

EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGIES: EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract. In the context of globalization and the rapid development of society, the issue of corruption remains one of the most pressing topics in both academic and practical spheres. Corruption undermines the foundations of democracy, impedes economic progress, and harms social justice. Thus, effective anti-corruption efforts are crucial for public administration institutions, enhancing public trust in state authorities and ensuring transparency.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies in Kazakhstan, identify best practices in corruption prevention, and provide recommendations for improving anti-corruption mechanisms within public administration.

Given the scope of the documents analyzed, the research was conducted using

both qualitative and quantitative content analysis methods.

The findings of this study can be utilized in the development of anti-corruption plans by public administration and civil society organizations, as well as in improving existing mechanisms.

Keywords: *corruption, anti-corruption strategy, public service, corruption prevention, prevention of corruption.*

СЫБАЙЛАС ЖЕМҚОРЛЫҚҚА ҚАРСЫ СТРАТЕГИЯЛАРДЫҢ ТИІМДІЛІГІ: ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ ТӘЖІРИБЕЛЕР МЕН ЖЕТИСТІКТЕР

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Аңдатпа. Жаһандану мен қоғамның қарқынды дамуы жағдайында сыбайлас жемқорлық мәселесі академиялық және практикалық салаларда өзекті тақырыптардың бірі болып қалып отыр. Сыбайлас жемқорлық демократияның негіздерін әлсіретеді, экономикалық прогресті тежейді және әлеуметтік әділеттілікке нұқсан келтіреді. Сондықтан мемлекеттік басқару институттары үшін сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы тиімді шараларды жүзеге асыру, халықтың мемлекеттік билік органдарына деген сенімін арттыру және ашықтықты қамтамасыз ету маңызды болып табылады.

Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты – Қазақстандағы сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы стратегиялардың тиімділігін талдау, сыбайлас жемқорлықтың алдын алу бойынша үздік тәжірибелерді анықтау және мемлекеттік басқару жүйесіндегі сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы механизмдерді жетілдіру бойынша ұсыныстар беру.

Талдау жүргізілген құжаттардың ауқымын ескере отырып, зерттеу сапалық және сандық контент-талдау әдістері арқылы жүзеге асырылды.

Бұл зерттеудің нәтижелері мемлекеттік басқару және азаматтық қоғам ұйымдарының сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы жоспарларын әзірлеуде, сондай-ақ қолданыстағы механизмдерді жетілдіруде пайдаланылуы мүмкін.

Түйін сөздер: *сыбайлас жемқорлық, сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы стратегия, мемлекеттік қызмет, сыбайлас жемқорлықтың алдын алу, жемқорлықтың алдын алу.*

ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ СТРАТЕГИЙ ПО ПРОТИВОДЕЙСТВИЮ КОРРУПЦИИ: ОПЫТ И ДОСТИЖЕНИЯ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

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Аннотация. Проблема коррупции остается одной из наиболее актуальных тем как в академической, так и в практической сферах. Коррупция подрывает основы демократии, препятствует экономическому прогрессу и наносит ущерб социальной справедливости. Таким образом, эффективные усилия по борьбе с коррупцией имеют решающее значение для органов государственного управления, укрепляя общественное доверие к государственным властям и обеспечивая прозрачность.

Целью данного исследования является анализ эффективности стратегий противодействия коррупции в Казахстане, выявление лучших практик в области предотвращения коррупции и выработка рекомендаций по улучшению механизмов борьбы с коррупцией в рамках государственного управления.

С учетом объема проанализированных документов исследование было проведено с использованием как качественного, так и количественного методов контент-анализа.

Результаты данного исследования могут быть использованы при разработке антикоррупционных планов органами государственного управления и организациями гражданского общества, а также при совершенствовании существующих механизмов.

Ключевые слова: коррупция, стратегия борьбы с коррупцией, государственная служба, предотвращение коррупции, профилактика коррупции.

Introduction

Corruption remains a pervasive issue in public administration institutions, the private sector, and business communities worldwide. It hinders the socio-economic development of states and undermines the efficiency of governmental apparatuses.

The phenomenon of corruption and efforts to combat it are not merely modern-day challenges. Historical accounts reveal instances of corruption dating back to ancient civilizations such as Egypt and the Roman Empire.

In ancient Roman law, the term "corruption" can be found, derived from the

Latin word "corrumpere," which means "to destroy, break, or unlawfully bribe." [1] Similarly, ancient Egyptian inscriptions advised: "When you appear before your superior, bow your head, for it will save your household; defiance will bring you trouble." [2]

Although the manifestations of corruption evolve with changing circumstances, its core essence remains constant. While the foundations of corruption in ancient times differ significantly from contemporary examples, the principle remains unchanged. [3]

One key distinction between modern and ancient corruption is its globalized nature. In the present day, corruption transcends national boundaries, infiltrating international organizations and posing a threat to global legal order. It is now recognized as an international problem that jeopardizes the integrity of worldwide governance systems. [4]

The effectiveness of a country's anti-corruption efforts and the level of corruption within its borders are critical factors that enhance its reputation. The level of corruption directly influences foreign direct investment inflows, political negotiations, and the country's standing on the global stage. [5]

Despite the numerous risks and potential manifestations of corruption, it is often linked to the poor design of public governance systems as a societal institution. Contradictory laws and regulations, coupled with their lack of clarity for the general population, allow public officials to interpret and communicate them at their discretion. This increases the shadow power of public institutions, consequently heightening the risk of arbitrary decision-making by public servants. Corruption in public administration is closely tied to the extent of monopolistic and discretionary powers exercised by officials. [6]

Monopolistic power is more prevalent in economically developed countries, while discretionary power is commonly observed in developing nations.

However, successful anti-corruption efforts require not only the active engagement of public authorities but also the commitment of the business community and civil society in combating corruption. [7]

Anti-corruption legislation is being developed and strictly enforced across countries worldwide. Dedicated state agencies tasked with combating corruption have been established, and penalties for corruption-related offenses are becoming increasingly severe.

In the fight against corruption, efforts are not limited to contemporary legal measures but also extend to the formulation of precise anti-corruption policies. Furthermore, in an ever-changing world, strategies and action plans are being devised to adapt to new challenges in combating corruption.

Singapore's anti-corruption framework, grounded in well-regulated legal documents and proactive measures, has demonstrated the possibility of significantly reducing corruption levels within a short period.

Singapore has successfully reduced corruption to minimal levels through a combination of political will, effective legislative reforms, the integrity of an incorruptible authorized body, and the independence of the judiciary. The clarity of reform objectives for the entire population, along with the strict implementation of these reforms, has produced unprecedented results recognized globally. [8]

In addition to the Singaporean model, the Hong Kong model of anti-corruption can also be highlighted. According to the works of renowned British scholar Alan Doig, Botswana has achieved significant success by adopting Hong Kong's anti-corruption model. Botswana's anti-corruption strategy consists of three main components: investigation, anti-corruption education, and preventive measures. [9]

However, the lack of a clear formula for corruption offenses means that adopting foreign models may not always yield positive results. According to Professor Rob Mccusker of Teesside University, a renowned scholar, corruption is a phenomenon primarily driven by the wrongful actions of individuals. In his research, the scholar emphasizes the need to conduct social and cultural studies before developing anti-corruption strategies. He also advocates for adapting international practices to align with national characteristics. [10]

The renowned scholar Gibson, in his works, argues that the development of anti-corruption strategies contributes to the enhancement of effective governance mechanisms within state institutions and helps build public trust in governmental bodies. [11]

However, it is clear that without eliminating bureaucratic barriers within state institutions, the implementation of any strategy will be difficult. [12]

After gaining independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted the fight against corruption as one of the state's strategic priorities. The first major strategic document in the history of independent Kazakhstan, the "Kazakhstan-2030" development strategy, also outlined an uncompromising anti-corruption plan. Moreover, the current "Kazakhstan-2050" development strategy also places significant emphasis on combating corruption.

Based on these national strategic documents, specific strategic plans aimed at reducing corruption have been adopted and are being implemented. These include the "Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2025" (now repealed) and the "Concept of the Anti-Corruption Policy for 2022–2026."

Additionally, the "National Report on Anti-Corruption Efforts" is published annually to explain the results of work carried out based on these strategic documents.

Thanks to the initiatives outlined in these documents, a number of comprehensive measures have been implemented in the country. However, despite the adopted measures, the number of corruption offenses remains high in Kazakhstan. Therefore, questioning the effectiveness of the country's anti-corruption strategies is a legitimate phenomenon.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of Kazakhstan's strategic documents has not been widely analyzed in the scientific literature. Additionally, there is a lack of specific research on the relevance and effectiveness of the anti-corruption measures taken.

Materials and methods

To analyze the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies, this article examines not only the current and previously implemented anti-corruption strategies of the Republic of Kazakhstan but also other relevant state programs, laws, political documents, annual reports, media content, and numerous other materials. A wide

range of documents were analyzed, and qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied to the information obtained. For this purpose, content analysis was selected as the research method.

The key feature of content analysis lies in examining written documents through their social context. This method allows for the collection and systematization of structured information from these sources. In particular, studying normative documents and reports plays a crucial role in evaluating the anti-corruption measures implemented in Kazakhstan and assessing their effectiveness.

Content analysis enables both qualitative and quantitative data to be analyzed simultaneously. By studying the textual documents of anti-corruption policies, it is possible to identify their core ideas, tools, and directions. Additionally, the use of quantitative data allows for the assessment of the implementation level and effectiveness of these strategies.

The advantage of content analysis in the study is that it allows the researcher to eliminate personal bias from the analytical process. [13]

The fight against corruption in Kazakhstan is multifaceted and comprehensive. Given the large number of documents, legislations, and reports, content analysis provides an effective method for systematically processing extensive data and drawing unified conclusions. This approach plays a significant role in identifying patterns between strategies and their outcomes, as well as in detecting trends within the research.

During content analysis, anti-corruption strategies and plans will be evaluated through a quantitative analysis of Kazakhstan's criminal corruption situation, using the "Corruption Perception Index" of the international non-governmental organization Transparency International, which is dedicated to fighting corruption and determining its global levels.

The analyzed data will be structured into tables and bar charts. Based on the results of content analysis from these tables and charts, preliminary conclusions on the effectiveness of Kazakhstan's anti-corruption strategies will be drawn. The theoretical general logical methods used for analyzing the tables and charts include comparative analysis, synthesis, generalization, induction, and deduction.

Results and discussion

Since gaining independence, the importance of combating corruption has been firmly established in politically significant state documents. The Republic of Kazakhstan's first and most comprehensive strategic document, the "Kazakhstan-2030" strategy, published in 1997, highlights the importance of a strong fight against corruption on six occasions. According to this document, by the year 2000, Kazakhstan was to establish a professional government, complete reforms in public service and government operations, and prioritize the fight against corruption and abuse of power. [14] In the "Kazakhstan-2030" strategic document, corruption is described as an incomplete set of "qualities" that were nurtured by the former bureaucratic regime and, in recent years, have transitioned from a hidden form to an open one. [14]

As a result of this strategy, efforts were made to strengthen democratic foundations, increase transparency and oversight in public administration, and

build trust in the government and its institutions. In 1998, the "Law on Combating Corruption" was adopted with the aim of attracting qualified professionals to public service and creating favorable conditions for individuals to serve with integrity and loyalty in public office. This law established the key principles of anti-corruption efforts, including mechanisms for control, prevention, supervision, and prohibition.

It was the first law within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to define the goals, principles, and mechanisms of authorized bodies in the fight against corruption.

Starting from 2001, state programs aimed at combating corruption were implemented under this law. Within the framework of these programs, assessments of the current situation were made, and plans were developed to address pressing issues in the near future.

The first comprehensive strategy for combating corruption, which involved analyzing the current situation and planning for the future, was adopted in 2014, covering the period from 2015 to 2025. However, due to the acceleration of globalization processes and changing societal demands, a new concept was developed. On February 2, 2022, the President of Kazakhstan approved the "Concept of Kazakhstan's Anti-Corruption Policy for 2022-2026," which summarized national experience and incorporated the best foreign practices in the fight against corruption.

Table 1. Political documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan

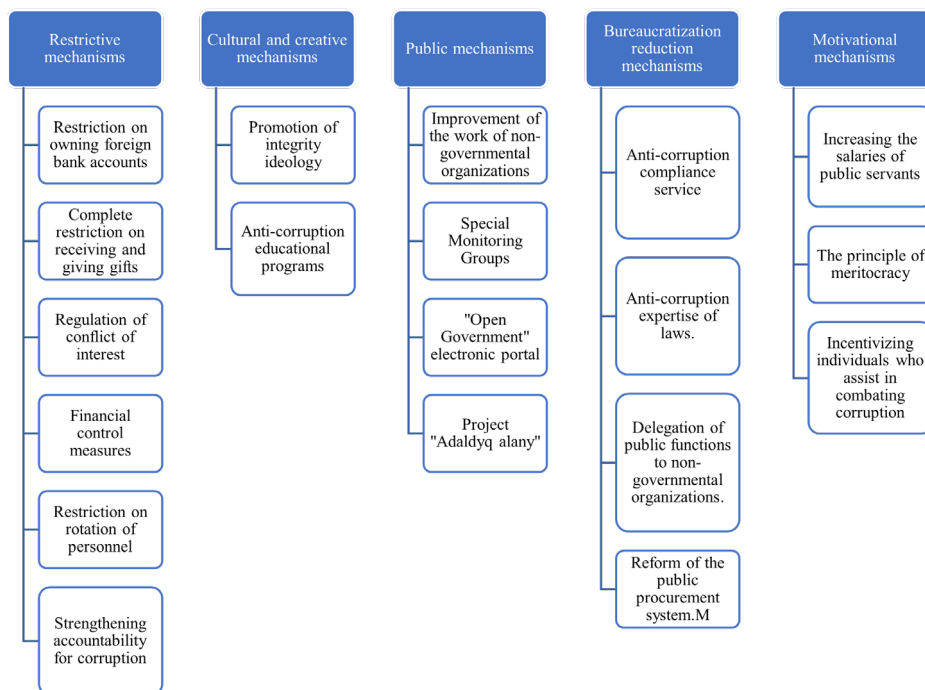
"KAZAKHSTAN-2030" POLITICAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENT	"KAZAKHSTAN-2050" POLITICAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENT
(11.10.1997)	(14.12.2012)
<input type="checkbox"/> On Anti-corruption Law (02.07.1998 – 18.11.2015)	<input type="checkbox"/> The Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2025 (26.12.2014 – 02.02.2022)
	<input type="checkbox"/> On combating corruption (18.11.2015 – currently in effect)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Concept of anti-corruption policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2022-2026 (02.02.2022 – currently in effect)

Source: authors

As shown in the table above, in the history of independent Kazakhstan, two strategic documents with the primary goal of combating corruption can be observed.

The first strategic document, based on the Anti-Corruption Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015-2025, marked the major achievement of repealing the Law "On Combating Corruption" and adopting the Law "On Anti-Corruption Measures", which not only focuses on combating corruption but also aims at preventing it. The new law takes a comprehensive approach to addressing corruption risks. The key priorities of this anti-corruption strategy are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. The best mechanisms for preventing corruption



Source: authors

The author will categorize the priorities of the strategies into five groups. As shown in the table, only one of the measures is a mechanism that is implemented after the occurrence of a corruption fact. The strengthening of accountability for individuals involved in corruption, while the other mechanisms are a set of measures aimed at preventing corruption.

In the course of implementing this strategy, the authorized body recognized in the fight against corruption, the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Anti-Corruption Service), has established the main principles of its activities. These include effective prevention, widespread public awareness, constructive cooperation with society, and the integration of criminal and legal measures. [15]

The authorized body established the Corruption Prevention Institute, which has played a significant role in preventing corruption in the public service and fostering integrity within society. Additionally, attention was paid to the work of non-governmental organizations, granting them the freedom to become a public oversight mechanism in the public service sector. Active representatives from society and the general public were given the opportunity to listen to reports on public service activities, provide suggestions, meet directly with senior management, and ask questions. The transparency of government agencies was placed under close scrutiny, and the authorized body conducted relevant evaluations. The main focus shifted from combating the consequences of corruption to addressing its causes. The authorized body carried out external and internal analyses, as well as anti-corruption

monitoring activities, aimed at eliminating corruption risks in the functioning of public administration institutions.

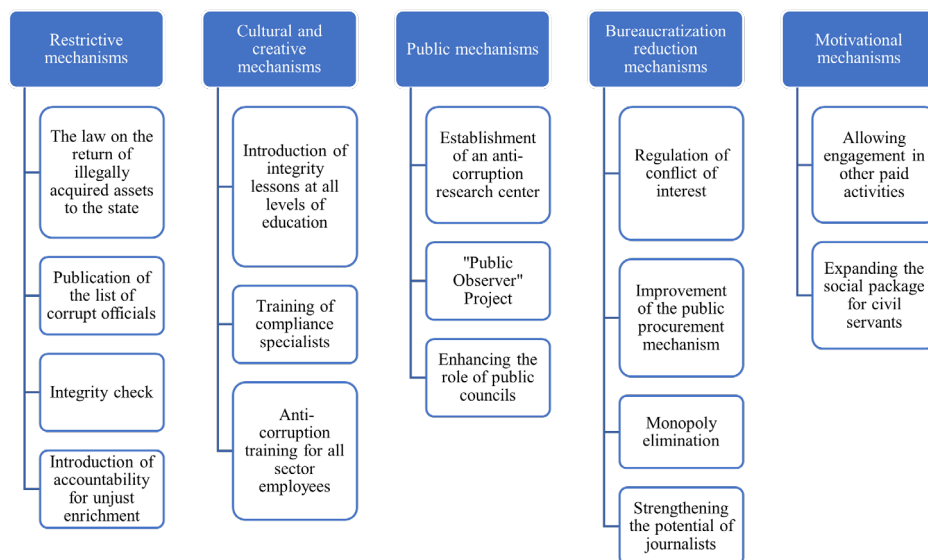
In the past, the authorized body in the fight against corruption was largely a closed and punitive institution. However, during the implementation of this strategic document, the authorized body opened front offices and began working closely with the public. During this period, tight cooperation with foreign anti-corruption organizations was established.

While implementing the 2015-2025 Anti-Corruption Strategy, there were certainly some shortcomings. These included the lack of a systematic approach to corruption prevention, the low level of social research on the results of anti-corruption efforts and the effectiveness of measures taken by public administration institutions and the authorized body, and the insufficient readiness of government agencies to ensure transparency at the required level.

These shortcomings were explicitly outlined in the strategic document, reflecting the state apparatus's ability to identify errors and take appropriate corrective actions.

Next, the effectiveness of the current Anti-Corruption Policy Concept for 2022–2026, as presented in Table 3, will be analyzed.

Table 3. The best mechanisms for preventing corruption



Source: authors

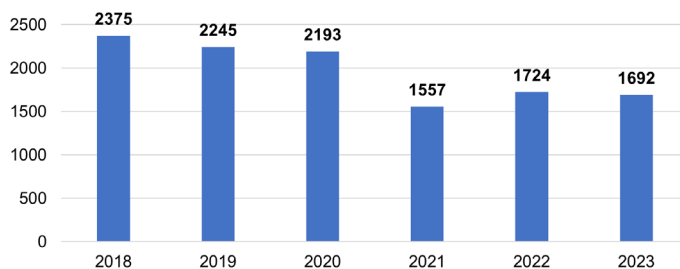
Tables 2 and 3 present the most effective corruption prevention mechanisms currently employed in Kazakhstan. The selection of these specific mechanisms is justified by their practical application within the national anti-corruption policy. They serve as key instruments of corruption prevention and are systematically analyzed in the framework of performance assessments of anti-corruption measures.

These mechanisms are incorporated into the National Report on Anti-Corruption Efforts, a fundamental strategic document that reflects the current state and outcomes

of the country's anti-corruption policies. Their selection is based on assessments conducted by relevant authorities, as well as on international recommendations in the field of anti-corruption regulation.

Thus, the mechanisms presented in this study are not only relevant but also subject to continuous monitoring, confirming their significance in shaping a sustainable system of corruption prevention in Kazakhstan.

Diagram 1. Corruption crimes in Republic of Kazakhstan

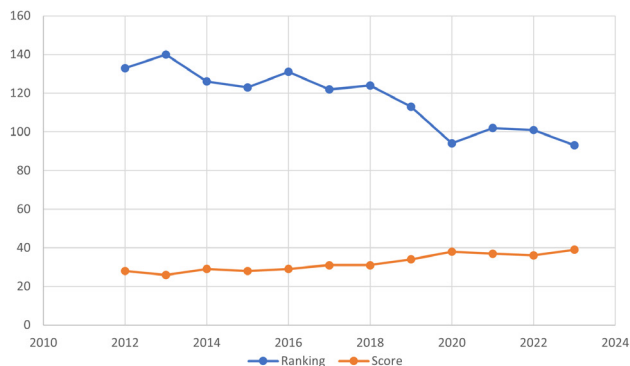


Source: National report on combating corruption

According to the implementation plan of the Anti-Corruption Policy for 2022-2026, the work done is aimed at improving the actions from the first strategic document and introducing new experiences.

The improvements made to the mechanisms initially introduced based on recommendations from foreign anti-corruption organizations aim to streamline their work and bring it into a consistent framework. As a result of these efforts, the prevention mechanisms within the authorized body have been systematized, and evaluation criteria for preventive measures have been established. By observing the measures outlined in the strategic document, we can see that Kazakhstan's fight against corruption is developing along the lines of the Singaporean model.

Diagram 2. Corruption perceptions index by Transparency International



Source: Transparency International, link: <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/kazakhstan>

The strategic document aims to eliminate corruption by combining the development of integrity among society and civil servants with the strictness of punishment. During the implementation of the strategic plans, several tasks were completed, and as a result, we observe a trend of decreasing corruption crimes.

In addition, the international non-governmental organization Transparency International provides a positive assessment of the results of the anti-corruption mechanisms in our country

As a result of the long-standing anti-corruption policy in the country, for the first time in history, Moody's agency assigned a "stable" rating to the Republic of Kazakhstan due to progress in public administration and anti-corruption efforts. [16]

Conclusion

The advancement of socialization and globalization processes has led to an increase in public relations. The role of the state in the mechanism of these relations is immense. Preventing corruption risks in the interaction between the public and the state, as well as among state authorities, and in the relations between civil servants and the population, positively impacts the social well-being of the people, increases trust in public administration institutions, and facilitates the implementation of state policies.

Since corruption is a direct factor influencing the general mood of society, the enhanced efforts to combat this epidemic in the Republic of Kazakhstan can be seen in the research above.

It has not been long since Kazakhstan's public administration institutions transitioned from a socialist regime to a market economy. Similarly, over time, the work of anti-corruption institutions in Kazakhstan has been improving.

The strategies were developed based on the best international practices, taking into account the cultural and historical values of the people, and the full implementation of the strategies involves the active participation of all state institutions.

However, there are also shortcomings in the anti-corruption strategies. Strategic planning of actions requires the proper preparation of personnel, and the clarification of mechanisms for implementing and evaluating the work.

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