



# An Assessment of Bureaucratic Capacity, Financial Resources and Accountability as Instruments of Effective Policy Implementation

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**Abstract:** For employees. It is therefore, recommended that government agencies should take these vital components into consideration so as any nation to record the desired progress and achieve development objectives, its policies must be properly executed. This is based on the fact that implementing government policies irrespective of the sector concerned is very crucial as it promotes accountability, efficiency in service delivery and improves quality. However, for policies to be effectively implemented, certain factors must be taking into consideration. This research assessed some important components of ensuring effective implementation in government bureaucracies as identified by Elmore (1978, 1997). These are bureaucratic capacity, financial resources and accountability. The research used literature review as its map of action, and identified that bureaucratic capacity could be assessed through professionalism, merit recruitment and diffusion of power. Financial resources on the other hand, could be assessed through performance based pay, cost benefit analysis and fiscal discipline. While accountability depends on the commitments of individual to have effectiveness and efficiency in implementing government policies.

**Keywords:** Bureaucratic capacity, financial resources, accountability, policy implementation

## 1. Introduction

The importance of ensuring successful development objectives could not be over-emphasized. Development objectives are however achieved throughout the world with an improvement in economic growth. This could also be made possible with proper implementation of economic policies. It follows therefore, that implementing policies irrespective of the system of governance, is very crucial in a nation's development processes as it promotes accountability, efficiency in service delivery and improves quality (Bhuyan, Jorgensen and Sharma, 2010). It is in view of this fact that Peter (2015) argued that no matter how good policies are, once they are not properly implemented, policy goals will not be accomplished. Owing to the enormous importance attached to policy implementation, it was described by Michael and Peter (2015) as "The Rest", meaning that it is the last thing to be realized after the initial stages of problem identification, policy formulation and policy evaluation.

There are indeed several factors that influences effective policy implementation. Elmore (1978), identified four main elements of ensuring effective implementation. This include:

- clearly specified tasks and objectives that accurately reflect the intent of policy
- a management plan that allocates tasks and performance standards to sub-units
- an objective means of measuring the sub-unit performance and
- a system of management controls and social sanctions sufficient to hold subordinates accountable for their performance.

The above outlined elements by Elmore (1978), depicts that bureaucratic capacity, and accountability are vital ingredients of ensuring effective policy implementation. Elmore (1997) further outlined the need for adequate provision of financial resources for effective implementation to take place. This however, portrayed that availability of financial resources are pre-requisite in policy implementation. To sum it up, bureaucratic capacity, accountability and financial resources are vital instruments of ensuring effective implementation as identified by Elmore (1978; 1997). This research is thus aimed at assessing these vital components of ensuring effective implementation of policies.

## 2. Research Framework

This research adopts the theory of bureaucracy by Max Weber (1864-1920) as the framework of the study. According to Weber, bureaucracy is a formal system of organization and administration designed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Bureaucracy emerged as a result of the need to have order and precision in organizations coupled with worker's need for fair treatment. Weber believed that bureaucracy is the best form of effective functioning of administrative organizations. Because of impartial treatment of employees as well as clear definition of tasks and responsibilities. This theory fits in the study because of the principles attached. These principles are required in any organization be it private or public so as to be able to accomplish policy goals. And it is a well-known fact policy goals could only be achieved when policies are effectively implemented. The principles are as follows:

- i. In a bureaucratic set-up, personnel derive their formal authority as a result of their position in the organization.
- ii. Positions are as well occupied in a bureaucratic setting due to employee's performance not as a result of their social standing or personal contact.
- iii. Employee's formal tasks and responsibilities in bureaucratic organizations are clearly specified.
- iv. Positions are also arranged hierarchically in bureaucratic organizations so as to enable employees to know they are to report and reports to them.
- v. Lastly, there are standard system of operating procedures in order to control employee's behavior. In other words, there are stipulated rules and regulations or guidelines that aid individuals in the organization.

## 3. Methodology

This research being conceptual in nature, used literature review as its map of action. After an introduction, a research framework was presented. This followed a review of relevant literature after which conclusion was offered and finally recommendations on the way forward were presented.

## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1 Bureaucratic Capacity

In the first instance, as a formal system of organization and administration designed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, bureaucracy emerged out of the organization's need for order and precision as well as worker's demand for impartial treatment. In line with this, Bureaucratic capacity denotes an organization's power to utilize available resources prudently for the purpose of ensuring effective implementation (Barkey & Parikh, 1991; Evan & Rauch, 1999; Fukuyama, 2013). It is a system of governance whereby employees are treated equally and the division of labor is clearly described. This is to ensure that every employee knows what is expected of him and whom he is to report to. On top of it, the impartial treatment accorded him will make him/her put maximum effort in ensuring the success of the organization.

Government bureaucracy are part of the Executive Arm of Government and Administrative machinery essentially established in order to accomplish government's objectives. In other words, Bureaucracies used to accomplish government's policy goals and indeed its development missions by effectively managing administrative systems (Eme & Onwuka, 2010). Based on this, bureaucratic capacity refers to public organization's power and capability to effectively utilize public resources for the purpose of efficient implementation of public policies (Barkey & Parikh, 1991; Evan & Rauch, 1999; Fukuyama, 2013). In essence, capacity is the ability of government and concerned stakeholders to adequately used the available resources and make concrete decisions towards stimulating policy agenda. Evan and Rauch (1999) stressed that the most important features of bureaucracies is their capacity to efficiently set quality agendas, manage policy issues and implement political decisions.

Consequently, it could be said that strong bureaucracies are very vital in the process of development. It should be worthy to note however that, proper structures are usually put in place to guide the administrative activities in a bureaucratic set-up. In this context, bureaucratic capacity is enhanced in different ways. In the first instance, there should be division of labour between government at the top (central government) and those at the bottom i.e. state and local governments (Brow man, Woods and Stark, 2010). Secondly, there should be merit recruitment and professionalism (Akinwale, 2014). Evan (1992) and Evan and Rauch (1999) further noted that assessing bureaucracy depends on professionalism. They further pointed out that one of the major features of bureaucracy is merit recruitment through formal competitive examinations, civil service procedures for employment and dismissal as opposed to

political appointments. It follows therefore, that a robust bureaucracy is capable of recruiting the much needed quality staff, retain them and even promote them (via civil service procedure). In this regard, it can be deduced that a bureaucratic organization that is capable of employing staff based on merit and professionalism and also gives them a good take home pay, is capable of improving administrative processes. From the foregoing, it can be seen that measuring bureaucratic capacity depends on professionalism, merit recruitment and division of labour. Combination of these makes up effective bureaucracies capable of accomplishing policy goals.

#### 4.1.1 Professionalism

Professionalism is discharging responsibilities has become necessary in almost all organizations be it public or private. In the education sector for instance, Richards (2014) noted that there have been rising demand for professionalism in knowledge disseminations in public institutions across the globe due to higher increase of public institutions and growth of educational system. This desire according to Fried son, (1988), prompted the need for an advancement in the institutionalization, qualification and regulation of practice.

Evets (2011) noted that professionalism is currently connected with qualification, as well as the individual's rank and service to humanity. It is in line with this as argued by Richards, (2014) that individuals obtained professionalism as well as professional prestige by improving the level of their education and by obedience to professional codes of conduct and ethics of the profession.

#### 4.1.2 Merit Recruitment

Merit recruitment refers to recruitment that follows due process. In other words, it is that type of recruitment that follows laid down rules and regulations using proper recruitment techniques for the purpose of employing qualified and quality staff (Yaro, 2014). It could be said that it is the act of increasing the workforce whenever a vacant position exists or when the need to do so arises by assessing prospective employee's qualification and other vital information. French and Rumbles, (2010) noted that recruitment is an instance whereby qualified candidates are invited to apply for available employment. This as Griffin (1997) rightly asserted, it is the process of "securing the right people for particular jobs, and it may take the form of advertising for large groups of employees or tracking out a lightly skilled individual for specific work." In this process, it is suggested by Newell & Shackleton (2000), that only candidates with the required credentials, skills and ability to commit themselves to duty should be employed. Nankervis, Compton and Baird, (2002), and Beardwell and Holden (1999), opined that: "the process of recruitment has two significant purposes. Firstly, the process should lay more emphasis on inviting and retaining candidates that qualified for a particular job. Secondly, it should build positive image of the organization to the general public." The first purpose suggests that recruiters should employ on those that are qualified and empower them through positive motivation in order to reduce brain drain. In this process, those responsible for recruitment, are expected to be fair in the selection process. In this way, those employed will see to it that they put in their best and as well protects the image of the organization.

#### 4.1.3 Division of Labour

In any organization, there are hierarchical sharing of responsibilities from top to bottom i.e. from superior officers to subordinate staff. In this instances, structures are put in place so as to guide the conduct of daily activities within the organization. But in order to ensure that work is done effectively within the various segments of the organization, work has to be shared or divided. In other words, there has to be division of labour between the government at the top and lower level governments ((Brow man, Woods and Stark, 2010). This is to make the employees aware of whom they are to answer and who is answerable to them. This is believed to automatically lead to specialization and adversely simplifies governments work.

One of the major signs of a strong bureaucracy is the ability of the bureaucracies to maintain a uniform division of labour between employees. This will subsequently lead to effective implementation of government policies and programs. Hierarchical sharing of duties and responsibilities also enables management in identifying who should account for any lapse should there be any.

### 4.2 Financial Resources

For any organization to operate and function effectively and accomplish its objectives, there is the need for financial resources (Kpolovie, Obilor & Isaac, 2013). It is widely believed that adequate financial resources enable policies to be effectively implemented. This is indeed paramount as sufficient and prudent use of financial resources enhances effective service delivery. This is based on the fact that bureaucracy's functions properly and implement policies much more efficiently when financial resources are adequately provided (Innocent, 2010 & Abdullahi, 2013). Scholars such as Osuntokun (2003) noted that public funding includes all financial related activities of the government. This comprises of taxing, expenditure, borrowing and lending. It also consists of allocating and disbursing public expenditure in order to provide and maintain facilities. He however noted that to have a hitch free financial operation, there should be fiscal discipline, cost and benefit analysis and performance base pay.

#### **4.2.1 Fiscal Discipline**

Olomola, (2009), noted that governments in contemporary world, realizes their visions through effective budgeting and fiscal discipline. Through fiscal discipline, financial resources are prudently utilized. Thus, aggregate fiscal discipline relates to significant procedures in fiscal performance including total revenue, financial balance and public debt, as well as total spending. A sound fiscal discipline is essential as it enables government policies to be effectively implemented.

Fiscal discipline denotes the capacity of government to sustain sound financial operation and a long term fiscal health. It is believed that a robust fiscal discipline enhances financial management capability as well as good governance in the tiers of government. In order to achieve this goal, there is the need on the part of government to establish firm fiscal discipline. Additionally, a sound fiscal discipline enables having a considerable fiscal consolidation and management and enables curbing corruption and financial misappropriation (Okonkwo & Nnamocha, 2015). This as Muhammad, Ahmad and Salihu, (2015) argued, is of paramount importance because with fiscal discipline, accountability and transparency could be ensured thereby leading to an improvement in financial transactions within and even outside the organization.

#### **4.2.2 Cost and Benefit Analysis**

Cost and benefit analysis is all about financial assessment of the threat or hazard involved in trying to achieve policy objective compared with the importance attached. In other words, it refers to the statistical or numerical analysis of probable outcomes of alternative courses of action, which minimizes uncertainty which in turn enhances the decision-making process. Snell (2011), is of the view that, cost benefit analysis is the official process usually put in place with a view to achieving a concrete and effective decisions in a situation whereby one is faced with numerous alternatives or an unclear data. In this regard, one has to choose the most promising alternative with lesser cost. Scholars such as Penning (2005), asserted that it is a diagnostic apparatus grounded under the welfare theory used to measure the full costs and benefits of a project or policy within a stipulated period.

In Nigeria for instance, a large portion of projects undertaken by governments failed to see the light of the day due to improper assessment and or appraisal of the cost and benefits of such projects before its commencement. The significance of cost and benefit analysis could therefore, not be over-emphasized as it gives a sort of direction to government officials on how and when to allocate public resources especially in instances whereby the markets failed to provide the necessary information needed. Cost and benefit analysis is also used in instances where uncertainty exists about the prices offered by the market. For example, where inputs are underpriced when it is compared to the costs, or in situations whereby the outputs are being overpriced. It is useful as well when undertaking a big project that is likely to consume huge amount of money. An appraisal of the cost and benefits in this case, becomes paramount in order to conform to economic realities.

#### **4.2.3 Performance Based Pay**

Performance based pay is that type of payment made to a worker or an employee based on the work done. Rajasekar, (2013) and Henderson, (2009) believed that paying employees according to the level of their performance in the organization, boost their morale and gives them a sort of energy to put in their best towards accomplishing greater results. Performance based pay is a human resources management issue that includes payment of salaries and wages otherwise known as remuneration; and an effective tool for implementing public policies because it facilitates worker's performance. This is due to the fact that if an employee knows that he/she will be underpaid for improper work, such employees are bound to work harder towards accomplishing their tasks.

One of the major reasons for using performance based pay in organizations is for the purpose of exercising fair play between employees. This is based on the fact that it is better to reward employees differently depending on their performance instead of given equal payment, as some of them performs absolutely well while others sometimes abscond from their duty posts without adequate or genuine reasons. However, despite all these, the idea of performance based pay was criticized for the simple reason that it will be difficult or almost impossible to precisely assess employee's performance or the task they performed.

### **4.3 Accountability**

Governments nowadays sees accountability as result oriented, because most government's focus in currently on good governance whereby greater emphasis is placed on outputs than on inputs (Dennis, 2004). In the views of Agara and Olarinmowe (2009), accountability is a quality control measure put in place especially in the public service in order assist government and its employees accomplish policy goals in line the laid down rules and regulations. It is a very vital tool for implementing government policies. In this respect, accountability is used to guide employees on the best way of recording quality output when discharging responsibilities. This could however be achieved when duties are performed in line with the ethics of the profession. Each profession has ethics which are expected to be abide by. Going contrary to the provision of such ethics usually made employees to behave otherwise. This eventually leads to corrupt

practices and other illicit behaviors that might tarnish the image of the organization and retard or completely block the chances of accomplishing policy goals.

Ogunayo, (2014), put it differently that accountability means an obligation which simply refers to the agreement reached between an employee and the employer before accepting to discharge responsibility in a particular organization. In a similar view, Adegite (2010) and Okoh and Ohwoyibo, (2010), further noted that accountability is the duty bound on an employee to perform his/her duties fairly in line with the rules of the organization and at the same time reports honestly and perfectly the performance results vis-à-vis authorized roles or plans. In another view, Onuorah and Appah (2012) posits that accountability refers to employee's loyalty and trust to that organization which he/she is working for. This has become necessary, because the organization have invested much in him/her by paying his/her remuneration and other entitlements and as such, the need to be to be more responsive.

## 5. Conclusion

From the foregoing assessment of the outlined instruments of ensuring effective policy implementation by Elmore 1978; 1997, i.e. bureaucratic capacity, financial resources and accountability, it could be deduced that ensuring effective implementation through these elements required quality human resources. In other words, much emphasis should be placed on human resource management for effective implementation to be ensured via these elements. It is good to note that bureaucratic capacity could be strengthened when quality human resources are employed based on merit. Those employed on merit should however be trained by the organization he/she is working for. Because training human resources enable them to be professionals in their own field. This professionalism could however be gained when each and every employee is assigned a job to which he/she is best at performing. This in essence means that professionalism is ensured with diffusion of power or division of labour.

Similarly, quality human resources are capable of managing and utilizing financial resources judiciously. Professional human resources are indeed those with fiscal discipline to effectively manage government finances. In the same vein, it is the same quality human resource personnel at the top level management that determines the cost and benefits of each project to be undertaken and at the same time determine how the employees should be paid based on the work done. In addition to this, quality human resource personnel are those who are diligent, enthusiastic and always ready to perform on their assigned functions without fear or favour. This depicts that they are the ones that are accountable to their duties and responsibilities.

## 6. Recommendations

In order to ensure effective implementation through bureaucratic capacity, financial resources and accountability as outlined by Elmore, 1978 and 1997, the followings are recommended:

1. Great emphasis should be placed on merit recruitment. This is based on the fact that employing the right caliber of people in government bureaucracies, enables formulating and implementing government policies effectively. Thereby, leading to achieving policy goals and objectives.
2. After employing the right caliber of people, such staff should also be assigned to perform the job to which they are best at. This will enable them to be professionals in their different fields or areas of competence.
3. The issue of training and re-training of employees should again be emphasized. This is to make the employees in tune with the dynamic changes in government work, thereby enhancing their skills and performance.
4. Great emphasis should again be placed on motivation. This is because employees who are rewarded for doing the right job, tends to put more efforts. This is a sure way of enhancing government work and one of the best ways of getting policies implemented because this makes employees to be accountable. This is known as positive motivation. On the other hand, when employees are punished for either corrupt practices or violating the ethics of their profession, such punishment will deter others from engaging in similar acts or illicit behaviors, thereby reducing bad eggs among employees who are in most cases stumbling blocks to effective policy implementation. This is otherwise known as negative motivation. In a nutshell, those employed should as well receive both positive and negative motivation as the case may be.

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