Enhancing governance through anti-corruption strategies: Exemplary approaches and obstacles

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Abstract The article examines the fight against corruption in contemporary public administration, specifically analysing the factors that affect the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures in the context of globalization and rapid technological development. One crucial aspect of successful anti-corruption policy is studying and applying best practices. This includes analysing the experiences of other countries and implementing international standards. Relevant government bodies should designate effective methods for detecting, preventing, and responding to corruption. The development of transparent and effective institutions is considered the foremost priority in anti-corruption management. Attention is drawn to the role of independent anti-corruption bodies in ensuring the effective functioning of the system. The research also focuses on interaction with the public and the role of citizens in the anti-corruption process. Ways to enhance civic awareness, legal culture, and active citizen participation in the fight against corruption are identified. An additional aspect of the analysis is the study of international experience and partnerships in anti-corruption programs. The paper evaluates the effectiveness of international cooperation and the implementation of best practices from other countries in combating corruption. It also identifies the main challenges that arise in implementing anti-corruption policies during times of war, such as resource shortages, the impact of globalization on corrupt practices, and adapting to changes in modern society.

Developing strategies to overcome challenges is necessary to improve anti-corruption policy and create an effective system for combating corruption in all areas of society.

Keywords: corruption, globalization, anti-corruption policy, corruption risks, public administration, transparent policy

1. Introduction

In current circumstances, it is essential to combat corruption to ensure the optimal management of societal phenomena. The proliferation of corrupt practices is accompanied by significant costs, production losses, violations of citizens' rights, and inequality in the distribution of resources. In this context, anti-corruption policy not only helps prevent negative consequences but is also recognized as an effective mechanism for ensuring ethics, transparency, and accountability in the activities of public institutions.

Studying and implementing best practices is a key component of anti-corruption policy. This includes analysing successful anti-corruption programs and strategies from other countries, as well as implementing international standards in this field. Relevant government bodies can designate effective methods for detecting, preventing, and responding to corruption. However, combating corruption presents numerous challenges, including the complexity of implementing anti-corruption reforms, insufficient public support, internal power conflicts, and the ineffectiveness of the judicial system. Research and the development of strategies to overcome these challenges are necessary steps in improving anti-corruption policy (Semenets-Orlova et al., 2023).

The aim of this scientific article is to examine and analyse anti-corruption policy as a crucial tool of public administration. Specifically, it aims to study best practices and identify challenges that hinder the effective implementation and improvement of mechanisms to combat corruption in modern conditions.

2. Literature review
During his research, K.M. Naumchuk (2023) proposed to define the state anti-corruption policy as a complex of goals, measures, decisions and strategies in the field of prevention, resistance and suppression of corruption, considering the foundations of state governance science. The presented framework is based on an institutional approach to shaping the object spheres of anti-corruption policy, making it distinctive and relevant to modern management standards. In defining the stages of policy development, the author analyses the emergence, formation, implementation of international approaches and development of institutional support for the state anti-corruption policy and tries to incorporate the key stages in the development of anti-corruption measures in Ukraine.

In his scientific work, A. Moshnin (2022) examined the current state of corruption in Ukraine, highlighting one of the country's most threatening problems. The author identified common causes of corruption growth, such as rapid transition to market relations, radical changes in the state structure, low management efficiency, and other factors. In addition, the paper emphasizes that the fight against corruption requires a systemic and long-term strategy based on the positive experiences of partner countries. The research suggests specific directions for tackling corruption, such as creating a “high-risk position list”, improving the quality of administrative services, and other measures.

Korchak's (2023) scientific work determined that corruption is a significant threat to the effective protection and preservation of cultural heritage in the context of globalization and rapid technological development. The author highlights the potential benefits of digitalization in increasing transparency and efficiency, reducing corruption risks, and promoting accessibility and preservation of cultural values. The use of innovative technologies, such as blockchain and artificial intelligence, is particularly important in achieving these goals. Furthermore, the author emphasizes the significance of international collaboration and the establishment of efficient anti-corruption initiatives and tactics in this context.

3. Methods

The following methods were used in the research process:
- literature analysis was used to determine the theoretical foundations of anti-corruption policy and approaches to its application;
- comparative analysis was carried out to study effective practices and methods of preventing and combating corruption in countries with a high corruption perception index;
- analysis of statistical data was applied to determine the level of corruption experience of the population and business representatives in Ukraine, as well as changes in the dynamics of the Corruption Perceptions Index;
- the generalization method was used to analyse existing and prospective measures to minimize corruption in Ukraine;
- the systematization method was implemented to identify problems and factors of corruption processes in Ukraine, as well as ways to overcome corruption and further prevent its manifestations.

4. Results

Anti-corruption policy is crucial for ensuring effective and fair public governance in the modern world. Corruption can lead to significant costs, production losses, resource distribution inequality, and violations of citizens' rights. Therefore, anti-corruption policy is considered an effective mechanism for ensuring ethics, transparency, and accountability in the activities of public institutions (Savchenko, 2021).

Preventing and combating corruption is a national priority, but legislative decisions are often delayed due to political factors, resulting in a loss of effectiveness. The level of economic development in a country is closely linked to the spread of corruption. Therefore, in this context, the integration of tasks to rationalize the managerial activities of state authorities is necessary to adapt conservative legislative activity to the evolution of civil society institutions. This contributes to the formation and development of the rule of law, ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens, and considering the interests of society and the state (Malova, 2023; Kryshtanovych et al., 2022).

The task of developing and implementing strategies that aim to raise the level of legal culture and legal awareness among the population is at the forefront of the context of national anti-corruption policy (NACP) in Ukraine. Effective addressing of corruption and raising citizens' awareness about its importance require active interaction between the state and citizens, as well as informing the population about initiatives in the implementation of the NACP (Smirnova, 2023).

Over the past two decades, European countries have implemented reforms in public governance and the organization of public administrations. These reforms aim to establish a clear division of functions between policymaking (at the level of ministries and department ministries) and policy implementation (agencies). This has been referred to as a “paradigm shift”. Therefore, the development of an independent paradigm of national anti-corruption policy is necessary in the formation of a new format of public governance system. This paradigm combines the tasks of societal transformation based on modern management concepts such as good governance, sustainable development, multilevel governance, participation, and responsiveness (Novak, 2021; Alekseeva et al., 2023).

The new paradigm integrates scientific disciplines such as legal, political science, philosophy, and managerial analysis. It requires a systemic study of the peculiarities of forming national anti-corruption policy in the contemporary stage of state
building. Therefore, during the current stage of state-building, certain factors have arisen that fail to reduce and intensify the social basis of corruption. These factors include ill-considered democratization, liberalization of legislation, and a rapid transition from a planned to a market economy. As a result, corruption, as an antisocial phenomenon, acquires features that determine the fate of power, the economy, the state, and society as a whole (Khmelnitska, 2022).

Furthermore, corruption is closely linked to organized crime and has a detrimental effect on all areas of state power, including the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Acts of corruption gradually develop into a societal issue, primarily infringing upon the lawful rights and interests of Ukrainian citizens. Given recent political and social changes, combating corruption has become a top priority on the management agenda. This is particularly important as effective anti-corruption policies are developed in the context of EU integration (Prodan, 2023; Lopushnyak et al., 2020).

However, Ukrainian society should focus on studying the interaction, perspectives, and consequences of globalization on law violations in the economic, corrupt, terrorist, and socio-unsafe spheres of a transitional society. Although globalization has positive aspects, it can also accelerate economic crises, which in turn can stimulate the growth of corrupt influences on public governance. Therefore, it is essential to identify signs of corruption, considering it as a systemic social, legal, political, economic, and moral phenomenon. Corruption violates legal norms and becomes part of organized crime, affects state authorities, contributes to legislative violations, and negatively affects society's trust in governing structures and decisions (Kovalova and Danilyan, 2019).

Preventing corruption in modern society requires the implementation of effective practices and measures. Denmark ranks first in the global corruption perception index among 180 countries, according to Transparency International in 2023 (TI Ukraine, 2023). This makes it a vivid example of a country that successfully implements and supports effective mechanisms for preventing corruption. Parliamentary oversight is a key practice that ensures a high level of integrity in Danish society. It grants members of parliament the right to question ministers about suspected corrupt actions, promoting openness and accountability among government officials. Measures to prevent corruption in Denmark start at the stage of labour negotiations. This includes the compulsory inclusion of anti-corruption clauses in labour contracts, which eliminates the possibility of bribery among employees (Yuzikova, 2021; Kussainov et al., 2023).

Similarly, New Zealand has implemented a range of legislative changes and initiatives recently to increase resistance to corruption. In New Zealand, the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is primarily responsible for coordinating the fight against corruption. Although the country does not have a legal definition of corruption, the SFO relies on specific criteria for accepting cases within its jurisdiction during anti-corruption activities. The SFO's broad powers allow for the interrogation of any individual, providing an important mechanism for countering corruption. Significant attention is also given to citizen education. Each person has the opportunity to undergo an anti-corruption online course, which contributes to the timely detection and prevention of corruption in the country (Lugina and Scherbatyuk, 2020).

In the context of the modern corruption prevention system in Ukraine, a significant improvement is the adoption of the State Anti-Corruption Programme (SACP), which is based on the previously adopted Anti-Corruption Strategy. It is worth noting that over 75% of the planned measures in the SACP are allocated to the executive branch. Furthermore, the SACP contains sections that focus on promoting a fair judiciary and safeguarding the integrity of political parties and election campaigns. It also establishes crucial ethical standards for Members of Parliament (TI Ukraine, 2023; Bondarenko et al., 2021). Ukraine has made notable achievements in corruption prevention, including the adoption of the State Anti-Corruption Strategy in 2021 and the expected appointment of the head of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SACP), which has contributed to the intensification of investigations into top-level corruption cases. Additionally, the High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC) has functioned impressively, hearing 49 cases and issuing 37 verdicts in 2022 alone. However, Ukraine's growth potential lately could have been significantly greater, and the results of the fight against corruption could have been more tangible. This could have been achieved if the competition for the position of SACPO head had not been delayed and had taken place within the specified term of 2021, allowing anti-corruption investigations to unfold more rapidly. Furthermore, had the parliament not delayed the adoption of the Anti-Corruption Strategy for two years, Ukraine would have had a clear action plan to combat corruption by now (Nesterenko and Bulgakova, 2023; Tsimoshynska et al., 2021).

Corruption in Ukraine is considered systemic due to its deeply ingrained nature and prevalence in various sectors of the country. The identification of systemic corruption is based on objective evidence, such as reports from international organizations, activist groups, journalists, and citizens’ experiences. The scale and nature of corruption pose a threat to the country’s development and the assurance of its democratic future (Dashkovska, 2023; Omelchuk et al., 2022). Combating systemic corruption requires additional measures beyond the basic principles. This phenomenon is deeply entrenched and widespread. Systemic corruption is the presence of corrupt individuals or groups operating within a specific system or organization, often with the complicity or tacit agreement of others, using positions of power to advance their own interests at the expense of society (Vasyltsiv and Baran, 2023).

The extent of corrupt practices is demonstrated by the high level of corruption experienced by citizens and business representatives. In Ukraine, over half of the population (51-52%) have engaged in corrupt activities to gain personal benefit in certain areas (Shevchenko et al., 2023; Levytska et al., 2022). According to the 2022 survey on corruption experiences among the population (Figure 1), the highest levels of corruption were observed in law enforcement agencies, the water supply and...
sanitation sector, and service centres of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The business sector also showed a significant amount of corruption, with the majority share belonging to customs.

Moreover, there has been an increasing call from the community for decisive measures to penalise corrupt officials. Additionally, the public and media pay even more nuanced attention to potential cases of corruption. To ensure successful monitoring, it is crucial to disclose data as widely as possible, as long as it does not compromise security issues (Kravchuk and Lavriv, 2021). Research data confirms the situation in Ukraine amidst a full-scale invasion and resulting political and economic crisis. Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index (Figure 2) shows an increase.
However, it is important to note that simply increasing the Corruption Perceptions Index is not enough to indicate success in combating corruption. It is necessary to consider not only quantitative indicators but also the quality of measures taken to counter corruption (Table 1). Ensuring transparency and openness in conditions of armed conflict presents challenges. It is important to balance disclosing information with ensuring national security (Guba and Linetskyi, 2022).

Table 1 Measures to minimise corruption in Ukraine.

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<tr>
<th>Measures to minimise corruption</th>
<th>Degree of implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of competitions and appointment of independent and integrity managers</td>
<td>Partially implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of the State Anti-Corruption Strategy (SACS) and implementation programme</td>
<td>Partially completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring transparency in the state property register and privatisation</td>
<td>Partially completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimising the risks from the adoption of draft laws that remove procurement from the scope of the Law of Ukraine “On Public Procurement”</td>
<td>Partially completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reforming the constitutional justice system in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission</td>
<td>Not implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on (TI Ukraine, 2023).

Moreover, effective anti-corruption efforts require not only punishing offenders but also systemic reforms in areas that create fertile ground for corrupt practices (Table 2). Building transparent and efficient institutions, developing the legal system, raising the level of civic awareness, and enhancing economic competitiveness are key aspects on the path to sustainable anti-corruption efforts, including during wartime and post-war recovery (Galunko and Shkuta, 2022; Akimov et al., 2020).

Table 2 Ways to reduce corruption in Ukraine based on the recommendations of Transparency International Ukraine.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Implementation details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of competitions</td>
<td>Hold competitions to select the heads of anti-corruption bodies, taking into account the professional experience and integrity of the candidates; Ensure a high level of independence and inadmissibility of influence of external factors on the work of the bodies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>To reform constitutional justice</td>
<td>Launch a reform of constitutional justice, taking into account the conclusions of the Venice Commission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open data</td>
<td>Ensure access to open data, including electronic declarations and reports; Consider the use of data protection and restrictions to protect important state interests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transparency of procurement</td>
<td>Actively implement the ProZorro electronic procurement system to ensure openness and transparency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective control and monitoring of procurement</td>
<td>Continuously monitor and audit procurement procedures to identify corruption risks. Establish a system of effective control and monitoring of all procurement processes, including the involvement of third-party experts and auditors; Introduce mechanisms of responsibility for violations of transparency and integrity in procurement procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore the system of submitting electronic declarations</td>
<td>Improve and ensure stable operation of the system for submitting electronic declarations to the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC); Introduce mechanisms for automatic verification and analysis of declarations for misconduct. Provide the necessary resources and infrastructure for the full functioning of bodies that are limited due to the war; Conduct an inspection to restore and upgrade the technical equipment of the designated bodies; Ensure technical and organisational capacity for bodies that are limited due to the war to fully report and provide information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restore the functionality and reporting of bodies that have been restricted due to the war</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled by the author based on (TI Ukraine, 2024).
Therefore, combating corruption involves promoting honesty and transparency in public services and among officials, implementing legislative changes, educating citizens about anti-corruption legislation, providing adequate remuneration for civil servants, protecting freedom of speech, and supporting investigative journalism. Currently, Ukraine is endeavouring to adopt international best practices in combating corruption. However, successful implementation of these practices requires strong political will from the country’s leadership. Establishing a unified state policy in the field of anti-corruption involves a range of measures at various levels, including governmental, political, economic, social, and legal. Key tasks include enhancing the efficiency of the system for preventing political corruption and ensuring the independence and effectiveness of anti-corruption bodies (Cherevatyuk et al., 2020; Lopushnyak et al., 2016; Melnyk et al., 2022).

However, it is important to note that the level of corruption in Ukraine is affected by various negative factors, including the large volumes of international aid, insufficient control over its distribution, decreasing citizens' incomes, inflation, limited access to state assistance, inadequate judicial measures against corruption, low awareness of anti-corruption programs, the influence of the Soviet “gratitude” system, and low societal awareness caused by war, psychological exhaustion, and moral trauma (Gura, 2023; Honcharenko and Ivanenko, 2023).

5. Discussions

We partially agree with Naumchuk's (2023) definition of state anti-corruption policy as a system of state management goals, measures, decisions, and activities aimed at countering and overcoming corrupt practices. However, it should be noted that anti-corruption legislation can be tailored to specific subsectors and comprehensively cover all spheres of societal life with anti-corruption measures.

We concur with Moshnin's (2022) findings, as his research sheds light on several significant aspects related to the issue of corruption in Ukraine. The study thoroughly analyses the reasons for the increase in corruption, including the rapid transition to market relations, radical changes in the state structure, and governance shortcomings. The author proposes specific measures to counter corruption, including the creation of a ‘high-risk positions’ list and enhancing the quality of managerial services. These measures are considered important and should be included in the anti-corruption strategy in Ukraine.

Korchak, N.M. (2023) argues that corruption poses a significant threat to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in the context of globalization and rapid technological development. The author suggests that digitization can enhance transparency and efficiency in this field, reduce corruption risks, and facilitate access to and preservation of cultural values. The article discusses the use of innovative approaches, such as blockchain and artificial intelligence, as key tools in countering corruption and illegal trade in cultural assets. The ideas expressed in the article align with our position. It emphasizes the importance of global cooperation and the development of effective anti-corruption programs and strategies.

6. Conclusions

The conducted research highlights corruption as a significant socio-economic challenge for Ukrainian society in contemporary conditions. Therefore, improving anti-corruption policy is particularly relevant in the face of global and national challenges. After analysing key aspects, such as the need for transparent and effective institutions and the independence and effectiveness of anti-corruption bodies, it has been determined that the systematic nature of corrupt practices in Ukraine requires a comprehensive and targeted approach to overcome this phenomenon. Moreover, when combating corruption, it is important to consider the specificities of the wartime period and adapt to the challenges while ensuring a balance between data transparency for society and national security.

Additionally, studying the impact of globalization on Ukrainian society reveals several crucial aspects, especially in the fields of economy, corruption, terrorism, and social security. In the context of globalization and the increasing influence of technology, it is important to consider the international aspect in combating corruption and cooperating with other countries. The exchange of experience, development of joint strategies, and international partnerships play an important role in ensuring the successful implementation of anti-corruption measures. Therefore, effectively combating corruption in Ukraine necessitates not only the application of international experience but also extensive efforts in the areas of public administration, legal systems, education, and increasing civic awareness.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

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