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Problems of training civil servants in the post-Soviet higher educational institutions

Abstract. The study of problematic aspects in training civil servants in the post-Soviet countries is extremely relevant. This, relates to the active policy of retraining workers per European approaches. Thus, the study of the problems that currently impede the effective training of civil servants allows finding solutions and improving them. Based on this, the purpose of this study was to analyse the main approaches and tools used by the post-Soviet higher educational institutions to train civil servants. Accordingly, to achieve it, the study used various scientific and methodological means, including functional and systematic approaches, as well as the method of analysis and synthesis, comparison, deduction, and generalisation. As a result, both the theoretical and practical part of the question was covered. The first half of the study defined the essential content of the main concepts and terms related to the subject under study, as well as covered their features. In addition, the methods and approaches that are fundamental in the training of civil servants in the post-Soviet countries were considered in depth and their main shortcomings were shown. The study revealed that the main challenges in training civil servants in post-Soviet higher educational institutions include outdated curricula, insufficient practical training, and a lack of focus on developing critical thinking and leadership skills. Furthermore, the research identified a need for greater emphasis on ethics, transparency, and accountability in public service education. Lastly, the findings suggested that incorporating more case studies, simulations, and internships could significantly enhance the effectiveness of civil servant training programs in these countries. The practical value of the study lies in the fact that it can be used both as a methodological material for higher educational institutions, and for the personal development of individual educational workers

Keywords: learning process; competence; students; modernisation; innovative technologies

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalisation and the active development of society, the question of improving the qualification of civil servants is increasingly arising. Increased attention to such subjects is justified since they personify state power. Accordingly, training such individuals is extremely complex and important for society since the future development of the country depends on its success and effectiveness. Analysis of the current state of educational approaches and materials used in the post-Soviet higher educational institutions for the training of civil servants points to their problematic nature and many shortcomings. This is because to a certain extent they do not meet the challenges of modern times, and therefore civil servants who receive education in such conditions do not have a perfect level of professional training. Furthermore, the ideological part plays a significant role, namely the essential understanding of the concept of civil servants and their competence.

The available curricula designed for the study of civil servants lack the foundations affecting their socialisation and interaction with the public within their powers (Jane-nova, 2020). Such results were obtained because of a systematic analysis of higher educational institutions, which accordingly train future civil servants. A key area for improving the educational process is, admittedly, paying attention to assessing the quality of the acquired qualifications of property subjects of state administration and local self-government bodies. This is because the verification of the level of knowledge is key and allows for figuring out the effectiveness of the approaches used by educational institutions. Furthermore, a qualitative assessment will find the main shortcomings that need to be overcome in the development and modernisation of the educational process (Stoliarenko *et al.*, 2021).

It is also critical to analyse the problems of training civil servants in the context of full compliance or, on the contrary, non-compliance with the fundamental humanistic foundations, as well as a personality-oriented approach (Podungge *et al.*, 2021). It is significant to develop the ability for individual career development in future subjects of public authorities, but at the same time pay great attention to the work skills and interaction in a team. Based on this, overcoming the current problems existing in higher educational institutions and preparing future civil servants, to a greater extent depends on conducting an in-depth analysis, as well as understanding and substantiating its essential content, and may vary according to the established forms of its implementation and reflection of their rational correlation (Sugiono *et al.*, 2021).

Thus, the main purpose of this study was an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms and means used by the post-Soviet higher educational institutions in extending the educational process, namely training civil servants, and finding their problems and shortcomings. Accordingly, to fulfil this purpose, several tasks were performed in this study: the essence of the concept of a civil servant was found, the main differences in the ideology of the post-Soviet

countries with the subjects of public authorities were established, the approaches that are a priority during training were analysed, the practices of foreign countries were considered, promising areas for improving the training of civil servants were developed.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To investigate the shortcomings in the approaches and tools used by the post-Soviet higher educational institutions to train civil servants, various research tools were used. This allowed fully consider and find the problematic aspects in this process, establishing the causes of their occurrence, and also forming possible ways to overcome them. It is necessary to note the functional approach, since at its expense the purpose and objectives of this study were found, and a plan for its implementation was formed. Based on this approach, the study was divided into several stages, which allowed the investigation of all the features of the subject under study more thoroughly. All the methods and methodological techniques used were interconnected through a systematic approach. This tool allowed the investigation of each of the shortcomings in the approaches of the post-Soviet higher educational institutions, in which civil servants are trained. A significant role was played by the method of analysis and synthesis. With its help, the issue under study was divided into separate elements, which allowed analysing of each of them and figuring out its properties. The synthesis method allowed for finding the common properties of such elements and the relationship between them. As a result of such a division, and then a combination, problematic aspects in the activities of higher educational institutions were found, as well as their common features were considered and the main reasons for their emergence were found. Based on the synthesis method, the necessary theoretical concepts were covered, which allowed for figuring out the essential content of the subject under study.

Equally significant was the method of comparison since it allowed comparing the main shortcomings of curricula and approaches. This method allowed, based on a comparison of such problematic aspects, to find the main ways to overcome them. The comparison method also made it possible to substantiate the need to change the approaches in the educational activities of future civil servants to more efficient and modernised ones. The logical structure of the study was based on the dialectical method since the study progresses from general to specific. At the initial stage of the study, the main theoretical concepts and features of the issue under study were analysed. The second half of the paper specifically examines the problematic aspects, i.e., the shortcomings that currently exist in the educational activities of post-Soviet higher educational institutions, which train civil servants. To analyse the results obtained and form concise conclusions, the generalisation method was applied in this study. As already noted, the study was carried out in three stages:

1) In the first stage, a work plan was formed, and the main purpose and tasks were figured out. The theoretical part of the issue was investigated, i.e., its general aspects were considered.

2) In the second stage, shortcomings, and obstacles in the educational process in the preparation of civil servants in the post-Soviet countries were specified. Promising recommendations were formulated to resolve such shortcomings.

3) In the third stage, the results of the study were investigated, and concise conclusions were formed accordingly. Possible areas for further research on this subject were also considered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation of such a topic as public service is gaining increased popularity among scientists. Scientists actively consider issues related to the professional training of civil servants. Such an elevated interest is conditioned upon the active policy of modernisation and European integration pursued by the post-Soviet countries. These actions can be considered as reforming the entire educational system. Currently, in countries such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Latvia, and Estonia, there is an active professionalisation of the civil service, as well as local governments, which also requires changes in the curricula used by higher education institutions. To figure out the main and most acute problems that exist in post-Soviet higher educational institutions that train civil servants, it is imperative to consider successful foreign practices and, based on the comparison, find shortcomings.

It is possible to cover the term “public service” as an interconnected system of state-legal and socio-economic institutions and organisational units aimed at performing certain state tasks and duties due to the proper performance of powers by civil servants, while unconditionally satisfying public interests. Thus, the analysis of the above system should be based on many notable features to identify problems and shortcomings, which, accordingly, reduce the level of effectiveness of the educational process and adversely affect the knowledge and competence of future civil servants. To conduct research, it is necessary to show the essence of the term “civil servant”. These are individuals whose professional activity is to create and implement management decisions, respectively, holding positions in government bodies, institutions, or the state apparatus. An essential feature of civil servants is the focus of their actions on the proper performance of state functions and powers assigned to them. Thus, the purpose of a civil servant is to satisfy the public interest, and not a personal one.

Proceeding from this, the reform of educational programs, according to which future civil servants study in post-Soviet higher educational institutions, will allow the development of the entire personnel system of public authorities and bring them as close as possible to European standards. Therewith, such improvement should be based not only on the development and implementation of new managerial skills and competencies but also on a

systematic analysis of the content and promising vectors of such changes. As a result of solving the issues existing in curricula and approaches, it is necessary to be able to freely set up a connection between the theoretical and practical foundations of the educational process, including by involving students in active practical activities. The main purpose of finding current shortcomings and eliminating them lies in the effective assimilation of modernised managerial skills and abilities by future students, i.e., reforming the system should certainly focus on the result.

As for the problems that adversely affect the educational process and the level of knowledge and competence of civil servants, they are largely provoked by the presence of irrelevant and inefficient approaches and tools used by post-Soviet higher education institutions. That is why the study of shortcomings should be based on the modernity of the materials or mechanisms used. Based on this, many other issues, including the quality and level of independence in assessing the results of educational activities of students, approaches to teaching educational information, determining the methods of communication between teachers and students, and the form of the educational process, are provoked to a greater extent by the inconsistency with the challenges of modernity and conditions related to state employees.

Thus, reforming and improving the entire structure and mechanism of professional training of civil servants should be understood as an interrelated process, the purpose of which is to modernise the functional and organisational aspects of curricula and materials based on which students receive knowledge. It is this approach that allows fully analysing of the existing approaches and tools, i.e., to figure out their effectiveness and success in the context of the educational process. A distinctive feature of this study is that the study of problems takes place within the post-Soviet higher educational institutions, which have features of the organisation of state power and the distribution of powers between the state apparatus. Accordingly, when considering current issues, attention should be paid to the form of the state, namely to the form of government and state structure. These properties are reflected in the characteristics of post-Soviet approaches to learning, especially within higher education institutions (Fahlevi, 2020).

The priority of choosing this approach is that the active use of innovative programs in training will allow using the acquired modernised knowledge in future professional activities. Achieving such a modification is possible due to the holistic filling of the entire curriculum with special mechanisms and approaches that meet the advanced world trends. Notably, the current problems of higher education institutions can only be solved through the implementation of systemic changes. Furthermore, the elimination of shortcomings and obstacles inherent in the organisation of the work of the state apparatus in the post-Soviet countries will provoke a dynamic acceleration and improvement of the educational process. The progressiveness of such actions will help increase the level

of evolutionary development of approaches to the concept of the civil servant and civil service. Thus, it can be proved that it is important to decide on the active introduction of modern world practices to the curricula and approaches, which should be harmonising with the national traditions and values existing in these countries. One should also pay attention to the fact that the solution to certain issues will allow the development of the current mechanism for the professional training of civil servants to a higher level (Kryvtsova *et al.*, 2021).

After analysing the general theoretical provisions covering the essential content of the current shortcomings of the educational system, as well as substantiating the priority of introducing changes, it is possible to more specifically study each of the problems and model workable solutions. Consequently, all higher educational institutions that are state-owned and found in the post-Soviet countries are based on a special approach to the organisation of the educational process. This mechanism lies in the approval of a special plan for the staffing of the state apparatus, as well as regulations of the highest bodies of state power. Therewith, this mechanism is quite complicated, since it requires certain educational and professional plans and procedures designed for the training and retraining of civil servants, who to a greater extent do not meet the necessary conditions of modern society. An essential element of the educational process in the post-Soviet countries is its compliance with national standards, which were adopted and defined quite a long time ago, which indicates their inefficiency. Based on this, an in-depth analysis of the problems impeding the quality training of civil servants in higher education institutions should begin with the constituent provisions, since they are the basis and source of many other shortcomings (Goncharuk *et al.*, 2021).

In addition, when studying the process of training civil servants, public authorities are a vital part of the educational system. Their role in teaching students of this speciality is to control the learning process of future civil servants. However, not in the usual attestation form, but in a special one. It is revealed during a special meeting of students for practical training, within certain territorial bodies of state power or local self-government. Based on the general problems relating to the entire post-Soviet space showed above, it can be argued that the mechanism for training, retraining, and advanced training of civil servants and officials of local self-government is at a satisfactory level. Moreover, these shortcomings are common among many educational institutions, which shows that they do not have special modernised tools and mechanisms.

If one explores more local problems related to certain academic disciplines, then they can be revealed through the generally named problems. Accordingly, one of the most negative among them is the lack of consistency in the educational process and future practical activities of students. This aspect is reflected in the entire educational process, since it must be integral and structured, and academic disciplines – interconnected. In turn, now, in the universities

of many post-Soviet countries, one can see disagreements in approaches to the definition of individual academic disciplines. An example of this issue is the presence of such educational areas as public administration and management of public affairs, as well as many others. Therewith, in countries such as Uzbekistan, there are currently about ten such academic disciplines, which to a certain extent even contradict each other, and, accordingly, are inconsistent with the general and priority educational and professional program “Public Administration”.

Based on the named problem, it is necessary to change and modernise the initial methodological materials and tools dependably. However, special attention must be paid to understanding the purpose of such a reform, i.e., to figure out an improvement plan and consider not only changes that would affect the educational process, but also students, i.e., future civil servants. Thus, innovations should have a specific and reasonable list of the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities that will be obtained by the subject because of passing a modernised educational and professional program (Eckel, 2023).

Furthermore, it is necessary to address the fact that another rather principal issue, especially for higher educational institutions in Ukraine, is the poor-quality division of specialities and educational qualification programs. It is necessary to distribute the above elements not by category of positions, but by certain positions of civil servants, as well as particular officials of local self-government. Therewith, this process should be more thorough and based on the personal qualities of the students (Millin, 2021). Analysing the modernisation and development of both curricula and methodological support, it should be modelled and have a clear target orientation. Introducing the necessary changes is a complex process, since it requires modification not only of local documents and relevant plans, but also of generally binding legal acts that have great legal force. Thus, the reform should concern the content of the above elements, as well as constitute an integral, interconnected system of training, retraining, and advanced training of civil servants. It is the choice of such an approach that will allow fully modernising the entire national educational system, which, as a result, will combine the educational activities of students with professional employment into a single mechanism for the continuous training of civil servants (Tokbaeva, 2021).

Furthermore, the solution of certain problems should be based on changes to the nationwide system of educational and professional training of civil servants and be aimed at strengthening the principles of manageability of the activities of the entire structure of state authorities and local self-government. Based on this, not only the educational system should undergo modification, but also the mechanism of interconnection and communication of the actions of all post-Soviet higher educational institutions and those implementing educational activities in the context of public service. Therewith, it is imperative to consider departmental types related to the

distribution of branches of power, as well as the organisation of the activities of their bodies and the allocation of levels (Vavreniuk *et al.*, 2021).

Consequently, the current state of development of higher education institutions in the post-Soviet space is insufficient, which is fully reflected in the level of competence of civil servants. The main problem is the division of professional training of officials of certain categories and positions. Since this process relates to the competence of various educational institutions, which provokes many issues in the future educational activities of students (Sanghera & Satybaldieva, 2020). A decisive step allows carrying out a general education reform is the formation of special subordinate bodies that control the process of reforming curricula and materials for civil servants. Moreover, this approach will enable timely identification of shortcomings that may arise in the future professional activities of civil servants and local self-government officials. An important process of modernisation of the educational system is also the organisation of periodic thorough monitoring of the competence and skill level of the state apparatus. This stage is essential because it allows figuring out the questions that need to be introduced into the curricula and explain to the students accordingly. Thus, because of the implementation of the proposed changes, there will be an increase in the level of efficiency of the educational process, as well as the quality of teaching materials. After overcoming the problems found in the study, general educational approaches and tools for the implementation of educational activities should be changed. Most importantly, as a result of reforming the educational industry, there will be an improvement in the ways of organising state power, since the state apparatus will be somewhat re-equipped both in a theoretical and practical sense by increasing the level of knowledge and competence of civil servants, as well as introducing innovative programs and technologies into professional activities (Gnusowski, 2021).

One of the significant challenges in training civil servants in post-Soviet higher educational institutions is the lack of emphasis on developing critical thinking and analytical skills. Traditional teaching methods often prioritise rote learning and memorisation over problem-solving and decision-making abilities (Huseynli, 2023). This approach fails to prepare future civil servants for the complex, dynamic challenges they will face in modern public administration. To address this issue, educational programs should incorporate more case studies, simulations, and interactive learning experiences that encourage students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios (Fedotova, 2020).

Another crucial aspect that requires attention is the integration of technology and digital skills into the curriculum (Chankseliani, 2022). As governments worldwide are increasingly adopting e-governance and digital solutions, civil servants must be proficient in using and understanding these technologies. Many post-Soviet higher educational institutions lag behind in incorporating digital literacy and e-governance concepts into their programs. This

gap needs to be bridged by introducing courses on digital transformation in public administration, data analytics, and cybersecurity, ensuring that future civil servants are well-equipped to navigate the digital landscape of modern governance (Larina & Larin, 2022).

Furthermore, there is a pressing need to strengthen the focus on ethics, transparency, and accountability in public service education (Sparks & Reading, 1994). While these concepts are often mentioned in curricula, they are not always given the depth and practical application they deserve. Developing a strong ethical foundation and understanding of good governance principles is crucial for building trust between citizens and the government. Educational programs should include more comprehensive modules on ethics in public service, anti-corruption measures, and strategies for enhancing transparency in government operations (Baimenov, 2022).

Lastly, the internationalization of civil service education programs in post-Soviet countries remains underdeveloped. While many of these countries aspire to align with European standards, their educational programs often lack sufficient exposure to international best practices and global perspectives on public administration (Ter-Matevosyan & Drnoian, 2020). Enhancing international cooperation through student exchange programs, inviting foreign experts as guest lecturers, and participating in international research projects can broaden the horizons of future civil servants. This exposure would not only improve their understanding of global governance issues but also foster innovation and new approaches to solving domestic challenges in public administration (Janenova, 2020).

In conclusion, the problems of training civil servants in post-Soviet higher educational institutions are multifaceted and deeply rooted in outdated systems and approaches. The main challenges include inconsistency between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, outdated curricula, lack of specialisation in educational programs, and insufficient adaptation to modern public administration needs. The solution to these issues requires a comprehensive reform of the educational system, involving not only changes in curricula and teaching methods but also modifications in the legal framework and organisational structure of civil service training. Moreover, the implementation of innovative programs, the introduction of practice-oriented learning, and the establishment of closer cooperation between educational institutions and government bodies are crucial steps towards improving the quality of civil servant education. By addressing these challenges, post-Soviet countries can significantly enhance the competence and effectiveness of their civil servants, ultimately leading to more efficient and responsive public administration systems that align with contemporary global standards and local needs.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the study, it was found that the current state of educational and methodological tools and

approaches in the universities of the post-Soviet space is unsatisfactory. So, many problems are both general and local, which indicates an extremely adverse impact of individual shortcomings on the educational system. The study analysed general educational issues at the highest level, which provoke many other contradictions. Among them, one can single out those shortcomings that are contained in general regulations, i.e., standards or orders of special state bodies. As for local issues, they are conditioned upon the specific features of the form of a particular state, as well as the type of university. Accordingly, in some of them, an important role is played by the method of financing the educational activities of students, as well as the distribution of specialties and qualification programs. Having systematically investigated each of them, one can unequivocally assure that the issues provoked by these issues are their inconsistency with modern requirements imposed not only on the educational process but also on civil servants.

A necessary condition for increasing the effectiveness of the implementation of educational and professional training of students is the modernisation of the entire

educational environment. This applies not only to particular educational and methodological plans and tools, but to approaches and understanding of the concept of civil servants, their essence, and their role in society. The implementation of the solutions established in this study allows for fully improving the quality of the acquired knowledge and skills of students, which will ultimately affect the activities of public authorities. Therewith, this subject is quite debatable and is subject to further consideration, especially in the context of the analysis of the latest programs and technologies for retraining and advanced training of civil servants and officials of local self-government, including in a remote format. A promising area for future research is the consideration of modern programs, including remote ones, to improve the professional competence of civil servants and name their main shortcomings.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Проблеми підготовки державних службовців у пострадянських вищих навчальних закладах

Анотація. Дослідження проблемних аспектів підготовки державних службовців у пострадянських країнах сьогодні є надзвичайно актуальним. Це, пов'язано з активною політикою перепідготовки кадрів за європейськими підходами. Таким чином, дослідження проблем, які наразі перешкоджають ефективному навчанню державних службовців, дозволяє знайти шляхи їх вирішення та вдосконалити. Виходячи з цього, метою даного дослідження був аналіз основних підходів та інструментів, що використовуються пострадянськими вищими навчальними закладами для підготовки державних службовців. Відповідно, для її досягнення було використано різні науково-методологічні засоби, зокрема функціональний та системний підходи, а також метод аналізу та синтезу, порівняння, дедукції та узагальнення. В результаті було висвітлено як теоретичну, так і практичну частину питання. У першій частині дослідження було визначено сутнісний зміст основних понять і термінів, пов'язаних з досліджуваною темою, а також висвітлено їх особливості. Крім того, було детально розглянуто методи та підходи, які є основоположними у підготовці державних службовців у пострадянських країнах, та показано їх основні недоліки. Дослідження виявило, що основними проблемами підготовки державних службовців у пострадянських вищих навчальних закладах є застарілі навчальні програми, недостатня практична підготовка, а також недостатній фокус на розвитку критичного мислення та лідерських навичок. Крім того, дослідження виявило необхідність більшого акценту на етиці, прозорості та підзвітності в освіті державних службовців. Нарешті, результати дослідження свідчать про те, що включення більшої кількості тематичних досліджень, симуляцій та стажувань могло б значно підвищити ефективність програм підготовки державних службовців у цих країнах. Практична цінність дослідження полягає в тому, що воно може бути використане як методичний матеріал для вищих навчальних закладів, так і для особистого розвитку окремих працівників освіти.

Ключові слова: навчальний процес; компетентність; слухачі; модернізація; інноваційні технології