

(Research/Review) Article

# Bureaucratic Reform and Digital Innovation in Travel Document Services

(A Case Study of Tanjung Perak Immigration Office)

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**Abstract:** This research aims to analyse the implementation of digital innovation in passport services at the Class I Immigration Office Tanjung Perak as part of bureaucratic reform and Good Governance initiatives. The study employed a qualitative case study approach, involving in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, to assess the successes and challenges of digital systems such as SIMKIM and M-Paspor. The findings reveal that digital innovation has successfully improved operational efficiency and generally provided transparency into costs and application status, whilst reducing queuing times and increasing service speed, thereby enhancing public satisfaction and trust in immigration services. However, the innovation has not fully addressed structural and cultural bureaucratic barriers, as field officers tend to become passive when systems experience errors or delays, struggling to provide detailed explanations about issues, which results in information ambiguity and potentially undermines procedural transparency and performance accountability principles. The study concludes that bureaucratic reform in the immigration sector requires internal cultural updates and enhanced human resource competencies to support comprehensive transparency and accountability. Digital infrastructure instability and officers' discretionary authority significantly influence the effectiveness of digital innovation. Whilst digital innovation offers substantial benefits in efficiency and transparency, its success depends heavily on strengthening systems, improving human resource skills, and fostering organisational cultural change, with continuous efforts essential for achieving effective, transparent, and accountable public service.

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**Keywords:** Digital Innovation; Good Governance; Immigration Services; Public Administration Reform; Public Satisfaction.

## 1. Introduction

The need for Bureaucratic Reform (RB) has become a significant imperative for the Indonesian government's efforts to achieve good governance, with the focus on creating a bureaucracy that is clean, accountable, effective, and serves the public optimally (Helistiawan, 2025). In general, RB is a series of fundamental changes to the system of governance, particularly in institutional aspects, administration, and human resources within the apparatus, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of public services (Basir et al., 2022a). Saffa et

al. (2025) note that this bureaucratic reform serves as a gateway to state sovereignty and a crucial service for citizen mobility; it is realised explicitly through a massive push for Digital Innovation. Digital innovations, such as the adoption of the Immigration Management Information System (SIMKIM) and the online queuing application (M-Passport), are key instruments for streamlining cumbersome procedures (debureaucratization), reducing face-to-face interactions vulnerable to extortion, and increasing service time efficiency (Al-Dafi et al., 2025). The Class I Immigration Office of TPI Tanjung Perak, located at one of the busiest entry/exit points in Eastern Indonesia, is a relevant case study for analysing the extent to which the implementation of RB through this digital innovation is truly effective and free from classic bureaucratic obstacles (Mas'adi, 2025).

The implementation of SIMKIM and M-Passport is a tangible manifestation of the principles of New Public Management (NPM) and E-Government policies, which emphasise efficiency, customer orientation, and the use of technology (Basir et al., 2022b). Digitalisation in the Travel Documents Section is expected to address classic issues such as long queues, unclear procedures, and potential data inconsistencies. The success of this innovation is measured not only by technical aspects (application functionality), but more importantly by administrative and social aspects the extent to which it has transformed bureaucratic behaviour (mindset and culture) and increased public satisfaction and trust (Anggara et al., 2023). The challenges, however, are significant. Digital infrastructure is often unstable, particularly in the centralised SIMKIM network system, where disruptions can paralyse the entire service process, eroding established efficiencies. Furthermore, human resources (HR) are crucial. Field officers (street-level bureaucrats) must possess high competence and integrity to operate sophisticated systems while maintaining responsiveness and empathy in service amidst high work pressure. An in-depth analysis of this Tanjung Perak Immigration case study must examine the dynamic interaction between Technology (Digital Innovation), Systems (RB and Governance), and Humans (Apparatus) (Darmaputra et al., 2025). This study aims to identify any bureaucratic barriers that persist (such as inconsistent discretion or slow problem handling) despite technological advancements, and to formulate integrated policy recommendations so that Bureaucratic Reform through digital innovation in the immigration sector can achieve its ideal goal of creating truly effective, transparent, and accountable travel document services for all Indonesian citizens.

## 2. Literature Review

Bureaucratic Reform is a policy umbrella that demands the creation of a clean, accountable, and service-oriented bureaucracy, with Digital Innovation as the primary catalyst. Therefore, the theoretical framework is built on three pillars: Bureaucratic Reform as a normative goal (achieving Good Governance through Transparency and Accountability), Public Management as a managerial approach (shifting from NPM which focuses on efficiency to Digital Public Administration which focuses on e-service quality), and the Innovation Diffusion and Policy Implementation Model as an analytical framework to understand the acceptance of technology (M-Passport, SIMKIM) in the field by ASN and the public. The integration of these three pillars aims to comprehensively evaluate whether digital innovation in Tanjung Perak has succeeded in realising the goals of RB or instead created new

obstacles, such as digital red tape and uneven discretion by street-level bureaucrats (Saraswati et al., 2025).

### **Bureaucratic Reform (RB) Theory**

Bureaucratic Reform is a fundamental change to the system of government administration, particularly concerning the institutions, administration, and human resources of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN). The primary goal of RB is to create an effective, efficient, clean, and service-oriented bureaucracy (Taher et al., 2024).

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is typically based on eight areas of change, with the primary focus in Immigration services being on structuring the Human Resources Management System to improve civil servants' competence and integrity, strengthening performance accountability by measuring results-based performance, and improving the quality of public services. Performance analysis at Tanjung Perak must examine the extent to which digital innovation has supported the achievement of these pillars, not merely as a tool but as an agent of organisational cultural change. Bureaucratic reform serves as an absolute prerequisite for achieving good governance, whilst good immigration performance must reflect the principles of transparency through open digital procedures, accountability through digital tracking systems, and participation through feedback from M-Passport application users. This framework demonstrates that effective bureaucratic reform requires integrating digital innovation with fundamental governance principles to transform both service delivery mechanisms and organisational culture within immigration services.

### **Public Management: from NPM to Digital Public Administration**

New Public Management theory underlies the push to adopt private sector principles in bureaucracy, namely a focus on efficiency, customer orientation, and decentralisation, whilst the implementation of M-Passport for online queuing and SIMKIM as an information management system are direct manifestations of NPM, where the goal is to reduce waiting times through efficiency and treat applicants as 'customers'. Digital Public Administration or E-Government represents an evolution of NPM, where digital technology is employed as the core of business process transformation that must transform not only the way services are delivered from manual to online but also the quality of the service itself. The performance of the Travel Documents Section must be analysed from an E-Service Quality perspective, which encompasses usability, information quality, and reliability. The theoretical challenge is the extent to which this innovation can overcome the digital divide and legacy bureaucratic barriers such as digital red tape (Setiawan et al., 2022).

### **Innovation Diffusion Model and Policy Implementation**

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Rogers is crucial for understanding how innovations such as M-Passport are accepted and implemented by civil servants as adopters and the public as users, whilst factors including relative advantage, complexity, and observability influence the adoption rate and effectiveness of these innovations in Tanjung Perak, helping to identify organisational resistance to change. Policy Implementation, particularly Lipsky's Street-Level Bureaucracy theory, remains relevant, as final service performance is still determined by field officers, or street-level bureaucrats, despite technological advancements. This theory applies to analysing how Travel Document Section officers integrate SIMKIM and M-Passport into daily practice and how their discretion, for example, during system errors, can affect service outcomes and consistency. These theoretical

frameworks ultimately determine the success of Bureaucratic Reform in immigration services (Samsara, 2025).

### 3. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a focused single case study design, aiming to analyse and describe in depth how Bureaucratic Reform (RB) is realised through Digital Innovation in the Travel Document Section of the Class I Immigration Office of Tanjung Perak, as well as identifying the challenges and impacts of this innovation on service quality (Hasan et al., 2022). In general, qualitative methods were chosen because the phenomenon of RB and Digital Innovation is a dynamic social process, complete with interpretation, and requires a contextual understanding of changes in bureaucratic behaviour (mindset), technology acceptance by ASN and the public, and policy implementation at the field level (street-level bureaucracy) (Waruwu et al., 2023). The research focuses on three main dimensions of Digital Innovation Implementation (SIMKIM and M-Passport) within the NPM framework, the influence of innovation on the achievement of the RB pillars (accountability, transparency, efficiency), and the structural and human barriers that affect Innovation Diffusion and e-service quality. The research location is the Tanjung Perak Class I TPI Immigration Office. The primary data sources (key informants) were determined purposively (purposive sampling), including Structural Officials (Head of Office, Head of Section), to explore the policy and management perspectives of RB Technical Implementers (Street-Level Bureaucrats), to understand daily practices, discretion, and technical/human challenges in operating digital systems and the Service User Community (passport applicants from various backgrounds), to evaluate the quality of digital and non-digital services (SERVQUAL dimension) and their impact on public satisfaction (Zaluchu, 2020).

The data collection techniques used were In-depth Interviews, to explore the personal interpretations and subjective experiences of informants regarding bureaucratic changes and application use; Limited Participatory Observation, by directly observing the check-in process, interviews, and data verification at the front office and back office, as well as recording the interactions of officers with the SIMKIM system and applicants; and Documentation Study, to collect supporting data in the form of Government Agency Performance Accountability Report (LAKIP) documents, digital Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), statistical data on M-Passport usage, and the results of the latest Public Satisfaction Survey (SKM). To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, Source Triangulation techniques were used (comparing data from Officials, Implementers, and the Community) and Method Triangulation (comparing interview results with observations and documents). The data analysis technique adopts the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes the following stages: Data Reduction (selecting, focusing, and abstracting raw data relevant to the focus of RB and Digital Innovation), Data Presentation (arranging data in the form of a thematic matrix or chart to facilitate mapping the relationship between innovation, bureaucracy, and its impact), and Conclusion Drawing (Verification), namely conducting in-depth interpretation of the findings, linking them to the theory of Innovation Diffusion and RB, and formulating substantive findings regarding the success and failure of digital transformation at Tanjung Perak Immigration (Moleong, 2018).

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### **Digital Innovation Diffusion (M-Passport and SIMKIM): Success of NPM Efficiency and Internal Resistance**

Analysis of the diffusion and implementation of digital innovations, namely the M-Passport online queue application and the SIMKIM (Immigration Management Information System) core system, at the Travel Document Section of the Class I TPI Tanjung Perak Immigration Office shows real success in achieving efficiency according to the principles of New Public Management (NPM), but at the same time, facing serious challenges in the form of internal resistance and infrastructure obstacles that weaken the effectiveness of the service as a whole (Andriyanto et al., 2024). In general, the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers) explains that the successful adoption of an innovation (M-Passport and SIMKIM) is highly dependent on its relative advantage and on how it is received by adopters (ASN) and users (the public). In Tanjung Perak, M-Passport is considered to have a very high relative advantage because it has broken the chain of manual bureaucracy, which is time-consuming and can trigger brokering practices. Therefore, this innovation has been well received by the public and fully implemented as an integral part of Bureaucratic Reform (RB) in the area of administration. Efficiency is clearly reflected in reduced physical waiting times and regular scheduling, meeting the NPM demand for fast, customer-oriented services (Nofrianti & Malau, 2025).

However, this success at the digital front-end level is fragile and vulnerable to resistance emerging from within the system. The primary resistance is not outright rejection, but rather structural dependency and limited technical competence of civil servants. Technical implementers (street-level bureaucrats) demonstrate high complexity in managing SIMKIM, particularly given the system's frequent infrastructure disruptions (server downtime or network errors) beyond Tanjung Perak Immigration's control (Oktavianti et al., 2023). When the system fails, service performance is completely paralysed, eroding the efficiencies that have been built. This indicates that the investment in bureaucratic reform remains incomplete; the efficiencies achieved through digitalisation are not matched by strengthening the buffer system (fast manual backup procedures) or increasing technical authority at the local level. As a result, officers tend to be passive, simply directing applicants to wait without a solution, reflecting a passive resistance to the responsibilities arising from system failures. This gap underscores the failure of bureaucratic reform in human resource management. Civil servants have not yet fully transformed into proactive and solution-oriented agents of change (Saffa et al., 2025). Although structurally they "use" innovation, their mindset is still tied to the old bureaucratic model that relies on central authority (SIMKIM). Therefore, the main conclusion is that the diffusion of digital innovation at Tanjung Perak Immigration has succeeded in meeting the demands of NPM efficiency at the process stage, but has failed to penetrate the layers of internal resistance related to system risk management and the competence of street-level bureaucrats, so that service effectiveness remains swayed by imperfect technological reliability (Fadillah & Marsofiyati, 2024).

**Table 1.** Analysis of Digital Innovation Diffusion (M-Passport and SIMKIM) in the Tanjung Perak Immigration Travel Documents Section.

Findings Category	Dimensions of Theory	Informant	Quote	Performance Implications & Bureaucratic Reform
Relative Advantage of Innovation	Relative Advantage (Rogers) & NPM	Service User Community	"Previously, I had to arrive at dawn just to queue for tickets, but now I can simply book through M-Passport. This saves me time."	Efficiency Success. Innovation provides real added value to the public and is well-received.
Complexity & Dependency Barriers	Complexity (Rogers) & NPM	Technical Implementer (Street-Level Bureaucrat)	"We've become very dependent on SIMKIM. If the central server starts lagging, the fingerprint data input process can take three times as long. We can only wait."	Passive Resistance. Reliance on central systems causes operational bottlenecks in the field.
The Challenge of Mindset Change	Bureaucratic Reform (Apparatus Human Resources)	Structural Official (Head of Section)	"Changing the mindset that innovation is a tool, not a single solution, is difficult. There are still officers who think, 'It's the system's fault, not us.'"	Organisational Cultural Barriers. Mental resistance and old paradigms hinder cultural change within the bureaucracy.
Discretion Due to System Failure	Street-Level Bureaucracy (Lipsky)	Technical Implementer (Street-Level Bureaucrat)	"If SIMKIM has an error while the applicant is present, we are forced to manually record the biometric data temporarily. But this is high risk and requires permission from a superior, so we often choose to wait."	Inconsistent Performance. Officers tend to wait and give passive discretion rather than making quick decisions, which is detrimental to the public.
Training & Competency Limitations	Observability (Rogers) & SDM	Structural Official (Head of Office)	SIMKIM training often focuses only on standard features. Training on error mitigation or crash handling is less intensive. This impacts the quality of their troubleshooting."	Competency Gap. Inadequate training limits technical response and field handling, threatening the sustainability of innovation.

(Research Source 2025)

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that Bureaucratic Reform (RB) in the Class I Immigration Travel Document Section of Tanjung Perak TPI has successfully achieved front-end efficiency through Digital Innovation (M-Passport and SIMKIM), in accordance with the Relative Advantage principle of Innovation Diffusion Theory and New Public Management (NPM). This innovation is recognised by the public for significantly reducing queues and saving time, confirming the bureaucracy's success in customer orientation. However, overall effectiveness is hampered by internal resistance and system limitations arising from the Complexity and Street-Level Bureaucracy dimensions. The main obstacle lies in the total dependence on the central SIMKIM system. Technical Implementers stated that when the server lags, they can only "wait," reflecting Passive Resistance (Yasn, 2025). They do not take solution-oriented discretion, even though they know the problem is detrimental to the public. This is reinforced by findings regarding Competency Gaps and training that focuses only on standard features, rather than on error mitigation or crash handling, thereby limiting their troubleshooting capabilities. Furthermore, the Challenge of Changing the Mindset of Structural Officials underscores that RB has not fully internalised that innovation is a tool that requires a proactive mindset, not a single solution to be used as a "scapegoat" for system failures. Fear of personal risk drives officers to choose passive discretion (waiting) over solution-oriented discretion (manual recording), causing performance inconsistencies that undermine service responsiveness (Briyadi et al., 2025). Therefore, the main conclusion is that digital Bureaucratic Reform in Tanjung Perak has been successful at the level of technology adoption, but has not been successful at the level of transformation of Human Resources and

system risk management, so that the efficiency achieved is very vulnerable and often fails to translate into consistent and excellent service effectiveness.

### **Digitalisation vs. Good Governance: Challenges of Accountability and Procedural Transparency**

An analysis of the impact of Digital Innovation in the Travel Documents Section of the Class I Immigration Office of Tanjung Perak, in the context of realising the principles of Good Governance, particularly Transparency and Accountability, reveals partial successes on the front-end, contrasted with serious challenges on the procedural back-end. In general, Good Governance demands that public services be provided in an open, accessible, and accountable manner at every stage, and digitalisation should be the primary tool to achieve these goals. Aini et al. (2025) Innovations such as M-Passport and SIMKIM have indeed succeeded in increasing transparency in official fees (because they are clearly stated in the application) and accountability in general application status (tracking). However, this digitalisation has failed to penetrate layers of opaque procedures and slow accountability systems when problems arise with applicant files. This gap indicates that Bureaucratic Reform (RB) has not entirely shifted organisational culture from merely digital efficiency to procedural integrity.

The main challenges arise when the system fails or when the applicant's files require complex manual verification (resulting in errors or delays) (Choirunnissa & Oktarina, 2025). Procedural transparency is immediately disrupted. Street-level bureaucrats tend to provide normative or passive responses, such as "waiting for central direction" or "being verified," without giving specific details about why the file is being held up or when the problem will be resolved. The inability or unwillingness of officers to explain these back-office processes creates a lack of clarity, fundamentally violating the principle of transparency. This loss of procedural transparency immediately impacts Performance Accountability. Accountability encompasses not only output (passport completion) but also the process and actions taken when deviations from SOPs occur. Because specific information about the causes of delays is hidden or unexplained, the public loses the ability to verify and critique bureaucratic actions, thus obscuring accountability (Fadhli & Putri, 2024). The failure of the accountability system is exacerbated by a complaints and feedback system that is considered slow and poorly integrated. While there are channels for complaints, the lack of prompt follow-up and transparent solutions makes the public feedback loop ineffective, rendering it merely an administrative formality rather than an active performance improvement mechanism (Balansa et al., 2025). Thus, digitalisation at Tanjung Perak Immigration has succeeded in making services faster (efficient NPM) but has failed to make them more open and accountable (effective Good Governance) when the system becomes more complex. To realise comprehensive RB, there must be policies that force digital systems and officers to proactively and transparently communicate any procedural obstacles, as well as strengthen internal accountability systems that can respond to public complaints quickly and openly.

**Table 2.** Challenges and Impacts of Digitalisation on Principles of Good Governance.

Findings Category	Principles of Good Governance	Informant	Quote	Performance Implications & Bureaucratic Reform
Cost Transparency vs. Procedures	Transparency	Service User Community	"The fees are clearly stated in the app, which is good. But when my files were called for re-verification, I didn't know why or how long it would take." "We can only say 'waiting for data from the centre' if there's an error. We're not allowed to explain technical details for fear of making mistakes or causing arguments with the applicant." "When I complained about a late passport, the officers' responses were always normative, blaming the system. I felt no one was taking responsibility for the original promise." "We have a digital complaint channel, but follow-up is still slow. Complaints must go through an escalation process and meetings; they can't be resolved by the implementer on the same day."	Partial Transparency Success on the cost aspect, but failure on the vital procedural aspect (back-end)
Information Ambiguity Delay	Procedural Transparency	Technical Implementer (Street-Level Bureaucrat)	"I'm starting to doubt their service promises. If the system is always being blamed, how can I trust that the service will improve in the future?"	Violating Transparency. The presence of bureaucratic red tape or the reluctance/inability of officials to proactively explain why problems occur.
Passive Performance Accountability	Performance Accountability	Service User Community		Accountability is obscured. Officials hide behind the system, weakening accountability for the process and actions taken in the event of irregularities.
Slow Complaint Feedback Loop	Accountability & Responsiveness	Structural Official (Head of Section)		Weak Accountability System. Formal channels exist, but they are ineffective and unresponsive. This demonstrates RB's failure to integrate feedback as a mechanism for rapid improvement.
Implications for Public Trust	Quality of Service (Reliability)	Service User Community		Undermining Trust. The failure of digitalisation to achieve transparency and accountability undermines service reliability and erodes long-term trust in the bureaucracy.

(Research Source 2025)

Based on Table 2, it can be concluded that although digital innovation in the Class I Immigration Travel Document Section of the Tanjung Perak TPI succeeded in creating front-end efficiency and meeting the target of partial transparency (clear costs in the application), it failed to fully realise the principles of good governance, particularly in the aspects of procedural transparency and performance accountability. Digital innovation, which should be a tool for openness, instead creates an information gap between the bureaucracy and the public (Wijayanto & Rani, 2024). This failure occurs when an anomaly or error occurs in the system. Quotes from Community Service Users indicate that although the costs are clear, they do not receive clarity on "why and how long" the files must be re-verified, suggesting the existence of Partial Transparency that focuses only on the financial aspects, not the core procedural aspects. This ambiguity is reinforced by Technical Implementers' admissions that they are "not allowed to explain the technical details" of the delay, reflecting the existence of bureaucratic red tape or internal policies that de facto violate the principle of Transparency as a primary prerequisite for Bureaucratic Reform (RB) (Noeridha, 2023).

This loss of procedural transparency directly impacts Performance Accountability. When complaints are filed, officers' responses, which are "always normative, blaming the system," indicate a blurred state of accountability; officers hide behind anonymous, decentralised technological failures, leaving no individual or unit accountable for the initial service promise. This reduces service responsiveness. Furthermore, the slowness of the

Complaints Feedback Loop, acknowledged by Structural Officials where complaints must go through an escalation process and meetings, rather than being resolved directly underscores the weaknesses of the Accountability system. Digital complaint channels have become mere formalities rather than effective mechanisms for performance improvement. This failure of digitalisation to achieve complete transparency and accountability has profound implications for public trust, undermining the reliability dimension of services (Afandi et al., 2025). In conclusion, digitalisation in Tanjung Perak succeeded in fulfilling the efficiency function of NPM (speed). Still, it failed to fulfil the integrity function of RB (openness and accountability), confirming that bureaucratic transformation requires proactive, transparent cultural change, not just the installation of sophisticated software (Son, 2024).

## 5. Conclusion

The implementation of digital innovations in travel document services at Tanjung Perak Immigration has yielded mixed results, with both success and failure. On the one hand, digitalisation, such as the implementation of SIMKIM and M-Passport, has successfully increased cost transparency and facilitated application status tracking, thus supporting the principles of good governance and fulfilling the pillars of bureaucratic reform. These innovations have reduced long queues and minimised face-to-face interactions, while simultaneously accelerating service delivery and increasing public trust in the technology system. However, these successes have not fully addressed structural bureaucratic obstacles or the organisational culture's legacy. The digital system, designed to increase transparency, has encountered obstacles when applicant files encounter errors or delays that require manual verification. This situation reveals gaps in the implementation of the principles of procedural transparency and full performance accountability. Field officers are often passive and unable to explain delays in detail, which creates ambiguity and undermines public trust. The recognition of these weaknesses indicates that bureaucratic reform still faces challenges in shifting organisational culture from mere digital efficiency to procedural integrity and real accountability. Furthermore, human resources, unstable digital infrastructure, and officer discretion play a significant role in the success or failure of these innovations. While technology can support the principles of transparency and participation, its effectiveness depends heavily on the readiness of human resources and a work culture that can adapt to new systems and consistently implement sound governance principles. Therefore, bureaucratic reform supported by digital innovation in the immigration sector must be continuously implemented by increasing human resource capacity, strengthening systems, and changing organisational culture to emphasise transparency, accountability, and excellent public service.

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