

Psychological Stability and Moral Culture as Constituent Elements of Anti-Corruption Behavior in Activities of Civil Servants (On the Example of Customs)

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ABSTRACT: This article is devoted to the analysis of the problem of development and strengthening the psychological stability and values of moral culture of customs officers. In the customs service, aimed at regulating foreign economic activity, developing entrepreneurship, increasing the country's export potential and replenishing its budget (fiscal function), constant prevention and counteraction to offenses related to corruption crimes are carried out. In improving the efficiency of solving this problem considering social, moral and psychological factors is a vital necessity.

KEYWORD: customs service, customs authorities, customs officer, personnel policy, anti-corruption, anti-corruption behavior, psychological stability, moral culture, "code of honor".

Corruption, as an unequivocally negative social phenomenon, not only undermines the economic integrity and political stability of any state, but also violates the very mechanism of interaction between government bodies and society. In this regard, in Uzbekistan, since the beginning of independence, a constant and uninterrupted fight against corruption has been carried out at all levels of state and social construction. As the President of Uzbekistan Sh.Mirziyoyev notes: "Until all segments of the population, the best specialists are involved in the fight against corruption, until our entire society, figuratively speaking, take "vaccination of honesty", we will not be able to achieve our goals"[1].

It is justice, honesty, legality that should prevail in all spheres of public administration and civil society.

The fight against corruption in Uzbekistan is based on the following principles:

- ✓ legality;
- ✓ priority of rights, freedom and legitimate interests of citizens;
- ✓ openness, transparency and consistency;
- ✓ interaction between the state and civil society;
- ✓ priority of measures to prevent corruption;
- ✓ inevitability of responsibility[2].

A significant contribution for ensuring the sustainable development of our country is made by the bodies of the state customs service, through which the regulation of foreign economic activity, the promotion of entrepreneurship, the protection of domestic market and the increase in export potential of the country are carried out.

Standing guard over the economic interests of the people, the customs service is an integral part of the country's economic security. The presence of corruption in this industry can seriously undermine the economic component of the state, since the replenishment of the country's budget depends on how fully and efficiently the fiscal functions of customs are performed. In this regard, from the very beginning of independence, a comprehensive fight against corruption was identified as one of the key factors in implementation of the customs policy of Uzbekistan.

An effective impetus in countering corruption in the customs authorities was given during a meeting on the priorities for further improving customs administration and transforming customs into an industry free from corruption on February 17, 2022, at which the head of state identified specific tasks for the full implementation of the program "Sphere without corruption".

As historical experience shows, corruption as a social and legal phenomenon existed in all societies. Therefore, national and international legislation pays special attention to the fight against this "evil" by legally asserting the inevitability of punishment and bringing officials to criminal responsibility for corruption offenses.

Unfortunately, corruption crimes are transformed into various forms and are still committed by civil servants and law enforcement officers. This requires more attention to this issue. At the same time, it is obvious that corruption is a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon, systematically organized and including economic, legal, social, moral, psychological and political factors. [3]

From this point of view, in identifying the causes and conditions leading to the corrupt behavior of law enforcement officers, it is not enough to rely purely on legal instruments. It is necessary to conduct a comprehensive study of the phenomenon of corruption using social, moral, ethical and psychological approaches based on interdisciplinary research.

In addition to material aspirations, social, psychological, moral and behavioral factors influence the emergence and growth of corruption. In studying the facts of manifestations of corruption, special attention should be paid to the features and conditions of official activity, behavior, character, personal views and interests of employees, social thinking, as well as issues related to existing organizational and social control over official activities.

The socio-psychological nature of corruption is based on criminal actions that undermine the idea of an "honest society", undermine high moral values, the purpose of which is to satisfy the material interests of an official and his inner circle.

In diagnosing commitment to corrupt behavior, an important role is played by considering the socio-ethical and psychological characteristics of the personality of a customs officer, the possibility of allowing him to abuse his official powers in the pursuit of material interests.

The manifestation of such negative moral traits as cupidity, greed, envy, avarice, unscrupulousness, irresponsibility and dishonesty, the commitment to put the interests associated with the satisfaction of material goals above the rule of law and official duty, gives reason to believe that the level of anti-corruption stability and the inclination of the employee by their actions create corruption situations.

From a psychological point of view, a person prone to committing corruption crimes is called a "corrupt official", and in sociology, illegal actions are interpreted as a manifestation of couch behavior.

The socio-psychological characteristics of a customs officer as a person play an important role in the abuse of official powers in the pursuit of material interests and the prevention of corruption. Such descriptions include such negative moral qualities as lust, greed, envy, careerism, uncleanness, repentance, as well as putting interests related to the satisfaction of one's material goals above legality. The presence of these qualities in a person means that he has a low level of non-corrupt stagnation and is inclined to create corrupt situations by his actions.

The psychological aspects of the manifestation of corruption in customs include:

- ✓ The psychology of corrupt behavior (bribe taker);
- ✓ The psychology of thinking and worldview of a corrupt official - "bribery";
- ✓ The psychology of public opinion and attitudes towards corruption and its various manifestations;
- ✓ Socio-psychological factors, causes and conditions affecting corruption[4].

Anti-corruption issues play an important role in the personnel policy of the customs service. In professional and psychological selection of candidates, much attention is paid to the personal qualities of candidates, their attitude to the chosen profession, readiness for high-quality and responsible performance of official duties under any conditions, conscientiousness, and identification of risk factors for exposure to constant prevention of corruption.

The formation of administrative and preventive mechanisms for combating corruption should be accompanied by considering socio-psychological factors in their application in practice, it involves the development of clear socio-psychological and ethical standards in the formation of anti-corruption behavior of customs officials and increase the efficiency of this process.

The study of the socio-psychological and moral phenomenon of corruption, as well as the formation of a system of non-corruption culture and values among customs officials and participants in foreign economic activity is crucial.

Development of socio-psychological and ethical standards not only in the selection of candidates for customs authorities, but also in diagnosing a person's tendency to corruption in the course of his service and, conversely, in determining the level of non-corruption behavior and culture.

Moreover, the application of the measures proposed in our analysis can not only increase the effectiveness of the anti-corruption strategy, but also contribute to the most stringent and systematic fight against it.

In the context of development of ethical and psychological attitudes of intolerance towards corruption as a destructive social phenomenon, the key attention is given to the formation and strengthening of anti-corruption behavior in public service bodies and in society as a whole. In this direction, state bodies and other organizations are taking the necessary measures to increase the legal awareness and legal culture of the population, the formation of an intolerant attitude towards corruption in society, including explanatory work, the organization of legal upbringing and education, scientific and practical events, the development of educational methodological and scientific literature on anti-corruption issues.

Anti-corruption behavior as a topical issue is reflected in various studies, according to which it can be argued that there are various definitions of this concept.

It can be argued that anti-corruption behavior is a set of conscious actions to prevent and overcome dangerous situations of corruption. And the main qualities of a person who observes the norms of anti-corruption behavior can be incorruptibility, determination, exactingness, openness, responsibility[5].

Anti-corruption behavior is a tool for counteracting corruption-dangerous behavior, which implies the admission to the activities of officials in situations that contribute to abuse of their official powers for their own selfish purposes, which lead to a corruption offense.

An important component of the anti-corruption behavior of customs officers is moral culture. Its relevance is especially important in the development of socio-psychological mechanisms for combating corruption, which are aimed at the following tasks:

- increased sense of responsibility and conscientious attitude to the performance of official duties;
- rational regulation of behavior patterns of a customs officer, the basis of which is the commitment to discipline and professional duty;
- development of physical and spiritual hardening, moral stability and the ability to control the emotional components of the psychological state of a customs officer in various service conditions;
- the development of vigilance and observation in the implementation of customs control, necessary to prevent the entry into the customs territory of the republic of contraband and elements that pose a threat to the health and tranquility of the citizens of our state;
- law-abiding, fighting corruption and preventing actions that violate the law;
- the ability to highly appreciate and adequately protect the rich historical and cultural heritage of the people of Uzbekistan in order to adequately counter attempts to export valuable objects outside the republic;
- maintaining a healthy psychological environment in the workplace through a respectful and friendly attitude, both to colleagues and to people applying to the customs authorities;
- the ability to adequately bear the high rank of an officer called upon to defend the Motherland in any conditions.

The fundamental basis for the commitment of the personnel of customs service to high professional requirements is the Disciplinary Charter, the Oath and especially adopted "Rules of Ethical Conduct of Customs Officers of the Republic of Uzbekistan" on March 28, 2016, which are considered a kind of "Code of Honor" of the customs officer, defining moral principles, foundations and rules behavior of a customs officer. The content of these rules is consistent with the international legal framework of the code of conduct for public officials, according to which "public officials perform their duties and functions competently and effectively in accordance with laws or administrative regulations and with integrity. They constantly strive to ensure that the public resources for which they are responsible are managed as effectively and efficiently as possible. Public officials are diligent, fair and impartial in the performance of their functions and in particular in their relations with the public"[6].

In 1993, the World Customs Organization adopted, and revised in 2003, the Declaration on Integrity in Customs (Declaration on Good Governance and Combating Corruption in Customs), known as the Arusha Declaration of the WTO. Among the ten elements of the anti-corruption strategy described in this document, a key role is assigned to "the development, promulgation and adoption of a comprehensive code of conduct that establishes practical and uniform rules of conduct for all customs personnel. It led to the emergence of a model code of ethics and behavior of customs officers, which defines the international standard professional behavior of officers of the customs services of the world.

The Customs Code of Ethics, developed by the World Customs Organization, regulates such areas as: personal obligations, compliance with the law, relations with society, receiving gifts, the use of official information, political activities, and the working atmosphere. The main idea that this document carries is that

a customs officer, being a representative of the state, must always maintain and strengthen the image of customs authorities by his actions. Indeed, tourists coming to the country or citizens crossing the customs border judge not only the customs service, but the state as a whole according to customs officer behavior, speech culture, manners and habits, appearance and intelligence. In turn, decency and impeccable reputation are the foundations of citizens' trust in customs officers.

An inattentive attitude to these requirements, given the complexity and specifics of customs activities, is fraught with damage and a negative impact on the country's economy, which is categorically unacceptable in the work of customs. In this regard, a special focus on the moral and ethical component of a customs officer's profession, already in the process of training personnel, forms and strengthens a system of value orientations that contribute to improving the professionalism and personal qualities of customs officers. It is important for us that young people choosing the profession of a customs officer should be aware of the voluntary assumption of responsibility and obligation to strictly comply with the norms and requirements of official discipline, and in their future professional activities proceed from the principles of honesty and justice, first of all, high social qualities, through which they will strengthen the authority of the national customs service.

Naturally, without considering the psychological and disciplinary-ethical component, it is impossible to ensure the success of the reforms carried out in the customs service, in particular, the large-scale fight against corruption.

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