

The Value–practice Gap in Police Personnel Management: Empirical Evidence from Karakalpakstan

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Abstract. This article examines the gap between employees' value-based commitment and their everyday organizational experience in police personnel management. It offers a focused secondary analysis of aggregated survey data reported in a doctoral dissertation and collected from 471 serving employees across territorial and functional units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. The analysis combines descriptive interpretation with an institutional and social-philosophical framework. The results reveal a pronounced normative resource: 80.5% of respondents associated service primarily with duty to the homeland and the people, while 71.6% continuously experienced their work as socially useful. Yet this commitment coexists with organizational uncertainty. Only 16.4% expected personnel stability to be maintained over the next three to five years; 41.1% could not offer a definite forecast, and 28.7% expected the departure of young employees to increase. Role ambiguity was also substantial: 42.6% could not clearly assess the correspondence between formal posts and actual duties, while 26.5% reported that one formal post involved multiple practical tasks. The article argues that personnel stability depends on aligning formal rules, workload allocation, career criteria, digital systems, and managerial accountability with employees' moral commitment. A five-link model—normative clarity, institutional fairness, legitimacy and trust, professional identification, and personnel stability—is proposed as an interpretive and practical framework.

Keywords: police personnel management, professional identity, institutional fairness, organizational trust, workload, career transparency, Karakalpakstan

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Polis kadr idarəetməsində dəyər–təcrübə uyğunsuzluğu: Qaraqalpaqıstandan empirik dəlillər

Adil Bekmurotov 

Xülasə. Məqalədə polis kadrlarının idarə edilməsində əməkdaşların dəyər əsaslı xidmət öhdəliyi ilə gündəlik təşkilati təcrübəsi arasındakı uyğunsuzluq araşdırılır. Tədqiqat Qaraqalpaqıstan Respublikası Daxili İşlər Nazirliyinin ərazi və funksional bölmələrində çalışan 471 əməkdaş arasında keçirilmiş sorğunun doktorluq dissertasiyasında təqdim olunan ümumiləşdirilmiş nəticələrinin məqsədli təkrar təhlilinə əsaslanır. Təsviri şərh institusional və sosial-fəlsəfi yanaşma ilə birləşdirilmişdir.

Nəticələr güclü normativ resursun mövcudluğunu göstərir: respondentlərin 80,5 faizi xidməti ilk növbədə Vətən və xalq qarşısında borc kimi qiymətləndirmiş, 71,6 faizi isə fəaliyyətinin cəmiyyət üçün faydalı olduğunu daim hiss etdiyini bildirmişdir. Bununla yanaşı, təşkilati qeyri-müəyyənlik nəzərəcarpacaqdır. Respondentlərin yalnız 16,4 faizi növbəti üç-beş ildə kadr sabitliyinin qorunacağını gözləmiş, 41,1 faizi dəqiq proqnoz verə bilməmiş, 28,7 faizi gənc əməkdaşların sistemdən ayrılmasının artacağını düşünmüşdür. Formal vəzifə ilə real iş yükü arasındakı uyğunluğu 42,6 faiz aydın qiymətləndirə bilməmiş, 26,5 faiz isə bir formal vəzifə çərçivəsində çoxsaylı tapşırıqlar yerinə yetirildiyini qeyd etmişdir. Məqalə normativ aydınlıq, institusional ədalət, legitimlik və etimad, peşə identifikasiyası və kadr sabitliyindən ibarət beşhəlqəli model təklif edir.

Açar sözlər: polis kadrlarının idarə edilməsi, peşə identifikasiyası, institusional ədalət, təşkilati etimad, iş yükü, karyera şəffaflığı, Qaraqalpaqistan

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Introduction

Personnel management in law-enforcement institutions is not merely an administrative function. Selection, assignment, evaluation, promotion, training, and retention shape how formal authority is embodied in daily practice. Police employees represent the state in direct encounters with citizens; consequently, the internal organization of their work has implications for institutional legitimacy, public confidence, and the protection of rights. Uzbekistan's Law "On Internal Affairs Bodies" defines the protection of rights and lawful interests, public order, security, and crime prevention as core duties of internal affairs bodies (Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the internal affairs bodies, 2016). The quality and stability of personnel are therefore not internal concerns alone but conditions of public value.

Institutional theory provides a useful starting point. Formal rules reduce uncertainty only when they are intelligible, credible, and reproduced in routine conduct (North, 1990). Organizations also acquire a distinctive character through values, informal commitments, and patterns of leadership that cannot be reduced to technical procedures (Selznick, 2011). In police institutions, this distinction is especially important because discipline is simultaneously formal and moral: an employee is required to comply with lawful orders while exercising judgment, restraint, and responsibility in situations that cannot be fully scripted.

Police socialization research has long shown that occupational attitudes develop through continued interaction with colleagues, supervisors, assignments, and organizational expectations (Van Maanen, 1975). Police culture is not uniform; different clusters of attitudes may coexist within the same organization, reflecting variation in experience, rank, work setting, and perceived managerial support (Paoline, 2004). These insights caution against treating personnel difficulties as isolated individual deficiencies. Workload ambiguity, unclear career rules, inconsistent evaluation, and weak feedback can gradually transform the meaning employees attach to their professional role.

Procedural justice scholarship further suggests that compliance and cooperation depend not only on outcomes but also on whether authority is exercised through fair, respectful, and transparent processes (Tyler, 2006). Research on police legitimacy similarly links trust to judgments about the fairness and appropriateness of authority (Jackson et al., 2012). Although much of this literature addresses relations between police and citizens, its logic also applies inside an organization: employees are

more likely to internalize rules and identify with an institution when personnel decisions are understandable, consistent, and open to reasoned explanation.

Recent reforms in Uzbekistan have strengthened the legal architecture of police personnel management. Presidential Resolution PQ-3413 regulates service, selection, appointment, training, and professional development; Resolution PQ-5076 introduced a qualitatively new system of professional training; and Resolution PQ-10 emphasized a people-oriented professional structure, ethics, discipline, and closer cooperation with the population (On measures to radically improve work with personnel of internal affairs bodies and the organization of their service, 2017; On measures to introduce a qualitatively new system of professional training for internal affairs bodies 2021; On additional measures to transform internal affairs bodies into a people-oriented professional structure and direct them toward closer cooperation with the population, 2023). These reforms establish a strong normative direction. The unresolved analytical question is how formal modernization is experienced by employees in everyday service.

The article addresses that question through evidence from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Its central proposition is that personnel stability is shaped by a value–practice relationship. Employees may retain a strong moral commitment to service while simultaneously encountering ambiguous roles, uneven workloads, uncertain career prospects, or digital procedures that do not improve substantive decision-making. If the two dimensions diverge for a prolonged period, moral motivation becomes difficult to convert into stable professional identification. The study therefore asks: (1) what value resources support employees’ identification with police service; (2) which organizational conditions weaken that identification; and (3) how can these findings be integrated into a practical conceptual model?

Methods

Research design. The article presents a focused secondary analysis of aggregated survey results contained in the author’s doctoral dissertation on the social-philosophical foundations of personnel management in internal affairs bodies. The design is cross-sectional and interpretive. It does not test causal effects or estimate a population model. Instead, it uses descriptive distributions to identify tensions between formal norms, lived organizational experience, and professional meaning.

Participants and setting. The source survey covered serving employees from territorial and functional subdivisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. A total of 471 employees participated: 380 men and 91 women. The age profile included employees aged 18–30 (19.8%), 31–40 (47.8%), and 41–50 (32.4%). Regarding education, 36.1% had specialized secondary education, 58.7% higher education, 4.2% a master’s-level qualification, and 1.0% an academic degree. Service experience ranged from up to five years (22.4%) and 6–10 years (17.6%) to 11–20 years (43.8%) and more than 21 years (16.2%). The source dissertation states that the survey was anonymous. Only aggregated, non-identifying results are used here.

Instrument and analytical domains. Survey questions were organized around five domains: working conditions and workload; correspondence between formal roles and actual tasks; fairness of evaluation, incentives, and career advancement; perceived effects of digital personnel systems; and professional motivation, social usefulness, and expectations of retention. The present analysis selects indicators with direct relevance to the proposed value–practice framework. Percentages are reported as documented in the dissertation; categories not discussed in the source are not reconstructed.

Analytical procedure. First, the relevant distributions were grouped into two layers: value resources and organizational experience. Second, each distribution was interpreted in relation to institutional clarity, fairness, legitimacy, professional identification, and stability. Third, the five categories were

arranged as a sequential but feedback-sensitive model. This procedure follows the institutional premise that formal constraints and informal meaning jointly structure conduct (North, 1990), while recognizing that police occupational attitudes are internally differentiated (Paoline, 2004). Digitalization was treated as an organizational intervention whose effect depends on how it redistributes discretion and accountability rather than on technology alone (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002).

Ethical and evidentiary boundaries. No individual-level dataset was available for this article, so inferential tests, subgroup comparisons, and claims of statistical association were deliberately avoided. The analysis uses only anonymous, aggregated results and does not process directly identifying personal information.

Statement on the use of artificial intelligence. OpenAI's ChatGPT was used for drafting support, English-language editing, structural organization, reference-consistency checking, and document formatting. The author reviewed and approved the final manuscript and remains fully responsible for its content, interpretations, and accuracy.

Table 1
Profile of the survey participants (N = 471)

Dimension	Category	Share/number
Sex	Men	380 (80.7%)
	Women	91 (19.3%)
Age	18–30 years	19.8%
	31–40 years	47.8%
	41–50 years	32.4%
Education	Specialized secondary	36.1%
	Higher education	58.7%
	Master's-level	4.2%
	Academic degree	1.0%
Service experience	Up to 5 years	22.4%
	6–10 years	17.6%
	11–20 years	43.8%
	More than 21 years	16.2%

Results

Value-based commitment. The strongest finding is the persistence of a pronounced moral orientation toward service. In response to the question about the primary meaning of service in the internal affairs system, 80.5% selected duty to the homeland and the people. Material security, status, and professional experience therefore appeared as secondary motives in the reported distribution. In a separate item, 71.6% stated that they continuously felt they were doing socially useful work, and a further 18.5% experienced that feeling often. Together, these indicators show that the institution

possesses a substantial axiological resource: most respondents understand service as socially meaningful and morally consequential.

This result should not be interpreted as proof of uniform attitudes or unconditional satisfaction. Rather, it establishes the value side of the value–practice relationship. Employees may identify with the public purpose of the institution even when they criticize its internal procedures. The distinction is analytically important because dissatisfaction with workload or promotion does not necessarily imply rejection of police service as a vocation. On the contrary, strong moral commitment may heighten sensitivity to perceived inconsistency between institutional ideals and daily management.

Role clarity and workload. Only 22.0% reported that duties were clear and work was within a normal range. By contrast, 26.5% stated that a formally single position involved many tasks in practice, while 42.6% selected "difficult to say" when evaluating the relationship between formal position and actual work. The latter response is not a neutral remainder. In an institution structured by formal authority, difficulty in identifying the boundaries of one's role signals uncertainty in how written expectations are translated into assignments. It may also reflect variation across units or reluctance to make a categorical assessment; the aggregated data cannot distinguish these explanations.

The reported sources of dissatisfaction reinforce this interpretation. Failure to observe working-time norms accounted for 26.7%, and the assignment of excessive tasks accounted for 19.9%. The source dissertation also identifies unfair treatment and insufficient transparency in incentives as relevant responses, although complete percentages for every category were not reproduced in the narrative. The available evidence therefore supports a cautious conclusion: workload is experienced not only as quantity but also as a problem of normative boundaries and distributive fairness.

Career expectations. A majority of respondents (63.0%) associated promotion with professional competence, indicating that merit is recognized as an important organizational value. However, 18.0% believed that no clear promotion criteria existed. This simultaneous presence of merit recognition and perceived ambiguity suggests uneven institutionalization. A formal commitment to competence can strengthen professional development only when employees can identify the standards, evidence, decision stages, and avenues of feedback used in promotion. Otherwise, career planning becomes situational rather than strategic.

Digital personnel systems. Digitalization received mixed but predominantly qualified evaluations. A total of 45.3% reported that digital systems had made decision-making easier. At the same time, 12.4% stated that such systems merely increased reporting, 14.1% perceived both positive and negative effects, and 19.8% observed no practical effect. These distributions caution against equating digitization with substantive modernization. Information systems can increase traceability and consistency, but they can also transfer discretion into templates and workflows, creating a system-level bureaucracy in which accountability depends on the design of categories, data entry, and review mechanisms (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002).

Expectations of personnel stability. The most direct indicator of future confidence was pessimistic or uncertain. Only 16.4% expected personnel stability to be preserved over the next three to five years if service conditions did not change. In contrast, 41.1% could not provide a definite forecast, 28.7% expected departures among young personnel to increase, and 11.2% expected experienced employees to remain while younger personnel left. These answers do not measure actual turnover, but they reveal how employees perceive the sustainability of the current organizational environment.

The coexistence of high moral motivation and low confidence in future stability is the study's principal empirical result. Employees largely affirm the social purpose of their work, yet many are unsure that the organizational conditions surrounding that work will sustain personnel. The issue is

therefore not a simple deficit of patriotism, vocation, or institutional loyalty. It is a conversion problem: the organization must convert existing moral commitment into durable professional identification through fair, clear, and workable personnel practices.

Table 2
Selected empirical indicators of the value–practice gap

Domain	Key response	Share	Interpretive significance
Public-service value	Service as duty to homeland and people	80.5%	Strong moral basis for professional identification
Social usefulness	Continuously feels socially useful	71.6%	High perceived meaning of work
Role clarity	Difficult to assess post–task correspondence	42.6%	Ambiguity in translating formal roles into practice
Workload	One formal post, many actual tasks	26.5%	Possible role expansion and uneven burden
Career	Promotion linked to professional competence	63.0%	Merit is recognized as an institutional value
Career	No clear promotion criteria	18.0%	Uneven transparency and predictability
Digitalization	Decision-making became easier	45.3%	Meaningful but incomplete positive effect
Digitalization	Reporting increased without substantive benefit	12.4%	Risk of formalism
Stability	Stability likely to be maintained	16.4%	Limited confidence in unchanged conditions
Stability	Young employees' departure likely to increase	28.7%	Perceived retention risk

Discussion

The findings support an institutional rather than individualistic explanation of personnel stability. Formal rules, training systems, and disciplinary standards are indispensable, but their practical effect depends on how employees experience workload, evaluation, promotion, and managerial decisions. North's (1990) distinction between formal and informal constraints is useful here: legal rules establish the official structure, while everyday routines determine whether those rules reduce uncertainty. Selznick's (2011) institutional perspective adds that an organization becomes durable when its values are embodied in practices and leadership, not simply announced in documents.

The survey identifies a reserve of institutional strength. Employees' understanding of service as duty and their high sense of social usefulness indicate that police work retains a strong moral meaning. This resembles the broader insight that legitimacy encourages voluntary cooperation because people view authority and institutional purposes as appropriate, not merely coercive (Tyler, 2006; Jackson et al., 2012). Internally, the same mechanism suggests that employees are more likely to exercise responsible discretion when they regard assignments, evaluations, and leadership as procedurally fair.

At the same time, the role-clarity results suggest that formal organization is not always translated into a stable occupational map. The high “difficult to say” response may reflect ambiguity, contextual variation, or caution. Whatever its immediate cause, it shows that a large group did not affirm a clear correspondence between position and actual task. Police socialization research explains why this matters: newcomers and experienced officers learn the real meaning of roles through observation, peer interaction, and supervisory practice (Van Maanen, 1975). If informal expectations consistently exceed or contradict formal descriptions, employees internalize uncertainty as part of the occupational culture.

Police culture should not be treated as a single attitude shared identically by all employees. Paoline (2004) demonstrates the analytical value of recognizing variation in occupational orientations. The current aggregated data cannot identify subcultures, but its demographic and experiential diversity makes such variation plausible. Employees with different service lengths, functions, or educational backgrounds may experience workload, career systems, and digitalization differently. Future analysis should therefore move from general distributions to cross-tabulations or multilevel designs while protecting confidentiality.

Digitalization illustrates the gap between formal innovation and experienced utility. Resolution PQ-5076 strengthens professional training, while Resolutions PQ-3413 and PQ-10 provide a framework for service organization, professional standards, ethics, and personnel development (On measures to radically improve work with personnel of internal affairs bodies and the organization of their service, 2017; On measures to introduce a qualitatively new system of professional training for internal affairs bodies 2021; On additional measures to transform internal affairs bodies into a people-oriented professional structure and direct them toward closer cooperation with the population, 2023). Digital tools can make these standards traceable and reduce arbitrary variation. Yet the survey shows that a system can facilitate decisions for some users while increasing reporting or producing no visible effect for others. As Bovens and Zouridis (2002) argue, ICT reorganizes discretion and control; it does not eliminate them. Accountability therefore requires transparent data rules, correction procedures, human review, and feedback on how digital records affect personnel decisions.

A practical interpretation is to view personnel management as a five-link chain. First, normative clarity defines duties, workload limits, evaluation standards, and decision authority. Second, institutional fairness converts these rules into predictable allocation, assessment, reward, and promotion. Third, fair and explainable procedures produce legitimacy and organizational trust. Fourth, trust allows employees to integrate institutional values into professional identity rather than treating service as mere compliance. Fifth, stable professional identification supports retention, responsible discretion, and institutional performance. The model is not mechanically linear: turnover, complaints, and operational errors also feed back into perceptions of fairness and trust.

Table 3

Five-link model for sustainable police personnel management

Link	Management question	Observable indicators	Priority intervention
1. Normative clarity	Are role, workload, and authority boundaries understandable?	Role descriptions; assignment logs; overtime patterns	Reconcile formal posts with recurring actual tasks
2. Institutional fairness	Are evaluation, rewards, and promotion consistent and explainable?	Published criteria; decision records; appeal and feedback use	Standardize criteria and require reasoned decisions

Link	Management question	Observable indicators	Priority intervention
3. Legitimacy and trust	Do employees regard managerial decisions as appropriate?	Climate surveys; complaints; trust items; supervisor feedback	Strengthen respectful communication and review mechanisms
4. Professional identification	Can employees connect daily work with public-service values?	Meaning of work; social usefulness; commitment	Link training and appraisal to public value and ethics
5. Personnel stability	Do employees foresee a sustainable career in the institution?	Retention expectations; transfer requests; actual turnover	Use early-warning monitoring and targeted retention measures

The model also clarifies why material or disciplinary measures alone are insufficient. Compensation, social guarantees, and discipline matter, but their effects are mediated by the employee's interpretation of fairness and future prospects. Walker and Archbold (2018) emphasize that modern police accountability includes multiple internal and external mechanisms. In personnel management, accountability should cover not only misconduct but also the quality of supervisory decisions, workload distribution, career review, and the operation of digital systems. Such accountability protects both employees and the public purpose of the institution.

The results have direct practical implications. Personnel units should periodically compare formal job descriptions with recurring assignments; publish operational definitions of promotion criteria; document the reasons for significant personnel decisions; and establish confidential climate monitoring at unit level. Digital systems should generate decision support rather than duplicate reporting. Indicators of workload, overtime, transfer requests, complaints, and retention expectations should be reviewed together, because no single measure captures the value–practice relationship. Training for supervisors should include procedural fairness, feedback, conflict management, and the ethical consequences of workload allocation.

Limitations. The study is limited to one regional internal affairs system and relies on aggregated cross-sectional responses. The source dissertation does not provide the full questionnaire, item-level dataset, survey dates, response rate, sampling probabilities, or complete distributions for every answer category. Accordingly, the article does not claim representativeness beyond the surveyed setting, causal relationships, or statistically significant differences between groups. Self-report data may also be influenced by organizational caution and social desirability, even though the survey was anonymous. The conceptual model should therefore be treated as an empirically informed framework requiring further testing.

Future research. A subsequent study should preserve anonymous individual-level data and include validated measures of organizational justice, trust in leadership, burnout, professional identification, intention to leave, and perceived public value. Stratified analysis by service length, function, sex, age, and rank could reveal whether the value–practice gap is concentrated in particular groups. Longitudinal measurement would distinguish temporary dissatisfaction from persistent institutional patterns. Actual administrative indicators—turnover, overtime, promotion decisions, training participation, disciplinary cases, and appeals—should be triangulated with survey responses. Qualitative interviews could then explain why employees select uncertain responses and how formal rules are translated into unit-level routines.

Conclusion

The Karakalpakstan survey shows that police personnel management contains both a strong value resource and a significant organizational vulnerability. Most respondents understand service as duty to the homeland and the people and regularly experience their work as socially useful. Yet uncertainty about role boundaries, workload, promotion criteria, digital systems, and future retention weakens confidence that this commitment can be sustained under unchanged conditions.

The main conclusion is that personnel stability should not be approached as recruitment and discipline alone. It is produced through the alignment of normative clarity, institutional fairness, legitimacy and trust, professional identification, and sustainable career expectations. Uzbekistan's legal and policy reforms provide a substantial normative foundation (Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the internal affairs bodies, 2016; On measures to radically improve work with personnel of internal affairs bodies and the organization of their service, 2017; On measures to introduce a qualitatively new system of professional training for internal affairs bodies 2021; On additional measures to transform internal affairs bodies into a people-oriented professional structure and direct them toward closer cooperation with the population, 2023). The next managerial task is to ensure that employees encounter those principles in everyday assignments, evaluations, digital workflows, and supervisory decisions.

The proposed five-link model translates the empirical findings into a sequence of actionable questions. It directs attention from the existence of rules to their clarity; from formal equality to experienced fairness; from compliance to legitimacy; from declared values to professional identity; and from short-term staffing to long-term institutional stability. When the moral meaning of service is reinforced by transparent and workable practices, existing commitment can become a durable resource for employees, the organization, and society.

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