

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN CIVIL SERVICE OF TAJIKISTAN: TRANSITION TO THE DEVELOPMENT STAGE

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ABSTRACT

This article outlines the human resource management policies of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for transitioning to the development stage of the civil service. Then, it presents the tasks that the Academy of Public Administration is taking to lay the conditions for the transition of the civil service to the development stage. It considers the development of a Strategy, training and the appointment of HR Specialists in each ministry vital tasks for moving forward.

Keywords: Human resource management; Tajikistan; Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape is characterised by a complex interplay of factors - geopolitical tensions, climate change, digital transformation, population growth, urbanisation, migration, and environmental degradation - that are fundamentally reshaping the realm of public administration. This confluence of challenges induces a challenging environment for making decisions and implementing effective governance strategies.

In this context, Tajikistan's government has demonstrated a clear commitment to enhancing the professionalism of its civil service at all levels. A prevailing trend within the country's government institutions is a concerted focus on redefining strategic priorities and objectives, leveraging digital technologies, and cultivating innovative human resources management approaches.

Recognising the complexity and multifaceted nature of these endeavours, it is essential to acknowledge the inherent contradictions and the necessity of aligning objectives, methods, and tools with the demands of the modern era. Thus, the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan assumes a pivotal role in collaborating with the government to enhance the efficiency of government institutions in the contemporary landscape. This is achieved through training of qualified specialists and the ongoing professional development of civil servants.

ROLE OF THE ACADEMY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Academy's primary focus is on empowering its teaching staff and developing cutting-edge educational programmes aligned with the country's strategic objectives. These efforts support the realisation of the Leader of the Nation's initiatives in achieving energy independence, overcoming communication challenges, ensuring food security, and transitioning Tajikistan from an agrarian to an industrial-agrarian economy.

The Head of State emphasised the imperative for industrialisation in his Address to the Majlisi Oli ('Supreme Assembly', the Parliament of Tajikistan) on December 26, 2019: "Times and needs are changing, and we must strive for industrialisation [...] of the country".² Historical evidence underscores the enduring significance of this decision: "The production efficiency of the industrial era is fifty times higher than the productivity of farming" (Covey, 2009).

To realise these objectives, a robust workforce comprising not only highly skilled specialists but also effective managers at all governmental levels is imperative. Consequently, human resource development has become a paramount focus for both policymakers and the Academy of Public

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² Address of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Leader of the Nation, respected Emomali Rahmon, to the Supreme Assembly (*Majlisi Oli*), on 26 December 2019, <http://www.president.tj/ru/node/21977>

Administration. Serving as a bridge between the government and the Tajik general public, the Academy is dedicated to cultivating professional, competent, and loyal civil servants and senior government officials equipped with the required knowledge, abilities, and skills to execute national plans and strategies.

Contemporary human resources management increasingly emphasises the significance of an individual as an employee. To optimise this potential, a judicious blend of human resources management philosophies, robust human resources management offices, innovative technologies, and the cultivation of shared values and ethical norms is essential. This approach aims to instil in employees a strong sense of behavioural and ethical alignment with organisational goals. Effective motivation is crucial for fostering integrity and strong performance. As aptly observed, "proper human resource management contributes to the formation of a sustainable competitive advantage. The personnel of a government agency, i.e., the people who work for it, can greatly improve its competitiveness. However, it should be noted that for this it is necessary to fundamentally change the way of thinking of senior management personnel, their attitude towards the workforce of the government agency and their views on relationships in the team" (Yarnykh, 2003).

Undoubtedly, civil servants are the cornerstone of any government, their role in socioeconomic development being invaluable. This necessitates continuous training, motivation, capacity building, and career development opportunities. Such endeavours inherently demand substantial investments in human capital enhancement. Analysis indicates that "Tajikistan has established a solid legislative framework encompassing human resource management to ensure transparency and effectiveness in public administration. A robust environment has been created to elevate the professional calibre of civil servants and optimise their performance.

The country has developed a clear-cut system for training, retraining, and upskilling civil servants. Furthermore, standardised procedures for recruitment, performance appraisal, and evaluation have been implemented to foster motivation and to incentivise civil servants. The talent pool mechanism has been meticulously outlined to systematically manage and track civil servant career trajectories" (Ergasheva, 2023). Thus, Tajikistan has established a comprehensive legislative framework for its civil service, which is successfully implemented and aligns with international standards.

Building on this foundation, the Academy of Public Administration emphasises proactive and forward-looking approach to "personnel development, prioritising the cultivation of progressive ideological perspectives grounded in the core values of the society and state" (Razzokov, 2012). Furthermore, the country has implemented the Unified Human Resources Management System for the Civil Service (Ergasheva, 2012). This system streamlines human resources management processes and ensures consistent implementation. By clarifying the relationship between functions and human resource management procedures, it enhances transparency. The country has established a foundation for effective human resource management, with the training and development of public administration professionals as a core component.

Prioritising human resources management technologies, the government supports initiatives to enhance the capabilities of senior managers. Strategically important educational programmes are organised to cultivate skilled and competent specialists, while fostering career advancement and instilling patriotism, integrity, and respect for national values.

In response, the Academy of Public Administration incorporates practitioners, scientists, and industry experts into the educational process. This approach aims to provide practical insights into personnel recruitment, selection, placement, adaptation, and career development, while also focusing on knowledge management for specialists across all sectors of the economy. Analysis indicates that top and middle-level government managers recognise that the primary objective of human resource management is to cultivate personnel capable and committed to fulfilling organisational objectives and functions.

As Tajikistan's civil service transitions from reform to development, a renewed focus on young employees is emerging. This approach emphasises a supportive and attentive environment for creative, responsible, and decisive individuals. Building upon this trend is crucial for optimising human potential and ensuring a sufficient pool of capable government managers. Ultimately, this will strengthen public trust in the government.

The success of a government agency hinges on effective personnel management and the strategic utilisation of human resource management technologies. To this end, efforts are underway to enhance the educational process by adapting to the evolving response to innovations and modernised landscape of human resource management. This includes empowering employees, cultivating skilled professionals who align with societal expectations, and are capable to facilitate achieving the national strategic goals.

Recognising that employee's dedication is fostered by alignment between personal and organisational objectives, the Academy of Public Administration has shifted its focus to a civil servant as a personality. This includes understanding employees' professional attributes, work ethic, and performance expectations.

The leadership of government agencies and their human resources management departments play a crucial role in creating conditions "for optimal utilisation of civil servants' intellectual and physical capacities, enhancing quality of life, strengthening employer-employee relationship, boosting motivation, and maximising productivity" (Vihoreva, 2022).

To achieve its goals, the Academy of Public Administration is currently working on its Development Strategy until 2030. This strategy will encompass systematic and targeted education and training of skilled personnel, identification of educational priorities including human resource management, continuous faculty development, enhancing the Academy's profile through media engagement, widespread adoption of IT-technologies, designing of both independent and collaborative internship and exchange programmes for faculty and students with partners from the CIS and other foreign countries, and effective distribution of responsibilities for implementing the activities included into the strategy.

The Development Strategy

A thorough analysis of past HR policies and human resource management documents will inform the development of the Academy of Public Administration's Development Strategy. This analysis will consider past experiences, potential and realistic opportunities, and the country's historical, regional, national, and cultural context. Human resource management, a central component of the document, will be defined as a framework of principles and mechanisms designed to influence the performance and behaviour of civil servants. The goal is to optimise the utilisation of their intellectual and individual capabilities in fulfilling their duties.

We are encouraged by the growing recognition among government agency heads of the importance of systematic human resource management to facilitate development. It is evident that alongside well-developed strategies, modern technologies, and streamlined processes, effective human resource management is essential for organisational success.

The core value of the Strategy will be to focus the Academy's activities on innovative educational approaches, contemporary human resource management practices, and advanced civil servant training aligned with global best practices. Systematically enhancing the teaching staff's expertise is crucial to this endeavour. This approach will enable the Academy to swiftly adapt to new challenges and maintain competitiveness with the private sector.

Training

Effective training, retraining, and upskilling of civil servants demands more than merely sending employees to courses held by the Academy. To foster a culture of lifelong learning among civil servants and achieve desired outcomes, ongoing improvements are needed in how government agencies organise their training activities. Without active engagement and ownership from

government agencies, these efforts will not yield the desired results. Only a well-structured system for continuously modernising human resource management methods, demonstrating care for each individual, and supporting their career aspirations can produce positive outcomes.

HR Specialists

We believe it is advisable to have a designated specialist in every government agency responsible for employee training and development. Such a specialist can fully focus on training issues, strategic planning, and organising professional development and training initiatives.

Currently, these tasks are handled by a supervisor or a person entrusted with the HR function. However, their heavy workload and multiple responsibilities prevent them from adequately focusing on personnel training. Having a dedicated staff member will enable the government agency to develop long-term training programmes for both the entire organisation and individual civil servants at various stages of their careers. This will also facilitate the timely updating, improvement, or modernisation of staff skills.

In turn, the Academy, in close cooperation with this designated individual, can develop specialised training modules and programmes addressing skill gaps and priority topics specifically relevant to the government agency.

This will also enable the creation of diverse training formats, including online courses, onsite trainings, workshops, seminars, roundtables, and retreats. Moreover, the Academy is prepared to collaborate both in organising large group events and in providing tailored training for specific target audiences.

Given that "public administration, like other operational and technological subsystems, ensures effective utilisation of allocated resources based on knowledge, qualifications, competencies, and technologies", the Academy of Public Administration aims to focus its educational processes and human resource management on ensuring that its graduates and students can compete with the private sector.

Therefore, the development of training programs and, more broadly, a clear mechanism for adapting to the new realities of the modern world is highly encouraged. This mechanism should facilitate the selection and placement of employees who possess a combination of professional and personal qualities, including competence, creativity, flexibility, social responsibility, and the ability to solve issues quickly and apply knowledge and skills effectively in practice.

Today's dynamic world, with its vast information resources and cutting-edge technologies, attracts young people with the prospect of working in a team environment that fosters self-development, provides opportunities for self-realisation and demonstrating their abilities, and offers trust and responsibility.

Therefore, we believe that the future development of the civil service should be inextricably linked to human resources management processes designed specifically for a public service capable of competing with the private sector.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, overcoming the challenges of the new reality requires concerted and purposeful efforts from the government, academia, public institutions, and the public. Well-organised work, effective public administration, and sustainable development are contributions of the civil service to achieving the country's strategic goals. This contribution is inextricably linked to further development aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the civil service as the primary mechanism of public administration, human resource management, and the moral and ethical foundations of serving to the state and civil society.

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