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## **PRESIDENTIAL YOUTH PERSONNEL RESERVE DEVELOPMENT BY TALENT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN KAZAKHSTAN**

**Abstract.** The article highlights problems associated with the training of personnel and the formation of personnel reserve in civil service. The ways of solving these problems through the introduction and development of talent management technology are considered. The article analyzes the implementation of selection to the Presidential Youth Personnel Reserve, where there is an ample proof of the importance of new HR technologies that have been widely distributed in the public sphere of Kazakhstan for the last 10 years. The article attempts to analyze two different programs as a career elevator for civil servants - direct elections and selection to the personnel reserve. The research into the drawbacks and few advantageous sides of enrollment procedures are presented and discussed. The article also addresses some challenges related to merit-based systems practiced in three Asian countries. Today, in the age of globalization and international economic integration, with increasing problems in the development and retention of professional managers in public service, it is becoming important to use proven technologies in the field of personnel management. In this connection, the article discusses and evaluates a key aspect - the technology of talent management and its implementation in order to develop personnel reserve program further. It is emphasized to borrow some internationally accepted practices.

**Keywords:** *personnel reserve, talent management, civil service vacancies, personnel selection, personnel reshuffles, mayors (akims).*

**Раушан Нұрбекова, Гүлмира Илеуова**  
**ҚАЗАҚСТАНДА ТАЛАНТТАРДЫ БАСҚАРУДЫ ЕНГІЗУ АРҚЫЛЫ**  
**ПРЕЗИДЕНТТІК ЖАСТАР КАДРЛЫҚ РЕЗЕРВІН ДАМУ**

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада мемлекеттік қызметте кадрларды даярлау және кадрлық резервті қалыптастырумен байланысты мәселелер көрсетілген. Таланттарды басқару тетіктерін енгізу және дамыту арқылы осы мәселелерді шешу жолдары қарастырылды. Мақалада Президенттік жастар кадрлық резервіне іріктеудің қалыптасуы мен жүзеге асырылу барысы талданады, бұл соңғы 10 жылда Қазақстанның жеке секторында кеңінен тараған жаңа кадрлық технологияларды танудың өзектілігін дәлелдейді. Мақалада мемлекеттік қызметшілер үшін мансаптық лифт ретінде екі түрлі бағдарламаны – тікелей сайлау және кадр резервіне іріктеу талдауына әрекет жасалады. Жұмысқа қабылдау рәсімдеріндегі кемшіліктер мен кейбір артықшылықтар бойынша зерттеу нәтижелері талқыланды. Мақалада сондай-ақ Азияның үш елінде қолданылып жүрген еңбекке негізделген жүйелермен байланысты кейбір мәселелер қарастырылады. Бүгінгі таңда, жаһандану және халықаралық экономикалық интеграция дәуірінде кәсіби менеджерлерді мемлекеттік қызметте дамыту және ұстап қалу мәселелерінің күшеюімен қатар персоналды басқару саласында дәлелденген технологияларды пайдалану өзекті болып отыр. Осыған байланысты мақалада негізгі аспект – таланттарды басқару технологиясы және оны енгізу арқылы кадрлық резервті дамыту талқыланып, бағаланады. Кейбір халықаралық мойындалған тәжірибелерді қабылдауға ерекше назар аударылады.

**Түйінді сөздер:** *кадрлық резерв, талант менеджменті, мемлекеттік қызметтегі бос жұмыс орындары, қызметкерлерді іріктеу, кадрлық ауыс-түйістер, әкімдер.*

**Раушан Нурбекова, Гульмира Илеуова**  
**РАЗВИТИЕ ПРЕЗИДЕНТСКОГО МОЛОДЕЖНОГО КАДРОВОГО**  
**РЕЗЕРВА ПУТЕМ ВНЕДРЕНИЯ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ ТАЛАНТАМИ В**  
**КАЗАХСТАНЕ**

**Аннотация.** В статье освещаются проблемы, связанные с подготовкой кадров и формированием кадрового резерва на государственной службе. Рассмотрены пути решения этих проблем за счет внедрения и развития технологии управления талантами. В статье анализируется формирование и осуществление отбора в Президентский Молодежный Кадровый Резерв, где доказывается актуальность признания новых кадровых технологий, получивших широкое распространение в частной сфере Казахстана за последние 10 лет. В статье предпринята попытка анализа двух различных программ карьерного лифта государственных служащих – прямых выборов и отбора в кадровый резерв. Было представлено обсуждение результатов исследования недостатков и некоторых преимущественных сторон процедур

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зачисления кандидатов. В статье также рассматриваются некоторые проблемы, связанные с системами, основанными на заслугах, которые практикуются в трех азиатских странах. Сегодня, в век глобализации и международной экономической интеграции, наряду с нарастанием проблем в развитии и удержании профессиональных менеджеров на государственной службе, становится актуальным использование проверенных технологий в области управления персоналом. В связи с этим в статье рассматривается и оценивается ключевой аспект – технология управления талантами и ее внедрение с целью дальнейшего развития программы кадрового резерва. Особое внимание уделяется заимствованию некоторых международно признанных практик.

**Ключевые слова:** *кадровый резерв, управление талантами, вакансии на госслужбу, отбор персонала, кадровые перестановки, акимы.*

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## **Introduction**

The importance of Presidential Youth Personnel Reserve (PYPR) development and talent management technologies implementation will grow after the January events of 2022 year in Kazakhstan. It is crucial to study them in order to increase the effectiveness of political decisions in long-term perspectives. Personnel reshuffles were carried out on a large scale in a short time in January 2022, and this kind of government reaction to the protests requires a deep post-analysis. Problems of public confidence in decisions have been made by the authorities require increased transparency and publicity. There are growing demands on the quality of political decisions, in particular, issues raised on the competence and professionalism of personnel in the public service. In private or non-governmental sector, talent management appears to be one of the leading issues in personnel policy. Talent management as a set of personnel management tools enable any organization to attract, to effectively use and to retain employees. While considering foreign succession management practices, it should be noted that the concept “personnel reserve” is not accepted among foreign scientists, which allows us to conclude about Soviet and Russian roots of this very concept. Personnel reserve management is similar to the goals of personnel management and consists of several following major elements: determining the need for human resources, recruitment, adaptation, and motivation, formation of internal corporate culture evaluation and development of personnel.

## **Methodology**

This study is structured around three main research questions: What are the theoretical prerequisites for creating PYPR? Do the target programs of the personnel reserve differ from the world practice? What technologies have been adapted and applied?

### **Hypotheses have been put forward:**

a) The lack of need or desire among potential reservists to participate in PYPR due to the ambiguity of the situation and the insecurity of the intra-elite balance of forces, and, consequently, the lack of a real competitive pool of candidates.

b) In the target programs of the personnel reserve, there is a fragmentation and inconsistency between the innovation - direct elections of the mayors of the village, settlement, and in the future planned, district and regional mayors.

Within the framework of the study, an analysis of literary sources, official appeals, and official websites of state bodies at various levels of management, information portals and resources were carried out. Along with the mentioned above, analysis and comparison focused on the existing mechanisms of personnel reserve formations in Kazakhstan were being performed. In order to ensure a systematic analysis, the main criteria were identified. The following methods were applied in the research: synthesis, analysis, generalization and comparison.

### **Results and discussion**

In August 2019, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a number of regulatory legal acts aimed at resolving PYPR issues; in particular, the documents refer to the creation of National Commission for youth personnel reserve. This personnel reserve has enabled the government to promote young people to all levels of public service in the following positions: ministers and their deputies; akims of regions, cities; chairmen of committees; chairmen and members of the boards of national holdings, national companies; secretaries of central executive bodies; heads of staff, etc. Despite the existence of contradictory expert assessments, objective results demonstrate the effectiveness of the reserve. At the time of the January personnel reshuffles, there have recently appeared outcomes of the program - A. Sartov, who previously held the position of a deputy akim of Fedorovsky district of Kostanay region has become the akim of Altynsarinsky district in Kostanay region. This civil servant had been enrolled in PYPR in 2021[1]. Literally, this very case proves that PYPR demonstrates its viability; however, will its efficiency increase? According to A. Kosherbayeva's statement, Vice-Rector of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, every reservist has to comprehend the responsibility. Any public administration should provide opportunities for three primary combinations: civil society, authorities and business [2].

In order to establish good governance, candidates should be hired on the principle of their merits, regardless of social status, gender or age. Public officials should be focused on making positive changes as well as on building their careers rather than waiting for next appointments and holding senior positions. One of the main principles of this reform was implementation of meritocracy in public sector. Meanwhile, meritocracy is a system in which talented personnel, who display higher abilities, are chosen and promoted based on their abilities and accomplishments. The personnel reserve may be an unstructured group of people, and the choice in this case is either subjective or requires additional comparisons, in fact, holding a competition [3, 62]. Among the tools of talent management in the civil service of Kazakhstan, the following exclusive practices stand out: the practice of social elevators, the possibility of studying abroad and specialized training programs for the purpose of training and retraining of civil servants, the creation of a personnel reserve. Along with exclusive ones, some inclusive tools are used [4, 31].

Stabilization of socio-economic sphere and political decision-making are hard to be realized without highly professional personnel. And that determines why the formation of specialists, who, in their turn, are capable of becoming the basis of personnel reserve in public administration system, business and socio-political activities, is currently becoming highly relevant. It can be argued that, a methodologically promising system of personnel reserve formation has been built in Kazakhstan. The development of personnel reserve is one of the most promising areas in working with state civil servants. Since 2013, the institute of corpus “A”, PYPR and the reserve of corpus “A” have been initialized in Kazakhstan, and they appear to be different target programs. Subsequently, some discrepancies can be found: age category, differences in the range of positions and in selection procedure. The age limit, in our viewpoint, is not final as a solution. As for the range of positions, it includes the positions of ministers, vice-ministers, akims of regions, Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Shymkent and their deputies, akims of cities, districts, as well as chairmen and members of the boards of national companies. One of the significant problems of implementing personnel reserve selection procedure is the absence of transparency in the process of its administration and the lack of awareness of candidates about their prospects, respectively. However, this point is relatively excluded, since in order to ensure the transparency of the selection, an automatic proctoring system is used. In addition, it can be noted that with technological solutions, the objectiveness of selection is ensured by attracting reputable representatives of the expert community. Nevertheless, there is a certain obstruction in the implementation, it is a bureaucratic procedure. It is available to observe the duration of the review and the expected transparency on 2021-year data (see table 1).

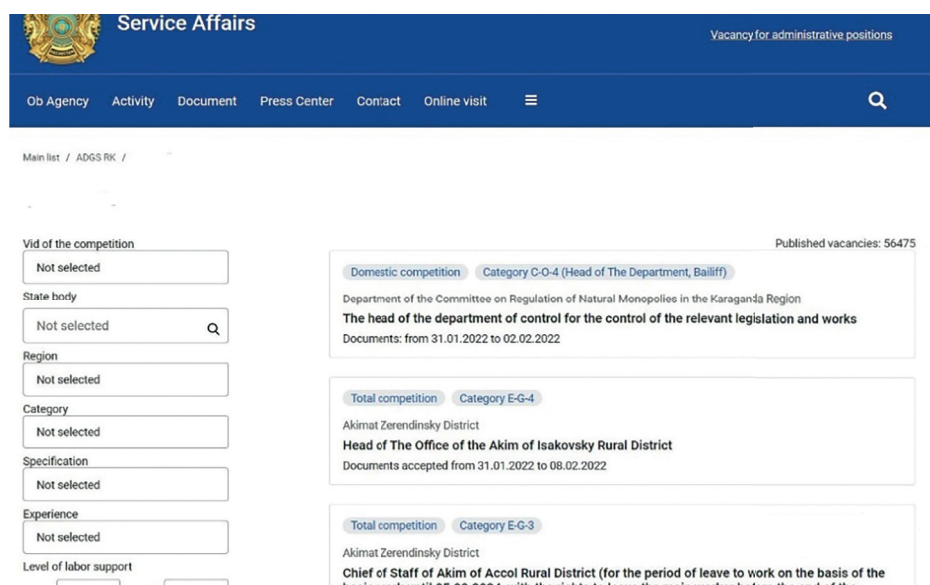
**Table 1. Deadlines for PYPR selection**

| Applicants | Ability testing (verbal, numerical) | Verification of testing | Solving situational problems | Assessment of competencies assessment center | Competency assessment interviews | Interview with the expert commission | Enrollment |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 22666      | 8638                                | 1062                    | 514                          | 235  | 132                              | 100                                  | 65         |
| 14028      | 7576                                | 548                     | 279                          | 103  | 32                               | 35                                   | 15         |
| 8638       | 1062                                | 514                     | 235                          | 132  | 100                              | 65                                   | 50         |
| Sept. 2021 | Oct. 2021                           | Oct. 2021               | Oct. 2021                    | Nov. 2021                                    | Nov. 2021                        | Dec. 2021                            | Dec. 2021  |

*Note: the source is provided from the site <https://pkrezerv.gov.kz/>*

The duration of the review is also relatively stretched, and fails to correspond to the intensity of career expectations. In a rapidly evolving economic environment and an exponentially growing number of jobs around the world, staff retention

is already a challenge [5, 198]. The number of those who have not completed registration is too high, which may indicate poor communication and feedback. The number of those who have not passed the test may indicate high requirements or non-compliance of candidates, or it might indicate the lack of preventive work by the Agency. The percentage of those who enrolled from those who showed interest in the personnel reserve is obvious -0.28%. The absence of links in the management chain leads to managerial mistakes, in order to avoid it, internal and external recruitment is practically initiated in the organization [6, 49]. Turning to the topic of recruitment, one can consider and analyze the recruitment process by viewing vacancies. The number of vacancies on the official website of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs on 28.01.2022 is extremely high, it amounts 56486 units, and they have been viewed at different times during 2020-2022 years. It was possible to observe almost a stable and steady figures showing high demand for personnel, and, posting of vacancies is, subsequently, publicly viewed (see picture 1).



**Picture 1. Vacancies on the official website of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs**

The private sector is often influenced by changes within the market. Any economic recession can highly impact the inner workings of a business in the private sector, which sequentially leads to big changes in the business' employee structure. Apart from this, the private sector is competitive and profit-driven, which creates a risk for workers to be easily dismissed. Organizations in the public sector, however, are not profit-driven and are not influenced by the market. Since they are funded by the government, it is unlikely to have any changes despite external events. Thus, it would be more beneficial to work in the public sector due to the high level of job

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security it is able to provide. Undoubtedly, vacancies on the official website of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs are expected to be much more attractive. Hence, vacancies should have been filled in immediately, but it fails to be.

The socio-political aspect is connected with the fact that the change of political leaders practically means the renewal of all key figures of the management apparatus and, as a result, there might be a need for new personnel that will meet the interests of the leader who comes to power [7, 271]. The change of key positions is currently taking place and will probably continue, and hypothetically, this might lead potential reservists to a state of uncertainty in career planning. However, the transition to a more democratic political regime, which, in its turn, includes significant political changes, will possibly have a positive impact on reservists. Such transformations both in the system and in the minds of reservists should be welcomed. High moral values and low corruption through the thorns of past events will become the main criteria in the selection of candidates.

Two main forms of development are actively used in the world practice: practical and educational. Practical forms of staff development basically include: gaining experience that staff receives in the course of their daily work; professional development at the workplace - conducted on an ongoing basis and, concurrently, includes coaching (training) as well as consultations with various employees, solving real problems at work [8]. Here it is necessary to note the presence itself in the educational sector of the Academy of Public Administration, with a special status, that intended to provide trainings for civil servants. The Academy applies all the most advanced and innovative educational technologies. In addition, this is the answer to all possible questions concerning PYPR database. Nevertheless, on the website for those who are not under supervision of the Academy, other communications are necessary in order to pass effectively testing and evaluation stages. More detailed trainings with samples, publication of references to literature and sources for targeted training are highly needed, and they should be placed on the site for candidates to be viewed.

It is important and relevant to ensure more sufficient information dissemination via media and on public events concerning different levels of the personnel reserve, its capabilities and prospects [9, 228]. There are still problems of society's misunderstanding of admission mechanisms to the civil service or skepticism about their objectivity. Media coverage and increasing interest of potential candidates need to be thoroughly studied. New approaches and solutions are required, the search and testing of which could lead to the formation of not just personnel reserve, but a multi-stage, strategic one [10, 24].

If we proceed to the study of requirements, in general, the acceptance of documents, then on the website [pkrezerv.gov.kz](http://pkrezerv.gov.kz) we can get full and detailed information. The motivating point is the fact that candidates enrolled in the reserve might be appointed to political positions, positions of corps "A", senior positions of corps "B". As mentioned above concerning the issue of a large number of failed tests, we can observe several points. While registering, candidates upload a valid official certificate of the established form confirming passing state language exam



with a certain result that meets established requirements of at least the average level (B1). In the absence of such certificate, a corresponding link will be provided in the registration module to take Kaztest system. The pool of appraisers is formed from among professionals in the field of public service, industry experts, representatives of NGOs and public figures. The transparency of selection is sufficiently ensured. The selection process and procedure in PYPR are regulated; candidates are assigned individual numbers, which, in turn, are used to depersonalize personal data at the assessment stages. It can be summarized that the risks of subjectivity are minimized, but the risk of inconsistency of the vast majority of candidates is high.

Problems that necessitate the development of a talent pool based on talent management:

- the need to improve business and professional qualities in order to achieve strategic goals;
- the need to obtain additional skills and knowledge of the personnel reserve, allowing you to get results, both for the staff and for the enterprise;
- the need to provide feedback to the personnel reserve, which is necessary for professional promotion [8].

Unlike private sector talent, which refers to inherited or developed exceptional human abilities, conceptualization of public sector talent emphasizes employees as human entities, but with different values. This can be explained by context-specific characteristics that public sector employees should possess, such as an innate desire to contribute to public service without seeking financial rewards [11, 9]. The private non-governmental sector has a competitive advantage, as some foreign scientists claim that this is due to bureaucracy, which takes a lot of time. It is impossible not to agree with this statement and the process of waiting and passing various certification procedures leads to the fact that a potential candidate is recruited faster in the private sector. Such a rate of responses and job closures can be seen on various websites in Kazakhstan. Although public sector and private sector talent management use somewhat similar processes, the former differs from the latter in how they conceptualize talents and broader goals of service to society [11, 11].

One can observe the growing legitimacy of talent management as a separate field of study in world practice. However, it is equally clear that the skepticism that surrounds the concept of talent management due to the lack of agreed conceptual and theoretical boundaries, combined with the relatively ambiguous quality of empirical work in this area, means that research in talent management has not yet gained credibility in higher education institutions [13]. Yet, in the public sphere, certain consequences arise from the nature of the organizational structure, rules and regulations, as well as "the bureaucratic red tape" associated with them [14, 144].

In providing definitions for talent management notion, foreign authors tend to use various terms to denote talent notion, for example, "excellent abilities", whereas such terms as "key employees", "high potential" or "people with high potential who are of particular value to the organization" are used likewise [15, 59]. The fight against talent crisis during the change of leadership positions is central to the talent management policy of three Asian countries (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia),



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which were considered in the works of scientists from Singapore. Although these three countries are in close proximity and have very similar schemes, they meet different needs and goals. Among these countries, Singapore already has a very clear career roadmap for talents, and they were selected at the very beginning, even prior to their enter to the service. While Malaysia has a strict evaluation system in place, the path of development of these talents is still being reviewed. Both Malaysia and Thailand also recognize that they are not able to pay as well as the private sector, and therefore may not attract the best to this service. However, both countries are catching up and revising wage increase schemes, as well as improving the competence of employees currently in service [12, 8]. However, in the public sector, as in their counterparts in the private sector, they face the same realities that all organizations face today: a dynamic workforce characterized by an increase in the number of knowledge workers; the decline of a long-term career; as well as aging and the subsequent exodus of the boomer generation [16, 410].

The past direct elections of rural akims, and the prospective implementation vertically higher, presupposes the electability of both district and regional akims. Reservists must have five years of experience in order to apply for the positions of akims. There are no direct comments on the differences and the consistency of these two programs in official sources. Nevertheless, the conceptual discrepancy becomes obvious in consistency and procedural part. To be selected by the evaluators of PYPR commission or to be elected by the people? A possible way out may be a restriction for reservists to be candidates for akims, and the offer of any other vacancies, if we are talking about localization in a certain locality of a reservist.

Merit-based civil service contributes to reducing overall corruption across all areas of the public sector [17, 4]. Meritocratic systems bring in better-qualified professionals who may be less tempted by corruption. Another way that meritocracy has been shown to reduce the risk of corruption is by providing long-term employment. This tends to promote a longer-term perspective that reinforces the employee's commitment to their job and makes it less tempting to engage in short-term opportunism presented by corruption. Conversely, if people know that their job will not last long, they may be more easily encouraged to use their position for personal gain during the short time they have.

The following statements might be answers to the hypotheses above:

a) We can claim that the lack of need or desire among potential reservists to participate in PYPR occur due to the lack of a real competitive pool of candidates. As it was mentioned above, one of the significant problems of implementing the personnel reserve selection procedure is the lack of transparency in the process of its administration and the lack of awareness of candidates in the reserve about their prospects. Nevertheless, the use of approaches to protect the principle of meritocracy has significantly increased the level of confidence in the career system of public service. In particular, interviews are conducted with potential candidates – civil servants. If they are not notified about the competitions, measures are taken to refuse to approve the general competition, with a return to selection from internal

reserves.

b) In the target programs of the personnel reserve, there is an inconsistency between the innovation - direct elections of the akims and PYPR. Reservists must have five years of experience in order to apply for the positions of akims. Obviously, there is less coincidence and compliance than it should have been. By itself, direct elections have been quite recently initialized and launched at the legislative level, and it is not surprising that there are issues that require further corrections and improvement.

### **Conclusions**

In this paper, an attempt was made to study the tool of the personnel reserve and talent management in one direction and for one purpose - effective work on personnel management in the public sector of Kazakhstan. In connection with the above, there is a need to draw some conclusions and recommendations. It is possible to single out an approach that involves succession planning, a longer-term one. The state needs to create opportunities for the promotion of talented and qualified people to management in the public sector, national companies. The experience in personnel reserve formation needs to be finalized and legislated. Thus, for effective political and economic functioning, it is necessary to review procedures and tools for creating or changing the composition of civil servants. Today, the formation of PYPR in the public sector of Kazakhstan is a way of selecting human resources, which are formed by the relevant representative of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs. The issue of PYPR formation, the personnel reserve of buildings "A" and "B" will be more in demand in the coming years. However, in the Strategy of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020-2023, signed in 2019, there is no direct statement about working with PYPR, which requires clarification. It is obvious that the Academy's strategy and legal acts concerning the work of PYPR were developed simultaneously. After the global economic turbulence struck Kazakhstan, the most prosperous in post-Soviet Asia, the prospect of turning Kazakhstan into a regional superpower receded, but according to the Russian historian A. Grozin, it has not lost its relevance [18, 35]. The state authorities are faced with the task of improving population life level and quality, strengthening domestic and foreign policy situation, which means that competent and experienced personnel are needed. It is the effective formation of the personnel reserve that will accompany this, for this we conclude that measures are needed to disseminate and brand this kind of personnel selection and analogization with talent management technologies, which is recognized in countries, in turn, in which public administration, objectively, can be considered worthy of imitation. Regarding the lack of transparency, definite measures should be undertaken to increase control over the effective filling in vacancies. It is necessary to raise awareness among potential candidates over future prospects. It is becoming vital to continue talent pool building by means of existing mechanisms. As for the discrepancy between the implementation of the personnel reserve program and direct elections of akims, it is necessary to be carefully studied.

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