Toktomamat kyzy Roza[1]

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the recruitment and selection system of the civil service in the Kyrgyz Republic. The process is critical to improving the quality of the workforce and the effectiveness of public services. To achieve these goals, the authorities have improved the recruitment and selection system for public service based on merit. Merit-based recruitment helps to ensure the recruitment of the most talented people through fair and transparent processes, the better allocation of human resources, and the circumvention of corruption and nepotism.Based on a literature review and interviews with members of the Competition Committees, it was found that the current system faces several challenges, including the need for more transparency, insufficient capacity building, and weak performance management.

Keywords: *Recruitment, Selection, Civil service, Civil Servant, Interview, Members of Competition Committee, Meritocracy, Competency-based recruitment.*

INTRODUCTION

Any organisation's greatest asset is its people, and an effective personnel policy outlines the principles and directions for the development of the entire workforce. Human Resource Management (HRM) is a very important process and one of the outstanding and dynamic resources in every organisation. This stimulates other resources to achieve organisational goals and becomes an essential element in the current organisation and management. The personnel management process includes recruitment, selection, adaptation, remuneration, professional development, labour protection, motivation, bonuses, social package, and all other functions related to managing employees (Bakchiev, 2017). States that seek to improve efficiency and achieve their goals and objectives recognise that human capital is the most important asset. For the state apparatus to function efficiently, it is necessary to hire highly qualified personnel. Therefore, improving the system of recruitment and selection of personnel in the civil service is the most important issue.

In developing countries, the practice of selection for civil service through nepotism practices is traditionally considered one of the factors of poor quality of public administration, which nowadays causes public distrust of the authorities and gives rise to doubts about the transparency of state power (Owusu, 2006). The highly influential 1997 World Development Report asserted that "*Making a meritocracy of the civil service helps bring in high-quality staff, confers prestige on civil service positions, and can do a great deal to motivate good performance*" (World Bank 1997: 92).

According to the Law on Public Service and Municipal Service, the public service of the Kyrgyz Republic is divided into four types: (i) the State civil and municipal service; (ii) the Diplomatic service; (iii) the Law Enforcement service; and (iv) the Military Service.[2] The classification of public service positions are depicted in Figure 1. This paper will focus on the recruitment and selection for administrative positions in the civil service.

---

[1] Leading specialist of the Legal Expertise Division of the Legal Support Department of the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic. Email: roza.toktomamatkyzy.ch@gmail.com
[2] Law "On State Civil Service and Municipal Service" (No 125 /27/102021). The Law defines the procedure for entering the civil service; appointments; rotations; restrictions related to public service; duties and responsibilities; social guarantees; termination of service.

*Figure 1: Classification of **p**ublic service positions*
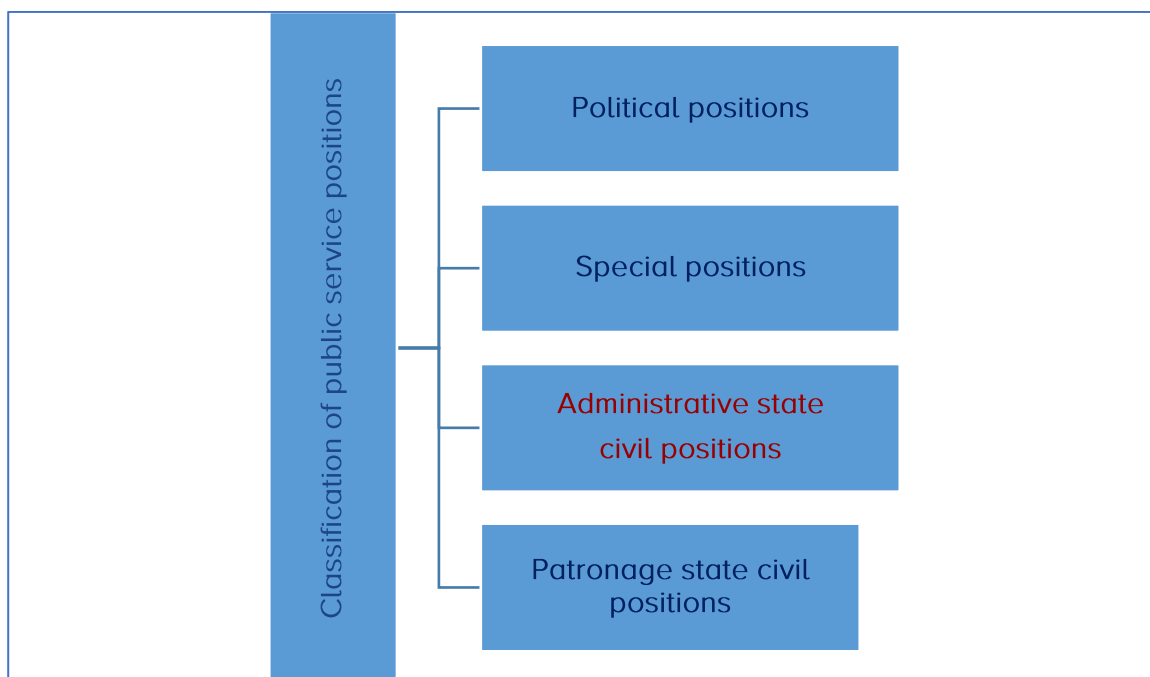
Source: Law on State Civil Service and Municipal Service

The State Agency for Civil Service and Local Self-Government Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic (Agency for Civil Service Affairs) is a state body responsible for the development, implementation, and provision of a general personnel policy in State institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic and local self-government bodies. The Agency is the main coordinating body for developing a unified personnel policy in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Since the proclamation of the State independence of the Kyrgyz Republic[3] from the Soviet Union, several measures have been taken to improve the civil service. To date, the stages of the formation of the civil service are divided into 4 stages, such as:

- Stage I. Preservation of the Potential of the civil service 1991 - 2004
- Stage II. Formation of the national civil service system 2004-2010.
- Stage III. Modernisation of the civil service system 2010-2016
- Stage IV. A new model of the public service system – the Law "On Public Civil Service and Municipal Service" (the Law on Public Service) of 27 October 2021 (Alymkulova, 2022).

The transition to a new model of public service was prompted by the Decree of the new President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov. The Decree "On the new State Personnel Policy" of 29 January 2021, was among the first three Presidential decrees after the election. According to this Decree, "People with progressive thinking, aware of their responsibility to the people, with appropriate qualifications and moral principles should be appointed to state and municipal positions". Thus the cardinal improvement of the system, reduction of corruption risks, and improvement of the selection of personnel for the state and municipal positions were included in its provisions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As noted above, the stages of the formation of the civil service are divided into 4 stages and since the adoption of the new Law "On Public Civil Service and Municipal Service" of 27 October 2021, the civil service has switched to a new model of the civil service system.

---

[3] Date of independence 31 August 1991 (from the USSR).

The new legislation gives a significant role to the heads of state bodies in forming the apparatus by creating personnel reserves, holding open competitions, and filling vacant positions from the formed reserve of personnel of a state body. Likewise, an analysis of the reforms carried out in the public administration system show that the streamlining of the functions of state bodies, changing their structure and mode of functioning, ensuring transparency of the activities of public authorities, the placement of personnel based on a competency-based approach is necessary to strengthen the potential of the state, increase the efficiency of public administration (Abdukarimova, 2019).

This situation is very characteristic of the transitional stage of the Kyrgyz Republic: "The reform of the executive branch of government should be based on a simple rule: it is impossible that only the social processes themselves should be reformed; at the same time the bodies that manage this process should change, personnel should be appointed according to the results of merit" (Abdukarimova, 2019: 408). Isakov (2018) in his article, also supports this idea and agrees with this statement and analyses the problems of personnel recruitment in state bodies of the Kyrgyz Republic. He also argues that the effectiveness of state and municipal management largely depends on how well the activities of the state and municipal service as a legal and social institution are organised, the work on the recruitment, selection, placement, training, and retraining of personnel, and how well professional qualifications and labour organisation meet modern requirements.

According to a comparative analysis, of the differences between the results for the Kyrgyz Republic and two other countries Romania and the Slovak Republic transparent, competitive recruitment and selection procedures should probably be one of the first steps towards reforming the civil service in Kyrgyzstan (Anderson, 2003). These conditions remain relevant since a unified methodology for evaluating candidates and transparency of recruitment and selection procedures have not yet been developed at the legislative level for selecting competent people.

According to Shuklinova (2013), one of the main methods of competitive selection in the state civil service is an interview. According to the Regulations on the competitions, the interview is conducted by the competition commission.[4] However, there is a gap in the Law on Public Service and there are no clear criteria for evaluating candidates. According to the Regulations on the conduct of the competition, "Based on the results of the interview, the commission decides on a recommendation to enroll a candidate in the personnel reserve or to reject the candidacy. Each member of the commission votes only "for" or "against" the recommendation of a candidate to the personnel reserve". Therefore, the question arises about the objectivity of the interviews conducted by the competition commission. There is also a risk for a head of a state body, since the composition of the competition commission of the state body is approved by its head. And there are no clear requirements for the members of the commission themselves, except as specified in the Regulations for competitions (Article 8).

The composition of the competition commission must include:

- The head (specialist) of the personnel management service;
- The Commissioner for the Prevention of Corruption (if any);
- A civil society representative and/or a veteran of state or municipal service (as agreed).

The maximum number of commission members should not exceed 9 people. 6 members of the competition commission out of 9 are approved at the discretion of the head of the state body. This raises the question of the competence of the members of the competition commission themselves.

---

[4] Regulation No 24 (2 February 2022) on the procedure for holding an open tender for inclusion in the reserve of personnel of the state civil service and municipal service of the state body and local self-government body, its formation and functioning.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

According to Isaac (2018), recruitment and selection are basic functions of Human Resource Management. It involves planning for human resources to job design, job description, job analysis, creating awareness, among others, and ensuring that at each stage of the recruitment and selection process the planned strategies are followed. Barbar (1998) indicates two important phases in the recruitment process: attracting large numbers of applicants and making **the best selections** out of the total pool of applicants. To manage a diverse workforce effectively, an organisation must hire the most capable candidate for a job, while being mindful of the necessity to build a workforce representative of the greater business community. This can be achieved through using more appropriate and inclusive recruitment and selection strategies.

Recruitment process

Recruitment is the process of generating qualified, skilled and knowledgeable candidates for employment (Gold, 2007). As a result, the organisation's objective is to find suitable candidates who meet the employment requirements. For Adu-Darko (2014), it is the process of obtaining applicants with the requisite experience, knowledge, skills, qualifications, and attitude. Armstrong (2006) argues that recruitment is about identifying and **hiring the best person to fill a vacant position.** And Castello (2006) states, recruitment involves using methods to obtain qualified persons to fill vacant positions legally.

An organisation's recruitment activities should attract enough and suitable potential employees to apply for vacancies. Cole (2002) argues that this is the primary goal. A selection activity's primary purpose is to identify and persuade the *best* candidates for a position within the organisation. The importance of efficient and effective recruitment and selection procedures cannot be overstated. According to Cole (2002), organisations can take advantage of opportunities and cope with threats and competition when they hire qualified employees who fit into their roles and are competent, while other organisations have difficulty finding and retaining workers. A recruiting and selection process attracts people for a job opening, according to Dessler (2002). Jovanovic (2004) defined recruitment as the process of attracting high quality applicants and selecting the *best* among them. In Yaseen's (2015) view, recruitment means attracting and finding **competent** candidates according to the jobs or key positions requirements.

These stetaments suggest that recruitment is the process of finding the most appropriate persons to fill vacant positions/job in an organisation. These persons must necessarily satisfy organisational recruitment requirements such as experience, knowledge, skill, qualification(s) and attitudes for the job. One of the most important functions of the Human Resource Department of every organisation is attracting potential employee(s) who have the requisite qualification, skills, knowledge, experience and attitude to take up the job offer to fill a vacancy (Muscalu, 2015). In attracting applicants for a job, management should identify sources of recruitment. The sources of recruitment an organisation could consider are **internal sources and external sources.** However, according to Muscalu (2015) it is appropriate to use both sources so as to increase the company's chances of attracting the most qualified person for the job.

Table 1: Sources of recruitment

Internal sources	External sources
Promotions	Human resource recruitment consultants
Transfers	Executive recruiters
Internal advertisement	Public advertisement
Recall	Graduate recruitment
Hiring employees the second time	Recommendation

Source: Muscalu, 2015

Bateman (1993) pointed out that internal recruitment is one of the best sources of applicants for job openings, and promotion from within is a policy many organisations follow. The benefits of internal recruitment include reducing costs over external recruitment, as well as no need for induction as employees already know the business. As a result of this form of recruitment, employees are motivated to work hard to achieve higher positions, which boosts their morale and develops loyalty among them. The reduction of employee turnover is among its benefits (Akrani, 2011). In contrast, Isaac (2018) argues external sources provide wider coverage of candidates than internal sources. Candidates for the vacant position are less likely to be subject to favoritism, partiality, or bias.

Selection process

In the employment process, selection is the second step. Selecting the best candidate for a particular position involves identifying her or his qualifications. Performance requirements are used in selection to determine the candidate's suitability for the job (Yaseen, 2015). Nalarine (1999) explains that selection involves assessing candidates by various means and making an appropriate choice followed by an offer of employment. Casteller (1992) defines selection as the process of finding candidates for vacancies in an organisation. Applicants should meet specific competencies related to the job. According to Swanepoel et al. (2003), selection is the process of selecting the best candidates for a job based on individual differences, such as the potentials an applicant can bring to the board.

Based on Robert (2005), selection is about evaluating candidates and selecting high-quality personnel. As Robert points out, selection is a matter of prediction. The most qualified, skilled, knowledgeable, and potential candidates are screened and sorted, and other procedures are used to separate them from those with less qualifications, skills, knowledge, and potential. Casteller outlined the following as some of the aims for selection and the factors to consider when selecting: (1) Gather relevant information of applicants; (2) Analyse, organise, and evaluate information of applicants to make a choice; (3) Assess each applicant to determine their suitability; and (4) Provide information of the company to applicants for them to make a decision to work in the company. The selection process involves collecting facts from a job applicant and studying the candidate's experience, beliefs, and opinions regarding predetermined selection criteria. The programme manager, as an interviewer, has several very important responsibilities, including developing the process, asking questions, and facilitating the interview (Wehman and Targett, 2002).

Public service quality and effectiveness are determined by the recruitment and selection process of the civil service. Providing public services, implementing government policies, and promoting good governance are all responsibilities of the civil service. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the civil service is staffed with competent and qualified personnel selected through a transparent and fair selection process. The lack of a clearly structured personnel interview, according to Shuklinova (2013), is one of the main reasons why the civil service's selection procedures are inefficient, since subsequent questions are asked based on the answer to the previous ones, in a free form (unstructured interview).

Merit-based recruitment and selection

According to Ventura (2018), the merit system is a crucial aspect of the recruitment and selection process in civil service. David McClelland recognised a human trait in 1953 and wrote a seminal paper in 1973 that raised questions about the reliability of intelligence tests as a predictor of job success. McClelland argued that the best predictors of outstanding on-the-job performance were underlying, enduring personal characteristics that he called competencies. According to the World Development Report 1997: "The State in a Changing World bureaucracies with more competitive, merit-based recruitment and promotion practices and better pay are more capable, motivated staff is the lifeblood of an effective state". Employees can be motivated to perform effectively in different ways, however, the most important would be through recruitment and promotion systems based on merit.

Rynes and Rosen (1995) provide empirical evidence that top management attitudes toward diversity training are associated with training adoption. HR professionals who advocate for interviewer training may face some managerial resistance but incur numerous benefits. Refining this analysis can provide even more insight into issues relevant to interviewer training, such as the genesis of the attitudes toward the interviewer training process and the benefits and limitations of the interviewer training process. Merit-based recruitment and selection depend in large part on competent selection committees/commissions, which should exclude political positions and members, receive appropriate training, and be appointed for longer periods of time. According to Haider, "Merit-based recruitment in the public sector remains a challenge due to the prevalence of nepotism and corruption" (Haider, 2019).

To implement revised merit-based recruitment procedures, the capacity of selection commissions must be strengthened through specialised training and guidance, including **guidelines for interviewers, evaluation criteria for examinations, rating sheets, and training designed to certify the members of selection commissions.** According to Amegashie-Viglo (2014), the recruitment and selection processes of public sector organisations should be conducted with maximum credibility and integrity to eliminate perceptions of influences or factors other than merit. The study recommends that recruiters exhibit friendliness, knowledge of the job area, truthfulness, and integrity.

In Japan, meritocracy is at the heart of the merit system. In other words, individuals are chosen and promoted based on their skills, knowledge, and accomplishments rather than their social status, connections, or personal relationships. This system ensures that people who demonstrate commitment and aptitude are rewarded for their efforts. Meritocracy also encourages employees to strive for excellence, leading to improved productivity and a healthier workplace culture. "It is necessary to take the examination of the National Personnel Authority (NPA) to become a national civil servant (entry-level officer) except for specific job types. Persons who pass the NPA examination are placed on the list of candidates for initial appointment from which the appointments of each ministry select persons they want to interview for possible employment. This makes for what is called a two-step selection process" (Hiroaki Inatsugu 2020: 22). After the interviews, the ministry selects from the list of candidates and appoints them as entry-level officers. The NPA uses this two-step selection process to ensure that only the best and most qualified candidates are chosen. It also helps to ensure fairness and objectivity in the selection process.

In order to deeply understand the Japanese personnel selection system, the author had the opportunity to conduct an interview with a former member of the NPA for this study on 8 August 2022 at Meiji University. The former NPA employee first presented the Japanese recruitment and selection system, and then answered the researcher's questions in the second part. The interview lasted for two hours, and the researcher gained valuable insights into how the Japanese personnel selection system works. The researcher understood the various steps in the recruitment and selection process and the different criteria used to evaluate candidates. The National Public Service Act adopts the merit system as one of basic principles of human resources management of national public employees. Article 33 of the Act stipulates "Appointment of an official shall, pursuant to the provisions of this Act, be made entirely based on the result of his/her examination, the result of his/her personnel evaluation or other demonstrated abilities". The merit principle is the important fundamental principle of modern civil service system. Recruitment for various officer-level positions.

In Japan, there are four types of examinations based on the level of the position. For each type of position, there are different types of testing, but in each case, the interview is the same. Initially, the interview will be conducted in the NPA, then in each ministry. NPA develops a list of successful candidates, and ministries can invite candidates to the final stage of the interview based on the interview results.

Table 2: Evaluation Points in the Interview

№		Points
1	Aggressiveness (motivation, ability to take action)	
2	Sociability (ability to understand others, ability to build relationships with others)	
3	Reliability (sense of responsibility, ability to accomplish his/her task)	
4	Ability to Learn Experience (recognition of issue, application of experience)	
5	Self-control (emotional stability, control)	
6	Communication skills (expressiveness, ability to persuade others)	

*Source: provided by the National Personnel Authority of Japan*

Candidates should be evaluated during an interview for their skills, competencies, and knowledge. As well as asking questions about the candidate's attitude, aptitude, and motivation, they also probe their ttitude and aptitude. A successful interview should assess a candidate's ambition (willingness to set goals and overcome challenges) and a positive attitude (ability to stay motivated and work productively). Problem-solving skills and critical thinking are also assessed by employers. Team-oriented candidates should also be sought by employers. Today's workplace requires good communication skills and the ability to work well with others. Another factor employers should consider is reliability. They must be responsible and able to complete their tasks on time and to their best ability. Additionally, employers should assess the candidates ability to work collaboratively and effectively with their team members.

Furthermore, they should be able to recognise issues and provide solutions based on their experience and knowledge. Candidates social skills are also crucial for employers to consider when assessing their abilities. These skills will allow candidates to express themselves clearly and coherently to their colleagues. Problem-solving skills will help them to identify and address issues quickly and effectively. Lastly, creativity can help to provide innovative solutions to difficult problems.

COMPETENCY-BASED RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Competency models are effective measurement tools that help employees agree on a common language and comprehend what is understood by superior performance (Chouhan and Srivastava, 2014). They also help align internal behaviour and skills with the strategic direction of the organisation as a whole. The word "competency" has its origins in the Latin word 'competentia', which means "is authorised to judge" and "has the right to speak". Its meanings are broad, vague, and inferred, which subject to a variety of interpretations. The definition of competency is one of the most fraught tasks in business research, with little agreement among researchers. McClelland (1973) presented data that traditional achievement and intelligence scores may not be able to predict job success. Boyatzis (1982, 2007) identified 19 generic management competencies that outstanding managers tend to have and clubbed those generic management competencies into five distinct clusters: (1) goal and action management; (2) leadership; (3) human resource management; (4) directing subordinates; (5) and focus on others. Lucian and Cristina (2007) explained the concept of competency, how it is linked to performance and one's career development, and looked into some models of competency mapping and appraisal tools. Competency-based approaches have evolved from distinctions between best-in-class (exemplary) and fully-successful performers to become a link between organisational strategy and organisational and individual performance. Training and development professionals are using competency models to improve human performance.

Figure 2: Concept of competency
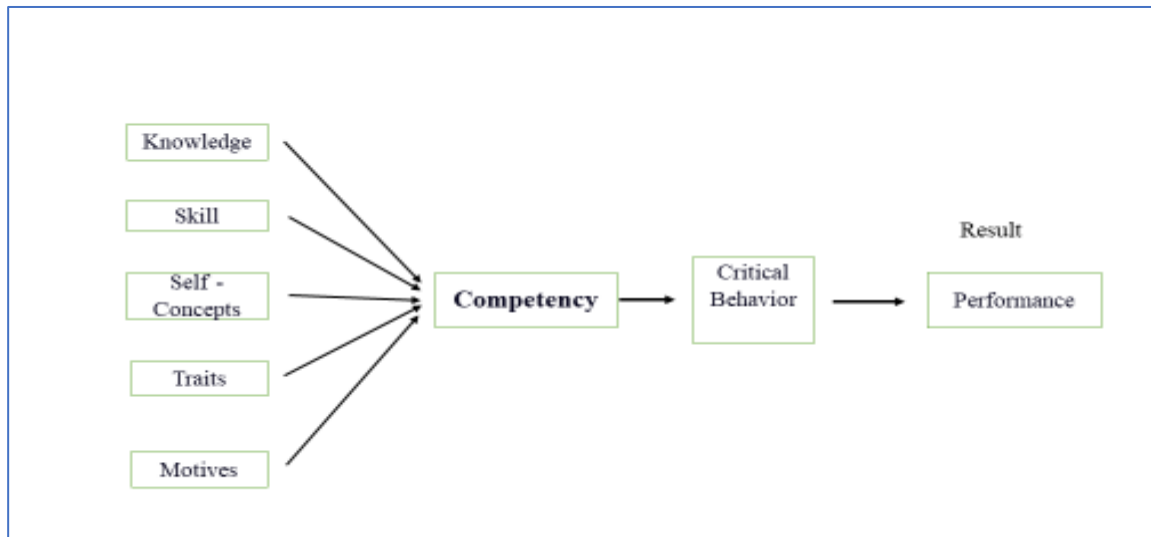
Source: Chouhan and Srivastava (2014)

(Tucker and Cofsky, 1994) identified five main components of competence and on these five types of competence characteristics Chouhan and Srivastava (2014) clearly showed these five components of competence (Figure **2**). They argued that motives and traits may be considered initiators of what people will do on the job without close supervision. A critical behaviour leads to higher performance, as shown in Figure 2. There is always a correlation between knowledge, skill, and attitude that determines the level of performance (low, moderate, or high). They suggest that when an individual has the right combination of knowledge, skill, and attitude, they are better able to perform critical behaviors that lead to higher performance. The authors also note that without close supervision, these traits and motives can be the driving force behind an individual's job performance. Therefore, it is important for managers to set clear expectations and provide feedback to ensure that employees have the right combination of knowledge, skill, and attitude for the job. This will enable them to effectively perform critical behaviours and reach their highest level of performance.

The experience of conducting a professional interview during a competitive selection in the state civil service of the Tambov region in the Russian Federation. In the framework of the Federal Programme "Reforming and Development of the civil service system of the Russian Federation (2009 – 2013)", the staff of the "State and Municipal Administration Department of the First Tambov branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration developed a professional interview for a competition to fill vacant positions of the civil service in the Tambov region in the executive bodies of state power.[5] The developed methodology of professional interviews for vacant positions of the state civil service of the Tambov region has already proven itself as an effective tool for competitive selection.

A structured professional interview is characterised by standard questions formulated in advance relating to upcoming (performed) work, and the answers are assessed according to the criteria derived from its content; in points (Shuklinov and Shabelnikov, 2013). This professional interview is designed for two categories of civil service positions: "managers" and "specialists". As each category requires a different set of questions related to professional knowledge and skills. The project leaders found out that in many cases questions are asked for all categories of positions almost equally, and this was considered one of the factors that the results of the interview will be ineffective. Hence, they divided the professional interview into 5 phases, which set the order of transition.

---

[5] Project leaders were Shuklinov M. V., and Shabelnikova E. N.

A personnel interview is a stressful situation that requires the candidate to calm down, focus, and eventually open up. According to personnel selection specialists, it is advisable to begin the interview with simple questions, not touching on serious topics from the outset, and only then proceed to the main phases. Hence, as part of the first phase, the applicant is contacted, which includes greeting the candidate, presenting the candidate for the vacant state civil service position to the competition commission, expressing gratitude for participating in the competition, and establishing trust with the candidate. In the next phase, "General information," the commission uses its discretion to clarify any information in the candidate's documents, including marital status and place of residence. In the third phase, "Education", the following points will be clarified: specialisation of education (thesis or research work conducted during studies, retraining), additional qualifications (advanced training courses, certificates, internships, seminars, grants), further educational plans.

Professional development is the main phase of the professional interview. Candidates are evaluated in points during this phase in order to determine whether they possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for the desired vacant position. This phase includes the following blocks. Each block has an evaluation criterion for positions: high (3 points), medium (2 points), and low (1 point).

Block 1 - Understanding the priorities of the state civil service.
Block 2 - Professional knowledge and skills.
Block 3 - Focus on quality and results.
Block 4 - Communication skills.
Block 5 - Motivation to occupy the desired position.

The professional interview ends with the fifth phase, where the results are summed up, a short summary is given, an indication of further actions, and words of gratitude for the conversation are pronounced.

CHALLENGES OF THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

Interviews

According to Camp (2011), an employment interview is one of the most commonly used selection tools, but most interviews are conducted by individuals who are untrained in the interview process. A competitive interview is a stage of selection that always elicits ambiguous responses from candidates. Armstrong's (2006) work interprets an interview as a conversation with a specific purpose, in which candidates share information about themselves, their experience, and their career goals. The goal of the interview is to accurately predict the performance of candidates in the workplace for which they are applying. The interview must be planned, directed, and controlled in order to achieve this goal. Considering how frequently managers make mistakes during interviewing and hiring processes, it is puzzling why they lack training. Trainers often advocate a structured interview process, but most managers still do not follow this method, which may explain why organisations may not provide interviewer training.

Camp's study (2011) focuses on why most managers conduct job interviews unprepared. Considerations regarding potential discrimination complaints make this practice particularly alarming. Even though employment interviews are among the most widely used selection tools, most interviews are conducted by individuals who do not have any training for this important task. The recruitment of qualified personnel is a priority at all levels of government and is one of the most challenging tasks that face all public administrators (Basu, 1994). To remain competitive in the labour market, the public sector must develop competitive strategies. The recruitment and selection process is a major issue for public employers. A recruitment process involves obtaining sufficient qualified employees to fulfill the organisation's mission. According to Owusu (2006), one of the factors contributing to poor quality of public administration is the practice of nepotism in civil service selection. In addition, it has been found that the introduction

of meritocratic selection in the state apparatus reduces the risk of corruption and improves governance quality (Dahlström et al., 2012)

Nepotism and Favoritism:

Management sometimes uses their position to recruit family members, friends, and allies instead of the most qualified candidates. As a result, the recruitment and selection process cannot achieve its goal of recruiting the most qualified candidates (Armstrong, 2009).

As defined above, recruitment involves finding the most qualified persons to fill vacant positions. In addition, these individuals must meet organisational requirements, including experience, knowledge, skill, qualifications, and attitudes. A Human Resource Department's most important function is to attract potential employees who have the qualifications, skills, knowledge, experience and attitude to fill a vacancy (Muscalu, 2015). Identifying recruitment sources can help management attract candidates for a job. There are two sources of recruitment an organisation can use; internal and external. Muscalu points out, companies should use both sources to increase their chances of attracting the best candidates. However, as Sundell (2014) argues, the meritocratic recruitment of civil servants is an integral component of a professional bureaucracy but despite reform efforts, patronage and nepotism continue to constitute pervasive problems in the administrations of many countries.

Competition Commissions

Recruitment and selection on merit depend on competent selection committees. Improving the professionalism of the members of the competition commission will directly affect the final result of the interview. Similarly, trained members of the commission with specific clear criteria for evaluating candidates during selection contribute to the accurate determination of the list of successful candidates. This leads to the placement of a competent candidate. This is because well-trained and competent members of the committee will be able to properly evaluate candidates following the requirements for the position and distinguish between those who have qualifications and those who do not.

In addition, they will be able to make objective decisions based on the criteria provided to them and not rely solely on subjective opinions. There will be no dominance on the part of management during the appointment of a competent candidate since the list of successful candidates with points scored is clearly visible. This eliminates any potential bias in the recruitment process and ensures that the most qualified candidate is appointed. It also creates a transparent system that allows easy tracking of recruitment decisions. This ensures that the process is fair and just for all applicants. This helps to create a positive employer brand, which in turn will attract the best talent to apply for the role.

Ultimately, this contributes to improving the public service recruitment and selection system. This will make the public service more competitive and effective in achieving its goals. It can also help to save costs in the long-term, as the recruitment process becomes more efficient. This will benefit the public by providing better services and increasing efficiency. It will also help to ensure that the most suitable and qualified candidates are selected for positions. This will lead to greater public confidence in the institution and its services.

Legal Gaps

Prescribing in detail the procedural aspects of organising a competition to fill a vacant position in the personnel reserve, the legislator did not clearly prescribe the criteria for appointing a person in the personnel reserve. The law only states that – **The head of a state body has the right to appoint to a vacant position a person who is in the personnel reserve, or a state civil servant.** Does the question arise if the appointment is in order of priority or according to certain qualified requirements? This paragraph of the law can be interpreted as it will benefit the employer, what is not prohibited by law is allowed. In this case, the candidates' trust is lost, and the prestige of the civil service is reduced. It is also not determined by what criteria the members of the competition commission will evaluate candidates during the interview, in the Regulation

on the procedure for forming the personnel reserve, only the point is written that, following the results of the interview, the commission decides on a recommendation to enroll a candidate in the personnel reserve or to reject the candidacy. Each commission member votes only **"for"** or **"against"** the recommendation of a candidate to the personnel reserve. There are also gaps in the legislation regarding the formation of members of the competition commission. To fill in these gaps in the legislation, in the next chapter, the author will conduct interviews with members of the competition commission to identify common problems and ways to solve them.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the purpose of this study the following research questions have been formulated: (1) What are the main problems in the selection stage of personnel for the public service in the Kyrgyz Republic? And (2) What skills and knowledge do the competition committee members need to possess to interview potential candidates for forming an effective professional apparatus in the state civil service? Figure 3 depicts the conceptual framework on which this study is based on.

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of the Research Study
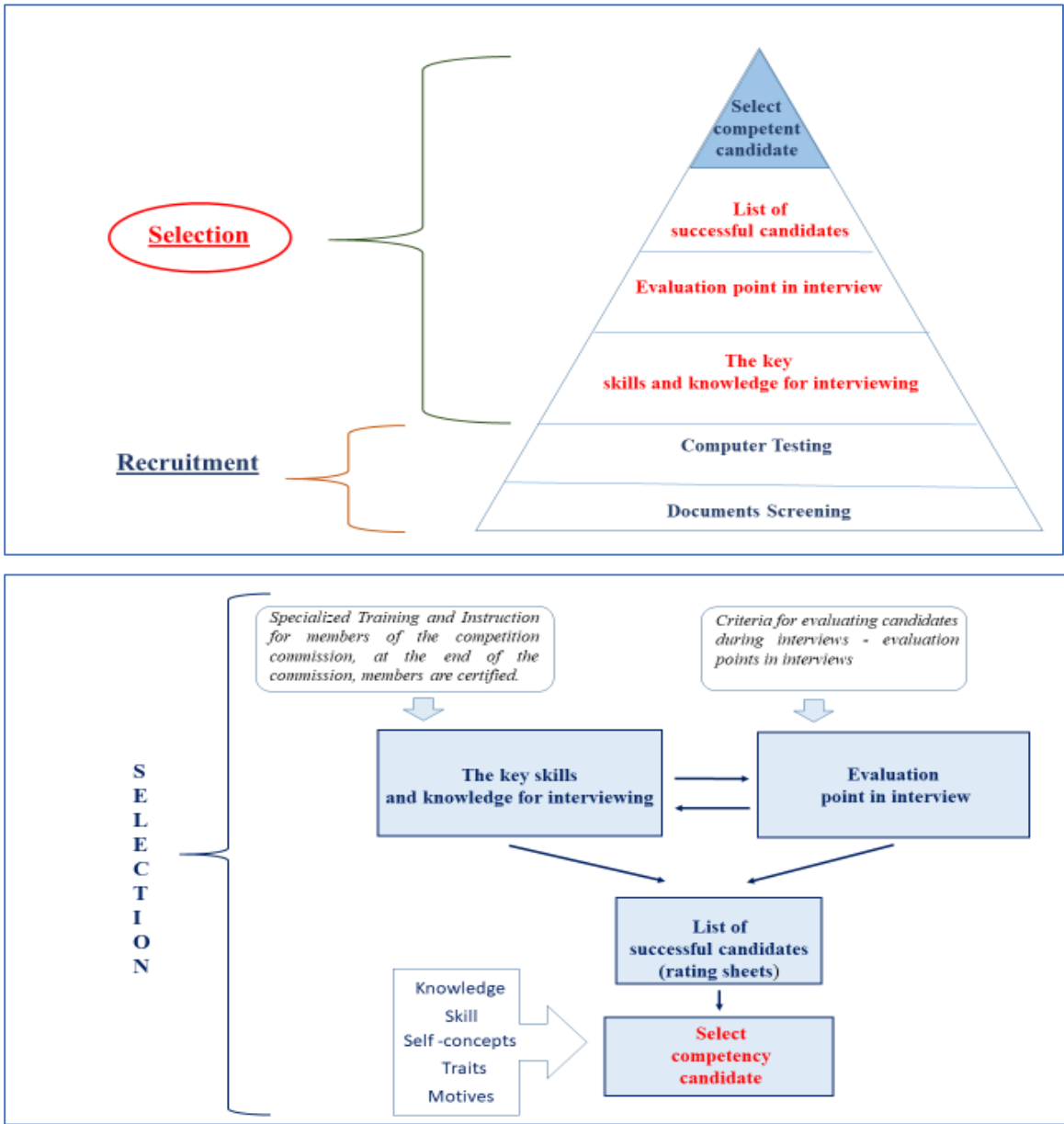
Source: Author (2023)

METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative method to conduct an in-depth study of current policies and practices in relation to human resource management, especially in improving the system of selection of civil servants; and to identify areas for further improvement. The author conducted interviews with key people from the Agency responsible for conducting a unified personnel policy in the Kyrgyz Republic.

As the purpose of this article is to present problems identified in the personnel selection processes for the public service in the Kyrgyz Republic, it uses data and information obtained through interviews with members of the Competition Commissions, who are directly responsible for selecting individuals to form an effective professional apparatus in the public service.

The following section provides information based on the analysis of the data obtained during the interviews. As no unified methodological support for the recruitment and selection of candidates and proper use at the selection stage exists, this analysis creates an opportunity to understand how the members of the Competition Commission conduct the selection process of candidates, which directly affects the formation of an effective professional state apparatus. Accordingly, this section focuses on research design through the lessons learned from the literature review and interviews, the data and their analysis depicting the results through figures, tables and graphs.

The respondents were selected using a purposive sample to obtain sufficient information to answer the research questions. Interviews were also conducted with representatives of the Japanese civil service to identify practices that can serve as a model to improve the system for selecting civil servants in the Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, legislative acts, government reports, publications, articles, and videos were used as secondary data sources. In this regard, the focus group of for this study were current and former members of the Agency's competition commission who are assumed to possess sufficient experience as a members of the competition commissions and their work at the Agency.

Semi-structured questions were prepared for the interview seeking to reveal the respondents' views on the subject matter. The first question asked was "what are the main requirements for candidates at the interview stage?" followed by several subsequent questions aimed at studying the criteria for selection, and what skills one should possess for conducting an effective interview, e.g., what qualities and skills are missing or are there problems in the recruitment and selection process are possible solutions to solve such problems.

Figure 4 shows the positions interviewees held in the organisation. Sixty-two percent are heads of departments. The remaining 38 percent hold positions at the highest, senior and junior levels.

Figure 4: Position of Interviewees
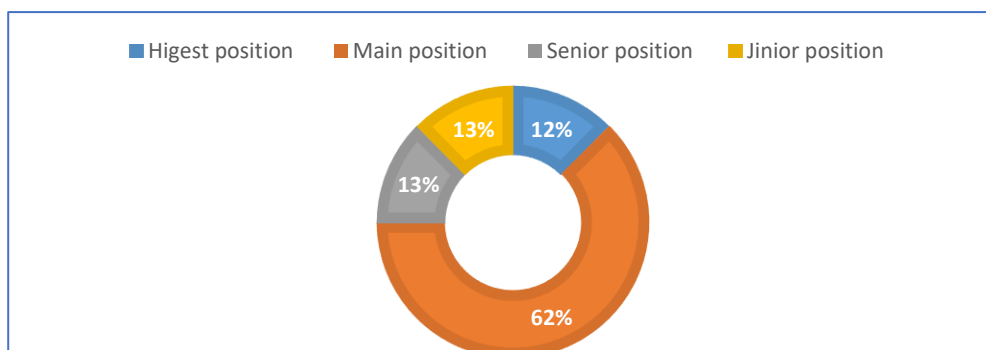
For the coding of the interview data, the Fig Jam application was used. The coding and the associated descriptions are shown in Table 3. For the analysis of the data the MAXQDA software was utilised.

Table 3: Theme coding and descriptions

Main theme	Sub-theme	Descriptions
Interview objectives	➢ Types of interview ➢ Method/ Organisation of interview	It describes specifically what type of interview is used and how the interview process is organised
Criteria for evaluating candidates	➢ Candidate qualities that are diagnosed during the interview process ➢ Most significant qualities demanded of a modern civil servant	It investigates the qualities of the candidate that are revealed during the interview process and the qualities required of a modern civil servant
Skills and knowledge of the competition commission members	➢ An objective and subjective approach	It describes what skills and knowledge the members of the commission have to conduct an effective interview
Challenges in the selection stage of personnel for public service	➢ Merit-based selection ➢ List of successful candidates ➢ The members of the competition commission are not independent	It investigates the current challenges in the selection stage of personnel for public service
The Improvement of the recruitment and selection system of civil servants	➢ Merit-based selection ➢ List of successful candidates	It explores and finds solutions to the current challenges faced in recruiting and selecting candidates for the public service

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Figure 5 shows that 80 percent of the respondents answered that an interview is the most effective method of evaluating candidates, and the remaining 20 percent that an interview and testing are equally effective. However, those respondents who answered that both methods are effective added that testing may provide additional information about the candidate, but an interview is the most important factor in evaluating a candidate. Additionally, the interview should be the primary method for deciding whether to hire a candidate. Many respondents also said that the interview should be used to gauge the technical and cultural fit of candidates.

Figure 5: An effective method of evaluating candidates
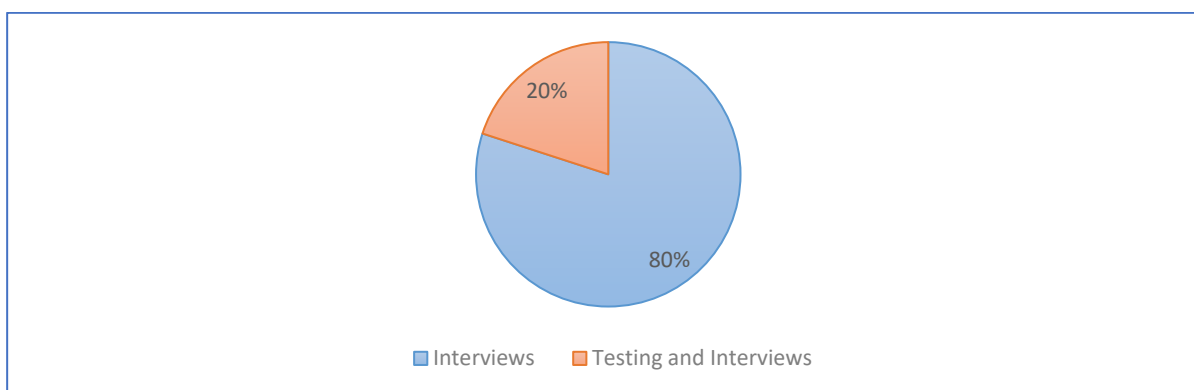
The respondents were then asked what type of interview was used in selecting candidates. None of the respondents could answer this question, although two respondents replied that a behavioural interview was used, and at the same time, two other respondents said that the

interviews were structured, and another four that they were unstructured. In sum, there was no consensus on the type of interview used for the selection of candidates.

Figure 6: Type of interviews in the candidate selection process
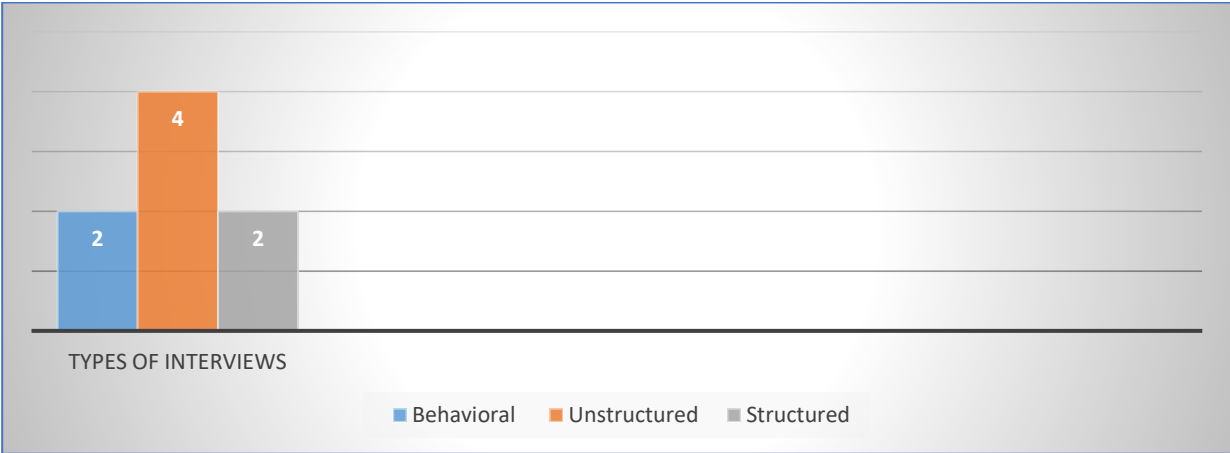
Among the major reasons the civil service's selection procedures are inefficient is the lack of a structured personnel interview, according to Shuklinova (2013), where subsequent questions are asked based on previous responses in free form (unstructured interview).

When respondents are asked what qualities are needed for a modern civil servant, the answers are seemingly unrelated to the question of what qualities are evaluated during the interview. This suggests that the interview process could be more effective if questions were tailored to the job. Questions should focus on the skills, knowledge, and experience that are essential for success in the role.

The respondents may have a narrow view of those competencies and may be unfamiliar with the complexities of the public authority's role. (Table 4) Therefore, it is important to ensure that the interview process evaluates candidates based on the competencies most relevant to the job. It is also important to provide candidates with a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

Table 4: Evaluation by the members of the competition commission of the required and diagnosed qualities/skills/abilities of civil servants in the interview process

Candidate qualities that are diagnosed during the interview process	Most significant qualities demanded of a modern civil servant
– Professionalism; – Knowledge legislation; – Ethical and moral indicators of the candidate; general sociability; – Communication style; – Appearance; – Ability to convince; – The motivation of the candidate.	– Analytical/Critical thinking; – Emotional intelligence; – Possession of modern technologies; – Teamwork; – Planning/ Organising; – Resilience / Ability to adapt quickly to new changes – Communication; – Commitment to continuous process improvement; – Ability to manage conflict situations

Professional qualifications are usually evaluated through standardised tests and interviews, while personal qualities often rely more on subjective perception and may not be as accurately assessed. This can lead to an imbalanced recruitment process which may not accurately reflect candidates' skills and abilities. This is because professional qualifications are more easily quantified and objectively assessed, while personal qualities are difficult to measure and are often left up to the recruiter's opinion. This can lead to a situation where those with the best

qualifications may not be the most suitable candidate for the job. The possibility exists that the hiring process did not take into account all of a candidate's potential talents and abilities, including their capacity for teamwork, problem-solving, and interpersonal interactions. This can happen because conventional hiring procedures give more weight to a candidate's professional credentials than to their other competencies. This means that even if candidates are highly qualified, they may not be the best choice for the job due to their lack of other skills necessary for success.

To find out what skills the members of the competition commission should have, the respondents were also interviewed about the skills and abilities of the commission members themselves, how they assess their skills, and whether the commission members need assistance in the form of support from HR units to conduct training sessions for each member of the commission. The members of the commission are untrained employees, except for three members who are appointed by the organisation's head, and there are no requirements or criteria for the members of the competition commission.

Civil service recruitment and selection system improvement requires a change in the regulatory and methodological framework a gradual and proven approach to personnel selection heads of structural divisions continually improving their potential personnel specialists in state agencies, who play a vital role in their formation state employees (Isakov, 2018). This approach ensures that the selection process is transparent and objective, taking into account the professional skills and qualifications of the candidates. It also helps to ensure that the right people are recruited for the right positions, which leads to improved performance and outcomes in the civil service.

In conclusion, the observations made during the conversation revealed some important problems related to the effective formation of the personnel of the state body, which entails consequences that significantly affect the selection and recruitment process. Table 5 presents the findings of existing problems and their consequences.

Table 5: Results of the interview

Problems	Causes/consequences (effects)
There is no unified regulation on the conduct of the competition; there is no methodology	Each member of the commission has different approaches to evaluation and this leads to incorrect organisation of competitive selections
Lack of a system for assessing the knowledge and competencies of the members of the competition commission	Lack of motivation of the members of the commission to work on themselves
The members of the competition commission have not been trained to conduct an effective selection process of candidates	The level of each member of the commission is differen; the members of the commission do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to evaluate candidates
There is no criterion for evaluating candidates; there is no unified evaluation form of candidates (Voting: for/against)	Subjective assessment of the selection process
According to the results of the interview, the rating of successful candidates is not compiled	Bias - candidates' trust is declining - this affects the prestige of the civil service
The decision-making process remains with the head of the organisation	Nepotism and lack of meritocracy system
Psychological characteristics of candidates / motivation of candidates are not evaluated	The leakage of personnel from the civil service is high
The majority of the commission members are appointed at the discretion of the head of the organisation	The members of the competition commission often change; there is no fixed term; bias

Without a unified regulation, the competition can become chaotic and difficult to control. This can lead to unfair outcomes and create a negative experience for participants. It is important to ensure that the competition is conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Lack of a system for assessing the knowledge and competencies of the members of the competition commission can have a detrimental effect on the credibility and legitimacy of the competition. To avoid this, it is essential to establish a system for regulating the competition process. This system should include the necessary checks and balances to ensure fairness and transparency.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The members of the competition commission, who are charged with conducting interviews with potential candidates for the formation of an effective professional apparatus in the civil service, lack the following skills and knowledge:

- Interpersonal skills:
- Analytical skills:
- Ethical standards:
- Time management skills and
- Objectivity

Overall, the commission members should have a combination of technical knowledge, interpersonal skills, and ethical standards to effectively interview potential candidates and form an effective professional apparatus in the state civil service.

As a result, assessing the candidate's competencies and skills often needs to be more accurate. The interviewers should be trained in interviewing techniques to ensure effective and meaningful interviews. They should also be aware of the potential biases that may arise during the interview process. This can help to ensure that all candidates are given equal opportunities and that the assessment is fair and objective. Interviewers should also be prepared to ask follow-up questions to ensure they obtain a complete picture of the candidate's qualifications. Furthermore, they should take notes and document the entire interview process. This will help to ensure that all candidates are assessed in an unbiased manner. This can also help to reduce the potential for bias or favouritism in the assessment process. By having all interviews documented, it allows for a more accurate comparison of the candidates and their qualifications. This also allows for any issues or discrepancies to be addressed and resolved quickly. The notes and documentation can also be used to re-assess the original criteria and objectives of the position when making a final hiring decision. This ensures that the candidate with the most relevant qualifications and experience is chosen. It also allows for a transparent review of the hiring process and ensures fairness for all involved.

1) Developing a unified methodology for the conduct of the competition commission, which will prescribe all points all members must follow;

2) There should be criteria for evaluating candidates, a form for evaluating candidates' answers, a list of questions (structured interviews) that should be included in the methodology not only for candidates, but also for competition commission members;

3) Establish a commission training programme. Training should be provided for members of the commissions on conducting interviews, assessing which qualities are important, identifying qualities, revealing candidates, determining motivations, etc;

4) To amend the legislation to prohibit the head of an organistion appointing a candidate without any criteria at his/her discretion;

5) As a solution, the author proposes to compute the final scores of candidates based on their interview results and according to estimates and compile a list of successful candidates based on these estimates;

6) To ensure transparency, it is mandatory to announce the results on the official website of the state body so that the candidates themselves can see them.

REFERENCES

Adu-Darkoh, M. (2014). Employee recruitment and selection practices in the construction industry in Ashanti Region. Unpublished thesis submitted to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for partial fulfilment for requirements for the award of a degree in Master of Business Administration (HRM) Option

Abdukarimova A.A., and Jalil Gulmira, (2019). "The importance of the personnel management service in the public service system Kyrgyz Republic" Moscow Economic Journal No. 1 2019 https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/znachenie-sluzhby-upravleniya-personalom-v-sisteme-gosudarstvennoy-sluzhby-kyrgyzskoy-respubliki/viewer

Anderson, J., Reid, G., and Ryterman, R. (2003). Understanding public sector performance in transition countries: An empirical contribution. Washington, DC: World Bank. http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/civilservice/UPSP%20final.pdf

Armstrong, M. (2006). Strategic HRM: The key to improved business performance. London: Kogan page Limited

Atkinson, J. D. (2017). Qualitative Methods. In *Journey into Social Activism: Qualitative Approaches* (pp. 65–98). Fordham University Press, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1hfr0rk.6

Bakchiev D.B, (2016). Improving the recruitment and selection of personnel in the civil service through modern human resource management. Centralised competitive selection. Analytical note. Bishkek: National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/574241

Basu R (1994). Public Administration, 3rd Reversed & Enlarged Edition. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers

Bratton, J. and Gold, J. (2007). Strategic human resource management. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Castello, D. (2006). Leveraging the employee life cycle, CRM Margazine, 10(12), 48-58, retrieved from Academic Search Premier Database

Cole, D. (2002). Designing the right blend combining online and onsite training for optimal results. Performance Improvement, 41 (4), 26-36

Dahlström C., La Puente V., Theorell J. The Merit of Meritocratization: Politics, Bureaucracy, and the Institutional Deterrents of Corruption // Political Research Quarterly. 2012. Vol. 65. No. 3. P. 656–668. URL: https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912911

Decree "On approval of the State Strategy for the Development and formation of personnel in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2023-2025", 8 February 2023 https://www.president.kg/ru/sobytiya/24271_utverghdena_gosudarstvennaya_strategiya_razvitiya_i_formirovaniya_kadrov_na_2023_2025_godi

Dessler, G. (2002). Human resource management, (8th ed). New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall

Duisenov E.E. (2003). Legal problems of public administration reform (Republic of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic): Almaty, Kazakhstan

Iskakov I. I. (2018). Staff recruiting problems for the state civil service and the municipal service of the Kyrgyz Republic

Lucian Cernusca & Cristina Dima, 2007. Competency and Human Resources management, s. l.: Aurel Vlaicu University, Romania

Hiroaki, I. (2020). Comparative Study of the recent developments of the civil service systems (Japan, US, UK, Germany and France). Publication: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Muscalu, E. (2015). Sources of Human Resources Recruitment Organization. Land Forces Academy Review, 20, https://www.armyacademy.ro/reviste/rev3_2015/MUSCALU.pdf

Nalarine Cornelius (1999). Human Resource Management: A Managerial Perspective, International Thomson Business Press, 1999

National Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2026. (n.d.). (Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic No 435, 12 October 2021, http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ruru/430700

New Personnel Policy (2021). Decree of the President of Kyrgyz Republic S.Zhaparov, UP №2, https://www.president.kg/ru/sobytiya/ukazy/18511_ukaz_prezidenta_sadira_ghaparova_onovoy_gosudarstvennoy_kadrovoy_politike

Owusu F. Differences in the Performance of Public Organizations in Ghana: Implications for Public-Sector Reform Policy // Development Policy Review. 2006. Vol. 24. No. 6. P. 693–705. doi:10.1111/j.1467-7679.2006.00354.x

Regulation on the procedure for holding an open tender for inclusion in the reserve of personnel of the state civil service and municipal service of the state body and local self-government body, its formation and functioning No 24, 2 February 2022, http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/preview/ru-ru/430848/10?mode=tekst

Robert, W. Tim, P. (2003). Competency based recruitment and selection, A Practical Guide, Goldsmiths College, University of London

Saginova, Nargis, (2017). "Implemendation of Meritocracy in the public sector of Kazakhstan, Nazarbaev University Graguate School of Public Policy https://nur.nu.edu.kz/bitstream/handle/123456789/3157/meritocracy.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Shuklinova Marina V., (2013). "Professional interview as a method of competitive selection for the civil service of the region", http://www.политуправление.рф/arhiv/2013/02/Shuklinova.htm

Scientific, European and Kuranchie, and Otoo, Isaac. (2018). Effectiveness of Recruitment and Selection Practices in Public Sector Higher Education Institutions: Evidence from Ghana. Vol.14, No.1 3.1857-7881 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333236513_Effectiveness_of_Recruitment_and_Selection_Practices_in_Public_Sector_Higher_Education_Institutions_Evidence_from_Ghana

Swanepoel, B., Erasmus, B., Van Wyk, M. and Schenk, H.. (2003). South African human resource management: theory and practice. Cape Town, South Africa. Juta Academic

Tucker, S.and Cofsky, K.. (1994) Understanding Competencies and Competency Modeling — A Literature Survey

UNDP (2015). Meritocracy for public service excellence. UNDP Meritocracy for Public Service Excellence | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

Wehman, P., and Targett, P. (2002). Supported Employment: The Challenges of New Staff Recruitment, Selection and Retention