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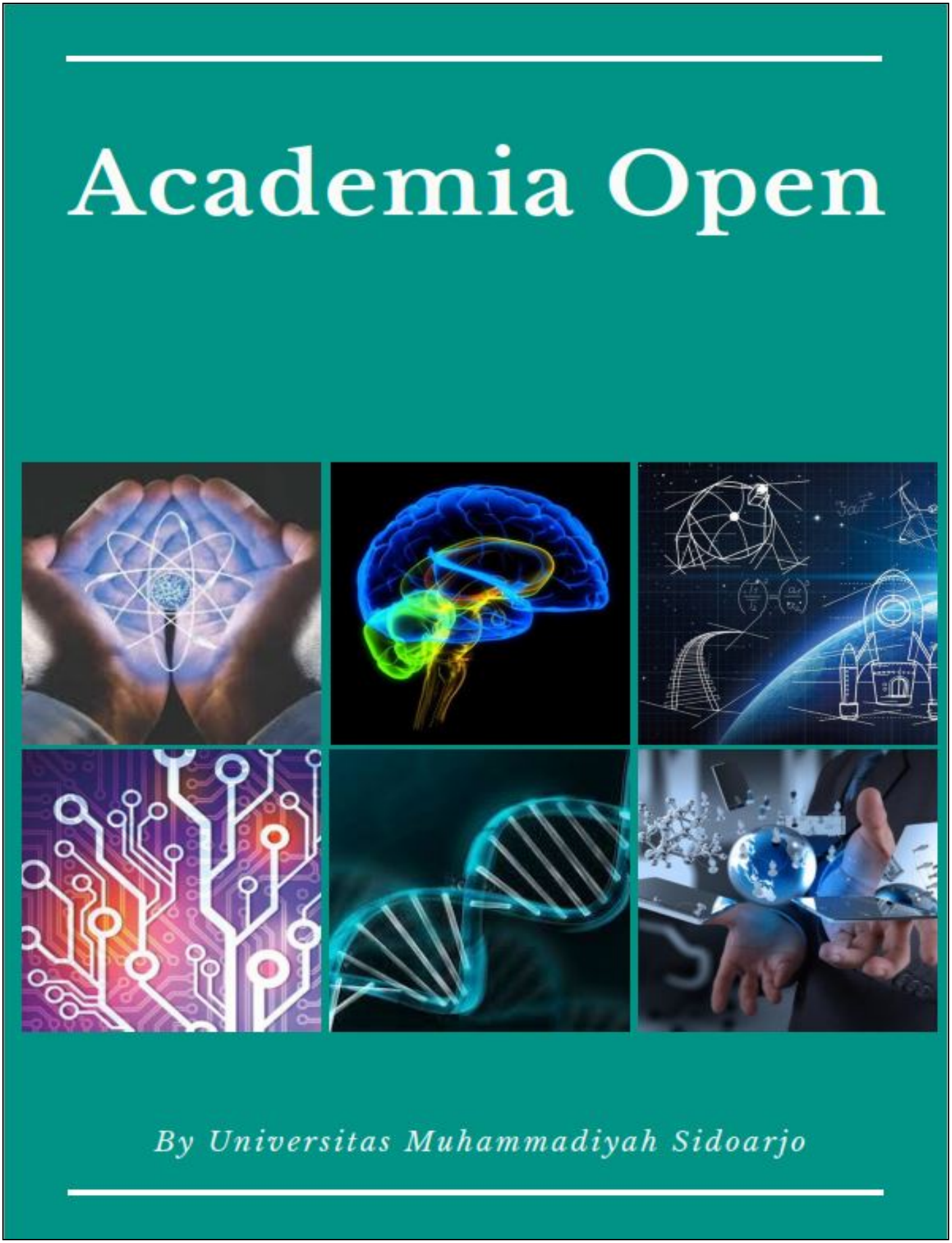

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Evolution of the National Public Service Delivery System in Uzbekistan

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Abstract

General Background: Public service delivery is a critical driver of socio-economic development and citizen well-being. **Specific Background:** In Uzbekistan, public service provision has evolved significantly since independence, reflecting institutional, legal, and technological reforms. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite various sectoral studies, there remains a lack of comprehensive, stage-based analysis detailing the systematic evolution of Uzbekistan's national public service system. **Aims:** This study aims to chronologically categorize the development of public service delivery in Uzbekistan and evaluate its implications for governance and service efficiency. **Results:** Through a detailed analysis of legal acts, policies, and digital initiatives, five key phases were identified: foundational institution-building (1991–2000s), procedural reforms (2001–2003), early e-government efforts (2003–2013), digital integration (2013–2017), and citizen-focused transformation (2017–present). Each phase progressively enhanced service accessibility, reduced bureaucracy, and introduced digital platforms. **Novelty:** This research is the first to offer a holistic, multi-dimensional chronology of public service reforms in Uzbekistan, integrating legal, institutional, and digital trajectories. **Implications:** The findings provide strategic insights for policymakers in emerging economies aiming to modernize public services, and serve as a foundation for comparative studies in public administration reform.

Highlight :

- Modernization of Governance: The public service system evolved from bureaucratic institutions to streamlined, digital service platforms enhancing administrative efficiency.
- Citizen-Centric Approach: Post-2017 reforms emphasized accessibility and inclusivity, establishing one-stop service centers across the country.
- Technological Integration: The implementation of e-government laws and platforms like *my.gov.uz* transformed service delivery through digital innovation.

Keywords : Uzbekistan, Public Services, E-Government, Administrative Reform, Citizen-Centric

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Introduction

The provision of quality public services has been demonstrated to play a significant role in the stimulation of socio-economic development [1,2], the improvement of the quality of life of citizens [3], and the enhancement of the business environment [4]. The establishment and evolution of the national system of public services in Uzbekistan has undergone distinct phases, distinguished by legislative reforms, technological advancements, and institutional restructuring [5,6]. Politicians, researchers and practitioners involved in public administration must comprehend these stages. Such understanding not only aids in evaluating past reforms but also informs future policy planning and implementation.

The primary objective of the present study is to ascertain the fundamental phases in the evolution of the national system of public services. Possessing a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of public services in Uzbekistan would facilitate the formulation of optimal decisions in the domain of public services development. Furthermore, the establishment of definitive scientific conclusions regarding the developmental stages of the national system of public services in Uzbekistan will facilitate a significant contribution to the extant literature in this field.

In addition, analyzing the public service development trajectory through a multi-dimensional framework—covering legal, institutional, and technological aspects—enables a holistic assessment of the sector's progress. By structuring this evolution into clearly defined stages, the study offers practical value for policymakers aiming to improve service delivery efficiency and citizen satisfaction. It also provides a foundation for comparative studies with other countries undergoing similar transitions, thereby strengthening the global dialogue on effective public sector reform.

Literature review

Babadzhanov [7], a researcher at the Center for Economic Research and Reforms in Uzbekistan, has distinguished two distinct phases in the evolution of the public service sector. The initial phase, spanning from 1991 to 2017, is characterized by an inadequate provision of public services, a pervasive bureaucracy, and a failure to meet the needs of citizens and business entities. The second stage is from 2017 to the present day, when interdepartmental electronic cooperation was established and bureaucratic procedures were significantly reduced.

Jabborov [8] concluded that the formation of the institution of "public service" in the Republic of Uzbekistan began in the Middle Ages. Since 2003, there have been opinions positing that the developmental trajectory of the national system of public service provision commenced with the implementation of a system of business entity registration based on the "single window" principle.

The extant literature on the evolution of the national public service delivery system in Uzbekistan frequently exhibits a paucity of comprehensive analysis. Whilst certain studies have concentrated on particular reforms or initiatives in the public service sector, others have provided more general commentary without examining the specifics of each stage. Consequently, there is a necessity for research that can methodically categorize the evolution of public service development into distinct stages and thereby enhance the general comprehension of these stages.

Methodology

In the course of the research, one of the objectives was to address these gaps in the field by conducting a chronological analysis of the stages of formation and development of public services in Uzbekistan. The following methodology was employed to study the stages of development of the national system of public services in Uzbekistan: firstly, a chronological analysis of the legislative acts, political initiatives and empirical evidence related to the provision of public services in the country was conducted; secondly, the aforementioned legislative acts, political initiatives and empirical evidence were then collated. The formation and development of the national system of public services in Uzbekistan was understood through the utilization of historical data, government reports and scientific literature as a foundation.

Results and Discussion

In order to achieve the stated objective of the research, a systematic chronological analysis of legislative documents, government reports, scientific literature, and other relevant sources was conducted. Consequently, the evolution of the national system of public service provision in Uzbekistan was categorized into five distinct phases (Figure 1).

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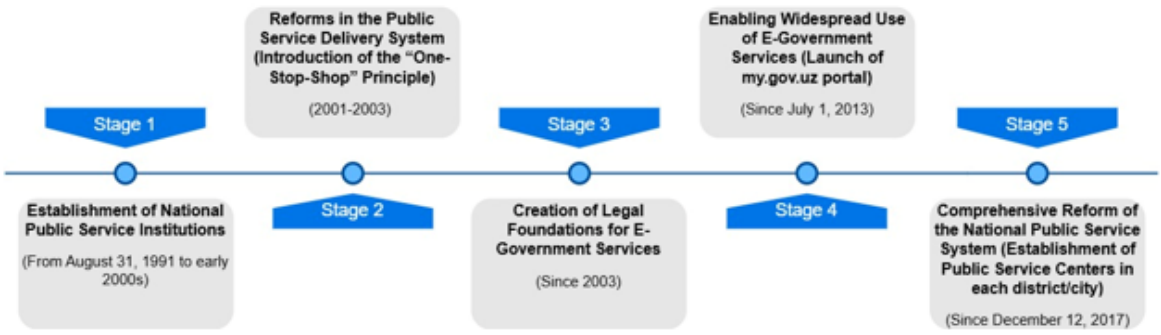

Figure 1. *Chronological Stages in the Development of Uzbekistan's Public Service Delivery System. Source: Author's compilation based on official sources.*

The first phase, spanning from August 31, 1991 to the early 2000s, marks the foundational period in which the national public service institutions of Uzbekistan were established. During this stage, the government began transitioning from a centrally planned administrative structure to institutions compatible with a market economy and democratic governance [9]. Legal and administrative bodies such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor, and other core agencies were restructured to meet the new socio-political and economic realities [10–12]. Although this period laid the institutional groundwork for public administration, actual service delivery remained traditional and bureaucratic, with minimal focus on citizen-centric approaches.

The second phase, from 2001 to 2003, introduced notable reforms in the public service delivery system, particularly concerning business registration procedures. In August 2001, the government implemented the "one-time registration" principle to simplify how businesses were registered and recorded [13]. This was followed by the formal introduction of the "one-stop-shop" principle in 2003, wherein local authorities were tasked with managing business registrations through specialized inspectorates [14]. These initiatives significantly reduced redundant administrative steps and were early indicators of a shift toward more streamlined, service-oriented governance practices, especially in support of entrepreneurial development.

The third phase began in 2003 with the establishment of a legal foundation for e-government services. Key legislation during this stage included the Law on Informatization [15], which introduced definitions related to electronic documents, and the Law on Electronic Document Circulation [16], which regulated digital transactions within public institutions. Further, a series of government resolutions in 2007 laid out the framework for delivering interactive public services using information and communication technologies [17,18]. These developments were pivotal in moving public services away from manual, paper-based processes toward digital integration. Although the implementation was still limited, this phase was crucial in institutionalizing the idea of digital service delivery within the state apparatus.

The fourth phase, commencing in July 2013, was characterized by the operational launch of Uzbekistan's Single Portal for Interactive Public Services (my.gov.uz). This marked a turning point, as it provided the population with practical access to a growing range of digital services [19]. In 2016, the establishment of the OneID unified identification system further facilitated secure and streamlined access to various services through a single user interface [20]. During this period, the government expanded the scope of e-services and improved usability, leading to increased citizen engagement with digital platforms. This phase illustrates a critical moment where policy, infrastructure, and technology converged to significantly enhance service accessibility.

The fifth and most recent phase began in December 2017 and represents a comprehensive reform of the national public service system. This period saw the establishment of the Public Services Agency under the Ministry of Justice and the rollout of public service centers in every district and city [21,22]. These centers were designed to serve both individuals and business entities using the "single window" approach, offering an extensive list of services under one roof. The institutional restructuring was accompanied by a broader push for transparency, efficiency, and inter-agency digital cooperation. As a result, the time, documentation burden, and costs associated with public services were significantly reduced. This phase reflects a transformative leap toward a modern, citizen-focused service delivery model aligned with international best practices.

Each stage in the development of the national system of public service delivery in Uzbekistan is characterised by its socio-economic initiatives and reforms in terms of its goals, policy reforms, challenges and results. During these periods, significant changes were implemented in Uzbekistan with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of governance, improving the quality of public service delivery and stimulating socio-economic development. A thorough investigation into each phase will facilitate the acquisition of a thoroughgoing comprehension of the trajectory of public service development in Uzbekistan.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, the formation and development of the national system of public services in Uzbekistan can be attributed to the country's efforts to modernize governance, increase administrative efficiency, and improve service delivery mechanisms. The evolution of public services has been significantly influenced by legislative reforms, technological innovations, and institutional restructuring. The maintenance of momentum in public service reform and the support of innovation in service delivery remain among the primary conditions for the provision of quality public services to all citizens and business entities of Uzbekistan. The ongoing reform process aimed at establishing a robust, responsive, and citizen-oriented public service system is of paramount importance for inclusive development. This is because it draws on lessons learned from the experience gained in developing public services and takes advantage of emerging opportunities.

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