PUBLIC INNOVATION IN BRAZIL: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS TYPES, RESULTS AND DRIVERS

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Public innovation has become a field of interest on its own. The theme has moved from being an exclusive issue for firms and private enterprises to become also relevant in public organizations worldwide. Public sector agencies, therefore, generate or adopt innovations in response to the constant economic, political, social and technological changes in a more globalized and networked world, constrained by rising citizen expectations, complex problems and tight budgets.

In that sense, many have claimed that innovation can contribute not only to economic growth, industrial change and competitive advantage, but also to improve the public service quality and efficiency by enhancing the governmental capacity in solving problems. In Brazil, specifically, a certain degree of consensus about management innovations has increased over the last two decades. However, as in other countries, there is a lack of evidence-based knowledge regarding different dimensions of innovation.

One important dimension that must be deeply investigated is the innovation determinants. In other words, which factors influence the public sector innovation practices? Do the innovations determinants or drivers vary accordingly to the innovation's type or stage? Do the different innovation's drivers affect their goals and results distinctly? The paper aims to discuss these relevant questions. The original data comes from the Federal Management Innovation Award (FMIA), the most important innovation prize in Brazil. The annual award was created by the National School of Public Administration (Enap) to recognize innovative practices that have improved governmental capacity and service delivery. Every year, twenty initiatives are nominated to the final, and ten are awarded as the most innovative management practices in the federal government.

To make a contribution to the literature, this article builds a dataset of quantitative variables employing content analysis on runners up and winner's initiatives reports. Subsequently, we examine their influential factors, including environmental, organizational, innovation characteristics and individual/employee levels. Moreover, some exploratory analyzes are undertaken to explain the relationship among these factors and other relevant aspects, such as innovation type, decision process and initiation phase.

In order to provide theoretical basis to support the paper's analysis, we undertook a comprehensive literature review on innovation in public administration, not only relied on the Brazilian literature, but also on international publications. It focuses, primarily, on the determinants or influential factors that affect the innovation's generation or the decision to adopt an innovative practice in the public sector. Management innovation is a multidimensional construct that may vary according to salient aspects, such as types, objectives/ outputs, stages and so on. Historically, organizational and environmental factors play a dominant role in the debates about the capacity of organizations to innovate. However, their relevance varies in accordance to particular cases and, above all, to the combination of them, not only as a consequence of an isolated factor.

Overall, it is evident that the complexity of innovation determinants involves a considerable degree of overlapping among these factors and levels. In order to facilitate our analysis, based on this section discuss and Vries, Bekkers and Tummers (2014) classification, we employ four different levels of influential factors, as follows: *i*) organizational; *ii*) environmental; *iii*) innovation characteristics and, *iv*) individual/employee level.

The inquiry's analyses show almost 60% of the initiatives were generated inside the organization. Innovations implemented because of diffusion processes, *i.e.* external ideas incorporated by federal ministries and agencies, in total, represent around 30%. The majority

of the initiatives are highly concentrated in the Federal District - DF (75%), whereas 25% are undertaken in federal agencies spread over the other twenty-six states.

When we examine innovations by policy sector, the data hightlighs a significant diversity. Twenty two ministries were nominated and won the prize at least once along the analyzed period. However, the distri-buitions are far from equal. As the literature advocates, organizational size and complexity matter (European Commission, 2010; Fernandez & Wise, 2010; Hansen, 2012). In this specific case, education, health and justice, that not only have the biggest structures in the Brazil-ian cabinet but also are som of the eldest ministries, leads the ranking with 14, 13 and 11 winner practices over the last nine years. On the contrary, smaller and newer ministries, such as cities and sports, have not won at all. We also note that normally the number of nominees and awardees initiatives are relatively close.

Interesting and expected findings concern innovations' goals and outcomes. Innovation goals linked to improving organizational performance, such as quality, are cited by the majority of the initiatives. The same happens to effectiveness for the nominees and efficiency for the innovations awarded. On the other end, the objective related to social involvement is rarely mentioned in the winners' innovation reports.

Concerning the determinants, the research's find-ings confirm that innovation is a consequence of the combination of factors and not an isolated construct. These innovation drivers have different levels of impact, depending on the innovation type; however, all four levels of influential factors are common in the Brazil-ian case. In sum, the most recurrent ones are relative advantage; cost benefit; slack resources; network/ cooperation and; leadership.

In that sense, we conclude that the paper has accomplished its objective and, subsequently, has produced some important empirical knowledge and insights to the public management debate. Nonethe-less, the results must be treated as preliminary in this broader line of research and, therefore, deserve further investigation. They, certainly, confirm our perception that innovation in public sector is a complex and chal-lenging subject in this comprehensive research field. In order to advance on the innovation determinants, the inquiry next steps should be to comparatively analyze all FMIA candidates, to investigate management trends over the last decade and to examine innovation in other branches and levels of government.

SUMÁRIO EXECUTIVO

Discussion Paper