EFFECTIVE BUREAUCRACY AND PRODUCTIVITY IN AKWA IBOM STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effective bureaucracy and productivity in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service, and ways of increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the service. The subjects are staff of Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. The data were collected from interview and questionnaire with a twenty five item questions administered to each subject. The method used in the analysis of data was Pearson's product moment correlation, chart and frequency distribution tables. The findings establish that bureaucratic formalities hinder the degree of productivity in the service. In a bid to combat this problem, various government agencies, individuals and non-governmental organizations should adopt a kind of liberal rules for guidance of behavior, and in decision making, allow both the senior and junior staff to contribute their quota and thus minimize this social menace of low productivity in the service.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, formalities, study of Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Introduction

The Akwa Ibom State Civil Service is a statutory body established in consonance with section 197, part 11A of the third schedule of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Its functions include appointments, promotions and discipline of the civil servants. It also serves as an appellate body for appeals/petitions and complaints received in respect of appointments, promotions, discipline, and other personnel matters. To ensure efficient and effective service delivery, the commission discharged the above functions in respect of officers on salary grade levels 07-17 in state civil service, while the personnel matters in respect of staff on salary grade levels 01-06 were delegated to the junior staff management committee of Ministries and extra-ministerial departments. In addition, members of the commission and senior management staff in the commission serve as observers in senior staff management committees and junior staff management committees in ministries and extra ministerial departments respectively.

The civil service is the engine that drives the wheel of government. Though the service has over time been taunted to be ineffective and slow, the civil service is the only reliable bridge between every old and new government. It gives people (with or without disabilities) ample opportunities for sustainable employment and livelihood enhancement in the society, (Effiong, Ekanem and Ottong, 2023). It is the stabilizing force and sustaining foundation for an incoming administration. The civil service, using its various apparatus, appendages and institutions, makes positive inputs towards the initiation of laudable policies and programmes for the people. These policies and programmes are tailored in line with the vision, policy thrust and agenda of the existing government. Though, the civil servant is expected to be politically neutral, yet he or she is bound to exhibit total and unsolicited loyalty to the government in power at all times, expressing at the same time unflinching commitment to the attainment of goals and objectives of the government.

In the case of Akwa Ibom State civil service, these policies and programmes tend to be hindered by the "unbent rules" of bureaucracy. Perhaps, the most abused word in the field of management is Bureaucracy". Over years, "Bureaucracy has acquired a very dissatisfying status in the civil service. The term, "Bureaucracy" literally means government behind the desk. But the first man to use the term ideal type bureaucracy" was a great German sociologist, Max Weber (1922). The great scholar came out with an ideal construct of a model of formal organization which he termed bureaucracy after probably observing the German civil service which in his opinion was very effective and efficient at that time.

It was in the realization of the enormous responsibilities expected of the civil service that his Excellency, Pastor Umo Bassey Eno, on assumption of duty, pledged to effectively re-position the State's Civil Service to be more pro-active, efficient, people centered and result-oriented. He needed to lubricate the service (the engine) in order for it to spin the wheel of his government at the speed he required, knowing that the civil service was in dire need of transformation. According to Agha, Ukommi, Ekpenyong and Effiong, (2020), no transformation succeeds in any society without effective industrial development. The question now is, has the civil service been truly transformed? What are its problems and realizations? What is actually the cause of these misfortunes? What is the way forward and how could it be achieved?

The answer drives back to the growing ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the bureaucratic rules in the civil service.

Bureaucratic Challenges in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service

Bureaucratic model is the blue print of Max Weber's structural paradigm in which organizations are defined in terms of regularities of hierarchical authority, task allocation and functional co-ordination, based on unbent rules which do not allow for innovation, limits freedom and create experts without human face, which according to the human relations approach inhibits productivity in the civil service. The question to raise now is; how has bureaucracy influenced the level of development in the service? The political character of

bureaucracy is something to point out; an enduring feature of the state's public attitude toward government bureaucracy is the belief that, bureaucracies are, and should be, politically neutral organizations that carry out the administrative tasks of elected official assigned to them. In this view, legislature and the Governor formulate policies and the bureaucracy implements them. From the perspective, bureaucratic administration is simply a mechanistic process for implementing the wishes of elected officials.

The Nigerian or the state's expectation that government bureaucracy should be politically neutral has greatly affected the development of the state's civil service. For example, the creation of the civil service commission sprang from the desire to hire workers who could perform skilled tasks and who would be protected from the political pressures of the political superior appointees imposed on them. Proponents believed that providing members of the civil service commission with fixed and staggered terms in office would minimize the possibilities for political interference and thereby enable the commissioners to act in the best interest of the public.

Although the notion of bureaucratic neutrality is appealing, close examination of administrating tasks of government ministries shows that bureaucracies are inherently political institutions. To begin with, implementing the decisions of legislature, the Governor, and the courts require that ministries do much more than mechanically putting the wishes of others into effect. This is because, the legislature, Governor, or the Court lack the time needed to specify all the details of public policy, as well as to anticipate all possible future developments, bureaucracies by necessity must try to translate broad principles and goals into concrete programmes. The power to give meaning to what may be no more than general principles gives bureaucrats a range of discretion as they decide how to fulfill their duties. Ministries use their power to administer policy and shape policy rules to pursue their own interests and their own visions of good public policy as well as that of responding to the demands of other political actors.

The work of bureaucracy is also political because the legislature and governor seldom speak with a single, coherent voice. Both want to direct the actions of the bureaucracy, but neither can unilaterally command its obedience. Instead, they must compete for its allegiance. Ministries can turn this competition to their advantage since they ca play legislature and governor against each other. Merton (1968) argues that certain aspects of bureaucratic procedure may be dysfunctional to the organization. In particular, he stated that they may encourage behaviour which inhibits the realization of organizational goals. While agreeing that the various elements of bureaucracy out lined in Weber's ideal type serve to further organizational efficiency, Merton maintains that they inevitably produce dysfunctional consequences. He suggested that "the very elements which conduce towards efficiency in general, produce inefficiency in specific instances". The work of bureaucracy is inherently political. The changes in the ministry of finance manage the tax payer's money under leaders with divergent policy goals attests to this. The process of implementing policy almost by necessity gives them discretion, and because they are responsible to both legislature and Governor, ministries have

some freedom to shape their own rules and pursue their own political goals which may not favour the general public. Thus, Akwa lbom State civil service, based on these bureaucratic procedures has been mismanaged and eventually the degree of productivity has incessantly reduced.

The underlying questions now are: how have these "unbent rules" hindered the progress of the state's civil service? What is the attitude of the public towards these incessant rules? Could these rules be minimized or reduced to effect greater productivity in the service? What are the steps towards this great success and how could it be attained? What is the extent and gravity of the effect of bureaucratic rules towards the civil service's development? Are they negative or positive? These and other questions would be analyzed in the course of this study. The significance centered mostly on how bureaucratic rules could be minimized for possible productivity and development in the civil service.

As have been noted earlier, bureaucratic formalities have hindered innovativeness in the civil service; the bureaucrat has not been taught to improvise and innovate and in addition, he may well be afraid to do so. The devotion and strict adherence to those rules may lead to displacement of goals. The question of impersonality often times creates friction and enmity between officials and the public and thus, delimits the rate of productivity in the service. The neglect of the "Social Man", and emphasis on the "mechanical man', does not promote effectiveness and efficiency in the service. Thus, this work emphasizes the minimization of these formalities which will promote innovativeness in the service. The reduction of these rules will enhance the interaction between workers, managers and the general public in the service; thus, increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

A situation in which bureaucracy creates experts without human face is fought against in this case; cognizance could be taken of peculiarities in individual's or client's cases. This brings in a level of humanization of workers and the entire public. The worker under this case becomes sure of himself in event of being allowed to take actions in emergency situations. Since in the capitalist society the bureaucratic arrangement is the instrument of the bourgeoisie for exploitation and alienation of the workers, reduction of such rules means reduction of the exploitative tendency of the bourgeoisie, fighting against impersonality, oligarchical ineptitude and official insensitivity in the service. The workers will now have their freedom and thus promoting creativity, innovativeness and authenticity of purpose. In this case, the psychosocial needs of the workers are satisfied and the goals and aspirations of informal groups within the service are reconciled with that of the entire organization for increased productivity. This, according to Akpan and Effiong (2021), are critical to addressing bureaucratic challenges that bedeviled functionalities of organizational structure of every society. Therefore, the minimization of these "unbent rules" would rebuild the fabrics of "humanness" in the service, reduce, the syndrome of anomie, reduce conflict between the civil service employees and the general public, enhance innovation and creativity, reduce exploitation of workers by employers and most especially help in the attainment of effectiveness, efficiency and increased productivity in the entire civil service.

Objectives of the Study

 i. To critically examine how bureaucracy has positively or negatively influenced the growth and development of Akwa Ibom State civil service.

 ii. To identify the nature of bureaucratic formalities in Akwa IbomState civil service.

 iii. To determine the opinion and attitude of employees and the general public.

 iv. To evaluate how bureaucratic formalities influences employee's productivity, its advantages and disadvantages in the service.

 v. To ascertain whether or not bureaucratic formalities have adverse effects on the civil service employees and to suggest ways of improving productivity in the service.

Hypotheses

H_1: There is a positive relationship between bureaucratic formalities and increased productivity.

H_2: There is a strong correlation between bureaucracy and productivity.

Theoretical Framework

Bureaucracy is a concept in sociology and political science referring to the way that the administrative execution and enforcement of legal rules are socially organized. Four structural concepts are central to the definition of bureaucracy.

- A well-defined division of administrative labour among persons and offices.
- A personnel system with consistent patterns of recruitment and Stable linear careers.
- A hierarchy among offices, such that the authority and status are differentially distributed among actors.
- A formal and informal networks that connect organizational actors to one another through flows of information and patterns of cooperation.

Examples of everyday bureaucracies include governments, armed forces, corporations, non-governmental organizations (NGOS), hospitals, courts, ministries and schools.

While the concept as such existed at least from the early forms of nationhood in ancient times, the word "bureaucracy' itself stems from the word "bureau" used from the early 18th century in the Western Europe not just to refer to a writing desk, but to an office... that is, a workplace, where officials worked.

The original French meaning of the word bureau was baize used to cover desks. The term bureaucracy came into use shortly before the French Revolution of 1789, and from there rapidly spread to other countries. The Greek suffix kratia or Kratos — means "Power" or "rule".

In a letter of July 1, 1790, the German Baron Von Grimm declared:

We are obsessed by the idea of regulation, and our masters of Requests refuse to understand that there is infinity of things in a great state with which a government should not concern itself".

Jean Claude Marie Vincent de Gournay sometimes used to say, "we have an illness in France which bids fair to play havoc with us; this illness is called bureaumaflia". Sometimes, he referred to a fourth or fifth form of government under the heading of bureaucrat.

In another letter of July 15, 1765, Baron Grimm wrote also, "The real spirit of the laws in France is that bureaucracy of which the Late Monsieur de Gournay used to complain so greatly; here the offices, clerks, secretaries, appointed to benefit the public interest, indeed the public interest appears to have been established so that offices might exist. This quote refers to a traditional controversy about bureaucracy, namely the perversion of means and ends so that the greater good is lost sight as corollary, the substitution of sectional interests for the general interest. The suggestion here is that, left uncontrolled, bureaucracy will become increasingly self-serving and corrupt, rather than serving the society.

Perhaps the early example of bureaucrat is the scribe, who first arose as a professional on the early cities of summer. The Sumerian script was so complicated that it required specialists who had trained for their entire lives in the discipline of writing to manipulate it. These scribes could wield significant power, as they had a total monopoly on the keeping of records and creation of inscriptions on monuments to kings. In later, larger empires like Achaemeflid Persia, bureaucracies quickly expanded as government expanded and increased its functions. In the Persian Empire, the central government was divided into administrative provinces led by satraps. The satraps were appointed by the shah to control the provinces. In addition, general and loyal secretaries were stationed in each province to supervise troop recruitment and keep records, respectively. The Achaemenid Great Kings also sent royal inspectors to tour the empire and report on local conditions.

During the chaos of the spring and Autumn period and the Warring states, Confucius recognized the need for a stable system of administrators to lend good governance even when the leaders were inept. Chinese bureaucracy, first implemented during the Qin dynasty but under more Confucian lines under the Han, calls for the appointment of bureaucratic positions based on merit via a system of examinations. Although the power of the Chinese bureaucrats waxed and waned throughout China's long history, the imperial examination system lasted as late as 1905, and modern China still employs a formidable bureaucracy in its daily workings. Modern bureaucracies arose as the government of states grew larger during the modern period, and especially following the industrial revolution: along with this expansion came the recognition of corruption and nepotism in the managerial system.

The work of Max Weber is usually taken as the starting point in sociology of organization because of his "ideal type bureaucracy". Weber believed that a particular form of organization-bureaucracy becoming the defining characteristic of modern industrial society. Weber regards social reality as infinitely variable and can only be studied or analysed through the framework of the "Ideal types". One of such conceptual frameworks, which Weber considered "useful both for historical explanation and understanding the action of the hypothetical actor", is bureaucracy. The model bureaucracy could be regarded as structural paradigm in the sense that "Organizations can be defined in terms of regularities of hierarchical authority, task allocation and functional co-ordination.

Weber's view of bureaucracy must be seen in the context of his general theory of social action. He argued that all human action is directed by meanings, thus, in order to understand and explain action, the meanings and motives in which is behind it must be appreciated: Weber identified three types of actions which are distinguished by the meanings on which they are based; these are "affective" or "emotional action", based on individual's affective state at that point in time, traditional action which stems from the custom or norms of the society, and the legal rational action which is goal oriented. This involves a clear awareness of goal; it also involves systematic assessment of means of achieving such goals.

In Weber's words, rational action is "the methodical attainment of a definitely given and practical ends, by means of increasing precise calculations of means. He believed that rational action is the dominant mode of action in modern industrial society and referred to it as rationalization in which bureaucracy is an example; a clearly defined goal and clear means of attainment of such goals. He talked about legitimacy of authority which can be based on various types of meanings; thus he identified three types of authority; traditional, charismatic and legal rational authority. The three types of legitimacy based on the above authority are affective, traditional and rational legitimacy.

In a traditional authority, obedience is derived through stipulated rules, norms and customs, in a charismatic authority, it is based on super-human, supernatural or extraordinary characteristics possessed by the leader, which makes, the subjects to obey him, while rational authority, legitimacy and control stem neither from the perceived personal qualities of the leader and the devotion they excite nor from a commitment to traditional wisdom and the authority which resides in traditional status, but on the acceptance of a set of impersonal rules which govern behaviour. Like other forms of authority, rational legal authority produces a particular kind of organizational structure which is bureaucracy in which Weber defines as "a hierarchical organization designed rationally to co-ordinate the work of many individuals in the pursuit of administrative goals based on clearly defined tasks, hierarchical arrangements, abstract rules, formalistic impersonality, technical expertise and strict separation of private activities from the public ones.

Method

A descriptive study was conducted among the staff of Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. Two hypotheses were formulated. Section B part of the questionnaire was posed to elicit responses from the sampled respondents. The subjects are staff of Akwa Ibom State Civil Service. The method of data collection was interview and questionnaire methods with twenty five interview questions administered to each subject and their responses recorded. Supportive information was gotten from observation of the area of study, Journals, government white paper and gazettes. The method used in the analysis of data was simple percentage and frequency distribution tables. The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient test of significance was also used.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: There is a positive relationship between bureaucratic formalities and increased productivity

Category	x	X^2	Y	Y^2	XY
01-06	80	6400	40	1600	3200
07-10	60	3600	20	400	1200
12-13	70	4900	20	400	1400
14-17	30	900	15	225	450
18 & above	10	100	5	25	50

R = 0.9

Test of significance r = 3.57; Critical value = 2.35at a 0.05

Decision: Since test of significance is 3.57 and the table value is 2.35, this means that there is a negative relationship between bureaucratic formalities and Productivity. In this case, the calculated value of 3.57 is greater than the table value of 2.35 at a 0.05 level of significance. This means that the higher the level of bureaucratic formalities the lower the productivity.

Table 2: There is a strong correlation between bureaucracy and a high rate of productivity

Category	X	X^2	Y	Y^2	XY
01-06	100	10000	20	400	2000
07-10	80	6400	10	100	800
12-13	50	2500	10	100	500
14-17	40	1600	5	25	200
18 & above	30	900	5	25	150
Total	300	21400	50	650	3650

R= 0.91
Test of significance r   = 3.822
The table value = 2.35 at a 0.05

Decision: Since the calculated value of 3.822 is greater than the table value of 2.35, this means that there is a weak correlation between bureaucratic formalities and productivity, in this case, bureaucratic formalities affects the level of productivity. In this case, bureaucratic formalities do not encourage high productivity in the service.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This research has provided an appraisal of the effects of bureaucracy on the civil service's Productivity in Akwa Ibom State. According to the findings gotten from the responses of the respondents, bureaucracy hinders productivity and development in the service. Some scholars have tried in different perspectives in order to show the negative effects of bureaucracy and possible means of minimizing these rules but to no avail; the Maxian and the theory of bureaucratic dysfunction by Crozier (1964) have tried to expose the negative effects of bureaucracy on Productivity in the civil service. It therefore becomes necessary to call on both government and leaders of different modern organization to be more committed in the reduction of these "undesired rules" to effect efficiency and effectiveness in the service. Only a sincerity of purpose, in pursuit of a more liberal rule that would govern performances in the service could bring increased Productivity and development. A situation in which these "unbent rules" only favours the senior cadre will only politicize their efforts and in effects perpetuates under-development and low productivity in the service.

If the reforms must succeed in reducing or abolishing these rules in the civil service, then concerted efforts must be made by government and leaders of different modern organizations to reduce its implications and thus increase the degree of productivity in the service. Although these "rules" cannot be totally abolished or eradicated since there must be some sort of guidance of performances, we must do something in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the State's civil service. A flaw of bureaucracy to be taken cognizance of, is the tendency towards "over specialization" due to intensive division of labour, and this in men leads to relative mobility of labour and skills in which an individual is being used to a particular machine and function and if being removed from that place, finds it difficult to adapt to a new position, this type of short coming should be eradicated and productivity enhanced.

Based on the findings, the researcher therefore proposes the following suggestions for improving the plight of Akwa Ibom State Civil Service:

i.   In decision making processes, the state government should abolish and eradicate rules that do not bring progress and increase productivity.

ii.   Government should encourage a sort of liberal rules for guidance of performances that would encourage productivity, effectiveness and efficiency in the service; innovativeness, creativity and hard work should be encouraged and compensated in the service.

iii.   Government should adopt an open system of equality of opportunity in the sense of allowing staff from the junior cadre to take spontaneous action and not necessarily waiting for commands from their superiors.

iv.   The psychosocial needs of the workers first of all requires satisfaction before they can put in their best, hence, informal, unofficial and co-operative groups should be encouraged within the work place as this will help in increasing efficiency and productivity in the civil service.

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