

Review Article

Innovation in Official Travel Administration Based on Information Technology to Support Local Government Budget Efficiency

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze innovations in official travel administration based on information technology in supporting the efficiency of regional government budgets. This research employs a qualitative approach using the Qualitative Secondary Analysis (QSA) method by utilizing various secondary data sources, such as policy documents, government reports, and relevant research and academic journals. The results indicate that the implementation of an information technology-based official travel administration system has successfully transformed bureaucratic processes from manual to digital systems. The submission, approval, execution, and reporting of official travel, which were previously carried out through physical documents, can now be conducted through an integrated electronic system. The digitalization of administrative processes has had a significant impact on improving the efficiency of administrative service time. Employees no longer need to go through lengthy bureaucratic procedures to obtain travel approval, as the entire process can be conducted online through an application system. This aligns with the concept of digital transformation in government, which emphasizes the utilization of information technology to enhance the efficiency of public organizations. The implementation of an information technology-based official travel administration system also increases transparency and accountability in managing official travel budgets. The digital system allows all administrative processes related to official travel to be systematically recorded and electronically documented. With a digital system in place, the potential for misuse of official travel funds such as fictitious trips, duplicate activities, or manipulation of expense reports can be minimized.

Keywords: Budget Efficiency; Information Technology; Innovation; Official Travel Administration; Regional Government.

1. Introduction

The demand for effective, efficient, and transparent governance has increasingly grown alongside the development of the good governance paradigm in public administration. Regional governments, as providers of public services, are expected to manage resources optimally, including budget management. One significant component of expenditure in regional government budgets is official travel, which supports activities such as coordination, supervision, guidance, and the execution of governmental duties across various regions. In practice, the administration of official travel often faces challenges such as slow administrative processes, non-integrated record-keeping, and potential inefficiencies in budget utilization.

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Administratively, official travel requires various supporting documents, including Assignment Orders (Surat Perintah Tugas – SPT), Official Travel Orders (Surat Perintah Perjalanan Dinas – SPPD), travel reports, and financial accountability records. Official travel is a core administrative instrument in regional government operations, enabling coordination between administrative units, policy implementation oversight, intergovernmental collaboration, and the delivery of public services beyond the central office. In a decentralized government system, regional officials often rely on official travel to conduct field supervision, attend intergovernmental meetings, support executive leadership functions, and ensure the continuity of administrative services. Thus, official travel is not merely a logistical activity but a component embedded in bureaucratic functions that support legal mandates and policy objectives. From a public administration perspective, official travel facilitates organizational connectivity and administrative responsiveness, particularly in territorially dispersed jurisdictions where face-to-face interaction remains institutionally significant (Sari et al., 2025).

In many regional government agencies, these administrative processes are still conducted manually or using simple office applications that are not integrated. This situation can lead to delays in administrative procedures, errors in data recording, and difficulties in monitoring the use of official travel budgets. Manual data management also increases the risk of data loss and slows down the preparation of financial reports (Agusniar & Aryanti, 2022). Moreover, weak management systems for official travel can result in suboptimal accountability and transparency in budget utilization. Several studies have shown that poorly managed travel administration can lead to inefficiencies, such as duplicate tasks, uneven workload distribution, and potential misuse of travel activities. Therefore, a more structured and integrated management system is required to enhance efficiency and accountability in the use of official travel budgets in regional government environments (Nurchahyo & Agustina, 2012).

With the advancement of information and communication technology, various public sector organizations have begun to leverage digital technology to improve administrative processes and data management. The implementation of information technology-based systems in government administration is part of e-government initiatives aimed at improving public service quality, bureaucratic efficiency, and governance transparency. Information technology enables administrative processes that were previously manual to be conducted digitally, integrated, and systematically documented.

In the context of official travel administration, the application of information technology systems can assist government agencies in managing all administrative processes more effectively. Travel information systems allow for the electronic creation of SPT and SPPD documents, integrated travel data recording, and real-time budget monitoring. Furthermore, digital systems can facilitate reporting and accountability for official travel, thereby improving financial administration transparency in regional governments (Azahari et al., 2024). Research on the development of official travel information systems indicates that web-based applications can enhance administrative efficiency and minimize errors in data processing. Such systems enable more structured and accurate management of travel data, facilitating monitoring and reporting processes. With digital systems in place, processes that previously required significant time can now be completed more quickly and efficiently (Damayanti et al., 2025).

Additionally, innovation in public administration has become a key strategy for improving government organizational performance. Administrative innovation can include the application of new methods, work systems, or technology utilization to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public services. In the context of regional governments, information technology-based innovations in official travel administration can provide solutions to bureaucratic challenges, such as complex administrative procedures, poor data integration, and weak oversight of budget utilization.

The implementation of official travel information systems not only offers administrative benefits but also has implications for regional government budget efficiency. Digital systems enable governments to plan official travel in a more controlled manner, monitor budget usage transparently, and reduce potential wastage. These systems also allow for data integration across units, facilitating coordination and decision-making in managing official travel budgets. Furthermore, digital transformation in government administration aligns with bureaucratic reform agendas that emphasize efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Regional governments are encouraged to develop technology-based innovations to improve governance quality. Digitalization of administrative processes represents a strategic step toward achieving a more modern, adaptive, and responsive bureaucracy.

Nonetheless, implementing information technology-based administrative innovations in official travel management still faces challenges. These include limitations in human resources with IT competencies, digital infrastructure constraints, and organizational resistance to changes in work systems. Therefore, in-depth academic studies are needed to examine how IT-based innovations in official travel administration can be effectively implemented to support regional government budget efficiency. Based on the above discussion, research on information technology-based innovations in official travel administration to support regional government budget efficiency is essential. This study is expected to contribute to the development of public administration innovation concepts and provide policy recommendations for regional governments to enhance budget management efficiency through the utilization of information technology

2. Literature Review

Concept of Public Administration

Public administration is a discipline that studies the processes of government policy implementation and the management of public sector organizations to achieve the goals of serving society. Public administration is not only concerned with policy execution but also encompasses planning, organizing, implementation, and oversight of the use of public resources.

According to Henry (2015), public administration is a combination of theory and practice aimed at promoting understanding of government and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public organizations. Public administration also involves efforts to manage government programs to provide the best possible services to the public. Meanwhile, Waldo (1984) states that public administration is a management process involving people, organizations, and resources to implement public policy effectively. In this context, public administration serves as a key instrument in achieving development objectives through the professional management of government organizations.

According to Pasolong (2007), public administration is a form of cooperation carried out by a group of people or institutions in performing governmental duties to meet public needs efficiently and effectively. Meanwhile, Ibrahim (2007) defines public administration as “all efforts in government implementation, including governmental management activities (planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision of development) through a working mechanism supported by human resources.” In the practice of regional governance, public administration relates to various bureaucratic activities, including budget management, personnel administration, and operational administration such as official travel. Proper administrative management supports the creation of effective, transparent, and accountable governance.

Public administration has a scope that is implicitly related to governance. As Syafi'i (2006) explains, the scope of public administration includes: “in the field of relationships, events, and governmental phenomena as frequently described by governance experts, covering central government administration; regional government administration; sub-district administration; village administration; city administration; administrative departments; and non-departmental administration. In the field of authority, as often described by foreign political science experts, it includes domestic political administration; political party administration; NGO community roles; government policy administration; policy, wisdom, condition, and government roles.”

The scope of public administration is highly complex and depends on the evolving needs of society. According to Pasolong (2007), there are eight areas of public administration: “public policy, public bureaucracy, public management, leadership, public services, civil service administration, performance, and public administration ethics.

E-Government

. In general, E-Government is defined as an information management system and public service delivery mechanism based on the internet. These services are provided by the government to the public. By leveraging the internet, a wide variety of service modalities emerge, enabling citizens to play an active role. Citizens are expected to independently register for permits, monitor processing progress, and directly carry out various public services. With internet technology, all these activities can be performed from anywhere and at any time (Hardiyansyah, 2003).

Belanger and Carter (2012) describe E-Government as the use of information technology to enable and enhance the efficiency of government services provided to citizens, employees, businesses, and institutions. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines E-Government as “the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by government agencies. E-Government is the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to promote more efficient and cost-effective government, facilitate more convenient government services, allow greater public access to information, and make government more accountable to citizens” (Indrajit, 2004).

E-Government refers to the use of information technology by government agencies, which has the capacity to transform interactions with citizens, businesses, and other governmental units. The technology can provide diverse benefits, such as improved citizen services, enhanced interaction with the business and industrial sectors, citizen empowerment through access to information, and more efficient government management. The outcomes include reduced corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, higher government revenue, and/or cost reduction (Grönlund, 2008). E-Government serves as the frontline effort of governments in providing information and services to the public, business groups, government employees, and civil society organizations (Yu-Che & Perry, 2003).

Furthermore, Awan (2015) defines E-Government as electronic interaction—transactions and information exchange—between the government, citizens (individuals and businesses), and employees. E-Government facilitates achieving multiple objectives more effectively, including the provision of government services to citizens, improving communication with business and industry, empowering citizens through information access, and creating more competent government management. One of the most prominent E-Government services is the provision and use of web-based information pages, commonly known as the World Wide Web.

The essential goal of E-Government is to provide online services that are easily accessible to everyone, regardless of time and place. Additionally, E-Government aims to deliver services without the need for intervention by public institution employees or long, complicated queues. The fundamental objectives include:

- a. Improving the quality of public services through the use of IT in government operations.
- b. Establishing clean, transparent governance that can effectively respond to changing demands.
- c. Enhancing organizational structures, management systems, and governmental work processes (Blueprint Sistem Aplikasi e-Government, 2004).

Innovation in Public Administration.

Innovation relates to something new for individuals, organizations, society, or specific situations. Innovation itself involves the development and implementation of something novel. The term “new” here does not necessarily refer to an entirely original product, but rather to “newness.” This newness implies that innovation is the creation and implementation of existing elements into a new combination. Newness is also linked to the dimensions of space and time (Prabowo et al., 2022).

Innovation consists of generating new ideas and implementing them into new products, processes, or services. It is a long and cumulative process involving multiple organizational decision-making stages, from the idea generation phase to implementation (Urabe et al., 1988). Innovation is viewed as the process of adopting or implementing new ideas, where these ideas are transformed into actual products or services (Godin, 2014; Osborne, 2013).

Historically, innovation has been more prevalent in the private sector because it can overcome various constraints that hinder innovation. The private sector has embraced the motto “innovate or die,” whereas the public sector often treats innovation as optional or discretionary. Public institutions rarely face existential risk if they do not innovate; however, without innovation, governments may lose legitimacy and public trust (Prabowo et al., 2022).

The potential benefits of innovation in the public sector are substantial, and the size of the public sector varies by country. On average, the public sector constitutes about one-third of a nation’s economy. This scale indicates that public sector innovation has the potential to contribute significantly to economic growth and national prosperity—directly by reducing the costs of public service delivery and improving the quality and composition of services, and indirectly by enhancing the private sector through expanded and improved infrastructure provided by the public sector (Osborne & Brown, 2012).

Innovation is necessary to improve and enhance the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of public service delivery. Through innovation, systems, methods, and technologies can be

developed to reduce costs, shorten service times, streamline bureaucracy, and, importantly, increase public trust in government performance. Public service innovation represents a breakthrough in service delivery, whether through original creative ideas or adaptations/modifications, which provide direct and indirect benefits to society. Original creative ideas represent the positive value of public service providers in delivering novelty in their services (Prabowo et al., 2022).

Public sector innovation has its roots in studies primarily focused on private sector innovation (Moore & Hartley, 2008; Torfing et al., 2020). Innovation is also critical for effective public service management in dynamic and increasingly diverse societies where individuals demand higher quality services. New ICT and communication technologies, new work practices, new forms of social and family organization, and social changes have led to the fragmentation of previously homogeneous social groups.

According to Kuratko (2007), innovation can be classified into four types:

- a. Invention – the creation of a new product, service, or process that has never been performed before. This concept is often considered revolutionary.
- b. Extension – the development of an existing product, service, or process. This involves applying ideas from something that already exists to create a difference.
- c. Duplication – the imitation of an existing product, service, or process. Duplication, however, does not merely copy; it adds creative enhancements to improve the concept and make it competitive.
- d. Synthesis – the combination of previously existing concepts and factors into a new formulation. This process involves integrating multiple ideas or products to create a new product that can be applied in innovative ways.

Public sector innovation may relate to new outcomes (e.g., new services), the processes used to achieve them (e.g., co-design), and the support provided to facilitate these processes (e.g., innovation labs supporting teams in co-design to generate innovative outcomes) (Nählinder & Eriksson, 2019). Public sector innovation is often driven by public sector agents (e.g., civil servants, public institutions, state-owned enterprises) and typically involves or affects actors across the entire ecosystem. However, at times, innovation in the public sector can also be driven by actors primarily outside the public sector.

Budget Efficiency Theory

Law No. 1 of 2020 on State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability states that the budget, as a tool for management accountability and economic policy, functions to achieve economic growth, stability, and equitable income distribution in order to realize national objectives. In this context, budgeting is a process or method for preparing an organization's budget. Generally, budgeting in public sector organizations is an important and strategic stage, considered complex and containing various administrative nuances as well as high political dynamics.

Budget efficiency is one of the key principles in public financial management. Efficiency relates to an organization's ability to use resources optimally to achieve maximum results. According to Mardiasmo (2018), efficiency is the relationship between output and input, where an activity is considered efficient if it produces optimal output with minimal resource usage.

In the context of public finance, Mahmudi (2015) explains that budget efficiency reflects the extent to which government budget use can generate maximum benefits for society. Indicators of budget efficiency include operational cost savings, optimization of resource use, reduction of budget waste, and increased organizational productivity. In the administration of official travel, budget efficiency can be achieved through more structured system management, effective supervision, and the use of information technology to minimize administrative errors and cost overruns.

Budget efficiency is a key indicator of public financial management, reflecting the government's ability to utilize financial resources optimally to achieve development goals. In this context, efficiency is not merely understood as cost-saving but rather as the ability to produce maximal outputs or outcomes with minimal inputs. Mahmudi (2015) states that efficiency is achieved when there is a balance between the inputs used and the results obtained. This means that a process or activity is considered efficient if the resources employed such as time, effort, money, or materials—are proportional and aligned with the results or benefits produced. In other words, there is no waste, and every input contributes meaningfully to the output.

The OECD (2007) emphasizes the importance of the Value for Money (VfM) principle in budget policy. VfM stresses that every expenditure or allocation of public funds must provide the best value to society, not merely consume the budget. This principle requires that budgets be prepared and implemented by considering three main aspects: economy (cost-saving), efficiency (optimal use of resources), and effectiveness (achieving desired objectives). In public financial management, applying VfM ensures that every unit of currency spent truly generates benefits equivalent to or greater than the costs incurred. Therefore, this principle is critical to promoting transparency, accountability, and quality of public spending, as well as ensuring that budget policies have a real positive impact on development and societal welfare.

3. Materials and Method

This study employs a qualitative method with a Qualitative Secondary Analysis (QSA) approach, which involves analyzing qualitative data through the use and re-analysis of existing secondary data (Greenwood, 2020). Data were collected from various sources, including previous research, working papers, conference proceedings, mass media, and other documents relevant to the research topic. The data collection process was conducted systematically, using clear selection criteria such as relevance to the research questions, source credibility, and the completeness of the information presented.

The data analysis process was conducted in three main stages following a descriptive approach: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 2009). During the data reduction stage, information from various documents was filtered and selected according to the research focus, eliminating irrelevant or low-quality data. The reduced data were then presented in thematic narratives or visualizations, such as tables or diagrams, to support analysis. The final stage involved drawing conclusions, in which the synthesized findings were used to answer the research questions in an integrated manner.

To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation was applied. Triangulation involved comparing information from different documents and sources to identify consistency, gaps, or discrepancies in the data. This step aims to reduce bias, enhance the reliability of the findings, and strengthen the analytical foundation. By applying the Qualitative Secondary Analysis approach, the study focuses on an in-depth evaluation of secondary data.

4. Results and Discussion

Official travel represents a significant component of operational expenditures within the structure of the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD). Travel expenses are generally used to support activities such as coordination, consultation, program monitoring and evaluation, and other governmental functions requiring the mobility of regional government officials.

In conventional administrative practice, official travel management is still largely conducted manually. This process includes the preparation of Assignment Letters (SPT), Official Travel Orders (SPPD), financial administration records, as well as travel reporting and accountability procedures. Manual systems often result in various problems, including: slow and bureaucratic administrative processes, potential administrative errors and document duplication, lack of budget transparency, high reliance on physical documents, and weak oversight of travel budget utilization.

These conditions have prompted regional governments to implement administrative innovations through the use of information technology. This innovation has taken the form of an electronic official travel administration system (e-official travel or e-SPPD) integrated with regional financial information systems. The implementation of IT-based systems aligns with national policies regarding Electronic-Based Government Systems (SPBE), which aim to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accountability in government administration (Ministry of PANRB, 2020).

a. Digitalization of Official Travel Administration

Research indicates that the implementation of IT-based official travel administration has transformed bureaucratic processes from manual to digital systems. Digitalization encompasses all stages of official travel administration, from submission, approval, and execution to reporting. Through electronic systems, travel requests are submitted via web-based applications or internal government information systems. Employees planning to travel input activity data, travel objectives, estimated costs, and supporting documents into the system. The system then automatically processes requests through electronic approval mechanisms by authorized officials. Digitalization offers several advantages, including faster administrative processes, reduced data entry errors, improved document use efficiency, and easier administrative oversight.

According to Heeks (2006), digitalization of government administration via information technology enhances organizational efficiency because administrative processes become more structured, automated, and systematically documented. Moreover, electronic systems enable data integration across government units, allowing real-time access to travel information for relevant stakeholders.

b. Integration of Travel Systems with Regional Financial Systems

A key finding is the integration of the official travel system with regional financial management systems. This integration allows travel requests to be made based on available budget allocations in the respective agency's budget documents. In the integrated system, every travel request is automatically linked to available budget data. If funds are insufficient, the system notifies the user, preventing further processing. This integration provides several benefits, including increased budget planning accuracy, prevention of overspending, easier monitoring of budget usage, and enhanced accountability in regional financial management. According to Mardiasmo (2018), effective public sector financial management requires information systems capable of providing accurate and timely financial data to support better decision-making. Integrated digital systems allow regional governments to monitor travel budget usage transparently and systematically.

c. Electronic Approval System (Digital Approval)

IT-based travel administration also incorporates an electronic approval system. Approvals are no longer carried out via physical document disposition but through an electronic system accessible by authorized officials. Officials can approve requests directly through the application without being physically present, providing flexibility in decision-making and accelerating bureaucratic workflows. According to Fountain (2001) in digital government theory, using information technology in administrative decision-making reduces bureaucratic barriers and increases government organizational efficiency. Digital systems also provide an audit trail documenting the entire approval process, enhancing transparency and administrative accountability.

d. Impact on Efficiency

One of the most significant impacts of IT-based travel administration systems is the increased efficiency of administrative processes. In manual systems, travel requests often take considerable time due to bureaucratic stages such as form filling, document printing, and manual disposition. Digital systems allow these processes to be completed faster as all stages are managed electronically. According to Laudon & Laudon (2016), management information systems improve operational efficiency by accelerating information flow and reducing unnecessary administrative processes. Research shows that digitalization of travel administration significantly reduces processing time, enhancing the productivity of regional government staff.

Digital systems also reduce the use of physical documents. Documents such as SPT, SPPD, travel reports, and financial accountability forms can be stored digitally, reducing paper usage and printing costs. This not only improves operational efficiency but also supports paperless office policies. According to Gil-Garcia & Helbig (2006), digital public administration reduces operational costs through decreased paper usage and optimized IT-based administrative processes.

IT-based travel administration also enhances the efficiency of regional budget management. Digital systems allow for systematic and transparent monitoring of budget utilization. Local governments can track the number of official travels per agency and the associated budget, providing a basis for evaluation and expenditure control. According to Anthony & Young (2003), effective financial information systems are key instruments for

improving public sector budget management. Therefore, IT-based travel administration can serve as an effective internal control tool for regional financial management.

Adoption of Innovation Diffusion of Innovations Theory. According to Rogers (2003), the adoption of innovation in organizations is influenced by five key characteristics:

- a. Relative Advantage – IT-based travel administration offers a relative advantage over manual systems by increasing administrative efficiency, accelerating bureaucracy, and enhancing budget transparency.
- b. Compatibility – This innovation aligns with the bureaucratic reform agenda and government policies regarding digitalization through SPBE.
- c. Complexity – Although digital systems have inherent complexity, this can be addressed through training and capacity building for government staff.
- d. Trialability – IT-based travel administration systems can be piloted in selected agencies before wider implementation.
- e. Observability – Benefits of the innovation can be readily observed through improved administrative efficiency, reduced operational costs, and increased budget transparency.

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that IT-based official travel administration innovation possesses characteristics that support successful innovation adoption within government organizations.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of an information technology-based official travel administration system has successfully transformed bureaucratic processes from manual to digital. The submission, approval, execution, and reporting of official travel, which were previously managed through physical documents, can now be conducted via an integrated electronic system. This digitalization of administrative processes has significantly increased the efficiency of administrative service delivery. Employees no longer need to navigate lengthy bureaucratic procedures to obtain travel approvals, as the entire process can be completed online through an application system. This aligns with the concept of digital transformation in government, which emphasizes the use of information technology to enhance the efficiency of public organizations.

The adoption of an IT-based travel administration system also improves transparency and accountability in the management of travel budgets. The digital system enables all administrative processes to be systematically recorded and electronically documented. With this system, the potential for misuse of travel funds—such as fictitious travel, duplicated activities, or manipulated expense reports—can be minimized.

This study contributes to the development of public administration research, particularly in the areas of bureaucratic innovation and digital transformation in government. The findings indicate that leveraging information technology in government administration can enhance public organizational efficiency while strengthening transparency and accountability in regional financial management. The study also reinforces the relevance of Diffusion of Innovation theory, which explains the process of innovation adoption within government organizations. Innovation characteristics, such as relative advantage, compatibility with organizational needs, and the observability of benefits, were shown to influence the successful implementation of IT-based travel administration innovations.

Practically, this research highlights the importance of digitalizing government administration as a strategy to improve the efficiency of regional budget management. Regional governments should promote the development of integrated administrative information systems to support more effective and efficient governance. Implementing IT-based travel administration systems can also serve as a form of bureaucratic innovation that supports the bureaucratic reform agenda and the implementation of Electronic-Based Government Systems (SPBE).

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses solely on the implementation of IT-based travel administration innovations in a specific regional government context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the research emphasizes administrative and budget efficiency aspects, without deeply exploring the technical development of the IT systems used. Based on these limitations, future research could explore the following areas: comparative analysis of digital travel administration system implementations across various regional governments; evaluation of the long-term impact of administrative digitalization on regional expenditure efficiency; analysis of the integration of travel administration systems

with smart government platforms; and studies on information system security in digital government administration.

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