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The customer-oriented approach in the professional culture of Russian government agencies: integral components and development tools

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Abstract

A new aspect of the study of the 'public service-oriented' state is the customer-centricity of the professional culture incorporated and practiced by the state bodies and civil servants. The lack of scientific study of such a professional culture involves poor knowledge and insufficient terminological description of its constituent parts and development tools. Therefore, the purpose of the presented empirical study is to identify customer-centric components of the professional culture incorporated by the federal bodies of the Russian Federation, as well as the development tools for this professional code of conduct. The research method is represented by the content analysis of documents and materials posted on the websites of government agencies, with particular consideration given to the ministries and federal agencies involved in the provision of public services. The aggregated data review shows that Russian practice largely encounters such components of professional culture formulated from the standpoint of a customer-oriented approach such as values, principles, observance of ethical and professional norms when dealing with citizens, and the competence of civil servants. At the same time, the greatest systemic deficiency manifested itself concerning development tools. The conducted analysis also allows concluding that if there are plenty of manifestations in reference to the customer-centricity of the activities of a state body, then almost no attention is paid to the customer-oriented approach of a civil servant. The scientific novelty of the findings is caused by the fact that, firstly, a databank of manifestations of the customer-centric corporate culture of a government agency has been

collected (which may be carried over and adapted for other government agencies). Secondly, it is a contribution to the corpus of theoretical provisions represented by a classification of the principles of a customer-centric corporate culture of a state body based on six different justifications, along with their detailed description and a clearer terminological designation of both components and development tools. And thirdly, against the background of addressing values and competencies mainly from the standpoint of a customer-centric approach, the authors introduce into scientific circulation the consideration of objectives and training programs as tools for the establishment of a customer-oriented professional culture in a state body or institution.

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Professional culture, government agencies, civil servants, customer-centricity, Russian practices.

Introduction

The global trend that appeared in the late 1970s - early 1980s and strengthened to this day has been the implementation of the concept of 'public service-oriented' [Purcărea et al. 2013] state. Other terms such as 'citizen-oriented' [Cuadrado-Ballesteros et al. 2013:29; Sobaci and Karkin 2013], 'customer-oriented', 'customer-focused' [Pyon et al. 2009; Asmu'I 2014], 'user-oriented' [Cuadrado-Ballesteros et al. 2012:69], 'human-centered' [Syzdykova 2020], or 'human-oriented' state [Petrov et al. 2018] has also been applied in reference to this trend in different aspects.

The brief overview of this concept's main provisions (that affect the methodology and further interpretation of the study results) suggests that within the concept's framework, the authority is considered as a 'service organization', the main task of which is to satisfy the needs of individuals and societies (customers). In a broad sense, any governmental activity is viewed as a service to society, including issues of strategic and mid-term planning and certainly the forms of current management technologies [Kozhenko et al. 2011]. On the contrary, in a narrow sense, public services are classified into mass, socially significant, and individual or administrative.

'Service' management model provides for the definition of a set, content, and technology for the provision of public services based on the needs of the population [Coste and Tiron-Tudor 2013:216; Bilouseaca et al. 2012:1025; Nedel'ko et al. 2008:14] and the development of 'individualized and/or custom-made' services and features [Qvist 2016:19].

This technology implies making decisions while engaging the consumer through all stages of the service [Žarković et al. 2014:210]. The 'quality' of public services is interpreted here as the degree to which the needs of each individual citizen and society as a whole are met [Maslov 2009:67].

Therefore, the customer-centric professional culture practiced by the state body and civil servants poses a new aspect in the study of the 'public service-oriented' state. In science, the professional culture of the civil service is mostly characterized by knowledge of innovative modern management theories and technologies and the ability to carry out professional activities in the field of governmental and

municipal services under modern conditions and challenges [Aliyeva 2008]. However, from the standpoint of scientifically identified components and tools for the establishment of a professional/corporate culture, it should be noted that the current topic of the customer-centric culture of the civil service somehow lacks a thorough analysis and corresponding developments.

Analysis of scientific and specialized literature reflecting customer-oriented values, principles, motives, norms of behavior and interaction, competencies, missions, codes of ethics, methods of training, staff development and evaluation demonstrates that the greatest attention is paid to competencies, to which researchers rank those constituents of a professional culture that may also be qualified differently (as values, principles, attitudes, etc.). Therefore, the cited scientific characteristics are left in the author's interpretations, which correlates them with certain elements of the governmental office professional culture. Also, noteworthy that these elements are articulated almost exclusively as values and competencies.

In the context of customer-oriented public administration, the values of the civil service are logically viewed as subordinate to the values of society. Concerning the provision of public services, this range of values includes efficiency, operability, and fairness [van den Bekerom et al. 2021:128], as well as the service delivery timeline [MacCarthaigh, 2008].

The customer-centricity is mentioned in separate scientific papers just like as the nowadays principle that implies the tasks of studying citizens' digital profiles and forming the data arrays following current needs [Tropinova 2020, p. 82-83]. Another key principle of the state body functioning is the evolution of the experience of customer interaction with the governmental bodies, as well as intersectoral interaction involving business and civil society and aimed at a barrier-free open dialogue between citizens and the state. Such principles are interpreted precisely as new elements of the organizational culture of administrative units [Tropinova 2020:82-83].

Concerning competencies, researchers emphasize that the competency-based approach in reference to civil servants is developing today precisely based on the 'public service' concept of a state [Evarovich and Martynova, 2020]. The following competencies of this kind might be singled out in the scientific discourse:

- 1) Personalized, related to the values of a civil servant and focused on the interests of a particular community [Vaidelytė and Sodaitytė 2017:391; Druskienė and Šarkiūnaitė 2018:345; Jałocha et al. 2014: 254-255; Zharkeshova et al. 2017:311; Mutiarin et al. 2019:355; Zakrzewska 2017:531], motivation to provide quality public services [Jałocha et al. 2014:254-255], empathy [Coste and Tiron-Tudor 2013:215,218], emotional intelligence [Ilies 2014:1559-1561], which allows for a better understanding of the actual needs of the consumers of public services (Borisova 2015), and the capacity to innovate the very service development (Core Skills for Public Sector Innovation 2017);
- 2) Optimum performance, related to:
 - achievement of meaningful results while providing services: professionalism - the ability to respond to the expectations of citizens [Vaidelytė and Sodaitytė 2017:390], responsibility [Zakrzewska 2017:531], operational flexibility, capability to reduce bureaucratic manifestations [Mutiarin et al. 2019:355], etc.;
 - ability to communicate with citizens in the process of providing services while also improving their quality: sociability, success in explaining and advising citizens on urgent issues [Skills for a High Performing Civil Service 2021], including using digital technologies; ability to organize feedback and plan further actions in close collaboration with the members of the public.

Public service motivation is considered as a motivation formed under the influence of awareness

of the social significance of the performed action, incl. as a result of direct contact between employees and service recipients [Public service motivation 2013].

Consideration of other components and development tools necessary to establish a customer-centric corporate culture of a governmental agency/civil service has not yet been found in the scientific literature. Thus, the lack of scientific study of the topic also includes insufficient knowledge of the integral parts of the customer-oriented corporate culture and the social tools for its establishment (tools are mentioned at best but not technologized). Speaking of the professional culture practiced by the state bodies of particular countries and, in particular, the Russian Federation, the level of its development from the standpoint of customer-centricity has also not been determined.

The task of developing this topic in Russia was mainstreamed in the Federal project 'Customer-centricity' focused on the period up to 2030 (Russian Federation Government Executive Order N 2816-r). The project involves the introduction of the principles of a customer-oriented approach in public administration and the transformation of approaches to working with citizens for a simple and quick solution to their life situations, proactively informing about new opportunities that appear in the course of administrative reform (Unified plan to achieve the national development goals of the Russian Federation...). Of particular note is the proclamation of a 'customer-centric culture' that should be practiced by the state bodies.

The Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation issued in December 2021 (Russian Federation Government Executive Order № 3878-r) determines the implementation of mentioned principles (through the use of customer-centric standards) in government bodies and subordinate institutions. These standards establish procedures for identifying customer needs and, based on achieved data, further designing and reengineering public services and state governance. It was also emphasized at the government level that the customer-centric project sets the rules and standards for all government projects [Meeting on the implementation progress 2022]. This statement provides for the general consideration of a customer-oriented approach as the main principle of public administration and public service.

The content of the presented article includes the definition of the purpose and methodology of empirical research (Materials and Methods), the presentation of the results following the objectives of the study (Results), and the interpretation of the results from the standpoint of the main theoretical provisions of the 'public service-oriented' concept of the state and the practices of other countries, an assessment of the contribution of research to scientific developments on this topic (Discussion), conclusions and prospects for further scientific research on the customer-centric corporate culture of state bodies (Conclusion).

Materials and Methods

The purpose of the empirical study presented in this article is to identify customer-centric components of the corporate culture of state bodies of the Russian Federation, as well as develop tools to establish such a culture.

The research method is quantitative and qualitative content analysis [Lasswell 1977; Elov 2011; Tarshis 2002] of the documents and materials. The method of qualitative content analysis consists in distinguishing the semantic units in the content; the named units are further to be brought under a certain category. In this case, the units are parts of the text or visual elements; the categories are components and development tools of professional culture. The quantitative content analysis focuses on counting units in categories.

The choice of public administration bodies for analysis was explained by their 'service' profile of activity: ministries and federal agencies associated with the provision of public services. The considered institutions included the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Construction Industry, Housing and Utilities, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media, Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Finance and Federal Tax Service, Federal Technical Regulation and Metrology Agency (Rosstandart), Federal Service for Labor and Employment (Rostrud), and Federal Agency for State Property Management (Rosimushchestvo).

The named federal bodies are associated with the provision of both socially significant mass services (medical care, cultural, social, and educational services, utilities, transport, etc.) and individual (administrative) services related to the establishment of rights and the issuance of relevant documents. The term 'services' is regularly used in federal regulations in reference to socially significant mass facilitation, for example, 'medical services' [Federal Law No. 323-FZ], 'educational services' [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation N 640], and so on.

The range of legal documents [Presidential decrees, resolutions, and executive orders by the Government, etc.], some of which were adopted back in 2012 [Decrees of the Government of the Russian Federation N 1284 and 640; Unified plan...; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation № 597; Russian Federation Government Executive Order № 3878-r], predetermines the predominant focus on customer care of the designated government agencies. The key aspect of customer-centricity, reflected in these documents, is the orientation towards assessing the satisfaction of citizens with public services and taking this assessment into account in decision-making. Financing the provision of public services is also made dependent on the needs for existing services and the level of satisfaction of citizens with the volume and quality of services [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation N 640].

One of the latest innovations of public administration in the considered aspect, reflected in recent documents, is the development of a single feedback platform [POS, introduced in 2019 but still in progress]. POS provides for collecting citizens' opinions on a wide range of issues and responding to the social call by the authorities with a quick solution. The range of issues should cover public services of pretty much any type: beautification, public utilities, health care, culture, education, road maintenance, communications and television, social services and protection, transport, physical culture and sports, etc., as well as administrative services. The relevant agencies also always get involved in the consideration of the problems noted by citizens. Thus, any chosen federal ministries and agencies should be involved in implementing the concept of a customer-centric government.

The vast majority of documents used in the study were located through the websites of the mentioned authorities. The following considerations motivated the choice of sites as the main source: 1) official sites contain comprehensive information on all aspects of the state body activities; 2) for citizens and local residents, sites are the main channel providing coverage of activities, performed or planned by the authorities, so it would be logical to assume that the manifestations of customer-centricity in the materials of these resources should be clearly pronounced.

The purpose of content analysis of documents and site materials was brought down to identify 2 following features:

1) Components of professional culture: values, principles, norms of behavior and interaction, competencies (knowledge, skills, personal qualities);

2) Development tools: mission and objectives, training, codes and standards, identification system

(symbols).

These components of professional culture can be formulated both directly and descriptively - through the presentation of the content of the activity, with an opportunity for the researcher to single out certain components.

The information presented in the following sections of reviewed sites served as the material for analysis:

- mission and statement;
- structure;
- activities (public declaration of goals and objectives, independent quality assessment);
- government services;
- databank and archives;
- public service / national/local contests / career opportunities;
- coordinating and advisory bodies;
- polls / feedback;
- news / events.

A search was conducted in the 'Mission and Statement' section of the governmental agency as a whole and as a structure for such directly marked elements as the mission/objectives, values, principles, and rules of official conduct. In addition, general information on the institution or agency may reflect the development tools forming the professional culture - in particular, symbols, state body emblems, or other insignia.

The 'Activities' section was analyzed from the side of customer's opportunities to receive affordable and high-quality services, as well as express an opinion on the quality and accessibility.

The 'Government Services' sections clearly exhibited the customer-centric principles for providing services by, for example, focusing on the convenience of citizens and legal entities and developing the e-services and associated Internet resources.

The databank was analyzed by the keywords 'customer-centricity', 'code', 'consumers of services.' This, in particular, allowed accurately describing the acting codes of ethics and official conduct of civil servants. The codes were also considered in terms of their customer service-oriented and customer feedback components.

A search revealing norms, requirements, and competencies that can be classified as 'customer-centric' was conducted through the sections containing the information about the public service and qualification requirements. That required a thorough analysis of the contest and competition announcements, qualification requirements for job candidates, and methods for assessing professional and personal qualities.

The list of coordinating and advisory bodies was examined in search for materials on public councils designed to exercise public scrutiny, ensuring the proper consideration of needs and interests of citizens.

The 'Polls' section was analyzed from the point of view of whether the topics of the surveys actually allow identifying the expectations, assessments, and suggestions of citizens regarding public services.

The 'News/Events' section is another material that made it possible to trace the current state of professional culture via searching through the keywords 'customer-centricity, mission, values, code, principles, rules of official conduct.' The search span ranged from 2020 to 2022. The choice of this exact period is explained by the first appearance (in 2020) of customer-centric values and principles

articulated in official statements and documents of the Government of the Russian Federation.

The qualification of certain provisions may not be indicated in the materials and documents. In these cases, the correlation with one or another component of the professional culture was carried out by the researcher.

The results of qualitative content analysis are supplemented by quantitative data: the summary tables reflect the frequency of manifestation of customer-oriented components of the professional culture and prospective development tools establishing the latter in government agency's environment.

A total of 67 contexts relevant to the purpose of the study were selected and analyzed. The content analysis was conducted in March 2022.

Results

The results of the content analysis presented in accordance with the objectives of the study:

Integral components of professional culture

The most common is the presentation of such components as customer-centric principles and norms of interaction with citizens. Much less attention is paid to the formulation and public presentation of relevant values and competencies (Table 1).

Table 1 - Quantitative data of content analysis on the prevalence of components of a customer-centric corporate culture

Components of professional culture	Gov. agencies that reflected given parameters (units)	Gov. agencies that reflected given parameters (%)
Values	2	14
Principles	12	86
Norms of interaction	10	71
Competencies	2	14

Source: compiled by the authors

For specific bodies, the representation of the components of a customer-centric corporate culture is shown in Table 2. The components are most fully demonstrated in the materials and documents sourced from the websites of the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Tax Service of the Russian Federation.

Table 2 - Components of professional culture presented on the websites of particular government agencies

Gov. agency	Values	Principles	Norms of interaction	Competencies
Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media	-	+	+	-
Ministry of Economic Development	-	+	+	-
Ministry of Culture	-	+	+	-
Ministry of Finance	+	+	+	+
Federal Tax Service	+	+	+	+
Federal Service for Labor and Employment	-	+	+	-
Ministry of Education	-	+	-	-
Ministry of Transport	-	+	+	-
Ministry of Labor and Social Protection	-	+	-	-

Gov. agency	Values	Principles	Norms of interaction	Competencies
Ministry of Construction Industry, Housing and Utilities	-	+	+	-
Ministry of Health	-	-	+	-
Federal Agency for State Property Management	-	+	+	-
Federal Technical Regulation and Metrology Agency	-	+	-	-
Ministry of Science and Higher Education	-	-	-	-

Source: compiled by the authors

The conducted analysis allows for forming a certain databank that meaningfully describes the components of a customer-centric professional culture in the Russian authorities.

Values. From the standpoint of customer-centricity, among the values declared by the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, one can distinguish ‘service to society’ and ‘transparency’ (Russian Ministry of Finance: strategic map). The head of the Federal Tax Service, in the context of the ‘birth of new values’, also calls customer-centricity (Daniil Egorov: public services...).

Principles. The range of formulated customer-centric principles is quite wide. Still, it became possible to group them based on the semantic similarity of descriptions and/or the commonality of the parameters that they objective correlative with - approaches to solving citizens' problems, service development, engagement with citizens, the introduction of innovations, and information transparency. Overall, six groups were identified and described.

The first group includes descriptions of the components with a pronounced focus on citizens' satisfaction with services, perspectives of current and potential users, and current needs of members of the public and business community, for instance:

- ‘These measures aimed at increasing the level of satisfaction of citizens and businesses with public services, including those provided online’ (Russian Ministry of Digital Development Communications and Mass Media ... Service Development and Customer Experience Department);
- The range of issues people are applying with is analyzed ‘with the highlight of the most frequently occurring and relevant topics’ (Russian Ministry of Culture / Openness);
- ‘Only the existing customer who actually uses the services can answer the question whether he likes them and how he sees the service products offered’ (‘Taxes’ television show...);
- ‘Double standards? Broken unity of measurements? Tell us about the problem’ (Federal Technical Regulation and Metrology Agency (Rosstandart) / Main page). ‘The acting standardization tool is designed to help promote certain technological solutions; for most companies, the standard allowed to increase sales, which ultimately led to an increase in the number of customers’ (On the Rosstandart agency / Historical reference).

The second group combined the principles that characterize the approach to solving the problems of citizens and businesses: comprehensiveness, timeliness, operational flexibility, efficiency, and de-bureaucratization:

- ‘The principle of an integrated approach to solving the life situations of applicants through electronic superservices’ (Russian Ministry of Digital Development... E-government);
- ‘Organization of timely and thorough consideration of citizens' appeals’ (Russian Ministry of Education / Department of Legal Support, Administration and Public Services);
- ‘Fast response to customer requests’ (Federal Agency for State Property Management

The customer-oriented approach in the professional culture ...

(Rosimushchestvo) privatized...);

- ‘Establishment of a comfortable environment for taxpayers to fulfill their tax obligations; reduction of administrative burden and simplification of procedures’ (Mission, main activities, and Strategic map of the Federal Tax Service).

To the third group were attributed the principles that determine the development of ordinary and electronic services: individualization, continuous improvement, increase in usability and accessibility:

- ‘Services will be implemented and adjusted further for greater citizens’ convenience’ (Federal Tax Service joined the implementation of the federal project...);
- ‘Over 60 interactive services are already available through the website of the Federal Tax Service of Russia. Almost all the issues that citizens are currently facing can be resolved online, i.e., without visiting the inspector’s office’ (‘Taxes’ television show...);
- ‘For the convenience of citizens, residents, and legal entities, the Ministry of Culture of Russia has developed several online services and resources that provide information on the cultural life of the country and its historical heritage’ (Russian Ministry of Culture / Public services and other benefits);
- ‘Obtaining public services in the social and labor sphere via ‘single window system’ - 80 %’ (Federal Service for Labor and Employment (Rostrud) / Labor inspection);
- ‘Improving the quality and accessibility of public services on the conduct of ministerial relations’ (Russian Ministry of Labor.../ Open Government fundamentals);
- ‘The strategic ‘Customer-centricity’ initiative in public services involves implementing an individual approach to each citizen of the country with continuous improvement of accessibility of the government services’ (The Ministry of Economic Development spoke about the strategic initiatives...).

The fourth group consists of such innovative approaches to the provision of services as omnichannel and proactivity:

- 1) ‘A customer profile should be created as a tool allowing creating customized, convenient, and proactive services’ (Op. cit.);
- 2) ‘Digital transformation and optimization of state and municipal services will be based on the following principles:
 - omnichannel interaction with the accessibility of any user-friendly tools for applying;
 - proactive service delivery’ (Russian Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media ... E- government).

The fifth group includes the following principles of interaction with citizens: dialogue and partnership, trust, conflict-free environment, involvement of citizens/residents in public administration (assessment, examination, and implementation of decisions), accountability to citizens everywhere:

- ‘Our [*Federal Tax Service*] role under modern conditions is a test of customer-centricity, convenience, and efficiency of the solutions proposed. At the same time, an important part of our work is a partnership and not confrontation with the taxpayer’ (Daniil Egorov: launching new solutions...);
- Promoting the development of trusting relationships with reference groups: public organizations, homeowners, local residents as consumers of public utilities and other services, etc. (Russian Ministry of Construction Industry, Housing and Utilities / Reference groups);
- ‘It is very important to see where taxpayers incur costs that could be eliminated in order to make our relationship less conflicting’ (‘Taxes’ television show...);

- Promoting open dialogue and cooperation between the society and business community’ (Mission, main activities, and strategic map of the Federal Tax Service);
- Ensuring the participation of citizens, public associations, and the business community in the development and implementation of administrative decisions while also respecting their opinions and priorities. Ensuring the opportunity and accessibility for citizens, public associations, and the business community to exercise control over the activities of the Ministry of Finance of Russia (Russian Ministry of Finance ... Public goals).

The sixth group unites principles related to the transparency of information and decisions:

- ‘We are striving to ensure the availability of information to the citizens on our activities and performance and make the administrative process understandable, while engaging in the process of public administration those who will live tomorrow by the rules they took part in developing today’ (Russian Ministry of Finance ... Public goals);
- ‘Raising public awareness about the work of the executive branch: agenda, decisions, results; increasing the predictability of executive decisions for society...’ (Russian Ministry of Construction Industry, Housing and Utilities / Reference groups);
- Presentation of the goals, objectives, agenda, and results of the activities of the Ministry of Finance in a form that provides a simple and accessible perception for the public (Russian Ministry of Finance on the implementation of the Concept of fair and open recruitment...).

Norms of interaction. Interaction norms as a manifestation of customer-centricity include:

1) Ongoing customer support to resolve unclear and problematic issues:

- our online resource allows contacting the labor inspectorate, obtaining a free consultation on labor relations, or conducting a self-examination of your organization. An electronic inspector allows passing a preliminary check of compliance with the requirements of labor legislation. Employment navigator contains the instructions covering the most common problematic work situations and prospective ways to solve them’ (Onlineinspektsiya.RF state labor inspectorate portal);

2) Direct interaction with citizens in decision-making:

- the creation of a mechanism for direct participation of citizens in the establishment of a comfortable urban environment, increasing the share of actively involved citizens up to 30 % (Consideration of the Action Plan of the Ministry of Construction...);

3) Ongoing feedback with an assessment of the quality of services and suggestions for improvement:

- ‘implementation of an individual personalized approach to the provision of services will be followed by the establishment of a feedback collection system. No more worries about looking where to complain or, conversely, to commend; there is no need to remember what the service was called and the address where it was provided, and what was the name of that very employee. The state itself must know all the points of contact that have taken place and, moreover, in what way and through what channels each particular consumer of governmental services should leave the relevant feedback’ (The Ministry of Economic Development spoke about the strategic initiatives...);
- Ensuring the possibility for the recipients to express their opinions on the quality of services in the cultural sector (Independent system for assessing the quality of performance of the cultural sector institutions);
- The agency collects feedback from taxpayers to make its services more customer-centric.

Feedback is collected through AppStore and Google Play while also accounting for service ratings, which are collected using a QR survey. Citizens also have access to technical support, where they can express any wish or comment on the use of a particular service. It is this information that is consolidated into further measures to improve the agency's interactive services ('Taxes' television show...);

- Polls: 'Please rate your experience with the provision of high-tech medical care', 'What difficulties did you encounter when booking an appointment with a doctor online?' (Russian Ministry of Health / Polls).

4) Constant communication with customers to provide information and/or receive feedback with the quality assessment and/or suggestions for improvements:

- 'If you wish to help us make the site better or you can't find something, please, write or call' (Russian Ministry of Economic Development / Press service contacts);
- 'Please, evaluate the accessibility and clarity of the information provided on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 - fully satisfied, and 1 - the accessibility and clarity of the information provided is wholly insufficient' (Federal Agency for State Property Management (Rosimushchestvo) ... Polls).

Competencies. References to customer-centric competencies were found in the materials of two government agencies. Thus, in the context of the values and principles of competence specified by the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation, 'a creative approach to solving tasks, awareness of responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, knowledge of business ethics, business negotiation skills, conflict prevention and resolution skills' (Announcement of the reception of applications...; Appendix to the order of Russian Ministry of Finance...) from the standpoint of the modern concept of public administration may be considered customer-centric.

The Federal Tax Service also assumes the formation of such new competencies as knowledge and understanding of the customer-oriented approach in the professional culture of a government agency, the ability to generate and implement changes (simplify procedures, transform the system into a more understandable and customer-friendly environment, build official communication with citizens based on new principles and new ethics, utilize the customer experiences, etc.)

Professional culture development tools

The development tools required to establish a customer-centric professional culture were traced to a way smaller extent. The analysis revealed only mission statements, some provisions in codes, and a focus on forming the customer-centric competencies in training programs. Noteworthy is the small number of government agencies that practice the use of such tools (Table 3).

Table 3 - Quantitative data of content analysis on the prevalence of development tools for the establishment of a customer-centric professional culture

Professional culture development tools	Gov. agencies that reflected given parameters (units)	Gov. agencies that reflected given parameters (%)
Mission	5	36
Training programs	1	7
Codes	1	7
Customer-centric standards	0	0
Identification system (symbols)	0	0

Source: compiled by the authors.

For specific bodies, the representation of development tools required to establish a customer-centric professional culture is shown in Table 4. This representation is characterized by single manifestations.

Table 4 - Professional culture development presented on the websites of specific government agencies

Gov. agency	Mission	Training programs	Codes	Customer-centric standards	Identification system (symbols)
Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media	+	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Economic Development	+	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Culture	+	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Finance	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Tax Service	+	+	-	-	-
Federal Service for Labor and Employment	+	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Education	-	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Transport	-	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Labor and Social Protection	-	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Construction Industry, Housing and Utilities	-	-	-	-	-
Ministry of Health	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Agency for State Property Management	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Technical Regulation and Metrology Agency	-	-	+	-	-
Ministry of Science and Higher Education	-	-	-	-	-

Source: compiled by the authors.

The conducted analysis made it possible to present a meaningful vision of the development tools required to establish a customer-centric professional culture in Russian government agencies.

Mission. The wordings that can be attributed to the mission of the state body reflect the orientation towards:

1) Building services around the needs of citizens and residents:

- ‘WE ARE A TEAM: civil servants of the Ministry and employees of subordinate organizations - we build state services around the needs of people’ (Russian Ministry of Digital Development... Career opportunities);
- ‘Our mission is to provide real assistance in every case we process. The customer-centric government first of all studies the true needs of consumers of its services and establishes rules and state procedures focusing on the convenience of a particular person or business entity. It seeks not just to satisfy requests but to anticipate and exceed expectations’ (Federal Tax Service joined the implementation...).

2) High-quality services:

- ‘The Federal Tax Service of Russia is dedicated to providing high-quality services and comfortable conditions for payment of taxes while effectively countering illegal tax evasion schemes to ensure fair and equal business conditions for all’ (Mission, main activities, and

The customer-oriented approach in the professional culture ...

Strategic map). ‘The Federal Tax Service is transforming into a digital service company that provides reliable and efficient administration and the provision of services to the highest standards’ (Public Declaration of the goals and objectives of the Federal Tax Service...).

3) Creating conditions for realizing the potential of citizens:

– ‘Creating conditions to foster creativity and realize the creative potential of the very each person’ (Russian Ministry of Culture / Public Declaration of the goals and objectives for 2021).

4) The transition from criminal proceedings and administrative penalties to the provision of services:

– ‘Transition from the mission of ‘identifying violations’ to ‘promoting the improvement of working environment’ (Online service ‘Electronic Inspector’).

In rare cases, the missions for public bodies created under the ministries employed the following wordings: ‘The Public Council under the Ministry of Economic Development was established to ensure the coordination of socially significant interests of citizens of the Russian Federation, public associations, state authorities and local governments in the area of the ministry's activities. Achieving this goal is possible only on the condition of active interaction between the members of the public and the Ministry and directly depends on the quality of the implementation of their powers by all members of the Public Council’ (Code of Conduct for Members of the Public Council).

Training programs

Based on the materials on the website of the Federal Tax Service, it can be concluded that the programs certainly aimed at creating a customer-centric professional culture: ‘Departments have been created in the structure of the central office, whose tasks include the establishment of a customer-centric system inside and outside the Tax Service, vocational training of employees, and human resource development’ (Federal Tax Service joined the implementation...). Professional development and training involve the formation of new values and competencies. In reference to motivational representation, the task of developing the internal motivation of an employee and the willingness to implement customer-centric models is brought to the fore. Therefore, interactions with a mentor and training webinars dedicated to the work of the contact center (both mentioned in the analyzed materials) can be considered educational formats.

Codes. The provisions of the code of ethics, reflecting the focus on the needs of society, are identified in the materials of the Federal Technical Regulation and Metrology Agency (Rosstandart): ‘Members of the Public Council participate in the development of civil society institutions and the coordination of socially significant interests by exercising objective and impartial public control over the activities of the Federal Agency, nominating and supporting civil initiatives’ (Code of Conduct for Members of the Public Council under the Federal Technical Regulation and Metrology Agency).

In general, the degree of prevalence of the customer-centric corporate culture of Russian government agencies (based on the reviewed materials on their websites) can be characterized as follows: despite the wide range of manifestations of client-centricity, there are still very few ministries and agencies that paid sufficient attention to a customer-centric culture. Thus, the websites of most government agencies (8 out of 14) reflect only single manifestations (1-2) of the components and/or development tools required to establish such a professional culture.

Discussion

Concerning the interpretation of the results of content analysis from the standpoint of the main theoretical provisions of the ‘public service-oriented’ concept, it should be noted first of all that given

the heterogeneity of customer-centric practice, the best experience of ministries and agencies is also the most indicative.

The best experience exhibits well-pronounced characteristics of the 'service' concept in the content of the components of the professional culture: the formulation of values and principles reflects the orientation towards the needs and satisfaction of citizens. Efficiency and operational flexibility in the provision of public services, dialogue with the people, and development of customer experience - mentioned in the scientific literature as values / principles - are also incorporated by Russian government agencies. Of particular note is the fact that the authorities of the Russian Federation supplement the range of principles with omnichannel, user comfort, comprehensiveness, de-bureaucratization, flexibility, and proactivity.

The norms of interaction declared by state bodies demonstrate constant contact with the public to resolve emerging issues and joint decision-making regarding the improvement of services provided. Examples of defining customer-centric competencies show that the understanding of new knowledge and skills and personal qualities of a civil servant is also associated with the desire to introduce changes in administrative procedures based on the interests of the consumer of public services.

With regard to the set and priority of competencies, one can see some discrepancies with scientific discourse. Thus, the concept of a 'public service-oriented' state provides for the emergence of the personal competencies of a civil servant, associated with an orientation towards the interests of society and motivation by the social significance of the actions taken. Still, the current Russian government agencies are largely referring to the values and activity-related competencies.

The formulations of the tools for developing a customer-centric professional culture correspond to the main provisions of the concept of a 'public service-oriented' state, reflected in the scientific literature. The ideas of building services around the needs of people, anticipating their expectations, and creating conditions for self-realization are reflected mostly in missions and training programs.

Concerning the technologization of tools required to establish a customer-centric corporate culture of a state body, the results of the analysis allow - yet to a smaller extent - but still supplement scientific ideas. As noted above, the scientific literature lacks the technologization of development tools. However, in terms of implementation of training programs aimed at developing the customer-centric competencies among civil servants, an analysis of the activities of Russian government agencies allows proposing contemporary educational formats (interaction with a mentor, training webinars) and topics (contact/call center omnichannel customer support).

The conducted analysis also allows concluding that if there are plenty of manifestations in reference to the customer-centricity of the activities of a state body, then almost no attention is paid to the customer-oriented approach of a civil servant. The basic documents in this regard - civil servant codes - contain general ethical provisions, for example: 'Civil servants, being aware of their responsibility to the state, society, and citizens, are called upon to: proceed from the fact that the recognition, observance, and protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens determine the basic meaning and the content of their activity; not to give preference to any professional or social groups and organizations, be independent of the influence of particular citizens, professional or social groups and organizations; observe the norms of professional ethics and rules of business conduct; exercise correctness and attentiveness in dealing with citizens and officials; be tolerant and respectful to the customs and traditions of the peoples of Russia and other states, etc.'(Code of Ethics and Official Conduct of Federal Civil Servants of the Federal Service). The codes do not include the norms of customer-centricity in the modern sense since all of them were introduced in the 2010s.

In this regard, the content of these Russian documents might be compared with the insides of the

ethical codes of civil servants in other countries. Thus, foreign codes of ethics contain direct indications of the norms of customer-centric behavior, including enhanced customer satisfaction and the achievement of the respective results (Office of Personnel Management); exclusive focus on the needs of the population, and adequate respect to criticism with its further employment to overcome shortcomings (Code of honor of public servants of the Republic of Kazakhstan); habitual exhibit of a culture of engagement and commitment (Standards of Ethical Conduct...); constant, constructive, and timely feedback (Office of Personnel Management); a desire to win public confidence (Standards of Ethical Conduct...).

Against the background of such a typical and highlighted in the scientific literature tool for the establishment of organizational/professional culture as symbols (Litvintseva and Pereverzina 2015), it should be noted that this development tool has not yet been comprehended from the standpoint of customer-centricity. Descriptions of symbols occasionally used by Russian government agencies do not reveal the idea of customer-centricity whatsoever, rather focusing on associations with power, for instance: 'The emblem represents a two-headed golden eagle with raised wings, topped with one large crown,' etc. (Official symbols of Rosstandart). However, a new understanding and representation of the symbols of government agencies are not yet found abroad either.

The introduction of customer-centric standards in Russian government agencies is yet quite an innovation concerning the practice of other countries. Since these standards are still at the stage of experimental testing, they might not be posted on official websites and, accordingly, do not yet disclose the modern technology for the provision of public services.

On the part of the contribution of the study to scientific developments on the discussed topic, the results presented are somewhat making up for the scientific and technological deficiency that is observed concerning the customer-centric corporate culture practiced by the state agencies. Firstly, a databank of manifestations of such a culture has been assembled, which can be carried over and adapted to other state bodies. Also, it may represent a certain value, given a lack of empirical material of this kind as an example of the actions. The second part of the contribution to the theoretical base of the customer-centric corporate culture is represented by a classification of its inherent principles based on six different justifications and a detailed description of these groups, including a clearer terminological designation of both the components and development tools. And thirdly, against the background of the customer-centric approach (largely referenced to values and competencies), the authors introduce into scientific circulation the interpretation of mission statements and training programs as development tools for the establishment of a permanent practice of customer-centric corporate culture by governmental authorities.

Conclusion

Following the purpose of the presented study, the article revealed the customer-centric components, as well as development tools required to establish the professional culture in state bodies of the Russian Federation. In a holistic way, the Russian practice encounters all elements of professional culture, formulated from the standpoint of a customer-centric approach: values, principles, norms of interaction, and competencies of civil servants. At the same time, the greatest systemic deficiency manifested itself concerning development tools. Given the innovativeness of the task of forming a customer-centric culture of a state body, as well as the insufficient development of this topic in the scientific literature, it is reasonable to consider emerging developments in this area, including the experience of the Russian government agencies. The best Russian practice may enrich pretty much any particular government agency with an array of data structures related to formulating the components of a customer-centric

corporate culture. The maturity of such a databank resulting from the study determines its practical significance.

The study revealed the level of development of a customer-centric corporate culture in Russian government agencies: ministries and agencies with sufficient attention paid to such culture make up less than half of the structures studied. This condition can be considered the starting point for assessing the further development of a customer-centric professional culture, defined as a priority in federal documents.

The measures required to be implemented within the framework of further development are the expansion of best practices to a larger number of government agencies, as well as the detailed articulation of tools for the establishment of a customer-centric corporate culture. Particular attention should be paid to the customer-centric culture practices by civil servants and, accordingly, the creation and introduction of new ethical codes for civil servants that enshrine customer-centric values and norms. Also, the posed task requires implementing the programs for the professional development of civil servants to form the personal competencies necessary to perform within the framework of the 'public service-oriented' state model. In general, the modern understanding of the customer-centricity of a government agency calls for a significant update of the documents and materials that were developed at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century.

In practical terms, it is essential to train personnel officers and heads of state bodies to develop knowledge on the tools for creating and establishing a new professional culture of a government agency. The new personnel technologies should reflect customer-centricity as the integral component in staff selecting and evaluating procedures.

Thus, further scientific research on the presented topic can be devoted to the development of a monitoring program for the establishment of a customer-centric corporate culture within a government agency, both in terms of the representation of the relevant characteristics of a state body for individual citizens, and their actual implementation in the trivial round. Moreover, of particular significance remains the development of technologies for implementing relevant tools that form and establish a customer-centric professional culture of a state body.

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Клиентоориентированный подход в профессиональной культуре российских государственных органов: неотъемлемые компоненты и инструменты развития

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Аннотация

Новым аспектом изучения государства, ориентированного на государственную службу, является клиентоориентированность профессиональной культуры, инкорпорированной и практикуемой государственными органами и гражданскими служащими. Отсутствие научного изучения такой профессиональной культуры связано с плохим знанием и недостаточным терминологическим описанием ее составных частей и инструментов развития. Таким образом, целью представленного эмпирического исследования является выявление клиентоориентированных компонентов профессиональной культуры, инкорпорированных федеральными органами Российской Федерации, а также инструментов разработки этого профессионального кодекса поведения. Метод исследования представлен контент-анализом документов и материалов, размещенных на веб-сайтах государственных учреждений, с уделением особого внимания министерствам и федеральным агентствам, участвующим в предоставлении государственных услуг. Обзор агрегированных данных показывает, что российская практика в значительной степени сталкивается с такими компонентами профессиональной культуры, сформулированными с точки зрения клиентоориентированного подхода, как ценности, принципы, соблюдение этических и профессиональных норм при общении с гражданами и компетентность государственных служащих. В то же время наибольший системный недостаток проявился в отношении инструментов разработки. Проведенный анализ также позволяет сделать вывод, что если существует множество проявлений клиентоориентированности деятельности государственного органа, то клиентоориентированному подходу государственного служащего практически не уделяется внимания. Научная новизна результатов обусловлена тем фактом, что, во-первых, был собран банк данных о проявлениях клиентоориентированной корпоративной культуры государственного учреждения (который может быть перенесен и адаптирован для других государственных учреждений). Во-вторых, это вклад в свод теоретических положений, представленный классификацией принципов клиентоориентированной корпоративной культуры государственного органа, основанной на шести различных обоснованиях, наряду с их подробным описанием и более четким терминологическим обозначением как компонентов, так и инструментов разработки. И в-третьих, на фоне рассмотрения ценностей и компетенций преимущественно с позиций клиентоориентированного подхода авторы вводят в научный оборот рассмотрение целей и программ обучения как инструментов формирования клиентоориентированной профессиональной культуры в государственном органе или учреждении.

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Ключевые слова

Профессиональная культура, государственные органы, публичные услуги, клиентоцентричность, российская практика.

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