

The Normative Framework of Public Employee Ethics and Codes of Conduct: Towards Building an Institutional Integrity System in the Public Sector

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Abstract:

Integrity is a fundamental value in public administration and public sector institutions. It entails a public employee's commitment to honesty, transparency, and impartiality. It is an integral part of public service ethics, which include trustworthiness, respect for the law, avoidance of conflicts of interest, protection of confidential information, and fair treatment of citizens and colleagues.

Codes of ethics constitute an essential regulatory instrument for the aforementioned principles. They define the standards of conduct to be followed within institutions, clarify rights and duties, establish professional behavioral guidelines, and set out accountability mechanisms in cases of misconduct. These codes also contribute to strengthening trust between public administration and the public, while fostering an institutional culture grounded in transparency and accountability.

Thus, integrity, employee ethics, and codes of ethics form an integrated framework that ensures responsible job performance, supports good governance, and helps combat corruption.

Keywords: Corruption; employee behavior; Job performance; Codes of ethics; Behavioral Guidelines

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1. INTRODUCTION

Combating corruption in all its forms within state institutions requires the adoption of a combination of ex-ante preventive measures and ex-post punitive mechanisms. Among the foremost preventive steps is the consolidation of integrity within the public service, together with the establishment of binding codes of ethics to which public officials must adhere in the exercise of their duties and, where appropriate, even beyond the workplace and outside official working hours. Such measures are likely to reaffirm the rule of law, promote justice, enhance transparency and equality of opportunity, and eliminate favoritism, nepotism, undue influence, embezzlement, and other manifestations of corruption.

Reforming the structures and functioning of the state, and ultimately achieving the objectives pursued through the provision of public services, begins with reforming the public official. This entails creating and nurturing an institutional culture within the civil service, strengthening professional values, developing a sense of responsibility, and upholding high ethical standards in interactions with others, whether colleagues, superiors, or users and beneficiaries of public services. Such an approach can significantly enhance confidence in state institutions.

Through this study, the importance of the principle of integrity, as well as the necessity of instilling professional ethics among public officials, will be highlighted as fundamental elements in combating corruption and reforming the structures and functions of the state.

- Significance of the Study:

Improving governmental performance, enhancing the quality of public services, and strengthening trust between citizens and the state fundamentally begin with confronting corruption and standing firmly against corrupt practices. Therefore, it has become imperative for the state to promote the principle of integrity and to entrench professional ethics among public officials as a primary step toward reform. In this context, the present study derives its importance from its attempt to outline the general framework for the implementation of the integrity principle and codes of ethics within the public service.

-Objectives of the Study:

This study aims to highlight the imperative nature of enforcing the principle of integrity and the rules of professional conduct within public institutions as a proactive approach to combating corruption.

-Research Problem:

This study is guided by the following central question:

How can a normative framework for public employee ethics and codes of conduct be designed and effectively operationalized so as to ensure its genuine integration into the institutional structure of public administration and contribute to embedding a sustainable culture of institutional integrity within the public sector?

-Sub-questions:

-What is meant by integrity? What is meant by probity? What constitutes corruption?

-How can integrity be institutionalized within public bodies? What are its standards, procedures, and the steps required for its implementation?

-What is meant by public service ethics and codes of professional conduct?

-Hypothesis:

The consolidation of the principles of integrity and the ethicalization of public officials within the public sector is expected to curb corruption; however, their effective implementation requires clearly defined standards, procedures, and operational steps.

-Methodology of the Study:

This study adopts a descriptive approach, aiming to explain and clarify the concept of the principle of integrity and the ethicalization of public administration. It also seeks to outline the standards and requirements for institutionalizing integrity within public institutions.

-Structure of the Study:

The study is divided into three main sections:

-The first section is dedicated to the nature of integrity and the rules of professional conduct.

-The second section focuses on the standards and requirements for promoting integrity within public institutions.

-The third section addresses the content of codes of professional conduct and occupational ethics, as follows:

1 The Concept of Integrity and Codes of Professional Conduct

To study the concept of integrity and codes of professional conduct, this axis has been divided into two sections. The first section is dedicated to clarifying the concept of integrity and related terms, while the second section focuses on codes of professional conduct.

1.1 The Concept of Integrity:

Under this heading, three points will be addressed. The first point is to define the concept of integrity, the second point is to provide a definition of uprightness, and the last point is to define the concept of corruption.

1.1.1 Definition of integrity:

Integrity is one of the pillars of the political, economic, and social structure. It is essential for ensuring economic and social well-being, securing the prosperity of citizens, and is considered a fundamental element for public governance and good governance, protecting the public interest, and promoting the core values of society and the democratic system.

There are several definitions of integrity, but they all fall within the same framework and share almost the same defining characteristics:

-Public integrity is defined as "the coherent alignment between ethical values, principles, and common standards, and the commitment to uphold them in order to protect the public interest, giving it priority over private interests within the public sector." (OECD C. R., p. 2)

-It is also defined as "doing the right thing and ensuring that the administration is trustworthy and a reliable partner for business, where individual ethics and honesty are fundamental elements, and public funds are managed properly."

-In another definition, it is "performing duties in a manner that can withstand public scrutiny." (Integrity, pp. 13-14)

-It is also defined as "doing the right thing even when there is no oversight."

-It is defined as "placing the obligations related to government human resources above personal interests." (Federal Authority for Government Human, 2017, p. 9)

-In another perspective, it is "acting according to ethical principles, working in good faith, and within a framework of intellectual integrity and fairness." (WorldHealthOrganization, p. 1)

-Integrity is "working diligently and sincerely, fostering personal accountability, fulfilling duties and responsibilities, and avoiding anything that harms government work or conflicts with the public interest." (Authority, p. 7)

-Integrity is measured by what is correct and just. (Institutions, 1998, p. 11)

Thus, integrity is embodied in a system of values as well as responsibility to preserve the state's public assets and resources. It represents the employee's commitment to ethical rules, which include honesty, truthfulness, and avoiding harm to others. It means that the employee acts with transparency and respects regulations at all times, refraining from engaging in suspicious or illegal practices. It may also involve serving citizens and earning their trust, and not using the employee's position and authority in a deceptive way, placing the public interest above personal gain or any other consideration.

1.1.2 Definition of Uprightness:

Uprightness "means that work is carried out honestly and without corruption. A person is considered upright when they perform their duties efficiently, honestly, and completely, without deficiencies. A process is described as upright when it is executed as intended and appropriately."

An institution is characterized by uprightiness if it is responsible, executes its tasks efficiently, and does not divert its resources for other purposes. It is like the structure of a ship: when we say it is upright, it means the entire system functions as it should. The ship's outer hull does not leak, all the systems that form and support the structure are intact, and they perform their functions correctly. (Governance, 2009, p. 7)

1.1.3 Definition of Corruption:

Corruption, which is considered the opposite of reform, integrity, and uprightiness, is defined as:

-“The misuse of a public office to achieve private gains and the use of public or private interests of the administrative body to serve the personal interest of the officeholder.”

-Corruption is also defined as “any behavior that violates the rules and regulations imposed by the system.”

-In another definition, it is “the exploitation of influence for personal benefit, whether through bribery, extortion, favoritism, fraud, providing money to expedite services, or embezzlement.” (Al-Duwaik, 2013, pp. 9-10)

1.2 Codes of Professional Conduct:

1.2.1 Concept of Professional Conduct Rules and Public Service Ethics:

Establishing integrity requires a commitment at the highest levels of the state to promote integrity, reduce corruption, and develop a strategic approach to strengthen integrity by setting high standards for employee conduct.

The rules of professional conduct for employees of government entities refer to a set of principles and behaviors that should be followed in employees’ interactions within governmental institutions, and adherence to them is considered an integral part of their duties and responsibilities. This, in turn, enhances the quality of work, improves performance, serves employees, and helps build trust between citizens and the state.

Professional ethics constitute a comprehensive statement of the values and principles that should guide an employee’s daily work. (Institution, p. 6)

The performance of the latter must take place within a framework of values and ethical principles that govern professional and occupational behavior. Therefore, these ethics should be formalized in the form of a document containing a code of ethics that regulates employee conduct. It includes the core values that a public employee must operate within, as well as a set of ethical principles that guide their professional and occupational behavior.

1.2.2 Content of Codes of Ethics:

Codes of ethics are documents that define the rules of professional conduct for public employees in the public service. Their purpose is to

promote the behavior of members of public institutions and clarify work ethics, thereby improving the quality of work, enhancing the work environment, and developing the services provided to the public. These codes aim to explain and outline the duties of employees in the government sector, their commitment to the principles of public administration, as well as to promote discipline, integrity, transparency, efficiency, objectivity, and effectiveness in professional and behavioral conduct.

2 Standards and Requirements for Consolidating Integrity in Public Institutions

To study the standards and requirements for consolidating integrity, this axis has been divided into three sections. The first section is dedicated to the standards of integrity in the public sector, the second section focuses on the requirements of a coherent and comprehensive system of public integrity, and the third section examines the elements that strengthen the practice of integrity in both the public and private sectors.

2.1 Standards of National Integrity in the Public Sector

National integrity in the public sector is measured by a set of standards, as follows:

2.1.1 Rule of Law Standard: This standard is further divided into the following sub-criteria:

a- Reference Standard: This refers to the availability of clear and unambiguous laws and regulations that do not require multiple interpretations. Indicators for measuring this point include the following: legislation should serve as the primary reference for administrative procedures in public administration; there must be no conflicts or contradictions in the legislation; and a third party must ensure that the issuance and implementation of instructions are legally binding.

b- Implementation Standard: This involves applying and enforcing the law fairly and equally for all, without discrimination. Evaluation is done by calculating the proportion of unjust decisions. All issues that conflict with the rule of law must be addressed. There should also be practical procedures and policies to combat and prevent favoritism and nepotism, with

mechanisms for their implementation, which can be measured by the number of policies adopted in this regard.

c- Standard of Aligning National Legislation with the International Anti-Corruption Convention: This means that domestic law derives its provisions from the international anti-corruption convention as a reference.

2.1.2 Accountability and Responsibility Standard: This standard also includes the following sub-criteria:

a- Defining the administrative, legal, and financial powers and duties of officials, with the requirement that they submit and publicly disclose their financial statements in accordance with the law.

b- Updating and activating codes of professional conduct in the public sector and assessing compliance with them, with an indicator to measure the number and proportion of institutions and employees adhering to these codes of professional conduct.

c- Defining the conditions and rates of achievement and excellence, and the extent of government support for them, with a standard to measure the proportion of achievement and excellence, both materially and morally, in relation to achieving objectives and strategy.

d- The importance of having clear and publicly announced supervisory and disciplinary procedures, with the necessity of implementing mechanisms to punish those who fail in their duties or to reward based on reports. This includes clarifying the proportion of sanctions applied relative to the number of disciplinary and incentive cases—that is, the number of punishments and the number of rewards—thus demonstrating the effectiveness or failure of accountability and responsibility.

e- Establishing an internal audit body in the public sector, defining its operational mechanisms, and activating its role.

2.1.3 Transparency Standard: This standard includes the following sub-criteria:

a- Documenting all information, such as decisions, procedures, and forms, classifying them while respecting the confidentiality of certain information. An indicator should be set to measure the proportion of classified

documents, the approval rate of information requests, and the percentage of information available for citizen access.

b- Adopting the principle of openness and clarity in transactions, with an indicator showing the progress of administrative procedures and their transparency, the proportion of e-government programs implemented, the percentage of services provided to citizens, the number of beneficiaries of these services, and compliance with the timeframes for completing transactions.

c- Adopting a participatory approach with stakeholders, which requires the existence of open and multiple communication mechanisms with all citizens. This can be measured by the number of joint and participatory activities with all concerned parties, as well as the number of meetings and partnership councils held with them.

2.1.4 Standard of Justice, Equality, and Equal Opportunities: This standard includes the following sub-criteria:

a- Service quality standard, with its indicator being the number of complaints submitted to the institution.

b- Standard of justice, equality, and equal opportunities among employees, with its indicator being the number of complaints and grievances received related to employee matters, as well as complaints submitted to the authority concerning public administration units.

c- Standard of justice, equality, and service quality among service recipients, with its indicator being the number of complaints and grievances related to the process of obtaining services and their quality.

d- Standard of justice, equality, and equal opportunities among suppliers of goods and services to the institution, with its indicator being the number of complaints and grievances related to government tenders and procurements. (Commission, 2012, pp. 10-12)

2.1.5 Standard of Good Governance: This standard includes the following sub-criteria:

a- Planning: Measured by the existence of governance councils or specialized committees to review policies, decisions, plans, and procedures,

as well as the presence of strategic objectives defined within a specific timeframe.

b- Organization: Measured by the rate of achievement in executing operational plans.

c- Monitoring and Evaluation: Measured by the presence of periodic administrative audits and reports that track work progress.

d- Soundness of Decisions and Procedures: Measured by the proportion of decisions that comply with governance standards.

e- Optimal Use of Human and Financial Resources: Measured by the proportion of adherence to allocated resources. (Commission, National Integrity Standards in the Public Sector, p. 13)

2.2 Requirements of a Coherent and Comprehensive Public Integrity System:

Integrity requires the implementation of an integrated and consistent framework in order for it to be firmly established. Such a framework includes the following:

2.2.1 The existence of political and administrative will and commitment at the highest level of authority within the public sector to promote public integrity and reduce corruption:

This is reflected in ensuring the establishment of laws and institutional frameworks that enable public sector institutions to assume responsibility for effective management, for the integrity of their activities, and for the integrity of public officials. It also involves ensuring that the public integrity system supports, defines, implements, and monitors integrity within a sound system of public administration and good governance, in addition to setting expectations that reinforce this system at senior levels of authority through exemplary personal conduct and respect for public ethics.

2.2.2 Clarifying institutional responsibilities within the public sector to enhance the effectiveness of the public integrity system:

First, responsibilities for designing, leading, and implementing the components of the integrity system at the institutional level must be defined. It is also necessary to ensure the existence of the capacity to develop, apply, and monitor the elements of this system among all

employees and bodies, as well as their ability to fulfill their obligations. On the other hand, mechanisms for cooperation between public officials, as well as among units and across levels of government, should be strengthened in order to exchange expertise and lessons learned, support coherence, and avoid gaps. (OECD, pp. 2-4)

2.2.3 Establishing a strategic plan for the public sector aimed at mitigating risks related to public integrity:

This is achieved by defining strategic objectives and priorities for the public integrity system on the basis of a risk-based approach to violations of integrity standards. It is also necessary to set benchmarks and indicators, collect data, and monitor the system's performance and effectiveness.

2.2.4 Defining high standards of conduct expected from public officials:

This includes incorporating integrity standards into the legal framework and regulatory policies, such as codes of professional ethics, in order to clarify all relevant aspects and to specify the sanctions resulting from violations. It also requires establishing procedures to prevent breaches of public integrity standards and to avoid conflicts of interest, while giving priority to the public interest and adhering to the values of public service. Moreover, these standards and values should be disseminated throughout all public sector institutions, and extended as well to the private sector, civil society, and individuals, encouraging them to respect these principles in their dealings with public officials.

2.2.5 Promoting a shared culture of public integrity among partners as a collective responsibility:

At the outset, it is essential to recognize the role of other sectors and stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society organizations, and even individuals, in upholding integrity values in their interactions with public officials, within what is known as shared responsibility. They must be made aware and educated, both civically and academically, about the benefits of integrity in business and in profit and non-profit activities, and about the need for zero tolerance toward violations of its values and standards. The effort should not stop there; their participation must also be

encouraged in the development, updating, and implementation of the public integrity system.

2.2.6 Investing in the development of leadership capacities characterized by integrity:

This requires including integrity-based leadership competencies as a condition for the selection, appointment, and promotion of managers, as well as for evaluating their performance. Such competencies should also be integrated into managers' mandates. The matter does not end there; the roles of managers who uphold professional ethics must be clarified, and they should be provided with institutional support, training, increased guidance, and the development of skills related to sound judgment in matters of public integrity.

At the same time, administrative frameworks should be established that encourage managerial responsibility in identifying integrity-related risks and mitigating them. The purpose of this investment is to demonstrate the commitment of public sector institutions to integrity.

2.2.7 Promoting a professional, merit-based public sector devoted to the values of public service:

This is achieved in particular by ensuring a fair and open system for recruitment, selection, and promotion based on objective criteria, within a human resource management framework grounded in transparency and merit so as to strengthen the professional competence of the public service and eliminate favoritism and bias in hiring. It also involves establishing an evaluation system that supports accountability and the concept of public service, thereby preventing misconduct and the misuse of positions for private purposes.

2.2.8 Providing adequate information, training, guidance, and advice to public officials to apply public integrity standards in the workplace:

To preserve integrity in professional settings, employees must be continuously informed about the institution's policies and rules related to integrity. Training should also be provided to raise awareness and develop their skills in resolving ethical dilemmas so that they can apply these standards personally. In addition, mechanisms for consultation and

guidance should be made available to assist them in implementing these principles and values in the exercise of their duties.

2.2.9 Supporting an open and responsive organizational culture regarding integrity:

This requires, first, encouraging an open culture that allows discussion with employee representatives about ethical problems, enabling managers to respond, provide advice, and resolve issues in a timely manner. It also entails establishing rules and procedures that permit and facilitate the reporting of violations affecting public integrity within institutions, while ensuring legal and procedural protection for whistleblowers against retaliation. Where possible, alternative confidential reporting channels should be provided to a designated body capable of conducting independent investigations.

2.2.10 Implementing an internal control and risk management system to safeguard integrity in public institutions:

This includes ensuring the availability of a control environment with clear objectives that demonstrate managers' commitment to the values of integrity and public service. It also requires adopting a strategic approach to risk management and monitoring that encompasses assessing integrity risks, deterring and addressing breaches, remedying control weaknesses, and facilitating reporting procedures.

2.2.11 Ensuring that enforcement mechanisms provide appropriate responses to all integrity-related violations:

In this regard, public integrity standards should be applied fairly, objectively, and in a timely manner through disciplinary, administrative, civil, and even criminal procedures. Mechanisms for cooperation and information exchange among the relevant bodies, units, and officials should be strengthened to improve the speed and proportionality of enforcement. Transparency toward the public concerning the effectiveness of these mechanisms within public sector institutions should also be encouraged.

2.2.12 Strengthening the role of external oversight and control in the public integrity system:

This includes ensuring accountability, reform, and compliance with sanctions, rulings, and formal advice issued by supervisory bodies and administrative courts. It also involves making sure that these authorities and agencies respond to information they receive from third parties regarding abuses or misconduct. Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure that agencies responsible for enforcing regulations apply the law impartially.

2.2.13 Enhancing transparency and stakeholder participation at all stages of the policy process in order to strengthen accountability and the public interest:

This requires promoting transparency and adopting open government data policies, enabling stakeholders to participate in the formulation and implementation of public policies, and addressing situations of conflict of interest.

2.3 Elements Supporting the Practice of Integrity in the Public and Private Sectors

Adopting integrity is essential for combating corruption, and consequently achieving transparent investments and real development. Bribery, corruption, and bureaucracy lead to a lack of trust and transparency due to deceit and fraud in contracts, resulting in an unfair and unsuitable business environment and unequal opportunities, which ultimately drives investors away. (OECD, pp. 7-8)

Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen integrity, which requires:

2.3.1 The Necessity of Working to Combat Corruption by Reinforcing Measures as well as Promoting Governance and Consolidating Integrity

Fighting corruption is a key responsibility of the state, which must first demonstrate its political will to confront this phenomenon and then establish a proactive legal framework based on international standards to combat forms of corruption and impose penalties on violators.

The state can express its long-term commitment to good governance in both the public and private sectors through several means:

A- Adopting an official national strategy to combat corruption, because the commitment to fighting corruption is more effective when accompanied by

a clear action plan that includes specific steps, a defined timeline, and a dedicated budget.

B- Raising awareness and sharing information about the preventive measures being implemented to fight corruption in the public sector, while also providing data on investigations and court cases related to corruption and bribery.

C- Thirdly, the state must clearly communicate information about the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of the various institutions tasked with combating corruption. These institutions are responsible for implementing legal provisions related to fighting corruption. Therefore, it is necessary to designate the responsible institutions, define their roles clearly and precisely, and ensure they are funded and provided with training and technical resources. If roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined, this can lead to overlapping authorities and jurisdictions, creating potential conflicts that negatively affect the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

D- The necessity of providing information and guidance to companies regarding issues related to corruption and the procedures to address it, including national legal provisions, associated regulations, and methods for compliance. This is essential for effective anti-corruption efforts.

E- Communication with non-governmental entities must also be established, with multiple channels available for contact. This allows for a better flow of information between the government and the public regarding anti-corruption measures. Communication can take place, for example, through press conferences, publication on websites, or specific publications such as brochures that describe particular offenses and present measures for monitoring and prevention. It also includes responding to public inquiries via telephone or other communication channels, without restrictions on location or time.

F- Initiating dialogue by establishing an institutional framework between the public and private sectors as a means to ensure a healthy working environment in both sectors.

2.3.2 Adopting Integrity Procedures and Controls at the Institutional Level

There is no doubt that economic development is achieved through lower levels of corruption and higher levels of business integrity. Corruption driven by narrow personal interests and private gains discourages investment and contributes to the flight of both domestic and foreign investors, resulting in the loss of capital and missed opportunities to benefit from production technologies.

Companies should be aware of the specific corruption-related risks they may face in their operations, utilize available resources flexibly, and develop an action plan tailored to their needs.

Integrity measures, procedures, and controls at the institutional level include the following:

A- The existence of ethical and professional codes that outline the moral principles to be followed within the institution. Companies can adopt various measures to ensure corporate integrity and employee compliance, such as establishing a code of conduct.

B- Assigning a member of the staff as a compliance officer responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of and adhere to the existing corporate integrity measures.

C- Regularly monitoring, reviewing, and updating the measures to account for changes in content and operational methods.

D- The compliance officer reports regularly to management on all issues related to the corporate integrity policy. This should be accompanied by a clear and systematic mechanism for investigation and response based on the compliance officer's report. (Development, pp. 10-12)

E- Maintaining records and conducting training sessions for employees to assess the adequacy of record-keeping systems.

F- Evaluating the declared policy regarding key areas aimed at ensuring sufficient books and records. This includes the processes for vendor approval and contracting, as well as expenditure, recruitment, and payroll operations.

G- Reviewing the basic data related to accounting policies and core accounting operations, as well as examining them thoroughly.

H- Reviewing payment processes for settling obligations.

I- Discussing with employees the nature of all existing compliance-related functions, including any internal audit team and the legal advisor. (United Nations Office. on Drugs and Crime, 2021, pp. 59-60)

3 Content of Codes of Conduct and Professional Ethics

To study the third section, which deals with the content of codes of conduct and professional ethics, it was divided into four parts. The first part is dedicated to general principles, the second part to the duties of government bodies, the third part to the leader, while the last part addresses the duties of the employee.

3.1 General Principles:

Professional ethics means that the employee performs their job duties with honesty, integrity, and objectivity, continuously working to achieve the goals of the organization they serve, and carrying out their work free from any negligence, violation of the law, or harm.

All public employees should uphold the highest ethical standards and proper professional conduct at all times and in all places, with a firm commitment to the highest principles of sound ethical behavior in all dealings. (Federal Authority for Government Human, 2017, p. 17)

3.2 Duties of Government Bodies:

Government bodies include departments, agencies, public institutions, and all entities affiliated with the government. They have duties toward their employees. First, they must provide a suitable, safe, healthy, and fair work environment that meets the employees' basic needs and enables them to perform their tasks comfortably. They should also treat their employees with equality, fairness, and justice, without discrimination, while encouraging initiative, innovation, and the exchange of expertise, and maintaining open channels of communication with them. Furthermore, they must protect the rights and privileges of their employees. (Tourism, p. 6)

3.3 The Leader or Manager:

Managers and leaders must first apply laws, institutional principles, and professional ethical values, and serve as role models for the employees under their supervision and management, particularly regarding adherence to professional ethics. They should exemplify the highest standards of

integrity, ethical conduct, and social responsibility both within and outside the organization. (Holding, p. 22)

Managers and leaders must respect the rights of employees and deal with them without bias, favoritism, or discrimination. They should also inform and educate their employees about professional ethics, take necessary measures to prevent violations and misconduct that compromise professional ethics, and handle any breaches with impartiality and objectivity.

3.4 Duties of the Employee

An employee is a person appointed by the competent authority to perform governmental job responsibilities. In carrying out their duties, the employee must pursue only the public interest, and nothing else. A government employee represents a model to be followed through adherence to work ethics, embodying positive values, and supporting and inspiring others. (Resources, 2023, p. 4)

3.4.1 Loyalty to the State, Compliance with Laws, and Following the Instructions of Superiors:

An employee owes loyalty to the state, which means sincerity and dedication in both word and action, performing governmental work with a firm priority that places the nation, leadership, and public interest first. Accordingly, the employee must comply with the law and not violate it, striving to apply it in full, and refraining from engaging in any illegal activity, while maintaining political neutrality.

The employee must also respect and follow the directives of their superior. Examples of laws and regulations to be observed include those related to administrative transactions and services, as well as laws that govern personal appearance. On the other hand, the employee must refrain from malicious complaints against individuals or government institutions that violate the law.

Public employees are also required to adhere to the orders, instructions, and guidance of their superiors according to the hierarchical structure. They must comply with and execute instructions and perform any

task assigned to them, even if it falls outside their usual responsibilities. (Conduct, p. 22)

3.4.2 Good Performance and Work Efficiency

Competence and effectiveness mean exerting maximum effort with quality and accuracy in the least amount of time and cost. Integrity means working diligently, sincerely, and devotedly, without neglecting duties, encouraging self-monitoring, avoiding anything that harms governmental work or conflicts with the public interest, and using all designated work time efficiently, honestly, and responsibly while maintaining the precision required by one's tasks and adhering to the highest professional standards. Employees must also remain neutral in their interactions, avoid discrimination between clients, and not exploit their position or work for personal gain. They must take corrective measures if any mistakes occur, inform stakeholders, and fully assume responsibility for the decisions they make.

Good performance and efficiency also require that employees personally carry out their assigned duties and not perform tasks for which they are unqualified. (INTOSAI, p. 14) Work must be performed personally, and delegation to others is only permitted under legal authorization or in cases of force majeure. Performing duties is a personal obligation based on individual competence and personal responsibility.

Employees must act impartially, honestly, and fairly, without regard to the personal characteristics of those they deal with, and refrain from actions that violate public morals or societal traditions. They must carry out their tasks accurately and with good intentions, prioritizing the public interest over personal interest, and execute their responsibilities efficiently, quickly, objectively, and according to best practices.

Additionally, employees must be present at the workplace during designated hours, not leave their post during work hours, perform their duties diligently, with effort and sincerity, and complete assigned tasks within specified or, at minimum, reasonable timeframes.

Employees must also strive for excellence in their work performance, continuously updating their knowledge, and improving their skills and

competencies through training and professional development. They are required to maintain continuity in their work, performing their duties consistently and reliably to ensure the uninterrupted provision of public services, as any negligence could delay or halt service delivery. (Conduct, p. 24)

Simultaneously, employees must inform their superiors of all matters related to their work to guarantee continuity and report any violations they believe to be fraudulent, deceptive, counterfeit, or misleading. (Holding, Code of Ethical Conduct, p. 7)

3.4.3 Confidentiality and Information Security

Information refers to any data the employee has access to by virtue of their job or related to it, or any data concerning the work of the government entity. This includes messages, maps, drawings, specifications, models, licenses, agreements, or any other documents owned by or stored within the entity, whether in printed, electronic, or digital form.

Employees must sign a confidentiality agreement, which includes respecting professional secrecy and not disclosing secrets or documents. They must also respect the privacy and confidentiality of clients and stakeholders.

Employees must refrain from collecting information or documents outside the scope of the law and their work requirements. They must follow information security protocols and policies, using technology, IT systems, and communication tools solely for work purposes, avoiding prohibited activities such as incitement to violence or engaging in illegal activities outside their work.

Employees must not use work devices to hack, spy, or harass others. They must avoid sharing any information, comments, or statements with others via media or social networks about topics still under review, investigation, or approval unless they have prior written authorization from their administration.

Employees must not contribute to publishing articles or messages that harm their institution, colleagues, superiors, or the government by any means. They must maintain confidentiality even after leaving the job and

return all work-related materials, such as files, documents, and disks, to their organization.

Employees representing their institution before external entities or the media must not act beyond their assigned duties and must avoid disclosing information still under investigation or review. (Authority, Government Employee Handbook, p. 9)

3.4.4 Protecting Public Money

It is the employee's duty to protect public funds of all kinds and safeguard the state's interests and rights, with a requirement to report any violations. Employees must act responsibly and honestly regarding money, goods, real estate, and other assets in their custody. They must also handle office equipment and supplies carefully and ensure that devices are properly turned off. (Conduct E. C., p. 6)

3.4.5 Appropriate Use of Granted Authority

Employees must refrain from exploiting their position for personal gain, either directly or indirectly, for themselves or their relatives. They must not misuse or disclose information obtained through their position in a way that harms others or unfairly benefits someone, even after leaving their job.

3.4.6 Employee Conduct

Employees must avoid obstructing work and uphold the honor of their position at all times. They should act in accordance with the ethical code even outside work, avoiding behavior that violates societal values and traditions.

Public employees must respect their superiors, colleagues, clients, and others, interacting with politeness, neutrality, objectivity, and professionalism. They must refrain from tarnishing the reputation of superiors or colleagues, or questioning their skills and expertise.

Employees must also completely avoid all forms of harassment, discrimination, violence, aggression, or intimidation toward superiors or colleagues, directly or indirectly. They must not demand others perform unnecessary or excessive tasks, impose undue burdens on the public, or abuse their rights. (Conduct C. o., p. 21)

3.4.7 Bribes, Gifts, and Favors

Employees are not entitled to accept any benefits, of any kind or form, whether direct or indirect, for themselves or their relatives. This includes gifts, rewards, services, or any advantages that could compromise the employee's credibility and impartiality, thereby affecting the proper execution of their duties. Employees must also refrain from borrowing money from any colleague, client, contractor, or supplier.

3.4.8 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest refers to any official action, behavior, or decision by an employee that creates a clash between their personal interests and the government's or public interest. Accordingly, employees must sign a declaration regarding conflicts of interest and submit it annually to the Human Resources department. This ensures they avoid conflicts between their personal interests and those of the government entity.

Additionally, employees must refrain from participating in any process or decision that could award a contract or benefit to themselves, or to a relative up to the fourth degree, either directly or indirectly. Employees must immediately and in writing inform their superior if a conflict of interest arises between their personal interests and their professional duties.

3.4.9 Good Conduct and Respect

Employees must follow the instructions of their superiors and interact with them respectfully, appreciatively, and assist them consultatively with objectivity and honesty. They must also uphold respect, integrity, and professionalism in all interactions at all times. Employees are expected to exercise self-control, patience, perseverance, and confidence in their work.

Employees must respect the rights of their superiors and colleagues, acknowledge and value differences, and treat others with courtesy and politeness. They must refrain from spreading rumors and must not interfere in the personal lives of others. (WorldHealthOrganization, p. 3)

3.4.10 Commitment to Efficient Use of Resources

Employees must preserve the assets and resources of the government institution in their custody or within the organization and not use them for personal purposes. They must not misuse these resources or property, and

they must use the organization's communication tools only for official purposes and when necessary. Employees are also required to comply with all laws regarding the purchase and optimal use of resources, ensuring accountability, integrity, and legality.

3.4.11 External Activities

Employees must not hold two positions simultaneously, except as legally exempted. They must not participate in any external activity that promotes or benefits clients of their organization and must not collect donations of any kind, whether inside or outside the institution.

3.4.12 Safe Work Environment

Employees must perform their work in a manner that ensures their own safety and health, as well as the safety of colleagues and others present in the workplace. They must also promote positive attitudes and behaviors within the work environment.

3.4.13 Use of Illegal Substances

Employees must not possess, consume, use, or distribute prohibited substances that could affect general health, professional conduct, or mental well-being for themselves or their colleagues.

3.4.14 Uniform and Appearance

Employees must maintain a neat, tidy, and modest appearance. Wearing inappropriate clothing, such as sportswear, revealing outfits, or overly extravagant attire that contradicts societal and state customs, is prohibited. Employees must preserve a professional appearance that reflects positively on their organization, aligns with their job role, and respects the traditions of the state and society. (WorldHealthOrganization, pp. 11-34)

4. CONCLUSION

Combating corruption, reforming administrative and financial systems, and restoring trust between citizens and the state, as well as enhancing the competitiveness of public institutions, require the establishment of the principle of integrity and its full implementation in public institutions, in accordance with the procedures, steps, and standards outlined in this article.

It is also essential to instill ethical controls, strengthen values, and reinforce principles of responsibility, transparency, and justice within state

institutions, starting with the employee. The performance and conduct of public servants must operate within a framework of values and ethical principles governing professional behavior. Therefore, these professional ethics should be codified in a document containing ethical codes that regulate employee conduct, define the core values within which public employees must operate, and outline a set of ethical principles guiding their professional and occupational behavior. The purpose is to enhance the conduct of public institution members, clarify work ethics, improve the quality of work, foster a better work environment, and develop the services provided to the public. These codes aim to explain the duties of employees in government public service, ensure their adherence to governmental work principles, and promote discipline, integrity, transparency, competence, objectivity, and effectiveness in professional conduct.

Thus, it is necessary to draft ethical and professional charters that include standards of integrity and ethical behavior expected of state employees, both during their work and outside the workplace. Establishing the principle of integrity and reinforcing professional ethics contributes to eradicating corruption and setting public institutions on the right path.

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