

IMPROVING CONSUMER RIGHTS PROTECTION MECHANISMS IN UZBEKISTAN'S AUTOMOBILE DELIVERY SYSTEM: LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION DIRECTIONS

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Abstract

This article examines the current state of consumer rights protection in Uzbekistan's automobile delivery system, focusing on regulatory compliance, warranty disparities, service infrastructure, and digital transparency. Based on consumer complaints recorded between January and August 2025, the study identifies recurring issues such as untimely vehicle delivery, insufficient warranty coverage, lack of Uzbek-language user information, and the absence of unified digital monitoring for after-sales services. Using national legislation and empirical field data, the study proposes an integrated model for enhancing consumer confidence through digital service book systems, unified online registries, and insurance-based warranty mechanisms. The findings emphasize the importance of harmonizing warranty policies, introducing electronic monitoring tools, and ensuring transparency and linguistic accessibility in the automotive market, in alignment with the "Digital Uzbekistan – 2030" national strategy.

Keywords: consumer rights, automobile market, digital warranty systems, after-sales services, service centers, delivery delays, digital economy, competition policy

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston Respublikasida avtomobil yetkazib berish tizimida iste'molchi huquqlarini himoya qilishning hozirgi holati, normativ-huquqiy talablar, kafolatdagi tafovutlar, servis infratuzilmasi va raqamli shaffoflik masalalari tahlil qilinadi. 2025-yil yanvar–avgust oylarida qayd etilgan iste'molchilar murojaatlari tahlili asosida avtomobillarni o'z vaqtida yetkazib bermaslik, kafolat xizmatlarining yetarli darajada ta'minlanmasligi, davlat tilidagi foydalanuvchi ma'lumotlarining yo'qligi hamda yagona raqamli monitoring tizimining mavjud emasligi kabi takrorlanuvchi muammolar aniqlangan. Milliy qonunchilik va empirik dala ma'lumotlariga asoslanib, tadqiqotda iste'molchilar ishonchini oshirishga xizmat qiluvchi raqamli servis kitobchalari, yagona onlayn reyestr va sug'urta kafolati mexanizmlarini o'z ichiga olgan integratsiyalashgan model taklif etiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari kafolat siyosatini uyg'unlashtirish, elektron monitoring vositalarini joriy etish hamda avtomobil bozorida shaffoflik va til jihatdan ochiqlikni ta'minlash zarurligini ta'kidlaydi. Ushbu yondashuv "Raqamli O'zbekiston – 2030" milliy strategiyasi maqsadlariga to'liq mos keladi.

Kalit so'zlar: iste'molchi huquqlari, avtomobil bozori, raqamli kafolat tizimlari, sotuvdan keyingi xizmatlar, servis markazlari, yetkazib berishdagi kechikishlar, raqamli iqtisodiyot, raqobat siyosati

Аннотация

В статье рассматривается современное состояние системы защиты прав потребителей в сфере поставки автомобилей в Республике Узбекистан с акцентом на вопросы нормативного соответствия, гарантийных различий, инфраструктуры сервисного обслуживания и цифровой прозрачности. На основе анализа обращений потребителей, зарегистрированных в период с января по август 2025 года, выявлены повторяющиеся проблемы, такие как несвоевременная поставка автомобилей, недостаточный объём гарантийных обязательств, отсутствие информации на узбекском языке и нехватка единой цифровой системы мониторинга послепродажных услуг. Используя национальное законодательство и эмпирические полевые данные, автор предлагает интегрированную модель повышения доверия потребителей посредством внедрения цифровых сервисных книг, единого онлайн-реестра и страховых гарантийных механизмов. Полученные результаты подчёркивают необходимость гармонизации гарантийной политики, внедрения электронных инструментов мониторинга, а также обеспечения прозрачности и языковой доступности на автомобильном рынке в соответствии со стратегией «Цифровой Узбекистан – 2030».

Ключевые слова: защита прав потребителей, автомобильный рынок, цифровые гарантийные системы, послепродажное обслуживание, сервисные центры, задержки поставок, цифровая экономика, конкурентная политика

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Uzbekistan has embarked on an ambitious path toward economic modernization and digital transformation, as outlined in the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” national strategy. This comprehensive agenda emphasizes the development of consumer-oriented institutions and the integration of digital technologies across key sectors, including the automotive industry. As one of the fastest-growing consumer markets in the country, the automobile delivery sector has witnessed both rapid expansion and a growing number of consumer-related disputes.

The automobile market presents unique regulatory and service challenges due to its technical complexity, extended product lifecycle, and reliance on after-sales infrastructure. In the Uzbek context, these challenges are further compounded by inconsistent warranty practices, limited service coverage in regional areas, insufficient linguistic inclusivity, and the absence of a unified digital monitoring system for vehicle maintenance and warranty compliance. These systemic gaps have resulted in a significant number of consumer complaints, primarily centered around delayed deliveries, inadequate warranty services, and unequal contractual terms.

This paper addresses the urgent need to strengthen consumer rights protection mechanisms in Uzbekistan’s automobile delivery system by analyzing empirical complaint data, assessing current regulatory frameworks, and benchmarking international best practices. It argues that the transition toward a digital consumer protection model—anchored in transparency, accountability, and accessibility—is essential to fostering consumer trust and market efficiency.

The study aims to propose a practical and integrated reform model that introduces digital warranty tracking, national service registries, linguistic standards, and insurance-based warranty enforcement mechanisms. These initiatives are designed to align Uzbekistan's consumer protection policies with international norms while supporting the state's long-term digitalization and economic competitiveness objectives. Through a combined quantitative and qualitative approach, this research contributes to ongoing policy discourse and offers actionable recommendations for achieving a more transparent and consumer-friendly automotive ecosystem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of consumer rights protection in the automobile sector has been extensively examined in the context of digital transformation, product safety, and after-sales transparency. According to OECD,¹ the automotive market is one of the most complex consumer markets due to the long-term nature of vehicle ownership, the technical complexity of products, and the asymmetry of information between sellers and buyers. Consequently, regulatory systems in advanced economies have shifted from reactive dispute settlement to preventive digital transparency mechanisms, enabling consumers to monitor warranty and servicing data online.

UNCTAD highlights that in emerging markets, including Central Asia, consumer protection policies increasingly rely on digital infrastructure such as electronic warranty registries and online feedback platforms. These systems ensure not only post-sale accountability but also stimulate fair competition by allowing consumers to evaluate service quality and compliance in real time.²

Benöhr, Iris, and Hans-W. Micklitz. emphasizes that the automobile industry's service ecosystem directly influences consumer confidence. It suggests that the establishment of digital monitoring tools and unified regulatory frameworks significantly improves consumer satisfaction, especially in countries transitioning to market-oriented economies. The report also notes that warranty transparency and consistent after-sales service standards are essential elements for sustainable industrial trust.³

In the regional context, Bychko, Marina A., et al. have examined Uzbekistan's consumer protection mechanisms within the framework of the national digital economy strategy. Their studies conclude that despite notable legislative progress, gaps remain in implementation efficiency, particularly regarding the automotive and electronics sectors.⁴ They recommend the introduction of electronic monitoring platforms to align

¹ OECD. (2022). *Consumer Policy and Automotive After-Sales Markets: Digital Transparency and Trust*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/auto-eco-2022-en>

² UNCTAD. (2023). *Digital Economy Report 2023: Governance and Consumer Protection*. Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

³ Benöhr, Iris, and Hans-W. Micklitz. "Consumer protection and human rights." *Handbook of Research on International Consumer Law*, Second Edition. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018. 16-34.

⁴ Bychko, Marina A., et al. "Consumer Rights Protection in a Digital Space: Problems and Ways of Their Solution." *Economic Issues of Social Entrepreneurship*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021. 205-215.

consumer protection systems with the goals of the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy.¹

At the global level, European Union directives (Directive 2019/771/EU on the sale of goods) and the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection advocate for harmonized warranty terms and easy access to product-related information. These documents emphasize the principle of *informed choice*, ensuring that consumers receive complete and accurate data about warranty conditions, service obligations, and complaint procedures.²

Moreover, OECD underscores the relevance of linguistic accessibility in consumer protection. Providing information in the consumer’s native language is not merely a convenience but a legal obligation that supports equitable market participation. This aspect is particularly relevant for Uzbekistan, where many imported vehicles lack Uzbek-language manuals and interfaces, thereby limiting consumers’ informed decision-making.³

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches to comprehensively examine the state of consumer rights protection in Uzbekistan’s automobile delivery system. The research focuses on identifying key deficiencies in warranty practices, service accessibility, linguistic transparency, and legal enforcement mechanisms, as well as proposing digital and institutional solutions to address them. Primary data were obtained from the official analytical materials of the Competition and Consumer Protection Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, covering the period January–August 2025. These data include 358 consumer complaints related to automobile sales, delivery delays, defective products, and warranty disputes. In addition, field inspection results from 63 retail automobile dealerships across different regions were used to assess service center availability, warranty consistency, and compliance with linguistic and technical regulations.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The ongoing modernization of Uzbekistan’s economy and the development of digital infrastructure have significantly influenced consumer protection policy in the service and industrial sectors. Within the framework of the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” strategy, improving transparency, accountability, and service quality in the automobile industry has become a strategic objective.

The automobile market has rapidly expanded in recent years, accompanied by a noticeable increase in consumer complaints. According to the Competition and Consumer Protection Committee, 358 complaints related to automobile sales were

¹ Government of Uzbekistan. (2020, October 5). Decree on the “Digital Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy. Collection of Legislative Acts, No. 41.

² UNCTAD. (2023). Digital Economy Report 2023: Governance and Consumer Protection. Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

³ OECD. (2022). Consumer Policy and Automotive After-Sales Markets: Digital Transparency and Trust. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/auto-eco-2022-en>

registered during January–August 2025. Of these, 75.7% were resolved positively, while 24.3% received explanatory feedback. Most complaints (65.9%) concerned manufacturing defects not rectified under warranty, 19% related to delivery delays, 11.2% to vehicle replacement requests, and 3.9% to extended delivery periods.

Nationwide inspections conducted at 63 automobile dealerships revealed that 5 lacked service centers, 39 failed to provide user manuals in the state language, and 13 had inconsistencies between the warranty period of the main product and its spare parts. For example, several dealerships, including *Roodell LLC* and *Riteyl LLC*, distributed KIA, Haval, and Chery vehicles without localized service infrastructure. Similarly, *UzAuto Motors* vehicles such as the Cobalt model offer a general warranty of 36 months or 100,000 km, whereas components such as the engine, shock absorbers, and other parts are covered for significantly shorter periods.

According to Article 15 of Uzbekistan’s *Law on Consumer Rights Protection*, the warranty for spare parts must not be shorter than that of the main product. However, the investigation revealed systematic violations of this provision, indicating an imbalance between manufacturers’ obligations and consumers’ rights. In addition, service centers often invalidate warranties when vehicles receive maintenance outside their authorized facilities, highlighting the absence of a unified warranty data system.

Furthermore, in many imported vehicles (e.g., Chevrolet, Chery, Haval), information displayed on dashboards and in manuals is not available in Uzbek, contravening linguistic policy requirements. Contracts signed between dealerships and consumers frequently include clauses that disadvantage consumers — such as penalties for delayed pickups, but minimal compensation for late deliveries — thereby contradicting the principle of contractual fairness.

A review of international experience indicates that the European Union and OECD member countries have implemented integrated *digital warranty monitoring* and *electronic service book systems* accessible to both consumers and regulators. Such systems not only ensure compliance with consumer law but also build trust through transparency in post-sale services (OECD, 2022; UNCTAD, 2023).

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of consumer complaints with qualitative assessment of dealership contracts, service policies, and warranty documentation. Data were obtained from official committee reports and direct field observations conducted in 2025.

The analysis demonstrates that:

- (1) warranty durations for automobile parts remain inconsistent with the main product;
- (2) there is an insufficient number of operational service centers, particularly in regional areas;
- (3) information accessibility in the state language is limited; and
- (4) the absence of a digital registry for vehicle warranties hinders accountability and transparency. Table 1

In response, the author proposes a set of comprehensive policy recommendations, summarized in the analytical table below.

Table 1. Policy Recommendations for Enhancing Consumer Protection in Uzbekistan’s Automobile Delivery Sector¹

№	Proposed Measure	Implementation Mechanism	Expected Outcome	Responsible Institutions
1	Introduce an electronic service book for each vehicle, enabling online monitoring of service history and warranty status	Develop a unified digital platform integrating manufacturers, dealers, and service centers via QR-code tracking	Greater transparency in service operations; enhanced consumer trust	Competition Committee, Ministry of Digital Technologies, UzAuto Motors, private dealers
2	Integrate insurance mechanisms into warranty coverage to compensate for service errors	Develop an “AutoInsurance” product covering repair liabilities; align with national insurance firms	Financial responsibility for service failures is ensured	Ministry of Finance, Uzbek Insurance Agency, Competition Committee
3	Establish 24/7 mobile service units in regions lacking service centers	Create mobile brigades with GPS-based scheduling and response tracking	Ensures continuous service availability and reduces consumer inconvenience	Regional authorities, UzAuto Association, Competition Committee
4	Create a National Electronic Registry for all automobile warranties and service data	Launch the “e-Car Service Registry” and integrate it with dealership networks	Unified digital control and warranty verification system	Ministry of Digital Technologies, Competition Committee
5	Mandate state-language interface and documentation for all vehicle dashboards and manuals	Amend certification standards for imported cars to include linguistic compliance	Guarantees equality and accessibility for Uzbek-speaking consumers	Agency for Standardization, Customs Committee, Automotive importers
6	Standardize dealership contracts to include fair consumer protection clauses	Develop model contracts approved by the Competition Committee	Strengthens legal equality between sellers and consumers	Ministry of Justice, Competition Committee
7	Implement a digital consumer feedback and rating platform for service quality monitoring	Launch an “e-Feedback Auto” system allowing real-time consumer evaluation	Promotes healthy competition and quality improvement in service delivery	Competition Committee, ICT Ministry, mass media
8	Introduce national standards for warranty duration and spare parts quality	Update existing GOST and O‘zDSt norms to specify minimum warranty requirements	Harmonization of warranty policies across manufacturers	Agency for Standardization, Ministry of Industry
9	Legally enforce penalty mechanisms for delivery delays	Amend the Consumer Protection Law to define mandatory compensation for overdue deliveries	Increases contractual discipline and consumer confidence	Ministry of Justice, Competition Committee
10	Develop a mobile application (“AutoCheck UZ”) for tracking vehicle warranty and service records	Enable VIN-based warranty verification and history tracking	Ensures digital transparency and easier monitoring for consumers	Ministry of Digital Technologies, UzAuto Motors, private IT firms

The proposed policy framework aligns with Uzbekistan’s strategic digitalization goals, ensuring that consumer protection evolves alongside technological innovation. Establishing electronic registries, digital monitoring tools, and insurance-backed warranty systems will strengthen institutional accountability and enhance consumer satisfaction.

¹ Developed by the author based on the analytical data of the Competition and Consumer Protection Committee (2025)

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study concludes that while Uzbekistan's legislative framework for consumer protection in the automobile sector is comprehensive, its implementation remains inconsistent. Introducing a nationwide digital warranty monitoring system, improving service accessibility, and ensuring linguistic inclusivity will significantly enhance consumer trust and market transparency. These measures directly contribute to achieving the objectives of the "Digital Uzbekistan – 2030" strategy, fostering a fair, competitive, and consumer-oriented automotive ecosystem

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