

## **Juxtaposing South Africa's Private Sector and Its Public Service Regarding Innovation Diffusion, to Explore the Obstacles to E-Governance**

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**Abstract :** Despite the benefits of innovation diffusion in the South African public service, implementation thereof seems to be problematic, particularly with regard to e-governance which would enhance the quality of service delivery, especially accessibility, choice, and mode of operation. This paper reports on differences between the public service and the private sector in terms of innovation diffusion. Innovation diffusion will be investigated to explore identified obstacles that are hindering successful implementation of e-governance. The research inquiry is underpinned by the diffusion of innovation theory, which is premised on the assumption that innovation has a distinct channel, time, and mode of adoption within the organisation. A comparative thematic document analysis was conducted to investigate organisational differences with regard to innovation diffusion. A similar approach has been followed in other countries, where the same conceptual framework has been used to guide document analysis in studies in both the private and the public sectors. As per the recommended conceptual framework, three organisational characteristics were emphasised, namely the external characteristics of the organisation, the organisational structure, and the inherent characteristics of the leadership. The results indicated that the main difference in the external characteristics lies in the focus and the clientele of the private sector. With regard to organisational structure, private organisations have veto power, which is not the case in the public service. Regarding leadership, similarities were observed in social and environmental responsibility and employees' attitudes towards immediate supervision. Differences identified included risk taking, the adequacy of leadership development, organisational approaches to motivation and involvement in decision making, and leadership style. Due to the organisational differences observed, it is recommended that differentiated strategies be employed to ensure effective innovation diffusion, and ultimately e-governance. It is recommended that the results of this research be used to stimulate discussion on ways to improve collaboration between the mentioned sectors, to capitalise on the benefits of each sector.

**Keywords :** E-governance, ICT, innovation diffusion, comparative analysis

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