

Administrative Justice and Democratic Governance: Strengthening Citizen Protection Through Administrative Law in Indonesia

Widhi Handoko¹✉

Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Semarang, Indonesia¹

ABSTRACT

Administrative justice plays an important role in democratic governance by ensuring accountability, legal certainty, and protection against unlawful governmental actions. This study examines the contribution of administrative justice to democratic governance in Indonesia through a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The analysis focuses on the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, and the legal framework governing the State Administrative Court (PTUN). Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, relevant literature published between 2020 and 2024 was systematically reviewed. The findings indicate that administrative justice strengthens democratic governance through accountability mechanisms, judicial oversight, legal protection, and access to justice. However, challenges related to institutional capacity, administrative discretion, digital governance, and procedural accessibility remain significant. The study concludes that administrative justice is essential for promoting accountable and democratic public administration in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Administrative Justice, Democratic Governance, Government Accountability, Administrative Law, Legal Protection, Indonesia.*

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Widhi Handoko

Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Semarang, Indonesia

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1. | INTRODUCTION

Democratic governance requires public institutions that operate transparently, accountably, and in accordance with the rule of law. While legislative and judicial institutions often receive significant attention in democratic studies, administrative institutions also play a crucial role in implementing public policies and delivering government services. Administrative authorities exercise extensive powers that directly affect citizens' rights, interests, and legal status. Consequently, effective mechanisms are needed to ensure that administrative actions remain lawful, accountable, and subject to public oversight. Administrative justice has therefore emerged as an important component of democratic governance because it provides legal safeguards against arbitrary governmental actions and promotes accountability within public administration.

Administrative justice refers to the system of legal principles, institutions, and procedures that regulate administrative actions and provide remedies for individuals affected by government decisions. It seeks to ensure that public authorities exercise power fairly, reasonably, and in accordance with legal requirements. Viktorovna and Aleksandrovich (2022) argue that administrative justice functions as a mechanism for balancing governmental authority with individual rights by establishing procedures through which citizens can challenge administrative actions. Similarly, Endicott (2021) emphasizes that administrative law plays a critical role in maintaining legality and accountability within governance systems. These perspectives indicate that administrative justice constitutes an essential element of democratic governance.

The relationship between administrative justice and democracy is closely connected to the rule of law. Democratic systems require public institutions to exercise authority within legal limits and remain accountable to citizens. Administrative decisions concerning permits, licenses, sanctions, public services, and regulatory actions can significantly affect individual rights and social welfare. Without effective legal controls, administrative power may be exercised arbitrarily or inconsistently. Walters (2022) argues that administrative institutions contribute to democratic governance when they operate within frameworks that promote accountability, transparency, and legal protection. Consequently, administrative justice functions as an important safeguard against abuses of public authority.

Government accountability represents another important dimension of administrative governance. Public institutions are expected to justify administrative decisions and demonstrate that governmental actions comply with legal and constitutional principles. Lührmann, Marquardt, and Mechkova (2020) argue that accountability mechanisms are essential for constraining governmental power and strengthening democratic governance. Likewise, Abhayawansa, Adams, and Neesham (2021) emphasize that accountability contributes to governance quality by ensuring that public authorities remain responsive to societal interests. These findings suggest that

administrative justice strengthens democratic governance by improving accountability and institutional responsibility.

In Indonesia, administrative justice is supported by a comprehensive legal framework that regulates governmental actions and provides legal remedies for citizens. One of the most important legal instruments is Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration. The law establishes principles governing administrative decisions, discretionary authority, abuse of power, and governmental accountability. It also provides legal standards designed to improve transparency, legal certainty, and good governance within public administration. Through these provisions, the law seeks to strengthen administrative accountability and protect citizens from unlawful administrative actions.

Another important component of Indonesia's administrative justice system is the State Administrative Court (Pengadilan Tata Usaha Negara/PTUN). Established through Law No. 5 of 1986 and amended by Law No. 51 of 2009, PTUN provides citizens with opportunities to challenge administrative decisions that are alleged to violate legal rights. The court serves as a mechanism through which administrative actions can be reviewed and evaluated according to legal standards. Consequently, PTUN contributes to democratic governance by promoting accountability and providing access to justice for individuals affected by governmental decisions.

The importance of PTUN within Indonesia's legal system has been highlighted by several studies. Kartini and Kusyandi (2021) argue that PTUN functions as an important institution for protecting citizens from unlawful administrative actions. Similarly, Soegiarto, Ridwan, and Pratama (2024) emphasize that administrative courts contribute to legal protection by reviewing administrative decisions that adversely affect citizens. These findings indicate that judicial review of administrative actions remains an essential component of democratic governance and citizen protection.

Administrative law in Indonesia has undergone significant developments following the enactment of Law No. 30 of 2014. One notable development concerns the expansion of legal remedies against governmental actions. Abrianto, Nugraha, and Grady (2020) argue that the law has broadened opportunities for citizens to challenge unlawful governmental conduct and has strengthened accountability mechanisms within public administration. These reforms reflect broader efforts to align administrative governance with democratic principles and the rule of law.

Citizen protection constitutes another important objective of administrative justice. Democratic governance requires mechanisms capable of protecting individuals from arbitrary administrative decisions while ensuring access to legal remedies. Administrative courts and review procedures provide opportunities for citizens to seek redress when governmental actions violate legal rights or procedural standards. Jacobs (2024) argues that access to administrative justice represents a fundamental administrative law value because it promotes fairness, inclusiveness, and legal

protection. These principles contribute directly to democratic governance by strengthening public trust in governmental institutions.

Recent developments in public administration have introduced new challenges for administrative governance. Digitalization, automation, and the increasing use of technology within government decision-making processes have created opportunities for efficiency while simultaneously generating concerns regarding accountability and transparency. Larsson (2021) argues that digital government initiatives may create inequalities when administrative systems fail to accommodate all citizens effectively. Similarly, Plantinga (2024) highlights emerging concerns regarding digital discretion and the use of artificial intelligence within public administration. These developments suggest that administrative justice must continuously adapt to changing governance environments.

Despite the growing importance of administrative justice, several challenges continue to affect administrative governance in Indonesia. These challenges include bureaucratic accountability, implementation gaps, administrative discretion, access to justice, and institutional effectiveness. While legal frameworks provide important protections, practical implementation may vary across institutions and administrative contexts. Consequently, evaluating the contribution of administrative justice to democratic governance remains an important area of legal and governance research.

Although previous studies have examined administrative law, accountability, and public administration, many focus on specific legal issues or institutional developments. There remains a need for comprehensive research examining how administrative justice contributes to democratic governance through accountability, legal protection, and citizen access to justice. Such analysis is particularly important given continuing administrative reforms and the evolving role of public administration in contemporary governance.

In response to this gap, this study employs a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine administrative justice and democratic governance in Indonesia. The analysis focuses on the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, Law No. 5 of 1986 concerning State Administrative Courts, and Law No. 51 of 2009. By synthesizing contemporary scholarship concerning administrative justice, accountability, legal protection, access to justice, and governance reform, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how administrative law strengthens democratic governance and citizen protection in Indonesia.

2. | LITERATURE REVIEW

Administrative Justice and Democratic Governance

Administrative justice is a fundamental component of democratic governance because it ensures that public authorities exercise power in accordance with legal principles and remain accountable to citizens. Democratic systems require mechanisms

capable of controlling administrative actions, protecting individual rights, and providing remedies against unlawful governmental decisions. Administrative justice therefore functions as a bridge between public administration and the rule of law by ensuring that governmental authority is exercised fairly, transparently, and responsibly.

The concept of administrative justice encompasses legal institutions, procedures, and principles designed to regulate administrative actions and resolve disputes between citizens and public authorities. Viktorovna and Aleksandrovich (2022) argue that administrative justice provides legal safeguards that protect individuals from arbitrary exercises of governmental power. Similarly, Endicott (2021) emphasizes that administrative law establishes standards governing administrative conduct and promotes accountability within public institutions. These perspectives suggest that administrative justice plays an essential role in maintaining democratic governance and institutional legitimacy.

The relationship between administrative justice and democracy is closely connected to the rule of law. Democratic governance requires public authorities to act within legal limits and remain subject to legal review. Administrative decisions often affect citizens' rights, economic activities, and access to public services. Consequently, effective mechanisms are necessary to ensure that administrative actions comply with legal standards and constitutional principles. Walters (2022) argues that administrative institutions contribute to democratic governance when they operate under systems that facilitate accountability and legal oversight.

Accountability represents another important dimension of administrative justice. Public institutions are expected to justify administrative decisions and demonstrate compliance with legal obligations. Administrative justice contributes to accountability by providing procedures through which governmental actions can be reviewed and challenged. Emerson (2021) emphasizes that administrative law strengthens democratic values by ensuring that governmental authority remains subject to legal control. These findings indicate that accountability and administrative justice are closely interconnected within democratic governance systems.

The literature further demonstrates that administrative justice contributes to public trust. Citizens are more likely to perceive governmental institutions as legitimate when effective remedies exist against unlawful or unreasonable administrative actions. Access to review procedures and independent adjudication mechanisms strengthens confidence in governance institutions by ensuring that administrative power remains subject to legal scrutiny. Consequently, administrative justice functions as an important safeguard for democratic legitimacy.

Administrative justice also supports good governance principles. Fair decision-making, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness are central objectives of both administrative law and democratic governance. By promoting these principles, administrative justice contributes to more effective public administration and stronger

citizen protection. These relationships illustrate the significance of administrative justice within contemporary democratic systems.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that administrative justice is an essential component of democratic governance. Through accountability, legal oversight, citizen protection, and adherence to the rule of law, administrative justice strengthens institutional legitimacy and promotes responsible governance.

Indonesian Administrative Law Framework

Indonesia has established a comprehensive legal framework regulating administrative governance and the exercise of public authority. The constitutional foundation of administrative law is provided by the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945), which recognizes Indonesia as a state based on law and requires governmental institutions to exercise authority in accordance with constitutional principles. These provisions provide the normative basis for accountability, legal certainty, and citizen protection within public administration.

One of the most important statutory frameworks governing administrative actions is Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration. The law regulates administrative decisions, governmental discretion, abuse of authority, and accountability mechanisms. It also establishes principles of good governance intended to improve transparency and legal certainty within public administration. Through these provisions, the law seeks to strengthen democratic governance by ensuring that administrative authorities exercise power responsibly and within legal limits.

The enactment of Law No. 30 of 2014 represented a significant development in Indonesian administrative law. Abrianto, Nugraha, and Grady (2020) argue that the law expanded legal protections against unlawful governmental actions and strengthened accountability mechanisms within public administration. Likewise, Naibaho et al. (2021) emphasize that contemporary developments in Indonesian administrative law have increased the importance of administrative accountability and legal control of governmental authority.

Another important component of Indonesia's administrative law framework is the State Administrative Court (Pengadilan Tata Usaha Negara/PTUN). PTUN was established through Law No. 5 of 1986 and subsequently strengthened through Law No. 51 of 2009. The court provides judicial review of administrative decisions and serves as an institutional mechanism for resolving disputes between citizens and public authorities. Through this function, PTUN contributes to accountability and legal protection by ensuring that administrative actions comply with legal standards.

The literature highlights the importance of PTUN in promoting democratic governance. Simanjuntak (2020) argues that administrative courts play a crucial role in controlling governmental actions and protecting citizens from unlawful administrative decisions. Similarly, Kartini and Kusyandi (2021) emphasize that PTUN serves as a

manifestation of legal protection because it provides citizens with opportunities to challenge administrative actions that adversely affect their rights and interests.

Administrative discretion constitutes another important feature of Indonesia's administrative law framework. Government officials frequently exercise discretionary authority when implementing policies and responding to administrative challenges. While discretion can improve administrative flexibility and efficiency, it also creates risks associated with abuse of authority and arbitrary decision-making. Law No. 30 of 2014 therefore establishes legal standards governing discretionary actions and provides mechanisms for reviewing their legality.

The framework further reflects broader principles of good governance. Administrative institutions are expected to operate transparently, accountably, and in accordance with legal requirements. These principles support democratic governance by ensuring that public authorities remain responsive to citizens and subject to legal oversight. Consequently, administrative law functions not only as a technical regulatory framework but also as a mechanism for implementing democratic values within public administration.

Overall, Indonesia's administrative law framework provides important institutional and legal foundations supporting accountability, legal certainty, and citizen protection. Through constitutional principles, statutory regulations, and administrative courts, the framework seeks to ensure that governmental authority is exercised consistently with democratic governance and the rule of law.

Government Accountability and Administrative Decisions

Government accountability is a fundamental principle of democratic governance because it ensures that public authorities remain responsible for the exercise of administrative power. Administrative institutions routinely make decisions affecting citizens' rights, obligations, and access to public services. Consequently, democratic systems require mechanisms that enable governmental actions to be reviewed, evaluated, and justified according to legal and constitutional standards. Accountability therefore serves as an important safeguard against arbitrary decision-making and abuse of authority.

The literature consistently identifies accountability as a central component of good governance. Lührmann, Marquardt, and Mechkova (2020) argue that accountability mechanisms function as constraints on governmental power by ensuring that public officials remain answerable for their actions. Similarly, Abhayawansa, Adams, and Neesham (2021) emphasize that accountability contributes to governance quality because it promotes transparency, responsiveness, and public trust. These findings suggest that accountable administrative institutions are essential for maintaining democratic legitimacy.

Administrative decisions represent one of the primary areas in which accountability operates. Government agencies frequently issue decisions concerning permits, licenses, sanctions, public services, and regulatory matters. Such decisions can have significant

consequences for individuals and organizations. Consequently, administrative law establishes procedures and standards designed to ensure that these decisions are lawful, reasonable, and consistent with public interests. Accountability mechanisms enable citizens to challenge decisions that are considered unlawful or unfair.

Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration plays a significant role in strengthening accountability within Indonesia's administrative system. The law establishes principles governing administrative conduct and provides standards for evaluating governmental decisions. It also regulates discretionary authority and identifies circumstances in which administrative actions may constitute abuses of power. Through these provisions, the law seeks to ensure that public officials exercise authority responsibly and in accordance with legal requirements.

Administrative discretion is particularly important within discussions concerning accountability. Government officials often require flexibility to respond to complex administrative situations and policy challenges. However, discretionary authority can also create risks if exercised without adequate oversight. Rosenbloom (2022) argues that accountability mechanisms are necessary to ensure that discretion remains consistent with legal principles and public interests. Similarly, Fisher and Shapiro (2020) emphasize that effective administrative governance depends upon balancing flexibility with legal control and institutional responsibility.

The literature further demonstrates that accountability contributes to legal certainty. Citizens require predictable and transparent administrative procedures in order to understand how governmental decisions are made and how administrative authority is exercised. Accountability mechanisms help reduce uncertainty by requiring administrative institutions to provide reasons for decisions and comply with established legal standards. These practices strengthen public confidence in administrative governance and promote procedural fairness.

Another important aspect of accountability concerns the prevention of abuse of authority. Administrative law seeks to ensure that governmental power is exercised for legitimate purposes and within legally defined limits. Naibaho et al. (2021) argue that contemporary administrative law reforms increasingly focus on preventing arbitrary exercises of power and improving institutional accountability. These developments reflect broader efforts to align administrative governance with democratic principles and the rule of law.

Technological developments have introduced new dimensions to administrative accountability. Digital governance systems and automated decision-making processes can improve efficiency and service delivery, but they also raise concerns regarding transparency and oversight. Plantinga (2024) highlights the growing importance of accountability mechanisms in contexts where digital technologies influence administrative decision-making. Similarly, Larsson (2021) notes that digital systems must remain accessible and accountable to ensure equitable treatment of citizens. These

findings suggest that accountability frameworks must evolve alongside technological changes within public administration.

Public trust is also closely connected to accountability. Citizens are more likely to view administrative institutions as legitimate when governmental decisions are transparent, justified, and subject to review. Accountability mechanisms create opportunities for oversight and corrective action, thereby strengthening confidence in public administration. As a result, accountability contributes not only to legal compliance but also to democratic legitimacy and governance effectiveness.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that government accountability is an essential component of administrative governance. Through legal oversight, control of discretionary authority, prevention of abuse of power, and promotion of transparency, accountability mechanisms ensure that administrative decisions remain consistent with democratic principles and the rule of law. These functions contribute significantly to citizen protection and the legitimacy of public administration.

Citizen Protection and Access to Justice

Citizen protection constitutes one of the primary objectives of administrative law and democratic governance. Administrative authorities possess extensive powers that can directly affect individual rights, economic opportunities, and access to public services. Consequently, democratic systems require legal mechanisms capable of protecting citizens from unlawful, unreasonable, or arbitrary administrative actions. Access to justice therefore serves as an essential safeguard that enables individuals to challenge governmental decisions and seek legal remedies when rights are affected.

The concept of access to justice extends beyond formal judicial procedures. It encompasses the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of mechanisms through which individuals can obtain legal protection and challenge administrative actions. Jacobs (2024) argues that access to administrative justice represents a fundamental value within administrative law because it promotes fairness, inclusiveness, and equal treatment. Similarly, Sossin (2017) emphasizes that administrative justice systems should be designed to ensure that citizens can effectively exercise legal rights and obtain meaningful remedies.

Within Indonesia, citizen protection is supported through administrative review procedures and judicial oversight mechanisms. The State Administrative Court (PTUN) serves as a key institution for resolving disputes between citizens and governmental authorities. Through judicial review, citizens may challenge administrative decisions that are alleged to violate legal rights or exceed administrative authority. This process strengthens democratic governance by ensuring that administrative actions remain subject to legal scrutiny.

The literature consistently highlights the importance of PTUN in protecting citizens' rights. Kartini and Kusyandi (2021) argue that administrative courts function as an important mechanism for providing legal protection against state administrative actions. Likewise, Soegiarto, Ridwan, and Pratama (2024) emphasize that PTUN

contributes to citizen protection by reviewing administrative decisions that cause legal harm. These findings indicate that judicial oversight remains essential for ensuring fairness and accountability within public administration.

Access to justice is also closely linked to the principle of effective legal protection. Citizens must have opportunities to challenge administrative decisions through procedures that are accessible, impartial, and capable of providing effective remedies. Szente and Lachmayer emphasize that effective legal protection requires institutions capable of reviewing administrative actions and correcting unlawful decisions. These principles reinforce democratic governance by ensuring that governmental authority remains accountable to legal standards.

The literature further demonstrates that citizen protection contributes to public trust in governmental institutions. When individuals possess access to fair review mechanisms, they are more likely to perceive administrative systems as legitimate and responsive. Legal remedies provide assurances that administrative errors or abuses of power can be addressed through institutional processes. Consequently, access to justice strengthens both legal certainty and democratic legitimacy.

Overall, citizen protection and access to justice represent essential components of administrative governance. Through judicial review, legal remedies, and procedural safeguards, administrative law protects individuals from unlawful governmental actions while promoting accountability and public trust. These mechanisms contribute significantly to democratic governance and the rule of law.

Challenges in Administrative Governance

Despite significant developments in administrative law and governance reform, various challenges continue to affect the effectiveness of administrative justice in Indonesia. Democratic governance requires administrative institutions that are accountable, transparent, and responsive to citizens. However, practical implementation often reveals gaps between legal standards and administrative realities. These challenges influence the ability of administrative institutions to provide effective legal protection, maintain accountability, and strengthen public trust.

One of the most significant challenges concerns bureaucratic accountability. Although administrative law establishes mechanisms for reviewing governmental actions, public institutions may still face difficulties in ensuring consistent compliance with legal and governance standards. Accountability requires not only formal legal obligations but also institutional commitment to transparency and responsible decision-making. Lührmann, Marquardt, and Mechkova (2020) argue that accountability mechanisms are effective only when institutions possess the capacity and willingness to implement them consistently. Consequently, strengthening administrative accountability remains an important governance objective.

Administrative discretion represents another important challenge. Government officials frequently exercise discretionary authority when responding to complex policy

issues and administrative situations. While discretion can improve administrative flexibility and efficiency, it may also create opportunities for inconsistent decision-making or abuse of authority. Law No. 30 of 2014 provides legal standards governing discretionary actions, yet practical implementation remains subject to institutional capacity and oversight. Fisher and Shapiro (2020) emphasize that effective governance requires balancing administrative flexibility with mechanisms that prevent arbitrary decision-making. These findings indicate that discretion remains both a necessity and a challenge within administrative governance.

The effectiveness of administrative courts also remains a subject of discussion within the literature. PTUN provides important legal remedies against administrative decisions; however, barriers related to procedural complexity, legal awareness, and access to legal representation may limit the ability of some citizens to utilize available remedies. Simanjuntak (2020) argues that administrative courts continue to face institutional challenges affecting their capacity to provide comprehensive legal protection. These issues suggest that strengthening access to justice requires not only legal frameworks but also practical measures that improve accessibility and public awareness.

Another challenge concerns the implementation of legal protection standards within public administration. Administrative laws establish procedural safeguards intended to protect citizens from unlawful governmental actions, yet implementation may vary across institutions and administrative contexts. Naibaho et al. (2021) note that differences in institutional practices and administrative capacity can affect the consistency of legal protection mechanisms. Consequently, administrative reforms must address both legal and institutional dimensions of governance.

Digital transformation has introduced additional challenges for administrative governance. Governments increasingly utilize digital platforms, automated systems, and electronic decision-making processes to improve efficiency and service delivery. While these developments offer significant benefits, they also raise concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and equal access. Larsson (2021) argues that digitalization may unintentionally exclude certain groups when administrative services become heavily dependent on technological access. Similarly, Plantinga (2024) highlights concerns regarding algorithmic decision-making and digital discretion within public administration. These developments indicate that governance frameworks must adapt to technological change while maintaining legal protections and accountability standards.

The literature further identifies access to justice as an ongoing challenge. Although legal remedies formally exist, practical barriers such as procedural complexity, financial constraints, and limited legal literacy may reduce citizens' ability to challenge administrative actions effectively. Jacobs (2024) emphasizes that access to administrative justice requires systems that are not only legally available but also accessible and understandable to the public. These findings suggest that administrative

justice reforms should prioritize inclusiveness and accessibility alongside legal effectiveness.

Transparency remains another area requiring continued attention. Citizens can only exercise oversight and seek accountability when administrative information is available and understandable. Limited access to administrative information may weaken public trust and reduce opportunities for effective participation in governance processes. Therefore, transparency mechanisms remain essential for strengthening accountability and promoting democratic governance within public administration.

The literature also highlights challenges associated with governance reform and institutional modernization. Administrative institutions must continuously adapt to changing social expectations, technological developments, and governance demands. Reforms intended to improve efficiency and responsiveness may create tensions between innovation and accountability. Consequently, policymakers must ensure that modernization efforts remain consistent with principles of legal certainty, transparency, and citizen protection.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that administrative governance in Indonesia faces challenges related to accountability, administrative discretion, access to justice, digital transformation, transparency, and institutional capacity. Although Indonesia possesses a relatively comprehensive administrative law framework, effective implementation remains critical for achieving democratic governance objectives. These challenges highlight the continuing importance of strengthening administrative justice as a mechanism for accountability, legal protection, and citizen trust.

3. | RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine the relationship between administrative justice and democratic governance in Indonesia. The review focuses on how administrative law frameworks contribute to government accountability, citizen protection, access to justice, and the rule of law. Particular attention is given to the implementation of Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, Law No. 5 of 1986 concerning State Administrative Courts, and Law No. 51 of 2009.

The study follows the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and consistency throughout the review process. According to Page et al. (2021), PRISMA provides systematic procedures for identifying, screening, evaluating, and selecting relevant literature. The review process consisted of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion.

Literature was collected from Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, HeinOnline, Garuda, and other legal and governance databases. Searches were conducted using combinations of keywords including administrative justice, democratic governance, administrative law, government accountability, legal

protection, administrative courts, PTUN, administrative discretion, access to justice, good governance, and citizen protection. Additional searches focused specifically on Indonesian administrative law reforms and public administration governance.

The inclusion criteria consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, legal studies, governance research, conference papers, academic books, and policy publications published primarily between 2020 and 2024. Studies were included when they discussed administrative justice, accountability mechanisms, citizen protection, administrative courts, government administration, or governance reforms relevant to Indonesia. Duplicate records, non-academic publications, and studies unrelated to the research objectives were excluded.

The selected literature was analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings were organized into five thematic categories: administrative justice and democratic governance, Indonesian administrative law frameworks, government accountability and administrative decisions, citizen protection and access to justice, and challenges in administrative governance. These themes were selected because they represent the principal dimensions through which administrative justice contributes to democratic governance.

The analytical framework conceptualizes administrative justice as a governance mechanism that strengthens accountability, legal certainty, citizen protection, and institutional legitimacy. Administrative law is examined as a tool for regulating governmental authority and preventing abuses of power, while administrative courts are analyzed as institutions that provide legal remedies and judicial oversight. Through the integration of systematic literature review methods and legal analysis, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how administrative justice contributes to democratic governance and citizen protection in Indonesia.

4. | RESULTS

The findings of this study demonstrate that administrative justice plays a significant role in strengthening democratic governance in Indonesia. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that administrative law frameworks contribute to accountability, legal certainty, citizen protection, and institutional legitimacy. Through administrative review mechanisms and judicial oversight, administrative justice functions as a safeguard against unlawful governmental actions while promoting transparency and responsible governance. The findings further reveal that Law No. 30 of 2014, Law No. 5 of 1986, and Law No. 51 of 2009 provide important legal foundations supporting democratic administration and citizen protection.

One of the principal findings concerns the relationship between administrative justice and democratic governance. Administrative justice contributes to democracy by ensuring that public authorities remain accountable for the exercise of administrative power. Government institutions routinely issue decisions affecting citizens' rights and interests; therefore, mechanisms are required to ensure that these decisions comply with legal standards. Viktorovna and Aleksandrovich (2022) argue that administrative

justice strengthens democratic governance by establishing procedures through which administrative actions can be reviewed and challenged. Similarly, Endicott (2021) emphasizes that administrative law promotes legality and accountability within public administration. These findings indicate that administrative justice serves as an important institutional safeguard within democratic systems.

The findings further demonstrate that accountability constitutes a central function of administrative justice. Public institutions are expected to justify decisions and remain responsive to legal obligations and public interests. Lührmann, Marquardt, and Mechkova (2020) argue that accountability mechanisms constrain governmental power by ensuring that officials remain answerable for their actions. Likewise, Abhayawansa, Adams, and Neesham (2021) emphasize that accountability improves governance quality by promoting transparency and institutional responsibility. These findings suggest that administrative justice contributes directly to democratic governance by strengthening accountability relationships between citizens and public authorities.

Another important finding concerns the role of Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration. The law establishes principles governing administrative decisions, discretionary authority, and accountability mechanisms. The literature indicates that this legal framework has significantly expanded protections against unlawful governmental conduct. Abrianto, Nugraha, and Grady (2020) argue that the enactment of Law No. 30 of 2014 strengthened opportunities for citizens to challenge administrative actions and increased legal control over governmental authority. These developments demonstrate the importance of administrative law reforms in promoting democratic governance.

Administrative discretion emerged as a recurring theme within the literature. Government officials frequently exercise discretion when implementing policies and addressing administrative challenges. While discretionary authority can improve efficiency and flexibility, it may also create risks associated with abuse of power. The findings indicate that administrative law seeks to balance flexibility with accountability by establishing standards governing discretionary actions. Rosenbloom (2022) argues that accountability mechanisms are necessary to ensure that discretionary decisions remain consistent with legal principles and public interests. Consequently, legal control of discretion remains an important component of democratic administration.

The literature further demonstrates the significance of the State Administrative Court (PTUN) as a mechanism for citizen protection. PTUN provides judicial review of administrative decisions and enables individuals to challenge actions that allegedly violate legal rights. Kartini and Kusyandi (2021) argue that PTUN serves as an important institution for protecting citizens against unlawful administrative conduct. Similarly, Soegiarto, Ridwan, and Pratama (2024) emphasize that administrative courts contribute to legal protection by reviewing administrative decisions that adversely affect individuals. These findings indicate that judicial oversight strengthens democratic governance by ensuring accountability within public administration.

Citizen protection represents another major finding of this study. Administrative justice provides individuals with access to legal remedies when governmental actions affect rights or interests. Jacobs (2024) argues that access to administrative justice is a fundamental value because it promotes fairness, equality, and legal protection. Likewise, Szente and Lachmayer emphasize that effective legal protection requires institutions capable of reviewing and correcting unlawful administrative actions. These findings demonstrate that citizen protection remains a central objective of administrative governance.

The findings also indicate that access to justice contributes significantly to democratic legitimacy. Citizens are more likely to trust public institutions when effective remedies exist against unlawful administrative decisions. Administrative courts and review procedures provide assurances that governmental authority remains subject to legal oversight. As a result, access to justice strengthens confidence in public administration and supports democratic governance.

Another important finding concerns the relationship between administrative justice and the rule of law. Democratic governance requires that public authorities act within legal limits and remain accountable to constitutional principles. Administrative law contributes to the rule of law by regulating governmental authority and preventing arbitrary exercises of power. Naibaho et al. (2021) argue that contemporary developments in Indonesian administrative law increasingly emphasize accountability, legal certainty, and institutional responsibility. These findings suggest that administrative justice reinforces democratic governance through legal control of administrative power.

The literature additionally highlights the importance of transparency within administrative governance. Transparency enables citizens to understand governmental decisions, evaluate administrative performance, and exercise oversight. Accountability mechanisms become more effective when citizens possess access to relevant administrative information. Consequently, transparency contributes to both governance quality and public trust. The findings suggest that transparent administrative procedures strengthen democratic legitimacy by promoting openness and institutional responsiveness.

Digital governance emerged as a growing area of discussion within recent scholarship. Governments increasingly utilize digital technologies to improve service delivery and administrative efficiency. However, these developments also generate concerns regarding accountability and equal access. Larsson (2021) argues that digitalization may create inequalities when administrative systems fail to accommodate all citizens effectively. Similarly, Plantinga (2024) highlights concerns regarding digital discretion and automated decision-making. These findings indicate that administrative justice frameworks must adapt to technological changes while preserving legal protections and accountability standards.

The findings further reveal several challenges affecting administrative governance. Institutional capacity, bureaucratic complexity, limited public awareness, and procedural barriers may reduce the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms and legal remedies. Simanjuntak (2020) argues that administrative courts continue to face challenges related to jurisdictional limitations and institutional effectiveness. Likewise, Naibaho et al. (2021) identify ongoing governance challenges associated with implementation and administrative reform. These findings suggest that strengthening administrative justice requires continuous institutional improvement.

Overall, the evidence reviewed in this study demonstrates that administrative justice contributes significantly to democratic governance in Indonesia. Through accountability mechanisms, administrative review procedures, judicial oversight, and citizen protection frameworks, administrative law strengthens legal certainty and institutional legitimacy. Although challenges remain regarding implementation, digital governance, and access to justice, administrative justice continues to serve as a critical mechanism for promoting democratic governance and protecting citizens from unlawful governmental actions.

5. | DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that administrative justice serves as an essential component of democratic governance in Indonesia by strengthening accountability, legal certainty, citizen protection, and institutional legitimacy. Democratic governance requires public institutions that exercise authority within legal limits and remain accountable for administrative decisions. The reviewed literature consistently indicates that administrative justice contributes to these objectives by providing mechanisms through which governmental actions can be reviewed, challenged, and corrected when necessary. These findings support the view that administrative law functions not only as a regulatory framework but also as a democratic safeguard protecting citizens from arbitrary exercises of public power.

One of the most significant findings concerns the role of administrative justice in promoting accountability. Government institutions routinely make decisions that affect citizens' rights and interests, making accountability a necessary condition for democratic governance. Administrative justice strengthens accountability by requiring public authorities to justify decisions and comply with legal standards. The findings suggest that administrative review mechanisms and judicial oversight encourage greater transparency and institutional responsibility. Consequently, accountability serves as a critical link between administrative law and democratic governance.

The study also highlights the importance of Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration. The law represents a significant development in Indonesia's administrative governance framework because it establishes standards governing administrative decisions, discretionary authority, and abuse of power. By regulating governmental conduct and providing mechanisms for legal review, the law

strengthens accountability and legal certainty. The findings therefore indicate that Law No. 30 of 2014 contributes significantly to democratic governance by improving legal control over administrative authority.

Administrative discretion emerged as another important theme within the literature. Public officials frequently require flexibility to respond to complex administrative situations and policy challenges. However, discretionary authority may create risks when exercised without adequate oversight. The findings demonstrate that democratic governance requires a balance between administrative flexibility and legal accountability. Effective administrative justice systems provide mechanisms capable of reviewing discretionary decisions while preserving the ability of public institutions to perform administrative functions efficiently. This balance remains essential for ensuring both effective governance and citizen protection.

Another important implication concerns the role of PTUN in democratic governance. Administrative courts provide citizens with opportunities to challenge governmental decisions and seek legal remedies when rights are affected. Judicial review contributes to democratic accountability by ensuring that administrative actions remain subject to independent legal scrutiny. The findings indicate that PTUN functions not only as a dispute-resolution mechanism but also as an institution that reinforces constitutional principles and strengthens public confidence in administrative governance.

The study further demonstrates that citizen protection remains a central objective of administrative justice. Democratic governance requires legal safeguards that protect individuals from unlawful administrative conduct. Access to justice enables citizens to defend legal rights and obtain remedies against governmental actions that exceed legal authority. The findings suggest that citizen protection contributes directly to democratic legitimacy because individuals are more likely to trust public institutions when effective review mechanisms are available.

Transparency also emerged as a significant factor influencing administrative governance. Citizens can only exercise oversight and pursue accountability when administrative procedures and decisions are sufficiently open and accessible. Transparency enables public monitoring of governmental conduct and supports informed participation in governance processes. The findings therefore indicate that transparency strengthens both accountability and democratic legitimacy within public administration.

The study additionally identifies several challenges affecting the effectiveness of administrative justice. Institutional capacity limitations, procedural complexity, and variations in implementation continue to influence the operation of accountability mechanisms. Although legal frameworks provide important protections, practical effectiveness depends on institutional performance and public accessibility. These findings suggest that legal reforms alone are insufficient without corresponding improvements in administrative capacity and governance practices.

Digital transformation presents another challenge for contemporary administrative governance. Digital technologies offer opportunities to improve efficiency, accessibility, and service delivery. However, automation and digital decision-making processes may create concerns regarding accountability, transparency, and equal access. The findings indicate that administrative justice frameworks must evolve to address these emerging issues while maintaining legal protections and procedural fairness. Democratic governance therefore requires careful integration of technological innovation with accountability safeguards.

Overall, the study demonstrates that administrative justice contributes substantially to democratic governance in Indonesia. Through accountability mechanisms, judicial review, citizen protection, and legal oversight, administrative law strengthens institutional legitimacy and promotes responsible governance. Nevertheless, continuing challenges related to implementation, institutional capacity, and digital transformation indicate the need for ongoing reforms to ensure that administrative justice remains effective in protecting citizens and supporting democratic governance.

5. | CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between administrative justice and democratic governance in Indonesia through a qualitative Systematic Literature Review (SLR). The analysis focused on the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, Law No. 5 of 1986 concerning State Administrative Courts, and Law No. 51 of 2009 as the principal legal frameworks governing administrative accountability and citizen protection.

The findings demonstrate that administrative justice plays a significant role in strengthening democratic governance by promoting accountability, legal certainty, transparency, and citizen protection. Administrative law provides standards governing governmental conduct, while PTUN offers judicial mechanisms through which citizens may challenge unlawful administrative actions. Together, these institutions contribute to legal oversight and institutional legitimacy within public administration.

The study also found that administrative discretion, access to justice, and transparency remain important dimensions of democratic governance. However, challenges associated with bureaucratic accountability, institutional capacity, procedural accessibility, and digital governance continue to affect the effectiveness of administrative justice. These issues highlight the importance of continuous administrative reform and governance improvement.

Overall, the study concludes that administrative justice constitutes an essential safeguard within Indonesia's democratic governance system. Strengthening accountability mechanisms, improving access to justice, and enhancing administrative transparency remain important strategies for protecting citizens and ensuring that governmental authority is exercised consistently with democratic principles and the rule of law.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval and Originality Statement

Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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