



Ethical and cultural guidelines in the labyrinth of Kazakhstan's civil service

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the weak regulation of ethical standards and deficiencies in the organizational culture of Kazakhstan's civil service. Despite existing legal frameworks governing ethical aspects of public administration, their implementation remains inconsistent, leading to a decline in professionalism, discipline, and governance effectiveness. The study employs an interdisciplinary approach, integrating legal, sociological, and managerial perspectives to analyze structural and procedural weaknesses in ethical regulation. A comprehensive analytical framework assesses existing legal acts, institutional mechanisms, and organizational practices, identifying gaps that undermine administrative performance. The findings highlight insufficient regulatory oversight and weak adherence to ethical norms, which negatively impact service delivery and public trust in government institutions. Without a well-defined system for enforcing ethical standards, even the most ambitious public administration reforms risk ineffectiveness. Ethical norms and a structured organizational culture are essential instruments for enhancing public service efficiency, fostering accountability, and maintaining citizens' trust. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms is crucial for sustainable administrative development. This study provides actionable recommendations for modernizing Kazakhstan's civil service, proposing strategies to enhance ethical compliance, improve institutional accountability, and reinforce professional integrity. These insights may also be applied to similar national administrative systems facing comparable governance challenges.

Contribution/Originality: This study offers a novel interdisciplinary approach to ethical governance in Kazakhstan's civil service by integrating legal, sociological, and managerial perspectives. It uniquely identifies systemic enforcement gaps and organizational deficiencies, providing original insights and practical strategies to enhance ethical compliance, institutional accountability, and public trust in public administration.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is an established fact that the methods and standards governing decision-making and the organization of work processes within Kazakhstan's civil service are undergoing significant transformation. The shift in governance paradigms is characterized by the transition to a digital state, a refocusing on the needs and expectations of citizens, the implementation of the "Listening State" initiative, the strengthening of professional standards, and the enhancement of ethical norms among civil servants, the adoption of flexible management and decision-making methods, and the reinforcement of transparency and accountability in public administration. The successful

transformation of public governance is impossible without parallel changes in the organizational culture of civil servants, which must adapt to the values and approaches embodied in the national vision of the New Kazakhstan. "The course toward building the New Kazakhstan is aimed at changing the country's development paradigm. We will resolutely oppose ignorance and archaic thinking, radicalism and dependency, the cult of consumption, and corruption. We must overcome mutual alienation and restore society's faith in the reality of change. We will rely on the energy, talents, and diligence of our people. We will create the most favorable conditions for the self-realization of every citizen. Only in this way can we multiply the creative potential of our nation. Only in this way can we forge our own era of reformation, creating a new reality in all spheres of life" (Tokayev, 2022).

The aforementioned transformations underscore the growing demand for research-based support in the evolution of organizational culture, which facilitates the effective implementation of new governance paradigms, ensures sustainable development, and enhances the quality of public administration.

As of January 1, 2024, the authorized staffing level of civil servants in Kazakhstan stood at 90,583 positions, while the actual number of civil servants was 83,009. At the same time, government agencies reported approximately 7,500 vacant positions, accounting for 8.4% of the total authorized staffing. Among these, 1,408 positions, or 1.6%, had remained unfilled for an extended period exceeding three months. Overall, the civil service in Kazakhstan remains stable, characterized by a low turnover rate. In 2023, the net turnover rate was 4.9%, corresponding to 4,385 employees, compared to 4.7% in 2022, 6.2% in 2021, and 5% in 2020. However, a high turnover rate was observed in the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovation, and Aerospace Industry, at 14.3%, and in the Ministry of Education, at 10.6%. In contrast, low turnover rates were recorded in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 2.0%, the Ministry of Healthcare at 2.2%, the Ministry of Justice at 2.4%, the Agency for Civil Service Affairs at 2.3%, and local government agencies, where the average turnover rate was 3.2%. According to a survey conducted among employees of the aforementioned government agencies, the primary reasons for leaving the civil service included a career change, cited by 88.8% of respondents; family circumstances, reported by 23.3%; low salary levels, indicated by 22.4%; dissatisfaction with working conditions, noted by 8.6%; issues related to ethics and internal workplace relationships, also at 8.6%; lack of professional development opportunities, mentioned by 7.8%; and inefficient work processes, identified by 5.2% (National Report on the State of the Civil Service in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024).

The pace of reforms and the scale of radical transformations aimed at modernizing the country's socio-political and socio-economic spheres, as well as improving the well-being of citizens, necessitate the further development of the civil service. The growing demand for prompt and effective administrative decisions has led to increased public expectations regarding the performance of civil servants. By Presidential Decree No. 602 of July 17, 2024, the Concept for the Development of Civil Service in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2024–2029 was approved. This document places particular emphasis on developing a culture of public service, introducing new principles of civil servant interaction with citizens, and transitioning from a command-administrative behavioral model to a service-oriented approach, in which the primary objective is to meet the needs and expectations of society. Proactive behavior, prompt responses to citizen inquiries, and the establishment of new ethical standards in civil service contribute to enhancing public trust and satisfaction. The revision of civil service legislation is also recognized as a crucial measure aimed at creating a more stable and resilient legal foundation for the operation of the government apparatus.

In the Concept for the Development of Public Administration in the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030, approved by Presidential Decree No. 522 of February 26, 2021, it is established that corporate and organizational culture in the civil service must be improved. To achieve this, it is necessary to develop the institution of transformational leaders, expand the practice of civil servant internships in quasi-governmental, private, and international organizations, and introduce mechanisms for encouraging initiatives and rationalization proposals aimed at improving the efficiency of departments, government agencies, and sectors.

The development of organizational culture in Kazakhstan's civil service is of paramount importance for enhancing the effectiveness of public administration amidst ongoing reforms. Contemporary challenges, such as

digitalization, globalization, shifts in the socio-economic structure, and increasing demands for transparency and ethical governance, necessitate the creation of new approaches to shaping organizational culture. Given the growing public demand for improved performance of government institutions and their alignment with international standards, the implementation of innovative management methods and the reform of ethical standards are particularly relevant.

The growing public demand for high-quality state services has led to the institutionalization of ethical principles that govern both the professional and, to some extent, private behavior of civil servants. To safeguard these standards, stricter accountability measures have been introduced to address misconduct that undermines the integrity of public administration. Furthermore, the establishment of ethics commissioners and ethics councils has strengthened oversight mechanisms, ensuring compliance with ethical norms. More broadly, the civil service is entrusted with upholding the values of patriotism and professionalism, which should be formally embedded within the civil servants' oath and the Code of Ethics. The increasing societal expectations for government institutions to operate with greater efficiency, transparency, and adherence to principles of justice create a pressing need for scholarly inquiry into ethical governance. Additionally, the promotion of an ethical culture within public administration is directly linked to strengthening public confidence in state institutions, which, in turn, contributes to social stability and long-term economic sustainability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing scholarship on civil service ethics and administrative governance has extensively analyzed various models of organizational culture in public institutions across different countries (Gogheri, Nawaser, Vesal, Jahanshahi, & Kazi, 2013; Moon, 2000; Nier, 2009; Welch & Feeney, 2014). The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis has frequently been employed to evaluate the structural components of civil service frameworks worldwide (Ha & Coghill, 2006; Rezazadeh, Hamidi, & Rezazadeh, 2011), making it a relevant methodological tool for assessing Kazakhstan's administrative system.

The study of international approaches to the implementation of ethical standards in the civil service, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States (Lewis, 2008), Singapore (Cheung, 2003), and European Union member states (Moilanen & Salminen, 2007; Pevkur, 2007; Rothstein & Sorak, 2017), facilitates the identification of best practices that may be adapted to Kazakhstan's governance context. Prior research has examined the integration of ethical norms within administrative cultures across various governance models (Chapman, 1993; Garcia-Zamor, 2015; Lawton, 2005), forming a foundation for further comparative analyses of ethical frameworks in Kazakhstan's evolving civil service.

Previous studies by Monobayeva and Howard (2015) and Shegenovna (2014) have explored Kazakhstan's socio-economic modernization, emphasizing structural economic shifts, social transformations, and cultural evolution. Their findings provide critical insights into how these developments shape the structure and functions of state institutions. Additionally, pilot projects aimed at enhancing organizational culture and ethical compliance in public administration have produced measurable outcomes (Armenakis, Brown, & Mehta, 2011; Sudarmanto, Mulyani, Djanegara, & Sukmadilaga, 2022; Zatna, Abduh, Anggiani, & Zatn, 2022), offering empirical evidence that supports further reforms in Kazakhstan's civil service.

The transformation of organizational culture within the civil service, in response to shifting paradigms of public administration, remains a pressing issue in both global and Kazakhstani academic discourse. While substantial research exists on public administration, ethics, and governance, this study contributes a novel perspective by addressing the urgent need to restructure these processes to accommodate evolving governance challenges and international trends.

International research underscores the importance of ethical norms in enhancing civil service efficiency (Brereton & Temple, 2007; Buye, 2020; Garofalo & Geuras, 1999; Lawton, 2005). Scholars such as Rouban (1995) and O'Riordan

(2015) highlight the necessity of a well-defined organizational culture as a critical determinant of public sector effectiveness. Furthermore, research on the institutionalization of ethical frameworks emphasizes the role of codes of conduct and compliance monitoring systems in reinforcing accountability (Andersen, Jørgensen, Kjeldsen, Pedersen, & Vrangbæk, 2013). Member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have developed advanced ethical oversight mechanisms (Bertok, 1999; Mills, 1999; Rothstein & Sorak, 2017), providing detailed models for institutionalizing ethical norms within civil service structures.

Diverse models for strengthening ethical culture in public administration have been successfully adopted in countries such as Canada (Somerville, 2008) Australia (O'Brien & O'Donnell, 2000) and the Scandinavian nations (Christensen, 2011; Hansen, 2011) where ethical principles are systematically embedded within civil service operations. Similarly, New Zealand (Chapman & Duncan, 2007) and Singapore (Jones, 2018) have developed rigorous frameworks for ethical governance, incorporating continuous training, evaluation, and institutional reforms. These nations have demonstrated that sustained efforts toward ethical integration can significantly improve transparency and service efficiency. However, while these models offer valuable insights, they require adaptation to Kazakhstan's post-Soviet administrative framework and unique cultural-historical context. Consequently, further research is necessary to refine and localize best practices to enhance Kazakhstan's civil service governance.

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, several studies have been conducted focusing on the development of organizational culture and the improvement of the civil service. Among the foundational works are those of Janenova and Knox (2019); Baimenov and Janenova (2019); Arslan, Dadabaev, and Akyn (2022) and Akyn and Rakhymbai (2017), which examine mechanisms for reforming the civil service and implementing ethical standards. However, insufficient attention has been given to the systematic analysis of the issue of improving organizational culture. Moreover, research and practices in Kazakhstan regarding the organizational culture of the civil service remain limited and often fragmented (Kulzhambekova & Bekbossynova, 2020; Mukhamedzhanova, Suleimenova, Moldagulova, Nurmaganbetov, & Zharkeshova, 2017; Zharkeshova, Junusbekova, & Abilmazhinov, 2017), which complicates the development of a comprehensive approach to reform.

The review of existing research underscores that, despite the extensive experience of foreign countries and individual studies within the domestic context, the issue of developing and improving the organizational culture of Kazakhstan's civil service remains insufficiently explored and systematically justified. The identified fragmentation of approaches and limited empirical data highlight the need for a comprehensive analysis. Amid increasing global challenges and the ongoing reform of public administration, the development of an integrated model that combines legal, sociological, and managerial aspects is not merely desirable but imperative for the transformation of the civil service. This study aims to address these gaps, enabling the development of comprehensive recommendations for the formation of an ethical organizational culture that will contribute to enhancing transparency, efficiency, and public trust in the government institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

We formulated the following key research questions: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current system for monitoring compliance with ethical norms in the civil service of the Republic of Kazakhstan? How do socio-economic conditions, cultural factors, and geopolitical aspects influence the development of organizational and corporate culture and ethics in the civil service? What mechanisms and algorithms can enhance the effectiveness of reforming the organizational ethical culture of civil servants?

We applied an interdisciplinary, comprehensive approach that integrates legal, sociological, and managerial research methods. This integrated approach ensured a holistic examination of the issue, allowing for consideration of the various dimensions of the civil service in the context of shifting governance paradigms.

The legal approach focused on analyzing the normative legal framework regulating the activities of the civil service, including the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Labor Code, the Law "On the Civil Service of

the Republic of Kazakhstan," and other regulatory acts. The legal approach provides a deep understanding of the legal boundaries within which organizational culture develops and ethical standards are upheld in the civil service. One of the study's objectives was to identify gaps in legislation related to insufficient regulation of ethical norms and organizational culture.

The legal approach to studying issues of culture and ethical norms in public administration has been employed in previous works by Kazakhstani scholars (Akyn & Rakhymbai, 2017; Alimbekova, Ibrayeva, Ichshanova, Useinova, & Ibrayev, 2019; Ibrayeva, Seifullina, & Akhilbekovna, 2017). However, the distinctiveness of this study lies in its analysis of the latest legal framework and contemporary initiatives, considering organizational culture within government agencies as a fundamental component of ensuring strict adherence to the law in public administration processes.

Sociological research methods, including SWOT analysis, surveys, interviews, and statistical data analysis, were employed to identify the interconnections between socio-economic, cultural, and geopolitical factors influencing the development of organizational culture in the civil service. The sociological approach provided a deeper understanding of the social and motivational factors that shape civil servants' behavior, their attitudes toward ethical norms, and their perceptions of organizational culture. This is particularly crucial for developing effective reform mechanisms that align with the actual needs and expectations of civil servants. Sociological analysis allowed for the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the existing system and the development of practical mechanisms for its improvement.

The managerial approach focused on the practical aspects of reforming the organizational culture of the civil service. We developed recommendations for improving the mechanisms of reforming the ethical culture of civil servants. This approach is aimed at creating systemic changes that will enhance the quality of governance at all levels of the civil service and increase the accountability of public officials. The descriptive research was directed at a detailed analysis of the current state of organizational culture and the system for monitoring compliance with ethical norms in the civil service of the Republic of Kazakhstan. We obtained a comprehensive picture of the existing system, identified its strengths and weaknesses, and determined the dominant factors influencing the development of organizational culture.

A significant component of the legal analysis involved examining the law enforcement challenges related to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 416-V "On the Civil Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan," dated November 23, 2015, as well as the Regulations on the Ethics Commissioner and the Code of Ethics for Civil Servants, both approved by Presidential Decree No. 153 of December 29, 2015, "On Measures for the Further Improvement of Ethical Norms and Rules of Conduct for Civil Servants of the Republic of Kazakhstan." Particular attention was given to the fact that these regulatory acts do not clearly define the requirements for organizational culture in the civil service, creating the need for the development and implementation of specific norms and procedures at all levels of governance. The analysis of the effectiveness of legal norms was a key direction of the study, as it allowed for an assessment of the impact of existing laws on organizational culture and ethics in government agencies. Determining how legal norms influence the behavior and motivation of civil servants, as well as whether they contribute to or hinder compliance with ethical standards, provided a deep understanding of the effectiveness of the existing legislation.

A critical aspect of the study was the examination of civil servants' motivation, interests, and the group norms that have formed within government agencies. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the social factors influencing employee behavior and the identification of mechanisms that promote adherence to ethical norms. The final stage of sociological research aimed to formulate practical conclusions and proposals for improving the public administration system. The primary focus was on identifying factors that facilitate or hinder compliance with ethical norms and analyzing the extent to which legal mechanisms contribute to the effective performance of official duties.

The research findings enabled the development of concrete proposals for reforming legal norms and implementing new approaches to human resource management, aimed at enhancing the accountability and efficiency

of civil servants. The recommendations will serve as the foundation for further reforms aimed at strengthening the rule of law and improving the public administration system as a whole.

4. RESULTS

The findings of the conducted study indicate that the regulatory and legal framework governing ethical issues in the public service system of the Republic of Kazakhstan requires significant improvement. An analysis of law enforcement practices, including the Law "On Public Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan," the Regulation on the Commissioner for Ethics, and the Code of Ethics for Civil Servants, shows that the enacted regulations largely retain a formal character and fail to exert a proper influence on everyday managerial decisions. Under such circumstances, the mechanisms of ethical regulation remain overly declarative, while the criteria for their evaluation and control are insufficiently developed and lack a systematic nature. As a result, ethical norms, even if they are enshrined in legislation and local regulations, often do not find reflection in actual managerial processes.

The prevailing situation is explained, first, by the ambiguity of criteria and procedures necessary to measure the extent to which ethical norms are observed. In the absence of specific indicators and corresponding monitoring tools, civil servants do not receive clear guidance for structuring their daily professional activities in accordance with ethical standards. Second, the analyzed accountability system rarely takes into account factors related to ethical violations when making decisions on career advancement. This leads to low motivation to comply with ethical norms, since the personal benefit of systematically adhering to them is not readily apparent. Third, commissioners for ethics—who are theoretically endowed with controlling and coordinating functions—do not always possess sufficient independence and authority to initiate disciplinary proceedings and develop effective preventive measures. This gap in the institutional mechanism leads to ethics-related issues being scattered among various agencies and officials, leaving a unified concept for managing ethical risks and violations only partially formed.

A separate concern is the lack of public disclosure and transparency in the sphere of ethical oversight. Channels of communication with civil society, independent expert councils, and other public institutions are generally not structured in a way that ensures full external monitoring and proactive detection of deviations from established ethical principles. Moreover, the absence of an independent body with adequate competence to review complaints and prepare public reports on identified violations undermines public trust in the civil service and creates preconditions for concealing misconduct. It is not uncommon for individuals who report corruption or other abuses (so-called "internal informants") to be insufficiently protected from potential repressive measures on the part of their colleagues or superiors. In instances where there is no reliable channel for anonymous reporting or guaranteed legal protection, the desire to expose ethical misconduct diminishes, thus fostering a closed corporate environment that remains largely impervious to external scrutiny.

The analysis also revealed that the system of training and periodic certification of civil servants in the area of ethics has not yet become an integral part of human resource policy. The educational programs that have been developed tend to be episodic, and the assessment of formed ethical competencies does not hold a mandatory status in certifications or decisions regarding career advancement. Such a state of affairs complicates the development of stable anti-corruption and moral attitudes within the organizational culture, as employees do not perceive a direct link between their behavior and career prospects. Furthermore, the absence of a comprehensive mechanism for interagency cooperation among ethics commissioners, human resources departments, and anti-corruption bodies hinders the creation of a unified algorithm that would allow for the timely exchange of information on potential violations, the conducting of inspections, and the coordination of preventive and disciplinary measures.

To increase the effectiveness of ethical regulation, it is necessary, first of all, to introduce accountability for violations of ethical standards into the practice of personnel evaluations, so that ethical behavior becomes one of the most important criteria in managerial decisions concerning promotion or demotion. Second, it is advisable to enshrine in legislation a system of clearly defined indicators that make it possible to assess the extent to which a civil servant

complies with the requirements of the code of ethics. This system should be organically integrated into the attestation process so that motivation to follow ethical norms is strengthened by a direct link to professional prospects. Third, it is expedient to improve the institutional status of commissioners for ethics, so that they can initiate disciplinary proceedings, exercise independent authority to collect and analyze evidence, and receive support and interact with anti-corruption agencies. Fourth, an important element of reform should be recognized as the creation of an open and public monitoring mechanism, within which an independent body would produce annual reports, identify "problem areas," and issue directives on the necessity of rectifying identified violations. This body could serve as a link between the public and government structures, ensuring maximum transparency throughout the entire process.

An equally significant direction involves the introduction of a system of legal guarantees for "internal informants" and the improvement of channels for submitting anonymous complaints. By ensuring complete confidentiality of individuals who report unlawful actions, the legislation must include a set of measures that protect them both from direct pressure by immediate supervisors and from possible stigmatization within the professional community. Along with this, the reform of the educational system for civil servants will require the implementation of multilevel programs on ethics, regular testing or certification on knowledge of anti-corruption practices, and fundamental principles of professional etiquette. Such continuous training will contribute not only to the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills but also to the internalization of robust ethical values, highlighting the importance of honesty, transparency, and respect for citizens.

An essential component of successful reform is the creation of a sustainable mechanism for interagency cooperation. Interaction between commissioners for ethics and personnel and anti-corruption agencies should be based on clear, regulated procedures and technical-legal solutions that allow for the timely identification of risks, the sharing of information about potential violations, and the effective coordination of oversight measures. This model of coordinated management will make it possible to minimize the duplication of functions, reduce response time in cases where infractions are discovered, and ensure targeted accountability of specific officials.

The analysis of socio-psychological factors influencing the behavior of civil servants shows that a decisive role in the formation of an ethical climate is played by how closely individual motives, group values, and formal organizational-legal mechanisms coincide. When an organization establishes an effective interconnection between each employee's personal interest in professional development, recognition, and career growth, and the common principles of collective responsibility and mutual support, a stable motivational environment emerges in which ethics becomes not merely a formal requirement but an internal norm. In this context, systematic work on strengthening professional identity takes on particular significance, as employees become aware of the close relationship between their own success and adherence to ethical standards. The manifestation of such understanding reinforces the willingness to assume responsibility for complying with official ethical standards, which ultimately contributes to strengthening society's trust in government institutions.

The study results confirm that a purposeful implementation of measures aimed at developing group culture and stimulating intra-organizational exchange of experience can not only raise the level of social capital within the collective but also promote the dissemination of positive behavioral models. The exchange of real examples of ethical interaction, the discussion of practical cases involving management personnel, as well as the introduction of feedback mechanisms encourage collective awareness of the importance of ethics and create favorable conditions for employees' self-organization. A crucial condition for the success of such initiatives lies in ensuring that the exchange of information is maximally open and transparent, and that the mechanisms for submitting complaints and comments regarding unethical behavior exclude repressive consequences for informants. The establishment of anonymous channels for filing reports, regular discussion platforms, and the organization of interagency consultations create prerequisites for reducing the fear of possible retaliation, which in practice leads to more honest and ethically sound managerial policies.

Another key direction in developing an ethical culture in the public service is the integration of specific indicators of ethical conduct into the personnel assessment and evaluation system. The creation of clear criteria that record how and to what extent employees adhere to declared values helps shift ethics from the realm of declarations and anchor it in everyday practice. Such metrics should be directly linked to the procedures for career advancement and bonuses, as internal motivation to comply with norms is significantly heightened when employees see a direct connection between ethical behavior and opportunities for professional growth. Empirical research findings confirm that this comprehensive approach contributes to the formation of an integrated organizational culture, where adherence to ethical standards becomes an inherent component of government agencies' activities and an important condition for bolstering citizens' trust in their work.

The sociological study that was conducted showed that the structural and functional characteristics of the state's organizational culture have a profound impact on the quality of managerial activity, as well as on the degree of involvement and satisfaction of civil servants. The established corporate environment, in which leaders clearly articulate the mission and values of the public service and facilitate their daily implementation in the work of subordinates, forms a more stable foundation for making ethical decisions at all levels. In this process, the principles of official ethics go beyond formal regulation and acquire the status of generally accepted norms that directly influence how civil servants interact with citizens. It has been confirmed that the higher the level of awareness of ethical principles in an organization, the more actively employees participate in joint initiatives, demonstrate interest in enhancing their qualifications, and perceive changes as part of strategic development rather than as external pressure.

Study materials prove that organizational culture is not merely a collection of informal rules and rituals but is a fundamental factor determining the effectiveness of government institutions, the quality of the services they provide, and the degree of job satisfaction. The stability and productivity of this culture largely depend on how thoroughly the value orientations and the mission of the government body are institutionalized, as well as on the consistency with which management incorporates these orientations into the human resource system and into decision-making practices. Adherence to ethical standards and their linkage to performance indicators become an effective mechanism that reinforces interactions among employees and contributes to strengthening public trust. These findings highlight the importance of comprehensive measures to develop and implement value-oriented strategies that will take into account the multifaceted social-psychological and organizational factors that shape the everyday behavior of civil servants.

The results of the conducted sociological survey convincingly show that further improvement of the human resource management system in the public sector is impossible without comprehensive transformations in personnel policy, enhancement of professional competence, and the introduction of motivating instruments that foster initiative and innovative activity. The correlation identified in the course of the study between the quality of organizational culture and the effectiveness of public administration underscores the importance of further theoretical and applied research aimed at clarifying the mechanisms for creating and maintaining positive cultural practices in government agencies. The analysis of the structural-functional features of Kazakhstan's civil service culture demonstrates its complex and dynamic nature, shaped by the combined influence of economic, social, and historical factors. The high level of economic well-being creates a favorable backdrop for strengthening professional and ethical attitudes, but the tendency inherited from previous stages of development toward rigidly regulated bureaucratic structures often hinders the manifestation of proactive behavior and lowers the overall motivational environment for employees.

Analytical evaluation of the obtained data indicates that the optimal development of organizational culture in the context of the civil service presupposes a flexible approach that accounts for regional specificities and deliberate reform of the administrative management system, including the reduction of bureaucratic barriers, modernization of the regulatory and legal framework, and the introduction of adaptive oversight mechanisms. The development of ethical management and the creation of systems of non-material incentives, which not only tie into performance indicators but also cultivate in civil servants an internal need to follow high standards of professional and official

ethics, play a special role in this transformation. Such an emphasis on developing motivation and promoting career growth based on moral principles and responsibility helps increase employee engagement and professionalism, which ultimately is reflected in the quality of public services provided and the level of public trust in government institutions.

The summarized scientific results go beyond recording individual facts and point to the necessity of constructing new managerial strategies grounded in interdisciplinary approaches to analyzing organizational phenomena. Further study of the dynamic processes unfolding within the collective of civil servants can heighten the predictive value of developments in the field of human resource management and strengthen scientific understanding of the interconnections among cultural factors, professional identity, and the level of effectiveness in the government apparatus. The comprehensive interaction of the state, society, and the civil servants themselves, based on scientifically grounded solutions and empirical research findings, creates the foundation for forming an adaptive, highly professional, and socially responsible culture that will serve as a driver of sustainable institutional development in Kazakhstan.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Problems of Law Enforcement and Systemic Deficiencies

Law enforcement practice in Kazakhstan's public service indicates the presence of significant contradictions between the declared principles of legality, transparency, and adherence to ethical norms, on the one hand, and the actual managerial mechanisms for their implementation, on the other. The ethical standards formally enshrined in the Law "On Public Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan" and a number of related regulatory acts, including provisions on anti-corruption stability, often remain at the level of general declarations and do not feature specific criteria that would make it possible to evaluate the behavior of officials in an ethical context. As a result, when disciplinary cases are reviewed, especially those involving conflicts of interest in the area of public procurement, commissions frequently issue indeterminate decisions: either they confine themselves to issuing warnings or they employ subjective interpretations of the law, because there are no clear legal guidelines. Such ambiguity not only weakens the enforcement of sanction mechanisms but also hinders the formation of a clear understanding among employees regarding which specific practices are deemed unacceptable from the standpoint of official ethics.

Another concern is the weak system of protecting civil servants who face pressure and corruption risks. Although there are anti-corruption norms that were supposed to protect so-called "internal informants" (whistleblowers), in reality, law enforcement offers few guarantees of safety and fair consideration of their claims. The study of judicial materials, in particular, shows that several employees of the regional Tax Department in 2021 were dismissed under formal pretexts related to "loss of trust" and "incompatibility with the position" after they publicly reported corrupt activities. Such cases demonstrate that current legislation does not contain a comprehensive mechanism for protecting individuals who report abuses, and law enforcement and supervisory agencies do not always have the necessary procedures or incentives to conduct an objective investigation of such episodes.

The situation is further complicated by insufficient coordination among the various structures responsible for monitoring compliance with ethics in the public sector. The Committee for Public Service Affairs, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Anti-Corruption Agency, and the institution of commissioners for ethics operate separately and, as a result, either duplicate one another's functions or overlook a number of violations. The absence of a unified analytical database and clearly specified regulations for interagency cooperation negates the potential for collective efforts, since each of the named bodies pursues its own objectives, which are not always synchronized with those of other institutions. As a consequence, a considerable portion of information regarding possible violations of ethical and anti-corruption norms is lost at the intersection of different agencies or is addressed only in fragments, which has a negative impact on the quality of oversight and prevention. This institutional separation not only hampers the formation of a holistic perspective on compliance with the law but also complicates the process of assigning

responsibility in the event that unethical behavior is detected, since no single agency has full authority to promptly coordinate efforts and make decisions that must be carried out.

All these problems point to the need for a systematic revision of the legal framework, which should include both a clear definition of criteria for ethical violations and enhanced protection for individuals reporting wrongdoing, as well as the creation of an effective institutional mechanism for interagency cooperation. Without bridging the gap between the declared principles and actual administrative practices, and without establishing a unified strategic line for all agencies involved in oversight and monitoring, there is a high risk that the norms of the Law 'On Public Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan' and related acts will remain merely formal prescriptions that do not exert the proper influence on the behavior of civil servants and do not promote the development of a culture of responsibility and transparency.

The Law "On Public Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan," which mandates civil servants to uphold ethical principles and maintain professional integrity, exhibits significant deficiencies in its practical application. These shortcomings arise from the absence of clear behavioral assessment criteria, an underdeveloped institutional framework for mitigating corruption risks, and ineffective interagency coordination. While the law formally requires adherence to ethical norms, it lacks a structured system of measurable indicators to objectively assess compliance. This gap creates substantial challenges in disciplinary proceedings, as decision-making processes lack standardized analytical procedures and explicit benchmarks for evaluating ethical misconduct. Consequently, disciplinary actions are often subject to inconsistent interpretations rather than being grounded in a uniform legal methodology.

Although the legal framework includes provisions for anti-corruption regulation, its effectiveness is undermined by the lack of robust mechanisms to protect whistleblowers. The absence of institutional safeguards, including legal and psychological support, along with insufficient protections against retaliatory actions, discourages civil servants from reporting ethical violations. This deficiency not only weakens accountability but also fosters an environment where ethical breaches remain concealed or unaddressed, diminishing civil servants' motivation to uphold ethical standards and reinforcing a culture of impunity. Furthermore, interagency fragmentation significantly weakens ethical oversight. Agencies responsible for monitoring ethical conduct and ensuring compliance operate in isolation, lacking a unified strategic framework for coordination. This lack of cohesion hinders the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms, as critical information on ethical violations may either be lost at jurisdictional boundaries or remain unaddressed due to the absence of clear procedural guidelines for interagency cooperation. The lack of an integrated oversight system prevents timely interventions, allowing ethical infractions to persist unchecked. Collectively, these systemic deficiencies underscore the underdevelopment of a comprehensive ethical governance framework within Kazakhstan's civil service. The existing system fails to provide a cohesive and adaptive approach to addressing ethical challenges, ultimately undermining the integrity of public administration. Addressing these shortcomings requires the implementation of standardized compliance assessment mechanisms, stronger legal protections for whistleblowers, and enhanced interagency coordination. These reforms are crucial for improving ethical governance, fostering accountability, and restoring public confidence in Kazakhstan's civil service institutions.

The weakness of organizational and legal mechanisms is also evident in the insufficient institutionalization of ethics as a foundational element of personnel policy. Often, ethics in Kazakhstan's public sector is viewed merely as an auxiliary rather than a fundamental tool for improving the efficiency and transparency of administrative processes. This is reflected in the fact that, although the Code of Conduct stipulates core principles and norms, it is not included among the criteria taken into account during evaluations, promotions, or the incentive system. In several government agencies, instances of rude treatment of citizens or other blatant violations of ethical standards do not, in practice, affect the official status of responsible individuals. In international practice, by contrast, the prevailing model views the implementation of ethical norms as a major performance indicator that has a direct impact on an employee's subsequent career trajectory.

The practice of organizing training in ethical norms demonstrates a general formalism in public service: most of the training sessions and lectures included in educational programs do not involve testing or subsequent measures to reinforce the acquired knowledge and skills. Consequently, within a short time after each course, participants have only a weak grasp of the practical importance of the recommendations they have heard, and oversight bodies lack the ability to systematically verify how thoroughly employees have integrated the principles of official ethics into their daily activities. The absence of essential tools leaves ethics as merely a formal discipline set out in regulations and codes, lacking real support from those who oversee personnel policy.

The existing practice of applying the Code of Ethics reveals yet another major problem: the norms of this act, intended to serve as a type of “moral constitution” for civil servants, continue to be declarative. This means that even in the relatively infrequent instances where commissions or leadership acknowledge violations of professional ethical standards, there is no mechanism ensuring that sanctions inevitably follow or, conversely, that positive practices receive encouragement. In the absence of a link between compliance with the Code and career development, employees do not always see sufficient motivation to abide by the prescribed norms. The negative effect is exacerbated by the fact that disciplinary measures are often not only insufficiently strict but also rarely applied, undermining the authority of official norms and reinforcing the perception of legal uncertainty.

All these factors, taken together, indicate a low level of effectiveness in the legislative tools intended to regulate the ethical behavior of civil servants. The institutionalization of ethics as one of the key components of public service remains largely unfulfilled, and law enforcement practice confirms the presence of serious gaps between the regulatory framework and actual managerial processes. Consequently, ethical standards are still not regarded by the majority of employees as a primary guide for professional conduct, while shortcomings in regulatory support and organizational mechanisms impede the formation of a stable value system that could serve as a foundation for increasing overall effectiveness in public administration.

The introduction of the position of commissioner for ethics in Kazakhstan was a significant step intended to reinforce the culture of accountability and create additional channels for protecting employees and citizens when ethical norms are violated. Nevertheless, the research findings suggest that the actual implementation of this initiative often amounts to a nominal fulfillment of duties and does not possess sufficient institutional leverage to influence personnel policy or disciplinary processes. One of the key reasons for this state of affairs lies in the narrow scope of authority granted to commissioners for ethics: in many situations, their functions are advisory, and the absence of the right to initiate formal investigations effectively deprives them of the capacity to exert direct influence on how violations are addressed. This not only reduces the overall level of accountability among civil servants but also creates a gap between the declared goals of increasing ethical responsibility and the actual mechanisms of oversight.

Furthermore, although they are formally independent, commissioners for ethics often find themselves under the organizational subordination of the same leaders whose actions they are supposed to evaluate with respect to compliance with ethical standards. This dependency hinders the objective review of complaints, especially when the offenders occupy senior positions and possess administrative resources to resist investigations. An examination of specific cases points to a lack of robust practices for publicly discussing the decisions that follow from complaints, which fosters distrust in the very procedure for reviewing ethical violations. When the conclusions drawn by commissioners for ethics are not communicated to a broad audience and are not accompanied by clearly justified explanations, employees become less motivated to submit grievances, and the view of this institution as a purely formal structure lacking real effectiveness grows stronger. As a result, a vicious circle emerges: limited transparency and the dependence of commissioners for ethics on leadership lead to a small number of appeals, and the dearth of appeals, in turn, confirms the illusory nature of existing oversight mechanisms and undermines the original purpose of instituting this position. This situation starkly demonstrates the broader issue of ethics not being institutionalized as a systemic factor in public service, as genuine independence for bodies responsible for enforcing ethical norms is

essential to creating conditions in which ethics functions as a genuine regulator of managerial activity rather than a merely declarative legal requirement.

5.2. Motivation of Civil Servants: Socio-Psychological Preconditions for Observing Ethical Standards

An analysis of the motivational factors influencing civil servants' compliance with ethical standards has revealed a complex interaction among institutional regulatory mechanisms, individual value orientations, and collective norms. Contrary to the traditional view, according to which the behavior of civil servants is primarily determined by external stimuli such as salary, social guarantees, and career prospects, empirical studies (Fletcher & Robinson, 2016; Griбанова, 2021; Wang, Van Witteloostuijn, & Heine, 2020) confirm that internal motivation—encompassing professional identity, a sense of duty to society, and the pursuit of justice—plays an equally significant role. These internal attitudes provide a stable foundation for making ethically justified decisions even under conditions of institutional uncertainty, in which formal legal norms are either absent or allow for subjective interpretation.

The regularities identified in the course of the study confirm that a high degree of internal motivation among civil servants to comply with ethical norms correlates with their belonging to collectives in which robust informal mechanisms of control and support have been formed. These mechanisms, arising from joint professional activities, are driven by cultural codes, historically established traditions of organizational behavior, and the socio-economic context of public administration development. In particular, research shows that in environments where informal groups exert considerable influence, it is precisely collective expectations and an internal culture that function as a more powerful regulator of behavior than formal legal prescriptions. In such a context, any deviations from accepted in-group norms—whether violations of ethical principles or unethical use of an official position—provoke not only legal but also social reactions, thereby creating an additional incentive to adhere to ethical standards.

However, the findings also indicate that not all group norms contribute to strengthening an ethical culture. In organizations characterized by a high degree of formalism, where the principal regulatory mechanisms consist of directives and bureaucratic procedures, there is a tendency toward weakened informal social ties and a reduced level of collective responsibility for complying with ethical norms. In such structures, employees often perceive ethical requirements as externally imposed regulations that do not directly relate to daily practice. When compliance with ethical norms is not part of professional identity and is assessed solely within the framework of administrative oversight, the conditions are set for a formal approach to fulfilling requirements without any real assimilation and integration into work processes.

Further analysis revealed that the existence of clearly formulated ethical principles and their practical implementation depends directly on how formal regulatory mechanisms align with informal professional practices. If regulatory documents such as the Code of Ethics and rules of professional behavior define only basic principles without supporting them at the level of human resource policy and incentive systems, ethics remain a declarative element that does not affect actual decision-making processes. Unlike in countries with a developed system of managing ethical risks, where the assessment of adherence to ethical standards constitutes a mandatory criterion for career advancement, in Kazakhstan, compliance with the code of ethics is not included in the system for evaluating employee performance. The lack of mechanisms that connect ethical behavior to professional growth opportunities leads civil servants to focus primarily on formal performance indicators, while ethical issues remain on the periphery of managerial activities.

Based on an analysis of intra-organizational communication practices, it was established that creating an ethically resilient environment is possible when there are consistent collective expectations backed by both institutional and informal sanctions. In organizations where ethics is viewed as an integral component of professional activity, introducing interagency seminars, discussing practical cases, and examining real ethical dilemmas all help reinforce collective responsibility and reduce the frequency of violations. Observations have shown that open discussion of ethical norm violations leads to a long-term decrease in the number of disciplinary actions because collective culture

begins to perform a self-regulatory function. This is especially important in the context of public administration, where civil servants interact with citizens on a daily basis, and the extent of their commitment to ethical standards directly affects public trust in government institutions.

Thus, forming an effective system of ethical regulation in the public service requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only formally enshrining ethical principles but also establishing institutional mechanisms for their implementation that ensure the synchronization of formal regulations and informal social practices. Without recognizing the importance of collective expectations and mechanisms of intra-organizational support, even the most detailed norms remain formal provisions that fail to exert a real influence on employee behavior. In circumstances where government agencies continue to face problems of insufficient transparency and low public trust, the institutionalization of ethics as an instrument of human resource policy and managerial strategy takes on particular significance.

5.3. Organizational Culture of the Public Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan: A SWOT Analysis

The conducted SWOT analysis demonstrates that, on the whole, the regulatory and institutional framework of Kazakhstan's public service creates favorable prerequisites for integrating ethical principles; yet, the actual mechanisms of implementation and control remain insufficiently developed. On the one hand, the presence of the Law "On Public Service," as well as the Regulation on the Commissioner for Ethics and the Code of Ethics for Civil Servants, forms methodological guidelines that potentially ensure a high degree of formalization of ethical requirements. On the other hand, a detailed examination of the practices of applying these acts shows that much of what is prescribed in them either takes a declarative form or lacks a direct connection to procedures for personnel evaluation and financial incentives. This gap between formal regulation and its implementation at the managerial level leads to insufficient motivation for officials to comply with ethical standards, since the absence of mechanisms for both encouragement and sanction weakens the significance of the norms enshrined in the code.

A strong point of the established legal structure is the recognition at the state level that ethics serves as an important systemic factor in shaping high-quality public institutions that meet society's expectations for transparency and conscientiousness. Owing precisely to this recognition, various governmental programs and reforms increasingly declare the need to improve transparency in government operations and introduce the principles of responsible public administration. This stance underscores an orientation toward modern international trends, where the concepts of 'good governance,' 'open government,' and 'public value' occupy central positions in evaluating the effectiveness of administrative structures. However, achieving tangible results is complicated by a number of factors connected to the relatively low degree of institutionalization of ethical norms.

Relying on international experience, one may argue that the most successful cases of integrating ethics into the daily practice of public service are based on clear, quantitatively measurable criteria for behavior assessment, which are incorporated into personnel development, professional evaluation, and incentive systems. Compared with these examples, the Kazakhstani model shows an insufficient degree of specificity, resulting in subjectivity in evaluating disciplinary infractions and hindering the systematic prevention of unethical practices. In the absence of clear indicators, difficulties arise in forming a unified database on violations, and the fragmentation of oversight functions (among commissioners for ethics, personnel departments, and anti-corruption agencies) further complicates the coordination process. As a result, oversight activities often boil down to reviewing individual cases or become a mere formality not accompanied by the development of long-term measures to prevent repeated violations.

An aspect of no small importance that influences the formation of an ethical climate is the socio-political context in which governmental bodies operate. A lack of transparent channels for feedback and low engagement of the civil sector in monitoring public administration can reinforce paternalistic patterns and impede the development of mature anti-corruption practices. However, the existence of reform programs aimed at expanding the mechanisms of public oversight opens additional possibilities for institutionalizing ethics. Involving independent experts and non-

governmental organizations in the evaluation of government agencies increases the level of trust in monitoring results and can motivate state bodies to adhere more actively to prescribed norms. In this regard, the introduction of modern digital solutions is of particular interest, as they not only enable the prompt collection of information about violations but also provide greater transparency in procedures, thanks to open platforms and electronic document management.

Another area of development capable of enhancing the effectiveness of ethical norms is the introduction of specialized educational programs and training sessions aimed not merely at theoretical components (for instance, studying the Code of Ethics) but also at the practical application of situational behavior models. The formation of an environment in which civil servants acquire skills for dealing with conflicts of interest and adopt best administrative practices contributes to strengthening professional identity and internalizing moral principles. In this context, particular importance is given to feedback, which entails not only formal testing but also systematic assessment of how effective the training has been, based on actual changes in employees' on-the-job behavior.

The analysis confirms that, despite a relatively substantial regulatory and legal framework governing the ethical aspects of public service, the Kazakhstani model of organizational culture faces a number of fundamental obstacles that slow its reform. A crucial risk factor is resistance to change at the level of individual agencies and management, which can block innovative approaches and preserve vestiges of former practices. The absence of an effective system for protecting informants and clear mechanisms for holding violators of ethical norms accountable creates conditions for the development of corrupt practices and encourages destructive behavioral patterns among civil servants. Parallel to this, internal and external political and economic instability heightens concerns about the sustainability of institutional reforms, as sharp fluctuations in the economy and politics can lead to a decline in public trust in government bodies.

The situation is significantly influenced by the fact that government structures responsible for monitoring ethical standards are still insufficiently coordinated. The functions of commissioners for ethics, personnel services, and anti-corruption units often overlap or, conversely, leave gaps in which violators can evade disciplinary liability. Such fragmentation of oversight impedes the formation of a comprehensive strategy and undermines the effectiveness of monitoring. Moreover, the success of institutional reforms largely depends on whether the managerial structures can create a single coordination mechanism aimed not only at detecting and preventing violations but also at proactively eliminating the conditions that give rise to contradictions between declared values and real administrative processes.

In practice, what is required is not merely a set of discrete initiatives but a comprehensive approach in which ethics is reinforced as a fundamental criterion within personnel policy and the system for evaluating employee performance. The development of specific, quantitatively measurable criteria for evaluating ethical behavior enables objective monitoring and simplifies the procedure for holding violators accountable. Integrating these criteria into the processes of attestation, career advancement, and financial incentives provides real behavioral stimuli for civil servants, nudging them to comply with established standards. Strengthening the institution of commissioners for ethics, including granting them the authority to initiate disciplinary procedures and ensuring their independence, increases the effectiveness of measures to resolve conflicts of interest and expands the opportunities for a prompt response to reports of violations.

Establishing a sustainable organizational culture is impossible without the continuous professional development of staff in matters of ethics, anti-corruption measures, and leadership competencies. Nevertheless, educational programs will remain formal unless they are linked to regular public reporting of actual successes and problems arising in the realm of workplace behavior. Organizing open forums, seminars, and regularly issuing reports on the state of organizational culture—supported by data on trends in complaints and measures taken to correct violations—contribute to strengthening public oversight and boost citizens' trust in government structures.

Consequently, one can conclude that effectively transforming the public service system of the Republic of Kazakhstan requires systemic and coordinated intervention that addresses several key tasks simultaneously. It is

critically important not only to detail regulations and move ethical norms out of the 'declaration zone,' but also to establish a unified monitoring body, expand the powers of commissioners for ethics, arrange interagency collaboration, and initiate large-scale educational efforts that enhance civil servants' level of professional identity and moral responsibility. These changes do not merely improve transparency and accountability in the administrative apparatus but also lay the groundwork for fortifying a management culture suited to the challenges posed by the modern socio-political dynamic.

5.4. Organizational Culture through the Eyes of Civil Servants: An Empirical Perspective on Values and Behavioral Models

A survey conducted in January 2025 made it possible to gather empirical data on perceptions of the internal organizational environment and how managerial practices influence civil servants' behavior, as well as on the extent of trust in the existing system of ethical norms. Two groups of respondents participated in the study: 70% were employees of central and regional government bodies, and the remaining 30% were external experts representing international organizations and independent analytical entities. The anonymous nature of the survey promoted more candid responses, as participants were free to express their opinions and provide comments on the chosen answer options.

To assess the situation in government agencies, a set of questions was used, aimed at identifying respondents' attitudes toward organizational culture values, their level of trust in internal oversight and ethical standards, as well as their motivational aspects and career expectations. In addition, experts offered comments on issues relating to the quality of public services and the extent to which existing corporate norms affect officials' behavior and the effectiveness of their work. The analysis revealed that, from the standpoint of external analysts and representatives of international organizations, Kazakhstan's civil service continues to be characterized by a traditional bureaucratic system, dominated by a focus on processes rather than results and by an inclination to avoid personal responsibility.

Overall expert evaluation indicates that most (83.33%) consider the organizational culture of Kazakhstan's civil service to be a limiting factor that hampers timely decision-making and increases excessive formalism in work processes. Among the cited drawbacks were subjective criteria for hiring and promotion, excessive reliance on hierarchical directives and bureaucratic procedures, and a weak commitment to results-oriented management. At the same time, 16.66% of experts drew attention to significant positive elements, notably the principles of meritocracy and patriotism, as well as certain manifestations of professionalism among civil servants that, with proper support and development, could enhance their motivation and strengthen their self-identification with the mission of the public apparatus.

Experts observed that the weak institutionalization of organizational culture directly correlates with corruption risks, since, in conditions lacking genuine accountability and effective oversight mechanisms, systematic deviations from ethical norms occur. Almost all respondents (100%) pointed to the "traditional behavior" of civil servants, in which a strict vertical hierarchy of subordination and an orientation toward bureaucratic procedures prevail. This model frequently leads to excessively lengthy coordination processes (noted by 75% of experts), complicating government interaction with business and citizens and encouraging the development of informal practices for resolving issues.

Interestingly, despite their critical view of fundamental behavioral stereotypes, experts unanimously reacted positively to the Code of Ethics for Civil Servants of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In their opinion, the presence of a clear regulatory act declaring basic ethical principles can significantly influence organizational culture if it is complemented by specific instruments for implementation and incentives. Such an approach, they believe, would increase transparency in decision-making and foster a more mature environment in which personal responsibility goes hand in hand with a focus on achieving high-quality results. The analysts surveyed also emphasize the importance of developing personnel evaluation and reward systems, confirmed by the fact that 75% of respondents highlight the need to improve these areas within the public service framework.

Thus, the survey findings point to positive trends associated with improvements in the quality of public services and some progress in civil service recruitment procedures, while at the same time recording ongoing issues with a formal and hierarchy-oriented style of work. Expert perspectives reflect skepticism regarding the depth of cultural changes, yet they acknowledge the potential for further implementation of ethical norms, provided that personnel policy mechanisms are activated, communications are refined, and accountability is expanded for all participants in administrative processes. These conclusions indicate the need for a comprehensive transformation of organizational culture, aimed not merely at declaring moral principles but at their genuine institutionalization in civil servants' systems of motivation, oversight, and professional development.

Analysis of the second study, focused on how "B" corps civil servants perceive organizational culture, makes it possible to state that, despite the formally declared alignment of daily duties with the mission and objectives of government agencies (75% of respondents confirmed such alignment), a number of contradictory and problematic issues remain, as revealed by the survey. This research, based on voluntary anonymous answers from civil servants in various central and local government bodies, demonstrates the existence of two opposing trends. On the one hand, respondents noticeably aspire to link their work to long-term strategic plans and goals, suggesting a high level of formal awareness of the organization's mission and a commitment to the core values of service. On the other hand, responses point to ongoing structural problems associated with destructive stereotypes of intra-organizational behavior and bureaucratic obstacles.

A substantial outcome of the survey is the finding that a significant percentage (46.42%) of respondents noted "constraining elements in the style of work," which aligns with previous expert evaluations regarding the characteristic features of Kazakhstan's civil service—an orientation toward processes rather than results, and a susceptibility to bureaucratic formalism. Nearly one-fifth of respondents (21.42%) indicated a "destructive management style," referring to authoritarian leadership methods that hinder the development of proactive forms of behavior and interaction. These negative aspects inevitably affect interpersonal relationships and employee motivation, and consequently influence the overall productivity of the administrative apparatus.

Notably, some civil servants (16.66% of respondents) explicitly identified negative characteristics relating to corruption, bias, incompetence, and a lack of professional ethics. Although these figures may appear statistically modest when compared to broader trends, they nevertheless confirm the need for further reform of the human resource management system, with an emphasis on meritocratic principles, transparent personnel policies, and clear criteria for evaluating professional achievements. A similar viewpoint emerges in the call for improving the system of incentives and nurturing proactive employees, as well as the importance of reorienting organizational culture from a bureaucratic model to one that focuses on results. Respondents observe that "traditional" behavioral patterns, typical of vertically structured organizations where executive functions predominate and opportunities for innovative approaches and independent decision-making are limited, continue to prevail in day-to-day work.

Comparing the opinions of civil servants themselves with the findings obtained from the external experts' survey reveals a certain convergence in assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of Kazakhstan's civil service. While experts underline bureaucratic barriers and the ineffectiveness of certain administrative practices, civil servants attest to the presence of destructive stylistic factors that impede progress in professional relations and ethics. Consequently, the results of the pilot survey, despite the relatively small sample size and the high degree of subjectivity, offer valuable empirical data indicating that not only is there an awareness of the need for improvement in Kazakhstan's civil service, but a considerable potential remains for qualitative transformations in its organizational culture.

Although respondents highlight positive elements, such as striving to meet strategic goals and a sense of professional identity, they point out that many internal processes require streamlining and simplification. Measures such as refining systems for recruitment and promotions, establishing flexible mechanisms for task distribution, further developing civil servants' professional competencies, and encouraging their initiative must be implemented collectively. Otherwise, negative cultural aspects (corruption bias, bureaucratic overregulation, incompetence) will

continue reproducing themselves and adversely affect both the quality of public services and the public's level of trust in governing institutions. In light of this, survey findings underscore the importance of overcoming destructive stereotypes and barriers that still persist within the administrative sphere and of creating a more open, flexible, and ethically oriented public service.

6. CONCLUSION

The conducted study substantiates the relationship between high standards of professional ethics among civil servants and the formation of a sustainable organizational culture, characterized by transparency, accountability, and the quality execution of official duties. The implementation of the proposed measures can serve as a solid foundation for strengthening trust between the state and society, which is particularly relevant in the context of dynamic reforms and the modernization of public administration.

The analysis of ethical culture at all levels of the civil service has demonstrated that its improvement contributes to enhancing the quality of managerial decisions and the efficiency of responses to citizen requests, which, in turn, facilitates the effective implementation of government policies and increases public satisfaction with the quality of services provided. Furthermore, the effective integration of ethical norms reduces corruption risks and optimizes expenses associated with inefficient governance.

Special attention in this study has been given to examining the influence of motivational factors and group norms on the behavior of civil servants. Empirical data indicate that a combination of material incentives and a well-developed system of internal social support is a key factor in ensuring the sustainable adherence to ethical standards. The implementation of these recommendations contributes to the formation of a transparent, accountable, and effective public administration system, affecting both internal processes within government institutions and public perceptions of the civil service.

The scientific results of the study expand the theoretical foundation in the field of organizational ethical culture and provide concrete tools for the practical implementation of ethical governance principles. These findings can be utilized by the expert community for further empirical research, as well as for the development of new management solutions and strategies adapted to the rapidly changing conditions of the public sector.

The practical significance of the obtained results lies in their applicability to improving the regulatory and legal framework and strategic documents in the field of public service and administration, thereby creating prerequisites for the development of a modern and efficient legal foundation for regulating the ethical aspects of government institutions. Additionally, the study's findings can be used by civil society representatives, including non-governmental organizations and activists, to monitor and evaluate the performance of public institutions, thereby strengthening public trust in government agencies and encouraging active citizen participation in governance processes.

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