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ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF PUBLIC SERVANTS AS A GOVERNANCE TOOL FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST PREVENTION

Abstract

This article examines training for public servants as a tool for preventing conflicts of interest in the public administration system. The aim of the study is to analyze international approaches to conflict of interest training and determine their implications for improving the public servant training system in Kazakhstan.

The methodological basis of the study is a qualitative comparative analysis of international regulatory and educational materials developed by the UN, OECD, Transparency International, the International Anti-Corruption Academy, and the European Commission's Anti-Fraud Knowledge Centre, as well as an analysis of the national regulatory framework for training public servants in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The study's results demonstrate that, in international practice, conflict of interest training is viewed as an element of a broader public integrity system and is aimed at developing the professional competencies of public servants, including the ability to recognize conflicts of interest, assess risks, and make decisions in complex management situations. A comparison with the Kazakhstani's public servant training system shows that the topic of conflict of interest is present in educational programs; however, it is often addressed as part of general anti-corruption and ethics training and does not always receive separate, practice-oriented coverage.

In conclusion, it is noted that the development of conflict of interest training could be linked to a more explicit focus on this topic in educational programs and a focus on developing the applied competencies of public servants.

Keywords: conflict of interest; public integrity; anti-corruption training; public service; professional competence development

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts of interest in modern public administration are increasingly viewed not only as a legal issue but also as a management risk that can undermine public trust in government bodies and reduce the effectiveness of decision-making (OECD, 2020). Even in the absence of a formal violation of the law, such risks can negatively impact the transparency and legitimacy of public authority. In this regard, international anti-corruption policy standards emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to preventing conflicts of interest.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that in the practical work of public servants, conflicts of interest often manifest themselves in ways that require professional judgment and informed behavioral choices. In many

cases, knowledge of regulatory requirements alone is insufficient. This reinforces the importance of training as a tool for preventing conflicts of interest and developing sustainable professional standards.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2003 and entered into force in 2005, is one of the most important international standards. This document addresses various methods of combating corruption, such as developing a regulatory framework, preventing corruption, and strengthening integrity mechanisms in the public sphere (United Nations, 2003).

The Convention's main goal is to strengthen the system for preventing corruption by putting in place rules to stop conflicts of interest. This includes creating criteria for officials to follow when they disclose information and declare their interests and assets. Other resources on the subject of disclosure of interests and assets also stress this point. They say that these kinds of systems make things more open and help stop circumstances that could lead to corruption (Transparency International, 2015).

Meanwhile, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed specific guidance on conflicts of interest, the OECD Guidelines for Managing Conflict of Interest in the Public Service, which helps countries create more transparent and consistent systems for managing such risks in the public sector (OECD, 2004).

In addition to specific recommendations on conflicts of interest, the OECD develops a holistic understanding of public integrity as a set of institutions, rules, and practices aimed at increasing the resilience of governance systems to corruption risks. Specifically, the OECD has developed the Public Integrity Handbook, which serves as a practical tool for authorities seeking to implement a holistic approach to anti-corruption prevention, including training and capacity development for officials (OECD, 2020).

The OECD also released the Integrity Review of Kazakhstan: Advancing Integrity for Economic Development in 2025. This report looks at the country's public integrity system and suggests ways to make it stronger, such as better managing conflicts of interest and making public servant training more effective (OECD, 2023).

Thus, the relevance of this topic stems from the fact that in the modern public administration system, public servants increasingly encounter situations of potential conflicts of interest in their daily work. Such situations do not always have a clear legal solution and require professional judgment. In these circumstances, training is particularly important, helping not only to understand the rules but also to understand how to apply them in practice. Therefore, training is considered an important element in preventing conflicts of interest and strengthening trust in the public service.

This issue is particularly important for Kazakhstan. When it comes to the professional conduct of public servants, the national regulatory framework for anti-corruption and public service formally enshrines the obligation to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest. However, international reviews, such as the OECD Integrity Review of Kazakhstan, indicate a need to more deeply embed these standards into practice and create a culture of public integrity in which training is used as a preventative measure rather than a formal procedure (OECD, 2023).

The scientific significance of this article lies in its examination of conflict of interest training as an important element of public integrity. The paper focuses not so much on regulatory requirements as on educational approaches, their content, and practical application. This approach allows for a new perspective on the role of training in preventing conflicts of interest and expands scientific understanding of this issue.

Conflicts of interest in the public service system are linked not only to legal regulation but also to the development of professional competencies among public servants. These competencies include the ability to recognize potential conflicts of interest, evaluate potential risks for decision-making, disclose personal interests, and apply established resolution mechanisms. In this regard, training is viewed not only as a means of transferring regulatory knowledge, but also as a tool for developing practical skills in situations involving conflicts of interest.

This raises the question of the role training plays in preventing conflicts of interest in the public service. International approaches show that training is increasingly viewed not only as a means of informing about rules but also as a tool for developing practical skills and professional judgment. This approach allows training to be viewed as one element of preventing conflicts of interest and strengthening public integrity.

Based on the abovementioned, the purpose of this article is to analyze various approaches to training public servants on conflict of interest issues internationally and identify key trends that could be taken into account when modernizing the training system in Kazakhstan. This approach allows training to be viewed not as a technical formality, but as an important tool for improving the quality of management decisions and strengthening public trust in public administration.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative comparative analysis to identify key international approaches to training public servants on conflicts of interest. The empirical basis for the study was based on regulatory, methodological, and educational materials from international organizations, as well as documents regulating the public servant training system in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The analysis included materials from five international actors: the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Transparency International, the International Anti-Corruption Academy, and the European Commission's Anti-Fraud Knowledge Centre. These organizations were selected due to their role in shaping international standards of public integrity and developing educational tools for conflict of interest prevention.

The study's methodological basis is a qualitative content analysis of documents, comparative analysis and thematic classification. The first stage involved an analysis of international documents and educational materials to identify key elements of conflict of interest training, including learning objectives, the competencies developed, the training formats used, and the degree of practical orientation of the programs. The second stage covered comparing the identified approaches with the current system of training and professional development for public servants in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

This methodology enabled us to identify general trends in international conflict of interest training practices and identify areas for their prospective implementation within the national framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflict of interest as a management risk in the public integrity system

In modern scientific and academic literature, conflicts of interest are increasingly viewed not only as a legal violation but also as a management risk that can impact decision-making and trust in government bodies. International standards support this approach, emphasizing that preventing and managing conflicts of interest are part of a comprehensive system for preventing corruption and strengthening public integrity.

Despite significant attention to conflict of interest training, approaches presented in literature and international documents primarily focus on formalizing requirements and standards of conduct. Meanwhile, the practical application of these approaches in specific management situations and their impact on the daily work of public servants are considered to a lesser extent.

International organizations stress that even an unresolved or even perceived conflict of interest, absent a formal legal breach, can erode trust and cast doubt on the impartiality of public choices. The OECD says that a conflict of interest happens when an official's personal interests might affect, or seem to affect, how well they do their job (OECD, 2004). These suggestions stress how important it is for the public sector to deal with these kinds of risks.

Other international sources, such as guidelines on preventing and managing conflicts of interest, also reflect a similar logic when it comes to methods for minimizing and monitoring such situations in the public sector (World Bank, 2020).

According to the idea of public integrity, conflicts of interest are a part of a larger system of institutional risks that come with public administration activities. The OECD Public Integrity Handbook says that public integrity is the coordinated use of rules, processes, accountability mechanisms, and professional culture to build confidence and lower the risks of corruption, including conflicts of interest (OECD, 2020).

This approach allows us to consider conflicts of interest as a management risk in the public integrity system, and the training of public servants as one of the tools for its prevention and the development of practices of good behavior.

This understanding also provides a theoretical basis for analyzing the training of public servants as a tool for preventing conflicts of interest in public integrity systems. If conflict of interest is viewed as a management risk, training should not be limited to knowledge of the rules. It should complement regulations and other conflict of interest management mechanisms, helping public servants recognize potentially problematic situations and make decisions based on principles of public integrity.

Evolution of approaches to learning: from formal compliance to competency development

The scientific literature examines various approaches to training in conflict of interest and anti-corruption ethics, and increasingly emphasizes the importance of moving from the traditional training model, sometimes referred to as conditionally rule-based, to a competence-based or values-based training model.

In this context, training for public servants is viewed as more than just a means of familiarizing them with codes of conduct and regulatory requirements. More sustainable results are associated with a competency-based approach, which focuses on developing the ethical competence of public servants, including the ability to recognize ethical issues in specific work situations and relate them to professional standards of public service. (Whitton, 2009)

Arguments for developing practical ethical competencies in public servants and going beyond purely formal rule-following are presented in various works on public service ethics and organizational culture. (Whitton, 2009; Kaptein, 2009). International standards on public service ethics also show that such training helps public servants better meet societal expectations and consistently apply principles of public integrity (World Bank Group, 2020).

At the same time, it should be noted that the transition from formal familiarization with regulations to the development of practical competencies is particularly important in the area of conflicts of interest. In such

situations, it is not enough for a public servant to simply know the requirements. It is important to be able to relate them to real-life work situations and make decisions under uncertainty.

The Role of Training in the System of Conflict of Interest Prevention and Public Integrity

In the academic literature, training for public servants is considered an important component of conflict of interest management and corruption prevention. Researchers emphasize that anti-corruption education not only informs but also develops the skills necessary for ethically responsible behavior in public service (Boehm & Nell, 2007; Basabose, 2019). This approach is consistent with international standards, which recognize education as an important part of a broader public integrity system (UNCAC, 2003; OECD, 2020).

In this context, training in the public sector typically serves two interrelated purposes. First, anti-corruption training is designed for prevention. It systematizes knowledge about the potential dangers of corruption and conflicts of interest and fosters an understanding of the social harm these phenomena cause. Second, the goal of training is to develop practical skills in employees so that they can take appropriate measures when faced with corruption risks and navigate ethically ambiguous situations (Pijalovic et al., 2022; Feldheim & Wang, 2004).

Empirical research confirms that training is crucial for developing anti-corruption attitudes. Specifically, Hauser (2019) found that participation in anti-corruption training was associated with a reduced tendency to justify corrupt behavior. Furthermore, students showed greater attention to so-called "gray areas" of ethics and rule compliance (Hauser, 2019). These findings indicate that formal understanding of rules is limited. They also highlight the importance of ethical judgment and decision-making in real-world management situations.

In a broader context, training is considered as part of the development of long-term anti-corruption strategies in public administration. Researchers note that such strategies require public policies that include the development of relevant competencies and investments in educational programs (Pijalovic et al., 2022; Basabose, 2019). At the same time, it is emphasized that methods based solely on legal regulation are ineffective. A focus solely on norms and sanctions underestimates the importance of the institutional environment, professional judgment, and organizational culture (Boehm & Nell, 2007; Demmke et al., 2020).

The scientific literature places particular emphasis on the development of integrity competencies in organizations. For example, Barnard (2011) identifies qualities such as honesty, responsibility, moral courage, self-discipline, and trustworthiness based on a qualitative study of the work environment (Barnard, 2011). These skills are viewed as the value and behavioral foundations of employee integrity. They can also serve as an analytical basis for discussing ethical standards in various institutional contexts, including the public sector.

However, the quality of training depends largely on how well the work environment enables learners to apply and retain knowledge. The impact of training on employee behavior is not a natural outcome of educational programs, as Baldwin and Ford (1988) demonstrated. Learning transfer depends on the individual characteristics of learners, the level of training design and the organizational context, as well as the opportunity to apply and maintain skills on the job. This means that training programs, no matter how well thought out, won't function if there isn't support from leaders, clear rules, and real chances to use what you've learned (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

In general, the literature agrees that conflict of interest training is crucial for reducing corruption risks. However, its efficacy is significantly influenced by the institutional environment of implementation. Educational programs are most effective when complemented by management support and opportunities to safely apply acquired knowledge in practice.

Overall, the review shows that international conflict of interest training practices tend to be more practical in nature. At the same time, their implementation depends largely on the conditions of a particular public service system, including organizational characteristics and the institutional environment. This highlights that the application of such approaches may vary across countries.

However, approaches presented in the literature and international documents focus more on the normative and organizational aspects of training. While the practical component of training and its role in the daily work of public servants are explored in less detail. This reflects the complexity of the topic itself and the need for further understanding within various national contexts.

Thus, despite the availability of extensive international recommendations and academic publications, there remains a need for further analysis of which training characteristics ensure its practical effectiveness. This determines the research focus of this work, which is related to the analysis of international approaches to training and their comparison with national practice.

Results

The results of the study are presented as a comparative analysis of various international organizations' approaches to training public servants on conflicts of interest. This analysis allows us to identify common elements and differences in how training is used as a tool for conflict prevention in public integrity systems.

UN and OECD documents primarily provide a normative and strategic framework, while the practices of various international and regional organizations demonstrate how this framework is translated into specific programs, formats, and training materials. Training is an important component of a public integrity system, as it develops standards of conduct, procedures, and the practical ability to identify and resolve risky situations.

UN

The 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption is the main UN document. Article 7 of the Convention establishes that states are obliged to ensure the selection and training of persons holding positions vulnerable to corruption, as well as to establish education and training programmes aimed at the honest and proper performance of public functions and raising awareness of the risks of corruption. (United Nations, 2003)

Thus, training is primarily aimed at officials occupying positions vulnerable to corruption risks, which sets a risk-oriented logic for personnel training.

The inter-organizational guide, Preventing and Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector: Good Practices Guide elaborates on this approach. It states that training is essential for an effective conflict of interest management system (World Bank Group, 2020).

The same guidelines state that training should cover how to handle conflicts of interest in a way that is acceptable. Disclosure of personal interests, recusal from decision-making, redistribution of functions, and documentation of actions taken directly address these methods. Thus, training is viewed as developing conflict of interest management skills, not simply imparting abstract rules.

Finally, the UN strongly supports the idea of early identification of conflict of interest risks. Public officials should be trained to recognize potential conflicts of interest before making management decisions and to consider disclosure of conflicts of interest as normal professional practice, not a violation.

Thus, the UN's approach to conflict of interest training is based on clear functional requirements. Training should ensure:

- targeting vulnerable positions;
- focus on early identification of risks;
- awareness of typical conflict of interest situations;
- knowledge of acceptable response mechanisms.

These components constitute a normative framework in which education is seen as a key means of prevention.

OECD

The OECD Guidelines on Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector (2004) emphasize that the mere existence of rules is not enough: public servants must know what a conflict of interest policy is and be able to apply it in specific situations, which requires systematic training and consultation (OECD, 2004).

Managing Conflict of Interest: A Toolkit (2005) states that training should be tailored to the functions and levels of responsibility of public servants. This approach also suggests that training should be targeted at high-risk areas such as personnel decisions, public procurement, and resource allocation (OECD, 2005).

According to the Public Integrity Council Recommendations (2017) and the OECD Public Integrity Handbook (2020), training is part of the overall public integrity system (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2017). The OECD emphasizes that education should be practice-oriented, meaning that it should include analysis of real cases and teach servants to identify and resolve conflicts of interest in ambiguous situations, than restricting itself to the dissemination of information on prohibitions.

Overall, the OECD approach also provides fairly clear guidelines for the content of conflict of interest training. It emphasizes the practical application of policy, the analysis of real-life management situations, and the differentiation of training depending on the functions and level of responsibility of public servants. Moreover, training is not viewed in isolation, but as part of a broader system for ensuring integrity in the public sector.

Thanks to these components, training can be viewed as an ongoing management tool for prevention, rather than simply as a formal event.

Transparency International

Transparency International (TI) considers training a systemic tool for preventing the risks of corruption and conflicts of interest within the broader framework of integrity management. Its guidance on ethics education for government officials states that training should not focus on formal familiarization with norms, but rather on developing the ability to recognize conflicts of interest and make decisions in the face of ethical dilemmas.

Codes of conduct, conflict of interest management standards, restrictions on gifts and combinations, nepotism, lobbying, asset declarations and the use of whistleblower channels are mandatory thematic blocks (Transparency International, 2022).

Methodologically, Transparency International emphasizes interactive and modular education. This applies in particular to short-term thematic courses and e-learning based on practical situations (Transparency International, 2022). Such formats enhance the practical value of training, as they allow conflicts of interest and ethics to be linked to the real-life circumstances faced by officials. TI's educational initiatives that utilize this approach include both online courses for practitioners and intensive in-person programs. One such example is the Transparency International School on Integrity, which focuses on anti-corruption and ethical tools (Transparency International School on Integrity, n.d.).

The link between training and conflict of interest management is conceptually enshrined in the Topic Guide: Conflicts of Interest, which explicitly addresses the training process as an element of an effective system for

preventing and regulating conflicts of interest, along with other legal measures (Transparency International School on Integrity, 2015). TI also suggests using training tools such as checklists, self-assessments, and case studies developed within the framework of OECD instruments. In general, modern effectiveness training utilizes not only theory but also interactive materials, videos, and scenario exercises that simulate real-life situations (Transparency International, 2022).

Transparency International's approach to training as a preventative measure against conflicts of interest is characterized by the following:

Firstly, training is incorporated into the integrity system and serves as a supplement to legal regulation, rather than replacing it;

Secondly, a focus on the practical challenges and specific corruption risks associated with declarations, gifts, and lobbying;

Thirdly, the training is based on the use of interactive teaching methods, such as case-based scenarios, thematic modules and the use of practical tools (checklists, self-assessments and case studies), which are designed to reinforce skills rather than merely knowledge.

Finally, training comes in a variety of forms, from online courses for practitioners to intensive in-person programs with mandatory training, such as the Transparency International School on Integrity.

International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA)

The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) is a specialized international training center dedicated to developing the professional skills necessary to combat corruption and maintain institutional integrity. In its mandate and mission as an intergovernmental organization, IACA considers training to be an independent tool for institutional development (International Anti-Corruption Academy, n.d.-a).

Encompassing both short-term applied formats and postgraduate academic programs, IACA's educational approach is characterized by a multi-level and diverse program structure. IACA offers practitioners standard courses and thematic schools through open training programs (International Anti-Corruption Academy, n.d.-b). These courses are aimed at developing applied skills in the areas of anti-corruption policy, ethics, compliance, and conflict of interest management.

Online learning, used to expand coverage and standardize core knowledge, plays a significant role in IACA's educational model. Courses are provided on IACA's specialized online platform to improve practical comprehension of the mechanisms for preventing, identifying, and resolving conflicts of interest in both the private and public sectors. Specifically, the course "Handling Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector" combines theoretical modules with interactive elements, visual materials, and other self-assessment tools, emphasizing the academy's commitment to the practical application of knowledge (International Anti-Corruption Academy, n.d.-c).

IACA also actively utilizes asynchronous formats, such as instructor-led online training (International Anti-Corruption Academy, n.d.-d). This is a combination of online lectures, independent work, and discussions of practical cases. These programs aim to engage participants more deeply and cover a variety of topics, such as anti-corruption compliance, internal investigations, anti-money laundering, and the use of digital tools in anti-corruption practices.

A separate area of IACA's work involves the development of tailor-made training programs for government agencies, international organizations, and private companies (International Anti-Corruption Academy, n.d.-e). These programs are developed taking into account the actual needs of institutional clients. They allow for the tailoring of training content and methods to specific corruption risks and conflict of interest management techniques.

IACA also offers international Master's programs in anti-corruption studies and compliance, based on a modular and interdisciplinary approach. These programs include practical assignments, group projects, and research (International Anti-Corruption Academy, n.d.-f).

In addition, another element of the IACA educational system is intensive schools and summer academies focused on in-depth study of anti-corruption tools and the formation of transnational professional networks (International Anti-Corruption Academy, n.d.-b).

IACA's approach to training in corruption prevention and conflict of interest management can thus be characterized by a number of distinctive features. Training is viewed as an independent institutional measure, rather than an supporting element of regulation. Programs have a multi-tiered structure and include short-term practical courses, thematic schools, and master's programs.

Various training formats are used, including in-person, online, and blended, combining independent work with interactive interaction with experts. Training is focused on practice and skill development through case studies and assignments. Programs can be tailored to specific organizations, with the primary focus being on developing professional competencies rather than formal course completion.

In line with this approach, training in the IACA model serves as a means of long-term development of institutional and human resource capacity in the field of combating corruption.

Anti-Fraud Knowledge Center (AFKC)

The Anti-Fraud Knowledge Centre (AFKC) is the European Commission's central knowledge and training platform. Its goal is to prevent fraud, corruption, and conflicts of interest in the management of EU funds. By accumulating guidelines, manuals, best practices, and training resources, including on conflict management, interests, AFKC is a platform for training and development of institutional competencies.

The analytical review of internal control tools emphasizes that AFKC provides a wide range of materials (library, glossary, guidance, legislation) and includes a "best practice" section, which systematizes 37 practices in several areas: systems and IT tools, collaboration mechanisms, red flag systems, sanctions, and training and guidance. Each practice is provided with a brief description and key success factors (Cibotariu, 2023).

The Anti-Fraud Knowledge Centre (AFKC) utilizes interconnected platform modules to deliver a comprehensive training approach. The Guidance & Legislation section contains documents, official guidelines, and reference materials that support practitioners and organizations in their daily work protecting the EU's financial interests. It emphasizes the difference between guidelines, which offer methodologies, and those that summarize best practices at the EU level (European Commission, n.d.-a). These materials serve not only as a source of information but also as a basis for training programs on ethics, conflicts of interest, and fraud prevention. For example, guidance on identifying, managing and monitoring conflicts of interest within the ERDF and ESF is included in the annual training of public servants and is often used in fraud risk assessments (European Commission, 2021). Conflict of interest thus becomes a sustainable discipline rather than an abstract legal category.

To strengthen knowledge and understanding of practical anti-fraud and corruption procedures, AFKC is developing a variety of training formats, such as video modules (European Commission, n.d.-b), interactive online courses, and self-assessment tools. To improve risk recognition and decision-making skills in complex situations, the platform offers game-based and simulation-based training formats based on real-life EU fund management cases. The Anti-Fraud Game is a great example of a multimedia training method that includes an introduction, group work, and individual case studies based on real-life examples of fraud and corruption in EU financial management (European Commission, 2021b).

The AFKC method puts a lot of importance on how e-learning experiences are set up. The e-learning courses section shows how different member states make online courses to fight corruption (European Commission, 2021c). The most effective methods include interactivity, the use of practical exercises, the use of real-world case studies, and regular self-testing. Participants' evaluations indicate that these formats are extremely practical and convenient compared to traditional face-to-face training. At the same time, e-learning complements, but does not completely replace, face-to-face training.

Thus, the AFKC approach to training as a tool for combating corruption and managing conflicts of interest also has a number of distinctive features. First and foremost, training is integrated into the broader EU financial interest protection system and relies on methodological guidelines and reference materials. They are used not only as sources of information but also as a basis for regular training and risk assessment, including conflict of interest management.

Training is delivered using a variety of formats, including text materials, video modules, interactive online courses, and self-assessment tools. Practice-oriented and game-based methods based on real or realistic situations involving the management of EU funds are actively utilized. A key feature is the combination of self-directed learning and more interactive formats aimed at developing decision-making skills. Overall, the emphasis is on continuous learning and the accumulation of practical experience, rather than one-off or formal educational events.

Overall, the review shows that international approaches to conflict of interest training are gradually shifting toward a more practical focus. At the same time, their implementation depends largely on the specific conditions of the public service system, including organizational features and the institutional environment. This highlights that such approaches may have different characteristics in different countries.

Concluding, five international actors were examined: the UN, the OECD, Transparency International, the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), and the Anti-Corruption Knowledge Centre of the European Commission. All of them represent a multi-tiered training system used to prevent conflicts of interest in the public service. This selection allows us to trace how conflict of interest training is formed and functions at various levels: from the establishment of universal international standards and managerial principles of public integrity to their practical implementation in the form of specific educational programs, formats, and methodologies. In this context, the UN and the OECD establish strategic, conceptual, and normative frameworks for defining the goals, principles, and place of training in the conflict of interest management system. Transparency International, IACA, and the Anti-Fraud Knowledge Centre act as operational and educational actors, demonstrating how these frameworks are transformed into practice-oriented tools for improving the skills of public servants.

Discussion

The results of the analysis allow us to consider conflict-of-interest training not only as an element of anti-corruption training but also as a tool for managing institutional risks. In this context, the key factor is not so much

the volume of regulatory knowledge, but rather the ability of public servants to apply it in specific management situations requiring professional judgment.

The results show that, in international practice, conflict of interest training for public servants is regarded as an integral component of a comprehensive public integrity framework, rather than as an isolated educational program. Analyzing the approaches used by the UN, OECD, Transparency International, the International Anti-Corruption Academy, and the European Commission's Anti-Corruption Information Centre, we see that training serves a variety of different purposes at the institutional level. These purposes include establishing rules and guidelines, as well as developing professional skills and operational practices. Overall, this demonstrates the multi-layered nature of training as a method for preventing conflicts of interest.

Overall, the international practices reviewed above allow us to see how training is integrated into the broader public integrity system. At the normative and conceptual levels, international organizations formulate basic principles and standards for managing conflicts of interest. At the institutional and educational levels, specialized organizations and training bodies transform these frameworks into educational programs, training formats, and practical tools. This logic demonstrates that training is not a standalone educational activity, but rather an element of an institutional system for preventing corruption risks.

Table 1. International approaches to training as a tool for preventing conflicts of interest in public service

Organization	Role in the conflict of interest prevention system	The role of training	Formats and tools
UN	Forms basic international standards for combating corruption and managing conflicts of interest	Establishes the obligation of states to provide training to vulnerable categories of officials	Regulatory requirements, guidelines, recommendations
OECD	Develops the concept of public integrity and governance approaches	Views education as an element of the public integrity system	Recommendations, guides, toolkits, case studies
Transparency International	Focuses on developing a culture of integrity and reducing corruption risks	Uses training to develop the ability to recognize conflicts of interest and make decisions in ethically challenging situations	Online courses, trainings, case studies, checklists, interactive materials
International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA)	Acts as a specialized educational center for the development of anti-corruption competencies	Views training as an independent tool for professional development	Courses, master's programs, online learning, thematic schools, practical assignments
Anti-Fraud Knowledge Center (EC)	Provides methodological and informational support in the area of fraud and conflict of interest prevention.	Integrates training into risk management and internal control processes.	Manuals, videos, online courses, simulations, self-assessment tools.

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the sources.

In the context of the considered international models of training as a tool for preventing conflicts of interest, it is important to take into account the national legal and institutional frameworks in which such approaches are implemented.

In Kazakhstan, the basis is the Law "On Combating Corruption" of November 18, 2015, which classifies "prevention and resolution of conflicts of interest" and "formation of an anti-corruption culture" as key measures of the anti-corruption system (Article 6, Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015a) and establishes a conflict of interest as a separate object of regulation (Article 15). The Law "On the Public service of the Republic of Kazakhstan" of November 23, 2015, in which the training and professional development of public servants is designated as a mandatory condition for professional activity and the implementation of the principles of official ethics (Article 34, Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015b)

In order to implement these standards, by-laws have been adopted, in particular, the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 15, 2018 No. 125 "On approval of the Rules for the training, retraining and advanced training of public servants, requirements for educational organizations implementing advanced training of public servants", where the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (APU) is directly designated as the basic organization for training, retraining and advanced

training, and for administrative public servants a standard for undergoing advanced training at least once every three years is established (Clause 15, Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018).

Thus, at the legislative level, a connection is ensured between the tasks of developing an anti-corruption culture, managing conflicts of interest, and the state's obligation to ensure regular training of employees.

ASU's academic programs include master's programs (MPA, MPP, and other areas of training for government personnel). ASU also offers doctoral degrees for public servants (Academy of Public Administration, 2025).

Retraining programs are aimed at developing the basic managerial, legal, and professional competencies of public servants, including those at the early stages of their careers. They are typically conducted in full-time format, but are sometimes offered in a blended (full-time and distance) format (Academy of Public Administration, n.d.-a). E-learning, also known as e-learning, is used at the Academy to complement in-person training formats. This includes online and distance courses, which are designed to increase the accessibility and reach of training (Academy of Public Administration, n.d.-b).

Along with retraining programs, continuing education is a significant part of the public servant training system. It is done through short-term training seminars. According to the rules in place now, government workers get continuous education through seminars that span from 8 to 80 academic hours and are meant to improve their professional skills (Clause 15, Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018).

The training covers a wide range of topics, including public administration, risk management, digitalization, communications, leadership, and organizational culture development. Integrity, professional ethics, and anti-corruption behavior are covered in separate seminars and training modules, such as "Ethics and Professionalism in the Public Service: Anti-Corruption Behavior" and "Anti-Corruption Management and Compliance." These programs address conflicts of interest as part of a broader anti-corruption and ethical agenda and integrate them into the overall context of developing the professional behavior of public servants.

As a result, conflicts of interest appear more as an integral part of the general anti-corruption and ethical issues than as a clearly structured object of study with defined goals, thematic blocks and expected learning outcomes. At the same time, such integration, on the one hand, reflects the systemic nature of the training of public servants, but, on the other hand, may reduce the degree of awareness of the perception of conflicts of interest as a management risk.

Thus, the topic of conflict of interest is institutionally present in the training and professional development system for public servants and is integrated into educational programs, primarily within courses on ethics, integrity, and anti-corruption policy. However, an analysis of publicly available program descriptions and lists of training activities reveals that the content of conflict of interest training is generally not explicitly detailed. It is not always clear which aspects of conflict of interest are addressed, which situations are emphasized, and what practical skills are expected to be developed in students. As a result, conflict of interest is presented more as an integral part of general anti-corruption and ethical issues than as a clearly structured training subject with defined objectives, thematic units, and expected learning outcomes.

In this regard, international practice, in which conflicts of interest typically remain linked to the broader agenda of integrity and public probity while receiving separate thematic and methodological attention, allows us to identify areas for the possible development of educational programs. This is not about removing conflicts of interest from the existing system, but rather about their more explicit and structured disclosure through the allocation of time, training modules, case studies, and analytical tools. The goal is to instill the necessary skills and enable the application of acquired knowledge in everyday management activities.

Comparing Kazakhstan's public servant training practices with the international approaches presented in the table reveals common features and highlights areas where international experience provides a clearer structure and applicability for conflict of interest training. Typically, training is aimed not only at knowledge of the rules but also at developing practical skills and an understanding of conflict of interest as a management risk. In this sense, international experience can serve as a benchmark for understanding the role of training in public integrity systems. This, in turn, indicates a difference not so much in the availability of training, but in the level of its institutional development and practical focus.

In the literature, training effectiveness is associated not only with the assimilation of material but also with the ability to transfer acquired knowledge and skills to professional activities. In this context, the effectiveness of training programs depends on the characteristics of the learners, the training design, and the organizational context in which the acquired knowledge is expected to be applied (International Anti-Corruption Academy, 2026).

Based on the results obtained, it can be noted that the development of conflict of interest training in Kazakhstan is primarily associated with a more clear coverage of this topic in educational programs. While it is already addressed within the framework of anti-corruption and ethics training, it is important to devote more attention to it as an independent element of professional development. In particular, strengthening the practical component of training, including analysis of typical and challenging situations that public servants encounter in their work, is significant. Furthermore, a closer connection between training content and real-life management

processes and functions, as well as a gradual expansion of the use of flexible formats, including distance learning, can play a role. Overall, this allows training to be viewed not only as a formal part of training but also as a tool for improving the quality of management decisions.

Overall, the analysis shows that conflict of interest training is an important component of both international approaches to public integrity and the public servant training system in Kazakhstan. International practice views training not only as a means of familiarizing with rules but also as a tool for developing practical skills and professional judgment in real-life management situations. In Kazakhstan, the topic of conflict of interest is already integrated into educational programs, primarily within anti-corruption and ethics training. Comparison with international experience suggests further development of training toward a more clear, practice-oriented, and consistent approach to this topic as part of the professional development of public servants.

In this regard, the presented study allows us to clarify the role of training on conflict of interest issues as an element of the system of ensuring the integrity of the public service and to determine the directions for its further development.

Conclusion

The study shows that conflict of interest training occupies a key place in international approaches to strengthening public integrity and is considered an integral part of corruption risk prevention. International organizations and specialized educational centers consistently emphasize that effective training should go beyond formal familiarization with rules and focus on developing practical skills.

An analysis of Kazakhstan's system of training, retraining, and professional development for public servants shows that the topic of conflict of interest is present in educational programs, primarily within courses on ethics, integrity, and anti-corruption policy. However, training on conflict of interest is generally not structured as a standalone subject with clearly defined objectives, thematic units, and expected outcomes, limiting the development of sustainable practical skills for managing these risks.

Comparing national practices with international experience allows for a fresh look at the role of conflict of interest training in Kazakhstan's public service system. This also helps identify areas for further development of such training as a tool for preventing corruption risks.

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МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК ҚЫЗМЕТШІЛЕРДІҢ КӘСІБИ ҚҰЗЫРЕТТІЛІГІН АРТТЫРУ – МҮДДЕЛЕР ҚАҚТЫҒЫСЫНЫҢ АЛДЫН АЛУДЫҢ БАСҚАРУ ҚҰРАЛЫ РЕТІНДЕ

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Аңдатпа

Мақалада мемлекеттік басқару жүйесінде мүдделер қақтығысының алдын алу тетігі ретінде мемлекеттік қызметшілердің кәсіби құзыреттерін дамыту мәселесі талданады. Мүдделер қақтығысы тек құқықтық мәселе ретінде ғана емес, сонымен қатар нормативтік реттеумен қатар кәсіби пайым мен практикалық дағдыларды қалыптастыруды талап ететін басқарушылық тәуекел ретінде қарастырылады. Зерттеу концептуалдық-талдамалық сипатта жүргізіліп, жаһандық және мамандандырылған халықаралық акторлар қолданатын көпдеңгейлі оқыту тәсілдерін сапалық талдауға негізделген. Мақалада Біріккен Ұлттар Ұйымы мен Экономикалық ынтымақтастық және даму ұйымы (ЭЫДҰ) жария адалдықтың норма-

тивтік және тұжырымдамалық стандарттарының көзі ретінде, сондай-ақ Transparency International, Халықаралық сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы академия және Еуропалық комиссияның Anti-Fraud Knowledge Centre құрылымы осы стандарттардың білім беру форматтары мен құзыреттерді дамыту құралдары арқылы практикалық іске асырылуын көрсететін акторлар ретінде қарастырылады.

Алынған нәтижелер Қазақстан Республикасындағы мемлекеттік қызметшілерді даярлау және олардың біліктілігін арттыру жүйесімен байланыста талданады. Зерттеу ұлттық контексте мүдделер қақтығысы бойынша оқытуды институционалдық тұрғыдан енгізудің ерекшеліктерін айқындауға мүмкіндік береді және халықаралық тәжірибені ескере отырып, оны одан әрі дамыту бағыттарын көрсетуге негіз болады.

Түйін сөздер: мүдделер қақтығысы; жария адалдық; сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы оқыту; мемлекеттік қызмет; кәсіби құзыреттерді дамыту.

ПОВЫШЕНИЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫХ СЛУЖАЩИХ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ ДЛЯ ПРЕДОТВРАЩЕНИЯ КОНФЛИКТА ИНТЕРЕСОВ

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Аннотация

В статье анализируется развитие профессиональных компетенций государственных служащих как механизм предотвращения конфликта интересов в системе публичного управления. Конфликт интересов рассматривается как управленческий риск, требующий не только нормативного регулирования, но и формирования профессионального суждения и практических навыков.

Исследование носит концептуально-аналитический характер и основано на качественном анализе многоуровневых международных стратегий обучения, применяемых глобальными и специализированными акторами. В работе рассматриваются Организация Объединённых Наций и Организация экономического сотрудничества и развития как источники нормативных и концептуальных стандартов публичной добропорядочности, а также Transparency International, Международная антикоррупционная академия и Anti-Fraud Knowledge Centre Европейской комиссии как акторы, демонстрирующие практическую реализацию этих стандартов через образовательные форматы и инструменты развития компетенций.

Полученные результаты рассматриваются во взаимосвязи с системой подготовки и профессионального развития государственных служащих Республики Казахстан. Проведённый анализ позволяет выявить особенности институционального встраивания обучения по вопросам конфликта интересов в национальный контекст и обозначить возможности его дальнейшего развития с учётом международного опыта.

Ключевые слова: конфликт интересов; публичная добропорядочность; антикоррупционное обучение; государственная служба; развитие профессиональных компетенций.