

Innovation in the 'Public Sector': Putting it into Perspective

Governments around the world advance innovation as a significant means to improving public services (Walker, 2006:311). Within this discussion the word innovation seems to be used habitually by policy makers where there are high expectations in relation to reviving, boosting and renewing the flagging economies and the public sector services. Within this context, innovation in the public sector is recognized as a vital factor in meeting the challenges of globalization and demographic changes, and simultaneously sustaining a high level of public services to citizens and businesses.

However, there is ambiguity and disagreement in the 'literature' with no universally accepted definition (National Audit Office 2006; Becheikh, N. et al 2007) about what innovation is, And about what deserves to be classified as an 'innovation' (Hartley 2005; Moore and Hartley 2008; Osborne 2008). Through reviewing the literature concerning innovation theory and the more recent literature on innovation in the public sector this paper compares and contrasts both definitions and classifications of innovation in an effort to shed more light on this complex area.

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