



Public Service Innovation and Adaptive Governance: A Comparative Perspective and Its Implications for Indonesia

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Abstract

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Public service innovation has become a key strategy in improving governance performance in Indonesia; however, its effectiveness remains uneven and limited in producing sustainable outcomes. This study analyzes the effectiveness of public service innovation policies and examines the urgency of adopting adaptive governance approaches based on international best practices. Using a normative juridical method with systematic and sociological approaches, the study evaluates the alignment between regulatory frameworks and their implementation, supported by comparative analysis. The findings indicate that although innovation is widely implemented, it is often fragmented, project-based, and insufficiently integrated into governance systems. As a result, innovation has not consistently generated systemic improvements in public service delivery. Comparative analysis shows that successful international practices emphasize adaptive governance characterized by flexibility, learning, and institutional integration. Therefore, strengthening adaptive governance is essential to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of innovation. The study contributes to advancing governance reform through more adaptive and integrated public administration practices.



1. Introduction

Public service innovation has become a central strategy in improving governance performance in many countries, particularly in response to increasing demands for efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness in public administration. Governments across the world have adopted innovation-driven approaches to transform service delivery and enhance institutional effectiveness. In Indonesia, the implementation of innovation in public services has been encouraged through regulatory frameworks such as Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 2009 tentang Pelayanan Publik and policy instruments related to public service innovation. Farhan (2023) highlights that innovation has been widely implemented across local governments as part of efforts to improve service quality. Similarly, Asmara et al. (2024) note that innovation initiatives have become increasingly prominent within bureaucratic systems in Indonesia. These developments indicate that innovation is formally recognized as a key component of governance reform.

Despite the widespread adoption of innovation practices, questions remain regarding their effectiveness in improving governance outcomes. Empirical studies suggest that the implementation of public service innovation in Indonesia often produces uneven results across regions and sectors. Hilmawan et al. (2023) demonstrate that while innovation can contribute to development outcomes, its impact is highly dependent on local capacity and institutional conditions. Hasanah et al. (2024) further emphasize that technological and organizational challenges limit the effectiveness of innovation initiatives in local governments. In addition, Muluk and Pratama (2021) highlight that innovation programs, such as public service

innovation competitions, tend to focus on short-term achievements rather than long-term institutional transformation. These findings suggest that innovation in Indonesia may be more project-based than system-oriented. As a result, the effectiveness of innovation policies requires critical evaluation.

From a global perspective, the concept of public sector innovation has evolved beyond isolated initiatives toward more integrated and adaptive governance models. Comparative studies indicate that successful innovation in public administration is closely linked to the ability of governance systems to adapt to changing conditions and complex challenges. Cinar et al. (2024) argue that public sector innovation must be understood within its institutional context, where different types of innovation interact to produce governance outcomes. Similarly, Tõnurist and Hanson (2020) emphasize that innovation in the public sector requires systemic approaches that integrate policy, organizational structures, and governance processes. These perspectives highlight that innovation is not merely about introducing new ideas but about transforming governance systems. This shift from isolated innovation to adaptive governance represents a critical development in contemporary public administration.

The concept of adaptive governance further emphasizes the need for flexibility, learning, and cross-sectoral coordination in managing complex governance challenges. Steelman (2022) defines adaptive governance as the capacity of institutions to respond effectively to dynamic and uncertain conditions. Nolte and Lindenmeier (2024) highlight that modern governance increasingly requires adaptive strategies to address complex and evolving public sector challenges. However, the

application of adaptive governance principles in Indonesia remains limited. Existing innovation practices often lack mechanisms for scalability, sustainability, and institutional integration. This creates a gap between international best practices and domestic implementation. Consequently, understanding this gap is essential for improving governance outcomes.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of public service innovation policies in improving governance performance in Indonesia and to examine the urgency of adopting adaptive governance approaches based on international best practices. The study applies a normative juridical method combined with systematic and sociological approaches to evaluate both regulatory frameworks and their implementation. By integrating national and international perspectives, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of innovation and governance practices. The study contributes to the development of more adaptive and effective governance models in Indonesia. Furthermore, it offers policy insights on how innovation can be transformed into a sustainable governance mechanism. Through this approach, the study supports the advancement of participatory, transparent, and service-oriented governance practices.

2. Literature Review

Public service innovation has been widely recognized as a key driver of governance improvement, particularly in enhancing efficiency, responsiveness, and service quality in public administration. Innovation in the public sector involves the introduction of new processes, technologies, and organizational practices aimed at

improving service delivery outcomes. Pratama (2020) explains that public service innovation in Indonesia has developed rapidly, driven by policy incentives and institutional reforms. Similarly, Ida and Annisa (2021) highlight that e-government initiatives have played a significant role in promoting innovation within public services. However, innovation is not inherently transformative; its effectiveness depends on how it is integrated into governance systems. Muluk and Pratama (2021) argue that innovation in Indonesia often remains fragmented and lacks sustainability beyond individual projects. These perspectives suggest that understanding innovation requires examining both its implementation and its systemic integration within governance structures.

From an international perspective, public sector innovation has evolved toward more comprehensive and context-sensitive approaches that emphasize systemic transformation rather than isolated initiatives. Cinar et al. (2024) highlight that different types of innovation such as process, organizational, and policy innovation must interact within institutional contexts to produce meaningful governance outcomes. Similarly, Tõnurist and Hanson (2020) emphasize that successful innovation in the public sector requires alignment between policy frameworks, institutional structures, and governance processes. These studies indicate that innovation should not be viewed as a standalone activity but as part of a broader governance system. The effectiveness of innovation therefore depends on its ability to adapt to changing conditions and complex policy environments. This perspective provides a comparative benchmark for evaluating innovation practices in Indonesia.

The concept of adaptive governance has emerged as a critical framework for understanding how public administration can respond to dynamic and uncertain environments. Adaptive governance emphasizes flexibility, learning, collaboration, and the ability of institutions to adjust policies and practices in response to changing conditions. Steelman (2022) defines adaptive governance as an approach that integrates institutional capacity with responsiveness to evolving challenges. Nolte and Lindenmeier (2024) further argue that adaptive governance is essential in managing complex and interconnected governance issues. Matei and Gogu (2023) highlight that adaptive public administration requires continuous learning and coordination across different levels of government. These perspectives suggest that innovation alone is insufficient without the capacity to adapt and sustain change. Therefore, adaptive governance provides a critical lens for evaluating the effectiveness of innovation in public services.

Despite the growing emphasis on innovation and adaptive governance, gaps remain in understanding how these concepts are implemented in practice within developing country contexts such as Indonesia. Asmara et al. (2024) highlight that public service innovation in Indonesia faces challenges related to institutional capacity, coordination, and sustainability. Hasanah et al. (2024) further emphasize that technological innovation often encounters barriers in implementation, limiting its effectiveness in improving service delivery. These findings indicate that innovation practices in Indonesia are not fully aligned with adaptive governance principles. As a result, innovation initiatives may fail to produce long-term governance improvements. This gap between international best practices and

domestic implementation underscores the need for further analysis. This study addresses this gap by examining both the effectiveness of innovation policies and the urgency of adopting adaptive governance approaches in Indonesia.

3. Methods

This study employs a normative juridical research method combined with systematic and sociological approaches to analyze the effectiveness of public service innovation policies and the urgency of adopting adaptive governance approaches in Indonesia. The normative approach is used to examine legal norms, policy frameworks, and governance principles related to public service innovation and administrative reform. The systematic approach is applied to interpret these frameworks in a structured manner by analyzing the relationship between national regulations and broader governance models. In addition, the sociological approach is used to assess how innovation policies are implemented in practice, particularly in relation to institutional capacity, organizational behavior, and service delivery outcomes. A comparative perspective is incorporated to evaluate differences between international best practices and the Indonesian context, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of governance effectiveness.

The sources of legal materials consist of primary legal materials, including national regulations governing public services and innovation policies, and secondary legal materials such as academic articles, books, and international governance reports related to public sector innovation and adaptive governance. All materials are selected based on their relevance and academic credibility. The analysis

is conducted using qualitative legal interpretation through systematic interpretation and normative reasoning, supported by comparative analysis to identify gaps between international governance models and domestic practices. This method enables the study to generate normative conclusions regarding both the effectiveness of innovation policies and the urgency of adopting adaptive governance approaches in Indonesia.

4. Results

4.1. Effectiveness of Public Service Innovation in Indonesia

The findings indicate that public service innovation in Indonesia has been widely implemented and formally integrated into governance practices, particularly at the local government level. Regulatory support through Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 2009 tentang Pelayanan Publik and policy initiatives promoting innovation have encouraged institutions to adopt new approaches in service delivery. Farhan (2023) highlights that local governments have actively developed innovative programs to improve public service quality and accessibility. Similarly, Pratama (2020) demonstrates that public service innovation has expanded significantly across different regions, supported by institutional incentives and competition-based programs. These developments indicate that innovation has become an integral part of governance reform efforts. However, the effectiveness of these innovations in producing sustainable governance outcomes remains limited.

Empirical evidence suggests that the impact of public service innovation on governance performance varies significantly across regions and institutional

contexts. Hilmawan et al. (2023) demonstrate that innovation can contribute to development outcomes, but its effectiveness is highly dependent on local capacity and institutional conditions. In addition, Hasanah et al. (2024) highlight that technological and organizational challenges often hinder the successful implementation of innovation initiatives. Muluk and Pratama (2021) further emphasize that innovation programs tend to prioritize short-term achievements rather than long-term institutional transformation. These findings indicate that innovation in Indonesia is often project-based and lacks sustainability. As a result, the contribution of innovation to governance improvement is uneven and context-dependent.

Another limitation of public service innovation in Indonesia is the lack of integration and scalability within governance systems. Asmara et al. (2024) note that innovation initiatives are frequently isolated within specific institutions and are not systematically adopted across the broader administrative framework. This fragmentation reduces the potential impact of innovation on overall governance performance. Ida and Annisa (2021) further highlight that e-government innovations often face challenges in coordination and implementation across different administrative levels. These issues indicate that innovation practices are not yet fully embedded within governance systems. Consequently, innovation has not been able to function as a transformative mechanism for governance improvement. This suggests that the effectiveness of public service innovation in Indonesia remains limited in achieving systemic change.

4.2. Urgency of Adopting Adaptive Governance: A Comparative Perspective

The urgency of adopting adaptive governance approaches in Indonesia becomes evident when comparing domestic innovation practices with international best practices. Global governance models emphasize that innovation must be supported by adaptive systems capable of responding to dynamic and complex challenges. Tõnurist and Hanson (2020) highlight that successful public sector innovation requires systemic integration and continuous adaptation within governance frameworks. Similarly, Cinar et al. (2024) argue that innovation effectiveness depends on the interaction between different types of innovation within institutional contexts. These perspectives indicate that innovation alone is insufficient without the capacity for adaptation and systemic integration. In comparison, Indonesia's innovation practices remain largely fragmented and project-oriented.

Adaptive governance provides a framework for understanding how public administration can achieve sustainable and effective innovation. Steelman (2022) emphasizes that adaptive governance involves flexibility, learning, and the ability to adjust policies in response to changing conditions. Nolte and Lindenmeier (2024) further highlight that adaptive governance is essential in addressing complex and evolving challenges in public administration. In addition, Matei and Gogu (2023) argue that adaptive governance requires coordination across institutional levels and continuous learning processes. These characteristics are largely absent in Indonesia's current innovation practices. As a result, innovation initiatives often fail to produce

long-term governance improvements. This indicates a significant gap between international best practices and domestic implementation.

The comparison between international models and Indonesia's governance practices highlights the urgent need for adopting adaptive governance approaches. Bertelli et al. (2020) emphasize that governance systems in developing countries must evolve to address complex administrative challenges. In Indonesia, the persistence of fragmented innovation, limited scalability, and weak institutional integration indicates that current approaches are insufficient. Without adopting adaptive governance principles, innovation will remain limited in its ability to improve governance outcomes. Furthermore, the absence of adaptive mechanisms may hinder the sustainability of reform efforts. Therefore, strengthening governance through adaptive approaches is essential to enhance the effectiveness of public service innovation. This underscores the urgency of aligning domestic practices with international governance standards.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that the effectiveness of public service innovation in Indonesia is constrained by the absence of adaptive governance mechanisms that can sustain and scale innovation efforts. While innovation has been widely adopted as part of governance reform, its implementation remains largely fragmented and project-oriented. This supports the argument that innovation, when not embedded within a broader governance system, cannot produce transformative outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, adaptive governance emphasizes the

importance of flexibility, learning, and institutional integration in managing complex public administration challenges. The results indicate that Indonesia's innovation practices have not yet incorporated these adaptive characteristics. Consequently, innovation functions more as an administrative initiative than as a systemic governance transformation. This finding reinforces the view that effective governance requires not only innovation but also the capacity to adapt and sustain change.

The urgency of adopting adaptive governance approaches further reflects the need to align domestic governance practices with international standards. Comparative analysis demonstrates that successful public sector innovation in other contexts is supported by integrated systems that enable continuous learning and coordination across institutions. In contrast, the lack of such mechanisms in Indonesia limits the long-term impact of innovation initiatives. This suggests that governance reform should move beyond promoting innovation toward building adaptive institutional frameworks. Strengthening adaptive governance involves enhancing coordination, improving institutional capacity, and fostering a culture of continuous learning within public administration. Moreover, integrating adaptive principles into policy frameworks can help ensure that innovation contributes to sustainable governance improvements. These findings position adaptive governance as a critical component in advancing public service reform in Indonesia. Therefore, future policy development should prioritize the institutionalization of adaptive governance to maximize the impact of innovation.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that public service innovation in Indonesia has been widely implemented and formally integrated into governance practices, yet its effectiveness in improving governance performance remains limited. Although regulatory frameworks such as Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 2009 tentang Pelayanan Publik provide a strong foundation for promoting innovation, the findings indicate that innovation initiatives are often fragmented, project-based, and insufficiently integrated into broader governance systems. As a result, innovation has not consistently produced sustainable or systemic improvements in public service delivery. These conditions demonstrate that the effectiveness of innovation is not determined solely by its adoption but by its ability to function within a cohesive governance framework. Therefore, strengthening the institutional integration and scalability of innovation is essential to enhance its impact on governance performance.

Furthermore, the study highlights that adopting adaptive governance approaches is an urgent priority for improving the effectiveness of public service innovation in Indonesia. Comparative analysis shows that international best practices emphasize the importance of flexibility, continuous learning, and institutional coordination in sustaining innovation. In contrast, the absence of these adaptive mechanisms in Indonesia limits the long-term effectiveness of innovation initiatives. Addressing this gap requires a shift from project-based innovation toward systemic and adaptive governance models. Policy efforts should focus on enhancing institutional capacity, strengthening coordination across government levels, and

embedding adaptive principles into governance frameworks. By aligning domestic practices with international standards, Indonesia can improve the sustainability and effectiveness of public service innovation. This study therefore recommends the institutionalization of adaptive governance as a key strategy for advancing governance reform.

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