The Innovative Role of Ethics Commissioners in Kazakhstani Public Service Development

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ABSTRACT

The article explores innovative approaches to governance, in particular the introduction of ethics commissioners into public service. A comprehensive study of the institution in three areas, functional, organizational, and instrumental, has been conducted. A comparative analysis of international experience illustrates the uniqueness of the institution of ethics commissioners in Kazakhstan with its expanded functionality including interaction with civil society institutions and public organizations. The inclusion of this function in the activities of ethics commissioners is innovative as the institution becomes a bridge between citizens and the public body, as well as a motivator for civil servants to commit to the values of the organization and develop personal accountability for achieving the organization's results. By using international experience analysis as well as conducting two-staged expert interviews (23 respondents) and a sociological survey (1,188 respondents) on the activities of ethics commissioners, the authors demonstrate the importance of increasing their status to the level of reporting to the top manager. The authors have developed recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the ethics commissioners' institution in functional (clarification of business processes), organizational (changing the organizational structure to reflect country specifics), and instrumental (including coaching technologies through which effectiveness has been confirmed by statistical modelling) terms. All of this can ultimately enhance the principles of client-orientation and human-centeredness, to the benefit of the citizens of Kazakhstan and the public good.

Keywords: innovations, ethics commissioners, coaching, civil service personnel, motivation

Introduction

In some scientific papers there seem to be differences in approaches to the definition of innovation. In general terms, innovation is considered as the creation, dissemination, and application of a new "idea, products, or design" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022) that meets human and social needs and causes social and other changes (Stenberg, 2017).

The essence of innovation is the activity of searching for and obtaining new results, ways and tools for creating them, eliminating inefficient management structures, and new forms of organizational activities (Pavitt, 2003; Stenberg, 2017). Therefore, the innovative approach is considered as a targeted change in the functioning of the organization, increasing the personal initiatives of staff, and the development of their creative capacity.

Currently, the problem of innovation in Kazakhstan seems to be critical for many social institutions since the election of the new President and doing things differently affect almost all spheres of life of Kazakh society. Hence, one of the main development trends of modern management system can be a search for new approaches to innovations and ways of implementing them in the civil service. The creation of a new professional state apparatus and civil service, with a new vision and approaches in management and implementation of state programs, is the main challenge to be solved in the nearest future.

A number of strategic documents of Kazakhstan (including Message of the President, 2020; Decree #872, 2022) emphasized the main priority areas: the professional level of civil servants and the qualitative composition of the civil service personnel; the implementation of the "hearing state" concept that mainly focuses on building a constructive dialogue between the government and society; a "human-centered model"—the principle of an accountable state, which includes access to information, accessibility and accountability to civil society (The Concept of Public Administration Development, 2021); and personal accountability—the principle of de-bureaucratization of the state apparatus. To achieve them, it will be necessary not to only raise the professional level of civil service personnel, but also to use innovative approaches with regard to interaction with the public and building a constructive dialogue with civil society. Additionally, to develop human values such as respect, honesty, internal balance and motivation, accountability must be the focus for making a personal contribution to the key results of a public organization.

One of the tools of such a dialogue in Kazakhstan seems to be the institution of the Ethics Commissioner (EC) which has been comprehensively examined by the authors from three areas: functional, organizational and instrumental.

The purpose of the study and research question
The purpose of this study is to examine the terms of reference of the ethics commissioners and to develop recommendations for enhancing their effectiveness in order to establish their unique and innovative role in their interaction with civil servants and the citizens. The objects of the study are, therefore, the ethics commissioners. The subject of this study is the innovative role of the ethics commissioners.

The article will focus on the main research question: "To what extent can the institution of the Ethics Commissioners in Kazakhstan be an innovation towards building the culture of civil servants' interaction with civil society institutions and public authorities?"

Literature review
Public service personnel face increasing number of conflicts (Emison, 2010). In many countries there seem to be special regulations to resolve them. The main document regulating the ethical behavior of civil servants and the functions of ethical commissioners is mainly referred to as a Code of Conduct in international practice. A Code of Conduct can be considered as a guide with a specific set of rules governing values, behavior and ethical principles for civil service personnel in different states (Christensen and Lægreid, 2011). Countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom were among the first to introduce the official ethical guidelines (Kernaghan, 2003). For example, in the UK, ethical principles are directly linked to the ethical competencies of senior civil service staff. These include: goal setting, personal impact, strategic thinking, getting the most out of people, professional development, focus on commitment, personal accountability for one's decisions

and outcomes (Gilman, 2005), while in Slovakia ethics competencies are handled by advisors (Irkhin, 2011).

In France, the competences of ethical officers are approached thoroughly through continuous professional development (Gilman, 2005). Elci, Sener and others (2012) believe that employees working directly in ethical conflict resolution experience stress. Thus, along with professional development, it can be necessary to periodically pay attention to the internal condition of employees. Therefore, a number of researchers (Chung and Gfroerer, 2003) suggest using coaching technology for these purposes. In that case a coach (a person who conducts training, counselling, or instructing individuals and groups) can help clients by not giving any specific advice or pressure, but assisting employees to better define their skills, make decisions, unleash their power within, and become more productive, efficient and accountable (Hube, 1996; Whitmore, 2002; Gallwey, 2014). This position is also supported by Kazakhstani scientists and experts (Seitgapparov, 2014; Zhakupova, 2012; Abdanbekov, Buralkiyeva, 2021) suggesting that employees of the organization be considered as unique creative individuals, who are able to make decisions independently, take responsibility, and develop their inner capacitied. This promotes inner confidence, peace of mind, and motivation (Whitmore, 2022).

Vandenabeele (2008) stresses that civil servants' motivation is directly linked to beliefs, attitudes, and the personal values that motivate them to serve civil society, despite personal interests and benefits, by observing ethical norms. In Kazakhstan the ethics commissioner's communication arrangements between government institutions and the society play a major role in motivation as a representative of the state.

Thus, the ethics commissioners should have the necessary skills and intrinsic values for the performance of their duties. The Code of Conduct (Decree #153, 2015), adopted at the end of 2015, was the basis for the introduction of the position of ethics commissioners in governmental organizations.

According to the Decree #153 (2015) an ethics commissioner in Kazakhstan is a civil servant whose activities are aimed at ensuring compliance with the norms of official ethics and prevention of violations of anti-corruption legislation, as well as advising civil servants and citizens within the terms of references. In Kazakhstan, the position of an ethics commissioner first appeared as a result of an institutional reform to create a professional state apparatus. Currently, this position is divided into two parts: full time position (independent); and part time. The independent position is mostly introduced in the state bodies at the national level that have territorial subdivisions, as well as in the offices of the head of local administrations, cities and the capital.

Table 1: Ethics Commissioners' Activities

| Duties and responsibilities	Protection and assistance	Communication with Civil Society	Monitoring and Evaluation	Punishment
Number	3	10	6	3

Source: Decree #153, 2015

Ethics commissioners that do not have regional offices are those who hold a senior position and who have gained recognition and respect within the team. (Decree #153, 2015). According to Decree #153, the position of ethic commissioner has 12 main functions, 4 tasks, as well as 6 items related to implementation of his/her activities. All these have been grouped into four activity areas (Protection and Assistance, Communication with Civil Society, Monitoring and Evaluation, Punishment) that are reflected in Table 1. More than half of their functions, duties and responsibilities are related to interaction with society, civil service agencies and staff.

At the same time, a survey conducted by Nauryzbek (2022) demonstrates that in addition to the main duties, some part of the Kazakhstani society expects other responsibilities from the ethics commissioners. In the survey of 10,255 civil servants of the central state bodies of Kazakhstan and local executive bodies of all regions, 13.3% of respondents believed that the ethics commissioners should be responsible for conflicts of interest within their organizations.

Additionally, the results of in-depth interviews with international and Kazakhstani experts showed that 66.7% of experts (10 people) believe that the ethics commissioners should be responsible for monitoring issues (ibid). These results demonstrate that ethics commissioners should not only be "all-in-one" professionals, but also that both Kazakhstani citizens and civil service personnel express trust in ethics commissioners. The citizens' trust in ethics commissioners is clearly demonstrated by the increasing number of applications to them. During the first year of the establishment of the ethics commissioners' institution, only 445 citizens applied for the consultation while, by 2019, this figure increased almost 40-fold (17,083 applications) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of Applications to the Ethics Commissioners from Citizens, 2016-2019

Source: Ethics Commissioners Activities Data, 2019.

Number of applications to the Ethics Commissioners from the citizens, 2016-2019
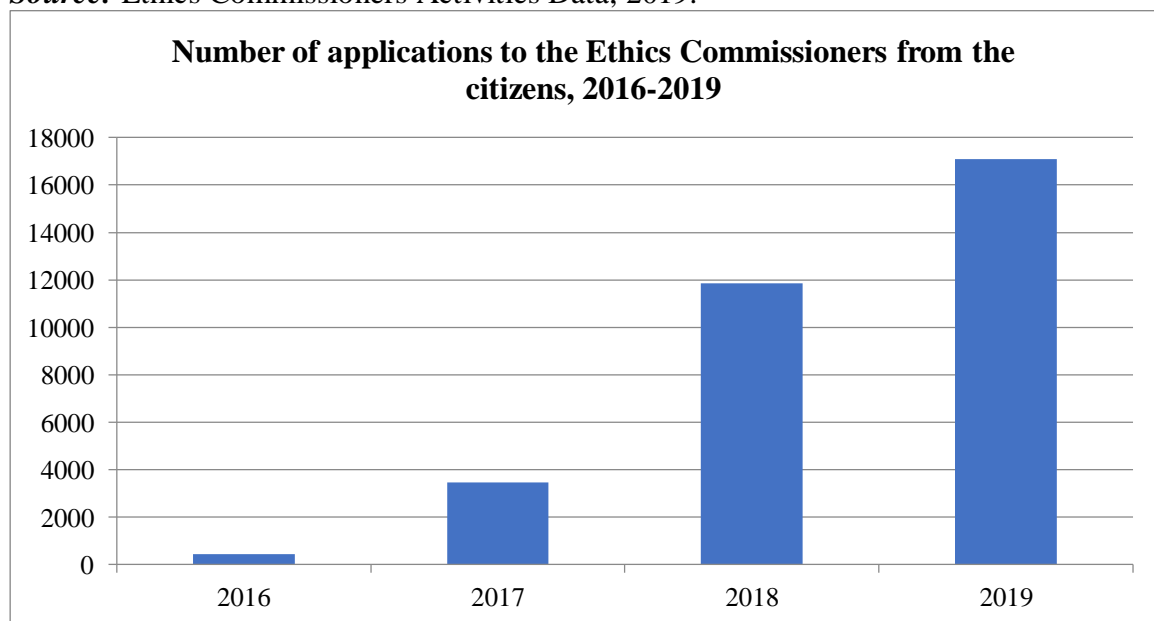
Source: Ethics Commissioners Activities Data, 2019.

A comparative analysis of the institutions responsible for ethical issues in the civil service in different countries has shown that approaches to ethical issues vary widely. Thus, for example, Canada (Apresyan, 2004), the USA, Thailand (Chokprajakchat and Sumretphol, 2017), and South Korea (Janenova, 2017) have adopted Codes of Ethics which describe the principles of civil servant behavior, while the UK and Australia have adopted "Ten rules" codes without a detailed description of how civil servants should act in a particular life situation. The experience of Germany, Finland, Italy and Denmark shows that each state body can deal with ethical issues independently, while Canada, Australia and Greece have established specialized institutions of public service ethics (Janenova, 2017). At the same time, the level of performance of civil servants is directly related to the level of ethics (Chung and Gfroerer, 2003; Janenova, 2017), i.e. the higher the level of ethics of a civil servant, the more effective person is and therefore more motivated to perform.

Connors and Smith (2011) in their paper on "Changing the Culture, Changing the Game" suggest that the results pyramid should be considered one of the effective tools for achieving organizational results and creating or changing the culture which, in turn, is also reflected in employee motivation. The pyramid is based on employees' experiences and then their beliefs which directly influence the actions they take to achieve the result. Meanwhile a number of researchers (Connors, et al., 2010; Page and Wong, 2000; Slack et al, 2019) believe that the development of personal accountability has a huge impact on employees' motivation to perform not only their immediate roles and tasks, but also in achieving organizational results.

Personal accountability allows the employee to feel more confident and to unleash their power and personal capacities. which can positively affect the performance of their duties (Page and Wong, 2000). Henri Tajfel's social identity theory (Hogg, 2016) and organization-based self-esteem (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) also emphasize the importance of accountability, which helps employees make sure that they are valuable and can contribute to the organization's results. This will give them a positive attitude, increase their performance and, hence, their motivation to work in public service (van Dierendonck and Nuijiten, 2011).

The two-factor model of motivation proposed by Herzberg (Yusoff, Kian and Idris, 2013) also confirms that hygienic factors, including salary, do not have a strong influence on employee motivation, while internal human motivation, and personal accountability of the employee can increase employee effectiveness in achieving organizational goals and increasing client-orientation focus. Thus, among current management methods, coaching can be a rather successful tool in improving motivation of civil service personnel with a focus on human-centeredness (The Concept of Public Administration Development, 2021) and the client-orientation concept. At the same time, in order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, there seems to be a need for high professional personnel who have appropriate knowledge and practical skills for such kind of innovation implementation (Stenberg, 2017; Raksnys et al., 2020) in the Kazakhstani civil service.

Supporting that idea, the authors of this study emphasized the importance of ethics commissioners' professional development in order to improve communication, stress management and personal skills for better implementation their duties. As can be seen, the level of effectiveness of ethics commissioners' work depends on factors related to functional, organizational and instrumental components.

Methodology

For the purpose of the study, international benchmarking on the use of coaching to increase the motivation of civil service personnel was used. Additionally, in order to study the level of public awareness about the activities of ethics commissioners and their effectiveness, a survey (online questionnaire survey) using "snowball" method, was conducted.

The total number of respondents was 1,188 people nation-wide (regional coverage), with representation by age (respondents aged 18 and over), social status and level of education. The analysis of secondary information sources and the results of the mass survey formed the basis for the development of recommendations for public authorities to improve the activities of ethics commissioners and their impact on the motivation of civil servants.

A statistical model, with the Wald-Wolfowitz series criterion, was constructed based on the results of expert interviews of the participants of trainings involving the development of coaching elements. The method refers to non-parametric criteria and does not require any assumptions regarding the shape of the data distribution.

Discussion

According to international experience, the main task of ethics officers is to monitor the ethical component of civil servants and conflict resolution within the organization, ethical environment, and ethical infrastructure (Stare and Klun, 2016). The Ethics Commissioners in the Kazakhstani civil service, however, have a broader function that includes the following: giving advice and consulting on ethical issues with civil service personnel and citizens of Kazakhstan; monitoring the implementation of ethical standards and dealing with complaints of non-compliance; assisting in the development of the organizational culture and values within the organization; and interacting with civil society institutions and government agencies.

Thus, the ethics commissioners can be a "bridge" between citizens and the public authority, and a motivator for civil servants to adhere to the values of the organization, as well as to develop personal accountability for the results of the public authority. The inclusion of this function in the activities of the ethics commissioners has been innovative and has had its results. The authors suggest, however, that the role, status and functionality of ethics commissioners should be reviewed in order to achieve greater results.

In Kazakhstan, the institution of ethics commissioners has been one of the steps of administrative reform. Following advanced Western countries (Gilman, 2005), the main document regulating the behavior and values of civil servants in Kazakhstan is the Code of Conduct. Along with the basic principles reflected in the document in Western countries (ibid.), however, one important and unique function of ethical commissioners is interaction with citizens, which is a good tool to obtain feedback from the civil society and, thus, to increase the effectiveness of the public service.

In order to study the public awareness of the activities of the ethics commissioners and their effectiveness, the authors conducted a sociological survey. For the study, it was important to develop a portrait of the respondent by education in order to determine the extent

to which Kazakh citizens of different categories are aware of the activities of the ethics commissioners. Respondents were asked to begin by answering the following question: "Do you know who the ethic commissioner is?" with the options of "yes", "no" and "difficult to answer".

A definite positive answer to this question was given by 649 out of 1.188 respondents, (54.6%); 452 respondents (38%) answered that they "don't know who this is"; and 87 (7.3%) found it difficult to answer. Thus, the majority of respondents are familiar with the work of the ethic commissioners. At the same time, the answers of 45.3% indicate their lack of knowledge on this issue, which in further questions influenced the proportion of respondents who chose the option "difficult to answer".

The next question, "How do you know about the activities of the ethic commissioners?" was asked of respondents in order to find out the sources of this information (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: How did you get to know about ethics commissioners?**
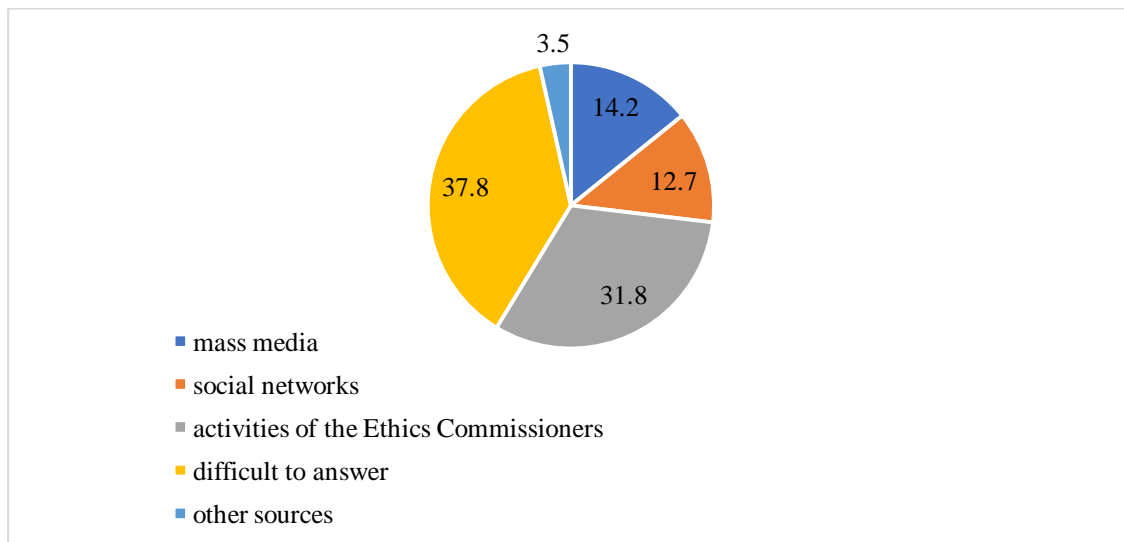
Based on their answers, the main known external sources include "mass media." This option was chosen by 169 people (14.2% of all respondents); "social networks was selected by 151 people (12.7%); a further 378 respondents (31.8%) were familiar with the activities of the EO 'externally' (i.e., were consulted, participated in information meetings and lectures, and had other contacts with them); and 41 people (3.5%) found out about the EO from other sources. It should be noted that the number of respondents who found it difficult to answer this question 449 people (37.8%) roughly corresponds to the number of respondents who were unaware of the EO institution's activities.

To the question "How do you assess the effectiveness of the EOs?" More than half of the respondents (60.3%) gave the positive assessments "effectively": 505 (42.5%) or "more effectively": 211 (17.8%), while 16.7% gave the negative assessments "rather inefficient than effective" 126 (10.6%) or "not effective" 72 (6.1%). Then, 261 people (22%) had difficulty in replying, while 13 people (1.1%) chose "other" (Figure 3).

In response to the question "What mechanisms do you think can influence the effectiveness of the ethics commissioners' work?" the respondents' opinions were divided. Almost one-third of respondents believed that "regular reports to the population (online, offline) and feedback from the society" are most effective (346 people or 29.1%), while more than one quarter of respondents chose the options of "evaluation system through citizen surveys" (314 people or 26.4%) and "evaluation of colleagues within the state body" (327 people or 27.5%). An additional 177 respondents (14.9%) found it difficult to answer, while 24 people (2%) chose "other".

Figure 3: How do you assess the effectiveness of the ethics commissioners?
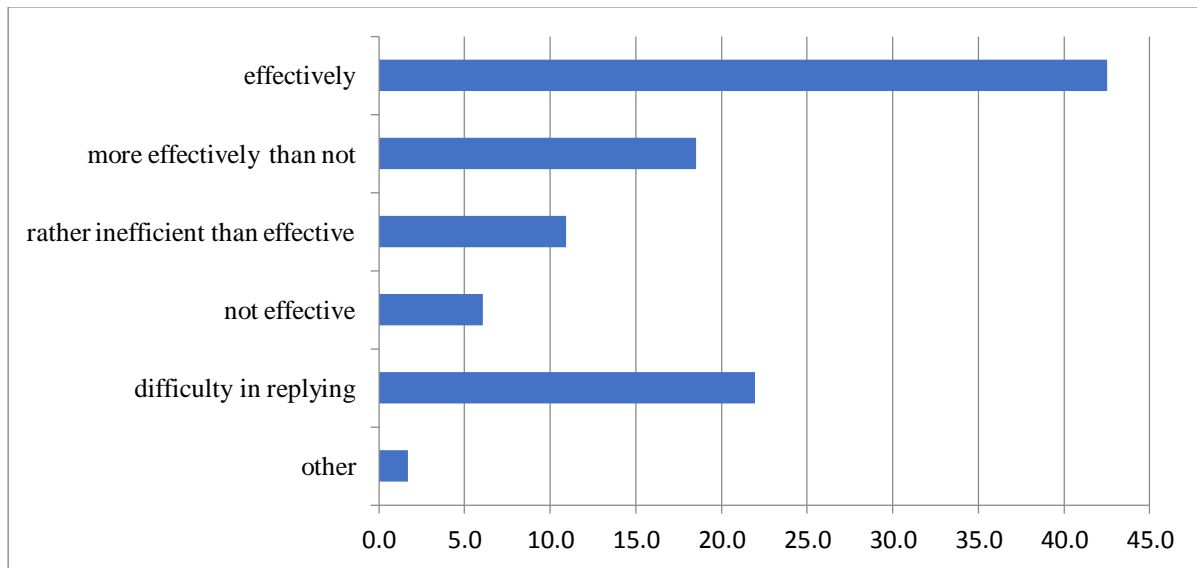
To the question "Whom should the ethics commissioners report to?", most respondents (522 or 43.9%) preferred "the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Civil Service Affairs," one quarter of the respondents (303 or 25.5%) believed that the ethics commissioners should report to "the head of the state body (minister, head of local administration, chairman)"; and 10.1% to "the Public Council under a state body". Again, 6.6% believed that "it should be an NGO representative", while 0.8% chose "other". At the same time, 13% found it difficult to answer.

Figure 4: Do you think the position of ethics commissioners in state authorities is necessary?


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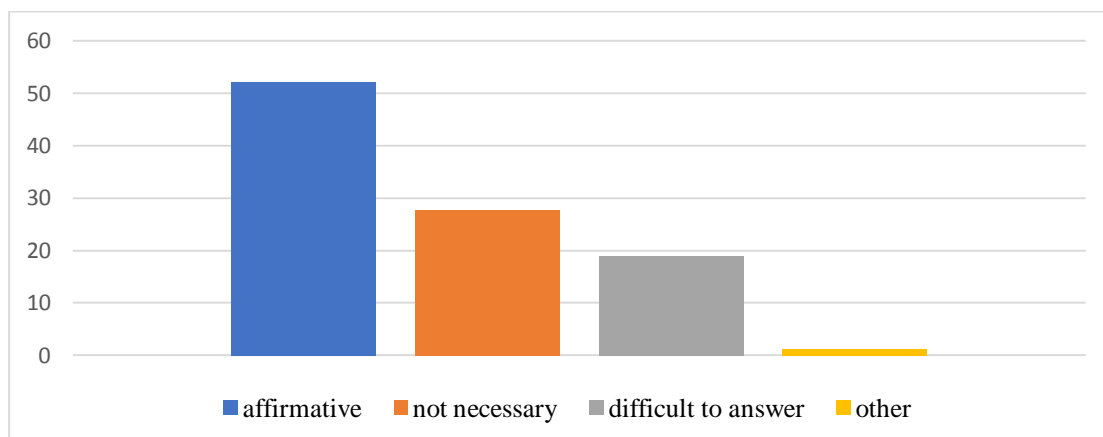
In response to the question about the need for the position of an ethics officer in the state authorities, 620 respondents (52.2%) answered in the affirmative, 329 (27.7%) thought that the position of ethics commissioners was not necessary, 225 (18.9%) found it difficult to answer, and 14 people chose another option (Figure 4).

Thus, the majority of respondents were aware of the ethics commissioners and believed that the institution is needed. More than half of the respondents tended to assess their activities positively. Approximately the same number of respondents believed that reporting, external and internal evaluation can influence the effectiveness of the ethics commissioners. The majority of the respondents believed that the ethics commissioners should not be accountable to the management of the public body in which it operates.

In response to the question "What is the role of the ethics commissioners in the effectiveness of civil service personnel?" one-third of respondents (33.3%) preferred the option "Prevent ethical violations", 18.4% of respondents believed that the PEA should "Maintain the moral and psychological climate in the team", 8.8% chose "Protect the rights of civil servants and advise them in ethical matters", 6.7% chose "Interaction with civil society institutions and state bodies", 12% found it difficult to answer.

Two hundred and forty-five respondents, 20.6%, chose "other," with 198 of them offering the answer, "to motivate the team to work effectively" (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: What is the role of the ethics commissioners in the effectiveness of civil service personnel?**
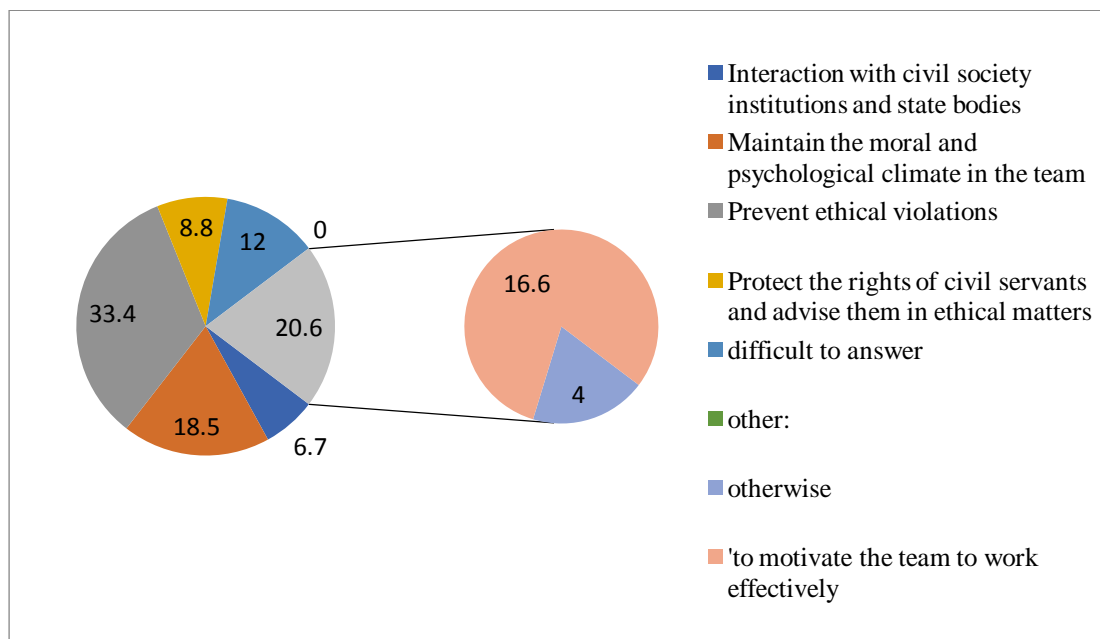
Based on the respondents' answers, the main skills of the ethics commissioners are "Communication and observation" (28.2%), "Ability to motivate and inspire" (26.9%) and "Analytical skills" (24%). Just 7.8% of the respondents chose "Empathy," 3.4% chose "other skills," and 9.7% found it difficult to answer.

Thus, if the ethics commissioners are to be responsible for the effectiveness of civil servants and the level of public confidence in the public service, they must have the relevant skills and tools to develop the capacity of civil servants and increase their internal motivation (Figure 6).

In 2020 and 2022, the authors of the study conducted a two-stage interview aimed at exploring the positive aspects related to the work of the ethics commissioners as well as the problematic issues that hinder them to work more effectively.

Figure 6: Necessary knowledge and skills
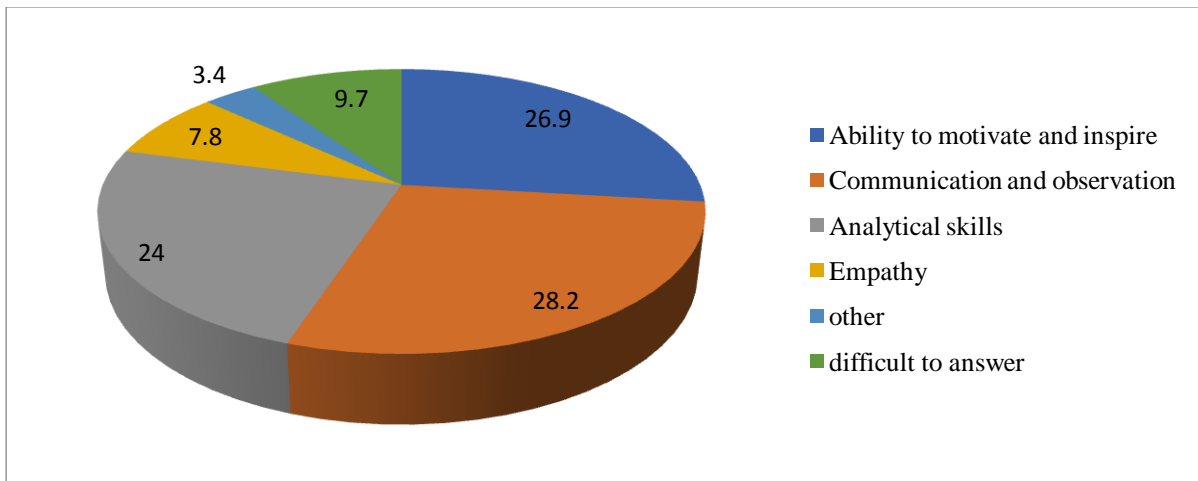
For the purposes of representativeness, 23 experts were interviewed and chosen according to the following criteria: work experience as ethics commissioners or staff members performing the functions of ethics commissioners, and total length of service in the civil service of at least three years.

To study the impact of innovative tools on the efficiency of the work of the ethics commissioners, the authors conducted expert semi-structured interviews with the ethics commissioners (23 respondents) in two stages. The interviewees represented both central and regional levels: 16 from central public authorities and 7 employees from regional public authorities. It should be noted that the experts were asked the same questions with a difference of two years (2020 and 2022).

To conduct the study, for representativeness 23 experts were selected according to the following criteria: work experience as ethics commissioners or performing the functions of ethics commissioners, a total length of service in the civil service of at least three years.

In the Regulations of the ethics commissioners (Decree #153, 2015), one of the functions of the ethics commissioners is interaction with civil society institutions. However, at present, there is no clear understanding of how this interaction should be performed. All the experts were asked about the mechanisms for establishing such interaction.

In 2020, experts proposed several mechanisms, such as:

- surveying the environment of its employee (neighbors, relatives, etc.) and monitoring social networks to collect information;

- holding regular meetings with the citizens;
- timely response to criticism of civil servants;
- organization of explanatory work with the involvement of civil servants;
- ethics commissioners should be open to society without a legislation framework; and - leave the issue of establishing interaction on the behalf of the ethics commissioners.

It should be noted that the answers from 2020 correspond to the areas of the activity described in the quarterly report form to the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs (Order #156, 2017) and other legal acts in this area.

The answers of the 2022 sample given by the same experts are also within the framework of the legal acts regulating their activities for 60% of the experts. At the same time, 9 ethics commissioners (40%) offered such non-standard options in terms of legal acts and the daily activities of the ethics commissioners, such as an invitation to representatives of civil society to get acquainted with the work of the state agency, and the use of coaching elements when talking with the applicant.

In the form of the report of the ethics commissioners (Order #156, 2017), several indicators reflecting the effectiveness of their work were provided with the researchers expecting to receive an expert opinion on the subject of coverage of these indicators relating to all the activities of the ethics commissioners.

In the responses of 2020, 83% of the experts believed that the indicators cover the activities of the EO as much as possible and did not need to be supplemented,while only 17% noted that the reports only display quantitative indicators and suggested supplementing them with an explanatory note with a detailed report on the work done.

In 2022, 30% of the group's respondents suggested including an indicator related to interaction with society in the report form. Also, 23% of experts proposed to display in the reports an indicator related to the motivation of employees.

Experts note the need for close interaction with civil society, however, the different interpretation of the mechanisms for establishing such interaction given by the respondents is associated with the lack of a legally fixed definition of the concept of "interaction of the ethics commissioners with society." Thus, it can be assumed that the lack of a common understanding and clear instructions do not allow this work to be carried out as efficiently as possible. Considering the fact that civil servants perform their work within the framework of the law, the presence of a function that does not have a clear specification and measurable indicators allows it to be implemented at one's discretion or completely ignored.

At the same time, the addition of the reporting form with a narrative part allows us to fully see the current picture of interaction with society and analyze the activities of the ethics commissioners (success stories and problematic issues) to improve the quality of work with the citizens.

Also, ethics commissioners currently report to the Agency's Ethics Councils, which include representatives of non-governmental organization (NGOs), as well as at open final

operational meetings of the state agency. In this regard, another one-third of the respondents consider the reporting procedure of the ethics commissioners to the NGO a duplication (according to subparagraph 3) of paragraph 6 of the Regulations on Ethics Councils of the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for civil service affairs in regions, cities of republican significance, and the capital (Decree #156, 2015). One of the functions of the Ethics Council is "to review the results of the activities of the commissioners for ethics in monitoring and controlling compliance with professional ethics".

At the same time, the remaining third of the experts believe that this measure will be effective and will even increase the level of public confidence in the ethics commissioners' institution. However, there is another side of the coin; since the level of public confidence is not high enough, the citizens of Kazakhstan are reluctant to attend such reporting meetings.

This issue is also proposed to be resolved by raising the status of the ethics commissioners. For example, if the ethics commissioners were to be directly subordinate to the first head of a state agency or head of local administration, then citizens would be more interested in participating in such meetings due to the possibility of resolving specific issues raised at these meetings through the ability to bring the issues under discussion to the attention of decision makers.

Accountability, only to the first head, will also increase the influence of the ethics commissioners within the state body since it minimizes pressure from the intermediate management in the form of deputies, the head of the office and heads of structural divisions.

This is also confirmed by the answers of 55% of the experts, who noted the need to subordinate the ethics commissioners to the first head, while his appointment and dismissal must be agreed to by the authorized body. At the same time, 27% of respondents believed that the ethics commissioners should be appointed and accountable to the Agency for civil service affairs, and 18% of respondents suggested making the position of the ethics commissioners completely independent of the state apparatus, giving the appointment to a third-party organization by outsourcing.

According to the Regulations on ethics commissioners (Decree #153, 2015), at present, state bodies independently appoint their ethics commissioners and also have the autonomous right to dismiss them. This is a significant factor limiting the activities of the ethics commissioners.

In the interview, the researchers also included the question of what human qualities and background an ideal ethics commissioner should have in order to prepare a psychological portrait of an ideal ethics commissioner. According to experts, along with professional qualities, the ethics commissioners must be *"... a good family man, a morally mature person, impartial, respectable, able to hear and listen to people, fair, sociable, be an excellent speaker and show empathy for people ... ".*

Thus, the choice of the ethics commissioners not only for their knowledge and professional skills, but also for the presence of high moral values will improve the image and status of the ethics commissioners position itself in society and, accordingly, the public's trust in the state apparatus through close interaction with the ethics commissioners.

According to Jha, et al (2010) public goods are considered to be access to food, health care, water, energy, Internet, etc. for all people. Additionally, all these goods should be accessible to all the group members equally (Beloussova, 2007). Based on the national legislation, citizens' complaints related to information on governmental agency's work or other matters shall be considered within a period of fifteen working days (The Administrative Procedural Code, 2020). Sometimes the quality of the official responses from the public servants seems to be low. The role of the Ethics Commissioners is to allow every citizen to get the required information in a more simplified manner. At the same time, the openness of the public commissioners and their linking function between citizens and public authorities enhances the possibility to convey citizens' questions and problems to civil servants. Therefore, in this paper we consider access to public goods as access to information for every individual.

If in 2020, to the question "do you use innovative methods in your work", 78% answered that they did not see the need for this since their work is quite regulated, then in 2022, 10 experts said that they used "active listening" methods and technologies for asking effective questions and other innovative approaches in their work.

To the question "Do you plan to expand your competencies, skills and knowledge related to the performance of the functions of the ethics commissioners?" in 2020, half (52%) of respondents noted that they want to engage in self-education (*reading books on psychology, personnel management, communications, conflict resolution; and watching training videos)*; 35% planned to go for training during the year *(advanced training, group pieces of training, personal work with a coach)*; 13% responded negatively, referring to high employment, as well as the lack of the need to develop skills in this area because the ethics commissioner is not their main area of work (as they are assigned ethics commissioners' functions).

After the completion of the interview with a two-year break, the participants were re-surveyed. To different extents, ten respondents out of 23 used the technology of individual, team and organizational coaching. As an indicator of the effectiveness of the use of coaching techniques, we chose the (+) decrease / (-) increase in the number of conflicts in a government body in October 2022 compared to the same period in 2020. We studied the impact on the indicator of the use of coaching elements by ethics commissioners in practical work. Based on the surveys, the authors obtained the following data on the change in the number of conflicts experienced by ethics commissionners who were involved (participated) in the study and control group in state bodies. The study group used coaching elements and the control group did not use them (Table 2).

Table 2: Changes in Number of Conflicts in the Study and Control groups

Groups	Changes in the number of conflicts												
Respondent #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Study (X)	5	7	2	10	3	1	4	13	11	15			
Control (Y)	-5	3	1	2	-7	-12	-8	0	1	-6	-2	-11	-9

The first line presents the answers of the respondents in the study group about the change in the number of conflicts over the 18 months (2020-2022) following the coaching. The study group (X) consists of 10 respondents (sample size nx = 10) who have been trained in coaching. In the second line there are the respondents' answers about the change in the number of conflicts over the 18 months (the study period) after the coaching. The control group (Y) consists of 13 respondents (sample size ny = 13) who did not receive coaching. Negative values show an increase and positive values demonstrate a decrease in the number of conflicts during the study period.

The third row of Table 2 demonstrates the numbers of reduced conflicts by the 10 respondents in the study group. In the study group (a total of 10 respondents), the first respondent 's number of conflicts declined by 5. The second respondent's number of conflicts decreased by 7, the third respondent's number of conflicts decreased by 2, etc. The fourth row shows the changes in the number of conflicts in the control group (13 respondents). The first respondent's number of conflicts increased by 5, the second respondent's decreased by 3, the third respondent's decreased by 1, etc.

To test the impact of the use of coaching technology on the number of conflicts, we use the Wald-Wolfowitz series test. As previously stated, it refers to non-parametric tests and does not require any assumptions about the shape of the distribution from which the data are taken.

It is used to test the hypothesis that two independent samples are taken from two populations that differ significantly from each other, in other words, they differ not only in the average but also in the form of distribution.

The criterion assumes that the variables in question are continuous and measured on at least an ordinal scale. The null hypothesis is that both samples are drawn from the same population, i.e. the data are homogeneous.

Applying the serial criterion, the authors determined whether the differences in the change in the number of conflicts in the compared groups are statistically significant. We combined the responses on the change in the number of conflicts of the studied and control groups into one, placing the obtained values in ascending order in a single row: {-12;-11;-9; -8; -7; -6;-5;-2;0;1;1;1;2;2;3;3;4;5;7;10;13;15}.

We marked in red the members of the series belonging to the study group (X) and in black to the control group (Y). The resulting series has four consecutive series (iterations) of values belonging to different samples, i.e. r=4. If nx=10 and ny=13, the critical value of the number of series r (α, nx, ny)=8 is found from the tables of critical values of the number of series at significance level α=0.05, the volumes of the study nx=10 and control ny=13 groups.

Since the obtained number of series r<r05 (4<8), the differences between the changes in the number of conflicts in the study and control groups should be considered non-random at the significance level α=0.05. The H_0 -hypothesis that changes in the number of conflicts in the groups are not statistically significant is rejected. Consequently, the use of coaching technology in the work of ethics commissioners affects the reduction of conflicts through the development of internal motivation, personal accountability of managers and employees, structural units within the organization, and the state body as a whole.

Thus, among modern management methods, coaching can be a rather promising area. So, there is a need for a more in-depth and long-term study of the effectiveness of this management method at different levels of management in the public sector in order to increase the personal accountability of employees and, consequently, to develop internal motivation of public service personnel. As the results of the study show, explored from the three dimensions of functional, organizational and instrumental attributes, the ethics commissioners' institution can be considered as an innovation and can contribute to good communication between public service and civil society.

Conclusion

The study conducted by the authors through the analysis of national legislation documents, statistical data, as well as a sociological survey of the citizens of Kazakhstan identified capacity challenges of ethics commissioners. Based on the research the authors concluded that the unique approach in assigning functions of interaction with the population to the ethics commissioners is a not only a valuable innovation for Kazakhstan, but it can also be replicated in countries with similar forms of public administration.

The study examined the institute of ethics commissioners from three points: functional, organizational and instrumental and came to the following conclusion:

Firstly, in comparison with other international experience, the ethics commissioners in Kazakhstan have broader terms of reference, including interaction with civil society, that support the innovative role of the ethics commissioners' institution.

Secondly, due to a strictly hierarchical system of public administration, where ethics commissioners are at the level of middle management, they cannot influence senior and line managers. Thus, the analysis illustrates that there seem to be a need to elevate the status of the ethics commissioners to one directly reporting to the senior manager or chief. This will allow the ethic commissioners to conduct communication at the same level with their colleagues and perform their functions in the field of conflict resolution.

Thirdly, within the instrumental component, the statistical model constructed on the basis of the interview results shows that continuous professional development by using technologies like coaching and other tools can significantly influence the effectiveness of the ethics commissioners' activities.

Finally, the research contributes to an improvement in the effectiveness of Ethic Commissioners by expanding their functions (working with civil society and public servants) which can be considered an innovative approach in Kazakhstan. Additionally, their effectiveness can be improved by coaching them to facilitate their influence on progressive behavioural attributes of civil servants, with a focus on upholding values, norms or standards, reducing internal conflict that in turn promote the public good by improving the functioning of the public service. All these contribute to solving both issues: internal (with civil servants) and external (with Kazakhstani citizens) as well.

Hence, the existence of an ethics commissioner position in all governmental agencies would serve to influence effective delivery of public goods.

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