Innovation in services: concepts and measurements



In trade as in numerous service activities: Concepts and measurements methods of Innovation have to be adapted

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How innovation is defined in the Oslo Manual

- Technological Product and Process Innovations (TPP)
- The product or process should be new (or significantly improved) to the firm
- Technological innovation not only involves products and processes but also ancillary and support activities



A critical view of the definition

"Innovation requires an objective improvement in the performance of a product": not easy to measure

- Innovation affects products (goods or services) or processes
 - the dividing line between product and process: the two are closely connected



- "Technologically" new or improved.
 In services, the term "technological" could be understood to mean « using high-tech plant and equipment »
 - excludes some "technical" innovations which are at the very heart of firms in the service industries
 - conflict with the fact that innovation can also "affect human resources or working methods and the organisation in general"



- Technological process innovation in ancillary activities is included (purchasing, sales, accounting, IT...)
 - a change in ancillary activities does not usually improve the performance of the final product



The "French" innovation survey

Coverage:

- Trade (firms that have to be innovative): hypermarkets, large department stores (specialized/non specialized) and central purchasing firms
- Services (activities not covered by CIS3): hotels and restaurants (NACE 55), real estate activities (70), renting without an operator (71), business services (part of 74), audiovisual (part of 92), personal services (part of 93)



The "French" innovation survey

- Definition of innovation:
 - no reference to technology
 - three categories of innovation
 - New concepts in sales or services
 - New methods of managing flows (of merchandise, information or services)
 - Re-organisation
- A "main" innovation is described: simultaneous changes of different types



The "French" innovation survey: first results (1)

- % of firms having introduced innovation in the previous three years
 - 46% in trade: a choice (firms that have to be innovative were surveyed)
 - 13% in service activities: small size/specific activities
- The main innovation introduced

in % of innovating units	concepts	methods	organisation
trade	63	26	11
service activities	64	21	15

The "French" innovation survey: first results (2)

- A problem: the logic behind this classification has been misunderstood
- The main innovation is a new concept and is described as a technological change or a change in which technology plays a part
 - 57% in trade
 - 61% in service activities
- Innovation is complex: simultaneous changes