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Bureaucracy and Public Service Delivery: A Comparative Analysis of United States and Nigeria

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Abstract

Bureaucracy, as an organisational structure, is vital to national administration and government. This comparative research looks at the structure, functioning, and difficulties of bureaucratic systems in the United States and Nigeria. The research emphasises significant disparities in the origins, development, and operational efficiency of bureaucracies in different nations. Bureaucracy in the United States is distinguished by a high level of specialisation, legal-rational authority, and an effective system of checks and balances. In contrast, Nigeria's bureaucracy is frequently characterised by centralisation, patronage structures, and major bureaucratic inefficiencies. The article investigates how administrative culture, economic development, and public administration changes affect each country's bureaucratic performance. In the United States, continuous reforms and a merit-based system have significantly improved bureaucratic performance. In Nigeria, efforts to reform the bureaucracy have been hampered by corruption, nepotism, and a lack of proper training and resources. The research continues by examining how these disparities affect governance and public service delivery. While the United States bureaucracy is an example of efficiency and accountability, Nigeria's bureaucratic system has obstacles that limit its effectiveness. Recommendations are made to improve bureaucratic operations in Nigeria, borrowing lessons from the United States' experience while taking into account Nigeria's particular socio-political situation.

Keywords: : Bureaucracy, Governance, efficiency, Administrative reforms & culture, Public service delivery

Introduction

Bureaucracy plays an important role in the political systems of nations. It is one of the drivers of growth in any country. The efficacy and efficiency of a society's civil service is critical to its transformation, especially in emerging countries. A country's long-term socioeconomic growth requires efficient and effective performance. In

the realities of today's modern government, public bureaucracy has become an unavoidable part of modern society, serving as the primary means by which any government implements social change. Public bureaucracy has become an unavoidable part of every modern civilisation, and as a result, it is given a high priority. This is because the public bureaucracy dictates the direction and pace of policy implementation.

Bureaucracy's function as a true instrument for change and progress is widely acknowledged across the world. This is because the function of government and its agencies is especially crucial in light of the ever-expanding spectrum of operations carried out by the modern state (Nwosu & Nwoko, 2018). Bureaucracy is crucial for turning government policies into actionable strategies. Bureaucrats are responsible for ensuring that these policies are effectively implemented at all levels of government. Bureaucratic institutions administer and provide critical public services including education, healthcare, transportation, and infrastructure development. Efficient public service delivery is a key component of national growth. According to Fatile and Adejwon (2017), bureaucracy is important to governmental administration. As a result, it is an important aspect in deciding whether a government's development policy succeeds or fails. The core of bureaucracy is managing huge companies to increase efficiency and accountability to the public (Olatunji, 2013). Bureaucracies have a considerable impact on economic planning and administration. They are responsible for budgeting, fiscal management, and the execution of economic policies that promote growth and development. Because of its overwhelming authority, public bureaucracy guides and directs all aspects of government operations and activity.

Due to its implementation function in government, the bureaucracy serves as the engine chamber of progress. The public bureaucracy is a fundamental

component of governance. In modern times, the importance of public bureaucracy in the pursuit for progress cannot be overstated, both in developed and developing nations (Asaju & Ayeni, 2021). Public services such as healthcare, education, sanitation, and infrastructure are critical to increasing inhabitants' quality of life. Accessible and effective delivery of these services ensures that fundamental needs are satisfied, resulting in healthier, more educated, and productive communities. Public services play an important role in achieving social justice by ensuring equal opportunities and access to basic services for all residents, regardless of socioeconomic position. This minimises inequities and promotes a more united community. For every country to prosper, its government must supply commodities and services that the private sector rarely offers. The supply of such products and services relies on the country's powerful bureaucracy and institutions.

When voters think that public services are delivered equitably and effectively, their faith in the government grows, as does political stability. This, in turn, generates an atmosphere that promotes economic growth and social development. Natural disasters, pandemics, and economic downturns all require well-functioning public services. They give critical assistance to impacted populations and aid to resilience and recovery efforts. Without a doubt, good public service delivery not only serves individuals' immediate needs but also promotes long-term growth, social cohesion, and resilience, adding greatly to a country's overall success and prosperity.

A comparative review of bureaucracy and public service delivery in the United States and Nigeria sheds light on the efficacy, efficiency, and issues that both countries confront while managing and delivering public services. The basic rationale for a comparison study is to account for important administrative similarities and variations between nations (Ekeukwu and Umah, 2021). The study is an examination of Nigerian bureaucracy in contrast to that of the United States, focussing on parallels, differences, and lessons that may be learnt from the United States bureaucracy.

Conceptual Review

Conceptualisation is critical for an effective solution of the research topic. Conceptual review improves the rigour and credibility of research by demonstrating a thorough comprehension of the essential ideas and situating the study within the larger academic debate. According to Abbo and Kura (2019), the rationale for this conceptualisation is twofold: first, to provide operational clarity by removing all sorts of nuances and analytical difficulties surrounding the key concepts, and second, the exercise of conceptual clarification in this entry attempts to provide themes, a framework of analysis, and a methodological guide on how to infuse practical relevance into the research.

Bureaucracy: Bureaucracy is formed from two words: "bureau" and "Kratos." The term "bureau" alludes to an office, but the Greek suffix "Kratos" denotes authority or control. Thus, the term "bureaucracy" refers to the power of the office (Adejuwon, 2014; Wasim,

2011). According to Nwankwo, Ananti, and Madubueze (2015), bureaucracy is a hierarchical management system that exists in companies based on a chain of authority and a division of work.

Bureaucracy is a structure with highly routinised operating tasks that can be achieved through formalised rules, regulations, and task specialisations grouped into functional departments, centralised authority, narrow spans of control, and decision making in accordance with the chain of command (Maduabum, 2014). Bureaucracy is a structure with routine operating tasks achieved through formalised rules, regulations, and task specialisations grouped into functional departments, centralised authority, and narrow spans of control and decision-making that follow a chain of command (Robbings & Judge, 2007). Bureaucracy also refers to a professional, full-time administrative workforce with lifelong employment, organised careers, wages, and pensions, appointed to office and advanced via formal education, merit, and tenure, and with legal protection against removal (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2017b).

Bureaucracy refers to a class, not a system ruled by that class. Bureaucracy is primarily a trait of large and complicated organisations, as opposed to a one-person operation (Fatile, Olojede & Adejuwon, 2015). Bureaucracy is defined as the rigid adherence to rules in an organised hierarchical organisation of authority patterns, intended to aid the executive in attaining government objectives (Aidelokhai, 2022). According to Akhakpe (2014), bureaucracy is the engine room of the public administration system; bureaucrats, by

virtue of their vocation, have particular traits that may be leveraged to effect good or bad change.

Public Service Delivery: Public Service Delivery may be characterised from a variety of viewpoints, with an emphasis on the provision, procedures, and consequences of public services to residents. Service delivery includes a variety of economic sectors that are not involved in the creation of manufactured items and are thus classified as generic services (Fatile, Olojede, & Adejuwon, 2015). Carlson, Davis, and Leach (2005) conceptualised service delivery as the connection between policymakers, service providers, and the general public. To them, it consists of services and supporting mechanisms, which are commonly referred to as state responsibility.

The United Nations (2022) defines public service delivery as the administrative and logistical procedures by which public sector entities provide products and services to the public, with the goal of improving quality of life and promoting social and economic development. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2020) defines public service delivery as the actions, methods, and policies that public sector institutions use to offer services to the public while assuring accessibility, quality, and accountability. The World Bank (2022) defines public service delivery as the implementation and execution of public policies and programs to provide public goods and services to citizens in an efficient, effective, and equitable way.

Public service delivery is the product of government intents and decisions, as well as the actions and decisions of government employees (Rakate, 2006). Public service delivery is also often defined as the provision of public goods or social (education, health), economic (grants), or infrastructural (water, electricity) services to people who want (or demand) them (Fatile, Olojede & Adejuwon, 2015). Public service delivery refers to the mechanisms and procedures used to offer public services to citizens. These services often include education, healthcare, water supply, sanitation, public transportation, law enforcement, and other important services intended at improving the population's quality of life (Shittu, 2020).

The aforementioned definitions and aspects illustrate the complex character of public service delivery, emphasising its role in improving residents' well-being and encouraging progress. Effective public service delivery is critical to ensure that individuals receive the services they require in a timely, efficient, and equitable way. Effective public service delivery is critical for residents' well-being and the general growth of a society. It necessitates a multifaceted strategy that involves strong institutions, public involvement, technology innovation, and a dedication to equality and accountability.

An Overview of Bureaucracy and Public Service Delivery in the United States

Bureaucracy is an important component of the American

government system, contributing significantly to the delivery of public services. It consists of a complex network of organisations and departments that carry out policies, enforce laws, and provide important public services. The United States serves as the beginning point for comparative public administration because it is where the field started. The majority of the events underlying the formation of comparative public administration occurred there, making it worthwhile to study and emulate (Fatile, Majekodun, Oni, & Adejwun, 2013).

The US bureaucratic system is founded on democratic values, with a focus on openness, accountability, and public service. The federal form of government implies that bureaucracy functions at three levels: federal, state, and local, each with its own set of tasks and responsibilities. The US bureaucracy is noted for its hierarchical structure, which includes clear lines of power and specialisation. It operates on the ideas of efficiency and effectiveness, which are frequently led by transparency-focused legislation and regulations (Umarova, 2019). Technology has enabled the United States to avoid restrictive bureaucracy and improve service delivery (Gupta, 2023).

Bureaucratic procedures in the United States are deeply based in the rule of law, which ensures that decisions and actions are guided by legal frameworks and accountability systems. The US bureaucracy places a high value on political neutrality, with civil officials expected to serve the public good regardless of party affiliation (Hughes, 2015). The civil

service system in the United States is built on merit principles, which mean that people are employed, promoted, and retained based on their credentials, skills, and talents rather than their political affiliations or connections. Recruitment and advancement in the United States bureaucracy are generally based on meritocracy, which prioritises credentials and talents over other considerations.

The US bureaucracy is more decentralised, with a large share of government duties performed at the state and local levels (Xojiev, Ismailova, & Rakhimova, 2015). Bureaucracies in the United States prioritise division of labour and specialisation, with work assigned to employees depending on their experience and positions. There is a preference for hiring and promoting people based on merit, credentials, and demonstrated talents rather than favouritism or nepotism. Recruitment and promotion in the United States bureaucracy are often based on merit, with an emphasis on credentials and performance (Holzer, 2022). Bureaucracy functions inside a legal framework intended to maintain uniformity, fairness, and justice in public administration.

Bureaucracy is an essential component of governmental service delivery in the United States. While it has obstacles such as efficiency, resource restrictions, and flexibility, continuing reforms and innovations seek to improve its efficacy and responsiveness. Understanding bureaucracy's structure, activities, and concerns is critical for enhancing public service delivery and ensuring that government actions fulfil citizen demands and expectations.

Bureaucracy and Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

Bureaucracy is an important component of Nigeria's government structure, responsible for enforcing rules and providing key public services. Despite its vital function, the Nigerian bureaucracy confronts various obstacles that limit its efficiency and effectiveness. Nigeria has a federal system of government with three levels: the federal government, state governments, and local governments. Nigeria's bureaucratic structure is greatly affected by its colonial history. Nigerian civil service, being a colonial establishment, is structurally similar to British public administration. The British colonial government created a centralised and hierarchical bureaucratic system that continued after independence (Adejwon, 2016). The Nigerian civil service was founded as a career-oriented organisation based on Weberian orthodoxy. Nigeria's great ethnic and geographical variety has an impact on its bureaucracy, which may occasionally complicate administration and policy execution.

The Nigerian bureaucracy has long been the primary means of government policy formation and execution (Alozie, 2019). The Nigerian bureaucracy frequently functions under a patronage system, in which personal relationships and informal networks shape decision-making and resource distribution. In Nigeria, processes can be sluggish and bureaucratic due to red tape, corruption, and a lack of accountability. Bureaucracy in Nigeria has a substantial influence on the quality of public services. This dysfunctional aspect of bureaucracy is shown in the Nigerian factor. As a

result, the public service is defined by a mentality of hatred and rivalry rather than collaboration and teamwork. This hostility exists among peers, supervisors, and subordinates (Maduabum, 2014). The Nigerian bureaucracy serves as an agent of growth. In fact, it is almost the most significant institution in the Nigerian state, influencing individuals' lives on a daily basis. It is necessary in modern life because of the roles it serves. One important reason Nigeria has survived, particularly after its civil war experience, is the balancing impact of bureaucracy and the formation of policies that, for the most part, represent the ideas and attitudes of the many groups that comprise the federation (Amadi, 2022).

Theoretically, Nigeria's bureaucracy has been designed after Weber's notion of political neutrality (Fatile, Olojede, & Adejwon, 2015), but as Somolekae (1993) points out, neutrality and autonomy are relative terms in Nigeria. Political shifts and volatility have a significant impact on Nigerian bureaucracy. Frequent transfers in political power might cause contradictions in bureaucratic operations and policy. Bureaucratic posts are occasionally filled by favouritism and nepotism rather than merit, which contributes to inefficiency and corruption. Ekpo (1979) asserted that Nigerian bureaucracies are corrupt, ineffective, and overstaffed. According to available information, the performance of the public service in nearly all levels of government and extra-ministerial agencies in Nigeria has remained terrible, resulting in the current condition of underdevelopment.

Nigerian bureaucracy is subject to heavy political meddling, with appointments and decisions affected by political factors rather than merit. In Nigerian bureaucracy, ethnic and regional factors frequently influence recruitment, advancement, and policy execution (Augustus-Daddie & Okoro, 2022). In an effort to enhance service delivery by government agencies, ministries, and departments, the Nigerian public sector has undergone restructuring throughout the previous two decades.

The Nigerian government has started a number of public-sector reforms aimed at increasing efficiency and eliminating corruption. These include the implementation of the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS), which eliminates ghost workers, and the Treasury Single Account (TSA), which improves financial transparency. The use of digital technology is increasingly changing public service delivery. Online platforms for services like tax payments and business registrations are intended to decrease bureaucratic delays and increase accessibility. The creation of authorities like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) attempts to combat corruption and improve accountability. The objective for the changes has been to make it more responsive to citizens' demands by boosting accountability, promoting efficiency and effectiveness, introducing participatory decision making, and implementing proactive procedures and practices in the public sector (Abah 2010). Despite major reforms in the public sector to improve

service delivery, the outcomes have been less than stellar.

The Nigerian bureaucracy is critical to the delivery of public services, yet it confronts considerable obstacles that limit its effectiveness. Corruption, inefficiency, resource restrictions, and political involvement are serious challenges that must be addressed. Recent reforms and initiatives show promise in enhancing public service delivery, but long-term efforts and strong political will are required for genuine transformation. Understanding the intricacies and constraints of Nigeria's bureaucracy is critical for devising strategies to improve performance and guarantee that public services are provided effectively and fairly to all residents.

Comparison of Bureaucracy and Public Service Delivery in United States and Nigeria

Bureaucracies have traditionally been regarded of as institutions designed to improve the efficiency of organisational processes and procedures. Bureaucracy has been involved in service delivery in some capacity since its inception. Both the United States and Nigeria rely heavily on bureaucracies to carry out government programs and provide public services. However, the efficacy and efficiency of these bureaucracies varied greatly due to changes in political, economic, and social settings.

Bureaucracy has a substantial impact on public service delivery in both the United States and Nigeria, determining how well individuals get government services (Puolokainen and Jaansoo, 2018). When comparing

bureaucracy and public service delivery in the United States and Nigeria, substantial contrasts and similarities emerge, impacted by a variety of factors such as government systems, economic development, and cultural setting.

Differences

The United States frequently benefits from a more streamlined and transparent bureaucratic procedure than Nigeria, where bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption may severely impede public service delivery. The US system is also distinguished by a strong administrative structure and a sound financial base, in contrast to Nigeria, which has a weak administrative structure and a fragile financial base, impeding the local administration's ability to effectively discharge their constitutional mandate (Hughes, 2015).

The United States normally has greater resources and better systems for allocating these resources efficiently, whereas Nigeria faces resource allocation challenges owing to corruption and incompetence. The United States bureaucracy is typically larger and more complicated than Nigeria's, reflecting the size and breadth of the federal government and its institutions. Bureaucratic efficiency and transparency differ greatly between Nigeria and the United States (Gupta, 2023). The U.S. system usually prioritises efficiency and openness, with procedures such as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) encouraging public access to government information.

Bureaucracies in the United States are often less influenced by

politics. While political appointments can occur, particularly in senior posts, the civil service is largely safeguarded by legislation that encourages merit-based recruiting and job security. Nigerian bureaucracy are more prone to political influence and favouritism. Political ties can often affect appointment and promotion decisions rather than talent alone (Xojiev, Ismailova, & Rakhimova, 2015).

Bureaucracies in the United States are often seen as more efficient, with well-established protocols and an accountability culture. While corruption occurs, it is less widespread and may be efficiently handled through legal and institutional processes. On the other hand, Nigerian bureaucracies frequently confront inefficiency issues, such as obsolete systems, insufficient resources, and a lack of competent training. Corruption is a serious problem, and bribery, embezzlement, and other types of wrongdoing frequently impede bureaucratic operations (Holzer, 2022).

Bureaucracies in the United States are usually more stable and well-funded, allowing for improved infrastructure, technology, and human resources. Budgeting and resource allocation are often more methodical and open, with explicit regulations and monitoring. While Nigerian bureaucracies frequently suffer with insufficient resources, which impairs their capacity to function properly and provide services. Resource distribution might be erratic and less transparent, with political concerns occasionally taking precedence over needs-based planning.

In the United States, there is a great focus on professionalism, with

elaborate training programs, defined career routes, and performance reviews. Professional development is promoted and supported through a variety of programs and institutions. In Nigeria, however, there are considerable barriers to professionalism, such as poor training, unclear career development, and insufficient performance management systems (Ahmed, 2016). Opportunities for ongoing professional growth and training are frequently restricted.

Bureaucratic culture in the United States emphasises impersonality, with judgements based on rules and processes rather than personal ties. A strong meritocratic culture exists, with performance and qualifications playing an important part in professional progression. Personal contacts and connections can affect choices in Nigeria's bureaucratic culture. Political patronage and clientelism can have a substantial influence on bureaucratic operations, compromising fairness and impartiality.

United States bureaucracies are more adaptable to change, having systems in place to update rules, procedures, and technology on a regular basis. There is a focus on innovation and implementing best practices from both the public and commercial sectors. Nigerian bureaucracies may be more hard to change because of entrenched habits, insufficient resources, and bureaucratic inertia. Implementing new technology and processes might be difficult owing to budget limits, a lack of experience, and systemic inefficiencies (Ajibade & Ibietan, 2016). These contrasts reflect the larger socio-political and economic settings in which the US and Nigerian

bureaucracies work, influencing their effectiveness, efficiency, and overall performance.

The United States has experienced substantial changes and innovations in public service delivery throughout the years, but Nigeria is currently working on implementing successful reforms. The United States has greater institutional structures for governance and accountability than Nigeria, which affects bureaucratic performance and service delivery. Decentralisation in the United States enables more localised and effective public service delivery, but centralisation of power in Nigeria frequently results in inefficiencies and delays (Eme & Onwuka, 2010). Citizen participation in public service procedures is often higher in the United States, which serves to hold the bureaucracy responsible. In Nigeria, public engagement is frequently constrained, compromising overall accountability and efficacy.

It is worth noting that the efficacy of public service delivery in both nations is inextricably linked to the efficiency, openness, and agility of their bureaucratic institutions. The continuous reform and modernisation activities are critical for resolving current difficulties and enhancing service delivery outcomes. Without a question, this research gives a detailed look at how bureaucracy and public service delivery are handled in two very different environments, emphasising areas of strength and chances for development.

Similarities

Despite differences in context and operational subtleties, the bureaucracies of the United States and Nigeria have many parallels.

Both Nigeria and the United States have hierarchical bureaucratic organisations, with distinct degrees of power and responsibility. There are several degrees of power and responsibility, resulting in a clear line of command from upper management to lower-level personnel. Bureaucracies in both nations use formal rules and procedures to manage operations and decision-making (Hughes, 2015).

Both bureaucracies use formal rules and procedures to govern their activities. These guidelines are intended to guarantee that administrative procedures and decisions are consistent, predictable, and fair. Specialisation and division of labour are essential features of both nations' bureaucracies. Tasks and responsibilities are distributed across different departments and personnel based on their expertise and function.

Both nations have developed a number of administrative departments and agencies to oversee various sectors of governance, including health, education, defence, and transportation. In both the United States and Nigeria, the bureaucracy is basically focused on serving the people. Government entities in both nations strive to provide basic services and develop policies that benefit residents.

Bureaucracies in both nations have important regulatory and oversight functions. They are in charge

of putting laws into effect, enforcing regulations, and ensuring that legal requirements are met. Both bureaucracies use formal mechanisms to recruit and train staff. While the techniques and rigour may differ, there is a focus on hiring skilled persons to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations.

Both bureaucratic systems include extensive documentation and record-keeping. Maintaining thorough records promotes accountability, openness, and continuity in government processes. Both bureaucracies are responsible with carrying out government plans and initiatives. They play an important role in converting political choices and legislative acts into real actions and services. Bureaucracies in the United States and Nigeria manage and allocate government money. They monitor the allocation and use of public finances to ensure that resources are utilised efficiently and effectively. While these parallels exist, the environment in which these bureaucratic systems function can result in disparate outcomes and levels of efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness.

Concluding Remarks

In modern times, the public bureaucracy has remained a legitimate government body for carrying out state or national development goals. An efficient bureaucracy is a necessity for public service delivery to be effective.

This article investigated the impact of bureaucracy on public service delivery in the United States and Nigeria. The report revealed that although public service delivery in the

United States continues to develop and satisfy residents' demands and expectations, Nigeria remains mostly unsuccessful owing to inadequate implementation of creative ideas. Innovative approaches were developed to improve public service delivery efficiency. Nigeria's public administration should draw cues from the United States when it comes to civil service operations.

While both the United States and Nigeria have bureaucratic structures that are necessary for public service delivery, their efficacy is affected by distinct circumstances. The United States benefits from a more merit-based and transparent system, yet it still confronts issues such as red tape and political influence. Nigeria's bureaucracy is hindered by corruption, inefficiency, and political favouritism, despite recent changes that show promise. Understanding the disparities is critical for establishing strategies to improve public service delivery in both nations.

Although both nations confront bureaucratic and public service delivery issues, the United States is typically more efficient, high-quality, and accessible due to its economic resources, governance systems, and technology integration. Nigeria, on the other hand, is attempting to overcome considerable challenges such as political stability, fiscal limits, and institutional capability in order to strengthen its public service delivery systems.

In conclusion, while both countries have bureaucratic systems with common features such as hierarchy and specialisation, the degree of formalism, impersonality, and the

impact of political and personal factors can significantly distinguish bureaucratic practices in the United States and Nigeria. While both nations have bureaucratic systems, the main distinctions are operational efficiency, adherence to legal frameworks, and the level of political power and patronage.

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