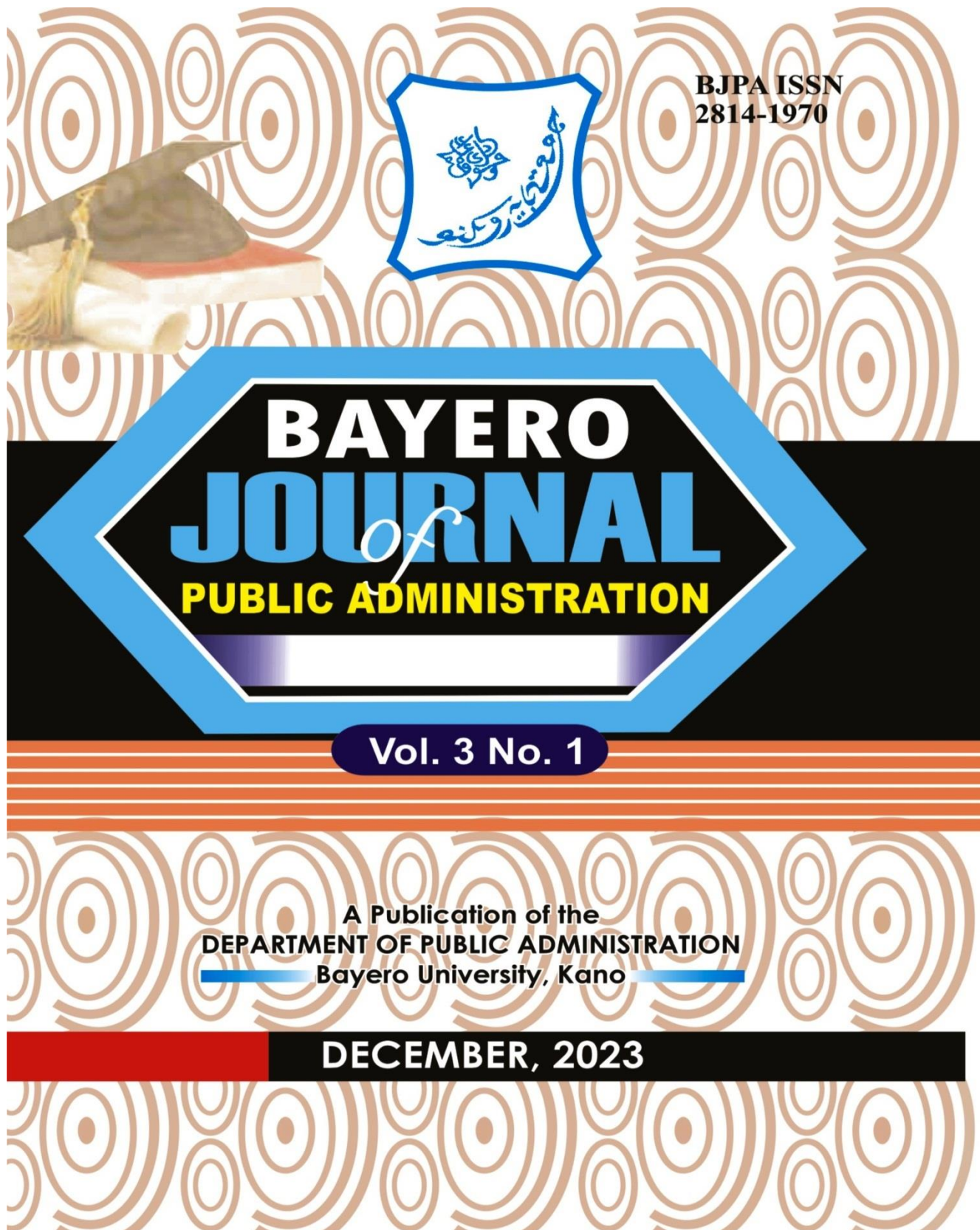




**Reviewing the Political Economy of Service Delivery and Bureaucracy in Public Universities
Administration in Nigeria: A study of Kwara State University, Malete**

Ibrahim O. Salawu PhD

Department of Politics & Governance Kwara State University, Malete

ibrahimsalus@gmail.com

&

Abubakar S. Yushau Alfakoro

Student Researcher

Department of Politics & Governance Kwara State University, Malete

abubakaralfakoro@gmail.com

Abstract

One of the most embraced forms of organizational theories today is the bureaucratic theory. This is owing to its principles of formalization, standardization, impersonal relations, and rationalization. Currently, all organizations comprising the public and private sector find it as the best slant to improve organizational effectiveness. However, the objective of this paper is to catalog the negative effects of excessive bureaucracy on public sector service delivery process in Nigeria using Kwara State University Malete (KWASU) as the case study. Nevertheless, excessive bureaucracy overtime has transformed into the major impediments of many organizations but more frequently within the public sector organizations; due to its hierarchical nature of offices, slow movement of files, slow decision making process, and stringent rules. The paper employed both quantitative and qualitative methods in the conduct of this research. A total number of fifty (50) questionnaire were administered randomly to the staff of KWASU and chi-square was been employed to test the hypothesis. The outcome of the research indicated that excessive bureaucracy as not only contributed to corruption, slow development, poor public service delivery, redundancy, but also decline in the revenue of government. The paper applauds that there should be a review of the bureaucratic principles or its relaxation in the public sector and also a customer oriented service delivery mechanism should be adopted or adhocracy should be practiced.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Productivity, Organizations, Public sector, Service delivery.

1.0 Introduction

As the world populations grows, the nature of human behaviors, needs and glitches are also changing. However, researchers are always on their search for the best one way of tackling and finding solutions to organizational problems. In handling this organizational problems, the concept of bureaucracy was adopted as a solution solving mechanism to organizational problems. The idea behind the term bureaucracy was coined by Vicent De Gournay in the year 1972 when he said, “We have an illness in France which bids fair to play havoc with us the name of the sickness is called Bureaumania” (Kim,

2021). Conversely, the modern concept of bureaucracy was developed by the famous German sociologist Max Webber (1884-1930). While clarifying the concept of bureaucracy, weber distinguished between power and authority paying more emphasis on authority since organizations according to weberian bureaucracy type is a formal organization. Webber explained three variants of authority namely traditional, legal/rational and charismatic authority (Sandro & Carlos, 2019). It is usually affirmed by the advocates of bureaucratic theory that, the more the bureaucracy the more the rationalization and the more they rationalization the more the productivity. The proponents of the theory also believes that there is no any other form of organizational setting that could guarantee maximum productivity than bureaucracy that why the termed bureaucratic organization as the most “rational organization” (Pollitt,2008).

Notwithstanding, the concept bureaucracy is as old as modern industrial society, with is central idea as rationality (Taiwo, 2005). Bureaucracy has a system presage formalized, standardized, impersonalized, and systemized body of rules and regulations on our organization should be conducted. Bureaucracy is seen as a formal organizational setting, with special operational characteristics like division of tasks, hierarchy of authority, impersonal relations, rationality, neutrality and system of rules among others (Ezeani, 2006). In other for government to carry out its basic state functions, public service delivery was seen as a central aspect of government charged with the responsibilities of providing public goods in areas that are vital, costly and of security aims e.g. water, electricity, court, hospital and schools etc. Surprisingly, due to excessive bureaucracy on governmental owned establishments, the aims of governmental owned enterprise has been defeated or lowest to ebb as the result of excessive rules, slow decision making, hierarchy of office, strict supervision and stringent rules and regulations. The antecedent effects of this excessive principles has resulted into varying challenges which includes poor service delivery of public goods, decline in revenue, slow development, irregularities, and corruption which serves as the biggest problem and cankerworm to organizational and state development among other problems in public universities in Nigeria . Bureaucracy as a concept is often accompanied with negative faces such as slowness in operations, actions are dense, and excessive request for documentation leading to delay in the social, economic and political sphere of development of every nations (Godoi, silva & Cardoso, 2017). No doubt excessive bureaucracy has negative impacts on political, social and economic development of most developing nations and has deterred their development.

Public’s service delivery in Nigeria has encountered numerous challenges and drawbacks in its operations. The nature of its service delivery methods has been dismal and unproductive due to the excessive principles of the Weberian bureaucracy been applied. For example, the process of carrying out major decisions on academic and administrative process in kwara State University Malete over the years as constitute a delay in the running of it programs due to excessive rules , red- tape, corruption and hierarchical structures. There has been outrage loss of income among public university due to excessive bureaucracy as student prefers going to private university due to timely, fast and easy means of resolving issues. Bureaucracy has also been a source of frustration, delay, irregularities, and wastage of resources.

Corruption is the biggest celebrated negative achievement of excessive bureaucracy which has dirtier development among other numerous problems.

The objective of this paper are to examine the effects of excessive bureaucratic principles on efficient public service delivery in the Nigeria public sector using Kwara State University, Malete as the study area. Other objectives includes to examine if bureaucracy is the ideal method to be operated in the Nigeria public sector, thirdly to find possible solutions to bureaucratic bottlenecks in public sector. Notwithstanding, the research is guided by the following research questions. Firstly does excessive bureaucratic principles has effects on efficient public service delivery in the Nigeria public sector, secondly is bureaucracy the ideal method to be adopted in the Nigeria public sector, and lastly are there solutions to bureaucratic bottlenecks in the public sector

This paper is further divided into four parts the introductory part, conceptual review, methodology, findings, conclusion and recommendation.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Bureaucracy

The concept bureaucracy was initially used by a French economist know has Vicent De Gournay in the year 1972. When explaining the term bureaucracy, he asserted that there is an illness in France that has havoc on them and termed it as 'Bureaumania'. The modern theory however is traced to the German sociologist Max Webber. The term bureaucracy is used to mean a formalized, standardized, impersonalized and systemized body of rules and regulations in an organization. The term is also used in pejorative term to mean red-tepism, slowness, inefficient, irregularities and corrupt organization. According to Stillman (1980) as cited in Akindele (2002), bureaucracy has been used synonymously to inefficiency, red-tapism, secrecy, smugness, aggressiveness and self-interest. To some it is a system of hierarchical structures, positions and impersonal relation made of professionals. That why To Gbenga & Lawal (2006), they posited that the concept bureaucracy connotes ideas that consist of professionals staff on a full time job with hierarchical structures, positions and supervision carrying out their functions in a well ordered way based on rules, regulations and orders from the top officials. In the words of Adu-Gyamfi (2003), bureaucracy refers to the concept that connotes staff of governmental organization, their functions, task specification, and rule and regulations governing the conduct of their affairs.

Characteristic of Bureaucracy

- Formalization: all relationship and activates in the organization must be formal in nature.
- Division of labour (specialization): there is division of positions and responsibilities.
- Hierarchy: presents hierarchical structure of authority and offices.
- Rules and regulation: there are established rules and regulations that guides each actions.
- Professionals: it is made of highly skilled professional with technical know-how.
- Rationality: it believe to be a rational organization due to their expertise.

- Impersonal relation: the power lies in the office and not the incumbent.

Types of Bureaucratic Authority

- Traditional: the type of authority are derived from tradition, culture or religion.
- Legal/rational: this consist of authority exercised due to position someone occupies.
- Charismatic: this is based on personal quality or characteristics of the individual.

Demerits of Bureaucracy

- Conflict of interest: there is highly conflict due to diverse interest.
- Closed system: organization is seen a closed system no room for outside consolidation.
- Allows no room for initiating of ideas: Personal ideas and initiatives are not welcomed.
- Nepotism and abuse of bureaucratic power and authority: it prone top class differentiation.
- Lack of delegation: there is low level of delegation of power and responsibility.
- Corruption and other forms of exploitations; the system is characterized by corrupt practices.

2.2 The Concept of Public Service

The connotation of Public service as preserved in section 277 subsection (91) as of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and now in section 169 of the 1999 Constitution as encompassing the civil service (Ministerial departments), statutory corporations or parastatals, judiciary, legislature, educational institutions, financially wholly or principally owned by government at the State, Local and Federal levels, Nigeria Police or Armed Forces and other organizations in which the Federal or state governments owned controlling share or interest. The term “Public Service” refers to all establishments that are responsible for the delivery of government services (Adegoroye 2005). The public service is defined as the vehicle for public service delivery and governance. The quality of the public service largely determines the pace of development of any nation. This is because of the crucial role public servants play in the formulation and implementation of programmes of governments.

Functions of Public Service.

- Implementation and enforcement of economic, political and social policies of the government
- designing and implementing public programmes
- generating revenue for the government
- ensuring managerial, political and financial accountability
- serving the people
- Monitoring and evaluating the performance of organisations (public, private or non-governmental) that are rendering service on behalf of government
- Driving all development initiatives
- Delivering quality public services (such as education, electricity, water and transportation).

2.3 The Concept of Civil Service

According to the 1999 constitution section 318 sub session 1 civil services refers to the services of the federation of (state) in a civil capacity, staff of the offices of the president, (governor), the vice president, (Deputy governor), ministry or department of the federation (state), (FRN, 1999). The encyclopedia britannica (2004) defines civil services as the body of government officials who are employed in civil occupation that are neither political nor judicial. As Adamolekun (2002) state that civil services is commonly used as the synonym of the machinery of the government, this is so in Britain and most common wealth countries of sub-saharan African. In Britain's civil services is used to refer to the body of permanent officials appointed to assist the decision makers. According Bezzina (1994) opined that civil services refer to employees selected and promoted on the basis of merit and seniority, system which may include examinations. The world book encyclopedia (2004), noted that the civil services consist of people employed by the state to run the public services of the country.

Features of Civil Service

- Anonymity
- permanence,
- political neutrality, anonymity
- impartiality
- integrity
- honesty and
- professionalism

Functions of Civil Service

- Advice.
- Program planning.
- Policy formulation.
- Grafting of bills.
- Policy implementation.
- Law making.
- Quasi-judicial function.
- Production.

3.0 Theoretical framework

3.1 Public Choice Theory

The public choice theory is also called the social choice theory or rational choice theory. It connotes the study of politics based on economic principles. The main argument of the theory is that, it's the selfish interest of both the public and civil servants that makes them want to serve the public. Duncan Black (1958) is regarded as the father of public choice theory. However its application to government regulation was developed by George Stigler (1971) & Sam Peltzman in (1996) while William Niskan (1987) wrote the public choice literature on bureaucracy [Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2008]. The theory stressed that

individual will always try minimize cost and maximize utility by cutting cost for their own personal gain. In the process of minimizing cost civil servants will use their bureaucratic power to influence ministries, departments and agencies MDAs budgets in other to be given some percentage of the money before awarding the contracts which according to Hackler (2003: 1019), posited that these actions by civil servants leads to recourse wastage and rent seeking. To Johnson (1991) he opined that problems in civil service does not lies not in the bureaucrat but in the nature of public goods and incentives that the get in the public procurement of contracts from bidders and institution existing in the bureaucracy and while some civil servants may selflessly pursue the public goods, other do so while simultaneously pursuing their careers and economic gains.

4.0 Research Methodology

The case study for the research is Kwara State University Malate (KWASU) established in 2009 during Dr Bukola Saraki administration as the center for community service and entrepreneurship. A descriptive survey research design technique was employed for the study. According to Oniye (1997), he stated that the descriptive method deals with systematic description of an event in a very factual and accurate manner. Primary and secondary source of data collection were used in the study. The primary source of Information's were gathered through structured questionnaire while the secondary sources consist of journals, articles, books and the internet. A stratified and purposeful sample method was used for the study. A total of fifty (50) respondents were purposively sampled among the staff of the university. A sum of twenty-five 25 academics staff which consist of Deans and HODs of some selected faculties and departments and other twenty -five (25) non academics staff holding key positions e.g. bursary, secretary postgraduate school, head of clinic, school librarian etc., were administered questioners for responses because the are key stakeholders in decision making process. The paper was analyze using simple percentage and chi-square in other to accept or reject the formulated hypothesis.

4.1 Discussion on the Demographic Profile of Respondents

The first item on the demography profile of the respondents as schedule in table 1 of the paper is 'SEX', it was gathered that thirty-eight (38) are males while twelve (12) her females from the total sample population of fifty (50) which indicate that the highest level of respondents are males. The next item on the list is 'AGE' in which ten (10) was used as intervals in-between the ages it includes 18-28, 28-38, 38-49 and 49-above. The dominate age of the respondents in the table is 38-49. 'QUALIFICATIONS' of the respondents include SSCE, HND/BSC, MSC/PHD and PROF, the highest qualification level is MSC/PHD from the result obtained. The last item on list is 'MARITAL STATUS' which is composed of single and married while majority are married from the research conducted.

5.0 Issues

Excessive bureaucracy overtime as constituted a serious havocs on the effective delivery of public service. Has its effects includes slow decision making, unemployment, decline in government income, poor service qualities, decline in productivity and corruption. That why Gbenga (2006) asserted that the

failure of the public bureaucracy over the years to deliver the expected service outputs to the society necessitated the need for a series of reforms that have come to form the policy thrust of successive Nigerian governments since 1980's.

In a formal bureaucratic setting, there usually exist a hierarchy of positions and jobs roles allocated to each individual. This system of authority or relationship is also called a top-down approach in which rules move from the highest to the lowest person in the hierarchical structure. This process does not allow for bypassing of stages every set of authority and order must be orderly received. However in the modern world due to increase in population accompanying with several public needs there is need for speedy decision making due to urgency of matter and complicated nature of public problems in which bureaucracy does not allow for. The negative effect of slow decision making process as lead to several challenges and difficulties in delivering of public services. The nature of bureaucracy in the delivery of public services as lead to loss of income on the government side. Many public organizations delivering public goods in terms of services or goods i.e learning institutions and hospitals in terms of rendering services and water supply in terms of goods has been declining in their income generation level due to their inefficiency in the delivery of service and private organizations are gradually taking the roles. To Felix, (2011), he posited that the difficulties confronting service delivery in Nigeria have made people termed bureaucracy as unpopular system, because excessive bureaucracy turns to be a barrier to productivity, efficiency, and contributes to the major losses in government revenues.

Division of labour as systematically resulted in delay and unsteady movements of files as hierarchy exist among these offices each document need to pass from one office to another following the necessary procedures. This process as constantly leads to delay in the passage or giving assent to document were by some document may spend almost a month on a desk if that person occupying that position is not on seat. Another problem is that it has contributed to unemployment level despite division of labour. Unemployment has been rampant as bureaucratic organizations are characterized by operating under shortage of personnel in order to maximize cost of operation. Corruption has been the most pressing issues of bureaucracy as the activities of bureaucrats has been the major source of corruptions in public services. Urien (2002), asserted that corruption allegations and charges now plays a leading role in our bureaucratic system than any other challenges. Corruption in civil service has been seen as the bane to the development of Nigeria and reasons for is underdevelopment. In the words of Gbega (2006), that why bureaucratic corruption is linked to the illegal activities of bureaucrats. There has been outrageous decline in level of service delivery in public service due to inefficiency and poor quality service among the bureaucrats. This problem as necessitated the reasons for involvement of private individuals in the rendering of essential public services including, electricity supply, security, health's, water, and schools. Gilmore (2003) point it out that instead of the government to rely on using excessive bureaucracy in public service delivery, they should otherwise adopt some set of marketing tools and activities to shape the nature of its service to customers.

6.0 Discussion on the Effects of Bureaucracy on Efficient Public Service Delivery

The next table in this paper is table 2. It composed of questions that constitute part (B) of the questioners and hypothesis tested. The first hypothesis tested through simple percentage and chi-square indicated that there are multiple effects of bureaucracy on efficient service delivery has fourth-two (42) which is 84% of the respondents disagree with the hypothesis that bureaucracy has no effects on efficient service delivery while eight (8) which is 16% of the respondent agrees. The second hypothesis was tested to confirm if bureaucracy is the ideal method to be adopted in the Nigeria public sector thirty-one (31) which 62% agrees bureaucracy is the ideal method to be adopted in the public sector while, nineteen (19) which is 38% disagree. The third question is asked to check if relationship exist between excessive bureaucracy and decline in government income. Thirty-seven (37) which 74% of the respondents agrees that there is relationship between excessive bureaucracy and decrees in government income while, thirteen (13) which is 26% of the respondents disagrees. In relations to the effects of bureaucracy on slow decision making, thirty-two(32) which is 64% of respondents agrees that bureaucracy has led to slow decision making while (18) which 36% of the respondents disagree. On the contribution of bureaucracy to corrupt practices,(41) which is 82% of respondents agrees that bureaucracy has indeed contributed a lot to corruption while (9) which is 185 of the respondent disagree to the notion.

7.0 Summary of Findings

1. Bureaucracy has effects on efficient public service delivery in Nigeria.
2. Bureaucracy is the ideal method to be used in the Nigerian public sector.
3. Excessive bureaucracy has contributed to decrease in government income.
3. Bureaucracy has contributed to increased corrupt practices.
4. Bureaucracy has led to slow decision making.
5. It does not gives room for self-initiatives and order.
6. It has reduced productivity in public service delivery.

8.0 Conclusion

The role of bureaucrats in the delivery of public services cannot be underestimated due to their roles in the developmental process of a nation. However, despite its importance it has been a cog to the delivery of essential public services as the result of factors raised in the paper. The nature of bureaucracy in Nigeria as not actually served the purpose it was meant for. There is the need to careful access and analyze the areas of problems, and solutions are to be provide in other to achieve efficient, effective, responsive and a public oriented services delivery system in Nigeria.

9.0 Recommendations

1. Government should allow for discrete decision making in times of emergency.
2. Organization should not be treated as a close system individual ideas should welcome.
3. There should be loose supervision and constant evaluation of workers about work progress
4. Organization should adopt some principles of private sector i.e. advertisement, welfare and quality.
5. Corrupt officials should be taking to administrative courts to face penalties.

References

- Adamolekun, L. (2002): *Public Administration in Africa: Main issues and Selected Studies*, Ibadan Spectrum Books.
- Adu-Gyamfi O (2003), *The Nature and Scope of Public Sector Administration and Management in Ghana*, University Printing Press, KNUST, Kumasi.
- Akindele, S.T et al (2000), *The Subject-Matter of Political Science*, Ibadan, Dekaal Publishers
- Black, Duncan (1984) "On the Rationale of Group Decision Making *Journal of Political Economy*" *Journal of Political Economy*, 56:23-34.
- Britannica 2004.
- Bezzina, C. (1994). The Maltese Civil Service: at the Crossroads?. *Management Development Review*, 7(1), 3-6.
- Chapman, D and Cowdell, T. (1998), *The New Public Sector Marketing*, London, Financial Times
- Encyclopedia 2004.
- Encarta dictionary 2009.
- Ezeani, E. O. (2006). *Fundamentals of Public Administration*. Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd.
- Felix, Kwame (2011). *The Impact of Bureaucracy on Public Service Delivery: A Study of Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly*.
- Gbenga, L. & Ariyo, T. (2006), "Bureaucratic Corruption, Good Governance and Development: The Challenges and Prospects of Institution Building in Nigeria" in "Journal of Applied Sciences

Research'', Department of Political Science, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, INSInet Pub lication.

Gilmore A. (2003), *Service Marketing and Management*, Sage Publications Ltd, London.

Merton K. Robert, (1957) *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, (pp. 195-206)
<http://media.pfeiffer.edu/lridener/courses/MERTONR2.HTML> (accessed 2021 june 22)

NISKANEN, W., (1973) *Bureaucracy and representative government*, Aldine Chicago.

Peltzman, sam.(1967). "Towards a More General Theory of Regulations." *Journal of Law&Economics* 19(August);211-240.

Stigler, George j. (1971) "theory of economics and regulations." *Bell journal* (spring). 3-21.

Taiwo, K. (2000) *Socio-cultural Values and Bureaucracy in Adebayo Ninalowo (ed). Bureaucracy and Social Change, Studies in Bureaucracy and Underdevelopment*. Prime Publication

The 1999 constitution of Federal republic of Nigeria.

Urien, J. (2012), "*The Impact of Corruption on the Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria*", in *Crown Research in Education*, Volume 2, Issue 3, Department of Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka.

Weber, M. (1978) *Economy and Society*. G. Roth and C. Wittich (eds) Berkeley: University of California Press.