significant gender imbalance in the answers to the questions regarding important life goals. In percentage terms, the goal of receiving a high salary, taking into account labor and qualifications, was chosen by 15% of men, and having good health was chosen by a majority of women (10.5%). This suggests that life goals between men and women are significantly different

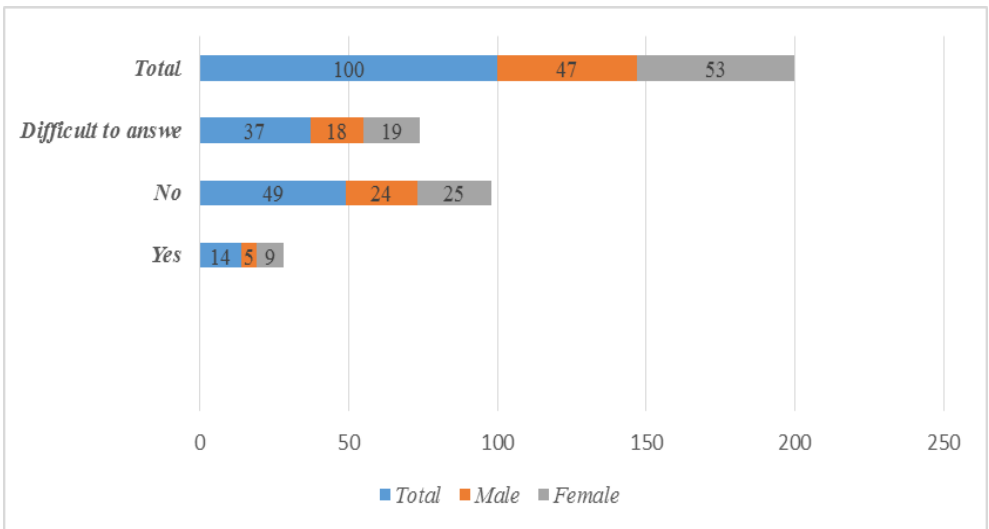
The level of assessment of the state of the higher education system was measured by a questionnaire regarding the satisfaction of respondents with the state of the higher education administration system: 30% of respondents said they were dissatisfied with the state of administration in higher education, 34% found it difficult to answer, only 13% were partially satisfied, and 23% were satisfied.

The dominant goal in the public administration of the higher education system is the quality of education. In this regard, the respondents were asked a number of questions regarding “causes of dissatisfaction or partial satisfaction with the state of administration of the higher education system”, critically evaluating various aspects of the state of administration of the higher education system. Of the total number: 22% of respondents said that the administration of the higher education system had an ill-conceived, unsystematic state policy; 20% said that frequent changes to regulatory acts were introduced in the higher education system; 13% said that there was no close relationship or partnerships of senior management bodies with universities; 12% had experienced unstable and random decision-making; 11% had experienced the adoption of new programmatic planning documents without careful analysis, identification and elimination of the reasons for the failure of previous documents; 10% lamented the over-regulation of financial and economic activities, limiting universities’ autonomy in financial and other matters; 7% were critical of outdated legislation; and 5% highlighted the manifestation of corruption in the state administrative bodies and educational institutions. Despite the measures taken in recent years in the Republic of Kazakhstan to improve the public administration of the higher education system, the outlook for the management of the higher education system looks rather pessimistic. This suggests that, in the public administration of the higher education system, there are a number of problems requiring the improvement of policies and decision-making and the adoption of new programs, plans and regulatory legal acts for the development of the education system, taking into account new global trends in the development of education. This would enable higher education institutions to inde-

pendently regulate financial and business activities, granting them the freedom to resolve financial and other issues.

It transpired that more than half of the respondents (54%) did not feel the support of the state in obtaining higher education, 28% found it difficult to answer, and only 18% answered that the state supported them.

The above data allow us to conclude that the main points of integration into the world of Kazakhstani education involve, first of all, attracting the attention of all students to this process, for which it is necessary to carry out explanatory work regarding ongoing innovations in universities. In addition, it is necessary to constantly carry out work to support students – including via scholarships, allowances, and benefits – since only competent and far-sighted social policy will help to ensure that young people are well-off and able to develop and live with dignity in the present and future. It is necessary for government bodies and non-state structures and foundations working in the field of education and youth policy to ensure regular sociological research, thereby taking into account the views of students. Along with this, the opinions of respondents regarding state support in finding a job were rather pessimistic, with 49% of respondents noting that they did not encounter state support in finding a job in their specialty after graduation (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Responses to the question of state support in finding employment in one’s specialty after graduation, %

Source: Compiled by the authors

According to this survey, suggestions are needed in order to solve the problems of graduate employment.

1. Universities should establish close cooperation with business structures, namely by agreeing on internships for their students within these organizations. The theoretical basis provided by a higher educational institution that is then backed up by an abundance of practice is key to the

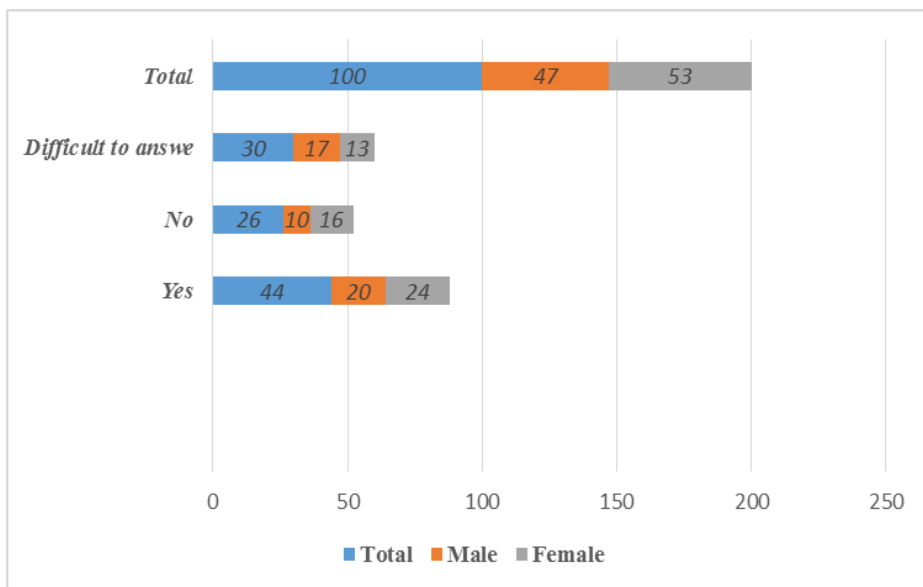
successful preparation of a competent young specialist.

2. Universities need to develop practices through which the student's place of internship can become their place of work after graduation. For this, it is worthwhile, first of all, to encourage students with good academic performance and those who have proven themselves during internships in particular organizations.

3. To increase the activity of business structures in hiring young specialists, preferential taxation, state grants and support should be introduced.

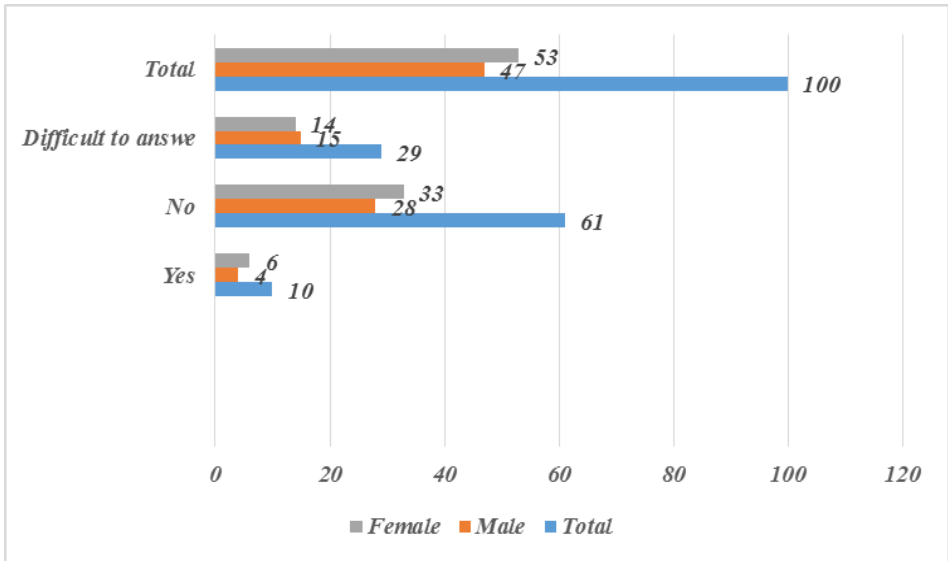
4. It is necessary to adopt a law on quotas for jobs for those who are first looking for work within their specialty.

5. It would be advisable to encourage the scientific development of students in various Kazakhstani universities and their implementation in production. For example, if the students of a particular university put forward a certain development that improves the work of a certain method of production, then those organizations, enterprises or companies that undertake to implement this idea and achieve positive results should also be provided with certain preferential conditions in the tax sphere. Moreover, students who have developed one or more ideas of this nature should be provided with work – either at the enterprise where their innovation is operating or at the company that was involved in the financial support of this project. This proposal should also be consolidated at the legislative level by adopting an appropriate regulatory act. Therefore, nothing can be fully realized without the active participation of universities, on the one hand, and government bodies and business structures on the other. At the same time, 44% of respondents supported requirements for working in higher education institutions or scientific organizations for at least three years after the completion of training, 30% found this difficult to answer, and 26% did not support these requirements for working. Respondents were asked whether they supported this measure and its expansion to include state bodies and national companies (Figure 2).



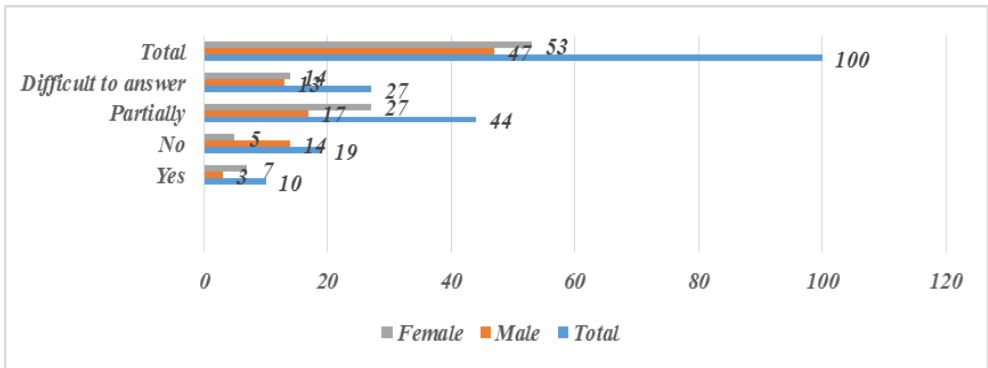
**Figure 2.** Support for the requirement for citizens studying on the basis of the state educational order to work at least 3 years, %  
 Source: Compiled by the authors

The answers to the question posed to the respondents regarding state support in solving the problem of housing for young specialists after graduation are shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Opinions regarding state support in solving the housing problem of young professionals after graduation, %  
 Source: Compiled by the authors

The analysis of respondents' answers regarding support for the reforms carried out by the state in the field of higher education showed that 44% of respondents partially supported them, 27% found it difficult to answer, 19% did not support ongoing reforms, and only 10% supported the reforms carried out in the higher education system. Based on this survey, the author suggests that the reforms carried out by the state in the field of higher education are overall negative in character (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Respondents' support for reforms carried out by the state in higher education, %  
*Source: Compiled by the authors*

Education, as a social sphere in which a significant part of the population is included, is most exposed to corruption risks. According to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer (Corruption Perception Index), 55% of respondents said that Kazakhstan is most corrupt in the law enforcement (66%) and legal/judicial (63%) systems. The results of national monitoring carried out by the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption also put education in the top 3 areas most susceptible to corruption. Among 167 complaints about higher education received by the Ministry, 15% contained information about the manifestation of corruption in universities. Kazinform (2015, 1) and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan point out that corruption in universities is manifested mainly upon admission (Kazinform, 2015, 2)

As can be seen from the data under analysis, 37% of respondents rated the effectiveness of the public administration of the higher education system as insufficiently effective, 25% found it difficult to answer, 24% considered it ineffective, and only 14% replied that the existing public administration system of higher education was effective. It should be noted that when conducting scientific research evaluating the effectiveness of public administration, one of the research methods is sociological surveys, which, in contrast to statistical studies, provide transparent data. Analyzing the responses assessing the effectiveness of the public administration of the higher education system, 61% of respondents supplied a negative answer. During the questionnaire, the respondents were also asked a number of questions that would help to reveal the measures that need to be taken in this field.

In addition, the questionnaire included a number of questions on the implementation of academic mobility and the places of the universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan in international and national rankings. When asked about the degree to which academic mobility was implemented in their university, the majority of respondents rated it satisfactory (31%), 56% rated it positively, and 17% rated it unsatisfactory.

Higher education is becoming a separate economic sector with its own potential. GRON for 2016–2019 aims to increase the share of international students in higher education to 4%. Over the past year alone, the number of international students in Kazakhstani universities has increased by a factor of 1.6. In 2018, their number amounted to 21,727, or 4% of the total amount,

which indicates the achievement of the GRNR indicator for 2016–2019 (Fig. 2.1.59). The share of international students in Kazakhstan is comparable with that of OECD countries such as Lithuania (4.1%), Israel (4%) and Norway (3.9%), and is ahead of Poland (3.4%), Slovenia (3.3%), Spain (2.7%), South Korea (1.9%), Turkey (1.3%), Chile (0.4%) and Mexico (0.3%). In general, universities and educational consortia around the world are struggling to attract international students. The appearance in the early 2000s of international university rankings made it possible to compare universities from different countries, which marked the beginning of an era of global competition. Over the past two decades, the number of international students at universities around the world has more than doubled – from 2 million in 1998 to 5 million in 2016 (Kennedy 2018; OECD, n.d.).

More than half of international students in Kazakhstan come from CIS countries. The distribution of international students by country of arrival demonstrates the popularity of Kazakhstani universities among citizens of Uzbekistan (9,500), India (3,717), Turkmenistan (2,615), Russia (1,273) and China (1,240). According to the forecasts of the Center for International Programs, by 2025 the number of international students in Kazakhstan will increase to 50,000 (Bnews.kz 2018; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, CC MNE RK).

Kazakhstan is among the top 10 countries in the export of students after China, India, Germany, South Korea and France. Countries leading in student exports are not in a position to attract an equal number of international students. Only two countries manage to attract more international students – France (+154,600) and Germany (+125,500) (Table 2.1.18). This result is a consequence of the presence in these countries of a unified state approach to the development of higher education. Thus, the French government in November 2018 announced the strategic goal of attracting 500,000 international students by 2027, while Germany has already exceeded its long-term goal of attracting 350,000 international students by 2020, three years ahead of schedule (Inc. 2.1.12) (Baker 2016). Based on the experience of countries with attractive higher education systems, Kazakhstan also needs to develop its own vision/strategy in the field of internationalization of higher education. As to the question of whether they tracked the places of universities in Kazakhstan in national and international ratings, 93% of respondents answered yes. Of these, 22% did so constantly, 33% sometimes and 38% not regularly.

Based on the foregoing, the question of which key indicators most interested respondents was asked. Per the survey, 36% of respondents were interested in the scientific reputation of the university, which plays an important role in the formation of the knowledge economy. In other indicators, the leading position was taken by the reputation of the university among employers (27%), followed by the ratio of teachers to students (16%), the share of foreign teachers (13%), scientific citation (6%), and the share of international students (2%).

Countries use world university ranking systems as tools for assessing the global competitiveness of universities. Most governments use university ratings to make strategic decisions at the national level. For example, when launching the national scholarship program Science Without Borders, the goal of which was to send 100,000 students and researchers in the STEM specialties to the world's best universities, Brazil determined the leading universities in the world based on their ranking positions in QS World University Rankings (QS WUR) and Times Higher Education Rankings. In addition, world university rankings affect the internationalization of education, as international students take into account positions in ranking systems when choosing a potential university (Luxbacher 2013, 2–4; Byrne 2013).

For the first time, the number of Kazakhstani universities listed in the QS WUR ranking has increased to 10. Among the Kazakhstani universities listed for the first time in the top 220 best

universities in the world, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University rapidly broke through to 220th place, an increase of 16 positions. Significant growth was also demonstrated by M. Auevov South Kazakhstan State University, which rose from the position of 501–550 to 480. For the first time, the Kazakh National Agrarian University (rank 651–700) and the Karaganda State Technical University (rank 751–800) were also included in the ranking.

The QS Emerging Europe and Central Asia (QS EECA) University Rankings rating is a projection of the QS WUR on universities from developing countries in Europe and Central Asia. In other words, the ranking ranks universities exclusively in this region (QS Top Universities 2018a). In the 2018 ranking, universities from 24 countries are represented. The purpose of the ranking is to track the performance of universities in the developing countries of Europe and Central Asia.

The evaluation of universities in the QS EECA University Rankings is carried out on the basis of 9 indicators. The highest weight is given to the academic reputation of the university (30%) and its reputation among employers (20%). The ratio of students to teaching staff, the number of publications per teacher and international networking in research are estimated at 10% for each indicator. Internet positioning, the percentage of teaching staff with a PhD degree and the number of citations compose 5% of the weighting, while the presence of international teaching staff and students accounts for 2.5%.

In total, the QS EECA ranking includes 301 universities, and Kazakhstan is represented by 20 institutions (Russia 87, Turkey 45, Ukraine 18, Belarus 4, Estonia 3, and Kyrgyzstan 1). In 2018, the number of Kazakhstani universities decreased by two units compared to 2017 (22 universities in 2017, 18 in 2016, 14 in 2015). The two universities that left the rating were the Innovative University of Eurasia and the Zhangir Khan West Kazakhstan Agrarian and Technical University.

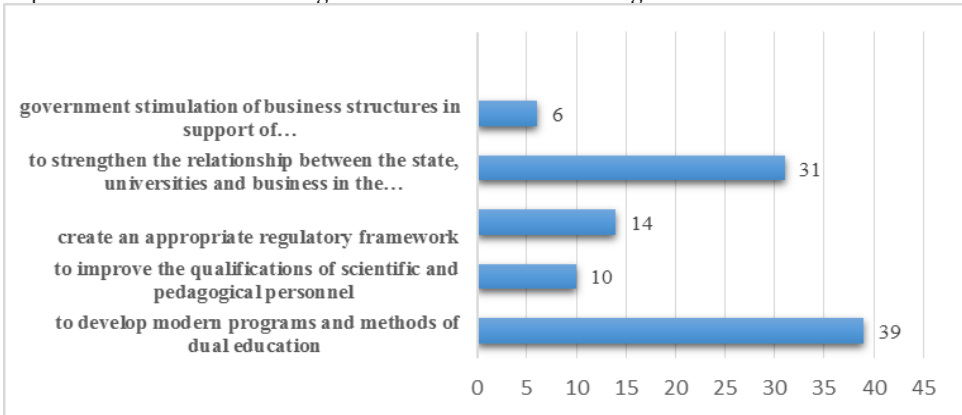
In 2018, the British rating agency QS ranked the higher education systems of countries for the second time in the QS Higher Education System Strength Rankings. This rating includes 50 higher education systems. The rating methodology includes indicators such as: (1) the strength of the higher education system; (2) access to higher education; (3) the position of the country's leading university; and (4) the economic context (See: QS Top Universities 2018b).

Kazakhstan entered the top 40 countries with the best systems of higher education, taking 37th place. This was an increase of three positions compared to the results of the 2016 rating. The country scored its highest number of points, 51.6, in indicator 3: "Positioning of the country's leading university." According to indicators 1, 2 and 4, Kazakhstan was assigned 37.6, 35 and 45.7 points, respectively. The higher education system of Kazakhstan, according to the British agency QS, is ahead of countries such as the Czech Republic, Turkey, Poland and Estonia (QS Top Universities 2018b).

The achievements of national universities were the results of systematic work in educational, scientific, international and industrial activities. For example, at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, training seminars were held to study the experience of leading world universities in the Times Higher Education ranking and on the problems of entering Kazakhstani universities with the participation of Phil Baty, the rating's editor.

In Kazakhstan, the topic of dual education, which involves the direct participation of enterprises in vocational education, has recently become relevant. In the course of the questionnaire, the question was asked regarding the measures necessary to implement dual education in universities. In response: 39% of respondents said that it is necessary to develop modern programs and methods of dual education, which requires the development of an educational program taking into account labor market requirements; 31% identified the strengthening of the relationship between

the state, universities and business in the implementation of dual training; 14% suggested creating an appropriate regulatory framework, because problem points arose during the implementation of the dual form of training in practice in organizations that concluded agreements with educational institutions, and these problem points were not sufficiently regulated by the norms of the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan; finally, 10% of the respondents chose the option of improving the qualifications of scientific and pedagogical personnel, which is important for the implementation of dual training. These results are shown in Figure 5.



**Figure 5.** Respondents' views on the measures necessary to implement dual education in universities, %

Source: Compiled by the authors

Dual training has an established regulatory framework with an emphasis on financing the activities of universities in the organization of industrial training and professional practice. In previous years, the concepts and competencies of stakeholders of dual training (including “dual training,” “industrial training,” and “mentor”) were clarified in the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education.” These standards were supported by the relevant provisions of the GOSO, the Rules for the organization of dual training, and the model contract for dual training. In the framework of the credit-per-capita standard, the costs of industrial and professional practice, in particular the remuneration of tutors, were taken into account. In the near future, it is planned to improve the wage formula for mentors by providing several options for reimbursing their labor to take into account the characteristics of the activities of educational institutions.

Based on the data of the information-analytical center, a picture is formed of the results of a general assessment of the autonomy of state higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. According to this, it can be said that Kazakhstan is lagging behind the international trend of replacing centralized state control and regulating forms of governance that emphasize the importance of politics, setting national goals, decentralized institutional management and the use of financial policies (e.g., financing productivity) in order to guarantee the timely response of the institutions to the priorities of state policy (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2018, 11–12).

Obviously, academic and financial autonomy covers those areas in which Kazakhstan faces



the greatest challenges. The rationale for providing greater autonomy to educational institutions is to improve the responses of higher education institutions to meeting the needs of the country and society. This should lead to the development of more innovative potential and increased efficiency. Continuing its transition from control to management strategy, the state can also stimulate the development of a culture of productivity.

Based on the foregoing, respondents were asked to select the most problematic areas for achieving autonomy. According to the respondents: 45% chose the budget/financial area, which suggests that Kazakhstani universities are not yet ready for financial autonomy; while 36% of respondents said that one of the problem areas in achieving autonomy was the regulatory framework. Currently, there is a process underway of granting autonomy to higher education institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, but specific changes and additions to the normative legal acts have not yet been made. This suggests that, in the course of achieving autonomy, Kazakhstani universities have faced the problem of the improvement of regulatory legal acts.

Updating the content of higher education is characterized by a fundamental restructuring of approaches to quality management in universities. The main directions for updating this sphere are enshrined in the State Program for the Development of Education and Science for 2016–2019. Among these directions are: expanding the academic, managerial and financial independence of universities to effectively respond to market demands and increase competitiveness domestically and internationally; the institutional, programmatic and personnel internationalization of universities in order to maintain the demand for the national higher education system and to turn it into an educational hub in Central Asia; training for priority sectors of the state program of industrial and innovative development; phased transition to English language instruction; improving the content and infrastructure of online university education; and the introduction of student startups. In place of conservative norms, universities have received long-awaited autonomy.

## **Discussion**

In general, we can talk about efficiency or inefficiency, the optimality or suboptimality of public the administration system of higher education; or, rather, the process of management in general and the process of making a management decision. Therefore, management that combines methodological certainty and compliance with the management system and mechanism will be successful. The rationality of the management process is facilitated by the principles of the purposeful instruction of interactions, the timeliness of management decisions, and the saving of time. The principles of continuity, technology and rhythmicity are also connected with these principles.

In early 2020, most countries in the world experienced the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdown affected all spheres of the economy, turned the usual way of life upside down, and taught everyone, without exception, to live in a new way. Surprisingly, many spheres of personal, social and professional life have not only been able to resist the new reality, but also to adapt to it. In this way, “collective consciousness” and the efficiency of decision-making became highly important.

The field of higher education can be viewed as one of those in which the pandemic had the greatest impact on a global scale. Certain problems have arisen here, and these issues will be discussed further as a result of this survey.

All of the measures and activities that have been undertaken by the global community (national governments, international organizations and associations, universities themselves) to sup-

port the higher education system will obviously have an effect, which remains to be evaluated. Today, we can analyze what was done, how, and by whom, so that the world of higher education does not become radically different and can strengthen itself in the context of a global crisis.

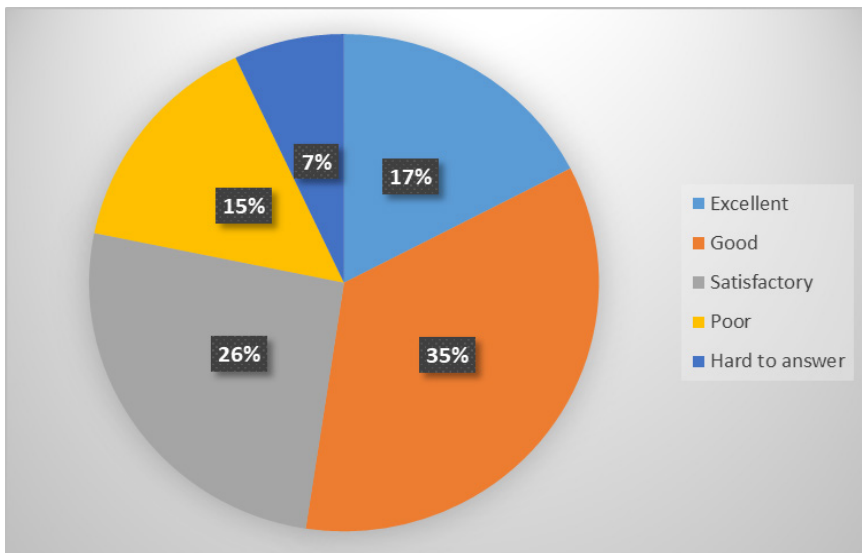
At the international level in the higher education sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has in general affected the internationalization of education, research, legislation, the organization of training, and funding. All of these trends do not have positive effects on the development of higher educational programs. Due to the high sensitivity of the sphere of higher education to the changes that have occurred at the international, national and institutional levels, an appropriate response has begun to form, the specifics of which must be considered in more detail in order to provide the necessary information to overcome the negative consequences in the future.

To attract international students, universities organize a large number of online events and webinars/fairs for applicants. Universities emphasize the importance of using online formats for communication with applicants. For example, a decrease in academic mobility especially affects master's programs, and the statistics from news portals and Study-In portals in the UK, Germany, and Estonia indicate that the largest number of international students enroll in master's programs in English. Obviously, in the future universities together with national ministries of education will need to revise internationalization strategies and take into account the experience that they have already gained when developing such strategies in the event of their current absence.

The sphere of virtual mobility and the development of new platforms for cooperation with partner universities during the pandemic turned out to be in a better position in relation to internationalization. Many universities have moved their partnerships to the online format, and some have begun to search for new forms of interaction in the digital environment to maintain constant communication, solve joint problems and issues, and find optimal solutions for all parties.

According to the results of this survey, the measures necessary for the government to overcome the crisis in the higher education system during the COVID-19 pandemic also involve providing assistance to students from socially unprotected segments of the population (help with the internet, providing laptops, etc.). These measures also include developing a mechanism for a phased transition to the traditional training format, improving the mechanisms of distance cooperation between partner universities, and taking into account the shortcomings revealed during lockdowns.

During lockdowns, the activities of the Ministries of Education consisted of providing recommendations to universities for organizing online learning and developing relevant regulations. The StudyIn portal, which was developed with the support of national ministries of education and ministries of foreign affairs to attract international students, also announced changes in the admission procedure for international students. In connection with this survey, respondents highly appreciated the work of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and universities in organizing the educational process during a pandemic.



**Figure 6.** respondents' views on the work of the Republic of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education and Science and universities on the organization of the educational process during the pandemic, %

*Source: Compiled by the authors*

However, among the uninformative portals that did not promptly update the information sits the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The results of the survey in this study revealed: the majority of universities in the country switched to the online format of education, which influenced the organization of communication between students and teachers, but a small number of universities did not have adequate infrastructure for organizing this communication; universities expect a decrease in the number of students entering universities (both international and domestic), but the number of international students will decrease to a greater extent; most universities, when switching to the online format, consulted with the ministries of education and science, which provided information support, but most universities received no state financial support; the impact of the pandemic on the partnership of universities is ambiguous, as some partnerships have weakened but in some cases ties have strengthened, and universities were able to find new formats of interaction such as virtual mobility of students and teachers, exchange of materials for online teaching, etc.; and in the context of the pandemic, most universities completely transferred teaching online. At the same time, representatives of universities noted the following challenges of online education: insufficient infrastructure of universities and in students' homes to conduct fully-fledged online education; insufficient competence of teachers to conduct online learning; inability to conduct some classes online (for example, medicine, chemical technology, etc.); difficulties in the organization of online exams; and suspended academic exchanges, international scientific conferences, and scientific projects, both national and international, which could not be completed on time.

## Conclusion

In general, the results of sociological efficiency showed a low subjective assessment of the state of the higher education system in the country. One of the most important results of our study is that the level of satisfaction with management is for the most part positively associated with the effective management of the education system. The level of education in the country has a special role to play in assessing the state of the education system. The growth of the supply of labor by highly educated workers and inflated expectations of a future career determine a person's perception of their social environment, which directly affects low subjective assessments of the state of the education system for those who have completed higher (tertiary) education.

Generally, a lack of satisfaction with management may be the best indicator of public discontent with the modern world. The low public assessment of the quality of the higher education system serves as a basis for justifying reforms in this area, so in the discourse of reform, improving the quality of education is associated with optimization.

From analyzing the results of sociological diagnostics of the public administration of the higher education system at the stage of formation of the knowledge economy, it is clear that it is necessary:

- to improve the organizational foundations of the public administration of the higher education system, as increasing the quality requirements for higher education necessitates improving the strategy of the public administration of educational processes;
- to develop a strategy for the internationalization of higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as higher education needs to meet the new challenges of the rapidly changing global situation;
- to develop a brand book office for each university and in the higher education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- to create a favorable visa environment for foreign citizens;
- to improve the position of Kazakh universities in the QS and Times Higher Education ratings by increasing their potential and supporting top managers and faculty staff;
- to optimize the administrative, regulatory and legal mechanisms, to expand the participation of society in the management of the higher education system, and to further develop the academic freedom and autonomy of universities with the preservation of state interaction and state support in various forms;
- to establish close cooperation between the state, business structures and higher educational institutions. It is necessary to directly attract the competencies and investments of business structures to create a qualitatively new environment in order to obtain professional higher education that meets modern requirements.

4. Increasing the competitiveness of the country's universities both domestically and internationally becomes especially relevant in the context of the formation of a knowledge economy. Thus, the state will receive a competitive market for educational services, businesses will be able to influence the quality of specialist training, and educational institutions will be able to attract additional funding and implement innovative educational programs of higher education. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to:

- make all possible efforts to ensure that every citizen has the right to receive higher education by organizing assistance to students from socially disadvantaged groups so that they can continue their studies in a distance-learning format with the provision of opportunities;

- produce an overview of higher education policies, taking into account the measures taken during the pandemic;
- develop a strategy of online exit and transfer to offline for universities, mechanisms for cooperation between national universities, and mechanisms for international cooperation;
- ensure that higher education institutions continue to develop effective methods of online learning to ensure quality and equity in education, including developing training for students and teachers on the use of digital learning tools;
- mandate universities to document all changes in the organization of the learning process that occurred during the pandemic in order to use their experience and mistakes in organizing online education and revise and update the system of training and teaching.

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## SOCIALINIS KAZACHSTANO RESPUBLIKOS VALSTYBINĖS AUKŠTOJO MOKSLO SISTEMOS EFEKTYVUMAS

**Anotacija.** Straipsnyje analizuojama Kazachstano Respublikos valstybinės aukštojo mokslo sistemos vaidmuo ir svarba. Aukštasis mokslas yra pagrindinis socialinės ir ekonominės pažangos veiksnys, kurį būtina palaikyti pasauliniu mastu – tobulinti konkurencingą mokslinių tyrimų bazę ir skleisti žinias visuomenės pažangos labui. Švietimas ir mokslas yra vis reikšmingesnis šiuolaikinio Kazachstano raidoje. Žmonės švietimo sistemoje praleidžia daug metų ir tų metų skaičius nuolat auga. Nuolatinio mokymosi reiškinys siejamas su žiniomis grįstos ekonomikos plėtra. Straipsnyje aptariami sociologine diagnostika grįsti aukštojo mokslo raidos rodikliai ir pasitenkinimas valstybine aukštojo mokslo sistema. Kazachstano visuomenėje susidarė paradoksali situacija: visuomenės požiūris į švietimo sistemos būklę atsispindi atotrūkyje tarp labai žemo išsilavinimo vertinimo lygio ir noro suteikti savo vaikams (ar anūkams) aukštesnio lygio išsilavinimą. Tyrime, remiantis sociologine

*diagnostika, buvo taikomi mokslo ir švietimo raidos rodikliai, pagrįsti pasitenkinimo lygiu, laikomu pagrindiniu socialinės kokybės rodikliu. Pasitelkus sociologinės diagnostikos metodą buvo nustatytos probleminės Kazachstano aukštojo mokslo sistemos plėtos problemos.*

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## ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT OF THE PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPHERE

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the essence of the definitions of management decision and decision-making, highlighting the essential components of these definitions. This later allows us to provide the authors' definition of the concept of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process in the educational sphere. The article analyzes decision-making models that can be extrapolated in educational institutions under reform conditions. The Rational model is highlighted as a priority decision-making model for the educational sphere. Unlike existing models, the Rational model differs in a significant number of economic criteria, which helps to make accurate decisions among existing alternative choices. The communication process is considered, taking into account the stages of decision-making, where the relationships and correlations between actions at each stage of decision-making are revealed. This subsequently makes it possible to form a matrix of the interrelationship of factors of the development of organizational and communication support and stages of decision-making. The study of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process in higher education institutions makes it possible to schematically depict a complex organiza-*



tional structure, where close communication links between departments are defined. It is noted that information about decisions is mainly provided remotely through the internal module of information and communication support. This allows the administrative and management unit to distribute management information for execution simultaneously to all units, eliminating the distortion of information. It also enables the educational institution to effectively interact with the external environment. The selected components of the organizational and communication support of the decision-making process allow a comprehensive approach to the substantiation of the hypothesis, which is based on the perception of organizational and communication support as necessary tools that have an impact on the quality of the decision-making process in the educational sphere.

**Keywords:** organizational and communication support, decision-making process, management decision, educational sphere, institutions of higher education.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** organizacinė ir komunikacinė pagalba, sprendimų priėmimo procesas, valdymo sprendimai, švietimo sfera, aukštosios mokyklos.

**JEL Classification:** I 20, I 21, I 28

## Introduction

In the globalized world, the educational sphere is a determining factor in the accumulation of the intellectual capital of any country, where national self-assertion is symbolized in a global dimension. The successful solution of the organization's tactical and strategic tasks depends to a large extent on the effectiveness of the management activities of personnel. Transformational processes, accompanied by systemic changes in the organizational structure of educational institutions, increasingly encourage managers to possess communication tools and modern technologies for careful processing of information that comes from the external environment in order to make a correct decision. In the conditions of growing competition, educational institutions are required to constantly work on improving the quality of education, which is possible through the implementation of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process in the educational sphere. Organizational and communication support for the decision-making process is important for the purpose of effective educational activity by the heads of the educational institution. After all, every day the heads of divisions and departments face situations where it is necessary to make correct decisions. Therefore, the key success factor in solving the issues of correct decision-making is organizational and communication support of managers' activities, which must be aimed at meeting the modern needs of all participants in the communication process, including consumers of educational services and other stakeholders.

## 1. Literature review

A large number of scientists have devoted works to the study of the nature of management decisions and the decision-making process – in particular, Pryimak (2011), Chopenko (2011), Melnyk (2005), Fayol et al. (1992), Mala (2010), Honcharov (2003), Gavkalova et al. (2022). An unusually large number of researchers from various fields of knowledge have paid attention to the issue of managerial decision-making in the management system. Thus, Kvasnytska and Derykot (2011) investigated the stages of the process of making managerial decisions. The study of decision-making processes in organizations was the subject of the work of Simon (2001), Eilon (1969),

Dehtjare et al. (2020), and Dehtjare et al. (2019). These studies investigated communication support in the educational sphere and the role of information and communication technologies in distance learning. Studying communication in the organization, Milner (2011) emphasized the importance of horizontal connections. Gavkalova et al. (2022) determined the special role of information and communication technologies in public administration. The individual achievements of organizational support in the organization were discussed in the works of Sopelana et al. (2010). Hryshyna (2017) researched tools for activating the organizational and communication support of personnel management activities. The specifics and peculiarities of the organizational and communication support of the decision-making process in the educational sphere are practically unexplored. The multifacetedness of the decision-making process and the unsolved problems related to its organizational and communication support in the educational sphere determined the need to research issues in this direction.

The purpose of this study is to substantiate the organizational and communication support of the decision-making process in the educational sphere. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve the following scientific problems:

- justify the essence of the definitions of management decision and decision-making;
- analyze decision-making models that can be extrapolated in educational institutions under reform conditions;
- consider the communication process, taking into account the stages of decision-making;
- determine the components of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process in the educational sphere;
- form a matrix of the interrelationship of factors of the development of organizational and communication support and stages of decision-making;
- propose a definition of the concept of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process in the educational sphere;
- propose a scheme of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process of a higher education institution.

## 2. Research method

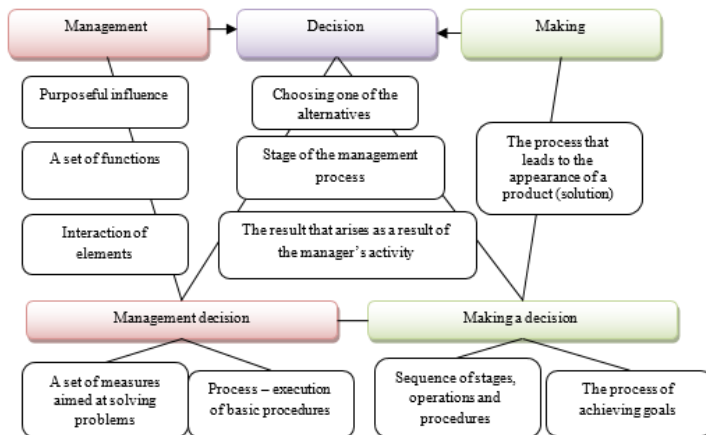
The following scientific methods were applied to the study: system analysis, content analysis, the comparative method, the method of logical generalization, the morphological method, and the dialectics of the relationship between fundamental and applied knowledge. Theoretical methods of scientific research were used, including inductive and deductive methods, to highlight the key components of the definitions of management decision and decision-making, and to present the authors' definition of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process in the educational sphere. Content analysis made it possible to form a matrix of the relationship of factors of the development of organizational and communication support and stages of decision-making, which includes: the characteristics of actions that are carried out at each stage of the decision-making process, the methods by which the procedure is carried out, and a list of factors of the development of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process. The methods of analysis, synthesis, and theoretical generalization made it possible to propose a scheme of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process of a higher education institution and to determine the components of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process in the educational sphere.

### 3. Findings and discussion

In modern educational organizations, personnel management covers all structural subdivisions of management decisions. After all, decision-making in educational institutions at all levels is central to their management system, as it serves as a unifying factor for other management functions and is the final stage of the management process that determines its outcome.

Basic studies of the concept of a decision or a management decision are represented sufficiently widely by the works of international and domestic scientists in the field of general management, as well as in administrative and pedagogical management. The definition of a decision was discussed by Melnyk (2005), who noted that a decision can be considered a result, as it arises as a result of the manager's activity in forming a conclusion about the need to apply or limit certain actions. It can also be considered a stage of the management process which results from the relationship between functions management, and is a prerequisite for management actions. Making a decision involves the presence of several alternatives. Therefore, a decision is a choice of one alternative. The more alternatives there are, the more objective the decision will be.

Decision-making in any organization is a process of managerial activity. Therefore, along with the definition of a management decision, it is important to consider the definition of decision making. In various spheres of human life, the definition of management is quite widely used. Fayol et al. (1992) spoke about defining management by defining the management of a set of functions. Fayol et al. considered the management process to be an activity to realize the goals of the organization, observing that "management is a process that means predicting, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling. Anticipate – take into account the future and establish a program of actions; to organize – to build a double organism of the enterprise: material and social; to dispose – to force personnel to work accordingly; to coordinate – to combine and connect all actions and all efforts; to control – to make sure that everything happens according to the established rules and given orders." A general presentation of the definitions of the concepts of management decision and decision-making are presented in Figure 1, with the selection of the essential components of these definitions.



**Figure 1.** Essential components of the concepts of management decision and decision-

making

*Source: systematized by the authors*

The management decision concept has two meanings, acting as both a process and a phenomenon. This was discussed in full by Kvasnytska and Derykot (2011), where a management decision was considered to be a set of measures aimed at solving the problem under consideration, in the form of a resolution or decree in oral or written form. The second meaning defines a management decision as the implementation of eight main procedures: information preparation; development of options; agreement of options; selection of one option; approval; implementation; control of the implementation of a management decision; and informing the initiator of the decision.

The definition of a management decision was also discussed by Pryimak (2011), who defined a management decision as a set of measures to select the optimal option from a set of possible options. These measures are carried out by a manager or a group of managers within the limits of their official powers and competence, and are aimed at achieving various goals of the organization. This was further discussed by Mala (2010), where the phenomenon of the concept of a management decision manifests in the processes of making and implementing management decisions, an important part of which is the psychological aspect.

Regarding the essential characteristics of a management decision, Melnyk (2005) noted that: the decision arises as a result of the emergence of a certain problem; the adoption of a decision presupposes the emergence of a person responsible for its implementation; and responsibility for the consequences of the adopted decision requires consideration of alternatives for solving the problem in order to choose the best option.

The interpretation of the word *making* was discussed by Mala (2010), who noted that the definition of acceptance is determined by the process that leads to the emergence of a product – that is, a decision. Decision-making is a field of management art. The choice of rational decisions consists in choosing the right methods and techniques which in a specific situation have the greatest potential for influence. Decision-making is the most important criterion in the evaluation of the manager's skills and abilities, on which the results of the organization's activity depend.

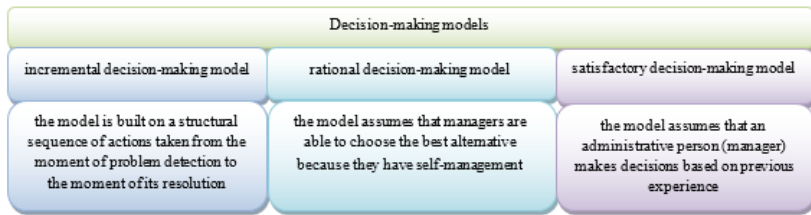
Along with communication, decision-making is one of the most important intra-organizational processes. The peculiarity of this process was discussed by Honcharov (2003), who highlighted the direct focus on achieving the goals of the organization or management body. Eilon (1969) talked about the decision-making process, describing it as a series of steps starting with the derivation and analysis of information and ending with a decision, and entailing the selection of one solution from several available alternatives.

Chopenko (2011) said that the number of alternatives depends on the organization's access to information from the external environment and the organization's organizational and communication support. The author noted that in the technological aspect, the decision-making process is a sequence of stages, operations and procedures, between which there are direct and reverse connections. At the same time, the actual number of stages, operations and procedures may vary depending on the complexity or type of problem being solved.

The decision-making process was also discussed by Mescon et al. (1998), where the authors provided a more detailed breakdown of the decision-making process into stages: problem diagnosis; formulation of limitations and decision-making criteria; definition of alternatives; evaluation of alternatives; choice of alternatives; implementation of an alternative; receiving feedback; and correcting the decision.

Thus, we note that the decision-making process occurs from the moment that a certain situation that needs to be resolved arises. In order to develop a high-quality educational strategy, the management staff must have a set of decision-making tools based on the collection of meaningful information, which will provide an opportunity to carry out an in-depth analysis of the educational process and educational activities. Going through certain stages of the implementation of decision-making, the decision is completed with the choice, which results in solving the problem.

The choice of a model based on a number of stages of decision-making depends on the peculiarities of the functioning of educational institutions in the conditions of reform. The characteristics of decision-making models are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Characteristics of decision-making models

Source: systematized by the authors

Each decision-making model has its own characteristics. This was discussed by Simon (2001), who pointed out that the satisfactory decision-making model is characterized by decision-making. An administrative person who makes a decision does not consider all alternatives, but stops at the one that satisfies the requirements of their activity or their own aspirations at that moment. The model of incremental decision-making involves going through many cycles until the problem is solved. As a priority decision-making model for the educational sphere, we note the rational decision-making model, where a significant number of economic criteria help to make an accurate choice of decision from existing alternatives.

Usually, the decision-making process covers three main phases: preparation, adoption and implementation. This was discussed fully by Simon (2001), who identified and described three stages of the decision-making process: the search for the reasons for the need for decision-making – intelligence activities; the development and analysis of possible areas of activity – project activity; and choosing a certain course of activity from among the possible alternatives – activity by choice.

Transformational processes in the educational sphere lead to the reorganization of the management structure, accompanied by changes in the construction of communication links between the participants of the educational process, which in turn has an impact on decision-making processes. The process of decision-making by management personnel in an educational institution is quite complex. Complexity is confirmed by the presence of an organizational structure with communication flows with vertical, horizontal and diagonal connections. The number of communication flows between departments of the organization is directly proportional to the number of alternatives that make it difficult to make a decision.

The educational sphere in each country is regulated by the Law “On Education.” As an example, we will consider the Laws “On Education” of Latvia and Ukraine, where we will consider the forms of education of the two countries. The Law “On Education” of the Republic of Latvia allo-

cates the following forms of education: full-time; extracurricular, including remote; self-education; and education in the family. The Law of Ukraine “On Education” distinguishes the following forms of education: institutional (whether full-time during the day or evening, or part-time, distance, or network); individual (whether external, with the family at home, via pedagogical patronage, or at the workplace or place of production); and dual. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected every country, the educational sphere began to reorient towards the distance form of education. This complicated the decision-making process for managers, which prompted to the improvement of their organizational and communication support. Distance learning, according to the Law “On Education” of the Republic of Latvia, is a type of extramural form of education which is characterized by specially structured educational materials, an individual learning pace, the specially organized evaluation of educational achievements, as well as the use of various technical and electronic means of connection. According to the Law of Ukraine “On Education,” a distance form of education is an individualized process of education which takes place mainly through the mediated interaction of distant participants in the educational process in a specialized environment that functions on the basis of modern psychological-pedagogical and information-communication technologies

Communication was discussed by Milner (2011), who considered it as a coordination aspect and defined it as a process of exchanging information flows and broadcasting information. This enables managers to successfully do their work and make decisions about choosing a rational management solution to achieve clearly defined targets.

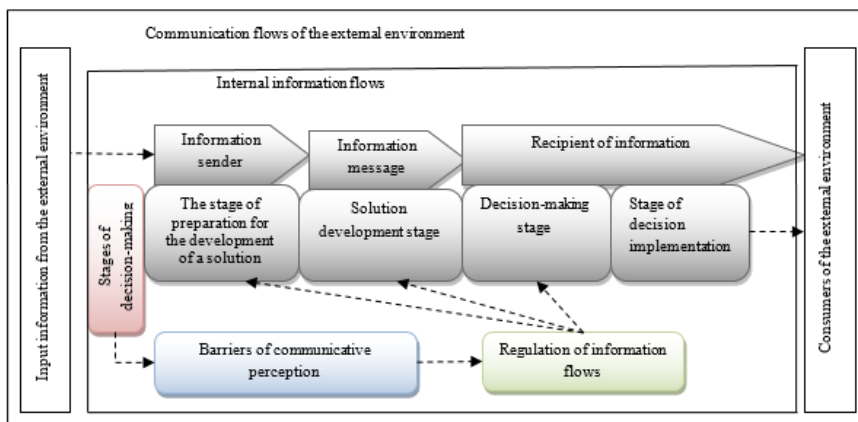
Communication processes in educational institutions must be considered to form a system of permanent, purposeful decisions aimed at systematizing internal and external elements of the personnel management process. The effectiveness of mutual exchange of communication can be achieved only if one party broadcasts the information flow, and the other receives it without changes.

This was discussed by Dehtjare et al. (2020), who noted that the change of educational models and requirements for the types of communication in education imposes on the teacher all of the higher requirements for proficiency in information technology products. The approach brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led us to admit the fact that every educator must be able to use modern technological tools in their process of information delivery. Undoubtedly, the pandemic will one day end completely, but it will have led to indelible changes to the approach of education, the necessary competences and skills, and the whole process of knowledge which should be delivered and disseminated. The authors add to this list the phenomena of communication barriers, overloaded IT and study departments aimed at ensuring stable connections, and a lack of direct contact with students. Nevertheless, there were undoubtedly advantages of this new form of working. A huge video archive covering most delivered subjects was created during this time, new technologies were acquired both by teaching staff and students, the opportunity to work from home led to saving resources, and, overall, a colossal amount of experience was gained.

This was discussed by Mironova et al. (2021), who added to the positive aspects of distance education by observing that teaching staff who receive academic freedom are more satisfied with their jobs, and the same connection can be seen when teaching staff are involved in the decision making process.

The proposed model of the communication process consists of four decision-making stages, where each stage of the communication process corresponds to a certain decision-making stage (Figure 3).

The information sender determines the most significant problem area, which is the subject of the communication interaction. The next stage is the choice of the method of the broadcasted information, and if the method does not correspond to the target setting, then the effectiveness of decision-making is reduced. The last stage of the communication process includes decision-making by the recipient of information. At the same time, if the regulation of information carried out by the information translator has the same meaning for the recipient, then the communication process is considered successful and uncertainty is eliminated. The main importance of internal communication flows lies in the determination of stable connections between various solutions and the formation of a single system of knowledge exchange. The collection and generalization of information obtained through various information channels allows institutions to respond flexibly to the challenges of the labor market and to form their innovative policy. This process also enables them to create and implement new information communication channels.



**Figure 3. The communication process, taking into account decision-making stages**  
 Source: developed by the authors

Outgoing management information flows contain management decisions on the start, continuation, suspension or rejection of the implementation of a decision. The presented matrix of the relationships between factors of the development of organizational and communication support and stages of decision-making contains the characteristics of the actions carried out at each stage of the decision-making process, the methods by which the procedure is carried out, and a list of factors of the development of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process (Table 1).

**Table 1.** A matrix of the interrelationships of the development factors of organizational and communication support and stages of decision-making

Stages of decision-making	Characterization of the actions of the stages of the decision-making process	Development factors of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process
I. The stage of preparation for the development of a solution	Obtaining information about the situation (analytical material); definition of goals (construction of goal trees and definition of criteria, ranking of goals by priorities).	The level of interaction in the decision-making process. Analysis of experts' opinions.  Qualitative and quantitative characteristics of organizational and communication support
II. Solution development stage	Development of scenarios for the development of the situation (identification of alternative options using the technologies of situational analysis and expert evaluation); expert assessment of the main options for managerial influences.	The complexity of organizational and communication support in order to determine the problem.  Dissemination of issues among the organization's personnel.
III. Decision-making stage	Coordination of the decision (expert assessment); decision-making by the responsible person.	Level of consistency. Awareness of consumer needs. Creation of a stable level of interaction with the object of management decision-making.
IV. Decision implementation stage	Development and control of plan implementation (monitoring, adjustment of plans); analysis of the results of the development of the situation after managerial influences.	Proving the decision to the executors. The level of stable communication interaction. The rationality of organizational and communication support for the managerial decision-making process.

Source: systematized by the authors

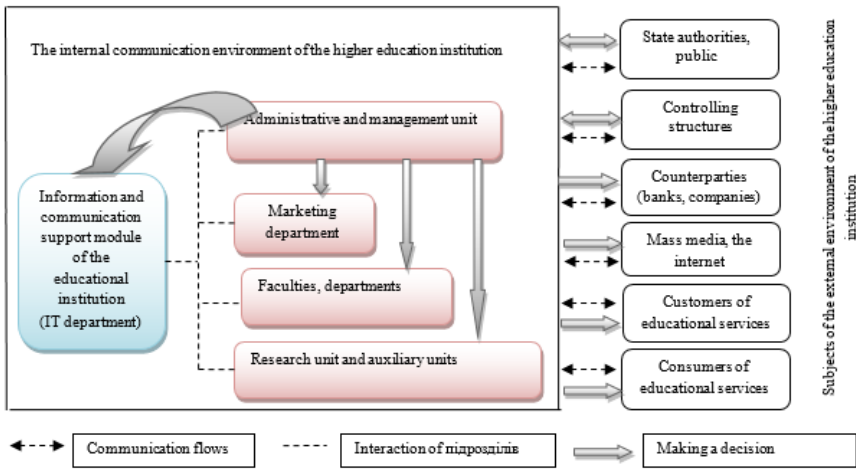
The organizational support of personnel management activities was discussed by Hryshyna (2017), who emphasized the fact that organizational support is very closely related to communication. The organizational structure cannot operate without a communication process at the enterprise, where the main goals of communication support for the management activities of the enterprise personnel are: effective exchange of information in the subject-object relations of the enterprise, including both external and internal communication interaction; the construction of communication channels for information exchange between employees, groups, and units, and the coordination of their tasks and actions; and the regulation and improvement of information flows for the effective exchange of information between management levels, both within the enterprise and with counterparties and other stakeholders. The author provides a definition of organizational and communication support for personnel management activities as a set of methods, tools, means, and technologies, where through the implementation of management functions the process of information exchange between subjects is carried out. The systematic and purposeful influence of the subject of management in relation to the object of management proceeds with the aim of making a timely management decision, the action of which is aimed at realizing the set goal and achieving the final result. This ensures the effective functioning of the enterprise.

This was discussed by Sopelana et al. (2010), who defined organizational support as a set of structural and dynamic relationships within the entity and beyond, covering a variety of specific ties that can be subordinate and related to coordination, linear and functional, or organizational.



The role of communication support was discussed by Dehtjare et al. (2019). The communication process plays an important role in distance learning, and the application of as many communication solutions and tools as possible is also crucial in retaining a student. Communication ensures active student involvement and immersion in the study process, together with continuous satisfaction and the feeling of support from both the tutor and the higher education institution in general. The approach to modern distance learning should combine both formal and informal communication. Formal communication includes online learning with the help of an educative platform, the use of a website, printed manuals, etc. Informal communication ensures smoother and faster interaction and helps to customize the process. Messenger apps and social networks could be used as tools for informal communication, together with standard communication devices and tools. In accordance with the Four Realms model, informal communication tools help to retain the customer's (in this case, the student's) attention, having both absorptive (requiring intrinsic motivation to obtain knowledge) and immersive (requiring physical action and presence, even virtually) importance.

In the complex organizational structure of a higher education institution, all departments are connected by communication links, where obtaining information in the form of decision-making is mainly carried out remotely thanks to the internal module of information and communication support. This enables the administrative management unit to distribute management information for execution to subordinate units simultaneously and with minimal communication barriers. It also enables the educational institution to effectively interact with the external environment. The scheme of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process of a higher education institution is presented in Figure 4.



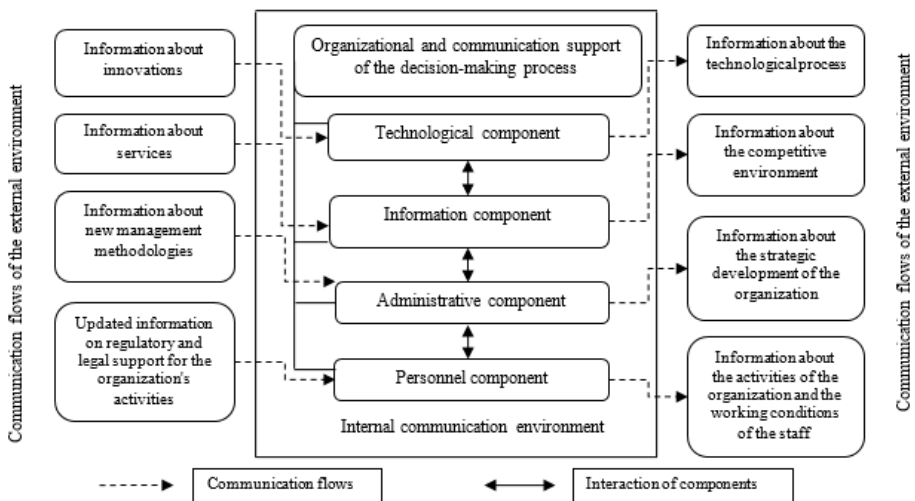
**Figure 4.** The scheme of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process of the higher education institution

Source: systematized by the authors

The organizational component forms stable interaction within the organization and creates conditions for the implementation of communication flows in the external environment, creating

management hierarchies in educational institutions. The quality characteristics of communication interaction depend on the number of management hierarchies in the organization. Organizational and communication support of the decision-making process is a system of interconnected components (informational, technological, administrative and personnel – Figure 5), which implement the processes of communication flows both within the organization and from the outside. The components of organizational and communication support receive information from the external environment about new and existing control elements, and at the output, through the reverse channels, the necessary information is provided for consumers in the external environment.

The formation of organizational and communication support for the decision-making process must be implemented on the principles of: establishing communication links of managerial influence; a systematic approach to organizational support for the decision-making process; and the improvement of reverse communication links.



**Figure 5.** The decomposition model of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process

Source: systematized by the authors

It should be noted that communication flows are a process of information interaction. The provision of information component plays a major role in broadcasting quality information flows in the decision-making process. In our opinion, the information component is the connecting element of all other subsystems and a decisive factor in the effectiveness of management decision-making. The personnel component includes the qualification training of personnel, the level of education, and the possibility of advanced training. In turn, the administrative component contains the methodology and the functional component of management theory, which are necessary for the systematization of management decisions. For the effective implementation of the administrative component, the rationality and systematicity of the existing organizational structure are of great importance. The administrative component of support is characterized by the presence of reverse communication links, the degree of implementation of long-term targets, and opera-

tional goals. This includes the level of development of the management component, which can be assessed by the amount of communication used and the degree of relative detailing of the process itself. The technological component of organizational and communication support for the process of making a management decision in the educational sphere began to develop actively when the COVID-19 pandemic covered all spheres of life. It was during this period that it became necessary to make a decisive decision to review education and reorient it from online to distance learning. The technological component broadcasts communication flows in the external environment, which are significantly fewer in number than the flows entering the internal environment. The informational component of communication support characterizes the level of automation of receiving information flows and the automation of the document circulation process itself. It should be noted that most organizations, regardless of their type of economic activity, have increased the degree of application of automatic broadcasting of information several times. Today, information and communication technologies are powerful tools for increasing the effectiveness of education and scientific research and are significant factors that determine the competitiveness of these activities. Due to the unfavorable demographic situation, the number of applicants to higher education institutions is decreasing.

The role of information and communication technologies in management was discussed by Gavkalova et al. (2022). The authors noted that the reality today in administration is such that the development of new forms of electronic communication with citizens and organizations has become the basis for increasing the volume of information. The increasing role of the information resources produced by administrations and the increased demand for them by society were the basis for increasing the scale of organizations' communication activities and the emergence of new directions, methods and forms of implementation. The wide use of information and communication technologies in management thanks to modern technologies (online services, chat bots and others) effectively influences the formation of a new level and quality of communication activities.

The study of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process in the field of education provided the opportunity to propose a definition. Hence, organizational and communication support of the decision-making process in the educational sphere is a set of measures characterized by a sequence of stages and consisting of certain actions aimed at solving problems in the educational sphere, the effectiveness of which depends on high-quality organizational and communication support.

The higher education system in Latvia was discussed by Dehtjare et al. (2022), who noted that Latvia has historically had a number of scientific prerequisites for developing a competitive higher education system – it must be economically and socially stable, with permanent access to European Union funding. This is confirmed by Latvia's high level of security and successful relations with the EU and the world's wealthiest countries, as well as its developed infrastructure, its digital, multicultural society, etc.

Modern society is interested in supporting higher education and science, and the development of these two areas is particularly driven by the following trends:

- 1) Intercultural exchange and globalization (including free mobility of teaching staff, students, exchange of knowledge and competencies);
- 2) Technological development (digitalization, remote learning – these trends are emerging especially because of the COVID-19 pandemic);
- 3) Rapid changes in the demands of the labor market (interdisciplinarity, the requirement of soft skills development, and the increasing roles of lifelong learning, a modular approach, non-for-

mal education, and flexibility);

4) In order to retain their competitive position, higher education institutions have to remain key drivers of the innovation ecosystem;

5) In order to establish increasing transparency and efficiency, as well as to cover the needs and demands of all stakeholders, higher education institutions should diversify their product portfolios by diversifying study content and involving representatives from different sectors (state, private, international) to ensure variability of scientific funding.

**Conclusions.** Improving the organizational and communication support of the decision-making process in the educational sphere is complex in nature. For the purpose of an effective decision-making process in the educational sphere, the following areas of development should be addressed:

- the further improvement of the technological subsystem of the organizational and communication support of the decision-making process, which is related to the development of databases, data banks, and internet information resources in order to provide information support for all stages of decision-making;

- the development of the internal organizational and communication environment of the educational institution, built on the basis of modern information and communication technologies and providing conditions for the effective interaction of all participants in the communication process;

- the constant improvement of existing information and communication technologies in educational institutions, which ensure the processes of external and internal information exchange.

Increasing the efficiency of management in the educational sphere in modern conditions is possible only under the condition of the implementation of an integrated information and communication environment in the educational institution. This will allow institutions to: cover various aspects of the educational process and the research and commercial activities of the organization; optimize personnel, administrative work, and financial management; and provide the development of information support and the adoption of strategic decisions by the management of the educational institution.

**Future research.** As previously explained, the role of organizational and communication support of the decision-making process has a great influence on the systematization of management processes in the organization and on their coordination with both the internal resources of the organization and the external environment. Further research requires an analysis of the peculiarities of the organizational and communication support of the decision-making process that takes into account: the regional aspect; practical modeling in the conditions of distance learning; the provision of practical recommendations on the organization of communication interaction in educational institutions; and the elimination of communication obstacles that stand in the way of making managerial decisions.

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## SPRENDIMŲ PRIĖMIMO PROCESO ŠVIETIMO SRITYJE ORGANIZAVIMAS IR KOMUNIKACINĖ PARAMA

**Anotacija.** Straipsnyje analizuojama apibrėžimų „vadybos sprendimas“, „sprendimų priėmimas“ esmė ir išryškinami svarbiausi šių sampratų komponentai. Šiame tyrime pateiktas ir autorių suformuotas apibrėžimas – „sprendimų priėmimo proceso švietimo srityje organizacinė ir komunikacinė parama“. Straipsnyje analizuojami sprendimų priėmimo modeliai, kuriuos galima reformų sąlygomis ekstrapoliuoti švietimo įstaigose. Racionalus modelis išryškinamas kaip prioritetinis švietimo sferos sprendimų priėmimo modelis, kuris, kitaip nei esami modeliai, skiriasi daugybe ekonominių kriterijų, padedančių tiksliai iš esamų alternatyvų pasirinkti reikiamą sprendimą. Komunikacijos procesas apmąstomas atsižvelgiant į sprendimų priėmimo etapus: kiekviename sprendimų priėmimo etape atskleidžiamas jų ryšys ir veiksmų koreliacija. Tai leido suformuoti organizacinės ir komunikacijos paramos raidos ir sprendimų priėmimo etapų veiksmų tarpusavio ryšio matricą. Aukštųjų mokyklų sprendimų priėmimo proceso organizacinės ir komunikacinės paramos tyrimas taip pat leido schema pavaizduoti sudėtingą organizacinę struktūrą, kurioje apibrėžti glaudūs komunikacijos ryšiai tarp katedrų. Pabrėžiama, kad informacija apie sprendimus daugiausia teikiama nuotoliniu būdu per vidinį informacijos ir komunikacijos palaikymo modulį. Tai leidžia administraciniam ir valdymo padaliniiui paskirstyti valdymo informaciją vienu metu visiems padaliniams, pašalinti informacijos iškraipymą ir švietimo įstaigai efektyviai bendrauti su išorine aplinka. Pasirinkti sprendimų priėmimo proceso organizacinės ir komunikacinės paramos komponentai leido visapusiškai pagrįsti straipsnyje išsiktą hipotezę dėl organizacinės ir komunikacinės paramos sprendimų priėmimo procese švietimo srityje.

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## DIGITAL TOOLS FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OF WORKS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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**Abstract.** *The issue of public procurement effectiveness is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of the observed budget deficit in Kazakhstan.*

*In this article, business processes related to ensuring the best combination of low price and quality in public procurement as the main indicators of procurement efficiency are studied and described in more depth. Considering the problems of public procurement efficiency, many researchers analyze the supplier identification stage. However, in the procurement of works, the execution phase is equally, if not more, important for efficiency.*

*Analysis of the work execution process in Kazakhstan revealed problems related to quality control of the work performed and the construction materials used, as well as limited competition in their procurement. The high degree of the human factor's presence in the quality assurance process and the low availability of information about the demand for goods creates the risk of purchasing poor-quality goods at a high price.*

*While the effectiveness of using big data in the decision-making process is universally proven, information in the public procurement system is not accumulated properly.*

*In this regard, to ensure the best combination of price and quality of work, the authors propose a model of public procurement of works using digital tools.*

**Keywords:** *public procurement, procurement efficiency, public administration, digitalization, e-procurement, quality of work, competition*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *viešieji pirkimai, pirkimų efektyvumas, viešasis administravimas, skaitmeninimas, e. pirkimai, darbų kokybė, konkurencija*



## Introduction

Improving the budget policy in terms of increasing the level of effectively spending finances is provided for by the “Kazakhstan – 2050” strategy (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2012). The effectiveness of budget spending is largely related to the efficiency of the public procurement system.

The share of public procurement in Kazakhstan’s GDP is 6.6%, which is relatively lower than the average level of this indicator in the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). At the same time, public procurement accounts for 43% of total government spending, more than the OECD average (OECD 2019). The OECD in its reviews recommends that the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan build a more efficient public procurement system through:

- ensuring an appropriate level of transparency at each stage of the public procurement cycle;
- providing tender documentation in a clear, detailed, and, if possible, standardized form to ensure access to public procurement for a wide range of people;
- using digital tools for the implementation of integrated e-procurement solutions covering the entire procurement cycle.

An analysis of public procurement from 2019 to 2021 shows that more than half of budget expenditures are directed to the execution of works. In this regard, the authors decided to consider the effectiveness of the process of the public procurement of works through the prism of the above OECD recommendations.

The authors understand efficiency to mean the achievement of target results with the lowest possible costs (financial, time, etc.). However, how effective is the public procurement system and how can it be made more efficient? The authors came to the conclusion that the effectiveness of public procurement is achieved by providing the best combination of price and quality.

Thus, this study aimed to analyze the processes of public procurement of works in terms of:

- the best combination of price and quality;
- a sufficient level of transparency;
- the availability of detailed information of the tender documentation;
- the possibility of using digital tools to improve the efficiency of the public procurement system.

## Literature review

According to the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, public procurement is the purchase by customers of goods, works, or services, in whole or in part, at the expense of budgetary funds and (or) their own income.

Public procurement is also defined by the United Nations Development Program (n.d.) as the overall process of acquiring goods, construction works and services, which includes all functions from the definition of needs, selection and attraction of sources, preparation and conclusion of the contract, as well as all stages of contract management until the end of the contract for the provision of service or useful life of an asset.

Cogburn (2003) emphasized that if the procurement function is unable to deliver quality goods and services in a timely manner and at an economical price, then the efficiency of the government obviously suffers.

Basheka and Kabatereine (2013) added that good procurement is that which is free from cor-

ruption and based on well-known procurement practices that promote efficiency and effectiveness as a means to improve service delivery.

Grega et al. (2019) concluded, as a result of their research, that the main problems in the effectiveness of public procurement are excessive bureaucracy, frequent changes in legislation, and corruption.

Komakech (2016) explained in simple terms that public procurement is one of the most appropriate means by which a government can meet the needs of the population in a way that not only provides public goods or services, but also provides value for money to improve their lives and living conditions. Komakech also came to the conclusion that too much emphasis is often placed on adherence to procedures, with less emphasis on performance in order to achieve optimal value for money. It is no longer enough to pretend that you are fully compliant with the law, and yet prices are well above the market rate.

Stritch (2020) argued that procurement is often judged on its performance. Efficiency is related to the ratio of work done in a process and whether that process makes the most of the available resources.

Junusbekova and Khamitov (2021), based on the results of their study, proposed to analyze the processes of concluding and executing contracts between customers and suppliers in order to optimize both delivery time and payment for goods, works, and services.

The authors agree with this. Many scientists, when studying the issue of the effectiveness of public procurement, analyze the stage of determining the supplier. However, in our opinion, the stage of execution of contracts is no less important, especially when purchasing works.

As a result of the literature review for state regulation and optimal decision making in procurement, the authors came to the conclusion that the effectiveness of public procurement is, first of all, a combination of price and quality. Moreover, the level of transparency, bureaucracy, corruption risks, etc., are factors that affect price and quality. To increase the level of transparency, reduce bureaucracy, and minimize corruption risks, it is necessary to use new technologies and digital tools.

## **Research methods**

This analysis was subject to the legal framework governing the process of public procurement of works in Kazakhstan, including the laws and by-laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

A literature review of international and Kazakhstani authors was also carried out, and the comparative analysis method identified and substantiated the factors that affect the efficiency of public procurement of works in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In addition, when determining the object and subject of the analysis, the recommendations of the OECD (2022) were considered.

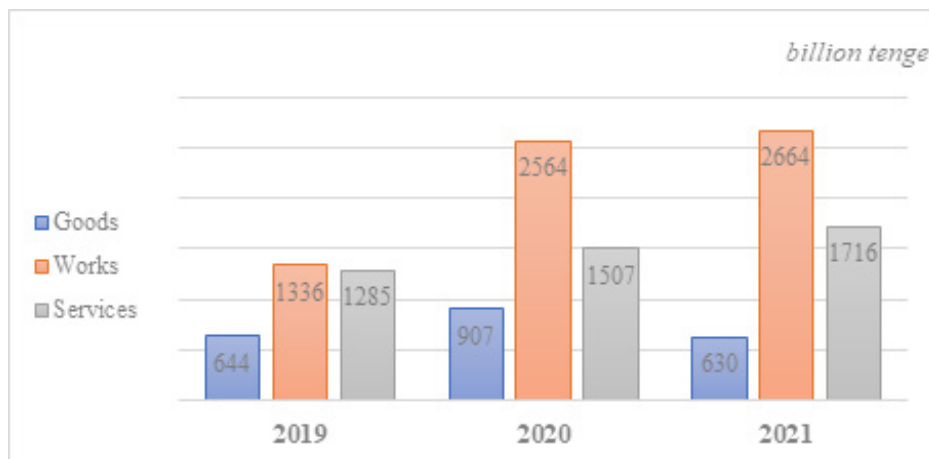
During the study, various methods of general scientific knowledge were used, including methods of economic, statistical and legal analysis.

To obtain the necessary data on public procurement and their processing, logical, comparative research methods were used. As an empirical research base for the analysis of the public procurement system, the authors used the statistical data of the JSC Center for Electronic Finance, which is the state operator of the public procurement portal.

Moreover, the existing digital platforms of the Ministry of Finance, Committee for Construction and Housing, and Communal Services of the Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan were analyzed.

## Results

An analysis of public procurement in Kazakhstan for 2019–2021 showed that the largest part of procurement is occupied by works (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The total amount of public procurement in Kazakhstan by type

It follows from Figure 1 that the procurement volume of goods does not have any stable trend, accounting for only 12.6% of all purchases by the end of 2021. The procurement volume of works in 2020 increased by 92%, and by the end of 2021 it occupied 53% of all procurement purchases. The procurement volume of services also tended to grow but did not reach the indicator of works, occupying 34.4% in 2021.

For this reason, the authors decided to analyze the process of public procurement of works.

The main principles of public procurement in Kazakhstan are:

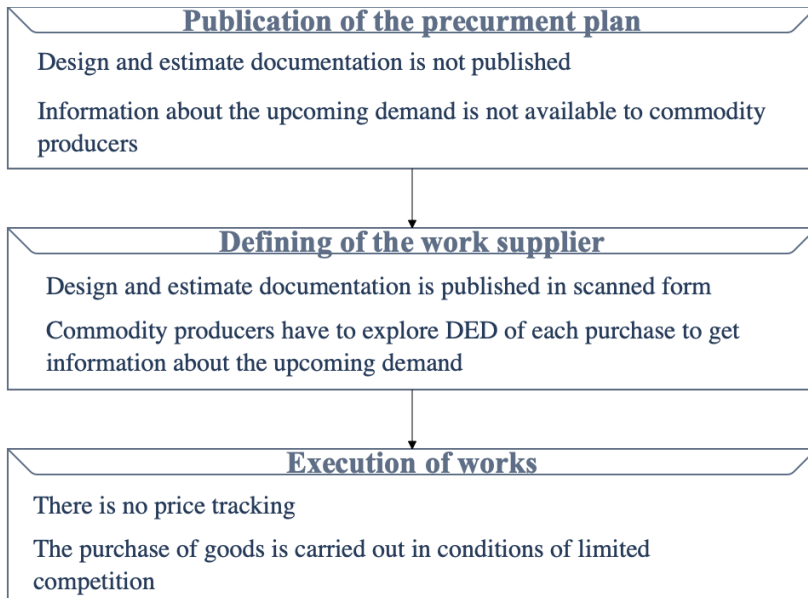
- optimal and efficient spending of money;
- openness and transparency of the process.

However, the current legislation of Kazakhstan does not fully ensure the implementation of these principles. The process of selecting a supplier is as transparent as possible, but post-contract processes, including the process of accepting the performed work, are still not sufficiently open. Not only the population as a beneficiary, but also the state itself is not able to monitor the procurement of work suppliers as part of the execution of a public procurement contract. This is important for ensuring the required quality of work and fixing average prices for goods.

### ***Low price guarantee***

To perform the work, the contractor purchases a certain amount of goods and accordingly forms the demand for these goods. Demand creates its own supply. Moreover, the availability of information on demand will not only form supply, but also ensure a low price due to competition.

Currently, the procurement procedure is as follows (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The current process of public procurement of works in Kazakhstan

According to the Law on Public Procurement (2015), the customer approves the public procurement plan and posts it on the public procurement portal (<https://www.goszakup.gov.kz>), which is a mandatory procedure. At this stage, design estimates are not published, so information about upcoming demand is not available to producers.

Further, in order to determine the supplier of works, the customer announces a competition on the portal with the publication of the design and estimate documentation. However, the design and estimate documentation is published in scanned form; therefore, in order to obtain complete information about demand, commodity producers need to study the design and estimate documentation for each purchase of works, which is a laborious process and requires certain time costs.

After the completion of the tender procedures, the contractor proceeds with the work and gradually purchases the goods provided for in the design and estimate documentation. Such a purchase of goods is carried out in conditions of limited competition, since, most likely, a limited number of commodity producers are aware of the presence of this demand (those who are familiar with the design and estimate documentation of this particular work, among many others). There is also a risk of purchasing goods of lower quality than that stipulated by the DED. At the same time, there is no tool for monitoring these purchases by the customer, the public, or other potential contractors.

Thus, the current process of public procurement of works is not sufficiently transparent and effective in terms of ensuring the lowest price.

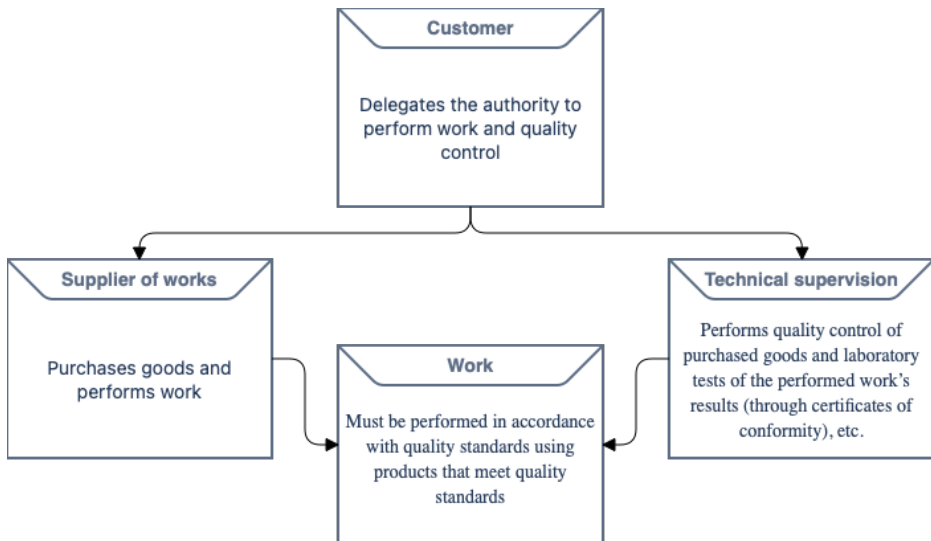
### **Quality assurance**

A system of standardization is used in public procurement to ensure the quality of the pur-

chased works.

According to the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a standard is a regulatory document that defines the main set of rules, norms, and requirements for a standardized object. The standard implies the repeated use of these requirements and defines the main product characteristics, application rules, and characteristics of production processes (The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Standardization,” 2018).

To control the quality of work performed, the customer engages an organization that exercises technical supervision over the execution of work by the contractor. Among other activities, the supervisory organization checks certificates of conformity of purchased goods with standards and laboratory tests of the results of the work performed (obtaining certificates of conformity).



**Figure 3.** The scheme of ensuring the quality of work performed

Currently, the above activities are carried out manually using paper certificates of conformity. Considering the huge number of them involved when performing a large amount of work, the question arises of the quality of the control itself. In addition, it is possible that forged certificates are used, or they are completely ignored.

Thus, at the end of the work, the customer, having no other quality control mechanisms, is forced to trust the technical supervision specialists and accept the work performed. As a result, many facilities built in Kazakhstan at the expense of the budget (roads, schools, residential buildings, etc.) have low wear resistance and will soon need to be repaired – that is, the budget will have to be allocated again.

### ***Suggested Solutions***

The analysis of the public procurement process revealed the following problems:

- the low level of availability of information on the upcoming demand for goods purchased as part of the procurement of works;

- the conditions of limited competition surrounding the purchase of goods to perform work;
- the lack of monitoring of average prices for goods purchased during the performance of works;
- the large amount of labor and time spent on checking certificates confirming the quality of the works performed and the materials used to perform them;
- the lack of the customer's ability to directly control the quality of the work performed and the materials used to perform them.

In order to solve these problems, it is proposed to:

- digitize and increase the availability of estimate data (names of materials, volumes, characteristics, prices) through the use of information platforms;
- increase the transparency of procurement of contractors when performing work to create a competitive environment and monitor prices by introducing a marketplace;
- digitize the results of quality tests of the work performed and materials used and automate the process of their verification.

It should be noted that at present in Kazakhstan there are already various information platforms that will allow the proposed measures to be quickly implemented.

All public procurements are carried out on the public procurement portal, in which the process of determining the supplier of works is automated. At the same time, the process of purchasing materials by the contractor for the performance of work is carried out without the use of any digital tools, and remains closed.

There is a unified portal for aggregating comprehensive non-departmental expertise on construction projects (<https://epsd.kz>, hereinafter referred to as E-DED). E-DED is an electronic platform that provides a partially automated process for submitting and issuing an opinion based on the results of the examination of design estimates, as well as their storage.

To perform work in the field of construction, the E-Qurylys information system (<https://equrylys.kz>) is used. This system provides automation of the activities of all participants in the construction process: the customer, the contractor, inspectors of the state architectural and construction control, as well as experts in architectural and technical supervision. The functionality of E-Qurylys allows one to keep almost all records of work performed in electronic form, from maintaining an electronic journal to compiling and signing acts of hidden, completed work. However, most importantly the system provides the ability to record and track the volume of work performed and the materials used to complete them.

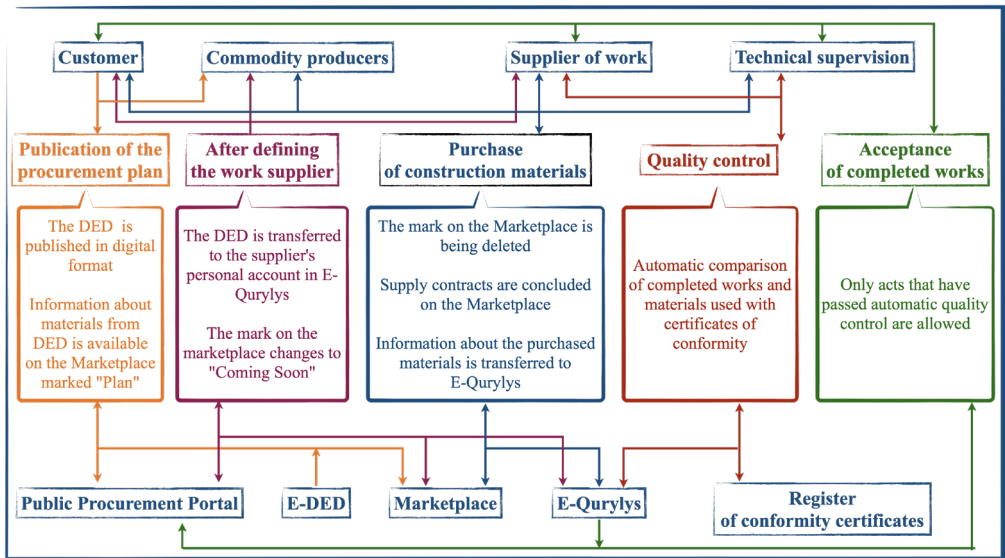
The integration of this system with E-DED would allow for the automatic transfer of estimate data (volumes of planned work, names, volumes, and characteristics of building materials, etc.) to E-Qurylys. However, most of the documentation on this platform is stored in a non-machine-readable form (for example, in PDF format). Thus, before integration, it is necessary to refine the functionality of the E-DED in terms of storing estimate data in a machine-readable form.

On the "Unified Window of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Export-Import Operations" platform of the Ministry of Finance (<https://eokno.gov.kz/public-register/register-ktrm.xhtml>), a register of issued documents on the assessment of compliance with product standards is maintained. At the same time, there is no register of issued certificates of compliance with the standards of the scope of work performed. In this regard, there is a need to create a unified register of electronic certificates of conformity.

These tests are carried out by accredited laboratories, which issue to the applicants (technical supervision for the scope of work; manufacturer for goods) certificates of their compliance with

the standards.

In this regard, it is recommended to develop missing information and improve existing platforms, and then introduce the following model of public procurement of works.



**Figure 4.** Proposed model of public procurement of works

The scheme of the proposed model is as follows:

1) When the customer publishes a public procurement plan, the estimate data is transferred from the E-DED to the marketplace with the mark "Plan." The marketplace design should allow manufacturers to search for demand for their products with the ability to fine-tune filters (by material characteristics, place of delivery, volume of demand in physical and monetary terms, etc.).

2) After defining the contractor on the public procurement portal, the estimated data are transferred from the E-DED to the E-Qurylys (the contractor's personal account). At the same time, the marking of materials on the marketplace changes to "coming soon." At this stage, the marketplace should allow manufacturers to send offers of their products to the contractor (with specifications, volume, and price).

3) As it is necessary to purchase materials, the contractor, using intuitive manipulations in E-Qurylys, removes the mark from the required product (or part of its volume) on the marketplace. After this, the contractor will be able to choose the best offer of commodity producers and, through a digital signature, conclude an online contract with them on the marketplace platform.

4) As the scope of work is completed, the contractor, by filling out an electronic journal, enters the relevant information indicating the materials used (in the case of purchasing materials on the marketplace, the corresponding fields of the journal are filled in automatically).

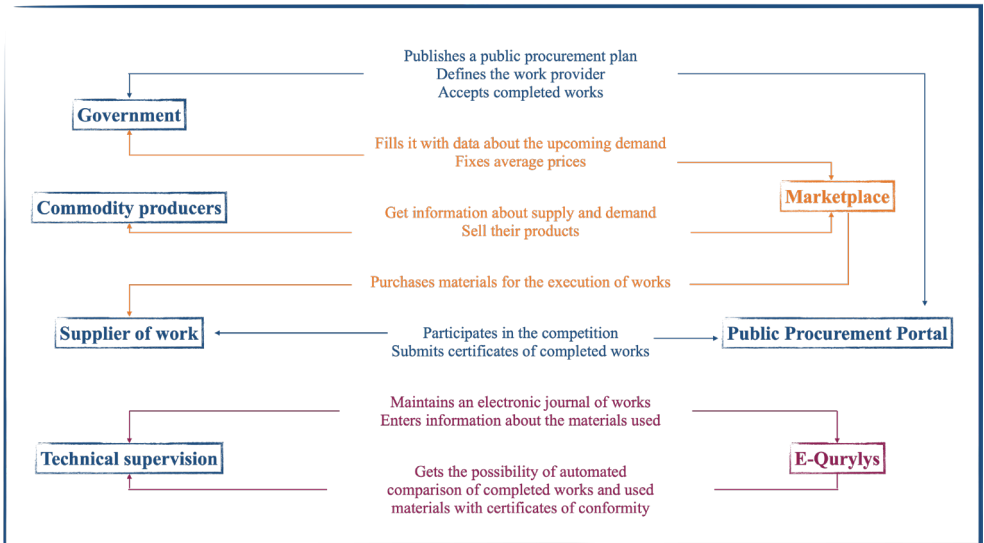
5) As the journal fills up, E-Qurylys automatically pulls data from the certificate register and compares them with the amount of work performed and materials used to confirm compliance

with national standards. At the same time, the actual use of the purchased materials must be confirmed by digital signatures of technical supervision specialists.

6) In the absence of conflicts at the previous stage, E-Qurylys, at the request of the contractor, generates an electronic certificate of completion (the amount is indicated according to the design and estimate documentation).

7) Acts of completed work generated by E-Qurylys are sent to the public procurement portal for signing by the customer.

The interaction of public procurement participants with information systems can be seen in the following figure.



**Figure 5.** The interaction of public procurement participants with information systems

It should be noted that this scheme provides for automated filling of the marketplace and verification of work performed only within the framework of the design and estimate documentation. Works within the framework of design and estimate documentation, as a rule, are expensive. Therefore, such control over them is justified.

However, public procurement is also carried out for works in the form of current and medium repairs, which do not provide for design and estimate documentation. This means that information about the materials necessary to perform these types of work will not be available in the E-DED.

E-Qurylys provides for the possibility of maintaining an electronic journal without design and estimate documentation by entering the necessary data manually. For example, JSC KazAvto-Zhol already uses this system in the implementation of the average repair of highways of national importance.

In this regard, contractors performing medium and current repairs can also use E-Qurylys. At the same time, the generated information about the necessary materials must also be trans-



ferred to the marketplace, and the materials purchased must later be compared with the register of certificates. Thus, the proposed model will provide the best combination of price and quality of the purchased works.

The total volume of demand for goods created by public procurement will be formed both throughout the country and in the context of regions. The tool for monitoring the purchase of goods by contractors for the performance of work will allow the public and other potential contractors to be involved in quality control of the purchased goods. The marketplace will simplify the search for a buyer for existing producers and will facilitate the creation of new industries.

The presence on the portal of the exhibited act of completed work will mean the presence of a check of the compliance of the purchased goods and the scope of work with national standards. This will increase the responsibility of testing laboratories and organizations exercising technical supervision, which are representatives of the customer at the site of the work being performed.

### **Discussions and conclusions**

Today, in the conditions of the state budget deficit of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the issue of ensuring the efficiency of the public procurement system is becoming more and more urgent. Considering that it represents the largest share of public procurement, it seems a priority to assess the procedure for procurement of works.

Thus, the procedure and mechanisms for ensuring the best combination of price and quality of work performed were subject to analysis. Quality control of both work and materials used is necessary to ensure the durability of the objects under construction, increase their service life, and reduce the cost of their repair. Moreover, competition in the purchase of building materials will lead to a decrease in their price, which will be used for design in the future.

The results of our research allow us to draw certain conclusions.

It was established that it is possible to increase competition in the purchase of building materials by ensuring the maximum availability of information to producers on the demand created by public procurement of works. The implementation of a marketplace was proposed, as if there is a design estimate it automatically collects all estimated information and publishes them to collect offers. At the same time, the availability of this information at the procurement planning stage will allow producers to prepare the appropriate stocks of their products. For the purchase of building materials for works that do not include design estimates, it is also possible to use the Marketplace by manually posting demand.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed problems in the work of technical supervision, creating a risk of reducing the quality of quality control, as well as the possibility of committing a corruption offense. Currently, verification of the conformity of the certificates of goods used and the work having been performed to national standards is carried out manually by a technical supervision specialist. Considering the human factor, there is the threat of a lack of completeness, a lack of reconciliation of certificates, or even collusion with the work contractor and the signing of acts of work performed without conducting appropriate quality tests. In this regard, the authors proposed a digital mechanism that allows for automatic verification of certificates of conformity, thereby eliminating the human factor.

3. In general, according to the authors, the introduction of the proposed model of public procurement of works will increase their efficiency through:

- ensuring the availability of information on the upcoming demand for goods purchased as part of the procurement of works;

- increasing competition in the purchasing of goods for the performance of work;
- obtaining reliable data on average prices for goods and their use in the design;
- reducing technical supervision costs for verification of certificates confirming the quality of work performed and materials used for their implementation;
- providing the customer with the possibility of direct quality control of the work performed and the materials used for their implementation;
- increasing the demand and responsibility of accredited laboratories that test the quality of work and building materials.

Digital transformation of public procurement is an excellent opportunity for the economy and has vast potential if fully exploited. Promoting competition, strengthening the economy and economic growth might be just a click away (Pekoji et al. 2019).

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## SKAITMENINĖS PRIEMONĖS VIEŠŪJŲ PIRKIMŲ EFEKTYVUMUI GERINTI KAZACHSTANO RESPUBLIKOJE

**Anotacija.** *Viešųjų pirkimų efektyvumo klausimas tampa vis aktualesnis stebimo Kazachstano biudžeto deficito kontekste.*

*Šiame darbe išsamiau nagrinėjami ir aprašomi verslo procesai, susiję su geriausio mažos kainos ir kokybės derinio užtikrinimu viešuosiuose pirkimuose. Šie procesai vertinti kaip pagrindiniai pirkimų efektyvumo rodikliai. Atsižvelgdami į viešųjų pirkimų efektyvumo problemas, daug tyrėjų analizuoja tiekėjų identifikavimo etapą. Tačiau darbų pirkimuose efektyvumui ne mažiau ar net svarbesnis yra jų vykdymo etapas.*

*Atlikus Kazachstano darbo proceso analizę paaiškėjo problemos, susijusios su atliekamų darbų ir naudojamų statybinių medžiagų kokybės kontrole bei ribota konkurencija jų pirkimuose. Reikšmingas žmogiškasis faktorius kokybės užtikrinimo procese ir mažas informacijos apie prekių paklausą prieinamumas kelia suponuoją prielaidas, kad už didelę kainą gali būti nupirtos nekokybiškos prekės.*

*Nors didžiųjų duomenų naudojimo sprendimų priėmimo procese efektyvumas yra visuotinai įrodytas, informacija viešųjų pirkimų sistemoje net nėra tinkamai kaupiama.*

*Atsižvelgdami į tai, siekdami užtikrinti geriausią darbų kainos ir kokybės derinį, autoriai straipsnyje siūlo darbų viešųjų pirkimų skaitmeninėmis priemonėmis modelį.*

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## A SCIENTIFIC-METHODICAL APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION OF ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT IN THE REGIONS OF UKRAINE

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**Abstract.** *This article substantiates the notion that the development of e-governance is an important direction of increasing government efficiency in the conditions of building an information society. The modern development of globalization trends determines the need for systems for monitoring and analyzing the development of e-governance in regions. The purpose of the article is to assess the level of development of e-governance of the regions of Ukraine in order to determine digital opportunities and prospects for the introduction of the latest information technologies. The information base for the evaluation of e-governance of the regions of Ukraine is: the data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine; the data of regional and district state administrations; and reference and information publications of the Ukrainian Institute of the Future and the Innovation Development Center regarding the state of development of e-governance. On the basis of the taxonomic approach, a comparative assessment of e-governance of the regions of Ukraine was carried out according to certain indicators: the share of internet subscribers by region in the total number of subscribers in Ukraine; the level of development of local electronic democracy; the share of state authorities that use e-democracy tools in the region in the total number of state administration bodies; the number of registered e-applications; the share of "Participation budget (pub-*

lic budget)” projects submitted by the public of the region in the total number of submitted projects; the level of publicity of local self-government; the share of electronic services provided in the TsNAP of the region per day in the total number of services provided; and the share of published reports in the region based on the results of the implementation of the open data policy in the total number of published reports. According to the results of the assessment of the level of development of e-government in the regions using the taxonomic method, the leading regions (the Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Odesa, and Ivano-Frankivsk regions) and the regions with the lowest level of development of e-government (the Luhansk and Cherkasy regions) were determined. The main prospects for the implementation of the latest information technologies in the regions were also determined: the creation of digital platforms; the introduction of innovative technologies into the management system based on the smart city concept; the development of IT infrastructure; the increase of institutional capacity; and the implementation of digital development projects and open data.

**Keywords:** e-government, public administration, region, taxonomic method, information and communication technologies

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** elektroninė valdžia, viešasis administravimas, regionas, taksonominis metodas, informacinės ir komunikacinės technologijos

**JEL Classification:** R13, R50

## Introduction

Information resources are an important strategic resource of any country and a necessary infrastructural component of building an information society and implementing electronic governance. Digitization is a multi-vector process of society’s transition to digital technologies that affects all spheres of social life, but it is of primary importance in the context of modernization of the public sector because it is this process that should determine the directions of improvement of various social sectors. The value of digital technologies is determined by their use as strategic tools that allow the success of public policy. With the gradual introduction of digital technologies, the development of e-governance is becoming the focus of the government’s efforts to improve the efficiency of the public sector.

The modern development of the globalization trends of various countries proves the need for systems of monitoring and analyzing the development of electronic government. In the conditions of global transformations, regions are considered as a unit of the regional level of state management, capable of maximally taking into account the needs of local residents and reducing the burden on central authorities. The digitization process provides ample opportunities for the transformation of the state regional management system, both ensuring the economic and social unity of the state and increasing the level of competitiveness of the regions. Therefore, research on the implementation of the state regional policy on the development of e-government and its evaluation becomes relevant.

## 1. Literature review

Theoretical coverage of the issues of information technology development and e-government and their importance in public administration has been provided by Gupta et al. (2007), Jansen (2005), Koniyo (2021), McBride and Draheim (2020), Sakowicz (2003), Salam (2013).

Gupta et al. (2007) determined the following parameters for evaluating the success of e-government projects: the electronic environment; the effectiveness of e-government programs (projects); the impact of e-government on the functioning of the general government, economic development and citizens; and the evaluation of the benefits of e-government.

In the works of McBride and Draheim (2020), it is proven that an e-government assessment based on complex adaptive systems and complexity theory allows one to understand and study the complex problems that exist in this field.

The challenges of e-government (lack of a clearly defined goal, failure to take into account specific national contexts and priorities) were discussed by Jansen (2005), who noted that ensuring an effective evaluation system is a necessary condition for the development of e-government.

Koniyo (2021) investigated the components of public policies for the evaluation of e-government at the regional level and identified a new framework for regional governments based on the identification of components and practices of information technology use.

Sakowicz (2003) identified four areas of e-government in the direction of its evaluation: e-services, e-governance, e-democracy and e-commerce.

Salam (2013) identified e-governance as an effective service delivery tool and equated it to good governance in all developed and developing countries. The evaluation of the effectiveness of district centers for the provision of e-services confirmed the importance of e-governance for the implementation of state policy.

Theoretical, practical and methodological issues of the development of e-governance in public administration, along with practical aspects of the influence of digital technologies on the development of public administration, were investigated in works by Aliev (2019), Shymanska and Bondarchuk (2021), Mokhova (2021), and Orlova et al. (2019).

Aliyev (2019) studied the experience of the European Union countries in the digitalization of public services, considered the dynamics and key vectors of application, and analyzed digitalization as one of the mechanisms of implementation of the state's service policy. The digitization mechanisms proposed by Shymanska and Bondarchuk (2021) allow for the gradual introduction of digital technologies in strategic sectors of the domestic economy, which are the foundation for the further process of digitalization. Klimushyn and Lopushynskyi (2010) determined the meaning and conditions of the development of electronic governance in the information society.

Despite the existing achievements related to various aspects of the formation of e-governance in Ukraine, the issue of assessing the development of e-governance at the regional level and strategies for the development of regions in the conditions of digitalization remains unresolved.

The purpose of this article is to assess the level of development of e-governance of the regions of Ukraine to determine digital opportunities and prospects for the introduction of the latest information technologies.

## **2. Research method**

The study of scientific and methodological approaches proves that the rating approach is mainly used to evaluate e-governance. Based on the analysis of shortcomings and debatable provisions in the field of modern instrumental rating, within the framework of multi-criteria rating the most adequate approach is the taxonomic method, which allows the implicit significance of indicators that arose to be eliminated due to their variation. The taxonomic method is one of the most effective tools of multi-level economic analysis, which, as a result of a number of successive stages, involves the calculation of a general rating indicator of the object of research based on the

comparison of the results of its activity with the corresponding characteristics of the reference object of analysis (the best among those available).

Assessing the level of development of e-government in the regions of Ukraine using the taxonomic method allows the strengths and weaknesses of the region in the development of e-government to be objectively identified, and strategic directions of development to be determined.

The information base for the evaluation of e-governance of the regions of Ukraine is: the data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine; the data of regional and district state administrations; and reference and information publications of the Ukrainian Institute of the Future and the Innovation Development Center regarding the state of development of e-governance.

Analysis is carried out on the basis of the calculation of a complex index, which includes the basic components of the development of electronic governance. The following indicators are taken into account for the calculation: the share of internet subscribers by region in the total number of subscribers in Ukraine; the level of development of local electronic democracy; the share of state authorities that use e-democracy tools in the region in the total number of state administration bodies; the number of registered e-applications; the share of "Participation budget (public budget)" projects submitted by the public of the region in the total number of submitted projects; the level of publicity of local self-government; the share of electronic services provided in the TsNAP of the region per day in the total number of services provided; and the share of published reports in the region based on the results of the implementation of the open data policy in the total number of published reports.

The given indicators were chosen in such a way that it was possible to assess the informational and infrastructural features of the region. The regions with the most favorable conditions for the development of e-governance were evaluated according to the following algorithm. The resulting set of proposed indicators by regions of Ukraine is presented in the form of a matrix (Table 3).

$$X = \begin{pmatrix} X_{11} \dots X_{1j} \dots X_{1n} \\ \dots \dots \dots \\ X_{i1} \dots X_{ij} \dots X_{in} \\ \dots \dots \dots \\ X_{m1} \dots X_{mi} \dots X_{mn} \end{pmatrix}, \quad (1)$$

where  $i = 1, \dots, m$  is the number of the region;  $j = 1, \dots, n$  is the index number.

The indicators used are different and incompatible with each other, so the next stage is their normalization. For this, matrix  $X$  is replaced by matrix  $Y$ .

$$Y = \begin{pmatrix} y_{11} \cdots y_{1j} \cdots y_{1n} \\ \cdots \cdots \cdots \\ y_n \cdots y_{ij} \cdots y_{in} \\ \cdots \cdots \cdots \\ y \cdots y_{mj} \cdots y_{mn} \end{pmatrix} \quad (2)$$

where

$$y = \frac{x_{ij} - \bar{x}_i}{\delta_i}, \quad \bar{x}_i = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^n x_{ij}$$

at the same time,  $\bar{x}_i$  represents the average value of the  $i$ \_th indicator for all regions;

$$\delta_i^2 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^n (x_{ij} - \bar{x}_i)^2 \quad (3)$$

at the same time,  $\delta_i^2$  represents the dispersion of the  $i$ \_th indicator values.



Table 3. Data for evaluation of e-governance of the regions of Ukraine

Region	The share of internet subscribers by region in the total number of subscribers in Ukraine	The level of development of local electronic democracy	The share of state authorities that use e-democracy tools in the region in the total number of state authorities	The share of registered e-applications of the region in the total number of registered applications
Vinnnytska	0.0037	0.5810	0.0328	0.0036
Volynska	0.0022	0.6600	0.0257	0.0030
Dnipropetrovska	0.0092	0.6080	0.0684	0.0495
Donetska	0.0059	0.6970	0.0247	0.0226
Zhytomyrska	0.0035	0.3960	0.0380	0.0046
Zakarpattia	0.0024	0.5370	0.0721	0.0143
Zaporizhzhvska	0.0053	0.5120	0.0479	0.0223
Ivano-Frankivska	0.0141	0.7000	0.0578	0.0143
Kyivska	0.0054	0.3970	0.0294	0.0076
Kirovohradska	0.0023	0.5950	0.0387	0.0059
Luhanska	0.0014	0.3920	0.0244	0.0042
Lvivska	0.0084	0.6780	0.0554	0.0820
Mykolayivska	0.0056	0.4900	0.0445	0.0343
Odeska	0.0383	0.5610	0.0421	0.0925
Poltavska	0.0055	0.3640	0.0343	0.0077
Rivnenska	0.0022	0.4410	0.0393	0.0273
Sumska	0.0028	0.5490	0.0312	0.0069
Ternopil'ska	0.0038	0.7530	0.0309	0.0134
Kharkivska	0.0062	0.6240	0.0554	0.0371
Khersonska	0.0032	0.3830	0.0328	0.0111
Khmelnyska	0.0028	0.7250	0.0328	0.0179
Cherkasska	0.0026	0.3400	0.0346	0.0034
Chernivetska	0.0024	0.4190	0.0195	0.0035
Chernihivska	0.0026	0.4250	0.0300	0.0030
Kyiv	0.0640	0.7340	0.0572	0.5079

### 3. Findings and discussion.

Electronic governance in Ukraine occurs at all levels of state administration. We conducted research on the implementation, use and development of e-government practices in the regions of Ukraine in accordance with the country's administrative and territorial structure. Thus, in Vinnnytsia Oblast: a mobile application has been launched to provide feedback from citizens to the authorities;

The share of projects submitted by the public "Participation budget (public budget)" of the region in the total number of submitted projects	The publicity level of local self-government	The share of provided electronic services in the administrative center of the region per day in the total number of provided services	The share of published reports in the region based on the results of the implementation of the open data policy in the total number of published reports
0.0000	0.7100	0.1288	0.0533
0.0085	0.7800	0.0454	0.0000
0.1523	0.6300	0.0336	0.1183
0.1034	0.7300	0.0179	0.0177
0.0023	0.7300	0.0079	0.0051
0.0058	0.6200	0.0094	0.0010
0.0364	0.6000	0.0095	0.0000
0.0359	0.8700	0.0087	0.0053
0.0189	0.6300	0.0186	0.0109
0.0206	0.6400	0.0530	0.0135
0.0165	0.6400	0.0088	0.0006
0.0394	0.7500	0.0272	0.0252
0.0202	0.6100	0.0091	0.0172
0.0282	0.6000	0.0297	0.0167
0.0429	0.5200	0.0336	0.0000
0.0162	0.6400	0.0526	0.0000
0.0104	0.6900	0.0905	0.0106
0.0287	0.7400	0.0092	0.0037
0.0353	0.6200	0.1718	0.0002
0.0132	0.6900	0.0079	0.0103
0.0165	0.7100	0.0095	0.0016
0.0070	0.5700	0.0084	0.0090
0.0000	0.7300	0.0083	0.0024
0.0158	0.6700	0.0569	0.0014
0.3098	0.7500	0.1435	0.6751

a specialized web resource, the Investment Portal of Vinnytsia Region, is in operation; and a system of electronic document circulation and collective work with documents has been implemented by the Department of Education of Vinnytsia Oblast State Administration – Educational Institutions and Educational Institutions of the Oblast (EGAP 2019). In the Volyn, Sumy, and Ternopil regions, the use of electronic services tripled in 2020 thanks to practical classes on the

introduction of e-services and the improvement of digital competences (Volynsk Regional State Administration 2019). In the Dnipropetrovsk region, for the first time, electronic digital signature technologies were implemented at the region's own accredited key certification center in the work of 356 local self-government bodies. The Open Budget initiative provides citizens with open access to expenditures and revenues of the budget of the Dnipropetrovsk region (with transfers). The sphere of electronic governance is included in 7 programs of social and economic development of districts (cities) in the Donetsk region. The city of Mariupol has launched its own open data portal thanks to international technical assistance projects through the UNDP, USAID, EGAP, Eastern Europe Fund, Erasmus+, Transparency International, EGOV4UKRAINE, and DESPRO programs, which are aimed at the development of e-government in the region. The use of the Igov volunteer project to obtain electronic services and the city's target program to expand the number of electronic services for residents of the region (Trokoz 2016) is typical for the Zhytomyr region. The Green Book on e-Government in Ukraine was presented for the first time in the Zaporizhzhia region as part of a discussion of state policy in the field of e-governance in Ukraine. The e-government site created in the Ivano-Frankivsk region allows simplified access to information about the activities of state authorities. In the Kirovohrad region, the Open Medicine project ensures the formation of a mechanism for public participation in the process of forming local policy in the field of health care. Among the achievements of the Kyiv region in the development of e-government, it is possible to single out: the creation of the Unified Information Space of the Territorial Community of the City of Kyiv; the Medical Portal; the official portal of administrative services; the Regional Center for e-Government Electronic Capital, a city data center for data processing; and information and telecommunication systems such as the Electronic archive of the city of Kyiv and the Mobile workplace of deputies and leaders (head's office). In the Luhansk region, citizens actively use the electronic ticket in public transport, the electronic voting system, and the discussion of draft decisions at meetings of the local council and its executive bodies. Thanks to the creation of an information portal by the Lviv City Council, which contains the headings "city government" and "Lvivian," the city of Lviv has become a leader in the field of implementation of electronic governance and a smart city (with its experience of implementing e-democracy and e-governance in Ukraine; Dzyuba 2010). In the direction of the development of e-democracy and e-governance in the Mykolaiv region, the Electronic City of Mykolaiv project was implemented, which ensures the development of social communication for local self-government. In the Odesa region, the Electronic Region pilot project is being implemented, and a system has been created that collects data on unused premises, such as production areas, equipment, facilities and objects of unfinished construction. The presentation of the electronic service for creating electronic petitions through the Action mobile application was held in the Poltava region. Kharkiv became the first city in Ukraine to join the Trembit electronic interaction system and the all-Ukrainian integrated system of electronic identification at id.gov.ua (Kharkiv City Council 2019). As part of the digitization program, an anti-corruption map of repairs has been implemented in the Kherson region alongside a map of the incidence of COVID-19 to obtain operational information about the level of the disease in pandemic conditions (Kherson Regional State Administration, n.d.). In the Cherkasy region, the Digital Cherkasy project was launched and the Dozor and Mapamagic mobile applications are in operation, which allow tracking the movement of public transport in real time. In the direction of the development of e-democracy, an online petition site, a portal for dialogue between citizens and authorities, and the Active Community project were implemented. In Chernivtsi region, the Portal of territorial communities of the Chernivtsi region was created and the "Smart village" and

“Electronic village: new information technologies to increase the efficiency of local self-government bodies of Chernivtsi region” projects were implemented as part of the Smart City Chernivtsi 2025 concept (Ministry of Digital Transformation 2021b).

The introduction and development of electronic governance is a necessary component of the formation of stable and effective relations between authorities and citizens, the community, and the business environment. The key areas of support for the digital transformation of regions by the government are: information infrastructure; digitalization of public services; tools of e-democracy; informational security; and organizational and resource support for the development of digitization. Thus, in the Vinnytsia, Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk, and Odesa regions, during 2015–2019, around 40 communities were involved in digital transformation, as: regional informatization programs were developed and updated; the automation of administrative service centers (CSP) was carried out and interaction with regional service portals was established; the Mobile TsNAP project was implemented; and the Territorial community site builder service platforms were implemented (Ministry of Digital Transformation (2021a)).

The Ministry of Digital Transformation has supported the Nation IT educational program, which will provide high-quality online and offline education in the field of information technologies for residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The new position of head of digital transformation, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for effective regional digitalization, has already been implemented in the Kyiv, Odesa, Chernivtsi, and Ivano-Frankivsk regions. In the Dnipropetrovsk region, a unified information space of the region has been formed and an annual study of the electronic readiness of territorial groups is conducted.

During 2020, three evaluations of regions were conducted on the following topics: a transparency rating from Transparency International Ukraine, a municipal survey from the Rating Group commissioned by the International Republican Institute, and a city democracy index from the Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Research. The following indicators were used for the analysis: democratization of legal acts; availability of IT tools; number of unique active users; percentage of unique active users; number of created cases; number of considered cases; number of supported cases; number of completed cases; and percentage of completed cases. The evaluation of the e-democracy of each city was carried out according to: the state of democracy of the regulatory and legal framework; e-participation of the public in solving issues of local importance; the availability of IT tools; the level of activity of users of IT tools in democracy; and the effectiveness of using such tools. Each block of criteria can be considered as a self-sufficient assessment of the development of a separate aspect (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Rating of readiness of regions of Ukraine for e-government

Rating of cities according to the Availability of IT tools dimension			Rating of cities according to the E-participation dimension			Rating of cities according to the Performance dimension		
No.	City	%	No.	City	%	No.	City	%
1	Kyiv	100	1	Kyiv	9.6	1	Khmelnyskyi	74.7
2	Vinnytsia	75	2	Zaporizhzhia	5.5	2	Vinnytsia	63.7
3	Lviv	66.7	3	Vinnytsia	3.4	3	Kyiv	44.6
4	Khmelnyskyi	66.7	4	Khmelnyskyi	3	4	Poltava	41.7

5	Zaporizhzhia	58.3	5	Lviv	2	5	Cherkasy	39.1
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Source: Yemelyanova and Loboiko (2020)

The evaluation of each city for each indicator was carried out on a 100-point scale as a percentage of the maximum possible level of e-democracy (from 0% to a maximum of 100%). Each block of criteria is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the indicator values of all instruments.

Electronic democracy is a key indicator of society's interaction with local self-government bodies. In 2018, the Innovation Development Center for the first time presented a study of the Local e-Democracy Index, which covers around of the 30 largest cities and takes into account 90 indicators. Each edition covers a different number of cities and different sets of indicators, and relies on a different method of calculating the aggregate index with different weight values (factors for taking into account the components in the total values of the cities).

The 2020 rating included 22 regional centers – such as Bucha, Irpin, Kamianske, Kramatorsk, Mariupol, Severodonetsk, and Slovyansk – as well as the cities of Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy and Drohobych, whose residents took an active part in the survey on the development of local e-democracy. Each city, depending on historical, natural, economic, ecological, and demographic features, as well as its digital capabilities, has an appropriate level of development of local e-democracy. Small cities such as Drohobych, Kamianske and Sloviansk have made significant progress in the development of local e-democracy. The cities of Ternopil (+28.6%), Khmelnytskyi (+20%), Mykolaiv (16.9%), Kamianske (+16.1%), and Sloviansk (+ 15.4%) all showed promising results (Yemelyanova and Loboiko 2020).

The presence in Zhytomyr and Kropyvnytskyi of concepts, strategies, and other documents aimed at the development of e-democracy, e-governance, and digital transformation ensured the approval of e-democracy tools in the charters of territorial communities. In general, the growth of all cities under the “Regulatory and legal provision of e-democracy tools” block was 1.4%, which indicates the need for further improvement of regulatory and legal acts regarding e-democracy (Yemelyanova and Loboiko 2020).

In the cities of Drohobych, Kyiv, and Khmelnytskyi, IT solutions for key tools of e-democracy (for example, the platform of a single office of the resident) were rated at a maximum value of 100%. The city of Mariupol (83.3%) received the highest rating for the development of an IT participation service for conducting contests for residents and public organizations. The strategies and government programs of most state authorities are aimed at the development of such electronic services, but they are hardly used for the transparent formation and operation of advisory bodies.

Drohobych (58.4%), Kyiv and Kharkiv (52.1% each), and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy (51.1%) have the highest results regarding the inclusiveness of IT solutions of e-democracy tools. The lowest indicators were demonstrated by Bucha and Zhytomyr (20.8% each) and Cherkasy (20.9%). The cities of Kyiv and Mykolaiv were positively evaluated due to the absence of critical problems in the inclusiveness of portals for e-appeals. Ivano-Frankivsk (24.7%), Lutsk (16.7%), Kyiv (15.1%), and Dnipro (11.1%) had the highest rates of involvement of residents (aged 18 and over) in using e-democracy tools, with Mariupol (10.4%), Sumy and Ternopil (9.3% each) close behind (Yemelyanova and Loboiko 2020).

In general, the performance indicator of e-democracy tools, which also allows the quality of local statistics to be assessed, increased by 12.7% in 2020 compared to the previous year's evaluation results.

The Publicity Index is a practical tool that allows one to comprehensively assess and compare the level of transparency, openness and accountability of government bodies in the process of interacting with the public. The calculation of the Publicity Index is aimed at determining how publicly decisions are made and the policy of the institution is implemented, and what the contribution is of the main subjects of the government to this process. Publicity includes three interrelated principles of good governance: transparency, openness and accountability.

Transparency is considered as the process of local authorities publicizing comprehensive and up-to-date information on their own initiative about their personal composition and structure, powers and functions, finances, current activity and plans, political initiatives and decisions, services provided to residents, and information that is in the public interest.

Government openness is interpreted as the process of the government providing maximum access to the information at its disposal and stimulating the active involvement of citizens in direct communication and regular dialogue on issues of management decisions at the local level.

Government accountability covers the process of systematically informing the public about the results and efficiency of the work of government bodies and the use of public resources and budget funds.

The system of indicators is based on 210 operational questions that cover a wide range of functions, government programs, and strategies of local self-government bodies and officials. In particular, this involves ensuring: access to public information, the transparency of personnel policy, the transparency of the budget process, the functioning of public participation mechanisms, the fullness of content on the official website, the transparency of the regulatory policy of the municipality, the availability of administrative services, etc. For ease of monitoring and comparison, all operational issues are systematized into 13 parameters, which in turn cover 23 indicators. Ivano-Frankivsk (87%), Lutsk (78%), and Lviv (75%) led the publicity index in 2020 (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Top 10 cities according to the Index of Publicity in 2020

City	Publicity index
Ivano-Frankivsk	87%
Lutsk	78%
Lviv	75%
Kyiv	75%
Ternopil	74%
Zhytomyr	73%
Chernivtsi	73%
Kramatorsk	73%
Vinnycja	71%
Khmelnyskyi	71%

Source: Yemelyanova and Loboiko (2020)

Different approaches to the formalization of e-democracy applied in the cities of Ukraine testify to an active strategic vision of public control, openness and accountability of self-government.

The presence of a large number of indicators regarding the assessment of electronic readiness does not allow us to draw reliable conclusions about the country's capabilities in the implementation of electronic governance and the presence of favorable conditions for its development. An integrated system of indicators based on the results of ICT market research, statistical data, and the rating assessments of international organizations (UN, EU, World Bank, OECD, etc.) is needed to evaluate e-governance. The analysis of e-governance at the regional level in Ukraine is at the stage of formation. Due to the unsuitability of their indicators and criteria for use in evaluation at the level of the locale, city, or region, global models of e-governance evaluation cannot be used to evaluate e-development in regions. Therefore, it is expedient to define a methodical approach to assessing the level of development of e-governance in regions to determine digital opportunities and prospects for the introduction of the latest information technologies.

According to the regional ranking of e-governance assessment in 2020, the regions of Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Odesa, and Ivano-Frankivsk are among the leaders in this regard (Table 4). The city of Kyiv has the highest level of e-government development in the country, which is explained by a sufficiently effective digital development strategy ( $R_j = 4.14$ ).

**Table 4.** The level of development of e-government in the regions and Ukraine (based on the calculation of quasi-distances)

<b>Region</b>	<b><math>R_j</math></b>	<b>Rating</b>
Kyiv	4.14	1
Dnipropetrovska	83.11	2
Lvivska	92.55	3
Odeska	95.54	4
Ivano-Frankivska	97.31	5
Kharkivska	99.51	6
Donetska	105.37	7
Vinnitska	107.45	8
Sumska	114.24	9
Ternpilska	115.44	10
Kirovohradska	116.40	11
Volynska	117.02	12
Khmelnyska	118.23	13
Rivnenska	120.10	14
Zaporizhvska	120.23	15
Mykolayivska	120.47	16
Zakarpatska	121.59	17
Chernihivska	123.74	18
Zhytomyrska	125.70	19
Khersonska	128.09	20

Kyivska	129.85	21
Chernivetska	134.64	22
Poltavska	136.10	23
Luhanska	137.22	24
Cherkasska	141.71	25

The following nine regions have a significant gap in the values of the combined rating, so it can be considered that the degree of development of e-government in these regions is mediocre: Dnipropetrovsk ( $R_j = 83.11$ ), Lviv ( $R_j = 92.55$ ), Odesa ( $R_j = 95.54$ ), Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast ( $R_j = 97.31$ ), Kharkiv Oblast ( $R_j = 99.51$ ), Donetsk Oblast ( $R_j = 105.37$ ), Vinnytsia Oblast ( $R_j = 107.45$ ), Sumy Oblast ( $R_j = 114.24$ ), and Ternopil ( $R_j = 115.44$ ).

Other regions of the country, despite quite positive indicators, have a low level of e-government development. According to these calculations, the Luhansk ( $R_j = 137.22$ ) and Cherkasy ( $R_j = 141.71$ ) regions can be considered to have the lowest level of e-government development. The main reasons for this are their low levels of transparency of information and the activities of state administration bodies.

## Conclusions

On the basis of the conducted research, it has been proven that the development of electronic governance is a necessary infrastructural component of building an information society and a strategic tool for ensuring and achieving the effectiveness of state policy.

On the basis of the taxonomic approach, a comparative assessment of the e-government of the regions of Ukraine was carried out according to the following indicators: the share of Internet subscribers by region in the total number of subscribers in Ukraine; the level of development of local electronic democracy; the share of state authorities that use e-democracy tools in the region in the total number of state administration bodies; the number of registered e-applications; the share of "Participation budget (public budget)" projects submitted by the public of the region in the total number of submitted projects; the level of publicity of local self-government; the share of electronic services provided in the TsNAP of the region per day in the total number of services provided; and the share of published reports in the region based on the results of the implementation of the open data policy in the total number of published reports. The Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Odesa, and Ivano-Frankivsk regions were among the leaders in the 2020 e-governance assessment. The Luhansk and Cherkasy regions were among the regions with the lowest levels of e-government development.

Taking into account the processes of globalization and regionalization of world economic relations, the priority of the innovative path of development, the informatization of society, and the implementation of administrative reforms in the country, the main prospects for the introduction of the latest information technologies in the regions are highlighted: the creation of digital platforms; the introduction of innovative technologies into the management system based on the concept of smart networks; the development of IT infrastructure; the increase of institutional capacity; the implementation of digital development projects; and open data. The use of public-private partnerships will allow the long-term tasks of regional development to be solved, will increase the competitiveness of the regions, and will attract additional funds for the implementation of e-gov-



ernment development projects. The implementation of the proposed measures will make it possible to form open and transparent communication between the authorities, citizens, communities, and the business environment, will increase the level of use of electronic democracy tools, and will ensure the effectiveness of the regional digital development strategy.

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## MOKSLINIS-METODINIS UKRAINOS REGIONŲ ELEKTRONINĖS VALDŽIOS VERTINIMAS

**Anotacija.** Straipsnyje teigiama, kad elektroninės valdžios plėtra yra svarbi viešosios valdžios efektyvumo didinimo kryptis informacinės visuomenės kūrimo sąlygomis. Šiuolaikinė globalizacijos tendencijų raida lemia e. valdžios raidos regionuose stebėsenos ir analizės sistemų poreikį. Straipsnio tikslas – įvertinti Ukrainos regionų e. valdžios išsivystymo lygį siekiant nustatyti skaitmenines galimybes ir perspektyvas diegti naujausias informacines technologijas. Siekiant įvertinti Ukrainos regionų e. valdžią buvo pasirinkta tokia informacinė bazė: Ukrainos valstybinės statistikos tarnybos, Ukrainos skaitmeninės transformacijos ministerijos duomenys, regionų ir rajonų valstybės administracijų duomenys, Ukrainos ateities instituto informaciniai ir informaciniai leidiniai, Inovacijų centro pateikti duomenys ir kt.

Lyginamasis Ukrainos regionų e. valdžios tyrimas atliktas taksonometrinio metodo pagrindu. Pagal tam tikrus rodiklius buvo tiriama: interneto abonentų dalis pagal regionus bendrame abonentų skaičiuje; vietinės elektroninės demokratijos išsivystymo lygis; e. demokratijos priemonės regione naudojančių valstybės institucijų dalis bendrame valstybės valdymo įstaigų skaičiuje; registruotų e. prašymų skaičius; regiono visuomenės pateiktų projektų „Dalyvavimo biudžetas (viešasis biudžetas)“ dalis bendrame pateiktų projektų skaičiuje; vietos savivaldos viešumo lygis; regiono teikiamų elektroninių paslaugų dalis per dieną nuo bendro suteiktų paslaugų skaičiaus; paskelbtų ataskaitų dalis regione pagal atvirų duomenų politikos įgyvendinimo rezultatus ir t. t. Pagal taksonometriniu metodu įvykdyto tyrimo duomenis, regionų e. valdžios išsivystymo lyderiai yra Kijivo, Dnepropetrovsko, Lvivo, Odesos, Ivano-Frankivsko regionai (sritys), o kaip žemiausio e. valdžios išsivystymo lygio regionai buvo nustatytos Luhansko ir Čerkasų sritys.

Nustatytos pagrindinės perspektyvinės kryptys diegti naujausias informacines technologijas Ukrainos regionuose (srityse): skaitmeninių platformų kūrimas, novatoriškų technologijų diegimas į išmaniojo miesto (smart city) koncepcija grįstą valdymo sistemą, IT infrastruktūros plėtra, institucinių galimybių didinimas įgyvendinant skaitmeninės plėtros projektus, atvirųjų duomenų diegimas.

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## THE WAY FORWARD FOR SOCIAL POLICY IN AMERICA IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICTING RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

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**Abstract.** *This paper discusses the way forward for social policy in America considering the conflicting religious and political ideologies that confront the polity. The paper applies Secularized Evangelical Discourse to analyze the position of the religious right, New Christian Right and main-stream evangelicals to seek answers on the way forward for the American welfare state. This paper argues that the debates between left-wing liberal Democrats and right-wing conservative Republicans have generated an ideological fulcrum that sometimes destabilizes, but often ensures stability for democratic checks and balances. The paper therefore suggests that the way forward for effective social policy implementation is to embrace a secularized notion of moral justice that admits equity, fair play and true statesmanship.*

**Keywords:** *New Christian Right; Secularized Evangelical Discourse; social policy; public policy; religion and politics.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *naujoji krikščionių dešinė, sekuliarizuotas evangelikų diskursas, socialinė politika, viešoji politika, religija ir politika.*

## Introduction

This paper evaluates the interface between religion and politics in American society, drawing from the influence of Christian groups such as Evangelicals and the New Christian Right on the political discourse. The paper also evaluates the state of competing ideologies in the policy arena and furthers the discussion on the way forward in the light of policy interventions implemented by the government in the recent past, synthesized by a Biblical model of government and statesmanship. There is no doubt that the United States was founded on Christian principles, but what is in doubt is whether the founding fathers conceived any idea of a dominant religion (Smith 2016). The argument goes further to suggest that there is no evidence that the God of America's civil religion is the same God of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> However, it is important to remember that by the time "The Star-Spangled Banner" became the official national anthem in 1931, in the American consciousness the "Power that hath made and preserved us as a nation" had become a nondescript deity. A generation later, when "under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance (in 1954) and "In God We Trust" became the American motto (in 1956), this bland, distant deity was more fully enconced on the pedestal.

After his election in 1952, President Eisenhower famously remarked that "our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is." Some scholars such as Huntington (1993) and Miller (2016) consider religious belief and affiliation not as causes of political action, but rather as consequences of political or economic interests. Religion, at most, is a device that savvy elites use to hoodwink gullible masses into serving their purposes. Some American presidents who talked of a divine mission to spread liberty used such language and symbols to aggrandize themselves and their wealthy constituents (Bulmer-Thomas 2018).

This paper probes into the fundamental concepts of our social policy from the New Deal of President Franklin Roosevelt to the triumphant position of the New Christian Right to seek answers on the way forward for the American welfare state. The paper applies *Secularized Evangelical Discourse* (SED), drawing from the rhetoric and actions of the New Christian Right. Evangelical discourse in contemporary America tends to exclude nonwhites, irrespective of the shared feeling of national belonging in other socio-cultural and ethno-religious groups. Delehanty, Edgell and Stewart (2019) describe SED as political statements drawn out of religious terms with roots in Christian evangelical philosophies but politicized to serve an underlying social and political interest. There is no doubt that the New Christian Right has taken positions on a variety of social policy issues including family life, public morality, affirmative action, and education (Midgley 1990). Numerous arguments have been generated to support this stance, but generally this position is inspired by an antipathy to modernism and liberal tendencies in civil society (Bruce 1988; Falwell 1980; Gottfried 1988; Guth 1983). The New Christian Right has used various tactics to influence the political process, including well-orchestrated media campaigns, direct lobbying, the public endorsement of legislative and presidential candidates, and even civil disobedience (Jorstad 1987).

The competing positions in debates between left-wing liberal Democrats and right-wing

<sup>1</sup> From the time of Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, the idea of a deistic deity was deliberately at war with the earlier, Puritan vision of the Lord who would rule over the "city set on a hill." Starting in 1776, and with greater or lesser emphasis throughout American history, the lack of specificity has meant that the God who is invoked may be conceived in the mind of the patriot (or the churchgoer) as the Triune God, but not so in terms of the body politic (Noll 2015).

conservative Republicans have generated an ideological fulcrum that sometimes destabilizes, but often ensures stability for democratic checks and balances. However, the question now is: Where do we go from here; which way forward? There might be no definite answer to this, but there is no doubt that the United States is founded on democratic principles that espouse justice, morality and the fear of God.<sup>2</sup> This paper is presented in six sections: the second evaluates the interface between religion and politics today; the third evaluates the state of competing political ideologies; the fourth discusses the way forward based on the current trend of social policy; the fifth synthesizes the above views with a Biblical model of government and statesmanship; and the sixth section concludes.

### **The interface between religion and politics in SED**

Discussions on religion have been inadvertently intertwined with the discussion of politics, even since medieval times (Smith 2016). There is no doubt that evangelical Christian beliefs and traditions constitute the core of American national identity. Albeit, most empirical studies in this area focus on the activities and identities of evangelical Christians, to the exclusion of others whose cultures have been shaped by evangelical beliefs but exist outside the mainstream (Delehanty et al. 2019). In the late 1970s, political conservatives collectively known as the New Right helped evangelicals establish political institutions capable of swinging elections (Shires 2007). Most of these New Right leaders, although they may have been religious, were not evangelicals. The New Right was anticommunist, anti-union, and anti-big government; it attacked the programs and the objectives of the Great Society and defended traditional individual rights, but also criticized corporate executives.

However, the protagonists of the New Right objected to the new individual rights sought by political liberals – such as abortion rights, women’s rights and LGBTQ+ rights – not because they believed these positions would destroy America spiritually per se, but because they believed such changes would destabilize society (Shires 2007). Ultimately, many New Right pundits sought to establish or confirm moral behavior and business-friendly economic practices for the purpose of making the technocracy itself function more efficiently. Conservatives with strong religious convictions decided to go into politics to reestablish America’s lost economic and social order. A case in point was the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*,<sup>3</sup> and the notion that the government had launched a war against religious life. Nonetheless, the court did not intend to infuse government with religion. By the 1970s, the traditional evangelical perspective was changing, largely because the new Christians, those born of the counterculture, and reform-minded evangelicals tended to look at these issues a little differently. Reformers and baby-boomer Christians understood that actions to help the poor, the sick, and the oppressed had important spiritual implications in and of themselves.

A Pew Research Center (2014) study shows that the average American seeks to live a strong-

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<sup>2</sup> Thompson (1986) quotes a letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson in 1815: “The question before the human race is whether the God of nature shall govern the world by his own laws, or whether priests and kings shall rule it by fictitious miracles.” These words captured the essence of the fear of the convergence of religion and politics.

<sup>3</sup> *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), was a landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in which the Court ruled that the U.S. Constitution protects a pregnant woman’s liberty to choose to have an abortion without excessive government restriction.

er religious life, anchored in acute symbolic differences with others based on religious indoctrination. In the present dispensation, according to Delehanty et al. (2019), Donald Trump's strong and persistent support among white evangelicals has renewed debate around a long-standing question: How do white evangelical Christian traditions shape prevailing understandings of national identity and belonging in the United States? In this regard, white evangelicalism is more than a religious subculture. Historically, it constitutes the primary source of the contemporary institutional mode of transmitting discourse about the religious roots of citizenship and national identity (Williams 1995) – a discourse that emanates from evangelicalism but has formed the basis for renewed clarifications and support for the understanding of national membership and identity (Braunstein 2017a). This discourse became very dominant in the sociopolitical culture of American society throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, with increasing pluralism (Jones 2016; Wuthnow 1988). The cultural gap between white evangelical Protestants, conservative Catholics and Jews was beginning to close in the postwar period. However, growing conflicts over issues became a defining feature of the civic landscape, contributing to divisions between mainline and fundamentalist Protestants and sparking the growth of a multid denominational coalition (Worthen 2013; Wuthnow 1988). This discourse is now employed not only by people in white evangelical denominations and congregations, but also by culturally conservative people in other faith traditions (Wuthnow 1988). It is not inherently politically conservative (Williams 1995), but, certainly since the twentieth century, Republicans have doled out the politics of exclusion to the American public via a culturally divisive religious rhetoric that is aimed at garnering the support of white evangelicals as a veritable political constituency (Kruse 2016; McAdam and Kloos 2014; Worthen 2013; Wuthnow 2012). Its embrace by the Republican Party extended its appeal beyond evangelicals to include others whose understandings of national belonging reflect white Christian cultural heritage, if not Christian beliefs. Politicians use profound religious rhetoric structured in SED to allay the fears and worries of evangelicals in particular and society at large. Delehanty et al. (2019) opine that conservative-leaning candidates adopt a form of religious code to pacify white evangelical voters, but others do not often take notice of the sensitive information embedded therein.

American society has witnessed a steady decline in religiosity, notwithstanding the fact that religious belief and behavior significantly impact politics and public life (Delehanty et al., 2019). In the polarized American political environment, religion persists in political speech and action (Chaves 1994; Williams 1995) and shapes the symbolic construction of the civic sphere (Alexander 2006). In mainstream America, white evangelicals exhibit a conservative culture that traditionally excludes nonwhites (Tranby and Hartmann 2008), the “undeserving” poor (Steenland 2007), atheists (Edgell et al. 2016), Muslims (Braunstein 2017a), and members of the LGBTQ+ community (Haider-Market and Taylor 2016). This means that evangelical political viewpoints are rather too narrow to be used as a yardstick for analyzing political attitudes and how Christian ideas affect politics and social order in America. Religious discourse in America has always been described in line with the divisions between the orthodox and modernist (Wuthnow 1988).

There are persistent evangelical cues from mainline Protestants, Catholics, and even Jews who have adopted evangelical practices and attitudes. Equally necessary is the need for Americans of different religious backgrounds to understand the cultural roots of many political statements and actions. There is an underlying coherence between the different shades of opinion that propel decisions and sentiments of the various extremes of political ideologies. These opinions are intertwined with the actions of party politics and social movements; starting with conservatives mobilized against the New Deal social welfare policies of the 1930s (Kruse 2016), and later move-

ments with the goal of opposing civil rights, abortion, and same-sex marriage (McAdam and Kloos 2014).<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, conservatives are not alone in this push for religious narrative as the centerpiece of political discourse – liberals sometimes adopt similar methods to create a sense of national belonging. For instance, Barack Obama employed civil religious discourse as a candidate and as president (Gorski 2011). However, there is relatively strong evidence of racial and cultural biases when right wing conservatives apply SED in their political discourse in comparison to the left's use of civil religious discourse. Mitt Romney, in a bid to assuage his conservative base with religious rhetoric in his consecutive runs for the presidency in 2008 and 2012, invoked negative feelings about his Mormon identity and raised concerns about Barack Obama's Christian faith (Crosby 2015). Donald Trump was quick to adopt conservative religious language during his campaign for the office of the president of the United States. This approach enhanced his candidacy and electability by building a strong white evangelical support base. Although Obama and other left-wing liberal democrats have adopted civil religious discourse to score political points, it has not been as critically divisive as their Republican counterparts (Braunstein 2017b; Gorski 2017b), and has featured less in country-wide political speech (Braunstein 2018). SED takes on specific meanings when deployed in political speech that are often shrouded in public opinion on issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage, notwithstanding the role of religion (Hout and Fischer 2014). The myth of national belonging has been built around the narrow concept of white evangelical culture (Bail 2014; Baldassarri and Goldberg 2014; Kruse 2016; McAdam and Kloos 2014). According to Jones (2016), political actors have used the following nonsectarian phrases to appease evangelicals in political discourse: "traditional family values," "wholesome school environments," "economic self-sufficiency," and "religious freedom." Thus, Delehanty et al. (2019) opine that SED is rooted in a discourse derived from white evangelical traditions but is used politically in ways that go beyond its religious origins and that are embedded into political debates.

Delehanty et al. (2019, 1288) measured the dimensions of SED on the American body politic by asking respondents "whether one must be religious to be a good American." Respondents showed that American evangelical leaders have long constructed symbolic boundaries pertaining to religiosity and national belonging. Americans generally see the president as a beacon of moral values, and as such expect anyone occupying a political leadership position to reflect exceptional moral standards. In the view of many Americans, it is not enough for politicians to possess outstanding oratory skill or excellent intellectual and academic records – they must also demonstrate high moral standing to be trusted and accepted (Smidt 2006). To this end, evangelicals hope and always believe that the president should be in a position to defend America's Christian heritage and the surrounding narratives that promote the myth (Whitehead, Perry, and Baker 2018; Gorski 2017a). Donald Trump's wide acceptance and subsequent downplay of his past amoral behaviors demonstrate the success of the use of strong Christian rhetoric and actions to pacify white evangel-

<sup>4</sup> Studies show that white evangelical discourse fuels the polarization of the American political space. The right endeavors to sustain their conservative base by appealing to white evangelicals on issues including welfare policy (Davis and Robinson 2012), consumer taste (Massengill 2013), and Islamophobia (Braunstein 2017a; Brubaker 2013). This strongly effects the attitudinal changes of not only evangelicals, but people of various religious identities. Recent research suggests that candidates and politicians have used SED in appealing for political support from religious conservatives without overtly showcasing strong religious nationalism (Albertson 2015; Djupe and Calfano 2013). Politicians apply conservative cues in order to activate evangelical support and evoke sentiments for a society unified around white Christian heritage (Campbell, Green, and Layman 2011).



ical leaders. In return, Trump has nominated judges and supported policies that white evangelicals widely approve of. Delehanty et al. (2019, 1288) argue that the steps taken by Trump to assuage the feelings and support of white evangelicals “speak to the importance that evangelical culture ascribes to personal moral leadership rooted in religious faith.” Perhaps the most significant interface between religion and politics in American life in recent times is the same-sex marriage case involving Kim Davis, the Rowan County Kentucky Clerk, who refused to issue a marriage license to a same-sex couple by invoking “God’s authority.”<sup>5</sup> It is obvious that political discourse in America, often laced with Christian religious rhetoric, passes through the scrutiny of white evangelicals and goes unnoticed by the non-sectarian populace to promote certain ideological stances.

### **The state of competing political ideologies in the policy arena today**

Murray (2015, 196) asks the question “what do we want to accomplish?” The differing political ideologies that envelop the policy arena make it difficult to accomplish much within a stipulated time. Every issue of national discourse has been dissected to reflect the viewpoints of either the left or the right, and in general terms must showcase a liberal or conservative leaning. These differing viewpoints in today’s political arena have led to sequestration, government shutdown and other social policy annihilations that affect the wellbeing of individuals and the progress of American society (Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Although differing political ideologies make the debate more robust and promote a political culture that is cautiously optimistic, one strongly questions the rationale for an idealistic stance that ignores the welfare and prosperity of ordinary Americans (McAdam and Kloos 2014). According to Jha, Boudreaux and Banerjee (2018), political leanings affect corporate and individual decisions, which in turn affect social capital. Social capital, on the other hand, affects corporate and individual decisions. Their study aimed to establish whether, in the current political climate, social capital tilts towards certain political ideologies. Their results indicate a double swing: on the one hand, high social capital regions show a greater inclination for the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party agenda is in essence a transfer of wealth from those that are relatively well-off to those that are relatively poor. The justification for such a transfer is that some people are not doing well financially – not because they have a poor work ethic, but because society has evolved in ways that do not favor their skills.

On the other hand, higher social capital regions might lean toward the Republican Party – a party that champions self-reliance and greater personal responsibility. The Republican Party also supports lower taxes, and rather than helping the poor through redistributive policies, it encourages them to become self-reliant. A region with high social capital could develop values that encourage people to solve their own problems rather than relying on the government (i.e., smaller government). This association can be best understood by the work of de Tocqueville (1835), who was impressed by the American values that celebrated self-interest and self-reliance. He observed that Americans often collaborated to solve problems outside the purview of the government. Because of their active participation in different nongovernment organizations, Americans developed what he called “the art of association.” He argued that Americans preferred limited government intervention. Participation in nongovernment organization is a key feature of high social capital. Ultimately, whether social capital is associated with leaning toward the Democratic or Republican

<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that the constitution of the United States in no way invokes Biblical principles in the protection of the rights of citizens. However, the moral standing of individuals and their Christian principles upon which the American society exists allow the expression of one’s religious beliefs and opinions but not interference with others (see Williams 2017).

Party is an empirical question (Jha et al. 2018). In the contemporary political culture of American society, political biases have gained prominence, and play a large role in personal, social and government relations (Iyengar and Westwood 2015) as more people are building their communal and social identities around political labels (Brooks 2014). Iyengar and Westwood (2015) found that it is much easier for Democrats to associate the word “good” with other Democrats; they are also more likely to trust Democrats (the same is true of Republicans).

The current trend of political ideologies stems from a post-modernist worldview and philosophy that embraces a system of multiculturalism, which is embedded in a critical theory that allows culture and norms to be used as tools for the exploitation of the masses. From the events of the 1960s, society has absorbed civil rights movements in the shades of racial desegregation, feminism, environmental activism and, above all, LGBTQ+ rights. All of these competing social issues attract considerable attention from public policy analysts, who question “why” and “how” we got here in seeking answers for political stability and social cohesion. Barber and Pope (2019) ask: “Are people conservative (or liberal) because they are Republican (or Democrat)? Or is it the reverse?” The answer to this question seems very difficult to derive, and could only be produced via empirical scrutiny. Using the election of President Donald Trump as a yardstick, the study finds that many respondents are not assuaged by ideological principles, but party loyalty.<sup>6</sup>

### **The way forward based on past policy interventions**

The idea that religiosity may be partly based on economic insecurity, and that such insecurity is more common in the United States than in other industrialized nations, may provide a particular structural explanation for the relatively high levels of religious involvement observed in the United States (Jelen 2007). First and most obviously, religion affects public policy (Cochran et al., 2016). The precise linkage between public opinion and public policy is elusive, but few candid observers would deny that the actions of policy-makers (especially elected officials) are influenced by public opinion. To the extent that the values and preferences of ordinary Americans are animated by religious considerations, religion will inevitably affect the content of government policy. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, religious political activism has generally been associated with the political right. Religious conservatives are considered an important voting bloc in the Republican party (Wilcox and Larson 2006), and such partisans are thought to be motivated by “social issues” (involving personal morality) such as abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, and the proper role of women in society.

To the extent that democratic discourse requires diversity, religion can provide important sources of ideas to the public debate. The presence of religious diversity in the United States has obvious effects on the practice of religion in the public sphere. Neuhaus (1984) argued that the increasingly secular nature of American culture had rendered the public square “naked,” or bereft of a shared moral or religious consensus within which political and social life could be conducted. Religious pluralism is an aspect of the culture of the United States with which religiously motivated political activists have had to contend. Accounts of the Christian Right in the 1980s documented the fact that the movement was fragmented, and rendered relatively ineffective, by the effects of religious particularism (Jellen 2007). Williams (2007) observed that religion helps legitimate cultural forms and in turn becomes a legitimate mode of expression within a culture. Many scholars

<sup>6</sup> This informs the reason why Trump’s harsh campaign rhetoric and amoral posture did not affect the outcome of the 2016 presidential election.

posit the basis of these changes in what is generally known as the 1960s, where the authority of many social institutions was challenged and individual expression was given the same primacy in the moral, cultural and religious realms that it had in capitalist economic ideology and institutions (Cochran et al. 2016; Williams 2017; Owen 2019).

Capitalism may be too stiff, to the extent that it creates limited social capital for the majority who work for the upper class. In order to cushion the effects of this shortfall, the government is poised to deliver some goods free to the less privileged in the form of social welfare. In the American welfare state, criticisms are rife that the social policy may be construed as transferring from the haves to the have-nots (Murray 2015). However, one wonders: if better housing, nutrition, and medical care contribute to less misery and more happiness; so also do good parents, a loving spouse, safe streets, personal freedom and the respect of one's neighbors provide the alternative. The synthesis of this argument is that the provision of government support, if abused, breaks the family and reduces the propensity for upward mobility of recipients in the social ladder. Murray (2015) further submits that social programs in a democratic society tend to produce net harm in dealing with the most difficult problems because they inherently have enough inducements to produce bad behavior, and not enough solutions to stimulate good conduct; the more difficult the problem, the more likely it is that this relationship will prevail.

Credited with so many good things, religion and religious organizations are culturally legitimate in American society. Individuals who participate in religious organizations are thought to be good people (Noll 1985, 43). It is difficult to run for public office without being a religious participant, and religious participation makes people, at-least by some American criteria, appear: better family members; more successful participants in education and economic institutions; less likely to commit crime or other "sins of the flesh"; and more willing to help others, often through volunteering their time and donating their money. Smith (2016) proclaimed that the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt reflects so many ideas that our "Founding Fathers" would not have embraced, which includes government involvement in our lives from cradle to grave (or from womb to tomb). Smith (2016) further declared that, today, post modernism appears to be a regnant philosophy. He traced the roots of postmodernism, in part, to what has been called the quintessential American philosophy: pragmatism, which arose in the late nineteenth century. A pragmatic approach, Smith (2016) contends, in the extreme takes the position that the end justifies the means – that is, that even underhandedness and dishonesty may be employed in order to promote a desired outcome. From all indications, the way forward seems to favor a religious, God-fearing posture for one to articulate a realistic public policy that would create a social and political balance.

### **The Biblical model of government and statesmanship**

From the scriptures, we learn that government operates under authority from God. In Romans 13:1, the scripture says "let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." A true statesman should be able to stand strong and disagree well (Fischer 1998, 13). In the same vein, statesmanship requires the individual to acknowledge the sovereignty of God; knowing full well that God is the ultimate source of authority and power. Fischer further stated that humility is a very important characteristic for a person to serve the needs of the people. A humble disposition will eschew foolish pride and lack of wisdom. Biblical injunction recognizes that even though the state derives its power from the people, absolute power resides with God. The greatest problem facing our society today, as Fischer (1998, 8) puts it, has nothing to do with the government at all. There is no such thing as absolute

truth, but the right answer to our problems could be found in God and a believer in the Christian faith. Liberty of the mind comes from acknowledging the sovereignty of God. Fischer (1998) further opines that if society and government are going to be preserved and set free from the bondage of sin and its deadly influences, then change has to occur first of all on a personal level. A study conducted by Jackson, Hester and Gray (2018) on revealing religious diversity across people and politics in America, using the perception and face visualization approach to measure God's mind in a large sample of American Christians, showed how motivations and cognitive biases shape believers' understandings of God's mind. Compared to liberals, the study found that American conservatives are more motivated to maximize social regulation, emphasizing law enforcement and authoritarian leadership. By contrast, liberals are more motivated to maximize societal tolerance, emphasizing intergroup harmony and social justice. These contrasting motivations suggest that conservatives may visualize an older, sterner and more masculine God who is better suited to safeguarding social order, whereas liberals may visualize a younger, kinder, and more feminine God who is better suited to encouraging social tolerance. This finding implies that one's view of the primacy of God in one's life and social order is influenced by one's political leaning. To this end, the spirit of statesmanship counteracts with the person's visualization of God.

However, a Biblical conception of true belief in God is bereft of one's political ideology. Fischer (1998) frantically stated that God, as sovereign, is the main reason that we know that government in general, and government officials in particular, should not have unlimited powers. The role of the Bible in public policy could be inferred from the passage selected for the swearing-in ceremony of Jimmy Carter as president – Micah 6:8 – which reads: “He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” This passage reflects Carter's way of relating his personal faith to his role as president. In another scenario, the passage is in sharp contrast with that which was used for the inauguration of President Reagan – Chronicles 7:14 – which reads: “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” This passage suggests a public, not a private, vision. It makes a public charge to the nation as God's people. The power of statesmanship in the United States has always been to appeal to God through the Bible for public policy guidance. However, to use the Bible in public policy discussion violates the proper basis of discussion in a democratic society.

Noll's (1985, 43) opined that there were devout Christians among the founding fathers of our nation, but there were probably more who would be considered “secular humanists” by the contemporary Christian right.<sup>7</sup> Christianity may be the tacit religion of the U.S., but it is not the “official” religion of the country. Those who would use scriptures in public-policy discussion forget this, and improperly assume that the Bible can be used legitimately to address the nation. They forget that the Bible is neither the preamble to the U.S. Constitution nor an amendment to it. However, a true statesman must serve with the fear of God, and the government must work towards

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the individual most responsible for guaranteeing religious freedom in the U.S., Thomas Jefferson, was an avowed deist. In a 1779 preamble to a bill on religious freedom introduced in the Virginia legislature, Jefferson wrote: “Our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics and geometry; therefore the proscribing of any citizen as unworthy of the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to office of public trust . . . unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which he has a natural right.”

fulfilling God's purpose on earth.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, we evaluated the interface between religion and politics in contemporary American society and found that, despite the fierce debate that surrounds our religious inclination, there is every tendency to imply that America's civil religion appeals to an interest group based on a specific ideological front. Although there is no accepted state religion, Americans are most likely to be sympathetic to the Christian religious faith. In recent times we have seen the impact of the New Religious Right on the body politic in changing the political landscape through a persistent demand for a Christian-like statesman to be voted for as President of the United States.

This paper reveals that the most dominant political ideology in the United States today draws from the post-modernist worldview and a critical theory of multiculturalism that promotes a culture of capitalism, where the poor work for the rich. The failure of the American welfare state to alleviate poverty and instead perpetually impoverish those involved in the scheme is now a cause of concern for scholars. There is a fervent need to restructure the social security scheme, as conceived under the New Deal and subsequent reforms, to suit the socio-economic conditions of today. Although debate on the political spectrum from both sides of the aisle is necessary for democratic stability, one should expect a common ground when there is a need to put the national interest above personal sentiments. Our democracy should begrudge the notion of winner takes all, and instead compromise for the benefit of the society.

This paper also reveals that politicians usually adopt a consistent pattern of Christian religious rhetoric and actions to assuage the feelings of white evangelicals in a bid to strengthen their sense of religiosity and national belonging. To this end, the paper finds that the use of SED in political discourse is camouflaged with religious rhetoric by politicians and social activists in order to penetrate the conscience of the traditional white evangelical and at the same time to promote a secular or humanistic public policy issue such as social welfare or civil rights. The New Christian Right and the reform-minded evangelicals of countercultural social movements adopt a blend of religion and politics in social and political discourse to reconstruct the traditional ideological viewpoints of the American 'Christian' society in the same manner as the SED.

Lastly, it is a fact that America is not a religious republic. Although founded on Biblical principles and religious persuasion, our founding fathers did not conceive a state that is governed by the tenets of a particular religion. The true order of principles would rather admit to moral justice and the respect for fundamental rights as enshrined in the constitution. Above all, a secularized notion of moral justice entails the ideas that the fear of God for statesmanship and true allegiance to the service of humanity shall be the guiding principles of our government. A humble disposition will eschew foolish pride and the lack of wisdom thereof.

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Eze Simpson Osuagwu

## AMERIKOS SOCIALINĖS POLITIKOS ASPEKTAI PRIEŠTARINGŲ RELIGINIŲ IR POLITINIŲ IDEOLOGIJŲ KONTEKSTE

**Anotacija.** Šiame straipsnyje analizuojami tam tikri Amerikos (Jungtinių Amerikos Valstijų) socialinės politikos aspektai ir atsižvelgiama į prieštaringas religines ir politines ideologijas, su kuriomis susiduria ši viešosios politikos kryptis. Siekiant pateikti tikslią informaciją apie įvairius Amerikos (JAV) gerovės valstybės raidos aspektus, tyrime analizuojami valstybės ir socialinės politikos gerovės klausimai, kurie aktualūs sekuliarizuotam evangelikų diskursui, religinės dešinės judėjimui, naujosios krikščioniškosios dešinės judėjimui ir pagrindinėms evangelikų pozicijoms. Teigiama, kad diskusijos (apie gerovės valstybę ir tai, kaip įgyvendinti socialinę politiką) tarp kairiųjų liberalų demokratų ir dešiniųjų konservatyvių respublikonų dažnai destabilizuoja, juolab ne visada užtikrina demokratinių procesų stabilumą. Todėl tegitina, kad, įgyvendinant veiksmingą socialinę politiką, reikia išryškinti sekuliarizuotą moralinio teisingumo sampratą, kuri pripažįsta teisingumą, sąžiningą politinį žaidimą ir garantuoja stabilų valstybingumą.

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## EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE REFORM OF THE UKRAINIAN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

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**Abstract.** *In this paper, trends in the development of Ukraine's education sector in the context of the country's European integration are revealed. This is accomplished through research into the dynamics of changes in the basic indicators of the development level of the sector in the 1990–2019 period on the basis of state statistical reporting. The purpose of this article is to establish the dynamics and directions of changes in the main indicators of pre-school, general secondary, vocational, and higher education. Further, this article seeks to provide an objective and sound assessment of the public authorities regarding the implementation of the state policy of reforming the Ukrainian education sector in accordance with the European integration concept.*

**Keywords:** *European integration, education system, educational policy of the state.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *eurointegracija, švietimo sistema, valstybės švietimo politika.*

**Introduction.** The current status of education in the territory of Ukraine has been formed

in the years since the country's independence, and has passed through certain stages, including legislative ones. One of the first educational laws adopted in the territory of the Ukrainian state was the Law of Ukraine "On Education", as amended in 1991. Its content was based on the ideas of the country's political elite regarding the possibility of the rapid implementation of plans for positive changes in all spheres of public life: economic, cultural, educational, military, and so on. The first version of this law absorbed many positive innovations borrowed from the education legislation of developed countries in Europe and around the world. These innovations are typical of the education systems of countries with developed socio-economic formations, and that are capable of development and innovation. This first edition became the basis for the adoption of a number of laws regulating the functioning of pre-school, general secondary, extracurricular, vocational and higher education. On the one hand, the content of such legislation was aimed at the development of Ukraine's education system; on the other hand, the implementation of some of the proposed norms was impossible due to existing socio-political and economic realities. These realities included: an economic crisis, the lack of a clear system of regulatory bodies in the education sphere, the low competitiveness of educational institutions, technological backwardness, etc.

Before submitting the draft law, as amended in 1991, to the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, its developers studied the experience of decentralized management in the field of education in the United States. The idea of decentralized education management was enshrined in many provisions of this version of the law. Along with positive results, there were significant shortcomings in the process of development of the education system in Ukraine in the 1991–1996 period, which were caused by the introduction of the paradigm of decentralized management of the education sector. There was a process of uncontrolled and unjustified opening of private higher education institutions and closure of educational institutions, especially pre-schools, which operated on the basis of state and communal property. The policy of decentralization of education management in Ukraine led to the narrowing of the functions of the central bodies of state education management, leaving behind the functions of defining state policy in the field of education and the management of educational institutions of national importance. This led to the appointment of managers to the positions of heads of education departments, without the consent of higher education authorities, from among pedagogues who were not professionals in their field and had no managerial experience. The idea of decentralizing the management of the education system did not work on the basis of the real Ukrainian educational space. Therefore, there was the urgent need to revise the content of the Law of Ukraine "On Education", which was carried out in its new version in 1996. The developers of the draft law of 1996 paid more attention to the study of systems of centralized education management in such countries as France and Germany, and came back to the Ukrainian experience in the period up to 1991. On this basis, the article on state control over the activities of educational institutions appeared in the new version of the law.

The adoption of the above-mentioned law allowed the central authorities to critically review the realities of Ukraine's education system and focus their efforts on studying and implementing the best practices of European education policy. As a result of such activities, regulations on state educational standards of Ukraine were adopted. The standardization of educational activities is a process aimed at developing norms, rules, requirements, etc., in the process of providing educational services, the result of which is a set of standards that serve as indicators of order in the education system of a country. The effectiveness of these standards shows the strength of the desire to achieve better global indicators. Thus, since 1996, Ukraine has become an active participant in European integration processes, as evidenced by the recognition by the Verkhovna Rada of

Ukraine of the Lisbon Convention (1997); The Sorbonne Declaration (1998); the Bologna Declaration (1999), etc.

**Presentation of the Problem.** All of the developed countries of the world carry out the permanent improvement of the educational policy of their state and direct significant material, financial, personnel, etc., resources towards improving the functioning of the educational sector to the levels of the best global standards. The main ways of reforming are the introduction into practice of countries' own legislative, pedagogical, scientific, etc., innovations, as well as the best experience of functioning education systems in other countries. The mentioned problem was and remains relevant, and is in the field of view of a number of scientists. In particular, the experience of a number of European countries has been studied by authors as follows: Ukraine – Zablotskyi et al. (2019); Lithuania – Hasiunaite-Binkene (2018); Poland – Vakhrina (2014) and Kovalenko (2014); Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Bulgaria, Estonia, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland – Radkevych V. et al. (2018); Great Britain – Ohiienko (2014) and Remezovska (2010); Germany – Kolesnyk (2014); Italy – Nelin (2014); Denmark, Norway, Sweden – Lohvynenko (2014); the Netherlands – Zaiats (2013), and others.

Since 2014, the Government of Ukraine has been actively implementing measures to introduce the successful best practices of European educational systems in the educational system of Ukraine, starting with the adaptation of legislation to the norms and standards provided by international documents. In order to implement state policy in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine took the following steps (“European and Euro-Atlantic Integration” 2019): the conclusion of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement (2014); the appointment of Deputy Ministers for European Integration in the Ministries (2014); the establishment of the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration in the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2014); the introduction of the post of Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration (2016); the creation of directorates in the ministries for the formation of state policies and strategic planning (2016); the establishment of a government office for the coordination of European and Euro-Atlantic integration (2017); the approval of Comprehensive Plan for the implementation of the association agreement (2017); the implementation of the reform of general secondary education and its approximation to the practices of European countries (2017); and the introduction into the Constitution of Ukraine of norms on the acquisition of full membership of Ukraine in the European Union (2018).

From 2014 to the present day, the legislative and executive authorities of Ukraine have outlined the following directions of implementing reforms in the educational system: improving educational policy; creating the European Educational Institution of the Eastern Partnership; promoting the development of the educational sphere in general and each institution in particular; securing accession to the EU Horizon Europe Framework Program; raising the prestige of the teaching profession; improving the financial situation of pedagogical workers; improving the quality of educational services; promoting the mobility of students and scientific-pedagogical workers of educational institutions; creating favourable conditions for learning; providing support and funding for research projects; developing distance education; creating the lifelong learning system, etc.

These slogans give the impression of striving to develop, improve and enhance the functioning of Ukraine's education system, but each of the proposed areas for reform needs deep thought and a politically sound accompanying mechanism. Unfortunately, the desire to quickly implement the best examples of European educational policy by public authorities has led to the disregard and

violation of a number of objective requirements that are crucial in the process of reforming any socio-economic sphere of the state, and especially the requirements concerning material-technical, financial, personnel, scientific-methodical, normative-legal, etc., support for the educational process in Ukraine. As a result, such neglect of the real state of affairs not only blocked the possibility of the sustainable development of the country's educational environment, but also became a source of destructive processes in the education system.

According to Krulashov (2005), the inadequate attention paid by the state to the development of scientific research led to: the sharp reduction of its resources; the outflow of researchers and teachers into other areas of human life; low financing of the sphere of education, which contributed to personnel and logistical losses; the departure of the best teachers abroad, promoted by the openness of higher education institutions to European integration and the state's failure to provide the necessary conditions for quality of life; the displacement of educated pedagogues as a result of educational bureaucracy, especially on the ground; and the imbalance between metropolitan and regional educational institutions, contributing to the degradation of the latter. Chyzykhov and Antoniuk (2012) believe that the lack of a single certification of the quality of educational services leads to the free adjustment of prices of higher education institutions – especially private institutions, which charge between 1000–2000 USD per year. In our opinion, this tendency leads to the violation of the constitutional right of Ukrainian citizens to free access to education, as not all are able to afford such funds for study. According to Ryzhak (2008), the lack of effective state regulation of the number of entrants and students in the higher education institutions of Ukraine leads to an imbalance between the labour market and the educational services market, which contributes to: an increased number of unemployed citizens with higher education; graduates very often becoming unemployed, even with a qualitative higher education; a lack of quality knowledge and the profanation of the idea of continuing education as a result of the ability to study simultaneously in two or more faculties (specialties); and a decrease in the quality of teaching and systematic bribery as a result of the desire of many students not to obtain knowledge, but to obtain a diploma.

Taking into account the above, the problem of developing and implementing effective state policy in the field of education and science based on the best European standards remains relevant. This involves the optimization of pre-school, general secondary, vocational and higher education, taking into consideration the needs of the population, the labour market, the demographic situation, the regional order, and the abilities of educational institutions of each type to provide qualitative educational services.

**Objectives of the Research.** In determining the main objectives of the development of the educational sector of Ukraine, it is advisable to search for scientifically sound answers to a number of relevant questions. In the context of European integration processes, a number of ratified international regulations, and the vector of Ukraine's political course, which to some extent depends on the results of the struggles between the ruling oligarchic elites, these questions are as follows:

1. What are the dynamics of changes in the main indicators of the development of the education sector at each of the stages we have described since Ukraine gained the status of a sovereign state?
2. What is the content of the main trends in the development of education in Ukraine?
3. What are the reasons for slowing down the sustainable development of the educational sector of Ukraine – what is their content and significance?

Thus, this research will allow us to characterize the main trends in the education sector of Ukraine in the context of European integration processes, to determine the content of causes and

negative phenomena that reduce the efficiency of the functioning of this sphere, and to provide a reasoned assessment of the activity of public authorities in the educational sphere of Ukraine.

**Materials and Methods.** To solve the objectives of the research, we analysed the primary statistical reporting of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in the 1990–2019 period, using the main indicators of development of pre-school, general secondary, vocational and higher education in Ukraine according to the “United nations development program. Human development report” web resource (United Nations Development Program 2020). For the analytical presentation of the main trends of changes in the studied indicators, the moving average method was used with an interval of 5 years, and the rate of changes was determined using the formula:

$$W (\%) = \left( \frac{X_2}{X_1} - 1 \right) \cdot 100,$$

where:  $X_1$  – primary period;  $X_2$  – final period. The graphical method was used to visualize the trends of changes in the main indicators of the level of development of the education sector. The above tasks were implemented using the R-studio mathematical and statistical complex (Kabanov 2014; Crawley 2007).

**Results of the Research.** According to the objectives of the research, we characterize the dynamics of changes in the development of Ukraine’s education sector based on its subsystems and identify the main trends in these changes during significant periods in the political history of Ukraine. From 1990 to 2019, the number of pre-school institutions in Ukraine decreased by 40% (from 24,500 institutions in 1990 to 14,800 in 2019; State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2020a).

The greatest rate of decline in the number of preschool institutions occurred in the period from 1990 to 2005 (reducing by 39%) – after 2005, their number remained relatively constant, and reduced by only 1% (see Figure 1). It should also be noted that starting from 2014, statistics are provided without taking into account the territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The index of coverage of children in pre-school institutions was characterized by the multi-directional dynamics of changes in the study period. This index was defined as the ratio of the number of children in pre-school institutions to the number of children of the appropriate age (%), see Figure 2). The level of coverage of children was 57% in 1990 and 58% in 2019. A significant deterioration of this indicator was observed in the period from 1990 to 1998 (reducing by 33%), and since 1998 there has been a steady increase in this indicator to the level of the base year of comparison. Characterizing the overall dynamics of changes in the number of children in pre-school educational institutions in Ukraine, it should be noted that it decreased from 2.4 million in 1990 to 1.23 million in 2019, i.e., it almost halved (reduced by 49%). This can be explained by the reduction of the total population of Ukraine in the study period, which in turn is due to the deep socio-economic crisis that led to high mortality, low birth rates, and migration processes.

The total number of secondary schools in Ukraine in the 1990–2019 period decreased from 21,800 to 15,200 (a reduction of 30%; State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2020b; see Figure 3). It should be noted that in the 1990–2005 period the number of secondary schools in Ukraine did not change significantly, but since 2006 a significant decrease in the number of schools in Ukraine has taken place, which amounted to a reduction of 11% by 2014 (from 21,700 in 2006 to 19,300 in 2014). Further significant reduction has already occurred due to the loss by Ukraine of part of the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

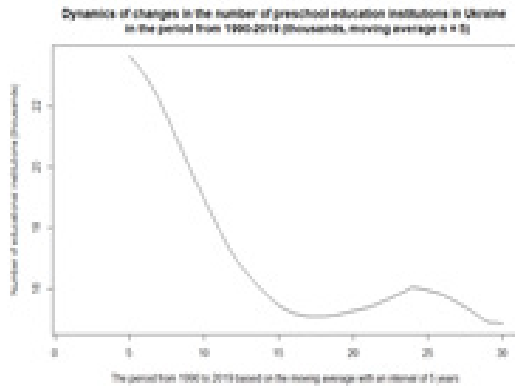


Figure 1.

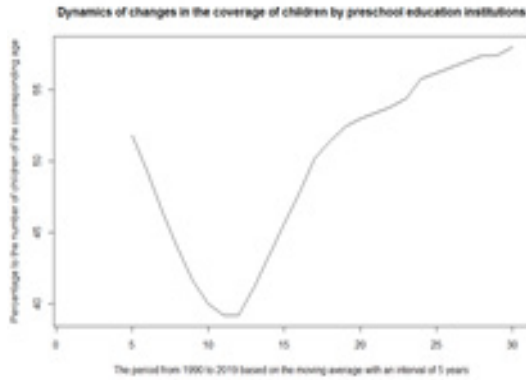


Figure 2.

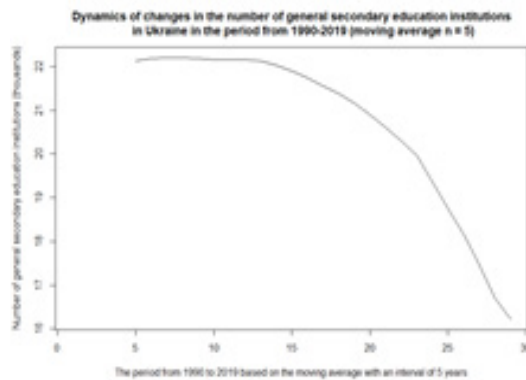
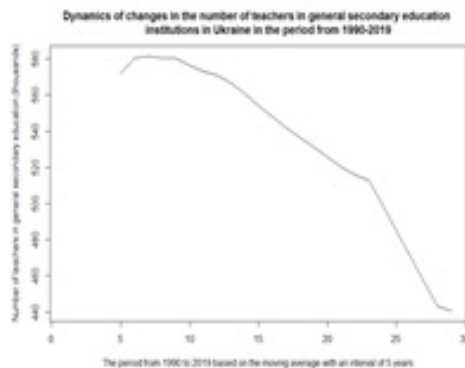


Figure 3.

The indicator of the number of pupils in general secondary education institutions is characterized by extremely negative dynamics in the studied period (see Figure 4). The total number of pupils in the period from 1990 to 2019 decreased by 42% (from 7.132 million in 1990 to 4.138 million in 2019). It should be noted that the largest reduction in the number of pupils occurred in the period from 2006 to 2014, and amounted to a decrease of 27%. In these 8 years, the number of pupils decreased more than in the previous fifteen years, from 1990 to 2005, which saw a reduction of 20%. In absolute terms, this meant a reduction of 1.527 million pupils from 2006 to 2014 against 1.401 million from 1990 to 2005. Another important fact is that in the last five years there has been a gradual increase in the number of children in secondary schools by 10%. This figure was determined without taking into account the lost territories.

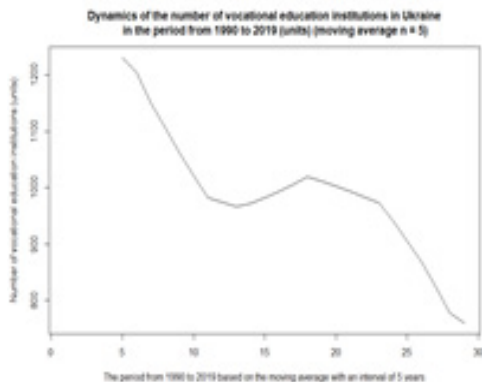
The negative dynamics of changes in the number of teachers in secondary education institutions is only natural in this context (see Figure 5). In the period from 1990 to 2019, the total number of teachers decreased by 18%, and the dynamics of these changes were multidirectional. Thus, from 1990 to 1997 there was an increase in the number of teachers in secondary schools, and since 2000 there has been a steady and gradual reduction in this indicator – by 7% in the period from 2006 to 2014, and by 13% from 2014 to 2019. This indicates that in recent years the crisis in the field of general secondary education is deepening, the number of institutions and jobs in Ukraine is declining, and the demand for the teaching profession in the labour market is declining.

The field of vocational education decreased by 42% (see Figure 6) in terms of the number of vocational schools in the 30-year period studied (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2020c) – from 1,246 to 723 educational institutions. For the first 20 years (from 1990 to 2010) of this period in Ukraine the number of vocational schools decreased by 22%, and from 2010 to 2019 the rate of negative change was more intense, as in less than 9 years the number of vocational schools decreased by a further 26%. This indicates that Ukraine is losing the base of training skilled workers for various sectors of tangible and intangible production, which is an extremely negative factor influencing the sustainable economic development of Ukraine. Clear confirmation of this is the significant reduction in the number of young people who choose to study in vocational schools in Ukraine – as of 2019, compared to 1990, their number had decreased by 62%, from 643,400 to 254,800 (see Figure 7). The highest rate of such reduction occurred in the period from 2010 to 2019, and amounted to a decrease of 43%, without taking into account the lost territories of Ukraine.

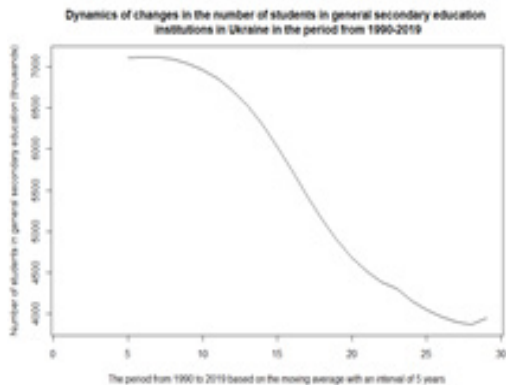


**Figure 4.**





**Figure 5.**



**Figure 5.**

Such negative dynamics testify to the low efficiency of the state policy of Ukraine in the field of vocational education and the presence of systemic crisis phenomena in the relationships between employers and vocational schools for the training of skilled workers and their further employment at Ukrainian enterprises.

The reform in the field of higher education has significantly reduced the number of educational institutions that have trained junior specialists (“junior bachelors” according to the new law of Ukraine on higher education) (see Figure 8). In general, the number of technical schools and colleges (educational institutions of the 1st level of accreditation) decreased in the period from 1990 to 2019 by 54% (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2020d). The period from 2006 to 2019 was characterized by a particularly rapid decline in such educational institutions (a 44% reduction).

Quite natural in this context is the tendency to reduce the number of students who studied in higher education institutions of this type (see Figure 9). In 1990 their number was 757,000, while in 2019 there were only 173,600 such students. This represents an actual reduction of 77%, with the fastest rate of decrease (66%) in the period from 2006 to 2019. The dynamics of changes in the number of higher education institutions of levels 2–4 of accreditation were completely the

opposite, as the number of such institutions in Ukraine increased by 89% (from 149 in 1990 to 281 in 2019) (see Figure 10). The highest growth rates occurred in the 1990–2005 period, when the number of higher educational institutions increased by 133%. It should be noted that over the past 15 years, the number of higher education institutions in Ukraine has decreased by 19%, from 347 in 2005 to 281 in 2019. In accordance with the growing number of higher education institutions in Ukraine, the number of students who studied in all forms of education – full-time, evening (distance) and part-time – also grew (see Figure 11). The largest growth rates in the number of students in higher education institutions occurred in the period from 1990 to 2005, with an increase of 130%, but since 2008 there has been a gradual decrease in the number of young people entering higher education institutions in Ukraine. As of 2019, compared to 2006, their number had decreased by 43%. This is not only due to the demographic crisis in Ukraine, but also to the introduction of the independent external testing of schoolchildren, who graduate from secondary schools and, according to the results of which, are enrolled on a competitive basis in the universities of Ukraine. Another important reason for the decrease in the number of students in higher education, in the authors' opinion, is the students' choice of foreign higher education institutions. Confirmation of this can be seen in the value of the index of international student mobility, which is calculated annually in the framework of United Nations reports on human development (United Nations Development Program 2020). For Ukraine, this index was –1.5% on average in the 2010–2017 period, which in turn indicates a negative difference between the number of young people who go to study abroad and the number of young people from other countries who choose to study in Ukrainian higher education institutions. This also indicates a significant decline in the prestige and ratings of leading Ukrainian higher education institutions.

One of the most important indicators that determines the level of development of higher education and science is the number of graduate and doctoral students who obtain the relevant degrees and meet the staffing needs of their respective sphere by becoming highly qualified specialists (see Figure 12). Along with the increase in the number of students in higher education institutions, the number of graduate students (Figure 12) and doctoral students (see Figure 13) who studied in the higher education institutions of Ukraine increased. The total number of graduate students increased by 89% in 2019 compared to 1990 (from 13,374 to 25,245), and the number of doctoral students increased by 121% (from 503 to 1,113). The period from 1990 to 2005 was characterized by the largest increase in these indicators – a 123% growth in the number of graduate students and a 161% growth in the number of doctoral students. It should be noted that, starting from 2007–2008, their number gradually began to decrease, culminating in an overall reduction of 19% over the last 10 years. Along with the increase in the number of graduate and doctoral students in Ukraine, and accordingly the number of those who successfully defended their dissertations, in the period from 2010 to 2019 the number of employees involved in research and development saw a steady decline (see Figure 14). In total, as of 2019, there were 79,262 such employees compared to 182,484 in 2010 (a decrease of 57%). The number of doctors and candidates of science involved in research and development in the period under study also decreased significantly – by 45% for doctors of science, and by 64% for candidates of science (see Figures 15, 16). In 2010, 11,974 doctors of science and 46,685 candidates of science worked on various scientific projects, while in 2019 their number was 6,526 and 16,929, respectively. This negative trend unequivocally indicates the partial collapse of basic research in Ukraine, possibly a decrease in the quality of research, and the significant outflow of scientific personnel abroad (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2020e). Among the possible reasons for the reduction in the number of teachers, scientists, research and teaching staff in Ukraine

are the mass departure of specialists abroad, changes in the type of professional activity caused by the socio-economic crisis, rising prices for basic necessities, a decrease in the purchasing power of the hryvnia, increases in unavoidable utility bills, etc. On the other hand, we must consider their critically low wages, especially in comparison with the wages of workers in other economic activities such as the civil service, the courts, the military, and the police. This is an even more shameful phenomenon against the backdrop of the increasing number of millionaires and billionaires from pro-government oligarchic groups. Brief official data on the average monthly salaries of educators and researchers in the period from 2010 to 2019 – in terms of US dollars via the weighted average annual exchange rate (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2020f; Word and Deed. Analytical Portal 2020) – indicates that, as of 2010, the average salary of an educator was 237.43 USD per month, and that of a researcher was 367.23 USD.

Over the next 10 years, the salaries of educators rose to 298.02 USD, and those of researchers to 533.03 USD (see Figures 17 and 18). It should be noted that in 2016 the salary of a teacher in Ukraine was only 149.62 USD, and a researcher only 319.97 USD. This did not and still does not cover the minimum costs of living, thus nullifying any prospect of the arrival in the field of education of talented and gifted young people, the sustainable development of education and science, and in general the socio-economic growth of Ukraine.

## **Conclusions**

Our study allows us to draw the following conclusions:

Analysis of the development of the education sector in Ukraine during its independence has revealed positive and negative trends in the educational policy of the state in terms of meeting the needs of citizens in receiving educational services. The results of the analysis of research conducted more than 15 years ago on the implementation of European integration processes remain relevant today, as evidenced by the statistics of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine. We agree with the opinion of Kruhlyashov (2005) on the existence of the fact that the state ignores the development of the scientific potential of researchers and provides low funding to educational institutions and pedagogues. This has led and continues to lead to the outflow of personnel abroad, increasing unemployment in the labour market. This opinion is supported by Chyzykhov and Antoniuk (2012) and Ryzhak (2008) who also claim that the necessary conditions for teaching and learning have not been created in the country. The government's reform policy leads to imbalances and disparities at every level of education and contributes to the destruction of the entire system, which is saturated with highly qualified pedagogues and scientists who are eager for strategic transformations, novelties, and the innovations of European integration. The experience of European countries such as Lithuania, Poland, Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Bulgaria, Estonia, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, etc. confirms that the political stability and high economic potential of the state not only influence but also act as a factor of the stability and development of the education sector. Thus, as our research has shown, Ukrainian governments of different periods understood the need for changes in education policy and tried to implement European integration and Euro-Atlantic education systems through the establishment of appropriate bodies, the appointment of people responsible for certain sectors, signing contracts, implementing legislation, and more. However, this was not sufficient, because only structural and organizational changes within public education bodies – without deep changes at the level of the main sphere of education that would create the necessary and sufficient conditions for the effective functioning of schools, universities, partici-

pants of the educational process, etc. – have not, during the 30 years of Ukraine’s independence, led to qualitative changes in the educational sector. As evidenced, present dynamics and indicators show the ineffectiveness of public policy, its dependence on the ruling political force at any given time, and the interests of certain political and oligarchic clans, which are the source of existing factors that slow down the development of the education system of Ukraine.

The dynamics of changes in the field of pre-school education in the period under study are characterized not only by a decrease in the number of institutions, but also by a decrease in the number of children. The indicators that impact the outlined processes are: the legislative non-regulation of compulsory pre-school education; reduced fertility; the financial inability of citizens to pay for the services of the institution; and the low standard of living, which leads to migration processes.

The negative dynamics of the number of general secondary education institutions and teachers working within them is explained by the introduction of reform processes, which have consisted of closing schools located in rural areas – a trend that is explained as “saving” money for their maintenance. This leads to the consolidation of schools of district-level importance, but at the same time results in the reduction of the number of teachers and reduced school attendance due to unorganized transportation. There is also a decline in the demand for the teaching profession due to low pay, although there is a need in the state to provide general secondary education institutions with experienced teachers.

During the period of existence of independent Ukraine, there has been a tendency within the whole territory of the rapid closure of industrial and agricultural enterprises, which negatively affects the economic development of the state and leads to the loss of demand for vocational education. This leads not only to the rapid reduction of employment, but also to the loss of highly skilled workers who are then employed abroad.

The decrease in demand for education in educational institutions of the 1st–2nd levels of accreditation – and, as a consequence, their reduction in number – is explained by the introduction of the external independent evaluation system and providing entrants with the opportunity to enter higher education institutions based on their score, avoiding bribery. Along with this, there is a dynamic of increase in the number of higher education institutions, which gives entrants the opportunity to freely choose their future profession and institution. Paradoxical against the tendency of the increasing number of higher education institutions is the fact that the number of students is decreasing. This is explained by two reasons: the legally regulated norm on external independent evaluation, and the possibility for entrants to choose not only institutions in the territory of Ukraine, but also abroad.

According to the analysis of the dynamics of changes in the main indicators of the development of the educational sector in Ukraine, it should be noted that the reform of the education system should be aimed primarily at creating conditions for providing quality educational services to the population in all spheres and at all educational levels. This would involve optimizing their number, establishing decent social guarantees, and offering proper remuneration of scientific and pedagogical workers. Furthermore, reform measures should not be reduced, but their requirements should be strengthened and the responsibilities of key employees should be increased, although such measures are more justified for the heads of educational institutions. It should also be noted that the influence of a number of objective negative socio-economic and, especially, political factors, which are only intensifying in Ukraine, will not, a priori, ensure the high quality of the educational process in the educational institutions of Ukraine in the near future.

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## UKRAINOS EUROINTEGRACIJA IR ŠVIETIMO SEKTORIAUS REFORMA

**Anotacija.** Straipsnyje pateikiamas Ukrainos švietimo sektoriaus plėtros lygio pagrindinių rodiklių pokyčių dinamikos (1990–2019 metais) tyrimas. Jis atliktas remiantis valstybine statistine ataskaita, sektoriaus plėtros tendencijų nustatymu Ukrainos eurointegracinės krypties kontekste. Straipsnio tikslas yra nustatyti ikimokyklinio, bendrojo vidurinio, profesinio techninio ir aukštojo išsilavinimo plėtros pagrindinių rodiklių pokyčių dinamiką ir kryptis. Tyrimu taip pat siekta remiantis eurointegracijos koncepcija pateikti objektyvų ir pagrįstą valstybės valdžios institucijų veiklos įvertinimą, joms įgyvendinant viešąją politiką Ukrainos švietimo sektoriaus reformos srityje.

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## THE COMMUNICATION CAPACITY INDEX OF UNITED TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINE'S EUROPEAN INTEGRATION POLICY

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**Abstract.** *This article deals with the development of the communication capacity index of united territorial communities (UTCs), as the analysis of basic research on the communicative development of communities demonstrates the urgency of the need to measure this process. Therefore, in this work, researchers set the purpose of determining the Communication Capacity Index of UTCs in the context of Ukraine's European integration policy. To do this, the authors used the method of analysis of statistical data and passport characteristics and the comparative approach. As a result of the analysis of four communication levels (information, consultations, dialogue, partnership) of township UTCs in the Mykolaiv region, the UTCs with the highest and the lowest Communication Capacity Indexes (CCI) were revealed, and are outlined in tables and diagrams. As conclusions of this research, the specifics and regularities of the communication interaction of UTCs (in the example of township UTCs of the Mykolaiv region) are determined.*

**Keywords:** *communication, united territorial community, Communication Capacity Index (CCI), information, consultations, dialogue, partnership.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *komunikacija, vieninga teritorinė bendruomenė, bendravimo pajėgumų rodiklis, informavimas, konsultavimas, dialogas, partnerystė.*



## Introduction

In order to implement the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, Ukraine is beginning a period of large-scale reforms, including decentralization, local self-government, administrative, and territorial reform. A fundamental aspect of these reforms is the ability of local communities to govern themselves, which must be ensured by a high level of communication.

The information openness of the authorities has to create ideal conditions for citizens to search for and obtain the information that is necessary for their livelihood and safety in some areas. In particular, this applies to local governments of united territorial communities (UTC).

Communication provides the conditions for monitoring the activities of local governments of UTCs by the local population, which provides opportunities to increase the efficiency of local governments. Communication is not only of social or political significance, but is also increasingly becoming a driver of the economic development of the UTC, the region or the state as a whole.

Communication for local communities is not just the exchange of information, but the process of uniting the local community to address issues of local importance, to foster a sense of territorial identity and ensure security stability.

The communication capacity of modern communities must take into account the needs of society in the electronic circulation of information. The public need to have trust in local governments and act as a reliable partner in making decisions of local importance. In conditions of the crisis associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, UTCs should provide the best possible internal communication through their websites and social media pages.

The next issues are actively explored in the scientific environment: the openness (transparency) of public authorities and the communication of their bodies in various areas, including the involvement of members of UTCs in making decisions of local importance. However, this is only one aspect of possible interaction. The following issues remain important: whether community members themselves are able to communicate with each other and other civil society institutions, and whether community members have a common identity with their community and want to take an active part in its life.

At the same time, we can be sure that the issue of communication in its general form generates a significant amount of interdisciplinary research. Thus, A. Hotun (2011) studied the basic concepts of communication in the political system of society, and T. Huzenko (2016), for example, analyzed the basic principles of the formation of communicative strategy in Kyiv. S. Shturkhet-skyi (2013) studied the development of communication strategies in local government in Ukraine, while N. Frolova (2019) considered the peculiarities of the use of social networks in the activities of public authorities. At the same time, the problem of communicative interaction (communication) at the level of territorial communities is only beginning to attract the attention of researchers, especially as a result of decentralization reform, which provided “the possibility to the UTC, or rather to the local population, for operative decision-making on community development” (Yevtushenko and Lushahina 2020, 397).

Analysis of basic research on the communicative development of communities shows the need to measure this process. In this case, we consider it appropriate to propose and calculate a UTC Communication Capacity Index that would demonstrate: factors on which the level of internal and external communication in the community depends; and what part this index plays in determining the capacity of the UTC in the social, economic, and political processes taking place

in its territory.

Thus, the purpose of the study is to determine the communication index of the capacity of UTCs in the context of Ukraine's European integration policy.

## Research

### 1. Methods

In the process of decentralization reform and the formation of UTCs, an important criterion for their emergence and development is the establishment of internal and external communication links, electronic document management, and a simplified system for obtaining the necessary information about UTC activities. Therefore, data from the following sources were used in the study:

- the main information portal of the reform of local self-government and territorial organization of power (decentralization) regarding the passport characteristics of UTCs;
- official UTC websites and official community pages on Facebook (which is the most widely used social network) to ensure public awareness of community events.

A comparative method was also used to identify similarities and differences in the communication ability of UTCs. Tables, diagrams, and formulas were used for the numerical interpretation of data.

### 2. Results and discussion

The best channels for internal and external UTC communication are the official community website and social media page. Having an official UTC website not only allows community members to focus on internal affairs, but also allows external investors to understand what the community is doing, how effective it is, and whether it is worth the investment. Another important aspect of the community's communication capacity is the ability to meet the information needs of young people, because the internet is the main source of information for them.

V. Dreshpak notes that communication in public administration "in general is a process of social interaction through messages, the content of which is public administration, the implementation of public authority and public policy" (Dreshpak 2015, 3).

Thus, communication is a process of transmitting and receiving information, which provides feedback through various means (channels of communication). In the context of the study of communication in territorial communities, we will consider the process of interconnection, interaction, and cooperation between the united territorial community, local governments, public authorities, businesses, NGOs, etc.

In our opinion, the evaluation of the level of UTC communication allows us to identify shortcomings in the UTC authority-population dialogue and to provide effective feedback between them, as well as to determine the communication potential of the UTC.

It is worth noting that effective communication depends on the proper organization of interaction between UTC local governments and the local community (joint development and public adoption of important decisions for the population of the UTC, budgeting, development and implementation of social target programs, etc.). There is a need to develop certain communication indices to determine the communication potential of UTCs (most effective and least effective) and to understand the factors that affect the level of communication in the UTC and which can increase the level of communication.

Taking into account these aspects, we propose to introduce the Communication Capacity Index of UTCs, which will be based on the best practices of public involvement in local decision-making. The Code of Best Practice for Public Participation of the Council of Europe describes

the levels of public involvement in policy-making processes in order of increasing intensity. They will be the basis for our index:

Information – the transfer of information; the local authority provides information to the public about certain events – for example, the adoption of a decision, the mechanism of public participation in the discussion.

Consultations – bilateral communication; the local government publishes a draft decision, and the public provides comments, remarks and suggestions in one way or another.

Dialogue (active public participation) – bilateral communication, during which the local authority can involve the public in working groups, expert councils, etc. in the process of making certain decisions.

Partnership – bilateral communication, when the local authority and the public exchange various resources (for example, the public helps to organize an event by involving volunteers) (“Kodeks krashchykh praktyk” 2009).

All of these levels are in a clear hierarchy and the transition to the next level involves the implementation of the previous one.

In addition, the current level of communication and best European practices shows that the availability of information on community activities to citizens plays a key role in the effective functioning of this community. In this context, we propose to consider the communication of township UTCs through their official websites and pages on social networks, including Facebook.

According to these levels, we will determine the index of citizen involvement in the communication process, which should include these components with their respective indicators, and give them values in ascending order depending on their complexity: public information (I = 1), consultations (C = 2), dialogue (D = 3), and partnership (P = 4).

**Public information.** The community must clearly understand that it can access the necessary information at any time, as this is the basis of all levels of further interaction. In many countries, there are constitutional guarantees of the right to access information, but they are not usually used unless there is special legislation to support them.

Public information channels are:

the official website of the local authority and media;

social networks, messengers, bots;

periodical e-mails;

telephone lines, where all interested persons can get the necessary information in the question-answer format.

For comparison, we will choose the township UTC of the Mykolaiv region, noting their brief characteristics (Table 1).

**Table 1**

General information of the township UTC of the Mykolaiv region

No.	Name of UTC	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Number of united councils	Population
1	Arbuzynska	430.3	5	10,382
2	Berezanska	882.2	10	13,796
3	Berezhnivatska	1259.5	15	19,344
4	Bratska	707.5	10	12,122

5	Veselynivska	906.7	11	17,896
6	Voskresenska	326.9	5	15,113
7	Vradiivska	801.4	12	16,836
8	Domanivska	728.8	7	14,850
9	Yelanetska	1015.6	12	14,863
10	Kazankivska	1002.6	14	15,113
11	Kryvoozerska	812.8	16	23,825
12	Oleksandrivska	287.0	3	9,126
13	Olshanska	244.8	5	9,148
14	Pervomaiska	390.4	5	9,493

**Source:** Holovnyi informatsiyni portal, n.d.

The first level – public information – is the simplest, and should be provided a priori. If there is no first level of communication in the UTC, then there can be no other level of communication. We determine the main parameters to be the availability of the UTC website (it has to be active, with relevant information), Facebook page, e-mail and telephone lines. If all components of the first communication level are available, the UTC receives the highest **Information Indicator (I) = 1**.

Considering these communities, we can conclude that all of these UTCs have their own active websites that have useful links, contact numbers and e-mail addresses. It is worth noting that most websites have only one phone number without specifying the person responsible for communication, which reduces the quality of the communication process.

The search for the website and social network page of the Kryvoozerska UTC was problematic, because the website of the township council (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Kryvoozerskoj selyshchnoj rady, n.d.) is not indexed in Google and can be found only through the link on the official Facebook page (“Kryvoozerska selyshchna rada” 2021). Also, on Facebook, there is a page not of the community, but of the township council. The contact phone number is mentioned on the gromada.info (n.d.) website, but the e-mail address is posted only on the social network page, which greatly complicates the search for the necessary channel to obtain information. However, as all four components are available, the Information Indicator (I) of Kryvoozerska UTC is **(I) = 1**.

Communication on social networks, in particular Facebook, is also carried out in these communities. However, such communication has different options, including: the community’s own messages, reposts of official information from various official sources, and user comments on pages that repost information from the pages of public authorities. According to N. Frolova (2019), the optimal presence on Facebook should include 4–5 publications per day.

A more complex level – consulting – involves two-way communication on a particular project or decision (this includes consultations, proposals, inquiries).

We can set the **Indicator of Consultations (C)** by reviewing draft decisions submitted for public discussion on the official website of the UTC. All UTC websites have a feedback form in the Contacts section, but the authors argue that this is insufficient to fully represent the Consulting level. In order to consult with the community and take into account their comments and suggestions, the site should have an appropriate section which contains information on the issue that is submitted for discussion with the community. Here we also encounter problems, because if this information is available on websites, it is often placed chaotically in different sections and is quite

problematic to find.

For example, on the website of the Arbusynska township UTC in the section “Appeals” there is a form for the proposals and appeals of citizens (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Arbusynskoi hromady, n.d.). This type of consultation is effective when the community is sufficiently informed and actively involved. That is, the first level of communication must be provided. In this case, the consultations indicator for the Arbusynska UTC is  $C = 2$ .

Now we will consider the website of the Bereznehuvatska UTC. There is no separate section for community consultations on the UTC website, but in the section “Development Plan” (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Bereznehuvatskoi hromady, n.d.) there is a questionnaire for businesses and residents regarding their vision of the community development strategy. Therefore,  $C = 2$ .

On the website of the Veselynivska UTC there is a section entitled “Discussions” (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Veselynivskoi hromady, n.d.) where a link to the feedback form and e-mail for comments and suggestions of citizens can be found, so again  $C = 2$ .

On the website of the Voskresenska township council, in the section “Announcements” (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Voskresenskoi selyshchnoi rady, n.d.), there are messages about suggestions and comments of the community about UTC projects –  $C = 2$ .

On the website of the Domanivska UTC in the section “Together with the community” the decision “On approval of the Regulations on public consultations in Domanivka township council” is posted, and in the section “To the attention of citizens. Public discussion” projects and programs for public discussion can be found. Therefore,  $C = 2$ .

On the official website of the Kazankivska community in the section “Available community” (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Kazankivskoi hromady, n.d.) a notice can be found regarding conducting electronic public consultations, indicating the relevant e-mail address of the Kazankivska township council. In addition, information on the results of the public discussion can be found in the Public Participation section, and on the planning of community meetings in the Advertisements section. Therefore, public consultation can be carried out in electronic form via email and through the direct meetings of citizens, so  $C = 2$ .

Analyzing the website of the Oleksandrivska UTC, we find the section “Public Consultations” (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Oleksandrivskoi hromady, n.d.), which contains a form for face-to-face consultations. In turn, on the website of Olshanska UTC there is a section “Public discussions”, where there are advertisements for public consultations. Therefore,  $C = 2$ .

The website of the Berezanska UTC does not have a separate section for “Public discussions”. However, in the section “News” (Ofitsiyni veb-sait Berezanskoi hromady, n.d.) there is an announcement of the Mykolaiv regional public administration for proposals of community members concerning implementation in the Mykolaiv region of the social project “Active parks – locations of healthy Ukraine”.

The website of the Bratska UTC is minimally informative. There are no sections on community consultation. The situation is similar with the following UTCs: Vradiivska, Kryvoozerska, Yelanetska and Pervomaiska. Therefore, in all of these united territorial communities, the consultations indicator is zero ( $C = 0$ ). In this case, the possibility of transition of these communities to the next levels (dialogue and partnership) is excluded. Therefore, we can immediately determine the Communication Capacity Index of these communities, which will be equal to 1 ( $CC_i = 1$ ). (Table 2)

Considering the second component (consultations) on community websites, we can make the conclusion that some sites have various effective forms (online questionnaires, links to internet

portals, etc.) of consulting with the community. However, most of the UTCs only have announcements about the date and time of consultations with the community in the council, a link to an email address, or a feedback form without any instructions. There is no single form for online consultation with the community and stakeholders.

Considering the third component – **dialogue (D)**, which entails active public participation – we need to ascertain the involvement of the public in working groups, expert councils, etc. in the process of making certain decisions. This level is quite complex and involves rather high standards of communication between local governmental bodies, local authority, businesses, volunteers, patrons and the community itself. Accordingly, those township UTCs that received a zero score at the previous level will not appear in this category.

The main component for this level is the availability of information on the website on the forming of temporary working groups or expert councils and relevant regulatory documents confirming this information.

In the section “Documents” of the Arbuzyńska UTC there is the main document of development – “Strategy of sustainable development of Arbuzyńska township united territorial community for 2019–2026”. This states that local governments, together with community members, formed a 40-member working group to prepare a draft of the Strategic Development Plan of the UTC, which was established in accordance with the Order of the Head of January 31, 2019 (“Stratehiia staloho rozvytku Arbuzyńskoi” 2019). Therefore, the **Indicator of Dialogue** of Arbuzyńska UTC receives a value of **D = 3**.

The protocols of the meeting on the establishment of a working group with the involvement of community representatives to develop a Strategic Development Plan for the Bereznehuvska UTC are posted on the community website. Therefore, the component of dialogue is estimated at **D = 3**.

The website of the Voskresenska township council (as a representative of the UTC) posted Order No. 99-r of June 30, 2017 “On approval of the Regulations of the working group for the development of the Strategic Development Plan of Voskresenska township council” (“Stratehiya rozvytku” 2019) for 2019–2021 with the indication of the group, which includes community representatives. Therefore, **D = 3**.

As for the Domanivska UTC, the community website, in the document “Strategy for Sustainable Development of Domanivka United Territorial Community of Mykolaiv Region for 2018–2026” (“Stratehiia staloho rozvytku Domanivskoi” 2018), describes in detail the working group with public involvement. A similar situation is observed in the Kazankivska UTC. Therefore, these communities receive an indicator value of **D = 3**.

On the website of the Oleksandrivska UTC, in the section “Useful information”, there are decisions of the council on various programs of UTC development with the involvement of citizens in decision-making. For example, “Program to support associations of co-owners of apartment buildings in carrying out major repairs, reconstruction and technical re-equipment of apartment buildings of Oleksandrivska township council for 2019–2021” (“Prohrama pidtrymky obiednan” 2019), “Anti-corruption program of Oleksandrivska township council for 2020–2023” (“Antykoruptsiina prohrama” 2020), etc. Therefore, **D = 3**.

As for the Veselynivska and Olshanska united communities, we do not find information about community involvement in expert councils or working groups. Therefore, **D = 0**.

Thus, as for this indicator, we can conclude that this level is quite problematic (Table 2), because the websites do not provide much information about the projects on which expert groups

or temporary working groups should work and, accordingly, about the results of their activities. In essence, we receive information from the reports of already completed programs.

The fourth level – **partnership** – provides the highest level of communication between different institutions and the community, and the availability of joint projects with international organizations, businesses and NGOs.

Thus, on the website of the Arbuzyńska UTC we find information that the UTC cooperates with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) according to the DOBRE program – aimed at the development of local self-government. Therefore, **P = 4**.

As for the Bereznehuvatska and Kazankivska UTC, we do not find clear information on the website about partnerships with any institutions, so **P = 0**.

The document “Action Plan for Sustainable Energy Development of the Voskresenska United Territorial Community until 2030”, posted on the website of the township council, states: “The Voskresenska United Territorial Community has joined the Agreements of Mayors – an initiative of the European Commission to unite European local authorities in a voluntary association to joint fight against global warming” (“Plan dii staloho enerhetychnoho” 2019). Therefore, **P = 4**.

The Domanivska UTC cooperates with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) according to the DOBRE program (“Proekt Dobre”, n.d.). The Domanivska UTC is the only one among fourteen UTCs that has a Communication Strategy for the development of the UTC for 2019–2026 (“Komunikatsiina stratehiia” 2019). The document was created as part of the USAID-funded program “Decentralization Brings Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE)”. The Domanivska UTC also participates in the Polish project “Application of evaluation in the process of effective management of the united community”, which is implemented by the foundation “The Democratic Association East” together with the East Ukrainian Center for Public Initiatives, and is funded by the program “The Support of Democracy” (“Ukraincko-polskyi proekt” 2017). Accordingly, the level of partnership of this community acquires the highest level: **P = 4**.

As for the Oleksandrivska UTC, the official website contains programs for the development of various areas of UTC activity with the involvement of civil society partners. For example, the Program “Development of Youth Policy in Oleksandrivska UTC for 2020–2022” (“Rozvytok molodizhnoi polityky” 2020) provides for cooperation with the Youth Public Council, NGOs, and participation in various grants. In addition, the community works with USAID on the DOBRE program. The program is implemented through an international consortium led by Global Communities, one of the partners of which is the Foundation for the Development of Local Democracy (Fundacja Rozwoju Demokracji Lokalnej (FRDL)) from Poland (“Stratehiia rozvytku hromady” 2017). Therefore, **P = 4**.

General characteristics for communities and indicators are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
Communication indicators of UTC

No.	Name of UTC	Information (I=1)	Consultations (C=2)	Dialogue (D=3)	Partnership (P=4)
1	Arbuzyńska	1	2	3	4
2	Berezanska	1	0	0	0
3	Berezhnevatska	1	2	3	0
4	Bratska	1	0	0	0
5	Veselynivska	1	2	0	0
6	Voskresenska*	1	2	3	4
7	Vradiivska*	1	0	0	0
8	Domanivska	1	2	3	4
9	Yelanetska	1	0	0	0
10	Kazankivska	1	2	3	0
11	Kryvoozerska*	1	0	0	0
12	Oleksandrivska	1	2	3	4
13	Olshanska	1	2	0	0
14	Pervomaiska	1	0	0	0

\* UTC, the website of which is represented by the website of the township council

**Source:** Author's work, 2021

The fourth level is the most difficult to achieve, but shows how much the territorial community is able to develop economically and in the direction of socio-political achievements. This level shows how actively the community participates in attracting grant funds for its development, and how effectively it is able to cooperate with civil society institutions, businesses and international organizations. As a result of the study, we see that only four communities out of fourteen have reached the fourth level (Table 2 and Figure 1).

Regarding the definition of the Communication Capacity Index UTC (CC<sub>i</sub>), we propose the following formula:

$$CC_i = I + C + D + P$$

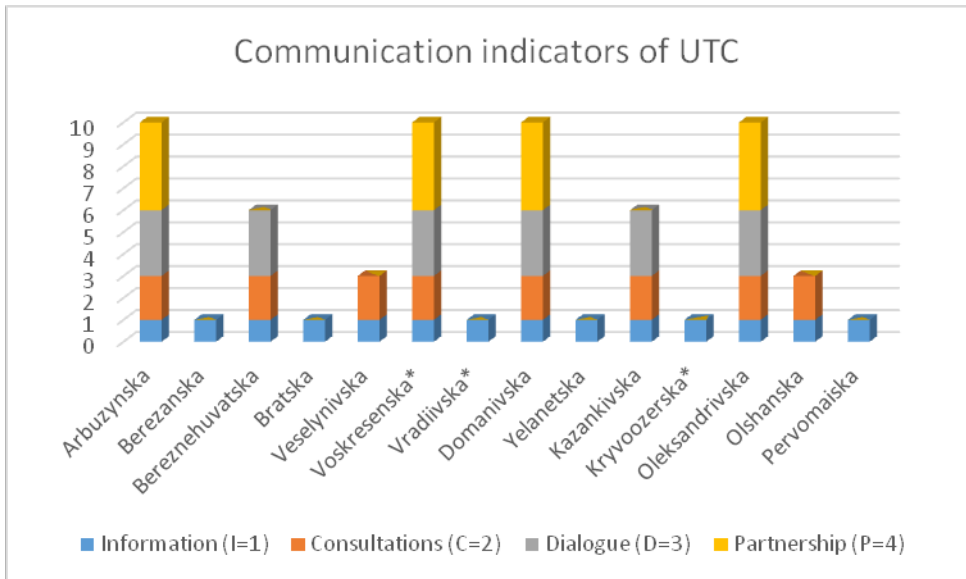
**I** – Information Indicator

**C** – Consultations Indicator

**D** – Dialogue

**P** – Partnership





**Figure 1.** Communication indicators of UTC

**Source:** Author's work, 2021

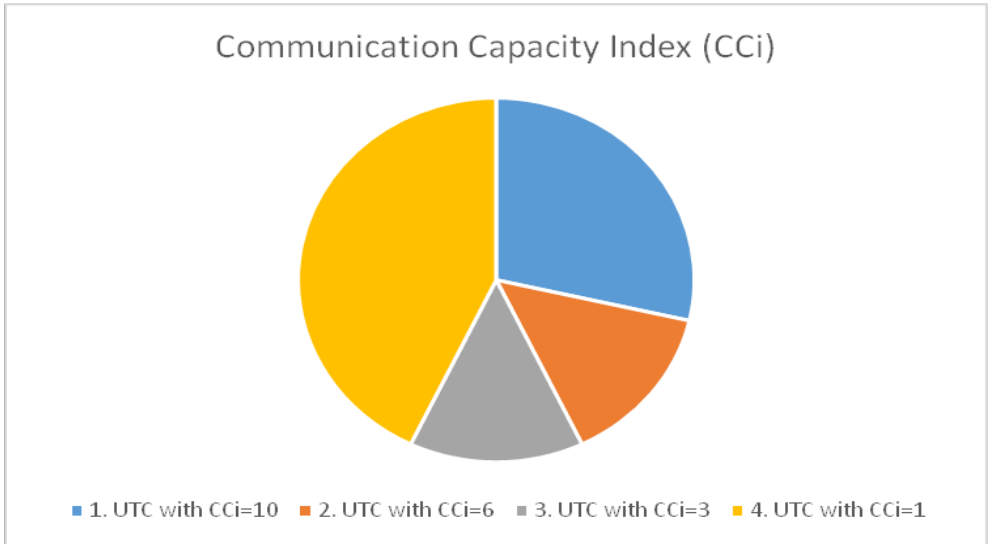
Thus, as a result, we can see that six communities have the lowest Communication Capacity Index  $CC_i = 1$  (Berezanska, Bratska, Vradiivska, Yelanetska, Kryvoozerska, Pervomaiska) and only four communities have the highest  $CC_i = 10$  (Arbuzynska, Voskresenska, Domanivska, Oleksandrivska). This is illustrated in detail in Table 3 and Figure 2.

**Table 3**  
Communication Capacity Index ( $CC_i$ )

No.	Name of UTC	Information (I=1)	Consultations (C=2)	Dialogue (D=3)	Partnership (P=4)	Communication Capacity Index ( $CC_i$ )
1	Arbuzynska	1	2	3	4	10
2	Berezanska	1	0	0	0	1
3	Berezhnuevatska	1	2	3	0	6
4	Bratska	1	0	0	0	1
5	Veselynivska	1	2	0	0	3
6	Voskresenska*	1	2	3	4	10
7	Vradiivska*	1	0	0	0	1
8	Domanivska	1	2	3	4	10

9	Yelanetska	1	0	0	0	1
10	Kazankivska	1	2	3	0	6
11	Kryvoozerska*	1	0	0	0	1
12	Oleksandrivska	1	2	3	4	10
13	Olshanska	1	2	0	0	3
14	Pervomaiska	1	0	0	0	1

\* UTC, the website of which is represented by the website of the township council  
 (Source: Author’s work, 2021)



**Figure 2.** Communication capacity index (CC<sub>i</sub>)  
 Source: Author’s work, 2021

### 3. Conclusion

1. If we compare the initial data of UTCs (Table 1) and the obtained results (Table 2), we see that the Communication Capacity Index of the UTC as an indicator of the communication potential of the community partly depends on the number of merged councils in the UTC (communities with the highest level unite, on average, 5 councils per UTC, while the average in the UTC with the lowest level is more than 10 councils per UTC). In general, it should be noted that UTCs with a lower Communication Capacity Index are characterized by a larger average size of their territory (22.5% more than the UTC with the highest CC<sub>i</sub>) and a larger average population (73.3% more than UTC with the highest CC<sub>i</sub>).

2. The Communication Capacity Index may depend on the community’s ability to communicate through information, consultation, dialogue and partnership. The information level is the simplest form of communication, and without it the work of the community is simply impossible. However, the partnership level shows a high level of communication of the community and its ability to attract investment and non-budget funds and participate in competitions for grants and

various community development projects. This can be ensured by the active participation of citizens in local decision-making.

3. The study of the communication of township UTCs shows that in the field of UTC territory management the issue of communication interaction (through information, consultations, dialogue and partnership) between government bodies and the UTC population is extremely topical.

4. The Communication Capacity Index proposed in this study allows the openness of UTC governing bodies to be characterized, and in fact it characterizes the level of trust of the local population regarding the activities of UTC bodies.

5. Bilateral communication is a guarantee of successful interaction between local governments, local people, business structures, investors and civil society institutions.

6. The evolution of a UTC from information (the simplest form of communication) to partnership (the highest level of communication) involves the active participation of the population in local decision-making and the ability of the UTC to attract non-budget funds for community development. That is, the main function of UTC communication is the struggle for resources: human, financial, investment, etc.

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## JUNGTINIŲ TERITORINIŲ BENDRUOMENIŲ KOMUNIKACIJOS INDEKSAS UKRAINOS EUROPOS INTEGRACIJOS POLITIKOS SĄLYGOMIS

***Anotacija.** Straipsnis skirtas suvienytų teritorinių bendruomenių komunikacinių gebėjimų indeksui sukurti. Jame, analizuojant bendruosius bendruomenių komunikacinio vystymosi pagrindinius tyrimus, parodoma, kad reikia skubiai išmatuoti šį procesą. Todėl šiame darbe tyrėjai siekia nustatyti suvienytų teritorinių bendruomenių pajėgumų komunikacijos indeksą Ukrainos Europos integracijos politikos kontekste. Tam autoriai taiko šiuos metodus: statistinių duomenų ir paso požymių analizės metodą, lyginamąjį metodą ir kt. Išanalizavus keturis Mykolajivo srities teritorinių bendruomenių komunikacijos (informavimo, konsultavimo, dialogo, partnerystės) lygius, buvo nustatytos atitinkamos jungtinės teritorinės bendruomenės, turinčios aukščiausių ir žemiausių komunikacijos indeksą, kuris atsispindi lentelėse ir diagramose. Atlikę tyrimą, autoriai nustatė suvienytų teritorinių bendruomenių bendravimo sąveikos ypatumus ir modelius (gyvenviečių, sujungtų teritorinių Mykolajivo regiono bendruomenių pavyzdžiu).*

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# THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE IN KAZAKHSTAN DURING ITS INDEPENDENCE

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**Abstract.** *This article provides a comparative legal and chronological analysis of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On local government and self-government” with the corresponding articles from the text of the Constitution. The priority directions of the ways of reforming the conceptual foundations of local government and self-government in Kazakhstan during the years of independence are analyzed. The research uses general scientific and special methods of scientific knowledge. Among the results obtained, we point out the following: proposals for improving legislation; recommendations for improving the Constitutional Law “On elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan”; reflections on the advantages of a mixed electoral system; criteria for the election of deputies of Maslikhats; and the main tasks of the deputies of Maslikhats.*

**Keywords:** *Maslikhats, authorities, law, the system of public administration, elections of Akims.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *Maslikhatai (vietinė atstovaujamoji valdžia), valdžios organai, teisė, viešojo administravimo sistema, Akimų (sričių administracijų vadovų) rinkimai.*

## Introduction

Over the 30 years of its independence, Kazakhstan has turned into a democratic, secular, legal, social state. As practical experience and the actions of the country's constitution show, in accordance with the political and economic situation, these issues have developed well in the upper echelons of the republic's power (Baimakhanova and Zhatkanbaeva 2013).

Due to the weak initiative of the population, the low level of legal and civic culture, and the insufficient perception of the authorities on this issue, for 30 years local self-government (hereinafter – LSG) has remained one of the least developed institutions of civil society in the country. The main form of LSG is the active participation of citizens and local populations in the work and decision-making of local authorities (Schramm et al. 2011). One of the primary tasks is to activate the consciousness of the local community in direct participation in solving problems on the ground. Therefore, the main element of any civil society is LSG. In accordance with the current Constitution, a norm is recognized in Kazakhstan that ensures the independent solution of local issues by the population (Karagusssov 2015).

Local self-governance is exercised by the population directly, as well as through Maslikhats and other governing bodies in local communities encompassing areas densely populated by groups of citizens (How self-government..., 2021). The history of LSG in Kazakhstan goes back many centuries. Its foundations were laid during the emergence of clan and tribal communities, when a nomadic way of life was being formed. The elders of clans and tribal leaders were elected at kurultais and gatherings of nomads (Klyashtorny and Sultanov 1992). According to the work of famous historian B. Ayagan (2020) in *History of Ulug Ulus-Golden Horde*, "...The election of Temujin (Genghis Khan) at the time of the Great Kurultai in 1206, in addition to famous people, according to the 'Secret History', involved the following tribes: three thousand from the tribe Konyrat, five thousand Onkuts, Jalair Muhali, Merkits, Kereys clans, Naimans, and Oirats."

In general, local self-governance in most of the former Soviet Union and CIS countries was characterized by the following problems: insufficient budget, loss of many socially significant objects of state and municipal property due to privatization, incomplete formation of the corps of communal property, lack of funds in the budget, weak material base for exercising local authority, and widespread passivity of the population in the decision-making process at the local level (Borisova et al. 2021; Shalbolova et al. 2021).

The purpose of this study is to analyze and compare the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On local government and self-government" with the relevant articles from the text of the Constitution. The main objectives of the study were to analyze the peculiarities of LSG development in Kazakhstan and a chronological analysis of the system of local self-governance.

## Materials and Methods

The comparative method was used, which facilitated an analytical study of the systems of local government and LSG in the country, and the formation of the view on the most appropriate reforms for their improvement.

The main theoretical basis of the study was: the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 148 "On local government and self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan" (2001); Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 639 "On approval of the Concept for the development of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2025" (2021); and the "Concept of the New Law on Local Self-Governance"



approved in 2021.

The theoretical basis of the research was also formed by the works of Kazakhstani authors D. M. Baymakhanov (2021), L. T. Zhanuzakova (2014), and S. L. Midelsky (2021), who studied the peculiarities of the development of state and LSG models. The relevance of the study is due primarily to two messages from the Head of State, K.-Zh. Tokayev, to the people of Kazakhstan: “Constructive public dialogue is the basis of stability and prosperity of Kazakhstan” from September 2, 2019; and “Kazakhstan in the new reality: time to act” from September 1, 2020. The basic theoretical and methodological provisions on local government and LSG bodies were formed in the 19th century. These studies include the entire complex of relations between society and the state and are characterized by political processes.

#### Results and Discussion

The acquisition of sovereignty and independence by Kazakhstan in 1991 paved the way for a process of developing the LSG system on Kazakh soil. In the period between 1995 and 2007, several attempts were made to develop a draft law “On Local Self-Governance in the Republic of Kazakhstan” (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan..., 1993; 2001), during which various drafts and recommendations were developed relating to LSG. Conventionally, the establishment and development of LSG bodies in Kazakhstan during these years may be divided into 4 stages (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Stages of Formation and Development of LSG Bodies in the Republic of Kazakhstan

	First stage	Second stage	Third Stage	Fourth stage
	1990–1993	1993–1995	1995–2007	2007–present
Introduced laws and decrees.	Decree of the Supreme Council of the Kazakh SSR No. 307-XII “On the Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic” (1990);  Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Local Self-Government and Local Councils of People’s Deputies of the Kazakh SSR” (1991).	The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 148-II “On local representative and executive bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (1993).	The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 148 “On local government and self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan” (1991).	The 2007 constitutional reform changed the relationship between local and state governance and self-governance in Kazakhstan.

Main changes in the Constitution.	<p>democratizing government;</p> <p>eliminating the monopoly of the Communist Party in public and political life;</p> <p>increasing the role of local councils of all levels in resolving economic and social issues in their territory;</p> <p>proclaiming the state independence of Kazakhstan.</p>	<p>the first Constitution of independent Kazakhstan was adopted;</p> <p>the local Soviets were abolished en masse;</p> <p>Maslikhats (Assemblies of Deputies) and local Akimats were created.</p>	<p>amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1995);</p> <p>definition of Maslikhats and Akimats as local government structures.</p>	<p>Maslikhats and Akimats were recognized as structures of local state governance and self-governance, and their status and competence were enshrined, considering new tasks facing the state and society.</p>
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The main core of the LSG system is defined by the local representative bodies – Maslikhats – which express the will of the respective administrative and territorial population and, considering the national interests, determine the measures necessary for its implementation and oversee their implementation (Abdrasulov and Gubaidullin 2019a). In essence, Maslikhats are a kind of bridge between the population and the authorities at the local level. Within the framework of their powers, they contribute to the solution of many urgent issues and accumulated problems of the local community (Baimakhanova and Zhatkanbaeva 2013). Local representative bodies imply a given community (Matsupa 2004). According to the definition of famous attorney A. O. Kopabaev (2000), “the status of Maslikhats is defined by the population as an institution of implementing state power and is simultaneously a subject of local state administration”.

The development of LSG based on Maslikhats may have been necessitated by the evolutionary state and political development of the country. The transition from a strong system of state administration to a model of local self-governance was carried out during a period of transition. It can be stated that Maslikhats were a kind of a compromise mechanism for the implementation of local self-governance. It is assumed that this model of self-governance in the transition period was justified and allowed for optimal consideration of the interests of central authorities and local communities (Zhangazy 2011). In this regard, the question of how Maslikhats became the basis for the formation of the system of local self-governance in our republic is answered, since they represent the practical unification of local state governance and self-governance. Giving LSGs the authority to implement state functions in accordance with the current legislation seems to be most appropriate in the current conditions of the country's development. Numerous scientific studies confirm the unreasonableness of opposition to the systems of state power and self-governance. For example, A.V. Turovsky (2015) noted that the formation of local self-governance should only have a functional meaning, not a political one.

Obviously, it is inadvisable to politicize the issue of LSG development; it should be guided by pragmatic considerations. Whichever model is implemented, it must first and foremost become an effective system of local community management. Naturally, LSG structures retain a certain autonomy from the state. At the same time, it must be taken into consideration that LSG is essen-

tially an extension of state power (Sheriyazdanov 2020). In addition, it is implemented with the participation of the local population and is therefore of a public nature. Consequently, LSGs fulfil two functions – state and public (The draft law... 2021). The latest amendments to the Basic Law of the country will allow Akims of settlements not only to exercise state powers but also to legally solve the problems of the local community (The election of Akims... 2021).

According to the law, the functions of the representative body work in several ways: firstly, they approve all plans and economic and social programs for the development of the territory, and draft local budgets. Secondly, Maslikhats approve planning schemes and draft master plans for the development of almost all territorial units, except regional centers. Thirdly, Maslikhats approve all social development plans, including rules for the provision of social support to citizens of the local community. Fourthly, Maslikhats agree on the composition of the Akimat, approve the head of the local police and elect senators to the Senate of the RK Parliament. Fifthly, the powers of Maslikhats in the fields of industry, construction, transport, and communications, the development of entrepreneurship and other sectors of the economy are stipulated by other sectoral laws of the RK. Similarly, the powers of local representative bodies in the spheres of housing and public utilities and commercial services imply a very broad group (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan... 2001).

In Kazakhstan – after elections to the Mazhilis of the Parliament and Maslikhats of all levels on January 10, 2021 – 14 regional, 3 urban and capital Maslikhats of republican subordination, 30 regional cities, and 164 district Maslikhats were formed and continue to work. Until 2019, Maslikhats could include self-nominated representatives of the local community, but the elections of 10.01.2021 had several peculiarities (Abdrasulov and Gubaidullin 2019b). Firstly, for the first time the Maslikhat elections were held on the basis of lists of political parties. Secondly, in accordance with the amendments to the Constitutional Law on Elections, one single territorial constituency was created in the territory of the respective administrative and territorial unit for the election of deputies to the Maslikhat. Thirdly, the number of women and persons under twenty-nine years of age had to be at least thirty percent of the total number of persons included in the party list (Maslikhats in the Republic..., 2021).

The local executive bodies – Akimats – are part of a unified system of executive bodies and ensure the implementation of the general State policy of executive power in conjunction with the interests and development needs of the territory concerned. The responsibilities of local executive bodies include: 1) the development of plans, economic and social programs for the development of the territory and the local budget, and ensuring their implementation; 2) the management of communal property; 3) the appointment and dismissal of heads of local executive bodies and the resolution of other issues related to the organization of local executive bodies; and 4) the implementation in the interests of local public authorities of other powers entrusted to local executive bodies by other laws. Akims of regions, major cities, and the capital shall be appointed to the office by the President of the Republic, with the consent of the respective Maslikhats (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan..., 2001).

In his second Message to the people of Kazakhstan, the President announced an initiative to introduce direct elections of rural Akims and develop a new concept of LSG in Kazakhstan until 2030 (Message from the Head..., 2019). This step is a key aspect of the realization of the “Listening State” concept in the further development of regional self-governance institutions in Kazakhstan. It was a timely step for the further development of the institution of LSG in Kazakhstan and one of the key aspects of the implementation of the concept of the “hearing state”.

The Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan has developed relevant

draft laws on the introduction of the direct elections of rural Akims. New changes in the draft law include the introduction of elections of rural Akims based on universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot, including the introduction of the procedure of self-nomination of candidates and through political parties. Direct elections of rural Akims will allow citizens to fully exercise their constitutional rights, contributing to resolving the needs and problems of the local population and fully implementing the concept of a “hearing state” (What powers will..., 2021).

As a part of the plan to implement the Presidential Address, the MNE RK has developed and approved a Concept of the Development of LSG until 2030. As a part of the implementation of the concept, the following are envisaged: the introduction of direct elections of Akims of villages, settlements, and rural counties in 2021, and Akims of districts and cities of regional and district significance in 2024; the provision of additional types of taxes to the LSG level; the creation of a local representative LSG body with relevant competence; the introduction of a mechanism for passing public expertise and online survey regarding socially significant expenditures; and the provision to Maslikhat deputies of the right to draft petitions (collecting signatures) and organize the online broadcast of LSG deputies sessions (What powers will..., 2021). Direct elections of rural Akims have already been successfully held in 2021.

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 60-VII ZRK “On amendments and additions to certain legislative acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on issues of expanding the independence and responsibility of district, city and rural levels of government” (2021) introduces amendments and additions to several normative legal acts: expanding the revenue base of cities of district significance, villages, settlements, and rural counties; simplifying budget procedures; expanding the independence and increasing the responsibility of local representative and executive bodies; and improving requirements for administrative and territorial units (Bielov et al. 2019).

First, there will be an increase in Maslikhats’ oversight functions concerning the implementation of social and economic development plans and regional budgets by local executive bodies. Two chairmen of the standing commissions on major issues of regional development will work on a voluntary basis. The function belonging to the previously elected chairperson of the body pointed to their inefficiency, as they work voluntarily. Therefore, the transfer of the powers of the chairman of the session to the secretary of the Maslikhat would certainly increase the role and responsibility of the secretary of the Maslikhat and the people’s elected representatives.

All of these key questions have been answered in “The concept of development of local self-government in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030” (2021). Following the approved concept, a new law has been drafted to ensure the effective resolution of issues at the local level. The concept – in addition to the direct election of an Akim of a district, town, village, or rural district for the development of LSG – provides the further decentralization of power and the creation of an effective system of LSG. Measures will be taken to gradually delimit the powers of local governance and local self-governance structures through the expansion of communal property and the increase of the revenues of district budgets in rural areas.

In addition, further improvement of LSG bodies in rural areas is envisaged. In rural districts, a collegiate body – a Kenes (council) – will be created with the functions of a representative body by transforming the role of a local community assembly. The Kenes will be supported by employees of the rural district Akimat. Members of the council will be elected by open ballot at the meeting of the local community for a period of 3 years from the citizens residing in the respective administrative and territorial units. The new representative body will adopt legal acts valid in the respective territory. In addition, their powers will include approval of the local community development plan

and the budget agreed with the local community assembly, and the monitoring of its implementation. The Kenes will also regulate issues of landscaping, sanitary cleaning of settlements, street trade, celebrations, and contests. In addition, the Kenes will have the competence to regulate the amount of taxes and payments (How self-government..., 2021). Hence, the creation of a local representative body, the Kenes, at the lowest level of LSG would bring power as close to citizens as possible (The concept of development..., 2021).

The main problems of modern society in the country are social injustice, corruption, and legal nihilism. Therefore, the broad participation of the public in the decision-making process at the grassroots level through local representative bodies, openness, and the interconnection of the relationship between the authorities and the local community is one of the most important ways of solving the existing problems. The main driving force of the development of self-governance can be the active part of the local population, fully aware of new opportunities and personally responsible for their future (Midelsky 2021). The electability of local representative bodies (Kenes, Maslikhat) is manifested in such an important attribute as their representative nature, which reflects the nature of their self-governance. As elected bodies of the population, they are entitled to represent and protect the interests of the citizens residing in the respective territory (Zhanuzakova 2014).

## **Conclusions**

Having analyzed the specifics of the development of LSG in Kazakhstan, the system of local governance that originated from the kurultais of the Great Steppe before the independence of Kazakhstan, and the measures taken by the sovereign state in the last 30 years, the following conclusions can be made:

The current law does not establish a distinction between local state administration and LSG. The law implies that the Maslikhat is both a local state administration structure and a body carrying out LSG. The Akimat, being a collegial body headed by the Akim, carries out within its competence local state governance and self-governance in the respective territory.

To increase civic activity in order to preserve the stability and democracy of the country, it is necessary to elect deputies of local representative bodies and rural Akims from representatives of various parties and individual authoritative local citizens with alternative elections.

Due to the uneven development of the territories, it is relevant to consider measures to equalize the level of development of the territories in the modern environment through the centralized redistribution of resources.

Under the requirements of increasing civic engagement, including through internet resources, it becomes important to ensure the transparency of the activities of the state and LSG bodies.

After the direct election of rural counties' Akims and the approval of an independent budget mechanism, the need arises to create a local representative body directly involved in the governance of the rural district.

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## KAZACHSTANO VIETOS SAVIVALDOS KŪRIMAS IR PLĖTRA NEPRIKLAUSOMYBĖS LAIKOTARPIU

**Anotacija.** Straipsnyje pateikiama lyginamoji teisinė ir chronologinė Kazachstano Respublikos įstatymo „Dėl vietos valdžios ir savivaldos“ analizė, į ją įtraukiant ir atitinkamus Konstitucijos teksto straipsnius. Nagrinėjamos nepriklausomo Kazachstano savivaldos ir prioritetinės savivaldos konceptualių pagrindų reformavimo kryptys. Tyrime taikyti bendrieji moksliniai ir specialieji mokslo žinių metodai. Akcentuotini šie rezultatai: parengti pasiūlymai dėl teisės aktų tobulinimo, pateiktos rekomendacijos dėl Konstitucinio įstatymo „Dėl rinkimų Kazachstano Respublikoje“ tobulinimo, išskirti mišrios rinkimų sistemos pranašumai, pateikti maslikhatų (deputatų) ir akimų (vietinės vykdomosios valdžios vadovų) rinkimų kriterijai, nustatyti pagrindiniai maslikhatų uždaviniai.

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## STRATEGIC VECTORS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIL SERVICE PROFESSIONALISATION MECHANISMS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL CHANGES

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**Abstract.** *The aim of this study is to determine the strategic vectors of the implementation of mechanisms for civil service professionalisation in the context of social changes. The leading method for studying the problem is the structural and functional method, which allows for the comprehensive consideration of the mechanism of civil service professionalisation through a two-part analysis and a study of the structure and functionality of the research object. Such general methods of scientific knowledge as analysis and synthesis, incomplete induction and deduction, generalisation and abstraction were also used in the study. The study analyses the definitions of the term “professionalisation”; determines the factors that should be considered when developing a new mechanism for civil service professionalisation or modernisation in the context of public changes; analyses the strategic plan of the activities of the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service for 2019–2022 and identifies its main advantages and disadvantages in the aspect of studying civil service professionalisation; and suggests strategic vectors of implementation of mechanisms for civil service professionalisation, which can have a positive effect in the context of public changes.*

**Keywords:** *professional development, civil servants' efficiency, human resources, evaluation system, motivation.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *kvalifikacijos kėlimas, valstybės tarnautojo darbingumas, žmogiškieji ištekliai, vertinimo sistema, motyvacija.*

## **Introduction**

Social transformations in the public administration system of Ukraine, carried out by the current government, are aimed at finding possible prospects for the development of Ukrainian society and identifying new methods and forms of achieving the efficiency of the civil service, and are focused on European standards. The effective functioning of society and its development depend on the strong, professionally competent human resources potential of the state (Shalbolova et al. 2021, 591).

Professionalisation contributes to the implementation of social transformations, ensuring the progress of society's development. Considering specialisation and the division of labour as necessary parameters of social development, the professional group can become one of those institutions that support social order (Shalbolova et al. 2021, 593). Professionalisation is defined in three dimensions: legislative; educational and professional; and scientific, where the personnel component of professionalisation is included in the educational and professional dimension and is associated with the desire of people for professional improvement. The mechanism of professionalisation will be effective only when it meets public conditions and requests – that is, conducting a systematic personnel policy and developing a talent management system for civil servants, which would ensure the optimal rotation of personnel within the state body, forecasting the development of civil servants, planning their career, and training and monitoring the effectiveness of their work.

The subject of professionalisation of the civil service of Ukraine in the conditions of adaptation to European standards of civil servants' training and their professionalisation in the context of changes was considered by such researchers as L. Titarenko and V. Yatsenko (2019), V. Govorukha (2008), O. Girkina and V. Semenov (2012), and others. The professionalisation of the service in the context of social transformations was also studied at the level of local self-government bodies, including in studies by U. Mustafayeva (2011), M. Butko and V. Skrypka (2011), and others. Professionalisation is mainly considered by scientists as a unity of two components – professionalism and competency – and when indicating measures for the professional development of employees, attention is mostly paid to professional training.

An insufficient level of civil servants' professionalisation leads to numerous problems in the functioning of the state, which hinders its development (Kostruba and Lukianov 2019, 2036). A high level of civil servants' professionalisation allows for the effective performance of the functions and tasks of the state and ensures the necessary level of service provision by the state body.

## **Materials and Methods**

Analysis and synthesis as general scientific methods of cognition are necessary at every stage of research and are used in both mental and practical activities. Using the method of analysis, the object of the research was divided into certain components that required separate study. The synthesis method combines parts of a whole object. The use of analysis and synthesis allows various aspects of a particular object to be studied and for it to be characterised in general, which ensures a holistic study. Induction is a method of reasoning and research in which a general conclusion is

based on individual judgments (Schramm et al. 2011, 268). Deduction is a method of reasoning by which a separate conclusion follows from general judgments. In the process of scientific cognition, methods of generalisation and abstraction are also used.

The main method of studying the mechanisms of civil service professionalisation is the structural and functional method, which can be considered the most developed method of studying socio-cultural phenomena and processes as a systemically organised integral structure, where each element has a certain functional significance. The structural and functional method examines system objects and is built based on identifying structural components in social systems and their role in relation to each other. The algorithm of the structural-functional method includes studying the structure of a system object, its elements, and their functional characteristics. It also permits analysing changes in these elements and their functions, considering the development of the system object in general, presenting the object as an integral functioning system, all elements of which support this integrity (Makhnitskaya and Shalbolova 2012, 416).

The structural and functional method aims to analyse two components – structure and functionality. Structure is the division of the object into elements that can be primary or secondary, but its characteristic feature is a direct relationship. Another component of the structural and functional research method is related to the role and purpose of these elements.

#### Results and Discussion

The priority on the way to the development of a new civil service system is to develop a clear concept for regulating and implementing the process of the professionalisation of the civil service as one of the most important and promising factors in the development of Ukraine. The sociological dictionary offers the following definitions for the term professionalisation: 1) the desire of some professional groups for professional excellence through the establishment of higher requirements (standards) to achieve higher social prestige; 2) the process of professional development through the purposeful development of professional knowledge, skills, and abilities; and 3) the process of professional growth of personnel, which is an integral element of personnel policy aimed at increasing their status and prestige and the development of a talent management system (Zaborovskyy et al. 2020a, 177–178). Considering the professionalisation of each civil servant, the following interpretation of this concept can be given: a set of interrelated and interdependent social institutions that ensure the establishment, identification, and development of the individual, providing them with assistance in professional self-determination and the development of professional experience (Onlanbekova and Abdrasulov 2015, 108).

An analysis of the proposed definitions allows it to be established that the mechanism of professionalisation is two-sided. On the one hand, it is a process aimed at the professional and personal development of an employee, which is controlled by external institutions. On the other hand, it is a process aimed at professional improvement and personal growth that is initiated by the employee. Researchers define the following main components of the professionalisation process: professional orientation; professional selection; professional adaptation; professional training; and the management of talents (Mustafayeva 2011, 153).

The profession of a civil servant is characterised by numerous inherent features, namely: the presence of traits that determine its essence and are inherent in other professions; the presence of a special professional culture; the presence of mechanisms of professional socialisation; and a sense of belonging to the profession (Zaborovskyy et al. 2020b, 149).

In the context of social changes, especially those related to the public administration system, it is advisable to develop strategic courses for the development of systems and mechanisms that

are important for the future development of the state. To achieve these goals, in 2018, the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service (NAUCS) has developed the “Strategic Plan for the Activities of the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service for 2019–2022”. The development of a unified comprehensive system for evaluating the effectiveness of civil servants will allow the most appropriate forms and methods for evaluating employees within each state body to be developed, the effectiveness of using working hours to be evaluated, and will help to reduce staff turnover. Currently, the most common international approach is that integral performance and efficiency indicators are used at the level of public authorities, reflecting the main social and economic parameters of their activities, which then go to the level of structural divisions, and then reach the level of individual employees. The most popular among such methods are the principles of determining Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The KPI system is based on the selection of the most important performance indicators that maximise the final effect. For each activity goal, performance indicators should be established – quantitative or qualitative characteristics of the activity. To achieve the most considerable business goals, the number of indicators should be limited. To assess the effectiveness of the activities of the head of a state body, it is recommended to set no more than 25 efficiency indicators; for heads of structural divisions of a state body, no more than 10 efficiency indicators; and for other civil servants, no more than efficiency 5 indicators (Ruchkin 2016, 61-62). The choice of criteria for assessing the performance of civil servants should be based on a differentiated approach to three groups of civil servants – categories “A”, “B” and “C”. Particular evaluation criteria should be developed in each individual public authority for each position. Before developing the KPIs of an individual employee, it is necessary to set the tasks that they must complete within a certain time. When tasks are set, after the specified time (month, quarter), the work performed by the employee is assessed in terms of the goals set and the result of the work performed.

As part of this work, in accordance with the job description and Regulations on the entrepreneurship administration and regulatory policy of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the Consumer Market of the Kharkiv City Council (Consumer Market of KCC), key performance indicators of the head of entrepreneurship administration and regulatory policy of the DAS and the Consumer Market of KCC were developed (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Key performance indicators of the head of entrepreneurship administration and regulatory policy of the Department of Administrative Services and the Consumer Market of the Kharkiv City Council

Job responsibilities	Key performance indicators	KPI index
Implementation of management functions	1. The level of performance of a structural division. 2. Satisfaction of the heads of related structural divisions and the direct manager with the quality, including the time frame for interaction and preparation of materials.	100%

Implementation of programmes and activity plans	1. Completeness of implementation of development plans and programmes in the areas assigned to the head of the structural division. 2. Satisfaction with the state of entrepreneurship support infrastructure on the part of legal entities, individual entrepreneurs, and communities.	50%
Work with citizens' appeals	1. Satisfaction with the completeness and validity of the information provided. 2. Percentage of responses to requests aimed at meeting the established deadlines.	100%
Control, supervision, monitoring	1. The number of detected violations regarding which an administrative protocol has been drawn up (for example, +2% for each justified protocol on an administrative offence that was not later cancelled).	100%

To calculate the efficiency coefficient of the head of the administration office for a certain period, it is necessary to follow the system for calculating KPI indicators for civil servants (Table 2).

**Table 2.** KPI calculation system

Weight % (Wi)	Significance of a certain indicator, with a total value of 1.
Base (Qbi)	Acceptable minimum value of the indicator. Below the basic level – no result.
Plan (Qpi)	A desired value. An excess indicator that allows improving results.
Fact (Qfi)	Actual results of work for a certain period.

The assessment of the efficiency coefficient of a particular civil servant has two key indicators (1) – the KPI index and the efficiency coefficient, which must be calculated using the corresponding formulas. The civil servant's KPI index is calculated using the formula:

$$\frac{\text{Fact} - \text{Base}}{\text{Norm} - \text{Base}} \cdot 100\% . \quad (2)$$

The calculation of the efficiency coefficient of a civil servant is carried out using the formula:

$$\sum \frac{\text{KPI indices} \cdot \text{Weight}}{N} ,$$

where  $N$  is the number of indicators.

Thus, considering the developed key performance indicators and using calculations with certain formulas, the assessment of the efficiency coefficient of the head of entrepreneurship administration and regulatory policy of the DAS and the Consumer Market of KCC for November 2021 was conducted (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Assessment of the efficiency coefficient of the head of the administration office for November 2021

Key KPI indicators	Weight	Base Base level (-) or = 0	Norm Standard Level (1)	Planned level (+)	Actual level	KPI index (%)
Efficiency level of a structural division	1	80	90	100	93	130
Satisfaction of the heads of related structural divisions and the direct manager with the quality, including the time frame for interaction and preparation of materials	1	80	90	100	90	100
Completeness of implementation of development plans and programmes in the areas assigned to the head of the structural division	0.5	80	90	100	100	100
Satisfaction with the state of entrepreneurship support infrastructure on the part of legal entities, individual entrepreneurs, and communities	0.5	80	90	100	85	25
Satisfaction with the completeness and validity of the information provided	1	80	85	90	90	200
Percentage of responses to requests aimed at meeting the established deadlines	1	80	90	100	95	150
Number of detected violations in regard to which an administrative report has been drawn up	1				3	+6%
Efficiency factor						113.5

As is evident from the assessment of the indicators of the head of the administration office, their performance coefficient is 113.5, which on the recommended scale is equal to an excellent result. When developing systems for evaluating the performance of civil servants, it is advisable to rely on the following provisions:

1. to increase the objectivity of the evaluation process, the development of key indicators should include the opinions of civil servants and rely on the regulatory framework;
2. to increase the transparency of the motivation system, especially the incentive payments, it is necessary to conduct explanatory work among employees upon achieving KPIs and pilot projects;
3. individual or group effectiveness should be consistent and interrelated with the effectiveness of the state body;
4. for the comprehensive accounting of KPIs with the determination of the amount of mon-

etary remuneration, it is necessary to provide for the development of an indicator or indicators related to the results of effective execution of single and other orders.

The motivation of civil servants is one of the most important factors in their professional development, as well as the main means of ensuring optimal use of resources and mobilisation of existing human resources. An effective motivation system allows for the attraction and retention of civil servants of appropriate qualifications and encourages them to improve their professional level. To determine the motivational factors of public sector employees, it is necessary to conduct repeated comprehensive opinion polls among civil servants. It is advisable to include an assessment of the degree of employees' satisfaction with working conditions in the surveys, which is one of the factors of employee loyalty. A higher level of employee loyalty reduces the likelihood of increasing staff turnover in the state body.

The results of the survey will become the basis for identifying the degree of impact of material and non-material incentives on employees. Material incentives are provided through a certain system of remuneration. The financial allowance of a civil servant today is a monthly salary in accordance with their position, as well as various charges in rank, service record, working conditions, and other additional payments.

In turn, non-material motivation is an incentive for employees for high-quality work which in no way affects their wages or other payments. Some researchers note that despite the relatively low value of civil servant pay, "civil service systems usually provide workplace reliability and advanced programmes of additional benefits" (Rainey 2004, 17). Therewith, the dominant motives of those employed in the civil service are the guarantee of permanent work, the stability of the situation, the desire to realise themselves in professional activities, and the prospects for official growth (Zaborovskyy et al. 2020b, 150). Other scientists note that most employees whose activities are accompanied by career growth are enthusiastic about performing their official duties – that is, they are more committed to the interests of the organisation, are proud of their work, and are more hard-working (Island et al. 2013, 88–90).

The first stage of a civil servant's professionalisation indicates a high level of professional efficiency. Therewith, a young civil service specialist mostly learns the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for independent work, and it can take quite a long time before this employee can be at the stage of the initial development of professionalisation. In this aspect, it is advisable to use mentoring technology in the civil service. Mentoring is an effective, usually interpersonal communicative interaction which develops a young specialist due to the transfer of professional experience by a more qualified employee – a mentor (Savchuk 2016, 44). The mentor, respectively, can be a civil servant who is in the second or third stage of professionalisation.

The individual development plan for a civil servant is a document that specifies the development goals and the procedure for the particular actions necessary to achieve these goals. It is assumed that an individual professional development plan will be drawn up by a civil servant with the participation and under the guidance of their immediate supervisor according to the official regulations for a period of up to 3 years. When creating an individual development plan, it is necessary to consider key indicators that characterise a civil servant: education; presence or absence of work experience; level of knowledge, skills and abilities; and personal qualities that are important for a civil service position.

In the strategic plan of the activities of NAUCS for 2019–2022, it is indicated in the "Analysis of the current situation in the field of the activities of the Nation Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service" section that the civil service system of Ukraine has implemented individual programmes

to improve the level of civil servants' professional competence which are based on the individual training needs of employees and are compiled based on the results of an assessment of their performance (Nation Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service, 2018). The implementation of such an individual programme in practice is mainly reduced to short-term advanced training programmes for civil servants of all categories, which cannot provide the employee with the necessary level of knowledge and competencies. A civil servant's individual development plan is primarily a certain list of actions and necessary measures aimed at their professional and managerial development. This list may include the following types of activities: training, which is aimed at gaining new knowledge; measures of corresponding orientation, which are aimed at development and provide for the improvement of the employee as a professional; and professional and personal activities, which are designed to work out the current or recently acquired skills of a civil servant, as well as the development of their personal qualities necessary for effective service and work in a team, etc.

### Conclusions

An effective mechanism for civil service professionalisation should be aimed at the professional development of each civil servant. When developing courses for improving the mechanism of civil service professionalisation, it is necessary to consider the following main factors: the multi-faceted nature and complexity of the process of professionalisation; the specific features of the work and status of each civil servant; the expediency of using innovations; the individual needs of employees in professional and personal development; and non-material motives in which civil servants are interested.

In the context of studying civil service professionalisation, the strategic plan of the activities of NAUCS for 2019–2022 was analysed. Within the framework of the studied subject, strategic vectors for the implementation of mechanisms for civil service professionalisation are identified and proposed, which can be introduced into the practical activities of the civil service system in the context of public changes. These are the following: improving the forms and methods of evaluating civil servants and the effectiveness of using working hours (in the example of the KPI assessment system); increasing the motivation of civil servants (material and non-material); implementing the principle of cooperation between experienced and young employees (mentoring); and developing the individual plans of civil servants as one of the main stages in the development of a talent management system in the civil service of Ukraine.

The recommended methods and forms of improving the system of civil servants' professional and personal development can be used both separately and simultaneously. The established vectors of further strategic development of the mechanism of civil service professionalisation require more detailed attention from scientists in each of these areas. Therewith, it is important to study in detail all the positive and negative aspects of the selected vector, identify possible risks, and conduct appropriate pilot projects.

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## VALSTYBĖS TARNYBOS PROFESIONALIZAVIMO MECHANIZMŲ ĮGYVENDINIMO STRATEGINIAI VEKTORIAI SOCIALINIŲ POKYČIŲ KONTEKSTE

**Anotacija.** Straipsnio tikslas – nustatyti strateginius valstybės tarnybos profesionalizavimo mechanizmų įgyvendinimo vektorius socialinių pokyčių kontekste. Pagrindiniai problemos tyrimo metodai yra struktūrinis ir funkcinis: nagrinėjant tyrimo objekto struktūrą ir funkcionalumą, visapusiškai apsvarstomas ir įvertinamas valstybės tarnybos profesionalizavimo mechanizmas. Taip pat straipsnyje taikomi bendrieji mokslo žinių metodai: analizė ir sintezė, nepilna indukcija ir dedukcija, apibendrinimas ir abstrakcija. Tyrime analizuojami termino „profesionalizavimas“ apibrėžimai, taip pat buvo nustatyti veiksniai, į kuriuos reikėtų atsižvelgti kuriant naują valstybės tarnybos profesionalizavimo ar modernizavimo mechanizmą visuomenės pokyčių kontekste. Be to, autoriai nagrinėjo Ukrainos nacionalinės valstybės tarnybos agentūros veiklos strateginį 2019–2022 metų planą, įvardijo pagrindinius valstybės tarnybos profesionalizacijos studijų privalumus ir trūkumus. Galiausiai pasiūlyti strateginiai valstybės tarnybos profesionalizavimo mechanizmų įgyvendinimo vektoriai, kurie gali teigiamai paveikti ir visuomenės raidą.

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# THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OF PERFORMANCE AUDITS – THE CASES OF CROATIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, AND SLOVENIA

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**Abstract.** *In the modern world, the availability of transparent and reliable information about the performance of public sector entities is becoming increasingly important. Besides the accounting systems that provide this information, the role of Supreme Audit Institutions is growing. As previous research in Europe has focused on EU or Nordic countries, the intention of our paper was to analyze the development of performance audits in selected south-east European countries. The results show that performance audits are still less of a priority for auditors and parliaments, and the impacts of performance audits are realized through follow-up processes.*

**Keywords:** *Supreme Audit Institutions, performance audit, follow-up process, South East European Countries*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *aukščiausios audito institucijos, veiklos auditas, tolesnis procesas, Pietryčių Europos šalys*

## 1. Introduction

Supreme audit institutions (SAIs) perform audits of public expenditure and revenue in their respective country. The basic tasks of SAIs are to strengthen the responsibility of public sector institutions in the spending of public resources, audit public reports of public sector institutions, audit the management of public resources, implement programs and projects, and oversee the operations of public sector institutions.

Depending on the subject, there are three basic types of audit: financial audits, compliance audits, and performance audits, which are conducted as connected or separate audits. In implementing audits, SAIs highlight irregularities, provide audit conclusions or opinions, and produce orders and recommendations for eliminating inadequacies in a public sector institution.

In order to improve performance and transparency in the public sector, countries have implemented reforms which involve the application of management tools used in the private sector. As performance auditing provides greater accountability and transparency in public financial management, in recent years there has been greater interest in researching the development and impact of performance audits. In researching the available literature, an absence of papers that present the development and impacts of performance audits in south-east European countries was observed. Therefore, the intention of our paper was to fill this literature gap.

For the purpose of our paper, three countries were selected: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), and Slovenia. Croatia and Slovenia are members of the EU, while B&H is negotiating accession. All selected countries are part of the ex-Yugoslavia common administrative and political area. After claiming independence, the development of SAIs in these countries proceeded in different ways, and consequently both the regulation and the results of these institutions differ. This research is based on publicly available data on audits undertaken in the mentioned countries. The paper analyzes the development of performance auditing over a five-year period (2015–2019), with the aim of identifying and quantifying public audit outcomes after performance audits.

The paper is divided into five sections. After this brief introduction, the literature review is presented, followed by the main characteristics of SAIs in selected countries. In the empirical part of the paper, the research results are presented and discussed. The last section contains concluding remarks.

## 2. Literature review

The importance of providing reliable, timely and transparent information for efficient decision making and improving accountability in the public sector has become greater in recent years because of events such as global economic and financial crises. In order to improve performance and transparency in the public sector, countries have implemented reforms which involve the application of management tools used in the private sector (Monfardini 2010). These reforms began under the paradigm of New Public Management, which refers to processes that support the improvement of effectiveness and efficiency in the public sector alongside greater transparency, accountability and reduction in public expenditures (Fainboim et al. 2013; Vašiček, 2006). SAIs play a key role in maintaining public sector accountability and are regarded as important guardians of transparency and greater public sector performance (Cordery and Hay 2022; Svärdesten 2019).

As a consequence of implementing reforms in the public sector, the importance of performance auditing has been expanded. Performance auditing is also known as value for money auditing (Hazgui et al. 2022), and is comprised of reporting on the “3Es”: economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Grönlund et al. 2011). The contribution of the performance audit is to oblige the subject to operate in terms of improving the performance of operations and implementing recommendations.

Recent studies have shown that there is growing interest in researching performance auditing (Mattei et al. 2021), and while some authors have focused more on the development and implementation of performance auditing in different countries and its impact through the implementation of recommendations, others have focused on the perceptions of public sector auditors

regarding performance audit.

Loke et al. (2016) researched the perceptions of public sector auditors on performance audit in the context of a developing country (Malaysia), and claimed that performance audit was perceived to be able to enhance public accountability as well as to enable more economic, efficient and effective use of public resources. On the other hand, Reichborn-Kjennerud (2013) analyzed auditees' perceptions of the audit process in Norway. Their results showed that performance audits were seen as useful by a majority of auditees.

By researching the implementation of performance audits, Pollit and Bouckaert (2011) emphasized that Anglo-American countries have been more active in introducing performance budgeting, accrual accounting and performance audits, while continental Europe has been less interested in implementing reforms in the public sector.

Torres et al. (2019) conducted a comparative research and analyzed the impact of performance audits carried out by SAIs and Regional Audit Institutions (RAI) in the European Union. Research showed that in the UK and the Nordic group of countries, audited entities usually implemented the recommendations of the audit report, and SAIs/RAIs always went back to the entities to review whether their recommendations had been implemented through a follow-up process. This group of audit institutions also showed the highest level of transparency. The Germanic group of countries gave greater importance to reporting to parliaments than to the public, and the effect of the performance audit was greater in terms of reforms promoted by parliaments and governments. In the French group of countries, audits reports were rarely presented in parliament and governmental reforms were rarely carried out after performance audits because of the absence of any negative consequences for not implementing the recommendations. In other groups of countries, performance audits had a poor effect because other problems were present that limited the implementation of audit recommendations.

Besides the systematic review of accounting, budgeting and auditing in selected south-east European countries (Vašiček and Roje 2019), there has been a lack of research on the role of SAIs in audits in the public sector. Therefore, the intention of our paper was to compare the development and representation of performance audits in selected countries, as well as to compare the impacts of performance audits.

### **3. Characteristics of SAIs in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenia**

The organization and actions of SAIs are regulated by national legislation in their respective countries. In determining the organization and actions of SAIs, the INTOSAI Framework of Professional Pronouncements is taken into consideration. SAIs in their respective countries are members of the association of SAIs at the international level of INTOSAI (<https://www.intosai.org/>) and EUROSAI (<https://www.eurosai.org>).

The development of SAIs in the selected countries has been monitored since their independence from the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. SAIs in the selected countries do not have a long experience of operating. In these countries, SAIs were established with the aim of conducting state audits provided in the INTOSAI framework, which prescribes that SAIs do not have permission to conduct other forms of control.

The first Public Audit Act was adopted in Croatia in 1993, and the State Audit Office was established. The State Audit Office Act regulates the establishment, organization, jurisdiction, manner of work and other areas relating to the work of the State Audit Office. The Office has been organized as a monocratic office headed by an auditor general, who is chosen by Parliament. The

State Audit Office submits an annual work report to the Parliament, and a report on specific or group audits that were undertaken, including the state budget audit. These reports are subsequently published in the public domain.

In accordance with the territorial organization of the state, B&H adopted the state and entity laws on public audits in 1999. Three SAIs were established which began functioning in 1999 and 2000. Based on the current organization, they include the following offices: 1. Audit Office of the Institutions of B&H; 2. Audit Office for Institutions in the Federation of B&H; and 3. Supreme Office for the Republic of Srpska Public Sector Auditing. Furthermore, the Office for the Auditing of Public Administrations and Institutions in the Brčko District of B&H was founded in 2007. As is evident, particular laws for public audits were adopted at each level. These laws have been mutually harmonized and their provisions are to a large extent identical, but certain differences do exist. The mentioned SAIs are regulated as monocratic offices headed by an auditor general that is chosen by Parliament. Work reports and reports on specific or group audits are submitted to the auditor general by SAIs and are subsequently published in the public domain.

The Court of Audit in Slovenia was founded in 1994, and operates in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. The Court of Audit Act has no judicial authority. The Court of Audit is headed by the President and is comprised of two Deputy Presidents who are appointed for a term of nine years by the National Assembly.

#### 4. Research results

The aim of our paper was to analyze the results of performance audits conducted over a five-year period (2015–2019) in the selected countries and to identify their outcomes. This analysis primarily relied on the method of theoretical research using secondary sources. Publicly available data on the work of SAIs were used, analyzed and are presented in the paper. In order to analyze results, the descriptive statistics method was used.

Therefore, the primary goal of the paper was to provide answers to the following research questions:

*RQ1: What is the current level of development of performance audits in the selected countries?*

*RQ2: What is the impact of performance audits in the selected countries?*

To answer RQ1, an analysis of the number of performance audits conducted in the observed countries was performed, as well as an analysis of the opinions contained in the reports after performance audits had been conducted.

In order to determine the effects of performance audits and provide an answer to RQ2, an analysis of the number of orders and recommendations provided by audits was conducted, alongside an analysis of the acceptance of these orders and recommendations.

##### **4.1. The development of performance audits in the selected countries**

In order to analyze the current development of performance audits in the selected countries, Table 1 provides information on the total number of audits in the 2015–2019 period. Data from 2019 were not available for the Federation of B&H.

	FINANCIAL AUDIT					COMPLIANCE AUDIT					PERFORMANCE AUDIT				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Croatia</b>	237	210	268	224	242	237	210	268	224	242	36	85	23	104	25
<b>Institutions of B&amp;H</b>	73	74	74	74	74	73	74	74	74	74	4	5	4	3	
<b>Federation of B&amp;H</b>	51	73	81	82	82	51	73	81	82		4	4	5	4	
<b>Republic of Srpska</b>	67	69	67	63	64	67	69	67	63	64	6	6	6	3	7
<b>Slovenia</b>	27	2	4	5	6	46	44	48	40	53	15	26	5	20	25

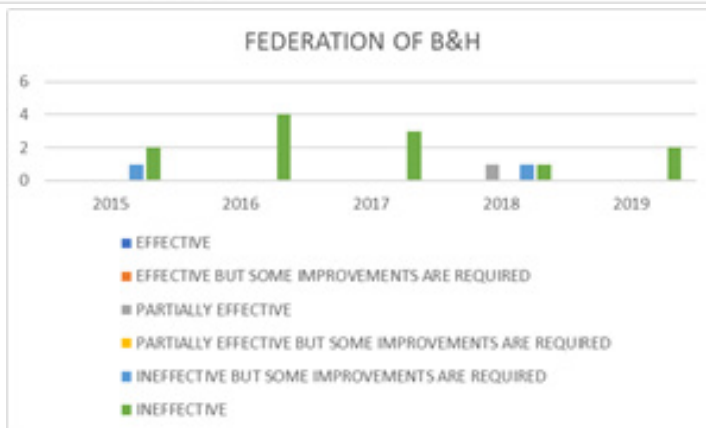
**Table 1.** Audits in the 2015–2019 period in the selected countries

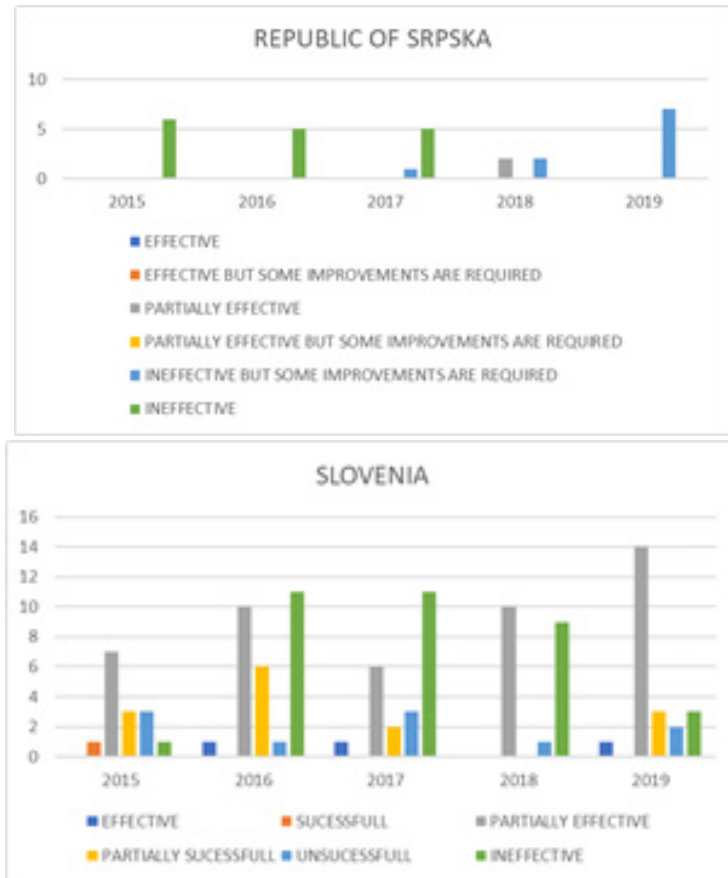
Source: authors' elaboration based on annual SAIs report

In Croatia and B&H, the number of financial and compliance audits was the same, because compliance audits were performed in conjunction with financial audits. In Slovenia, different numbers of financial audits and compliance audits were conducted. In terms of performance audits, a larger number of audits were conducted in Croatia and Slovenia in comparison to B&H. In Croatia, performance audits were performed more often for local units and their budgetary users, as well as for other audit subjects, whereas an insignificant number of performance audits were conducted at the level of the state budget and state budget users. The large difference in the number of conducted performance audits across the period in Croatia was related to revisions and the number of audited subjects covered by a single type of horizontal audit. In Slovenia, a large number of performance audits were carried out – on average, 16 performance audits per year in the observed period. In B&H, 4 to 5 annual performance audits were performed on average, indicating a smaller number of performance audits in regard to total conducted audits. In the Republic of Srpska, one of the reasons for such a small number of performance audits is the fact that the heads of audited subjects are not sanctioned for unfavorable findings in performance audits.

The end result of any audit work is a report on the audit conducted. This report provides all findings, conclusions and recommendations relating to the audited subject.







**Figure 1.** Opinions in conducted performance audits  
 Source: authors' elaboration based on SAIs' Annual Reports

In Croatia, the conducting of performance audits began in 2007, and in the 2007–2012 period five performance audits were conducted. In the 2012–2015 period, 180 performance audits were conducted. Figure 1 shows that most of the performance audits conducted in Croatia were evaluated as effective. In B&H, performance audits were mostly evaluated as ineffective or partially ineffective, while in Slovenia the percentage of evaluations of successful and effective as well as partially successful and partially effective audits varied from 39.1% (2017) to 78.3% (2019). These results show that auditors' opinions after the completion of performance audits differ among the selected countries.

The first research question was addressed at outlining the current development of performance audits in the selected countries. According to the analyzed data, it is clear that there was higher representation of financial audits and compliance audits than performance audits in the selected countries. Therefore, the conclusion is that auditors and parliament in the selected coun-

tries have been more focused on financial and compliance audits, while performance-driven ideas including performance audits are less in focus. The fact that Slovenia and Croatia conducted more performance audits and had better opinions after performance audits than B&H could be related to their membership in the EU.

#### **4.2. The impact of performance audits**

The audit process does not finish with the preparation and publishing of the auditor's report. The aim of auditing is the implementation of the recommendations provided in reports, and tracking the execution of orders and recommendations is one of the most important roles of the SAI.

The implementation of recommendations by the audited subject means that the SAI's audit goals have been achieved and that the SAI has improved the subject's business operations and performance. Tracking the execution of recommendations has multiple favorable outcomes. The implementation of the auditor's recommendations provides guidance to the audited subject in their operations, improving their practices and raising their level of know-how and competence. In providing findings and recommendations, auditors should provide implementable recommendations, considering the objective circumstances in which the audited subject operates. Some recommendations are implementable in the short-term, while other recommendations require an extended time period. The majority of recommendations should be resolvable within the audited subject under the condition that public management approaches the audit recommendations in a conscientious fashion, knowing that is responsible for the spending of public funds.

Torres et al. (2019) stated that the impact of performance audits can be identified in two main ways: through auditee actions and follow-up processes, or based on parliamentary action and government reforms. Analyzing the reports of SAIs in the selected countries, it is possible to observe that that impact of audits is reflected through follow-up processes. In the selected countries, conducted audits mostly refer to financial audits, and the follow-up process mostly refers to orders and recommendations implemented after financial and compliance audits. These results show that in tracking the implementation of audit recommendations, some of the recommendations are in the phase of implementation, others have been implemented, while some are yet to be implemented. The highest percentage of implementation is attributed to Slovenia, and the Republic of Srpska has also had a consistently high percentage of implemented recommendations. In Croatia, the percentage of recommendations implemented is between 43.59% and 62.88%. In the Institutions of B&H, the percentage of implemented recommendations is between 28.46% and 30.29%. In the Federation of B&H, the percentage of implemented recommendations is lowest, ranging from 11.04% to 20.09%.

Identifying the criteria for conducting a performance audit is most demanding because it requires measuring expected results, the real state of these expectations, and which criteria are reasonable and achievable – including best practices for validating such criteria. By analyzing the reports of SAIs in selected countries, it was impossible to separate the results of the orders and recommendations of financial audits from those of performance audits. In the Federation of B&H and the Republic of Srpska, data about recommendations implemented after performance auditing exists, with conclusions written in descriptive format. In its institutions, B&H has prepared special reports about performance audits and implemented recommendations. These results show that in the 5 years under study, most recommendations were partially implemented or are in the first phase of implementation. In Croatia and Slovenia, SAI report data regarding implemented recommendations after performance audits can also be obtained. In the selected countries, audit

institutions show a high level of transparency because full audit reports are available on their websites and, in most cases, summaries are also published.

The second research question was aimed at identifying the impact of audits in the selected countries. The results show that in all selected countries all SAIs went back to the audited entities to review whether their recommendations had been implemented through a follow-up process.

## **5. Conclusion**

SAIs have been established in Croatia, B&H (the Institutions of B&H, the Federation of B&H, and the Republic of Srpska), and Slovenia. They operate as monocratic offices without jurisdictional powers. The organization of SAIs and their procedures in conducting audits are compliant with the INTOSAI Framework of Professional Pronouncements and the International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions. In accordance with the methodology defined in the ISSAIs, 3 standard audit types are defined: financial audits, compliance audits, and performance audits. After reforms in the public sector undertaken under the New Public Management paradigm with the aim of improving accountability and control, there has been growing interest in performance auditing.

Previous comparative research has shown the growing importance of performance audits in the European Union, and these audits have produced different impacts. Therefore, the aim of our paper was to present the development of performance audits in selected south-east European countries (Croatia, Slovenia and B&H) as well as to assess the impacts of these audits.

The results show that there is higher representation of financial and compliance audits than performance audits in the selected countries. In B&H, a small number of performance audits were undertaken – both compared to other types of audits and compared with Croatia and Slovenia. The findings from performance audits were mostly ineffective or only partially ineffective. This indicates that the effect of performance audits on audited subjects in terms of achieving effectiveness in operations was low, because a small number of audits were performed and there were no improvements or feedback provided based on the audit findings. These results also show that the opinions of auditors after auditing differ among selected countries. The conclusion here is that auditors and parliaments in the selected countries have focused more on financial and compliance audits, while performance audits are less in focus. The fact that Slovenia and Croatia conducted more performance audits and produced better assessments of their audits than B&H could be related to their membership in the EU, which recommends that performance audits should form part of financial management.

The aim of auditing is the implementation of the recommendations provided in reports, and tracking the execution of orders and recommendations is one of the most important roles of the SAI. Analyzing the reports of SAIs in selected countries, it is possible to observe that the impacts of audits are reflected in follow-up processes.

Identifying the criteria for conducting a performance audit is most demanding because it requires measuring expected results, the real state of these expectations, and criteria that are reasonable and achievable – including best practices for validating such criteria. This is one of the reasons that the SAIs in the observed countries recorded slower development of performance audits, and the reason for the smaller number of performance audits compared to other audits.

There is much space for encouraging audited subjects to apply the orders and recommendations of auditors, especially within the Institutions of B&H and the Federation of B&H. The goal of verifying the execution of orders and recommendations exists to determine whether they have

in fact been executed, and to assess whether satisfactory progress has been achieved. Presuming that the relevant findings of state audits include providing orders and recommendations that influence the legality, regularity and planned spending of public funds and also increase the “3Es” of audited subjects, then failure to implement these recommendations will negatively affect all of these aspects – including the assessment of the work undertaken by the public management at the audited subject. Furthermore, failure to implement the orders and recommendations of the audit office will negatively affect the internal efficiency of state audits and the ability to achieve the added value which should be created by their actions in the public sector.

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## ATLIKTŲ VEIKLOS AUDITŲ RAIDA IR POVEIKIS: KROATIJOS, BOSNIJOS IR HERCEGOVINOS BEI SLOVĖNIJOS ATVEJIS

***Anotacija.** Šiais laikais vis svarbesnis tampa skaidrios ir patikimos informacijos apie viešojo sektoriaus subjektų veiklą prieinamumas. Be apskaitos sistemų, teikiančių šią informaciją, auga ir aukščiausiųjų audito institucijų vaidmuo. Kadangi ankstesni tyrimai Europoje buvo orientuoti į ES ar Šiaurės šalį, šio darbo tikslas buvo išanalizuoti veiklos audito raidą pasirinktose Pietryčių Europos šalyse. Rezultatai parodė, kad auditoriai ir parlamentas vis dar mažiau dėmesio skiria veiklos auditams, o veiklos audito poveikis paaiškėja tolimesnėje perspektyvoje.*

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## THE PROBLEM OF INSTITUTIONAL TRUST IN UKRAINE AND EUROPE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the results of research into the problem of institutional trust, namely: the nature and characteristics of citizens' trust in state institutions, represented by different branches of government; and the general trends of trust in these institutions in Ukraine and in Europe over the past two decades. The results presented will help to clarify and at the same time raise issues related to a better understanding of the nature of public trust, as well as the factors that determine the level of trust in state and political institutions not only in Ukraine but also in other European countries. It should be noted that trust in public institutions is considered by the authors as a basic factor in achieving the goals of socio-economic and political reforms by the state.*

**Keywords:** *trust, institutional public trust, public authorities, political institutions, level of trust.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *pasitikėjimas, institucinis visuomenės pasitikėjimas, viešosios valdžios institucijos, politinės institucijos, pasitikėjimo lygis.*

**Introduction.** Despite the efforts of scientists around the world, it is still unknown how long the pandemic associated with the spread of the COVID-19 virus will last, how it will be overcome, and how the risks of other crises in the economic, political, social and other spheres can be reduced. In order to overcome these crises, governments in many countries have to take unpopular measures of public administration. The effectiveness of these measures depends largely on the level of trust between the institutions of government and society.

The results and depth of the many studies that have already been carried out, along with the high relevance and variety of their findings, indicate that the problem of public trust in political and public institutions has not lost its relevance, especially recently. It is well known that trust is one of the basic factors that determines not only interpersonal, but also social, economic, and political relations at different levels of existence and development of society.

Following the well-known Polish sociologist Peter Stompka (2012), we will consider trust in political and public institutions as one of the varieties of public (institutional) trust. In his work, *Trust as the Basis of Society*, in Chapter 3, "Varieties of Trust," P. Stompka identifies two main



types of trust: interpersonal and social. According to P. Shtompka, when we consider trust in institutions and organizations, “we are already entering the territory of a special kind of public trust, which is defined as public. School, university, army, church, court, police, bank, exchange, government, parliament, enterprise are typical objects of this category. The degree of trust that people give to different institutions differs depending on the society and also changes over time” (Stompka 2012, 119). Another important form of institutional trust, in our view, is procedural trust, which P. Stompka defines as “trust in institutional practices or procedures based on the belief that compliance will have the greatest effect” (Stompka 2012, 119). The author cites examples from the fields of politics and economics: “trust in democratic procedures (elections, conditions of representation, majority voting), which are recognized as the best ways to satisfy the interests of the largest part of the population and achieve the most reasonable compromises in a conflict of interest situation.” In Section 8, “Trust in Democracy,” the author defines trust in the state and its institutions as “public trust or vertical trust, as opposed to the horizontal one existing between citizens” (Stompka 2012, 366). The term *vertical* implies that trust exists between partners at different levels within a defined hierarchy – namely, at the levels of power (p. 366). It should be noted that in the research of civil society and the state, modern researchers distinguish the problems of trust in public authorities (trust in political institutions) and the relationship between institutional trust (the politics of institutional trust) and interpersonal trust as the most important (Lukin 2005; Terin 2018).

Within the framework of the study of political trust, two theoretical traditions of interpretation of have emerged: cultural and institutional.

The cultural theoretical tradition of the interpretation of trust is represented by the theories of political culture (Baker et al. 1981; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). These theories are based on hypotheses of an exogenous nature in relation to the political sphere and the nature of political trust. From a cultural point of view, political trust is the continuation of interpersonal trust, which is formed during the early socialization period and influences further individual evaluations of political institutions. Political trust is seen here as a component of social capital, and interpersonal trust (based on the exogeneity of the origin of political trust) is seen as the basis for building political trust (Keenan 1986; Jowitt 1992; Hedland 1999; Joyce 1984; Fukuyama 1995).

Institutional conceptual interpretations of political trust focus on the endogenous nature of trust and the rationality of trust (i.e., its conditioning by internal political factors related to the political and economic course of government and citizens’ assessment of the level of policy effectiveness in the country). The logic behind this approach is that institutional trust is the consequence, not the cause, of effective political institutions. If political institutions operate effectively, they generate trust; otherwise, skepticism and mistrust. Institutional approaches to the definition of trust are presented in the works of such scientists as Rose (1995), Newton (1999), Mutz (1998), Dasgupta and Goyal (2019), Skowronek (1982), Shepsl (2017), and others.

To summarize, we can conclude that the following aspects of institutional trust exist, namely:

- identification with the values or goals of institutions (our president, our army, our science, and the like);
- identification with political leaders who lead or represent institutions;
- possibility of access to the services (resources) of respective institutes, or potential access to them;
- pragmatic assessment of the functions performed by institutions;
- illusions, hopes for benefits, and protection against threats caused by expectations of institutional dysfunctions;

- understanding the cost of compliance and non-compliance with institutional conditions and requirements, willingness to minimize the repressive pressure of the respective institute by recourse to resources of other groups, etc.

**The aim of the study.** The purpose of our study is to determine the role of institutional trust in the functioning of public institutions in Ukraine and European countries, to analyze the differences of citizens' trust in state institutions of different countries, and to determine how much the level of citizens' trust in different countries depends on their individual characteristics. We have tried to identify the key factors influencing citizens' confidence in political institutions by comparing trends in the level of trust in political institutions in Ukraine and Europe in the context of the laws that operate in high or low confidence countries.

**Materials and methods.** Over the last 20 years, a large-scale archive of national and international sociological research data has been accumulated, which allows many research problems to be solved.

The European Social Survey (ESS)<sup>1</sup> sociological monitoring project is unique – not only because its organizers received the prestigious Descartes Science Prize in 2005, the first time it had been awarded to research in the field of the social sciences. Nor is it unique because of the dozens of European countries represented by the best specialists in various aspects of comparative monitoring and sociological research who participate in the project leadership, in the committees responsible for the preparation and implementation of monitoring, and in the national coordination structures. The uniqueness of the project is determined, first and foremost, by its rigorous methodological and organizational requirements, compliance with which gives reason to believe with certainty that the data obtained in 29 European countries from the years 2002–2018 open up a real possibility to compare numerous indicators of trust in political and public institutions.

ESS surveys are conducted according to strict international standards. ESS 2002–2019 includes a basic thematic module on various aspects of citizen interaction with political and public institutions. In it, institutional trust and attitudes toward power are measured through the following questions:

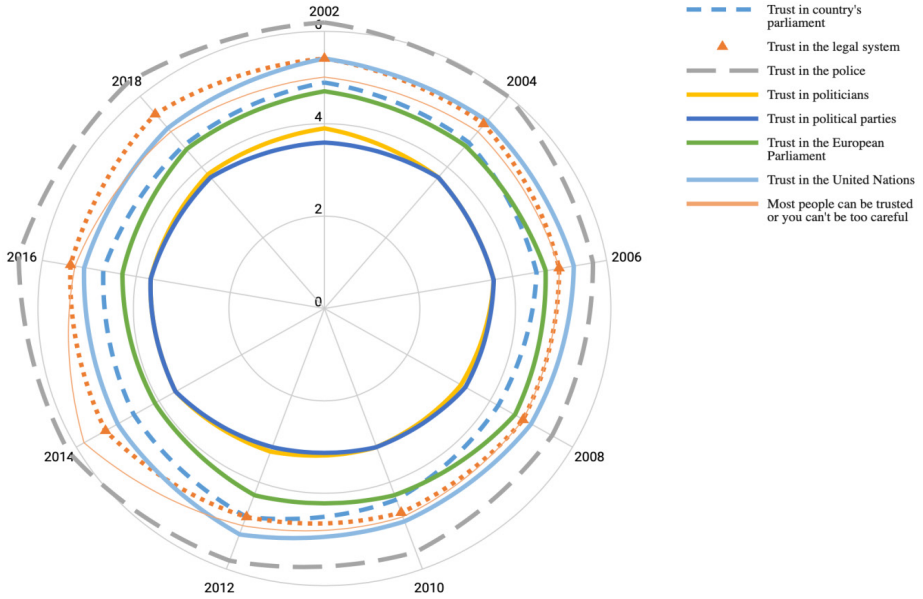
(1) “Please tell us how much you personally trust the Parliament... (politicians, police, political parties, the European Parliament, the UN)?” A scale from 0 to 10 is used for answering (0 – *absolutely do not trust institutions*, 10 – *I fully trust*).

(2) “How satisfied are you with the work of the government of the country?” To answer the second question, a 10-point scale is again offered (0 – *completely dissatisfied*, 10 – *completely satisfied*).

We decided to verify this statement based on the results of the European Social Survey. A confidence index (ID) was also used to compare and identify prevailing trends in European countries in the analysis, which was calculated as an average of the scale from 0 to 10.

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<sup>1</sup> European social survey // Data and documentation [online]. Accessed: 4.01.2020.



**Fig. 1.** Political and public confidence radii according to ESS Round 1–9

**Source:** authors

The empirical analysis begins with a simple description of the averages. Although the figures given in Figures 1–5 depict confidence based on data, and not all countries participated in all rounds of the European Social Survey, they draw a consistent picture.

Figure 1 shows a pie chart – the radii of institutional and generalized trust, built on the basis of average confidence indicators in each round of the European Social Research from 2002 to 2018. The diagram clearly shows that the highest level of trust among the countries participating in the project is enjoyed by the police. The average indicator of the level of police trust for the entire study period was 6 points on an 11-point scale, the maximum level of 6.2 was recorded in 2002, and the minimum of 5.5 in 2008 (see Table 2). The lowest level of trust was enjoyed by political parties and politicians (the average indicator of trust in political parties for the entire study period was 3.5; for politicians, 3.6). Confidence in these institutions noticeably decreased during the 2008–2009 crisis. Next, we will dwell on each institute in more detail.

**Table 1.** Average indicators of trust level among all countries (ESS Round 1–9, mean)

	Round1 (2002)	Round2 (2004)	Round3 (2006)	Round4 (2008)	Round5 (2010)	Round6 (2012)	Round7 (2014)	Round8 (2016)	Round 9 (2018)
Trust in country's parliament	4.9	4.7	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.8	4.6	4.7	4.6
Trust in the legal system	5.4	5.2	5	4.8	4.7	4.8	5.3	5.4	5.5
Trust in the police	6.2	6	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.2	6.5	6.4
Trust in politicians	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.8
Trust in political parties	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.7	3.7
Trust in the European Parliament	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.5
Trust in the United Nations	5.4	5.3	5.3	5	4.9	5.2	5	5.1	5.1
Most people/general level of trust	5	5	5	4.8	4.8	5	5.8	5.3	5

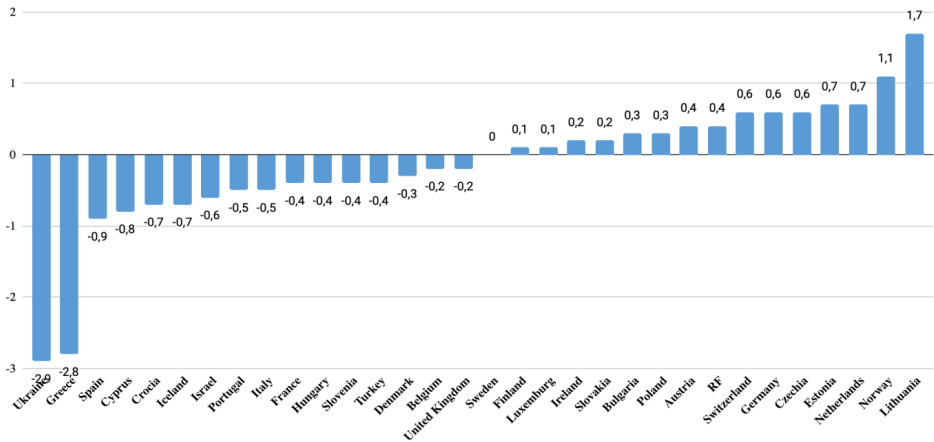
**Source:** authors

*Parliament.* The highest level of confidence of the legislative (representative) branch of state power was most often expressed by citizens of the countries of Northern and Central Europe (see Annex 1). The average index of confidence in national parliaments in Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark and Sweden for the years 2002–2019 was the highest – between 5.9 and 6.4 points. Ukraine, Poland, Croatia and Bulgaria belong to the group of countries with a negative index of confidence in the national parliament. The lowest level of population support in Europe was evidenced in the Ukrainian Parliament (2008–2012 data).

As for the dynamics of the level of confidence, according to the study, there are three clusters of countries (Fig. 1). The first is that where the level of trust had a positive dynamic, namely Lithuania, Norway, the Netherlands, Estonia, and Germany; the second was where the level of trust remained almost unchanged – Belgium, Sweden, and the UK; the third was where the level of trust had a negative dynamic – Ukraine, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, and Croatia.

When analyzing the nature of citizens' trust in national parliaments, many researchers point out that a lack of trust is more common in countries with “new” democracies (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 126–130). One of the reasons for the backlog is the insufficiently effective long-term functioning of democratic political institutions.

How stable is this order? Are these results some kind of random aberration? We tested our results using data from other ESS waves from 2002 to 2019 (Table 1). Sets of leaders and outsiders, despite the fact that the list of participating countries differed by year, intersected and yielded similar results for those countries that hit the intersecting part of the sample.



**Fig.2.** Dynamics of trust in national parliaments among ESS Round 1–9 project participants (difference in scores – 11-point averages – between the first and last survey)

**Source:** authors

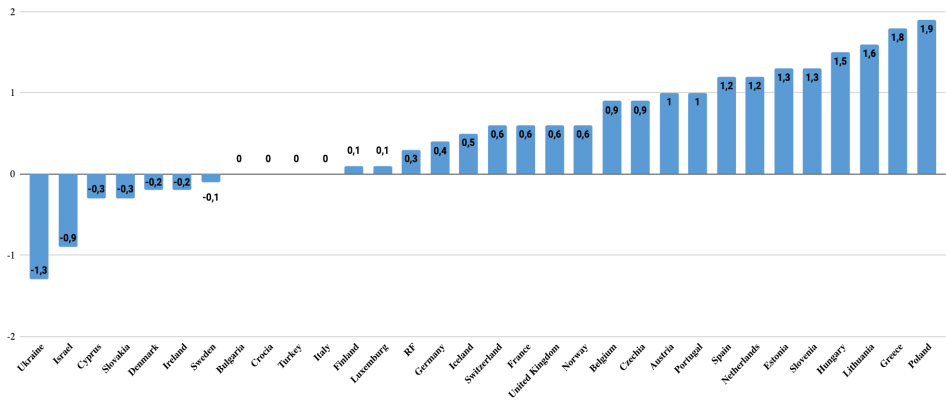
To group countries by level of confidence in national parliaments, we used another indicator: the integral trust indicator for national parliaments, which is calculated as the average of all confidence indicators across the country for all of the rounds in which they participated.

As a result, we see the following picture emerge: Denmark (6.4) and Norway (6.2) lead in the parliament category, followed by Switzerland (6.0) and Finland (5.9) (see Annex 1). The group is bookended by Bulgaria (2.3), Ukraine (2.6), Poland, and Lithuania (3.2).

Thus, we can formulate two preliminary conclusions. First, countries differ greatly in average confidence in national parliaments. Secondly, this distribution seems to be quite stable and almost independent of the year of the survey.

*Police trust.* In most European countries, police enjoy more trust than other political and public institutions (see Annex 2). The Police Confidence Index demonstrates that the balance of trust and confidence in almost all European countries is positive. Countries such as Finland (8), Denmark (7.8), and Iceland (7.6) have the highest rate, i.e., the police in these countries fully enjoy the mass trust of citizens. A low police confidence index is only observed in three post-Soviet countries – Ukraine (2.5), Bulgaria (3.7), and Russia (3.8). According to the confidence index of law enforcement agencies, Ukraine is at the bottom of the European rating.

It should be noted that, compared to the confidence of national parliaments, most countries participating in the ESS project have a positive trend when it comes to police confidence.



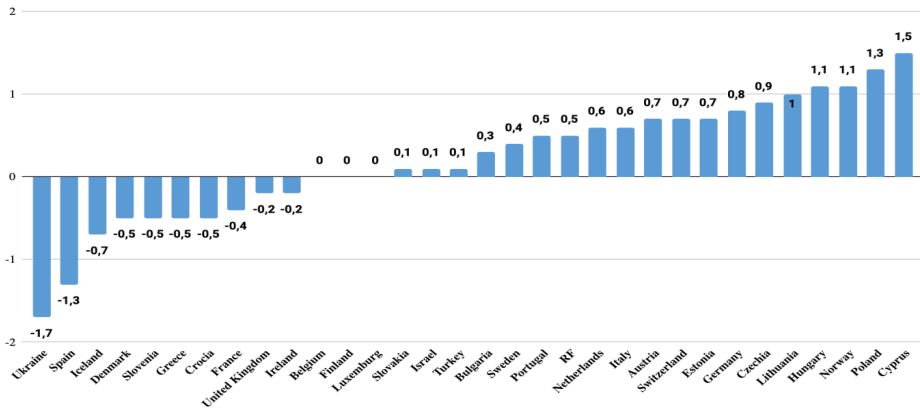
**Fig. 3.** Dynamics of police confidence among ESS Round 1–9 project participants (difference in scores – 10-point averages – between the first and last survey).

**Source:** authors

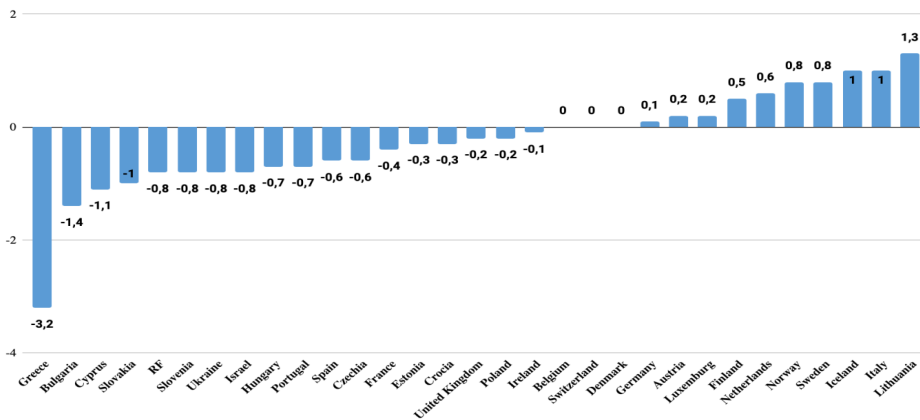
Only in two of the surveyed countries – Ukraine and Israel – did the confidence level drop by 1 point, while in the other four countries with negative dynamics the decline was insignificant (see Fig. 3).

*Political parties.* The confidence rating of politicians was also consistent with the confidence rating of political parties as a whole (see Fig. 3). As in the analysis of trust in political parties, most countries were characterized by a situation where the majority of citizens expressed varying degrees of distrust in their countries.

Negative outliers in the level of trust in political parties also stood out in Eastern and Southern Europe – Latvia (1.6), Bulgaria (1.9), and Croatia (2.1). Positive outliers included the states of Northern and Central Europe – Denmark (5.4), the Netherlands (5.1), and Norway (5.0) (see Annex 3).



**Fig. 4.** Dynamics of trust in political parties among ESS 2002–2019 project participants (difference in scores – 10-point averages – between the first and last survey)  
**Source:** authors



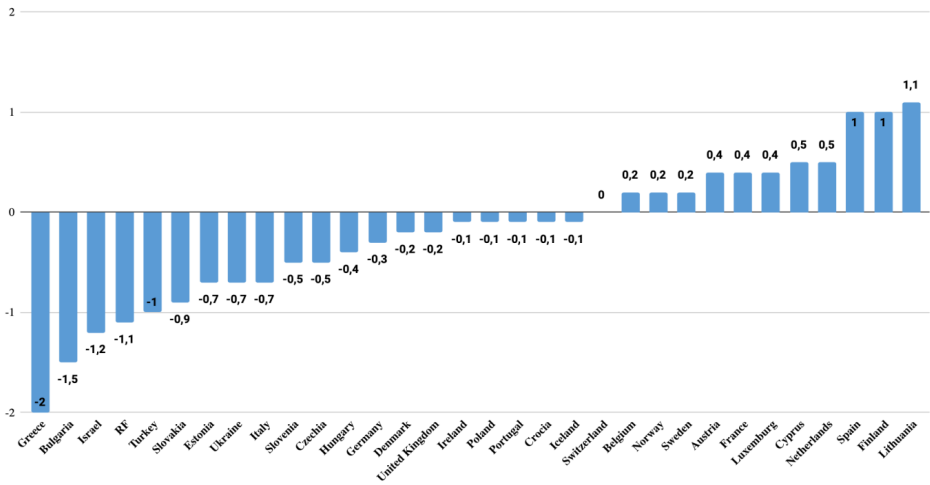
**Fig. 5.** Dynamics of confidence in the European Parliament among ESS 2002-2019 countries (difference in scores – 10-point average – between the first and last survey)  
**Source:** authors

Figure 5 shows a higher level of trust of Europeans in the UN and the European Parliament than in national parliaments.

The first feature of this data is that the average level of confidence in the European Parliament, though small compared to the confidence in other institutions, was 4.4 on a 10-point scale, but there were no significant differences in the indicators across countries.

The second feature is that when considering the dynamics of the EP and UN confidence indexes, it can be noted that the number of countries with negative dynamics is almost double

the number of countries with positive dynamics (see Fig. 6). From an institutional approach, this fact appears to represent an unforeseen deterioration in the quality of “exemplary” political institutions.



**Fig.6.** Dynamics of United Nations confidence among ESS 2002–2019 project participants (difference in scores – 10-point averages – between the first and last survey)

Source: authors

**Conclusions.** The results of our empirical study prove that trust in political and public institutions is rationally justified; it is closely linked to the citizens’ assessment of the work of the institutions. Institutions that work well – the police, the courts, the European Parliament and the UN – build trust; poorly performing institutions – political parties, politicians, and national parliaments – produce skepticism and mistrust. An empirical analysis of the dependence of confidence level on the individual characteristics of respondents in countries in “democratic transit” and in high-trust societies produces the following conclusions.

Institutional trust in these countries is significantly influenced by political and economic factors and, at the same time, is almost unaffected by interpersonal trust or the particularities of the socialization of individuals. The police and the judiciary stand out from other public institutions. In modern, developed societies with dense networks of social ties and voluntary associations, where political institutions (courts, police) work in a way that compels or encourages individuals to behave reliably, responsibly, and in a trusting manner, high levels of all kinds of trust are observed. This in turn has a reverse effect on political institutions. This is the pattern observed in “high-confidence societies.”

All of the above relates to the activities of public institutions to build institutional trust, and mainly involves high-trust societies – that is, Western Europe. Ukrainian society is usually referred to as a low-confidence society. Do high and low trust societies share the same patterns? In our opinion, political trust (or mistrust) is mainly formed by the activities of political institutions



(effective and just, or ineffective and unjust), and people's social characteristics play a lesser role in this.

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## INSTITUCINIO PASITIKĖJIMO PROBLEMA UKRAINOJE IR EUROPOJE: LYGINAMOJI ANALIZĖ

**Anotacija.** Straipsnyje pateikiami institucinio pasitikėjimo formavimosi tyrimo rezultatai, susiję su pasitikėjimo valstybės (viešosiomis) ir politinėmis institucijomis lygio nustatymu ne tik Ukrainoje, bet ir šiuolaikinėse Europos šalyse. Tyrimo kontekste buvo suformuoti uždaviniai, kurie leido nustatyti veiksnius, veikiančius piliečių pasitikėjimo politinėmis institucijomis formavimąsi: tirtas politinių institucijų veiklos efektyvumas; analizuota asmeninė piliečių sąveikos su valdžios atstovais patirtis; identifiukuotas pasitikėjimo valstybe kaip visuma lygis; išsiaiškinta, kaip tas pasitikėjimas gali būti perduotas atskiroms viešosios valdžios valstybės institucijoms. Analizuojant 2002–2018 metų Europos socialinio tyrimo (ESS) nuo pirmojo iki devintojo turo (bangų) duomenis, buvo lyginamas pasitikėjimas Ukrainos ir kitų Europos šalių politinėmis ir viešosiomis institucijomis. Analizė leido aukščiausiu (valstybės) lygmeniu nustatyti veiksnius, kurie gali turėti įtakos valstybės viešajai politikai. Remiantis tyrimo rezultatais, galima pasiūlyti priemones visuomenės pasitikėjimui svarbiausiomis viešosios valdžios institucijomis didinti.

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## ASSESSING THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE SYSTEM: A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTH INSURANCE POLICY IN INDONESIA

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to analyse the implementation of Indonesia's Health Insurance policy, which has been in effect since 2014. This research uses a qualitative approach to analyse data that was gathered through observations, interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and the review of documents. The respondents in this study consist of three groups: citizens as insurance recipients, hospital management, and Indonesian national health insurance management institutions. The study analysed the data using interpretive methods. The results of the study indicate that the National Health Insurance – Healthy Indonesia Card (JKN-KIS) system is a useful policy, especially in meeting basic needs within the public health sector. However, there are several problems regarding aspects such as participation, inappropriate fees, a benefit package system that actually creates fragmentation in health services, as well as ineffective risk management. The budget deficit within the Social Security Agency of Health (BPJS Kesehatan) as the policy implementer has placed significant limitations upon hospitals in providing services as a result of claims that hospital payments are not being paid by BPJS Kesehatan.*

**Keywords:** *policy implementation, health insurance, health policy, Indonesia*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *politikos įgyvendinimas, sveikatos draudimas, sveikatos politika, Indonezija*

## Introduction

In the field of health policy, national health insurance systems have become one of the most important issues in guaranteeing quality access to health services for all people. Until now, solving the problem of a complex national health insurance system has been the focus of scholars, governments, practitioners and even international agencies. Studies of social health insurance (SHI) in western Europe have shown that there are characteristics of self-regulation, in which special conditions for financing and providing health services are regulated by social-insurance institutions through mutual self-governance.

However, the principle of self-regulation began to weaken alongside the increase of state regulation and market competition, which were introduced in response to economic and social changes (Wendt et al. 2013). Furthermore, in Japan studies show the advantages and limitations of pursuing universal health coverage by the establishment of employee-based and community-based SHI. The positives of this approach are numerous: almost everyone came to be insured by 1961; the enforcement of the same fee schedule for all plans and almost all providers has maintained equity and contained costs; and the co-payment rate has become the same for all, except for elderly people and children. On the negative side, the fragmentation of enrolment into 3,500 plans has led to a more than three-fold difference in the proportion of income paid as premiums, and the issue of the uninsured population is emerging (Ikegami et al. 2011).

In 2016, China had three sorts of medical insurance systems: the Urban Employee Basic Medical Insurance System; the Basic Medical Insurance System for Urban Residents from personal accounts, where savings are used to pay for medical treatment and medication (public health insurance fund); and the New Rural Co-operative Medical Care System (NRCMCS) (free) (Matsuoka and Fukai, 2018).

Medical health insurance systems in Singapore are based on the Fund system, where the Central Provident Fund (CPF) manages money built up compulsorily from a certain percentage of capital and labour into a personal account. There are three kinds of medical insurance systems: Medisave; MediShield; and Medifund (Matsuoka and Fukai, 2018).

Malaysia is aiming to achieve fair medical access in spite of the absence of a public medical insurance system. Residents can receive medical services at public medical institutions with less of a financial burden due to assistance from the federal budget. The medical treatment fees of public medical institutions were set up based on the Fee Act of 1951 (Matsuoka and Fukai, 2018).

The concept of Universal Health Coverage is that every community within the population has equal and equitable access to holistic health services, including promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services that are of high quality and are essential, at affordable costs (Yuningsih 2013). A recent report shows that Indonesia's health index is in the poor category, and ranks 94 out of 146 countries (Legatum Institute 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to improve the health system to improve the quality of health in Indonesia. To achieve this, the government carried out reforms in the health sector through the policy of the National Health Insurance – Healthy Indonesia Card (JKN-KIS) system for every citizen. Health insurance in Indonesia is administered by the BPJS Kesehatan.

This study aims to analyse the implementation of the JKN-KIS policy. The study of this policy's implementation over the past two decades is one of the fundamental issues among researchers and practitioners of public administration, in order to bridge the gap between the concept and its reality. The study of the implementation of this policy analyses policy outputs and policy out-

comes. These two parameters will determine whether or not the policy has performed as well as was expected when it was formulated

Various literature has revealed and formulated theories, concepts and methods in analysing the performance of SHI. Norman and Busse (2002, 60) are of the view that SHI has various definitions but it has two basic characteristics, namely: health insurance recipients who pay regularly, usually based on the amount of their salary; and quasi-independent public organizations, whose role is to manage health insurance funds for financing health services. Further characteristics typically found in SHI studies include:

- a) SHI is compulsory for the majority or for the whole population;
- b) there are several funds, with or without choice and with or without risk-pooling;
- c) contributions made by the government (or special funds) on behalf of people not in employment are usually channelled through the sickness fund(s);
- d) both employers and employees pay contributions and share responsibility for managing fund(s) (Norman and Busse 2002, 60–61).

Other opinions suggest that health insurance should generate broad effective resource pooling, ideally incorporating the whole population in a single risk fund, delinking financial contributions from health needs. This can be achieved through different institutional designs including such as the National Health Service (NHS), National Health Insurance (NHI) or SHI schemes (Cuadrado et al. 2019).

The concept of SHI is deeply ingrained in the fabric of health care systems in western Europe. It provides the organizing principle and a preponderance of funding in seven countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Since 1995, it has also become the legal basis for organizing health services in Israel (Saltman et al. 2004). The OECD (1987) distinguishes between national health service, SHI, and private health insurance types of systems based on three dimensions: coverage, funding and ownership. In the literature, SHI is seen as a tool for achieving several goals: mobilizing more funds for health; promoting equal access to reasonable health care for the poor; pooling health risks and preventing impoverishment; and improving the efficiency and quality of health care. The design of SHI essentially involves maximizing social benefits under financial and political constraints (Hsiao and Shaw 2007).

This study uses a SHI approach as the principal method of health financing systems to measure the outputs and outcomes of the JKN-KIS policy. This approach is used to analyse the performance of health insurance by using several indicators to monitor and evaluate the health insurance system's performance. SHI is evaluated in order to achieve universal health coverage in a country. Furthermore, the purpose of health financing is to provide funding as well as financial incentives for health care providers and to ensure that all individuals can access public health services effectively (Carrin and James 2005). Analysis of SHI is performed using three indicators: a) revenue collection; b) pooling; and c) purchasing (Carrin and James 2005; WHO 2000).

Firstly, *revenue collection* consists of population coverage and method of finance. This dimension relates to the population coverage of health insurance and efforts to obtain funding to finance health insurance through various methods carried out by national health insurance providers. This fundraising can be sourced from households, companies, governments or other sources (WHO 2000). This indicator is an important factor because financial accessibility is influenced by efforts and methods to obtain health insurance funding. If revenue collection is not effective, this impacts the accessibility of existing health services for the community or users.

Secondly, *pooling* consists of the composition, fragmentation, and management of risk pooling. This dimension is related to the accumulation and management of funds in limiting the fees paid by health insurance recipients so that they no longer carry the risk of additional financing costs for the health services they receive (Carrin and James 2005).

Thirdly, the *purchasing* dimension consists of indicators of benefit packages, provider payment mechanisms and administrative efficiency. In general, this dimension relates to the benefit packages that recipients obtain when accessing health services with standard costs according to regulations, avoiding excessive payments while still maximizing the benefit package (WHO, 2000). Furthermore, purchasing in the SHI approach is based on equity and efficiency in determining the benefit package that national health insurance recipients receive. The provider payment mechanisms indicator relates to incentives obtained by individual health workers and health facilities, as they represent the front line in providing health services.

Administrative efficiency in relation to administrative costs that occur within the management of national health insurance systems is also crucial. Various projected conditions such as additional costs and the preparation of reserve funds for unexpected costs need to be considered in the national insurance policy system. From a performance perspective, the SHI approach can be used by governments in measuring the target milestones and performance of universal health insurance providers. Based on this analytical framework, this study aims to analyse the performance of the national health insurance system that has been implemented by the Indonesian government since 2014.

## Method

### Research Design and Strategy

This study uses a qualitative approach to explain the performance of the national health insurance system organized by the BPJS Kesehatan as the leading sector and main pillar in providing health insurance in Indonesia. Furthermore, health facilities are the second pillar, acting as health service providers and cooperating with the BPJS Kesehatan. The final pillar is the community – the target object of national health insurance, who has the right to receive health benefits and is obligated to pay monthly fees. Thus, the BPJS Kesehatan, Health Facilities and the community are the objects of this research as the pillars of national health insurance in Indonesia. The research strategy used in this study is that of an explorative case study (Yin 2009). This strategy was chosen so that the phenomenon of implementing national health insurance policies can be explored according to the Indonesian context.

This study was conducted in three public and private hospitals in Makassar City, an area with one of the largest urban populations in Indonesia. Data from the Makassar City Central Statistics Agency (2020) reports that the population of Makassar City is 1.4 million people. In addition, Makassar City has two state hospitals which are reference sources for chronic diseases, and whose patients come from various regions in Eastern Indonesia.

### Respondents

Information was gathered from respondents in order to explain the phenomena of the performance of the national health insurance system. As primary data sources, respondents provide important information about the conditions and realities of the object under study. The participants in this study included: a) 10 BPJS Kesehatan officials and staff; b) 30 recipients of financial

aid (PBI) and non-recipients of financial aid; c) 8 officers and staff of health facilities (*puskesmas* and hospitals); and d) 20 BPJS Kesehatan patients who were undergoing treatment at health facilities. The reason for the selection of respondents as mentioned above was because they are relevant actors, both as implementers and objects of policy targets. The respondents who act as implementers are aware of all processes and regulations in implementing policies, and the respondents who are patients know, experience, and pay for the services of health insurance in health facilities first-hand.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

The data collection techniques used in this research were observation, in depth-interview, and document study. Observations focused on tangible objects, such as the processes of health insurance recipients: registering at the BPJS office; accessing services in health facilities such as hospitals and clinics; paying for health insurance in those health facilities; claiming and billing health facilities to BPJS Health as organizers and managers of health insurance funds; and paying health insurance premiums at their bank and through the BPJS Health applications. Moreover observations of recipients' health services took place at secondary level health facilities – in this case hospitals and primary clinics as health service providers in collaboration with BPJS Health. In-depth interviews were addressed to key respondents as mentioned above. Furthermore, various documents were collected, such as: the regulations of Law No. 40 of 2004 regarding National Social Security Systems (SJSN) as a main legal basis; Regulation of the Health Social Security Agency No. 1 of 2015 regarding the Implementation of Health Insurance; data statistics such as the performance report of BPJS Kesehatan between 2015–2019; and institutional activity reports relating to the implementation of the health insurance policy.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

This study employs an interpretative approach to analysing data based on three stages: data reduction, data display and drawing, and verifying conclusions (Miles et al. 2014). The data obtained through observation, in-depth interviews and document analysis was categorised and classified based on its similarities and differences. The next step was data reduction, from which conclusion and analysis results were obtained. The explanation regarding data reduction is further elaborated in the next section. The analysis techniques used in this study involve pairing patterns and time series techniques. These techniques are utilised together to complement one another (Miles et al. 2014) performance measurement comes more to the foreground with the advancement in the high technology. So as to manage this power, which is an important element of the organizations, it is needed to have a performance measurement system. Increased level of competition in the business environment and higher customer requirements forced industry to establish a new philosophy to measure its performance beyond the existing financial and non-financial based performance indicators. In this paper, a conceptual performance measurement framework that takes into account company-level factors is presented for a real world application problem. In order to use the conceptual framework for measuring performance, a methodology that takes into account both quantitative and qualitative factors and the interrelations between them should be utilized. For this reason, an integrated approach of analytic hierarchy process (AHP).

### **Results**

This study aims to analyse and explore the performance of the national health insurance



system conducted by the BPJS Kesehatan using SHI indicators that include: a) revenue collection; b) pooling; and c) purchasing (Carrin and James 2005).

#### *Revenue Collection*

Revenue collection is measured based on population coverage and method of finance. The total amount of revenue sourced from health insurance recipients' fees reached Rp. 81.97 trillion. Viewed from the aspect of the amount of participation and membership, this health insurance is projected to gradually cover the entire population of Indonesia in stages. The number of health insurance memberships has continued to increase every year to date. Based on data from the BPJS Kesehatan (2019), there were 208,054,199 participants as of December 2018. Table 1 provides more details of this growth.

**Table 1.** Revenue collection performance's indicators

Indicator	Year/Million					Problems
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Population Coverage	133.42	156.79	171.93	187.98	208.05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business compliance in registering workers</li> <li>• Salaries/wages of non-civil servant and government employees below the UMK</li> <li>• Individual awareness of the need to register as a health insurance recipient</li> </ul>
Indicator	Year/Billion Rp.					Problems
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Method of Finance	40.72	52.69	67.4	74.25	81.97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrears in payments of individual recipients and businesses</li> <li>• Awareness of individuals and business entities of the need to pay health insurance fees</li> </ul>

Source: Processed data, 2019

Based on Table 1, the number of new members and recipients experienced growth each year. However, the increase in covered members did not fulfil the target numbers set annually. These conditions in turn meant that efforts towards universal health coverage (UHC) in Indonesia also did not reach their set targets. In general, the main problem regarding population coverage is the

low level of awareness among people that they must register for health insurance, regardless of its importance for every individual. This was conveyed by respondent H, who is the Unit Head of the Participation Management Unit and the Service Quality Control Unit, and is charged with the handling of BPJS Health Participation complaints. H stated that:

*The level of public awareness of the need to register as a BPJS participant still needs to be increased, both for the Business Entity segment and independent participants. Often, people only realize that BPJS Health is important when they are sick, because the cost of care without health insurance is expensive. (Source: interview excerpt)*

The reality is that there are still many private and state business entities who have not yet registered their own workers for health insurance. This is similar for both non-wage recipient workers and non-worker respondents, who consist of independent participants, investors, employers, and private pension recipients. Another issue in the efforts to increase health insurance membership and the number of recipients is that many non-civil servant government workers earn salaries below the regional minimum wage, so they experience financial difficulties in registering themselves for health insurance. This was stated by the staff of the Membership Management Unit, the Service Quality Control Unit, and the Unit in charge of the Handling of BPJS Health Membership Complaints. This condition generally occurs in daily workers who are paid less than Rp. 100,000 (€6) per day, or non-government workers with low salaries who are not registered by the government or business entity/company where they work.

The method of finance for health insurance, referred to as the Social Security Fund (DJS), is carried out with a fee mechanism paid by all recipients with the fee rate based on their selected class or tier of health service. Participants' fees or premiums are the main source of income, but health insurance financing is also sourced from government assistance funds and other income such as from investments obtained by the BPJS Kesehatan as the manager of the health insurance system. The collection of funding for health insurance includes income sourced from fees from poor communities or PBI participants that are paid by the central government, contributions from non-PBI participants, and contributions from "poor family participants" paid by local governments. Contribution Assistance Recipients (PBI) are participants in the Indonesian health insurance system (BPJS Kesehatan) that include poor and underprivileged groups whose contributions are paid by the Government as mandated by the Law on the National Social Security System.

Various efforts have been made to ease the accessibility of paying health insurance fees for participants, including the collection of contributions obtained through the main banking channels, where BPJS Kesehatan cooperates with four state-owned banks: BNI, Mandiri Bank, BRI, and BTN Bank. Payments through banks can be made via internet banking and mobile banking, where the bank also has a direct debit service or payments are automatically deducted from the participant's savings. In addition, collecting fees is also carried out through the Payment Point Online Bank method, where the number of payment channels reaches more than 600,000 – including e-commerce and virtual money.

The fee rates have often been controversial. On the one hand, the benefits received by health insurance recipients are so large that they cover the entire cost of health services received at health facilities. On the other hand, the contribution rate is considered too low, so there have been several rate increases since this system took effect in 2014. Since the health insurance system was implemented in 2014, payment arrears have also been a major problem. This was confirmed by respondent D, who is a staff member of the Legal, Public Communication and Compliance BPJS Health unit. D said that:

*This problem occurs because the level of participant payment compliance is quite low, even though BPJS Kesehatan itself often conducts socialization and educates companies or employers and the public. (Source: interview excerpt)*

There is another problem in that the income collected from fees does not reach the revenue target. This causes a budget deficit in financing, so the implementation of health insurance then becomes ineffective. This budget deficit has occurred since the health insurance system was first introduced. This problem is due to the large amount of arrears in dues. In fact, the inequality ratio between the income of the Social Security Fund (DJS) and the cost of benefits and health services reaches as high as 107.39% (BPJS Kesehatan 2019) performance measurement comes more to the foreground with the advancement in the high technology. So as to manage this power, which is an important element of the organizations, it is needed to have a performance measurement system. Increased level of competition in the business environment and higher customer requirements forced industry to establish a new philosophy to measure its performance beyond the existing financial and non-financial based performance indicators. In this paper, a conceptual performance measurement framework that takes into account company-level factors is presented for a real world application problem. In order to use the conceptual framework for measuring performance, a methodology that takes into account both quantitative and qualitative factors and the interrelations between them should be utilized. For this reason, an integrated approach of analytic hierarchy process (AHP).

The BPJS Kesehatan has made various efforts to overcome these problems, including by: conducting intensive socialization of the registration and payment of fees carried out by the institution or through JKN-KIS teams; encouraging local governments to issue regulations on the obligations of business entities to register for health insurance; and collaborating with the Manpower and Transmigration Office and the Attorney General's Office to monitor businesses that have not registered their workers and paid due bills. The BPJS Kesehatan also cooperates with the Population and Civil Registration Offices to conduct searches using the Citizen Identification Number (NIK) for information on individuals who have not been registered as health insurance recipients. The BPJS Kesehatan even cooperates with the heads of local neighbourhood associations (RW) to collect arrears of dues. In addition, sanctions have also been imposed for arrears in bills. However, these various efforts have not been effective enough to increase the number of health insurance participants and increase compliance with the payment of contributions. This problem was confirmed by respondent S, who is a staff member at the BPJS Health Billing and Finance Unit. S stated that this problem emerges:

*Because of the low awareness of the public and business entities/companies regarding the importance of health insurance for them. This is despite the fact that the INA-CBGs BPJS Health package system is very profitable because it covers almost all diseases, so the burden of participant contributions is effectively cheap. (Source: interview excerpt)*

#### *Pooling*

The function of pooling in the implementation of National Health Insurance (JKN) with the Healthy Indonesia Card (KIS) – President Jokowi's program – is to guarantee the risk of financing recipients' health services via feedback on the fees they have paid. The risk factor for financing is shared by the participants with a cross-subsidy mechanism, where those who are healthy pay for the sick. As is known, this health insurance is mandatory for all citizens and adheres to the principle of *gotong royong*, or mutual cooperation. Table 2 provides more detail on this indicator.

Table 2. Pooling performance's indicator

Indicator	Result	Problem
Composition of risk pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consists of 3 PBI and non-PBI segments and the integration of regional health insurance</li> <li>• Fees and classes of health care are divided into 3 types</li> <li>• Health insurance is mandatory with the principle of gotong royong and a cross-subsidy mechanism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many non-PBI segment recipients have not registered yet</li> <li>• Recipients in the PBI and regional health insurance segments have not all been registered by the government</li> </ul>
Fragmentation of risk pooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INA-CBG's package system</li> <li>• Financing fragmentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The gap in the cost of using the INA-CBG's claim system between hospitals in Jawa island and outside Jawa island</li> </ul>
Management of risk pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial sustainability</li> <li>• Participant satisfaction</li> <li>• Coverage of participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The low collection of fees and the amount of fees that do not match the economic price</li> <li>• The high level of complaints about health facility services (moral hazards) and membership administration services</li> <li>• Low support from regulators and other stakeholders for the JKN-KIS program</li> <li>• Problems in enforcement for compliance paying dues</li> <li>• Potential for health facility fraud</li> <li>• Additional recipient fees to be paid</li> <li>• Uneven distribution of recipients in health facilities</li> </ul>

Source: Processed data, 2019

Based on the composition of the risk pool, membership in the National Health Insurance is

mandatory for all citizens – both for participants who pay individually every month and those who are paid for by the government as a subsidy for poor families. The fees paid are adjusted to the tier of healthcare treatment that they choose. This type of treatment class tariff is divided into three: the third class has the lowest rate, Rp. 25,000 (€1.5); the second class fee is Rp. 51,000 (€3); and the first class has the highest rate, Rp. 80,000 (€4.9). The difference between the three classes is in the inpatient treatment room. For the non-PBI segment, they are entitled to determine the choice of healthcare treatment tier based on how much they can pay. This is opposed to participants of the PBI segment in the central government and participants from local government integrated with the regional health insurance, who are only entitled to the third level of healthcare because their payment is made by the central and local governments.

This dimension of fragmentation within the risk pool shows the potential loss in financing health insurance. Based on the INA-CBGs package system, this actually causes fragmentation in health services at health facilities. In fact, the standardized treatment package has the potential to cause a mismatch in the process of grouping disease cases, which can have implications for misdiagnosis. Moreover, the INA-CBGs package system also causes a disparity in the cost of health services when claiming benefits and often puts pressure on health facilities to solve the problem. This makes health services unequal so that the implementation of universal health insurance is not effective.

The self-financing scheme through healthcare recipient fees is actually based on payments for the standard INA-CBG drug package. Meanwhile, the pricing of packaged drugs is fully determined by market mechanisms, so the potential for an increase in fees due to an increase in drug prices cannot be avoided. The conditions are different when drug prices are controlled by government health authorities.

Management of the risk pool, as one of the dimensions of SHI (Carrin and James 2005), shows in its implementation the occurrence of various problems, such as: low collection of dues and amounts of fees that do not match the economic price; high complaints against health facility services related to moral hazard and membership administration services; lack of support from regulators and other stakeholders for the National Health Insurance program; low compliance with the enforcement of dues; potential for fraud in health facilities; additional participant fees to be paid; and unequal distribution of participants to facilities. Various problems in the implementation of JKN-KIS pooling indicate the need for several improvements by BPJS Kesehatan and the government. Furthermore, this health insurance system actually creates a moral hazard for recipients. For instance, there have been cases of recipients who should be receiving advanced health services such as treatment for chronic diseases, but are instead placed in the category of new recipients. In addition, there are often cases where people in general only register as healthcare recipients when they become sick in order to receive health services. This condition was confirmed by respondent C, who is one of the BPJS Health participant patients who is receiving health services at a regional hospital. C said that:

*The service obtained is not good and incurs additional costs such as for drugs that are not available in hospitals, which should be borne by the BPJS Kesehatan. In one instance, the hospital reasoned that the supply of their medicine was empty. When confirmed with the director of medical services at the hospital, it was said that this was the impact of arrears in hospital claims that had not been paid by the BPJS Kesehatan, thus affecting the medical services received by patients. Meanwhile, the head of the BPJS Health Referral Health Service Management unit argued that their late payment of hospital claims was due to a budget deficit. (Source: interview excerpt)*

### *Purchasing*

The purchasing dimension within the perspective of SHI in the context of the health insurance systems in Indonesia shows that the benefit package offered to recipients is very large. All costs for health services received by beneficiaries are carried by the BPJS Kesehatan in accordance with applicable procedures. However, the size of the benefit package causes national health insurance providers to be unable to pay claims for health services received at health facilities. This was revealed by respondent X, who is the head of the collection and finance unit. X stated that:

*There is an imbalance in the amount of funding for participant revenue collection, which is lower than the claim financing that must be paid by the BPJS Kesehatan, where there is a deficit of [Rp.] 9.1 trillion [around €550 million]. (Source: interview excerpt)*

The high expenditure on benefit packages when incomes from fees are low causes a budget deficit. Meanwhile, expenditures are influenced by the amount of service tariffs and the efficiency of the control results. The inequality in the ratio between income, the cost of benefits and the costs of health services has now reached 107.39% (BPJS Kesehatan 2019).

Provider payment mechanisms in the Indonesian national health insurance system tend to be unsatisfactory for health service providers, health facilities and medical workers who provide treatment. This situation was confirmed by respondent M, who is a staff member at the Referral Health Service Management unit. M said:

*There are cases of failed payment claims from BPJS Health to advanced health facilities, in this case the hospital, because the claims submitted are not in accordance with BPJS Health procedures. There are also deficiencies such as completeness of medical resumes, operation sheets, transfusion sheets, and other equipment, meaning that they need to be revised due to diagnostic errors or errors in diagnosis codes that often occur. Errors that must be revised by the hospital or in regard to the completeness of files will delay the process of replacing funds from BPJS. (Source: interview excerpt)*

This is different from the complaints of health facilities, which were revealed by the director of medical services at a regional hospital. This director considered all claim documents to be complete and in accordance with applicable procedures. When there is a claim submitted by the hospital to BPJS Health that fails, then the consequence is that the hospital itself bears the cost of patient care because BPJS Health considers the error to be on the hospital's side.

This is due to the fact that claims by health facilities against the medical actions of patients (healthcare recipients) are often deemed to be inconsistent with the majority of claims charged by health facilities when verified by BPJS Kesehatan. In contrast to the incentives obtained by medical personnel, the number of claims obtained has been determined in the INA-CBG system package. INA-CBG is payment system in the form of packages based on the diagnosis of diseases and the treatment procedures given to a patient. This rate is paid by the BPJS Kesehatan to the hospital. The calculation uses the standard tariff for health services in the implementation of the health insurance program.

Based on the results of interviews with these respondents, their incentives are smaller than the previous health insurance system – namely Health Insurance (Askes) and other health insurance by other providers. As respondent P stated:

*The amount of incentives obtained by medical personnel in the INA-CBG's BPJS Health package system tends to be small because the system has regulated various financing actions for each category of disease in the package of services to be provided by health workers. The value of claims received by the hospital has an impact on the amount of medical services received by medical personnel. The INA CBGs tariff, which is considered still to be lower than the expected standard, results in physicians'*

*dissatisfaction with BPJS.* (Source: interview excerpt)

The INA-CBG package system is a healthcare financing package based on the illness that the patient is suffering from. This system is based on the average cost of a group of diagnoses. Furthermore, the INA-CBG rates consist of 1,077 CBG codes consisting of 789 inpatients and 288 outpatients with three levels of severity. For the implementation of the JKN BPJS Health program, the INA-CBG rates are grouped into 6 types of hospitals: class D, C, B, and A hospitals, as well as national referral hospitals and other hospitals. INA-CBG tariffs are also arranged based on treatment classes I, II, and III. This system was originally intended to increase the efficiency of health facilities in providing services, but they actually considered the applied tariff system to be small, causing limitations for them in providing those medical services.

## **Discussion**

Several issues in the implementation of Indonesian national health insurance indicate the need for more support and quality improvements by the BPJS Kesehatan and the government. The goal of universal health coverage is to provide health services for all citizens at an affordable cost. Therefore, it is necessary to pay great attention to developing a management and health insurance system that is universal in nature in order to optimize targets and resources, as well as to monitor its development (Carrin and James 2005).

The greatest challenge in optimizing Indonesia's national health insurance lies in three areas: the dimensions of revenue collection, pooling and purchasing in the concept of SHI to achieve Universal Health Coverage. If revenue collection cannot be maximized, the health insurance budget deficit will become a systemic threat. Therefore, major action is needed to fix the amount of fees and rationalize tariffs so that the process of financing health services for individual recipients runs smoothly. An appropriate mechanism to collect revenue can reduce the financial risk for national health insurance providers and provide health-based financial protection for healthcare recipients (Carrin and James 2005; OECD 2004). It is critical to improve the quality of health services provided by health facilities such as clinics and hospitals in order to build trust among health insurance recipients. By receiving quality health services, recipients will feel more obligated and willing to pay their bills and fees. This is a crucial element to improving pooling performance in the national health insurance system in Indonesia.

The effectiveness of the implementation of national health insurance is an important point in the financial protection of health. According to several literature sources, insurance is a method of distributing financial risk related to individual health financing by regularly collecting premiums or individual contributions. There is usually an established national health insurance institution that collects funds on a national scale so that it can cover the financing of the entire population (OECD 2004).

## **Conclusion**

National health insurance is a program that aims to ensure that all individuals have access to health services at an affordable cost. Therefore, in terms of revenue collection, it is important to maximize the number of recipients and financing, where all citizens are aware of the benefits of participating in the health insurance system. Pooling within national health insurance, which often creates moral hazards and fraud, then requires further attention and the monitoring of its implementation at the health service level. Moreover, there is fragmentation in the different service tiers and classes, which creates a negative stigma in society. Lastly, purchasing is necessary to

improve the quality of the INA-CBG package system and provide an in-depth understanding for health facilities regarding the mechanism of the system. To achieve the success of Universal Health Coverage, collective awareness among BPJS Health organizers, the community, and health facilities is necessary, with the latter as the main pillar.

There are challenges ahead in the study of SHI or national health insurance for countries that want to implement it. They need to consider the factors of financing health insurance sourced from participants' periodic contributions. Risk of deficit is a big threat when revenue collection does not run effectively while the finance behind health insurance that must be paid to health facilities increases. In implementing health insurance treatment classes and tiers, it is better to use only 1 type of class and contribution, so that all health insurance participants receive equal service without any differences. The commitment of health facilities such as hospitals and clinics to providing services must be considered and monitored so that health insurance participants can obtain maximum service. The satisfaction of health insurance recipients must be a special concern, considering its potential impact on public trust and recipients' desire to continue paying health insurance fees. Various studies and cases of the implementation of national health insurance or SHI in several countries have not led to the development public trust within the community, even though these dimensions need to be considered in achieving the effectiveness and efficiency of health insurance policies.

Lastly, we acknowledge that this study has methodological limitations, with a focus on only one area in Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province. For this reason, this study reveals a case that may not apply in other areas. However, this study has investigated a national social security program that is applicable in all regions. In addition, another weakness of this study is that the research period was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which limits the study findings as they do not cover the events of the pandemic. Nevertheless, the BPJS Kesehatan was very helpful for people affected by the pandemic, especially people from vulnerable and poor backgrounds who are covered by the state (Sparrow et al. 2020; Djalante et al. 2020).

In future, we hope that other studies can be carried out in various regions that represent national trends. In addition, we hope that following studies will explore various dimensions in the implementation process of National Health Insurance, because this policy has a multi-layered effect. In the future, further studies will be carried out by adding several dimensions such as public trust, institutions and fraud in the implementation of National Health Insurance policies.

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## NACIONALINĖS SVEIKATOS DRAUDIMO SISTEMOS ĮVERTINIMAS: INDONEZIJOS SVEIKATOS DRAUDIMO POLITIKOS ĮGYVENDINIMO TYRIMAS

**Anotacija.** Šiuo tyrimu siekiama išanalizuoti, kaip įgyvendinama Indonezijos sveikatos draudimo politika nuo 2014 m. Straipsnyje taikomas kokybinis metodas. Duomenų rinkimas buvo atliekamas vykdant stebėjimus, interviu, fokusuotos grupės diskusijas (FGD) ir dokumentų analizę. Šio tyrimo informantus galima skirstyti į tris grupes: piliečių kaip draudimo gavėjų, ligoninės vadovybės ir Indonezijos nacionalinio sveikatos draudimo administravimo institucijų. Gauti duomenys buvo analizuojami taikant interpretacijos metodus. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad Nacionalinio sveikatos draudimo – Sveikos Indonezijos kortelės (JKN-KIS) – sistema yra naudinga, ypač tenkinant pagrindinius visuomenės sveikatos sektoriaus poreikius. Tačiau yra keletas problemų, susijusių su tokiais aspektais kaip piliečių dalyvavimas, netinkami mokesčiai, išmokų paketo sistema, kuri iš tikrųjų sukuria sveikatos paslaugų susiskaidymą, taip pat neefektyvų rizikos valdymą. Sveikatos ir socialinės apsaugos agentūros (BPJS Kesehatan) kaip politikos vykdytojos biudžeto deficitas turėjo didelės įtakos ligoninių teikiamų paslaugų apribojimams dėl esą ligoninių negaunamų mokėjimų iš BPJS Kesehatan.

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## THE APPLICATION OF COMPLEXITY THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

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**Annotation.** *Traditional public governance is based on rationality, clear causal links, and the assumption of stability of social systems. However, contemporary public governance systems have different levels of operation, they adapt, can organise themselves, have different levels of sensitivity, evolve and change unpredictably according to their internal logic of operation or under the influence of other external systems. Thus, traditional models of public governance become insufficient to explain and address the challenges that arise in this context. The provisions of complexity theory and methodology become especially important for understanding the contexts and processes of modern society, applying governance methodologies and increasing their efficiency, implementing systemic changes, and forming prediction models. While it may not be possible to provide concrete technical solutions that are useful in the short term, this theory can offer certain models and principles to better meet the challenges ahead. This article aims to define the essential features of complexity theory and to discuss the possibilities of its application in the context of public governance. The methods of scientific literature analysis, synthesis, historic analysis, and document analysis are used in this paper. The possibilities of applying complexity theory differ depending on the stage of development of public governance and its methodological assumptions. In the context of complexity theory, when shaping public governance change strategies for effective solutions, it becomes important to understand the limitations of idealised future perspectives and to assess the current functioning of systems and forces acting on them, identifying natural system development trends due to the influence of self-organisation forces.*

**Keywords:** *complexity theory, governance methodologies, public governance, public governance systems change*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *kompleksiškumo teorija, valdymo metodikos, viešasis valdymas, viešojo valdymo sistemų kaita*

**JEL classification:** H83, O3

## **Introduction**

When public governance researchers and practitioners face increasingly complex problems in the formation and implementation of public policy, it is important to properly understand the ongoing institutional and inter-institutional processes, the dynamics of their changes, and the measures that determine the respective results. Stable, rational, predictable, and control-based functioning of social systems in postmodern society is often quite limited. Modern social systems have different levels of functioning – they adapt, change, can organise themselves, have different levels of sensitivity, and can evolve and change unpredictably according to their internal logic of functioning or when affected by other systems. Significant changes can be caused by even the smallest fluctuations in social systems. This applies to contemporary public governance systems.

Currently, public governance systems around the world are facing unforeseen events and changes that have not been taken seriously so far. It is therefore necessary to seek new methodological approaches for the formation and implementation of effective and efficient policy decisions (Eppel and Rhodes 2018; Cairney and Geyer 2017; Gerrits and Marks 2015; Tenbenschel 2013; Eppel 2012; Room 2011, 2015; Westhorp 2012; Cairney 2012). With significant changes in the functioning of systems to create or change institutional synergies and ensure effective and efficient results in public policy-making and implementation, scientific discourse increasingly focuses on complexity theory, which may help to explain why certain political interventions do not produce the desired results in different contexts (Eppel and Rhodes 2018; Cairney 2012; Dawkins and Barker 2018; Fish and Hardy 2015).

Complexity theory is focused on the dynamics of the analysed social phenomenon. Policy formation and implementation, decision-making, and institutional activity improvement take place under the influence of different, complex, dynamically interacting factors. These processes can be linear if the systems are affected by a strong central force, but they are usually non-linear, if influenced by many different forces and interests when the final result of this operation is difficult to predict. These processes are strongly affected by different feedback mechanisms and contexts, which are often multidimensional and dynamic, with an emphasis on their potential functions of promoting or inhibiting change (Teisman and Klijn 2008; Westhorp 2012).

Complexity theory applied to the analysis of public governance processes emphasises that the decisions and implementation of policies by public governance institutions are difficult to predict and control, and the rational intentions of public sector policymakers and implementers do not produce the desired results. On the other hand, although there is a growing interest of the scientific community in complexity theory, it is still not widely applied in public governance science and practice (Eppel 2017). The authors of the article put forward a position that complexity theory became especially important for public governance systems in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic when seeking to manage it and minimise its negative consequences for society. Thus, this article aims to define the essential features of complexity theory and to discuss the possibilities of its application in the context of public governance. The methods of scientific literature analysis, synthesis, historic analysis, and document analysis are used in this paper.

## **Complexity theory and analysis of its essential operating principles**

Until the middle of the 20th century, the development of theories of social sciences was significantly influenced by the mechanical approach to research objects established in the natural

sciences, which is characterised by the following essential provisions: i) the relationships between the individual elements of the system can be understood by isolating the interacting parts; ii) there are links among these parts of the system, which are predictable; iii) the results of the interaction of all system elements can be predicted by analysing and summing the interactions of individual parts.

J. Sapir (2020) compares system (mechanical) and complexity approaches (Table 1).

**Table 1.** System thinking versus complexity thinking

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Systems Thinking</b>	<b>Complexity Thinking</b>
Ideal future vs. evolutionary potential of the present.	Systems thinking seeks to define an ideal future (e.g. culture) and then define strategies to “close the gap”.	Complexity works with the evolutionary potential of the present, i.e. it seeks to understand the “now”, find out what can be changed (in a measurable way), and then take small evolutionary steps in a more positive direction without any assumption of the end destination.
Complex systems are modulated, not driven.	Change one thing, and the other components of the system remain unchanged.	Change one thing, and the other components in the system change as well – in ways that do not repeat.
Complex systems are dispositional, not causal.	One can accurately predict the behaviour of the system (can see cause and effect).	One can observe a tendency or propensity for the system to move in a general direction. As we move in any given direction by making choices, there will always be a certain fluidity, not a direct path as in a causal system.

**Source:** Sapir (2020)

In the 21st century, simplistic understanding of systems is criticised by natural and social sciences, with increasing emphasis on the dynamism and unpredictability of systems, structures, and processes, seeking to distance from reductionism. One such approach is complexity, which is currently applied in many fields of science (Eppel and Rhodes 2018; Pirson and Turnbull 2016; Wagenaar 2007).

Complexity is defined as the scientific study of systems consisting of several interacting parts or agents, the behaviour of which cannot be explained based on individual system elements, agents, or interactions among individual system elements (Thietart and Forgues 2011). Greater complexity is a characteristic of those systems which are composed of more qualitatively different dynamically interacting elements. Social systems are always more complex than chemical, physical, and natural systems.

Social phenomena we face in the field of public governance differ from the objects of scientific research of the precise sciences primarily by the fact that they often arise and form not only as a consequence of some isolated cause – as we can see, for example, by analysing chemical reactions or mechanical interactions between objects, when a particular stimulus produces a very clearly and unambiguously predicted response or outcome. Social contexts and circumstances are much more complex, as we encounter many new, higher system-level variables, such as inter-sub-

jectivity, differences in system elements, individual attitudes, values, and top-down causation (reciprocal causation), when higher system-level phenomena influence the elements of the system, which in turn are influenced by the elements and the ability of the elements-agents operating in the system to realise and assess the processes taking place in the system. Social phenomena are very complex, and currently the complexity of such phenomena is gaining momentum because of globalisation. It becomes quite difficult to predict what policies, solutions, or interventions can deliver the results which are necessary, effective and efficient in the context of public governance (Fish and Hardy 2015).

Although the concept of complexity theory is often used, it must be acknowledged that it is a set of different theories. The basic idea of complexity is that the analysis of various phenomena should be concentrated not on individual elements of the system, but on the system itself as a whole, a network of various elements which interact with each other and cause a specific system operation which cannot be mechanically separated into the behaviour or actions of its constituent parts. On the other hand, the development of the system is inseparable from the interaction of the elements. Complexity theory is dominated by the view that systems develop in a non-linear way because they are affected by various feedback mechanisms, the principle of self-organisation, and development together with other systems (co-evolving) (Cairney 2012; Haynes 2008; Klijn 2008).

Self-organisation is the principle by which social systems can organise themselves (Morçöl and Wachhaus 2009). Wagenaar (2007) claims that the concept of complexity includes an evolving theoretical perspective. Complex systems cannot be fully understood and controlled, but some ways or approaches of dealing with them may be more useful and productive than others, such as those based on positivism or rationalistic cognitive methodology. Thus, it can be stated that complexity theory may be useful to identify and explain systems or processes that lack stability and order (Cairney 2012).

Classical public governance is based on positivistic and rationalistic assumptions that the stable functioning of systems must be ensured by centralised hierarchical governance and focused on the implementation of various procedures and legal acts. However, the postmodern society of the 21st century is complex, and constant change and uncertainty lead to the limitations of this classical approach. In the face of a global pandemic, good governance practices based on rational arguments, stability, and predictability may not produce the desired results (Eppel 2017).

The perspective of complexity provides an opportunity to explain how independent elements interact to increase their resilience and ability to survive over time when they are influenced by historical contexts, institutional forms, values, and other factors. It promotes an understanding of the interaction models and trends that emerge in systems, not relying solely on isolated, context-independent cause-effect relationships (Eppel and Rhodes, 2018). When assessing the performance of complex systems, it should be noted that due to the many different interrelationships in the complex system, small effects under specific conditions can affect the entire system in unforeseen ways, creating unpredictable results (Wagenaar 2007).

The scholars analysing and applying complexity theory claim that fundamental changes in the system occur at certain critical points, where different bifurcations of the system emerge. It is a process in which the system fluctuates between two possibilities and further developmental trajectories. This is manifested by system instability and increased sensitivity to environmental factors (Westhorp 2012, Dawkins and Barker 2018).

A very important idea of complexity theory is that social phenomena develop not only due to the action of external forces. Various social systems do not always obey the rules, laws,

and principles – they are also characterised by self-organisation features. Due to self-organisation, such systems can develop along a difficult-to-predict trajectory and at an unknown speed (Teisman and Klijn 2008). Dawkins and Barker (2018), based on the research of various authors, distinguished six essential periods of operation of complex system changes: (a) turbulence, when the system is brought out of balance due to external and internal influences and fluctuations; (b) sensitivity, when the system becomes particularly sensitive to various internal or environmental conditions and circumstances; (c) the critical bifurcation point, when, in the unstable state of the system, the structure of the system fluctuates among possible new alternative structural variants; (d) forces which form a new structure; (e) forces which break system symmetry and balance and encourage the transition to a new state; and (f) a new state of equipoise, in which a qualitatively new system is created that adapts to the changing forces and influences in the wider context.

The complicated possibilities of predicting complex systems are the main challenge. According to Fish and Hardy (2015), predictions in the case of complex systems are a major problem because such systems are adaptive and adjustable – they interact with the environment through the loops of positive and negative feedback. This presupposes the idea that even very intense factors acting on the system may not have a significant effect, and sufficiently weak factors may have a disproportionate effect and substantially transform the system (the best example here is E. Lorenz's "butterfly effect"). Thus, the impact on the system from the centre of the system (for example, from the municipal administration) may be less significant and effective compared to the impact which can be caused by the interaction of individual elements of the system (for example, the impact of the community or any other social group unexpectedly formed on social networks), which is generally less known and to which less attention is paid when analysing the system. This is supported by other scientists (Morçöl and Wachhaus 2009), who argue that systems do not seek to be in balance; on the contrary, they move away from balance and become less stable and more sensitive to external influences. In such states, systems begin to behave only in a partially predictable way when cause-and-effect relationships become non-linear. In such system states, systems can break down or become even more differentiated, complex, and achieve higher-level organisational principles and orders. The principles of a system self-organisation create preconditions for the emergence of adaptive elements of the system, strengthen certain approaches in the systems, and weaken others, which disturbs the new emerging order and enables harmonious operation without greater external coordination (Dawkins and Barker 2018).

Self-organisation in social systems arises from the freedom of choice and the actions of people and organisations when they belong to one system. Even when the system is exposed to some strong external force, the elements of the system retain freedom of choice and action, which can be used for even greater adaptation (Teisman and Edelenbos 2011). If a system is considered self-organising and self-renewing, it obeys its internal dynamics and reacts to the environment in a peculiar, specific way. Thus, the principles of operation of the system become difficult to understand from an external perspective, and the system itself becomes resistant to external pressure, or at least the response of the system to such pressure is unique (Klijn 2008).

In summary, the provisions and methodology of complexity theory become extremely important for understanding the contexts and processes of modern society, applying governance methodologies and increasing their efficiency, implementing systemic changes, and forming prediction models.

### **Complexity theory in the context of public governance**

Complexity theory provides new insights into different areas of public governance in policy processes, the implementation of decisions, and institutional interaction. While it may not help to make concrete, technical, short-term solutions, it can offer some principles for public governance systems, their operation and interaction (Eppel 2017).

The possibilities of applying complexity theory differ depending on the stage of development of public governance and its methodological assumptions. Traditional public governance is based on linear functioning, predictability, clear causal links and system stability. In the context of traditional public governance, actors are agents involved in the operation of systems – they are, or at least seek to be, rational. It is considered that they can set clear goals, choose their implementation means and achieve the desired results. However, the rational existence and functioning of an actor in the context of complexity is considered an inappropriate provision, as it limits the understanding of what can influence changes in the analysed public governance system and how (Eppel 2017).

The rational actor and rational choice in complexity theory are treated as simplifications of complex reality, reductionism, or simple complexity, which is unreasonable but very understandable and acceptable to a citizen or agent of a public governance system who is burdened with complex information (Cilliers 2011.). Such attitudes do not provide a better understanding of social reality itself but provide a version of reality that is useful to some stakeholders.

The same is true of the public interest. Complexity theory, like post-structuralism theory, states that there is no objective or neutral position from which it would be possible to observe and describe complex social systems such as organisations or society (Cilliers 2011.). Thus, to assess what is happening in social systems, we must always admit that we will never be able to fully understand complex systems and changes that take place in them, while realising that other starting points, other positions, and other ways and methods of understanding and interpreting social systems are also possible.

One of the main conceptual tools of complexity theory for understanding structural-process transformations is non-linearity. In mathematics, where this concept originated and formed, non-linearity refers to a disproportionate relationship between variables, where a small change can have a large effect and, conversely, a large impact can have almost no effect. This is completely inconsistent with the thinking models which are commonly applied to public policy and administration or public governance, where any policies and solutions are proposed in the hope that they will generate a result proportionate to the resources invested in them, ideally a measurable result (Morçöl and Wachhaus 2009). Otherwise, such decisions would be difficult to publicly justify and explain. A good example here could be from the practice of ensuring traffic safety in Lithuania – the abolition of green right-turn indicators, hoping that this will increase road safety. This decision was based on a variety of scientific research results and legal regulations. However, its effect (an increase in traffic jams) was quite different from that expected by its initiators, who when proposing such a solution followed isolated cause-and-effect relationships in the field of public security.

In essence, such an understanding of the non-linear relationships of individual social variables calls into question many of the traditional science-based generalised laws about social systems that rely on isolated linear cause-and-effect relationships between individual variables. In this case, the prognostic possibilities of such laws when dealing with broader complex systems are very limited (Fish and Hardy 2015). In reality, any public policy or decision falls into a complex field of forces that are difficult to predict, and the impact of that policy or decision inevitably transforms. Even when impacts from other natural systems (geological or biological) affect social



systems, it is very difficult to predict the consequences of such impacts. Examples of this include the impact of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan on the Japanese economy in 2011, or the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Lithuanian and global economy in 2020–2021.

Thus, it can be assumed that, under traditional hierarchical-linear governance conditions, every leader or public sector manager, when managing and controlling the situation and initiating change from their central position, cannot avoid complexity and various difficult-to-predict or fundamentally unpredictable influences that arise in the process of policy-making and implementation (Teisman and Edelenbos 2011). The new public management approach sought to reduce complexity by proposing clear responsibilities for politicians and civil servants and by separating public policy-making from its implementation. The focus is on output criteria and the organisation of the operation field (e.g. market mechanisms, privatisation, etc.). On the other hand, modern complex governance theories, such as the theories based on principles of networking, seek to assess the complexity and the existing fragmentation of systems by delineating complex systems and developing designs and strategies for governance mechanisms that are purposeful and focused on specific situations and process characteristics.

It is also noticeable that in public governance there is an institutional complexity when different institutions operating in the public space are guided by completely different values or operational logic, and have different expectations regarding the results of their activity (Greenwood et al. 2011; Raynard 2016). For example, it is suggested that foreign taxi drivers in Lithuania, which considers itself a part of the global world, are obliged to learn the Lithuanian language when communication between the service provider and the client is not necessary through the application of modern technologies.

The attempt is made to overcome institutional complexity by trying to bring together different stakeholders and ideas in the system to achieve the situations of temporary stability needed to achieve the results of policy-making and implementation. On the other hand, in the context of networking, the information processes in systems will be incomplete and complex due to the different values and perspectives represented by the stakeholders (Klijn 2008; Eppel 2017). In assessing the fragmentation of these interacting stakeholders, it should be noted that the negative effects of fragmentation will be reduced if the efforts of self-organising systems, such as communities, are combined with the efforts of controlling and supervising government institutions.

Integrated policy-making and implementation in complex systems should be based, on one hand, on the search for and implementation of new hierarchical control mechanisms and, on the other, on horizontal integration based on self-organisation when mutual adaptation is sought. Such integration is only possible if the results of mutual adaptation and interactive governance and the decisions made in this context are supported by citizens, and if they receive support from the higher levels of the formal government bureaucracy system (Teisman and Edelenbos 2011).

One can agree with the provision of Haynes (2008) on public policy: that the application of the complexity methodology to assess any social system or policy towards it emphasises the importance of a holistic overall approach to that system and the interaction of the elements of that system in the process of change. To identify the appropriate direction of development, it is necessary to understand the whole system and its individual elements, as well as the external factors of the system. Eppel (2012), summarising the works of various authors, offers such an analytical approach to the assessment of public governance processes that focuses on the cases analysed by the author, but can also be applied to a broader context when analysing and interpreting complexity in the context of public governance. This approach emphasises the following key principles: (i)

the system is a whole; (ii) an interconnected, interacting, and interdependent system; (iii) many interacting systems providing mutual feedback mechanisms within and among the systems; (iv) adaptation and development together with other systems; (v) changes due to self-organisation and emergence processes; (vi) open systems and socially constructed boundaries of the systems; and (vii) the history of the system influences the starting position of its changes.

Thus, to implement change in any sphere of the public sector, based on the complexity theory, it is necessary to abandon large long-term visions of the ideal future. It is much more promising to observe what is happening in the system we want to change, to understand the forces operating within the system and beyond our perceived (constructed) boundaries of the system, and to try to identify natural tendencies of system development that arise in the system due to the influence of self-organisation forces, than to artificially cling to any pre-determined, pre-known, and highly desirable or citizen-friendly results.

Only this way, by experimenting, is it possible to change the development trends of the system in the desired direction, to push the system towards the result we would like and which would meet the public interests, but not to stubbornly pursue any ideal vision of the future. Thus, in this case, we must at least partially abandon or limit the purely rational-mechanical approach to the governance and transformation of social systems in the public sector that has followed us since the Enlightenment. It is crucial that this approach, based on complexity theory, is well understood not only by state politicians but also by citizens. However, in the current social context, which is dominated by deterministic interpretive models of the social world based on strict cause-effect relationships, this is a rather difficult perspective to imagine.

## **Conclusions**

Traditional public governance systems are characterised by linear, stable functioning, predictability and clear causal relationships, and the rational behaviour of system elements. However, the formation of clear goals, the accuracy of decision-making, and the achievement of desired outcomes in a postmodern society can be a very complex process, as complexity theory is dominated by the provision that in process transformations there is a non-linear dependence expressing disproportionate relationships between variables when a small change can have a large effect and, conversely, a large change can have almost no effect. This phenomenon becomes a challenge to the methodological assumptions of traditional public governance. New public management is focused on reducing complexity, distinguishing differentiation of responsibilities, and the dichotomisation of public governance.

The application of the methodology of complexity to assess any social system or its functioning emphasises the importance of a holistic approach to that system and the interaction of elements of that system in the process of change. To identify the appropriate direction of development, it is necessary to understand the whole system and its individual elements, as well as the external factors of the system.

Modern network-interaction-based theories of public governance assess the complexity and fragmentation of systems by creating specific designs and strategies for management mechanisms that are purposeful and focused on specific situations and process characteristics.

In the context of complexity theory, in shaping public governance change strategies for effective solutions, it becomes important to understand the limitations of idealised future perspectives and assess the current functioning of systems and forces acting on them, identifying natural system development trends arising due to the influence of self-organisation forces.

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Adomas Vincas Rakšnys, Andrius Valickas

## KOMPLEKSIŠKUMO TEORIJOS TAIKYMAS VIEŠOJO VALDYMO IŠŠŪKIŲ KONTEKSTE

**Santrauka.** Tradicinis viešasis valdymas remiasi stabilumu ir racionalumu, aiškiais priežastiniais ryšiais ir socialinių sistemų pastovumu prielaida. Tačiau šiuolaikinės viešojo valdymo sistemos pasižymi įvairiais veikimo lygmenimis, jos adaptuojasi, keičiasi, geba save organizuoti, joms būdingi skirtingi jautrumo lygmenys, todėl gali evoliucionuoti ir nenusipėjamai keistis pagal savo vidinę funkcionavimo logiką ar būti veikiamos kitų išorinių sistemų. Taigi tradiciniai viešojo valdymo modeliai vertintini kaip nepakankami siekiant paaiškinti ir spręsti šiame kontekste kylančius iššūkius. Kompleksiškumo teorijos ir metodologijos nuostatos – itin reikšmingos norint suprasti šiuolaikinės visuomenės kontekstus ir procesus, taikyti valdymo metodikas ir didinti jų veiksmingumą, įgyvendinti sisteminius pokyčius ir formuoti prognozavimo modelius. Nors ji ir negali padėti priimti konkrečių techninių, trumpalaikėje perspektyvoje naudingų sprendimų, tačiau ji gali pasiūlyti tam tikrus modelius ir principus, padedančius geriau susidoroti su kylančiais iššūkiais. Šiame straipsnyje keliamas tikslas apibrėžti esminius kompleksiškumo teorijos bruožus ir aptarti jos taikymo galimybes viešojo valdymo kontekste. Straipsnyje taikomi mokslinės literatūros analizės, sintezės, istorinės ir dokumentų analizės metodai. Kompleksiškumo teorijos taikymo galimybės skiriasi priklausomai nuo viešojo valdymo raidos etapo ir jam būdingų metodologinių prielaidų. Kompleksiškumo teorijos kontekste, formuojant viešojo valdymo pokyčių strategijas, siekiant veiksmingų sprendimų, tampa svarbu suprasti idealizuotų ateities perspektyvų ribotumą ir vertinti dabartinių sistemų funkcionavimą, jas veikiančias jėgas, identifikuoti natūralias sistemos raidos tendencijas, atsirandančias dėl saviorganizacijos jėgų įtakos.

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