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PROCEDURAL QUALITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS IN UZBEKISTAN: AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

The effectiveness of administrative justice depends not only on the existence of specialized administrative courts and formal procedural rules, but also on the quality and consistency with which these rules are applied in practice. Administrative courts are expected to provide effective judicial protection against unlawful decisions and actions of public authorities. For this purpose, judicial proceedings must be timely, evidence must be assessed according to clear and consistent criteria, legal norms must be interpreted predictably, and judicial decisions must contain sufficient and coherent reasoning.

The problem becomes particularly important in administrative justice because the parties to an administrative dispute are often not institutionally equal. On one side there may be an individual or organization seeking protection of a right or legitimate interest; on the other side stands a public authority exercising administrative powers. Consequently, the quality of judicial reasoning and procedural safeguards becomes an important condition for ensuring effective judicial protection.

The theoretical literature on administrative justice emphasizes the importance of procedural principles, judicial review and consistency in the application of administrative law. Ostashchenko's study of the principles of administrative



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proceedings highlights the systemic role of procedural principles, while Nematov's research examines the transformation of administrative law in Uzbekistan and the development of judicial review over administrative acts. Comparative approaches to administrative law also emphasize that clear jurisdictional rules and coherent procedural mechanisms are necessary for effective administrative justice. These approaches provided the theoretical basis for identifying procedural quality as one of the key dimensions of administrative court effectiveness.

However, the existence of procedural rules at the legislative level does not necessarily mean that they are applied consistently in judicial practice. Therefore, the central problem addressed in this study is:

The question is important because inconsistencies in these areas may reduce predictability of judicial practice and, consequently, the effectiveness of administrative judicial protection.

Method of Studying the Problem

To examine this problem empirically, a professional survey was conducted in Uzbekistan from October to December 2025.

The survey involved 100 respondents who had direct professional involvement in administrative judicial proceedings. Purposive sampling was used because the study required respondents with practical knowledge of administrative justice. The sample included judges, court staff, legal-service officers of public authorities, lawyers and other participants in administrative proceedings.

The survey was conducted anonymously through Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of the theoretical literature on administrative justice, judicial effectiveness and empirical approaches to evaluating the rule of law.



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The respondents evaluated the proposed statements using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. This approach made it possible to transform professional perceptions into quantitative indicators and subsequently conduct statistical analysis.

For the present article, particular attention was given to the group of questions measuring procedural quality and law-enforcement practice. The questionnaire included five indicators:

1. consistency in the assessment of evidence;
2. stability in the interpretation of legal norms;
3. practical implementation of the inquisitorial model;
4. timeliness of court hearings;
5. existence of a unified methodological approach to substantiating judicial decisions.

The reliability of this group of indicators was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The coefficient was *0.808*, indicating a high level of internal consistency and supporting the use of the selected indicators as a common analytical scale for assessing procedural quality.

The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS Statistics 27.

Survey Results

The results demonstrate that procedural quality remains an area requiring further improvement.

Most indicators within this group received mean values around *3.0*, which indicates that procedural stability cannot yet be considered fully established.

The indicator concerning the practical implementation of the inquisitorial model received a mean score of: $M = 3.00$. The same score was obtained for the timeliness of court hearings: $M = 3.00$. These results indicate that the relevant



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procedural mechanisms exist and operate in practice, but their effectiveness is assessed only at a moderate level. The indicator concerning the stability of interpretation of legal norms received: $M = 2.90$.

This result suggests that respondents do not consider the interpretation of administrative legal norms sufficiently consistent across judicial practice.

The lowest results were obtained for two indicators directly related to the quality of judicial reasoning. The statement concerning the existence of a unified methodological approach to substantiating judicial decisions received: $M = 2.60$ while the consistency of evidence-assessment criteria received: $M = 2.70$.

These are the lowest values within the procedural-quality group.

The results therefore reveal a specific pattern: respondents assessed the existence and operation of procedural mechanisms somewhat more positively than the consistency and methodological standardization of judicial reasoning.

Discussion

The survey results indicate that the main challenge in procedural quality is not necessarily the absence of procedural mechanisms. Rather, the more significant issue appears to be how consistently these mechanisms are applied in individual cases.

The relatively moderate scores for the inquisitorial model and timeliness of hearings demonstrate that the basic procedural framework is functioning, although there remains room for improvement. However, the lower scores for evidence assessment and judicial reasoning point to a deeper qualitative issue.

The score of $M = 2.60$ for the existence of a unified methodology for substantiating judicial decisions is particularly significant. A judicial decision represents the final legal expression of the court's assessment of the dispute. If courts do not apply sufficiently consistent approaches to the structure and



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reasoning of decisions, similar administrative disputes may potentially produce different levels of legal justification. The result of $M = 2.70$ for consistency in evidence assessment reinforces this conclusion. Evidence assessment is central to administrative litigation because the court must determine whether an administrative authority acted lawfully and whether the factual circumstances relied upon by that authority are adequately established. The result of $M = 2.90$ for stability in the interpretation of legal norms also indicates that predictability of administrative judicial practice remains an issue. Taken together, these indicators suggest that the problem is systemic rather than limited to a single procedural stage.

This finding corresponds with the broader results of the dissertation research. The analysis identified an imbalance between different dimensions of administrative court development: institutional and organizational conditions were assessed relatively more positively, whereas procedural quality and professional capacity received lower assessments.

The regression analysis provides an additional perspective. Judicial independence was identified as the strongest determinant of administrative court effectiveness ($\beta = 0.631$; $p < 0.001$), while procedural quality and institutional conditions also had statistically significant positive effects.

This finding is important for interpreting the procedural-quality results.

Improving consistency in judicial reasoning should not mean restricting judicial independence. On the contrary, the objective should be to establish methodological standards without prescribing the outcome of individual cases.

Such standards could provide guidance concerning:

- the structure of judicial reasoning;
- identification and interpretation of relevant legal norms;
- assessment of evidence;



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- treatment of contradictory evidence;
 - justification of conclusions;
 - application of proportionality and legality principles.

The purpose of such standards would be to improve predictability and quality while preserving the judge's independence in determining the outcome of each individual dispute.

The findings are also relevant to the future digital transformation of administrative justice. The dissertation's research shows that digitalization was positively assessed by respondents, receiving $M = 4.40$ as an indicator of facilitating administrative judicial proceedings.

However, the present findings suggest that technological modernization alone cannot resolve weaknesses in judicial reasoning. If methodological approaches to evidence assessment and decision justification remain insufficiently standardized, introducing more advanced digital technologies or artificial intelligence may simply accelerate the processing of information without necessarily improving the substantive quality of judicial decisions.

Therefore, procedural standardization and technological modernization should develop together.

Conclusion

The empirical survey demonstrates that procedural quality remains an important area for institutional improvement.

The results show moderate assessments of the implementation of the inquisitorial model and the timeliness of hearings ($M = 3.00$ for each), while the stability of legal interpretation received $M = 2.90$. More significant weaknesses were identified in the consistency of evidence assessment ($M = 2.70$) and, particularly,



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in the existence of a unified methodological approach to substantiating judicial decisions ($M = 2.60$).

The findings suggest that the principal challenge is not simply the existence of procedural rules, but their consistent and methodologically coherent application in judicial practice. Accordingly, improving the effectiveness of administrative justice in Uzbekistan requires greater attention to the quality of judicial reasoning, consistency in evidence assessment and stability in the interpretation of administrative legal norms.

At the same time, such methodological development should not undermine judicial independence. The objective should be to establish common standards for the quality and structure of judicial reasoning, while leaving the substantive assessment and final decision to an independent judge. The study therefore concludes that the next stage of administrative justice reform should combine three elements:

judicial independence + procedural consistency + professional methodological standards.

Only such a combination can ensure that administrative justice becomes not merely formally accessible, but also predictable, reasoned and effective in protecting individuals against unlawful administrative action.

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