

# **NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY**

Graduate School of Public Policy

## **PSM AND ADMINISTRATIVE CULTURE IN KAZAKHSTAN**

*A Policy Analysis Exercise Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Public Policy*

Zia Ur Rahman

Charles Marges Ntaiya

Aidar Abdirakhman

Supervisor: Professor Artan Karini

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the impact of such factors as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and administrative culture on Public Service Motivation (PSM) of government officials in Kazakhstan. This country represents a governance system referred to as the "pragmatic hybrid." It implies the combination of the elements of hierarchy of the Soviet period and market transformations. For this reason, the traditional Western PSM approaches are inapplicable and should be modified. The research utilizes the design of concurrent transformative mixed methods. In total, data were collected via an online survey and semi-structured interviews of 38 government officials from the central ministries and executive authorities. The findings obtained from regression analysis are unambiguous. Hierarchical administrative culture has a negative impact. It reduces PSM ( $\beta = -.255, p = .004$ ). Thematic analysis of interviews shows a dual-motive structure. Extrinsic security meets basic needs first. Then intrinsic motivation operates above that level. The study also identifies four findings. Social prestige appears as a separate motivational factor. Perceived meritocracy shapes daily motivation. Peer support helps offset rigid hierarchy. And generational differences in motivation create a potential retention risk. These findings are linked to Kazakhstan's Civil Service Concept 2024–2029. Based on this, four policy recommendations are offered for the Agency for Civil Service Affairs.

*Keywords: Public Service Motivation, administrative culture, Kazakhstan, post-Soviet governance, Self-Determination Theory, mixed methods*

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## **1. Introduction**

The concept of PSM is of high significance when it comes to performance of civil servants and organizational commitment (Bokayev, Amirova, & Torebekova, 2024; Sagituly & Guo, 2021). Firstly, it shows willingness of a person to achieve goals that not only exceed their own and organizational gains but are of much higher value, namely, they contribute greatly to overall good of society. As regards Kazakhstan, in which PSM works, the situation is quite complicated and includes many components. Firstly, it has a long history of state that is centrally ruled and operates on principles of vertical hierarchy (Oleinik et al., 2015; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). Secondly, it continuously implements reforms that aim at modernization of its government activities and making them more market-oriented. The initiator of these reforms is President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The political system described is called a "pragmatic hybrid" (Oleinik et al., 2015). This name originates from the fact that despite the system's innovation nature, it relies heavily on the principles of hierarchy. Motivation is multidimensional in this case. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are both present, but their interaction cannot be fully described by Western theories. Job satisfaction becomes the intervening variable between the organization culture and the personal commitment (Bokayev et al., 2024; Sagituly & Guo, 2021). Various changes have been made since gaining independence in the form of meritocracy, digitalization, and performance-based systems. Nonetheless, these changes do not succeed equally well due to institutional limitations such as bureaucracy and hierarchy (Janenova & Knox, 2019; Oleinik et al., 2015). Therefore, the important issue here is to determine where these reforms have succeeded and where they have failed.

The structure of this study is rather simple. The first section covers the relevant theory and literature review of PSM, SDT, and administrative culture with emphasis placed on post-Soviet systems and reforms in Kazakhstan. Section 3 contains information about the methodology used in the study. In Section 4, results from regressions and qualitative thematic analyses are presented. The last section discusses the findings of this study within the context of the stated hypotheses and major theoretical contributions.

### **1.1 Background: Kazakhstan's Hybrid Governance**

The Republic of Kazakhstan is considered to be a post-Soviet, upper middle income country. Over the last twenty years since the time it gained its independence in 1991,

Kazakhstan has promoted the reforms within its public administration sphere as one of the major strategies for its development. Initially, Kazakhstan sought to leave behind the highly formalized Soviet administration model in favor of creating a more professional, responsible, and responsive to citizens administrative system. However, the existing situation is far from being as clear-cut. What one encounters is a mixture of old and new models coexisting under one roof, working harmonically at times but conflicting at other times. Official power stems from above.

Yet, the reform process has continued. In terms of introducing the idea of the “Listening State” under the presidency of President Tokayev in 2019, there was an intention to build trust relationships and facilitate involvement through digital tools and dialogues. It sounds nice enough, but the outcomes vary significantly. Research reveals that such instruments do not necessarily promote participation in reality. Sometimes they operate more as platforms for endorsement rather than genuine discussion forums (Karini, 2024; Janenova & Knox, 2019). The current reform initiative, Concept for the Development of Civil Service 2024-2029, seeks to adopt OECD-inspired HR strategies and digitalization/AI initiatives. This is all very promising. However, there remain many everyday challenges such as low salaries, poor career development prospects, lack of independence, and meritocracy-related promotion barriers (Bokayev et al., 2024). Thus, there appears to be a gap between theoretical reform initiatives and their practical application.

## **1.2 Problem Statement and Research Gap**

Despite a rich body of research into PSM in the West and administrative reform in post-Soviet countries, there is considerable underrepresentation at the intersection of both fields. Research on the factors influencing the motivation of public servants in Kazakhstan tends to either consider the topics of PSM and administration culture independently, or use Western-oriented approaches, which do not take into consideration the necessity of extrinsic motivation stability, such as job security and social perks, as a prerequisite for the motivation process in hybrid systems of governance (Homberg et al., 2015; Oleinik et al., 2015; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

Moreover, previous research literature assumes uniformity in motivational factors of the Kazakhstani civil service without differentiating between various layers of administration, organizational types, and generations of civil servants. To fill this gap, this research employs a simultaneous transformative mixed methods approach by empirically exploring how intrinsically motivated factors, extrinsically induced

rewards, and bureaucratic culture influence public sector motivation and organizational commitment of civil servants in central ministries and local executive organs (Akimats) in Kazakhstan.

### **1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This research is guided by one primary question and two supporting sub-questions:

**Main Research Question:** To what extent do intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and administrative culture shape public service motivation in Kazakhstan?

**Sub-question 1:** Which intrinsic and extrinsic determinants are particularly influential in determining PSM at various governance levels?

**Sub-question 2:** In what way does job satisfaction moderate the link between administrative culture and organizational commitment among public sector employees in Kazakhstan?

**Hypothesis 1:** The inflexibly hierarchical nature inherent to the administration in Kazakhstan is inversely related to the PSM level of civil servants.

**Hypothesis 2:** Compared to intrinsic motivation factors, extrinsic motivators have greater predictive power regarding organizational commitment in Kazakhstan.

**Hypothesis 3:** Job satisfaction moderates the relationship between autonomous perception and organizational commitment.

## **2. Literature Review**

The following discussion sets out the theoretical basis for this research. Unlike most literature reviews, which present the background to research in terms of separate bodies of knowledge on Public Service Motivation, Self-Determination Theory, and administrative culture, this section considers the relationship between the three topics through a key theoretical conflict that forms the rationale for the research. This is significant because it implies that existing theories and models of PSM in the West cannot be applied uncritically to other contexts.

### **2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Public Service Motivation**

The term Public Service Motivation is generally understood as "the propensity of an individual to act upon motivations that are essentially derived from public organizations" (Perry & Wise, 2010, p. 368). The definition highlights the nature of

PSM being institutional-specific. It differs from general prosocial motivation in the sense that it is motivated by the needs of the public sector and the demands arising out of it. Research on the concept has been ongoing for several decades now. Many empirical studies have found a positive correlation between high levels of PSM and good job performance, job satisfaction, and low turnover intention among others (Homberg et al., 2015; Jensen & Bro, 2018).

More recent research has posed crucial concerns regarding the applicability of these relationships universally. The emergence of events like the coronavirus pandemic, increasing levels of political polarization, and the focus on administrative systems that exist outside the Western context have made academics wonder about the extent to which PSM holds true in other political and institutional settings (Homberg et al., 2015). This current research paper has been conducted against this backdrop.

### **2.1.1 Perry's Multidimensional PSM Framework**

According to Perry (1996), the definition of PSM was empirically derived using factor analysis in that he discovered four major dimensions that characterized motivations. These were attraction to public policy making (APPM), commitment to the public interest (CPI), compassion (COM), and self sacrifice (SS). Each one of these four dimensions represents a separate element of the motivation in the public sector. In particular, APPM is an indicator of the motivation to be involved in significant policy-making process. CPI represents dedication towards common good and democracy. The motivation for COM is based on caring about other people, especially those who are disadvantaged in some way.

Despite numerous findings that have indicated that CPI and COM were the factors most correlated with favorable organizational results, these studies focused on Western countries (Homberg et al., 2015). When applying the above theoretical constructs to the case of Kazakhstan, it becomes obvious that they have several important drawbacks. For instance, the concept of the APPM presupposes the participation of civil servants in the process of decision-making; however, in an environment when all decisions are made by the higher-ups while everyone else should merely carry out the policy, the theory fails to be relevant (Oleinik et al., 2015). The same concerns the importance of COM and SS within the discussed environment due to their patriotic and developmental nature, which leads to a hybrid model outlined below.

### **2.1.2 Self-Determination Theory**

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), formulated by Deci and Ryan (2000), serves as an informative and meaningful framework for this research. The theory implies that the motivational continuum ranges from extrinsically determined motivation to intrinsically determined motivation. At the other end of the continuum, intrinsic motivation occurs if the individual experiences satisfaction from meeting three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy (sense of self-direction); competence (sense of efficacy in fulfilling the assigned role); and relatedness (connection with others). If these needs are satisfied, the individual will be able to internalize the organization's aims and be committed to their job tasks. In the context of public organizations, SDT provides specific predictions. Strict hierarchical organizational structure with low discretion violates the need for autonomy. Bureaucratic organizational role with restricted initiative violates the need for competence. Authoritative management style without personal interaction violates the need for relatedness. In total, these violate intrinsic motivation and, consequently, PSM (Breugh et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

SDT also emphasizes the “crowding-out effect,” whereby excessive amounts of surveillance, control, and evaluation reduce intrinsic motivation rather than enhance it (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This aspect is highly pertinent in Kazakhstan, where surveillance and control mechanisms are often characteristic of the day-to-day workplace environment. However, SDT introduces a significant caveat to H1 by suggesting that, even under conditions of constraint, autonomy cannot be completely eliminated. In such cases, a certain degree of autonomy still exists, known as “bounded autonomy.” This involves using one's professional discretion within certain bounds, discussing issues with colleagues and superiors, and taking part in decision-making processes even when one does not hold the ultimate decision-making power.

### **2.1.3 Administrative Culture and Motivational Consequences**

Public service motivation (PSM) does not exist independently but rather in an administrative culture that comprises the prevailing set of norms, values, and routine behaviors within public organizations (Ritz & Weißmüller, 2025). The administrative culture influences the process of turning individual motivation into actions and commitment. Comparativist studies in public administration tend to differentiate

between hierarchical and participative organizational cultures. The first is characterized by rule conformity and vertical accountability, while the latter highlights discussion and voice and joint responsibility for results (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Oleinik et al., 2015).

In Kazakhstan, just like many other former Soviet republics, the dominant administrative culture is characterized by hierarchy. There is a high power distance in the country. Interactions among individuals in organizations are governed by strict rules. Individuals do not question authority in the country (Oleinik et al., 2015). Studies on this kind of culture have shown that there are two motivational factors associated with it. First, it constrains the feeling of engagement that civil servants have in their jobs. It impacts greatly their satisfaction and public service motivation (PSM) (Janenova & Knox, 2019). Second, it leads to what has been termed as the compliance versus commitment divide.

However, the existing literature identifies another dimension. Clan cultures that depend on informal relations may emerge alongside formal hierarchy. This factor could partially compensate for the motivational deficiencies through recognition and support that cannot be provided within the formal system (Bokayev et al., 2024). This idea is included in the theoretical model and determines the interpretation of the qualitative results presented in Section 4.2.

## **2.2 PSM in Post-Soviet and Hybrid Contexts**

When the framework of the conventional PSM approach is employed in Kazakhstan, it becomes obvious that there is a definite motivational model here. What distinguishes it from the Western approach is the presence of extrinsic incentives. First, owing to Soviet experience, there has been created a culture of the paternalist state, where economic stability provided by the state is considered a fundamental prerequisite for working but not just one of many possible incentives (Mussagulova & Van der Wal, 2019). Thus, stable jobs, salaries, social benefits such as housing and healthcare, and a stable career path cannot be regarded as bonuses; they are perceived as conditions of continuing employment in the civil service sphere. They have become deeply embedded in the culture.

In the meantime, intrinsic motivation still exists. For example, such intrinsic factors as patriotism, the development of the country, civic responsibility, and so forth are widely

cited by government employees when asked about their reasons for joining the public service organization and staying there (Karini, 2024). However, what is specific for Kazakhstan is the hierarchical structure of motivations. First, intrinsic motivation in this case cannot exist without extrinsic motivation that precedes it. As a result, such a structure can be referred to as the structure of dual motivations, when first stability, and then purpose is achieved. The latter does not correspond to the main ideas of Western PSM theory, since it assumes that intrinsic motivation takes precedence over extrinsic one.

Empirical evidence from other post-Soviet cases corroborates this trend. For instance, according to Mussagulova & Van der Wal (2019), job security remains an important determinant of public sector employment as well as its major motivational driver in the long run. Similar conclusions are reached by Bokayev et al. (2024), for whom material and structural advantages are rated higher compared to the intrinsic sense of mission, although the latter does not become irrelevant for that reason. All things considered, these results imply that PSM theory should be modified accordingly.

### **2.3 Job Satisfaction, Autonomy, and Organizational Commitment**

Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between organizational culture and commitment. Multiple studies prove the link between employee satisfaction and their willingness to work harder, remain in the organization, and commit to achieving the goals set by the organization (Sagituly & Guo, 2021; Homberg et al., 2015). In Kazakhstan, there are several restrictions which affect job satisfaction among civil servants. First of all, employees' autonomy and decision-making powers are low (Janenova & Knox, 2019). However, autonomy is crucial in the context of this paper. According to the theories of Self-Determination, even an illusion of choice in a hierarchically managed organization has an important impact on both intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Breugh et al., 2017). When employees know that their professional opinion is taken into account and that they can change anything, even minor things, they become more satisfied. Conversely, when they have little discretion and are simply supposed to implement decisions made by others, they become dissatisfied.

It is a chain of connections. Administrative culture determines autonomy. Autonomy impacts on satisfaction. And lastly, satisfaction determines organizational commitment.

It is not a straight line relationship but a recurring one in the context of post-Soviet nations. This is how Hypothesis 3 emerges. Acknowledgment is another factor that seems to matter here. In a hierarchical system where autonomy is restricted, the manner in which managers relate with their subordinates takes center stage. Managers need to show acknowledgment by considering them as individuals, give constructive criticism, and match their appreciation to their work effort to increase their satisfaction levels (Breugh et al., 2017; Jensen & Bro, 2018).

## **2.4 Recent Administrative Reforms and Their Motivational Implications**

Kazakhstan's recent reform trajectory is characterized by a recurring tension between ambitious institutional goals and persistent motivational realities. Two reform initiatives are particularly relevant to this study.

### **2.4.1 The 'Listening State' Initiative**

The idea of the "Listening State," which was first proposed in 2019, was designed to enhance trust between the government and the people and incorporate the latter in the process of policy-making using digital technology and formal communication lines (Karini, 2024). From the perspective of civil servants, it indicated a move towards a more flexible and interactive framework of governance that allows for constant voice and input rather than periodic occurrences.

Indeed, there are contradictions in practice regarding the outcome of such participation. The reality on the ground shows that the outcomes have been varied and somewhat negative. While participatory approaches were officially adopted, the process of decision making is still left in the hands of senior staff members. According to survey results, about 45% of participants claim they participate in decision-making, yet participation does not influence decision-making processes (Karini, 2024). Participation does exist, though. In this case, it means that its effect is poor.

### **2.4.2 The Concept for the Development of Civil Service 2024–2029**

Approved in 2024, this strategic plan seeks to establish a professional, responsible, and digitally savvy public sector that meets the OECD benchmarks (Karini, 2024). The Concept highlights quick and efficient decision-making by managers, AI implementation, modern HR practices, and additional professional development opportunities. It also defines specific objectives like raising the proportion of

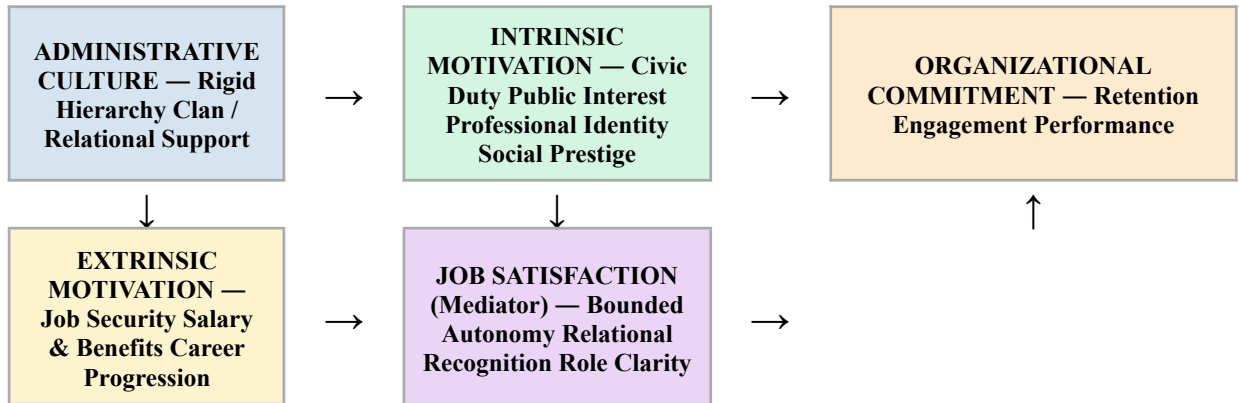
universities providing AI education and training a great many digital professionals by 2029.

Even with such objectives, preliminary data and current literature reveal that there are still the same motivational obstacles that have been present for quite some time. Some of those include relatively small paychecks compared to the private sector, minimal opportunities for meritorious career advancement, and poor professional recognition (Bokayev et al., 2024). Such aspects cannot be underestimated. They create the context within which motivation operates in the system. Therefore, technological innovation will only go so far when it comes to successful modernization of the system based on the Concept.

The conceptual framework is a synthesis of the multi-dimensional PSM approach proposed by Perry & Hondeghem (2008), the Self-Determination Theory, and the “pragmatic hybrid” approach of governance in Kazakhstan. The conceptual framework performs three functions: it provides an explanation for the research methodology adopted, defines the interconnection between key variables, and positions the hypotheses in a theoretical framework. The framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

There are five inter-related constructs that play key roles in this model. Administrative culture, which may vary from hierarchical to relational and participatory, is considered the main independent variable that affects both intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation serve as two independent variables affecting PSM, although they are not interchangeable because of the nature of their influence – whereas intrinsic motivation depends on the individual’s civic identity, extrinsic motivation is associated with security conditions in institutions that have to be met before intrinsic motivation becomes effective. Organizational commitment serves as an outcome variable, and job satisfaction serves as a mediating variable that links work environment features to organizational commitment.

**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual Framework: PSM in Kazakhstan's Hybrid Administrative Context*



*H1: Hierarchy → (–) Intrinsic PSM | H2: Extrinsic ≠ primary predictor | H3: Job Satisfaction mediates Culture → Commitment*

*Note. Adapted from Perry & Hondeghem (2008) and Ryan & Deci (2000). Arrows indicate proposed directional relationships. The dual-motive structure positions extrinsic motivation as an enabling precondition for intrinsic motivation rather than a competing alternative.*

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

Concurrent transformative mixed-methods design as proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) forms the basis for this research design. Here, survey data and interview data are collected simultaneously rather than sequentially and analyzed and interpreted together. The use of the transformative label captures the reality-focused nature of this research and the attempt to resolve an actual governance problem within a transitional setting based on a context-oriented rather than neutral research approach. The rationale for the use of this methodological approach is rather straightforward since the research questions require both breadth and depth.

While surveys will allow hypothesis testing and measurement of indicators related to key constructs, interviews will allow understanding of the lived experience of administrative culture, perception of bounded autonomy, and informal motivation mechanisms within hierarchical organizations from the insider perspective.

#### 3.2 Sampling Strategy

##### 3.2.1 Quantitative Sample

Targeted individuals consisted of professional civil servants from various government institutions, including central ministries and local executive agencies (Akimats),

throughout Kazakhstan. Thirty-eight surveys were completed and usable for analysis. In terms of their position within organizations, respondents were distributed into three categories: junior employees (21.2%), middle managers (69.7%), and senior managers (9.1%). Given the restricted nature of the Kazakhstani environment, including gatekeeper issues, the absence of official directories, and limitations for conducting external research, probabilistic sampling was impossible. Thus, convenience sampling was used.

By following such a procedure, we managed to overcome the problem of access but created a situation where self-selection bias occurs. Participants can be very different from those who did not respond to the survey in terms of their motivations, cultural views, and willingness to participate. Such a limitation should be considered when analyzing the results, as noted in section 6.2.

### **3.2.2 Qualitative Sample**

Eleven semi-structured interviews have been carried out among top management employees and specialists of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Healthcare, Presidential Administration, Secretariat of the Secretary of State, and organizations dealing with digitalization and environment issues. The purposeful sampling technique has been used in order to select respondents who would have relevant expertise, generally not less than five years of practice. Respondents are referred to by numeric code.

## **3.3 Data Collection**

### **3.3.1 Survey Instrument**

The survey was carried out via the internet in both Kazakh and Russian languages. The survey utilized validated scales. The dimensions of PSM were assessed using Perry's (1996) PSM scale, whereas administrative culture was based on Cameron & Quinn's (2011) theoretical framework. Respondents' scores of PSM, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and opinion about administrative culture (hierarchy, autonomy, and ethics) were obtained using the five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

The survey also assessed the significance of job security and job meaning and opinions regarding decision making within the organization. Data collection occurred in 2024-2025. Written consent was obtained from all the participants, and approval for

conducting this study was issued by Nazarbayev University's Institutional Review Board.

### **3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interview guide has been prepared to elicit thorough information about motivations, cultural experience, satisfaction with career, and views on public accountability. Interview questions were targeted at particular experiences instead of general views, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Confidential interviews were performed to enable frank discussions, particularly regarding such problematic topics as bureaucracy, internal governance, and meritocracy. All interviews were audio-taped, then word-by-word transcribed either in Russian or Kazakh language and subsequently translated into English.

## **3.4 Data Analysis**

### **3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis**

Data obtained using quantitative approaches were subjected to multiple linear regression and descriptive statistical analyses. Responses to survey questions were recoded into numeric scores, and composite index scores were computed by averaging Likert-scaled items under each construct. Dummy coding of administrative culture was performed, and top-down culture was considered the reference variable. This was done to ensure that ordinal categorical variables were not treated as interval data predictors in regression models. Assumptions were tested before performing multiple linear regression. Normality of residuals was assessed using Shapiro-Wilk test. VIF was computed to check multicollinearity ( $VIF < 3.0$ ).

Multiple linear regression was performed to determine the direct effects of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and type of administrative culture on the composite PSM score. Model adequacy was assessed using  $R^2$ , adjusted  $R^2$ , F-test statistic and associated probability, standardized beta coefficients, and t-value and p-value at  $\alpha = .05$ . Mediation analysis was carried out using the procedure described by Baron and Kenny (1986). Sobel test was also conducted. Multiple comparison adjustment using Benjamini-Hochberg procedure was done.

### **3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis**

The analysis of the interview transcripts followed the thematic approach of Braun and Clarke (2006), which consists of six stages: getting familiar with the data, developing initial codes, identifying themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and preparing the

report. The first stage involved inductive coding to recognize patterns within the participants' responses. These codes were subsequently classified under themes associated with the theoretical model, such as stability as a prerequisite for motivation, hierarchy as a constraint to autonomy, and relational management as a driver of satisfaction, in addition to other emerging themes like prestige motivation and generational differences. Triangulation among analysts was employed.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

The research was conducted in full compliance with Nazarbayev University's ethical standards for studies involving human participants. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board before any data collection. All participants gave informed consent and were clearly informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Given the sensitive nature of some interview topics, including views on meritocracy, hierarchical culture, and managerial behavior, qualitative participants are identified only by numerical codes, and no institutional details are shared in a way that would allow identification. Interview recordings are stored on encrypted, password-protected drives and are accessible only to the core research team.

## **4. Findings**

This chapter presents the findings from the quantitative survey ( $N = 38$ ) and 11 semi-structured interviews. Both sets of data are organized around the three research hypotheses. Qualitative evidence is used to support and explain the statistical results.

### **4. Findings**

The findings of the quantitative survey ( $N=38$ ) and semi-structured interview analysis ( $N=11$ ) are provided in this chapter and presented according to three research hypotheses. The qualitative data is employed to validate and clarify statistical data.

#### **4.1 Quantitative Results**

##### **4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics**

It was confirmed that all composite scales had acceptable internal consistencies: PSM  $\alpha=.863$ , Extrinsic Motivation  $\alpha=.755$ , and Intrinsic Motivation  $\alpha=.643$  (acceptable for an eight-item exploratory scale; George & Mallery, 2003). According to Table 1, all main variables are characterized by means exceeding the midpoint value of 3.00. The highest means are observed among variables for Extrinsic Motivation ( $M=4.13$ ,

SD=1.01), PSM (M=3.97), and Intrinsic Motivation (M=3.69). This tendency is consistent with post-Soviet literature where material stability is considered a key starting motivator and maintains its high importance throughout time (Mussagulova & Van der Wal, 2019; Bokayev et al., 2024). High Job Satisfaction also stands out with the mean value of 4.26. Nevertheless, there is strong evidence of negative skewness (−1.14) indicating a ceiling effect in this variable.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 38)*

| Variable                              | N  | M    | SD   | Min  | Max  | Skew  | 95% CI       |
|---------------------------------------|----|------|------|------|------|-------|--------------|
| PSM (composite)                       | 38 | 3.97 | 0.82 | 1.43 | 5.00 | −0.39 | [3.71, 4.23] |
| Intrinsic Motivation                  | 38 | 3.69 | 0.61 | 2.38 | 4.88 | −0.28 | [3.49, 3.89] |
| Extrinsic Motivation                  | 38 | 4.13 | 1.01 | 1.00 | 5.00 | −0.82 | [3.81, 4.46] |
| Job Satisfaction (single item)        | 38 | 4.26 | 1.08 | 1.00 | 5.00 | −1.14 | [3.91, 4.61] |
| Admin. Culture: Participatory (dummy) | 38 | 0.34 | 0.48 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.66  | [0.19, 0.50] |
| Admin. Culture: Hierarchical (dummy)  | 38 | 0.26 | 0.45 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 1.08  | [0.11, 0.41] |

*Note. Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree. Administrative Culture variables are dummy-coded; top-down culture is the reference category. 95% CIs =  $M \pm 1.96(SD/\sqrt{N})$ .*

#### 4.1.2 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

In a multiple linear regression (Table 2), the relationship between each variable and the dependent variable PSM was assessed separately, as well as their combined impact on the level of public service motivation. The result showed that all three independent variables had an effect on the dependent variable and the overall model was statistically significant,  $F(4, 33) = 43.779$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating that 84.1% of the variation in PSM is accounted for by the four predictors included in the study ( $R^2 = .841$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .822$ ). The large coefficient value indicates that the set of variables explains almost everything that determines PSM among respondents. The greatest impact was shown by Intrinsic Motivation ( $B = 0.940$ ,  $\beta = .703$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As Intrinsic Motivation increased by one unit, PSM was estimated to increase by 0.94.

However, Extrinsic Motivation also exhibited a statistically significant effect ( $B = 0.173$ ,  $\beta = .214$ ,  $p = .010$ ). Nevertheless, the magnitude of the effect is lower compared to Intrinsic Motivation. Simultaneously significant effects of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation indicate that the former and the latter act additively and do not negate each

other. Contrary to H2 that predicted the primacy of the role of extrinsic motivation, this hypothesis has been falsified. The Hierarchical Administrative Culture showed a statistically significant negative effect ( $B = -0.466$ ,  $\beta = -.255$ ,  $p = .004$ ). Contrary to H3, the variable for Participatory Culture was not significant ( $p = .176$ ).

The partial confirmation to Hypothesis H3 was found through an exploratory analysis of mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986), where it was revealed that Job Satisfaction mediates the link between Hierarchical Culture and PSM (indirect effect =  $-0.125$ ; Sobel's  $z = -2.10$ ,  $p = .036$ ). Nevertheless, this confidence interval  $[-0.861, 0.012]$  contains zero and was non-significant when Bonferroni-Hochberg correction was applied. Therefore, the result remains exploratory.

**Table 2**

*Regression Coefficients — Dependent Variable: PSM ( $N = 38$ ;  $R^2 = .841$ )*

| Predictor                           | B      | SE    | $\beta$      | t      | p     | 95% CI           | Sig. |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------------|--------|-------|------------------|------|
| (Constant)                          | -0.033 | 0.413 | —            | -0.079 | .938  | [-0.874, 0.807]  |      |
| <b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>         | +0.940 | 0.117 | <b>.703</b>  | +8.002 | <.001 | [0.702, 1.178]   | ***  |
| Extrinsic Motivation                | +0.173 | 0.063 | .214         | +2.749 | .010  | [0.045, 0.301]   | **   |
| Admin. Culture: Participatory       | -0.187 | 0.135 | -.110        | -1.384 | .176  | [-0.462, 0.088]  |      |
| <b>Admin. Culture: Hierarchical</b> | -0.466 | 0.151 | <b>-.255</b> | -3.094 | .004  | [-0.773, -0.160] | **   |

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$  \*\*  $p < .01$ .  $\beta$  = standardized coefficient. Reference category for Administrative Culture: top-down.

**Table 3**

*Hypothesis Testing Summary*

| H          | Statement                                                                         | Key Statistic                                                    | Verdict                                                       |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>H 1</b> | Rigid hierarchy negatively correlates with intrinsic PSM                          | $\beta = -.255$ , $p = .004$                                     | <b>Supported</b>                                              |
| <b>H 2</b> | Extrinsic motivators are stronger predictors of commitment than intrinsic factors | Intrinsic $\beta = .703^{***}$ vs. Extrinsic $\beta = .214^{**}$ | Not Supported — Revised: both significant; intrinsic dominant |
| <b>H 3</b> | Job Satisfaction mediates Administrative Culture → PSM                            | Sobel $z = -2.10$ , $p = .036$ ; Bootstrap CI $[-.86, .01]$      | Partially Supported † (exploratory)                           |

† Sobel  $p < .05$  but bootstrapped CI marginally includes zero; treated as exploratory pending replication.

## 4.2 Qualitative Findings

The 11 interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Six themes came out of the data. Each one connects directly with the quantitative results and adds detail that the regression model alone cannot capture.

### ***Theme 1: A Dual-Motive Structure; Public Meaning and Institutional Security***

Both civic commitment and security in terms of being an institution have proven themselves as motivating factors consistently in every single interview. People viewed those motivations as complementary to each other rather than conflicting. Civic commitment is rooted in economic and institutional security, as one can't go without another. According to interviewee 3 (Presidential Protocol), patriotism as a commitment to work for the benefit of the country is the primary motivational factor, but the absence of economic stability would render it impossible. Interviewee 10 (Department of Digital Development) even presented the exact statistics that suggest that the majority of civil servants join the ranks of employees due to income security first, and then develop civic commitments.

This finding is consistent with SDT, whereby external sources fulfill basic requirements, while intrinsic motivation develops further on these foundations (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This finding also explains the regression findings, whereby both motivational sources play roles, but intrinsic motivation proves more dominant. The relatively weaker role played by extrinsic motivation ( $\beta = .214$ ) does not mean that it plays a less influential role. This finding highlights that most of the study participants possess comparable levels of safety, hence offering little variance to account for than intrinsic motivation.

### ***Theme 2: Three Forms of Intrinsic Motivation***

Intrinsic motivation was neither a universal concept nor monolithic among the participant narratives. Instead, there were three distinct sources of intrinsic motivation that emerged from the interview responses: sector-oriented purpose, systemic influence, and professional identity. Sector-oriented purpose relates to motivation stemming from involvement in sectors of national significance, such as health care, financial services, and environmental conservation. Here, the nature of the work performed carries intrinsic value. Systemic influence denotes motivation derived from systemic-level decision-making and policy impact. Participant number 7 (from the Economic

Department) exemplifies this type of motivation, emphasizing the necessity of going beyond merely accomplishing one's tasks and achieving systemic-level influence where one's actions could potentially affect tens of thousands or even millions of people. Professional identity denotes motivation drawn from the congruence between one's academic background, professional skill set, and job responsibilities. Here, intrinsic motivation arises from performing a role suited to one's abilities within a relevant organizational context. All three of these types align closely with the three primary dimensions of public service motivation identified by Perry and Wise (1990): commitment to the public good, policy-making attraction, and compassion.

***Theme 3: Extrinsic Motivators as Preconditions; Not Substitutes***

While intrinsic motivation was statistically dominant, extrinsic factors were mentioned by every participant as basic to both entering and staying in the civil service. Interviewee 4 (Secretariat) described a full institutional package, stable salary, housing support, medical access, and regulated working hours as the main reason for choosing public sector work before thinking about mission or purpose. Career progression acted as a link between external reward and internal recognition: seeing colleagues advance through merit-based systems signaled that effort would be noticed and rewarded.

However, when the link between merit and promotion seemed weak, satisfaction dropped. Interviewee 4 described receiving a certification for promotion that was never implemented. This showed a gap between stated merit-based rules and actual practice, creating lasting dissatisfaction even after more than 26 years of service. This connects to Theme 6 (perceived meritocracy) and shows how extrinsic factors can become demotivating when institutional processes appear inconsistent or unfair.

***Theme 4: Relational Culture as a Driver of Satisfaction and PSM***

Highly satisfied respondents associated their high job satisfaction with a certain type of management characterized by a relation-centered style. Such managers acknowledge the individuality of the employee rather than his/her professional position. The respondent from the Ministry of Finance stressed that taking into account the personal circumstances of the employees as well as paying attention to the wellbeing of employees was the key driver of high motivation and performance, and was associated with the perception of respect and working with dedication, thus clearly supporting the suggested link between satisfaction and PSM in hypothesis H3, supported at the exploratory level.

On the contrary, unclear roles, heavy workload, and impersonal management were listed among the motivational problems. Respondents 1, 10, and 11 reported receiving extra tasks without adequate acknowledgment, which made them feel exploited, rather than contributing to the organization. Such examples can serve to explain the first hypothesis: that a rigid hierarchy leads to lack of recognition and role overload, reducing satisfaction and, subsequently, PSM.

***Theme 5: The Two Faces of Hierarchy***

The findings from the qualitative analysis reveal differences in the perception of hierarchy that cannot be comprehensively explained by the general regression results. Respondents who were working in prestigious and security organizations perceived hierarchy as an enabling factor and not a constraining one. Interviewee number 3 argued that the presence of discipline through schedules, tasks, and accountability helped individuals plan for activities and engage in purposeful actions. The respondent who was a former military officer for 20 years indicated that the factors of cooperation, mutual respect, and shared objectives facilitated hierarchical relationships that fostered commitment.

Hypothesis 1 is modified from this observation. While there is no doubt that hierarchy has a negative impact on intrinsic motivation based on the general regression results, the effects vary from one organizational setting to another. As suggested by self-determination theory, hierarchy is restrictive and constraining within administrative ministries. However, among prestigious and security organizations, hierarchy facilitates motivation and fosters identification. Further investigation may be conducted through institution-based sampling techniques.

***Theme 6: Bounded Autonomy; Voice and Role Clarity Within Structure***

Autonomy by participants' definitions was not freedom but the capacity for participation, consultation, and exercising professional judgment within a defined boundary or "bounded autonomy." Participation by both junior staff and their seniors in decision-making was acknowledged, although it was subject to certain restrictions. Uncertainty was considered better addressed through consultation among senior staff, whereas ultimate responsibility remained in their hands. The interviewee 6 explained this succinctly: although participation contributes to quality decision-making, it is the chain of command that guarantees accountability and feasibility.

On the other hand, the interviewee 10 offered a significant insight into a potential conflict within the discussed phenomenon. Although participation is expected in principle, in reality, it occurs on an upper management level, and contributions from junior staff are often ignored, despite the fact that they implement most front-line tasks. This conflict can be regarded as corresponding with the result from regression analysis of a negative correlation between hierarchical organizational culture and PSM. When voice becomes possible but restricted, there is little room left for the experience of being listened to, which results in decreased intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Oleinik et al., 2015).

### **4.3 Triangulation Summary**

Three major conclusions emerge from the two sources of data combined. First, intrinsic motivation is the primary determinant of PSM, although its effect depends upon the prior fulfillment of extrinsic needs; a dual-motive framework confirmed by both regression ( $\beta = .703$  vs.  $\beta = .214$ ) and qualitative analysis (Themes 1 to 3). Secondly, the organizational culture in terms of hierarchical administration diminishes the level of PSM ( $\beta = -.255$ ); yet the influence of such culture on the motivational process differs across organizations. Theme 5 reveals a category of participants whose organizations demonstrate a higher level of PSM despite their hierarchical administrative culture due to prestige/ security sector affiliation. Third, job satisfaction partially mediates the connection between organizational culture and PSM through the concept of relational management. While this hypothesis receives exploratory statistical backing, Themes 4 and 6 provide thorough insight into the mediating process, thus, theoretically strengthening the proposed framework for future research.

## **5. Discussion**

In this chapter, the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analysis are interpreted based on the research hypotheses, situating the findings within the relevant literature about PSM and post-Soviet governance while making four contributions to the literature. The findings reveal that the relationship between administrative culture and PSM in Kazakhstan is far more complicated and variable than existing theories have indicated.

### **5.1 Hierarchy and Administrative Culture**

The negative effect of hierarchical administrative culture on PSM ( $\beta = -.255$ ,  $p = .004$ ) largely agrees with the extant literature, which argues that highly centralized structures diminish individual autonomy and undermine intrinsic motivation (Oleinik et al., 2015; Janenova & Knox, 2019). According to SDT, situations where individuals feel deprived of control and lack competence will have detrimental effects on their intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, H1 is confirmed and corroborated by empirical evidence in the Western context (Homberg et al., 2015) and post-Soviet space (Mussagulova & Van der Wal, 2019). Nevertheless, the qualitative analysis reveals an interesting caveat that remains unaccounted for in the total regression coefficient. In institutions driven by prestige considerations and in security organizations, respondents perceived hierarchy as a source of motivation, not constraint. This cannot be merely attributed to the passive acceptance of hierarchy. On the contrary, it represents a positive attitude toward hierarchy grounded in institutional identity, common purpose, and role clarity.

This finding challenges the widespread Western PSM theory belief that hierarchy is invariably negative and raises the possibility that institutional type serves as a moderator variable (Perry & Wise, 1990; Homberg et al., 2015). In general, the conclusion about H1 is correct, though it is context-dependent. Future studies should focus on verifying whether hierarchy tends to depress motivational levels at administrative institutions and, conversely, enhance motivation in security and presidential institutions, by sampling institutions based on type. On a theoretical level, this study relates to the distinction made by Cameron and Quinn (2011) between hierarchical and clan organizational cultures. At the same time, it shows that both can exist within the same formal structure, depending on mission, status, and collective identity.

### **5.2 Re-evaluating Intrinsic and Extrinsic Drivers**

The rephrasing of H2 can be regarded as another major finding of the research. The initial prediction, supported by the post-Soviet literature that stresses the material stability of employees as the primary motivation factor, implies that the extrinsic

variables will become better predictors of organizational commitment (Mussagulova & Van der Wal, 2019; Bokayev et al., 2024). The analysis contradicts this hypothesis. Intrinsic motivation turns out to be more powerful ( $\beta = .703$ ), whereas extrinsic motivation, although statistically significant ( $\beta = .214$ ), remains less important. The research finding agrees with traditional Public Service Motivation (PSM) theory more than it does with the post-Soviet literature (Perry & Wise, 1990).

It is here that the qualitative data provide an additional clarification. Extrinsic factors were cited by all interviewees as fundamental, but more as prerequisites than motivational factors themselves. And this difference is essential. Extrinsic factors exhibit little variability in the regression model not due to their insignificance, but due to their omnipresence within the organizational context. Once secured, they cease to be conspicuous, and intrinsic motivation takes on a decisive role in explaining variance in dedication and work efforts. In accordance with the principles of self-determination theory, the fulfillment of basic needs comes prior to the emergence of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It should thus be evident that the mere improvement of extrinsic conditions is unlikely to have any positive effect on PSM. They are indispensable, yet insufficient on their own.

### **5.3 The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

As per the mediation analysis, there is some evidence to support hypothesis 3. The relationship between hierarchy and PSM is partially mediated by job satisfaction (the indirect effect is equal to  $-0.125$ , Sobel  $z = -2.10$ ,  $p = .036$ ). While the confidence interval based on bootstrapping technique includes zero, the finding does not hold true when the Benjamini-Hochberg adjustment is applied. Nonetheless, the qualitative results clearly explain how the mechanism works, something that the sample size was unable to validate statistically. For example, interviewees 1, 4, and 11 elaborate on the importance of relational management, the personal approach, communication, and recognition that reflects one's hard work for developing job satisfaction and motivating employees.

This observation resonates with the wider research literature that discusses transformational leadership and PSM (Jensen & Bro, 2018) and emphasizes relational management as the central connecting point between organizational environment and motivation. Relational management may be considered as an alternative to formal

autonomy within hierarchical structures in Kazakhstan and could help to satisfy recognition and competence needs even without involving employees into decision-making processes. Given the weak correlation observed in H3, this outcome can be attributed to the lack of data more than the theoretical framework, requiring further testing with institutional samples.

## **5.4 Four Novel Contributions**

Beyond the hypothesis-based findings, the interview data reveal four patterns that are not fully covered or are missing in both Perry's PSM framework and existing research on Kazakhstan.

### **5.4.1 Social Prestige as an Independent Motivational Dimension**

During interviews, interviewees identified social prestige as an independent motivational factor that differs both from civic responsibility and economic security. In particular, interviewee 3 singled out social prestige as a fourth form of motivation along with patriotism, security, and professional growth. Motivation through honor was also noted by interviewee 11, who related it to the honor of working at leading state organizations, while Interviewee 1 emphasized the prestige of holding an official position prior to any mention of financial remuneration. This phenomenon is, however, missing from Perry's (1996) four PSM dimensions.

From a theoretical perspective, this result highlights the concept of symbolic capital, as defined by Bourdieu (1986), which is the social prestige associated with being employed within the state in a country where there have been influences from the Soviet administration system, which gave civil servants a unique social status. In countries that are transitioning from such an administrative system and where this aspect continues to hold weight, prestige becomes a genuine motivator that needs to be included in PSM models.

### **5.4.2 Perceived Meritocracy as a Live Motivational Variable**

Whereas the extant literature commonly regards meritocracy as a reform objective to be achieved through institution building, rather than a daily motivational practice, the qualitative data indicate otherwise. Public sector employees continuously monitor their promotion and reward mechanisms for equity, and any perceived lack of fairness undermines their motivation, sometimes in profound ways. Interviewee 4 cited his case of obtaining a certificate of promotion that had never been realized despite 26 years of service, indicating the extent to which the issues were felt. Interviewee 10 highlighted

the contrast between competitive recruitment at the lower ranks and appointive promotions at the higher ranks, viewing this as a systemic integrity challenge that undermines merit-based motivation.

According to the procedural justice theory (Lind & Tyler, 1988), the effects of a just procedure can be greater than those of an outcome in terms of commitment. This connection, however, has not been explored by the PSM literature, especially concerning the former Soviet republics. The evidence presented above indicates that, for motivation purposes, adherence to merit-based principles is key rather than their mere existence.

#### **5.4.3 The Peer Collective as an Informal Motivational Buffer**

The central issue in PSM theory from the Western perspective is how the individual relates to the organization: Does the individual relate to the purpose of the organization? However, what the theory lacks is the dimension where the individual relates to his fellow colleagues, as discussed by the interview data presented. For instance, Interviewee 11 mentioned how the work unit was like a second family that maintained motivation during extensive working hours, which were not explained in terms of formal reward structures. For Interviewee 5, peer support was the most important aspect that made it possible for the team to cope with the stressful job of protecting children.

This concept is consistent with clan culture described by Bokayev et al. (2024) and the cultural types discussed by Cameron and Quinn (2011). However, neither considers this to be an element motivating individuals in their official organizational hierarchies. In conclusion, there is an underlying implication from the results. In environments where vertical relations are constrained by hierarchies and where formal appreciation may not be uniform, peer encouragement fills the gap. HR strategies need to be cognizant of this implication, making changes in how teams are formed and peers are encouraged in organizations.

#### **5.4.4 A Generational Divide in Motivational Orientation**

The Kazakhstan literature, in turn, typically assumes homogeneity between civil servants in terms of motivation, with the only exception being a division by the level of administration. The empirical information obtained through interviews provides evidence of generational diversity in this aspect that is not captured by the literature. Specifically, civil servants employed during the nation-building stage in the 1990s and 2000s display a unique motivational pattern. It is associated with participation in the

process of forming a new state. Such a motivational approach is unique for this generation. Motivation through nation-building principles cannot be recreated for a later generation because of the emergence of the state. Therefore, nation-building-based motivational strategies lose their efficacy for new generations of employees.

Unlike their older counterparts, the drivers of motivation of young participants differ. Namely, these are innovation, international experience, digital impact, and well-deserved merit promotion. The interviewee number 10 highlighted the increasing problem of losing the youth among the civil service participants, which proves the existence of the gap between the existing system and expectations of the generation under discussion. Therefore, the Civil Service Concept 2024-2029 must take into account the above-mentioned problem. In other words, specific retention strategies aimed at those who were recruited after 2010 must be developed in accordance with the real motivators of younger employees.

## **6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

### **6.1 Policy Recommendations**

The findings lead to four practical policy recommendations for the Agency for Civil Service Affairs and those implementing the Civil Service Concept 2024–2029.

**First: Satisfy extrinsic baselines as a prerequisite, not an afterthought.** This duality of motives in Kazakhstan is clear from the fact that it is only when all the needs for financial remuneration, living conditions, and proper promotion mechanisms have been satisfied that the motive of intrinsic purpose can take hold. This cannot be seen as just another problem with HR management; it is a necessity. Workload versus payment ratios, which were pointed out in multiple interviews, constitute an obvious obstacle to PSM. It will not help to address this through administrative measures if the basic needs of civil servants have not yet been met. The pay scales of government employees need to be re-evaluated in light of market conditions and cost of living.

**Second: Invest in relational management training.** The findings from both the statistics and qualitative analysis reveal that job satisfaction, through which PSM can be achieved, is mostly influenced by the quality of the managerial relations. Line managers need to be trained to relate well with subordinates. Training needs to include treating subordinates as people outside their workplace, ensuring genuine communication, allocating tasks equitably, and recognizing employees based on their efforts. This seems like the most viable means of enhancing motivation under the

existing framework because no significant changes have to be effected. Such training ought to feature in the curriculum of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs.

**Third: Restore meritocratic credibility at all levels.** Perceived meritocracy was seen as an important and autonomous source of motivation, particularly among civil servants with a long history in the organization. The difference between competitive recruitment in lower ranks and appointive promotion in higher ranks represents a significant contradiction, which reduces confidence in the process of functioning of the system. Expansion of the competitive mechanism to higher ranks, alongside proper and timely promotion decisions, would allow for overcoming this inconsistency in terms of equality. This is not merely a problem of governance but also motivation in its purest form.

**Fourth: Develop generation-differentiated retention strategies.** The difference in motivation between the generations observed during the interviews demonstrates that there is an ever-growing need to abandon the "one size fits all" mentality. The Civil Service Concept 2024-2029 should have specific retention tracks for young people who started their service after 2010. These should be related to innovation, international experience, rapid promotions based on meritocracy, and the actual impact on real-world systems, which were frequently mentioned by younger participants but are currently lacking from existing systems. Such a system might involve rapid advancement programs for junior high performers, secondment and exchange opportunities, and innovation units for young civil servants working on digital transformation with authority and acknowledgment.

## **6.2 Limitations**

There are certain factors that restrict the interpretation of the findings of this study. Firstly, the sample size used in quantitative analyses ( $N = 38$ ) is too small to allow drawing any definitive conclusions in terms of the mediation test. Convenience sampling used in the current study makes self-selection bias inevitable due to the conditions of Kazakhstan. Job satisfaction has been assessed using only one Likert scale question, which does not reflect the complex nature of the variable. Finally, the sample recruited for interviews consists mostly of individuals working for central ministries and executive agencies located in Astana, which means the results may not be applicable to all local Akimats. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data,

cause-effect relationships cannot be established. Moreover, PSM can be prone to social desirability bias in the studied environment where loyalty to the authorities is important. These issues should be addressed by further studies, in which researchers will conduct larger institution-based studies with a longitudinal approach, will apply multi-item measurement of job satisfaction, and, if possible, combine self-reporting of PSM with its behavioral measurement.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The current study explores the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and administrative culture on public service motivation of public servants within the Central government of Kazakhstan. Based on a concurrent transformative mixed-methods approach, three conclusions can be drawn. First, intrinsic motivation is a key predictor of public service motivation (PSM) ( $\beta = .703$ ); however, it does not function independently; instead, it is built upon the foundation of extrinsic motivation for institutional security, representing a necessary condition but not an alternative mechanism, thereby forming a "dual-motive" configuration compatible with Self-Determination Theory and the post-Soviet political setting. Second, hierarchical culture negatively impacts PSM ( $\beta = -.255$ ). Qualitative data reveal that, while hierarchy in administrative ministries is perceived as restraining, in prestige-seeking and security-related institutions, hierarchy is viewed positively. The former rejects H1, whereas the latter refines H1 by introducing a moderating effect in relational management.

In addition to the hypothesis-related conclusions that the research provides, there are also several contributions of the paper to the theory. Firstly, social prestige seems to be a different motivational variable that should be accounted for when considering Perry's PSM theory in post-Soviet states. Secondly, perceived meritocracy comes out as an active motivational force. The link between PSM and procedural justice becomes clearer, which is yet another aspect that remains unexplored in the existing literature on the topic. Thirdly, peer groups emerge as a source of support, adding an extra horizontal element related to peers rather than organization. Finally, different motives of younger workers compared to their older counterparts indicate a retention problem and, thus, the necessity for a certain policy.

Altogether, these results indicate the necessity of context-oriented modification of the existing theory of PSM. Motivation among civil servants in transitional states cannot be

regarded only as an adjustment to the Western model or even a later version thereof. On the contrary, it implies a completely new model of motivational process which requires further consideration and analysis. There is no doubt that Civil Service Concept 2024–2029 gives a promising platform for developing this model. However, it should take into account the purely human aspect of motivation, upon which all improvements ultimately hinge.

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