Evaluating the implementation of administrative procedures at the commune-level People's Committee based on the system theory: a survey in Binh Duong province

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Abstract: ***Implementing administrative procedure reform is recognized as one of the six crucial components of administrative reform in Vietnam. The study employs a systematic approach and survey methodology to assess the implementation of the current administrative procedure. The participants in the survey are civil servants responsible for carrying out administrative procedures at the commune-level government. According to the survey results, it is evident that the process factor exhibits the highest average coefficient among the three factors. The average coefficients for input factors and output factors are nearly equal. There is minimal disparity among these three factors.***

Keywords: *Administrative procedures; commune-level people's committee; the system theory.*

1. Introduction

Administrative procedures encompass the systematic execution of tasks, rights, and obligations by state agencies, authorized organizations, and individuals per legal provisions. Administrative procedures refer to various administrative processes, procedures, records, and documents essential for state agencies. Administrative procedures involve a wide range of disciplines, including business registration, construction permits, driver's licenses, and land use rights registration. These administrative procedures can be conducted at state agencies, administrative units, functional agencies, or through online systems provided by state agencies. Administrative procedures typically encompass a set of regulations, procedures, forms, and documents that are essential for the execution of tasks by state agencies or authorized entities and individuals. Ensuring the accurate and comprehensive implementation of administrative procedures is of utmost importance to fulfill individuals' and businesses' rights and obligations promptly. Currently, the implementation of administrative procedures at State agencies is characterized by numerous

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cumbersome and intricate steps that fail to meet the expectations of individuals seeking to carry out administrative procedures.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Administrative procedures

The administrative procedure refers to the systematic and regulated approach to exercising the authority of state administrative management subjects. It also encompasses how agencies, organizations, and individuals participate in state administrative management activities to fulfill their rights and obligations stipulated by the law (Dung, 2023).

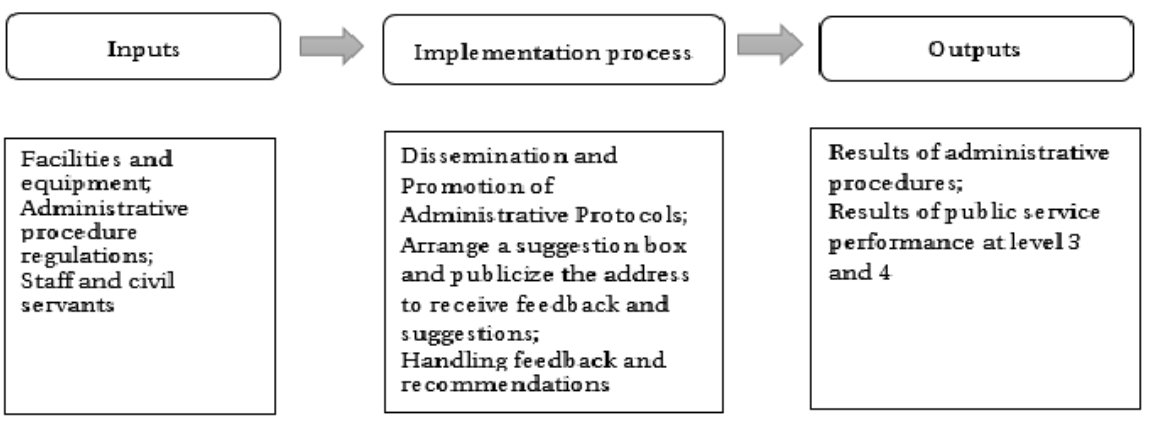
Administrative procedures possess several distinct characteristics. The task is primarily executed by entities responsible for state administrative management. Additionally, there is a level of flexibility. Furthermore, only capable agencies, organizations, and individuals must be granted the privilege to execute tasks, strictly adhering to the boundaries of authority defined by the law. Ensuring all administrative procedures are conducted strictly with the law (Minh, 2023).

2.2. Administrative procedure implementation according to the system theory

Systems techniques have evolved over the past 75 years. Examining complex problems via a systemic perspective can assist in understanding the interactions within the system, analyzing how the relationships between components impact its operation, and determining effective treatments for improved outcomes. System thinking illustrates the structure and functioning of systems. This necessitates comprehension of the connections and discrepancies between various components. It involves considering how to effectively apply this knowledge to initiate action, such as through designing and utilizing design thinking to create recommendations for testing and implementing as system interventions (OECD, 2017, pp. 17-18). Systems comprise interconnected elements that interact through dynamics to generate an effect, form a complete entity, or impact other parts within the system. Systems range from easily observable and analyzable to very complicated or new, necessitating postulation (OECD, 2017, pp. 17-18). robust system approach, thus, offers a powerful framework for understanding complex phenomena, managing complexity, and driving effective decision-making and intervention strategies, especially in the changing world.

Based on system theory, administrative procedure implementation is evaluated using three key components: input, implementation process, and output. These components are visually represented in the figure provided below Figure 1:

Figure 1. Administrative procedure implementation according to system theory



Source: Compiled by author

Firstly, regarding input factors

The input factors encompass a range of aspects, including facilities and equipment, information technology, and regulations related to administrative procedures and the participation of civil servants in their implementation. The facilities have ample workspaces that easily accommodate documents, equipment, and personnel. Facilities must comply with safety and hygiene standards and be sufficiently equipped with appropriate work equipment. The necessary equipment includes computers, printers, fax machines, phones, surveillance cameras, and other relevant devices (Government, 2018). Information technology is essential for facilitating administrative procedures as it enhances document processing, improves efficiency, and saves time for individuals and administrative agencies. The effective management of administrative procedures involves utilizing various information technology elements. These elements include management information systems, data management software, communication systems, online services, digital signatures, electronic solutions, and mobile applications (Viet, 2017). The team of civil servants should possess the requisite professional knowledge, skills, and abilities to proficiently, expeditiously, and accurately execute administrative procedures. I can provide guidance and address inquiries about administrative procedures for individuals and organizations (Ha, 2015).

Secondly, regarding implementation process factors

One of the primary concerns pertains to the compilation and dissemination of administrative protocols. Publicly disseminating administrative procedures is a strategic approach for proficient agencies to effectively manage the execution of administrative procedures and regulations and ensure their practical implementation. This practice facilitates individuals and organizations in acquiring knowledge and executing administrative procedures while also enabling the oversight of state administrative agencies, officials, and civil servants in their handling of administrative procedures. How administrative procedures are publicly disclosed is a topic of significance. This includes the provision of a comprehensive inventory of administrative procedures, a categorized compilation of administrative procedures within specific domains, the detailed content of each administrative procedure listed, and guidelines for receiving and incorporating feedback and recommendations from individuals and organizations (Thang & Phong, 2020).

Additionally, it is to implement a suggestion box system and effectively promote the designated address to facilitate the collection of valuable feedback and recommendations from stakeholders. Implementing a suggestion box system and effectively promoting its address facilitates receiving valuable feedback and recommendations from individuals and organizations. This enables stakeholders to engage in thoughtful reflection, provide constructive commentary, and contribute innovative ideas about matters relevant to the operations of the respective agencies. This initiative facilitates enhancing administrative procedures, thereby improving their efficiency and effectiveness. It also promotes transparency and accountability within the concerned agencies (Long, 2021).

Another crucial aspect to consider is the management of feedback and recommendations. The process of handling feedback and recommendations involves the reception, analysis, and resolution of feedback and recommendations from individuals and organizations about the operations of governing

bodies. This process aims to uphold transparency, accountability, and responsiveness on the part of governing bodies while also addressing the needs of individuals and businesses. Feedback and recommendations may be submitted to the appropriate authorities through various channels, including the suggestion box, email, phone, handwritten letter, or in person at the agency headquarters. Authorities must uphold the principles of transparency and accessibility in making information available to the public, as mandated by legal requirements (Long, 2021).

The fourth step involves conducting a comprehensive review and evaluation of administrative procedures. The administrative procedure review entails the systematic assessment, analysis, and enhancement of administrative procedures within governmental entities at the state level. This process facilitates the optimization of procedures, streamlines complex operations, enhances processing efficiency, elevates the quality of public services, and effectively addresses the requirements of individuals and enterprises. The review's objective is to propose amendments, additions, replacements, or abolishing administrative procedure regulations deemed unnecessary, unreasonable, or illegal. The aim is to ensure that administrative procedures are characterized by simplicity, comprehensibility, and ease of implementation. Additionally, the review seeks to minimize the costs associated with complying with administrative procedures for those responsible for their implementation (Ha & Tu, 2021).

The fifth criterion pertains to the model utilized to implement the single-window and interconnected one-stop mechanism. Various state administrative agencies have successfully implemented a comprehensive and centralized mechanism known as the "one-stop shop" in numerous sectors. These sectors encompass investment, business operations, construction, land management, licensing, business registration, taxation, environmental protection, cultural affairs, education, health, transportation, and more.

The sixth activity relates to the process of receiving documents and delivering outcomes through the utilization of postal services. The utilization of postal services for the transmission of documents and the subsequent delivery of results is widely regarded as a convenient and practical method for individuals and organizations alike. As per established protocols, individuals and organizations can transmit documents to state administrative agencies via postal services; organizations can transmit documents to state administrative agencies via postal services and obtain corresponding outcomes through the same channel.

Thirdly, regarding output factors

The initial outcome refers to the successful resolution of administrative procedures. The timely dissemination of administrative procedure outcomes is crucial for ensuring efficiency and time savings for individuals and businesses. Outcome factors include adherence to legal requirements regarding the outcomes of administrative procedures and the associated costs involved in implementing such procedures.

Additionally, it relates to the expenses incurred outside the boundaries of legal provisions during the execution of administrative procedures and the timing and caliber of responses to comments, suggestions, complaints, and denunciations of groups and people by authorities, officials, civil servants, and other public personnel as well as the advancements and standards of online public service delivery by proficient agencies (Government, 2018).

The next factor is the outcomes of the implementation of online public services. The utilization of online public services plays a crucial and pivotal role in the advancement of administrative reform, and the establishment of the utilization of online public services plays a crucial and pivotal role in the advancement of administrative reform and the establishment of advancing administrative reform and e-government. Utilizing online public services offers significant advantages in terms of time and travel cost reduction for organizations and individuals. It mitigates the inconveniences caused by bureaucratic processes and potential harassment from public officials. Additionally, it enhances the transparency and openness of administrative procedures. Furthermore, implementing online public services facilitates the improvement of officials' professional qualifications, responsibility, and proficiency in information technology. Consequently, this contributes to the overall promotion of socio-economic development (Tu, 2022).

3. Research Methodology

The study utilized a questionnaire survey methodology to gather data from civil servants working at the one-stop-shop of numerous wards of People's Committees. Within the realm of administrative procedure implementation, there are various significant stakeholders, the primary ones encompassing individuals and public servants actively engaged in the operations of the one-stop-shop facility. Beneficiaries are the recipients of entitlements, whereas civil servants are entrusted with carrying out administrative protocols on behalf of the general populace. Both actors actively participate in the execution and implementation of administrative procedures, each providing unique viewpoints as users and suppliers. Both individuals possess the necessary expertise and qualifications to effectively participate in evaluating the administrative procedure implementation process. Currently, many studies are underway to evaluate individuals' level of satisfaction regarding the implementation of administrative procedures. These studies focus on surveys related explicitly to the SIPAS (Satisfaction Index of Public Administrative Services) index.

This study surveyed civil servants employed at the one-stop shop within the People's Committee. The research team surveyed a sample of 150 civil servants at the commune level. The total number of votes collected from the participants was 150. The total number of valid votes cast was 145, constituting a proportion of 96.6% of the total respondents. The survey was conducted from July 3 to August 12, 2023.

One hundred forty-five civil servants from the ward People's Committee participated in the event, comprising 58 males and 87 females. Within the group above, ten male individuals employed in civil service are below 30. There are 19 individuals aged 31 to 40 and ten above 40. There is a group of 10 female civil servants who are under the age of 30. Additionally, 45 individuals fall within the age range of 31 to 40, and 32 are over 40. The educational attainment of civil servants at the Ward People's Committee comprises 19 male civil servants with intermediate-level qualifications, 23 with college and university degrees, and 16 with postgraduate degrees. There are nine female civil servants at the intermediate level, 65 at the college and university level, and 13 at the postgraduate level.

4. Findings

4.1. The input factors influencing the implementation of administrative procedures at the commune-level People's Committee

The survey findings are presented in the subsequent table below:

Table 1: Input Factors in the Implementation of Administrative Procedures

Item description	Rates				
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
1. Facilities and equipment					
1.1. The workspace is large enough to accommodate documents, equipment and staff.	0	0	28,9	46,7	24,4
1.2. Full equipment for work.	0	0	17,8	48,9	33,3
1.3. Facilities need to meet safety and hygiene standards.	0	0	20,5	36,4	43,2
Mean	0	0	22,4	44,0	33,6
2. Information technology					
2.1. Widely apply information technology such as management information systems management information systems, data management software, communication systems, online services, etc.	0	6,7	8,9	57,8	26,7
2.2. Improve document processes, increase efficiency, and save time.	0	0	11,1	44,4	44,4
2.3 Efficiently access information and execute administrative procedures through online platforms.	0	0	8,9	51,1	40
Mean	0	2,23	9,6	51,1	37,03
3. Administrative procedure regulations					
3.1. Regulations on processes, procedures, records, official dispatches and procedures related to resolving administrative issues of agencies, organizations and individuals.	0	0	20	51,1	28,9
3.2. Regulations are issued to ensure transparency, openness, honesty, and efficiency in implementing administrative procedures.		2,2	17,8	44,4	35,6
Mean	0	1,1	18,9	47,75	32,25
4. Staff and civil servants					
4.1. Have professional knowledge, skills, and abilities.	0	0	17,8	48,9	33,3
4.2. Trained and improved professional capacity, communication and problem-solving skills.	0	0	9,1	56,8	34,1
4.3. Proficient in providing guidance and addressing inquiries about administrative procedures for individuals and organizations.	0	2,3	16,3	39,5	41,9
Mean	0	0,7	14,4	48,4	36,43

Source: Primary data

Among the various factors considered, the factor that received the highest rating is the exemplary level of safety and hygiene in the facilities, with a percentage of 43.2%. Conversely, the criterion of having a spacious sufficiently spacious workspace to accommodate documents, equipment, and staff received the lowest rating, accounting for 24.4%. Among the various factors influencing the application of information technology, the criterion of utilizing IT to enhance document processing, improve efficiency, and save time received the highest rating, with 44.4% of respondents providing a favorable assessment. The third aspect pertains to the regulations governing administrative procedures, precisely the criteria for issuing rules that aim to promote transparency, openness, honesty, and efficiency in the implementation of said procedures. These regulations have garnered a commendable and noteworthy level of responsiveness. The accounting sector represents 35.6% of the total. Next, the analysis focuses on the collective of officials and civil servants. Notably, the criterion related to their ability to provide guidance and address inquiries from individuals and enterprises regarding administrative procedures received the highest rating, reaching 41.9%.

4.2. The level of response to process elements involved in implementing administrative procedures at the commune-level People's Committee.

The survey findings are presented in the subsequent table as follows:

Table 2. The results of a survey conducted to gauge the levels of response about the implementation of administrative procedures

Item description	Rates				
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
1. Dissemination and Promotion of Administrative Protocols					
1.1. Establish an environment conducive to the acquisition and application of administrative protocols by both individuals and organisations, while concurrently overseeing the performance of state administrative agencies, officials, and civil servants in effectively resolving administrative procedures.	0	8,9	17,8	40	33,3
1.2. Preparing a list of administrative procedures, List of field administrative procedures, Contents of each listed administrative procedure, Instructions for implementation of feedback and recommendations of individuals and organizations.	0	4,4	22,2	44,4	28,9
Mean	0	6,65	20	42,2	31,1
2. Arrange a suggestion box and publicize the address to receive feedback and suggestions					
2.1. People can reflect, comment on, and contribute ideas on issues related to the activities of functional agencies.	0	0	13,3	53,3	33,3
2.2. Publish information about the address, time, and method of receiving feedback and recommendations in a clear and easily accessible manner.	0	2,2	17,8	42,2	37,8
2.3. Ensure confidentiality and process feedback and recommendations quickly and effectively.	0	0	9,1	52,3	38,6
Mean	0	0,7	13,4	49,2	36,5

3. Handling feedback and recommendations					
3.1. Feedback and recommendations from individuals and organizations are sent to the agency via suggestion box, email, phone, handwritten letter, or directly at the agency's headquarters.	0	0	18,2	40,9	40,9
3.2. Ensure transparency and access of that information to the public by the law.	0	2,2	17,8	40	40
Mean	0	1,1	18	40,45	40,45
4. Review and evaluate administrative procedures					
4.1. Optimize processes, reduce complex procedures, increase processing speed, and improve public service quality.	0	2,2	8,9	46,7	42,2
4.2. Review administrative procedures periodically to ensure effectiveness and meet people's needs.	0	2,2	11,1	51,1	35,6
4.3. Amending, supplementing, replacing, and abolishing unnecessary, unreasonable, and illegal administrative procedures and regulations.	0	4,4	17,8	26,7	51,1
Mean	0	2,9	12,6	41,5	42,9
5. Criteria related to the one-stop shop and one-stop-shop mechanism					
5.1. The organization and operation of the one-stop-shop mechanism are deployed in many fields, such as business, construction, land, etc.	0	0	15,6	53,3	31,1
5.2. The implementation of administrative procedures is so simplified that people could only have to go to one place to submit documents and also go to that same place to receive results, increasing people's satisfaction.	0	2,2	17,8	53,3	26,7
5.3. The one-stop, inter-agency, one-stop mechanism helps centralize people's records in a single place and helps reduce waiting time.	0	0	35,6	40	24,4
5.4. The one-stop and inter-agency one-stop-shop mechanism helps to simplify and make administrative procedures public and transparent, helping to shorten transaction times between people and administrative agencies.	0	0	13,6	65,9	20,5
Mean	0	0,55	20,6	53,12	25,67
6. Receive documents and return results					
6.1. People do not have to wait long to receive documents and receive results of administrative procedures.	0	0	8,9	62,2	28,9
6.2. Providing information and giving information to agencies, organizations, and individuals.	0	2,3	9,1	38,6	50
6.3. The results of handling administrative procedures for organizations and individuals are stored in the electronic one-stop-shop information system of the competent authority to serve the use and look up of information and data according to government and law regulations.	0	2,3	31,8	34,1	31,8
Mean	0	1,5	16,6	44,9	36,9

Source: Primary data

Within the initial cluster of factors, namely the listing, and organizations publicizing of administrative procedures, the factor that garnered the highest rating of "very good" pertains to the establishment of conducive conditions for individuals and organizations to acquire knowledge and engage in the execution of administrative procedures, as well as oversee governmental agencies. In resolving administrative procedures, it has been observed that state administrative agencies, state officials, and civil servants face particular challenges. Among these challenges, the lowest criteria are identified: the requirements for creating a comprehensive list of administrative procedures, the compilation of a thorough list of field administrative procedures, the inclusion of relevant content for each listed administrative procedure, and the provision of clear. The second set of factors involves implementing a suggestion box and promoting its address to facilitate receiving feedback and recommendations. Additionally, it is crucial to establish criteria that guarantee confidentiality and enable the prompt and efficient handling of such feedback and suggestions. The findings yielded the highest rating, with 38.6% of respondents indicating their "very good" response.

Third, regarding handling feedback and recommendations, the criteria for input and recommendations from individuals and organizations are sent to the agency via suggestion box, email, phone, handwritten letter, or directly at the headquarters. Agencies had the highest very good-excellent response rate of 40.9%. The fourth factor is reviewing and evaluating administrative procedures; criteria for amending, supplementing, replacing, and abolishing unnecessary, unreasonable, and illegal administrative procedure regulations with a high rate of 41.9%. Fifth are criteria related to the one-stop-shop mechanism, interconnected one-stop-shop mechanism, criteria on the organizational situation and operation of the one-stop-shop mechanism, interconnected one-stop-shop mechanism deployed in many fields such as business sector, construction, land with an excellent rate of 31.1%. Sixth is receiving dossiers and returning results, criteria for providing information, and bringing information to agencies, organizations, and individuals with an excellent rate of 50%.

4.3. The level of response to output factors of implementing administrative procedures at commune-level People's Committees

Among the various factors influencing the outcomes of managing administrative procedures, the factor that received the highest rating at a significantly commendable level is the prompt and timely handling of individuals' documents and records by regulations (8.9%). Conversely, the lowest criterion pertains to the satisfaction and trust of individuals in the enhanced outcomes of managing administrative procedures, accounting for a mere 4.4%. The established criteria entail improving transparency and streamlining convoluted procedures within public service performance factors at levels 3 and 4. This resource aims to assist individuals in comprehending the implementation process and acquiring knowledge regarding the sequential steps involved in administrative procedures. This particular entity has been highly regarded, receiving a commendable rating of 9.5% based on many positive responses.

Table 3. The results of a survey conducted to assess the response levels about the output factors associated with the implementation of administrative procedures

Item description	Rates				
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %
1. Results of administrative procedures					
1.1. The management of individuals' documents and records adheres to established regulations, ensuring timely and efficient processing.	0	0	26,7	44,4	28,9
1.2. The enhancement of individuals' satisfaction and trust in the outcomes of administrative procedures is observed.	0	0	13,3	42,2	44,4
Mean	0	0	20	43,3	36,6
2. Results of public service performance					
2.1. Save time and costs for people when carrying out administrative procedures. Instead of having to go to administrative agencies, people can carry out online procedures quickly and conveniently.	0	0	17,8	51,1	31,1
2.2. Efficiently streamline administrative procedures to optimise time and cost savings for individuals. In lieu of physical visits to administrative agencies, individuals have the option to conveniently and expeditiously complete procedures online.	0	0	27,3	43,2	29,5
Mean	0	0	22,5	47,1	30,3

Source: Primary data

In summary, the highest average coefficient among the three process factors under consideration is 20.62. The average input and output factor coefficients are nearly equal, with values of 19.99 and 19.98, respectively. Nevertheless, the disparity among these three factors is minimal. This demonstrates that the factors in question are deemed to be assured.

5. Conclusion

Administrative procedures serve as instrumental mechanisms for implementing legal frameworks, facilitating public service delivery, and safeguarding the rights of individuals and corporate entities. Hence, a significant level of attentiveness and concentration is necessary, particularly when managing intricate and laborious administrative processes. Furthermore, state administrative agencies must prioritize reforming administrative procedures and devising strategies to address deficiencies, thereby enhancing efficiency and ensuring the satisfaction of both individuals and businesses. The practical implementation of administrative procedures is crucial in safeguarding the rights of individuals, companies, and organizations and mitigating legal risks.

It is crucial for the government to continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of handling feedback and recommendations regarding the implementation of administrative procedures, enhancing the support provided to government officials and civil servants in carrying out their responsibilities, as well as establishing and implementing robust

protocols and methodologies for effectively managing feedback and recommendations. It is necessary to optimize the current process, streamline complex procedures, improve processing speed, and enhance the quality of public services.

It is also essential for the government to regularly conduct evaluations of administrative procedures to determine their effectiveness and alignment with the needs of the public. As a result, this procedure may entail alteration or enhancement. replacement or removal of extra regulations related to administrative procedures. These terms can be characterized as fundamental, indefensible, and illegal. This inquiry seeks a thorough description of the processes, procedures, documentation, official communications, and protocols related to resolving administrative issues faced by agencies, organizations, and individuals. Therefore, a comprehensive document should delineate the diverse processes and procedures. It is worth mentioning that these criteria have been implemented with a high level of expertise. In addition, proficient organizations must strengthen their inspection and supervision endeavors regarding implementing administrative protocols and promptly detect potential errors during implementation.

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