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RECRUITMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR OF KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

The article deals with the issues of planned reforms in the personnel policy through the prism of recruitment. The relevance of this topic is due to the fact that in the conditions of a developing market economy in Kazakhstan, the efficiency of enterprises depends on the quality of human resources, therefore, recruiting technologies have a serious impact on achieving final goals in the public sector. The relevance of the consideration of public administration as management in this aspect is emphasized. The article focuses on the study of certain categories of personnel management, and focuses on individual human resource (HR) tools and practices that are directly related to the selection and hiring of personnel. The article also highlights the likely problematic nature of the process of optimizing the staff of civil servants. The article makes a constant comparison or manifestation of a relative comparative description with the non-state and private sectors. The experience of some western countries in the recruitment of civil servants is discussed and described. Attention is drawn to the activities of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs in dealing with vacancies and the effectiveness of further procedures for assessing and meeting the requirements for an administrative employee. The objective of the study is to identify the problematic issues on the topic, and stemming from it and to determine the attractiveness of vacancies appearing in public service. The object of the study is such economic categories as the labor market and nominal wages, as material attractiveness. The topic of ethics of civil servants and prevention in the selection process, as one of the main stages of recruitment, is discussed. An attempt was made to analyze the current procedure for approving candidates by personnel services and to consider the qualification requirements and job descriptions of administrative civil servants as a development of the topic for future research.

Key words: recruitment, personnel management, civil servant, staff optimization, HR, ethics, labor market, public sector.

Introduction

In the light of recent initiatives in the reform of the civil service, with their further planned implementation in the forthcoming years, many questions arise concerning the state of personnel management in the public sector. The role of civil servants, namely the performance of their official duties during the current modernization of public administration and on the way to further democratization of all state institutions, is significant and decisive. During the 30 years of the country's independence, there were many reforms concerning either cause or consequence of the transition to democratization.

Public administration and the elements accompanying this management become not only the object of political science, but also of other social sciences. Employee performance, professional activity, political decision-making, career growth, etc., are the main tasks and motivating goals of any administrative civil servant. The effective implementation of all personnel goals begins and turns into a great success at the entrance, particularly, at the time of recruitment. The selection or appointment of civil servants, in our opinion, should reflect and contain the stages of classical recruitment fully or partially, which are being practiced in the public sector of other countries, and in the nongovernmental organizations.

Materials and methods

To collect data for this article, several sources were included: secondary data on labor market statistics, average monthly nominal salary statistics and vacancies for administrative positions statistics. The statistical method was carried out by generalizing and grouping the materials of statistical observations. The objective of the study is to identify problematic issues on this topic by determining the attractiveness of vacancies for public service. For this purpose, a random sampling method was used to ensure representativeness in order to obtain general conclusions and outcomes. The year 2021 is taken as a sample, and the sample unit is the category of civil servant C-R-5.

Main provisions

This article contributes to economical management and political studies, predominantly in the area of the HRM in public sector. The government proposed to improve management resource and introduce modern management tools and principles of corporate governance in public sector. In addition, it proposed to attract external human resources through an outsourcing program. In this case, it meant to attract human resources from outside, from non-governmental sector. The Astana hub, which specializes in the field of public service, in one of its training programs, suggested an increase of outsourcing activities up to 50% in the nearest future. The provision of services by the private sector tends to be more efficient than the public provision of public services, as private providers compete with each other [1]. The concept of “human resources” is broader than “labor resources” and “personnel”; it represents collectively socio-cultural characteristics, personal and psychological characteristics of people. If we consider human resources apart from the resources of providing services, as fundamentally different categories, then according to the empirical research of the article’s author, we can trace some theoretical validity of the hypothesis on inefficiency of this approach. In case OECD countries do not reduce public employment (for example, do not fill vacancies) in the course of public sector outsourcing, continuing simply regrouping public sector employees, as a sequence, public sector outsourcing does not improve public sector efficiency, and may even lead to inefficiency [1]. To achieve different urgent tasks and organizational goals, certain human resource is needed, which can only be provided by hiring people with appropriate skills, qualifications and experience [2].

The civil service is the most important part of modern public administration. It carries out activities that affect many aspects of citizens’ lives [3]. A promising belief is that there are equal opportunities for entering civil service for citizens whose CVs reflect the compliance with advertised vacancies in public and official sources. To date, you can list a number of sites for applying. Such innovations not only technically, but also functionally take place in Kazakhstan. Open access, transparency, and publicity make it possible to implement these actions. Equal employment in any democratic and legal country should be one of the main issues for human resources professionals, in particular, a functioning Public Service Agency in Kazakhstan. The key to achieving these goals is the implementation of human resource management policy that attracts, develops, and retains the best talent [4]. Following this conviction, we need to include all areas in personnel management: recruitment, certification, training and motivation. In the world practice in multinational corporations, mentioned HR tools are used and developed constantly. Transnational corporations (TNCs) are playing an increasingly important role. TNCs are present as a system-forming factor both in the world economy and in world politics [5]. The growing role of TNCs cannot be excluded in the territory of Kazakhstan. They not only pay taxes, thereby influencing the economic condition of certain regions, but also interact with the state in legal, social, cultural and information spheres. In this interaction, there are different levels of communication in solving problems of regulation and coordination. Regarding communication, one can trace the inefficiency, in particular, the incompetence in some matters of civil servants.

Human resources management is concerned with development and implementation of policies that include planning, hiring, selection, workforce placement; training, job promotion, career, terms of employment, methods and standards of remuneration; working conditions and services [6]. The out-of-date management of personnel management, which we have inherited from the totalitarian regime, is barely getting used to. Moreover, the habit of “working in the old-fashioned way” is pivotal,

since innovations and reforms are not always positively perceived by specialists of personnel services in public sector. Success in providing the right people for civil service depends on hiring practices. It also depends on the ability of public service to attract a sufficient number of potential candidates who want to get a job. Central to the activities of a public service or any organization is its ability to attract and hire the necessary human resources. Human resources drive innovation and are a major driver of organizational innovation and productivity [7]. Definitely, Kazakhstani structure of civil service in comparison with those present in other foreign countries can be called similar, or even more advanced. However, the selection and appointment of a candidate for the position based on subjective assessments is very difficult to avoid. The election of rural authorities (akims), as one of the points of the reforms, will probably give some alternative to the objectification of this process, but without taking into account the recruitment tools, i.e. the tools of recruitment and selection of personnel, the probability of high efficiency will be controversial.

The purpose of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs is to create a modern, professional, mobile and small-scale state apparatus in Kazakhstan [7]. Another point, which also concerns the issue of the state of personnel management, is the instruction of the President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to accelerate staff reduction of state bodies. According to statistics for 2021, the total number of permanent vacancies in the civil service is 8.5% of the total number of the state apparatus. It is assumed that the optimization of positions will occur due to the elimination of vacancies. Optimization of the state apparatus, as such, should lead to the effective formation of the personnel reserve. This campaign continues its implementation, as it has been announced, and the question arises about the feasibility and validity of such a project. How will the amount of work performed be distributed, and will it not be a burden for the remaining civil servants who remain in the field? Here we need to remind about the opposite trend, about the non-closure of vacancies in some regions, in particular in rural areas. The reasons are low motivation as a combination of other related reasons, such as low wages, poor equipment of workplaces, etc. Such phenomena require a scientific approach or the involvement of experts, in the same format of outsourcing, which was announced in the Message “Strategy Kazakhstan–2050”.

One of the most important aspects of recruitment is the selection of the most suitable candidate for the job, but improper planning and analysis of the work is bad for this aspect [8]. In many state organizations, the regularity of the process of selecting and selecting specialists is poorly traced. G. Atamanchuk noted that in staffing processes, there was not and there is no clear selection procedure that would focus on values, goals, state and public ideals [9]. In most cases, candidates' selection process are carried on in the following well-known ways: internal competition and the principle of kinship. A paradoxical phenomenon can be observed among non-state companies, where this practice is not a priority, even if such companies are Kazakhstani. Undoubtedly, ethno-cultural characteristics are present, but having received negative consequences, managers and HR specialists try to avoid methods of ineffective selection, in particular on the principle of kinship. Especially the awareness of inefficiency has occurred during the economic crises of 2008 and 2014. The main goals and objectives of the competition for filling a vacant position are following ones: improvement of workforce selection and placement; selection should be realized on a competitive basis of highly professional staff [10]. The desire to give a legal and rational character to what is happening, or directly opposite and critical views can be seen in the content of official documents. To a lesser extent, a neutral and evaluative position is manifested.

The report of W. McCourt entitled “The system of merit and integrity in the public service” was presented at the conference on integrity and combating corruption in the public service organized by the OECD SIGMA program. The EU funds this program. In the report, scientists are offered procedures for appointment to a position with a list of the following elements [11]. In addition, almost all procedures are being applied in Kazakhstani public sector recruitment system. The procedure as a part of assessment, is one of the main HR tools in the recruitment and selection of personnel, and used mainly in the private sector. [11]. On E-gov website, one can be acquainted with the process of entering the civil service in Kazakhstan [12]. Information about vacant positions is posted on the Internet resources of the state bodies that announced the competition, and the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs. On the Internet, you can find several sites.

Results and discussion

Analyzing the website E-gov by searching for the entered offer in the Google browser Vacancy for administrative positions in Kazakhstan (the entry was done 28.01.2022) for the purposes of the analysis, the following algorithm was used: for convenient and targeted viewing, the analysis was carried out, on the example of a certain region – Almaty region. In the Category column, a choice was offered and C-R-5 was entered. The column Specialty was left unselected, Work experience is not required and the last action in the column Salary level without specifying the starting price and with a limit of up to 200,000 tenge, and you can get a figure for 62 vacancies and without a selection of a region, the number of vacancies comprises 2,535 ones. Obviously, this option of job search is quite convenient and does not require much effort. Unlike other suggested sites, the search on this site contains the current number of vacancies at the time of analysis (28.01.2022) is 56,475 vacancies. The other sites are slightly limited in the offer, but, in our opinion, the preference can be given to this site.

The specialized website Headhunter can offer the placement of resumes without searching for vacancies and the function of viewing by other companies. The same features are offered by other service providers, such as LinkedIn. If you combine all the state programs together, the personnel reserve, outsourcing, and staff optimization, then you need to search for such candidates in addition to the above sites. In recruitment, there is a tendency to be a specialist who is being “hunted”, and this method of finding a job is more promising and attractive for those who are satisfied with their place of work, than to apply for employment in public sector. The issue of motivation for finding a job and building a career in public service should be made attractive. Advertising, promotion of proposed vacancies in public sector is not covered enough, or the career elevator with social security is not always interpreted positively by consumers of information. Recruitment technologies in the private sector are more successful mainly due to HR branding. With the development of social networks, job seekers can afford to look for a job longer, compare and sort through the offers of employers. For job seekers, the following are important: working conditions, career prospects and the company’s image. In hiring and selecting successful and talented candidates, companies that know how to show themselves to candidates win. HR branding – positioning of the company in the labor market, promotion of an attractive image of the employer for job seekers and employees.

Let us consider the selection process as one of the main stages of recruitment. Citizens pass the following selection stages: testing for knowledge of the state language and the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan; testing for the assessment of personal qualities; competition for the occupation of an administrative public position. An individual who has expressed a desire to participate in the general competition submit documents to the state body that announced the competition, on a special basis. Testing of candidates for administrative public positions on the knowledge of the state language and the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan consists of three programs. Of course, these requirements are necessary and justified, but an analysis of the compliance of training in universities and colleges according to the above first two requirements is required. Without much scientific analysis, you can limit the list of potential candidates to law faculties, faculties in the specialty “public administration”.

Experts say that simple salary indexing is not enough. It is necessary to establish a system of remuneration based on the qualifications, complexity and volume of work performed. In addition, the government should have implemented it through the transition to a factor-point scale. The civil service in most parts of the world guarantees security of jobs over the full working life, and this is highly valued by the employees especially in developing countries where employment opportunities are inadequate. The salary structure of the civil service deserves special attention as it determines the quality of personal hired.

According to the table 1 (p. 250), there might be a gap of leading specialists considering that the amount of civil servants comprises 1.1% out of total number of workforce, which is higher than in developed countries. Agreeably to the census, at the end of 2021, the population of Kazakhstan was a little bit bigger than 19 mln; hence, workforce comprises around 48%, with a slight difference in gender. According to the table 2 (p. 250), we can observe the unattractiveness of wages public administration employees in comparison with other types. According to the table 3 (p. 250) for categories and salaries of civil servants C-R-5 sampling unit, additionally to the thesis of wage unattractiveness, there are figures indicating low salaries offered. There is a growth in public administration average monthly

nominal salary, but it is not going to reach salary for all types (table 2). However, we observe some fluctuations in comparing samples. There might be a shortage of personnel in public sector in the nearest future. If the proposed salary is below the market, the hired party should make efforts to retain the staff. The erosion of real salaries particularly of the higher grades and the very low nominal salaries of all grades compared to the non-government sector reflects the importance government attaches to the living standards of its workers.

Table 1 – The main indicators of the labor market for the last quarter 2021

in thousands	Total	including	
		male	female
Workforce	9 262,3	4 774,3	4 488,0
Employed population	8 811,9	4 576,6	4 235,3
Unemployed population	450,4	197,7	252,7
Unemployed aged 15-28 years	73,3	30,0	43,3
People who are not part of the workforce	4 058,5	1 524,0	2 534,5

Table 2 – Average monthly nominal salary in 2021

Types of economic activity	Average monthly nominal salary of one employee			Real wage index, as a percentage of	
	tenge	percentage		previous quarter	corresponding quarter of the previous year
		previous quarter	corresponding quarter of the previous year		
Average monthly nominal salary in the first quarter of 2021					
For all types (all)	230 829	99,0	115,2	97,0	107,4
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security (PA)	179 308	81,8	111,0	80,1	103,4
in the second quarter of 2021					
all	251 545	109,0	118,6	106,5	110,4
PA	203 041	113,2	113,1	110,7	105,3
in the third quarter of 2021					
all	243 667	96,9	119,3	94,9	109,8
PA	206,867	101,9	115,9	99,8	106,6
in the fourth quarter of 2021					
all	275 580	113,1	118,2	111,1	108,7
PA	245 386	118,6	111,9	116,5	102,9
Note – The source is provided from the following website https://stat.gov.kz/official/industry/25/statistic/6					

Table 3 – Categories and salaries of civil servants in the last quarter of 2021

Subdivisions of central state bodies and their departments in districts, districts in the city and cities of regional significance	Salary in tenge	
	from	up to
(C-R-1) Head of the district territorial administration	142,460	192,366
(C-R-2) Deputy head district territorial administration	127,422	172,394
(C-R-3) Head of department of district territorial administration	106,359	142,815
(C-R-4) Chief specialist	95,210	128,834
(C-R-5) Leading specialist	84,415	114,854
Note – The source is provided from the following website https://findhow.org/206-skolko-poluchayut-gossluzhashhie-v-kazahstane.html		

The right recruitment tools, as in practice in Kazakhstan, according to one of the procedures, is testing for the assessment of personal qualities, which makes it possible to determine the level of ethics of a candidate for an administrative position. On the website of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs, you can find an analytical report on determining the level of ethical behavior of civil servants in the opinion of the population. On average in the country, the level of ethical behavior of employees of akimats of the region/city/district for 2020 addressed by respondents is 6.69, using a ten-point scale. The highest average score was given to civil servants of Kostanay (9.08) and Zhambyl (8.05) regions. The lowest average rating was given to civil servants of Almaty (4.94). In this regard, it makes sense to pay attention to such an important aspect as the ethics of civil servants. The article by S. Zhanenova reveals the problem of ethics of civil servants, and the work of ethics commissioners, in which the author combines five reasons for the lack of efficiency of this category of employees. So, it is assumed that they should have: motivation, the need for training and methodological support, the specifics in the regions, the status and conflict, the complexity of the proof [13]. In the United States, Great Britain, Germany and many other developed countries, access to public service is open and free for any citizen. Employees are hired by competition without socio-political discrimination, but the principle of morality works strictly [14]. The complexity and multi-step nature of selection process is of great importance. Long interview procedures lead to an analogy with the bureaucratic system as a complex maze. However, international experience shows that these procedures, as part of recruitment, are integral parts of bringing a candidate to further meet the requirements of the desired position.

The modern assessment system introduced in this country includes ten criteria: education, personality and strength of character, judgment, responsibility, initiative, accuracy, efficiency and tact, ability to lead subordinates, diligence, behavior in the service [15]. When applying for a job in the French civil service, the equality of all citizens is respected. In Germany, the requirements are the motivation of official activity, compliance with the level of knowledge of the position intended for replacement, and a number of others. As discussed above, in order to reduce unethical behavior or low employee ratings, it may be necessary to identify the underlying motivation for hiring during an individual or collective interview. Conducting an interview or interview is mandatory for government employees. Formalism in the form of approval of a candidate with the personnel service is not an effective method of recruiting. The established personnel services are guided by organizational and administrative methods and function in a directive manner, and coordination, to a greater extent, is of an approving/disapproving nature of mutual functioning. In modern HRM, there is a noticeable trend towards an integrated approach to personnel management, namely, effective and productive interaction at all stages, especially in the initial part – recruitment. The ethics of civil servants is one of the topics discussed in the evaluation of their work in social networks. The ethical component is one of the priority aspects in creating a new model of civil service, official behavior of officials.

Conclusion

The reforms that have affected personnel policy and management in the civil service are the most important stages in improving the quality of public administration. The Public Service Agency, which is responsible for coordinating staff selection decisions, is the main body for improving recruitment processes. It is necessary to refer to the practice of other developed countries in terms of recruitment, but it is necessary to rationally adapt them to the realities and specifics of national programs and policies related to the selection of personnel, in particular administrative civil servants. As for the correlation of wages and the attractiveness of a job offer in public sector, it requires further study. Nevertheless, we claim that there are dependencies between recruitment procedures in either public sector or private sector and factors affecting both attractiveness and competitiveness of vacancies in labor market. Additionally, to gain a competitive advantage, public administration needs to appoint civil servants on merit. Following the statement that recruitment technologies in private sector are more successful mainly due to HR branding, public sector should have paid more attention to that trend. In this paper, the problem of ethics of civil servants is described and analyzed on the basis of secondary data either. In the opinion of many researchers, this problem can be effectively changed at the selection stage, during the interview. The introduction of advanced technologies in recruitment is necessary, including in connection with the prospect of outsourcing and the creation of a youth talent pool, as such technologies have been empirically tested.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК СЕКТОРЫНА ҚАБЫЛДАУ

Андатпа

Мақалада кадрлық саясатта жоспарланған реформалар мәселелері іріктеу призмасы арқылы қарастырылады. Бұл тақырыптың өзектілігі Қазақстанның дамып келе жатқан нарықтық экономикасы жағдайында кәсіпорындардың тиімділігі адами ресурстардың сапасына байланысты болуы, сондықтан қызметкерлерді іріктеу технологиялары мемлекеттік сектордағы түпкі мақсаттарға қол жеткізуге елеулі әсер етеді. Бұл аспектіде мемлекеттік басқаруды менеджмент ретінде қарастырудың өзектілігі атап өтіледі. Персоналды басқарудың кейбір санаттарын зерттеуге ерекше назар аударылады, сонымен қатар қызметкерлерді іріктеу мен жалдаумен

тікелей байланысты жеке human resource (HR) құралдары мен тәжірибелері қарастырылады. Мақалада сондай-ақ мемлекеттік қызметкерлердің қызмет құрамын оңтайландыру процесінің ықтимал проблемалық сипаты қамтылады. Мақалада мемлекеттік сектор жеке саламен салыстырмалы түрде сипатталады. Кейбір батыс елдерінің мемлекеттік қызметкерлерді жалдау саласындағы тәжірибесі талқыланып, сипатталған. Мемлекеттік қызмет істері Агенттігінің бос орындармен жұмыс жөніндегі қызметіне және одан әрі бағалау рәсімдерінің тиімділігіне және әкімшілік қызметкерге қойылатын талаптарды қанағаттандыруға назар аударылады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – осы тақырып бойынша проблемалық мәселелерді анықтау және осыдан туындайтын мемлекеттік қызмет саласындағы бос жұмыс орындарының тартымдылығын анықтау мәселесі болып табылады. Зерттеу нысаны – еңбек нарығы және материалдық тартымдылық ретінде номиналды жалақы сияқты экономикалық категориялар болып табылады. Жұмысқа қабылдаудың негізгі кезеңдерінің бірі ретінде іріктеу процесінде мемлекеттік қызметкерлердің этикасы және оның алдын алу тақырыбы талқыланады. Үміткерлерді кадрлық қызметтердің мақұлдауының қолданыстағы тәртібін талдауға және мемлекеттік әкімшілік қызметшілердің біліктілік талаптары мен лауазымдық нұсқаулықтарын болашақ зерттеулер үшін тақырыпты дамыту ретінде қарастыруға әрекет жасалады.

Тірек сөздер: персоналды іріктеу, персоналды басқару, мемлекеттік қызметші, персоналды оңтайландыру, кадр саясаты, этика, еңбек нарығы, мемлекеттік сектор.

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РЕКРУТМЕНТ В ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОМ СЕКТОРЕ КАЗАХСТАНА

Аннотация

В статье затрагиваются вопросы запланированных реформ в кадровой политике через призму рекрутмента. Актуальность данной темы обусловлена тем, что в условиях развивающейся рыночной экономики в Казахстане эффективность деятельности предприятий зависит от качества человеческих ресурсов, поэтому технологии рекрутинга имеют серьезное влияние на достижение конечных целей в государственном секторе. Подчеркивается актуальность рассмотрения государственного управления как менеджмента в данном аспекте. Особое внимание уделено изучению некоторых категорий управления персоналом, также рассматриваются отдельные human resource (HR) инструменты и практики, которые напрямую взаимосвязаны с подбором и наймом персонала. Освещается вероятная проблематичность процесса оптимизации штата государственных служащих. В статье производится компаративное описание и сравнение с негосударственным и частным секторами. Обсуждается и описывается опыт некоторых западных стран в рекрутменте государственных служащих. Обращается внимание на деятельность Агентства по делам государственной службы в работе с вакансиями и эффективность дальнейших процедур по оценке и соответствию требованиям к административному служащему. Цель исследования состоит в выявлении проблемных вопросов по данной теме и определении привлекательности вакансий государственной службы. Объектом исследования являются такие экономические категории, как рынок труда, номинальная заработная плата, материальная привлекательность. Затронута тема этики государственных служащих, профилактики в процессе отбора как одного из главных этапов рекрутмента. Предпринята попытка проанализировать действующую процедуру согласования кандидатур с кадровыми службами и рассмотреть квалификационные требования и должностные инструкции административных государственных служащих как предмет для будущих исследований.

Ключевые слова: рекрутмент, управление персоналом, государственный служащий, оптимизация штата, HR, этика, рынок труда, государственный сектор.