

Bureaucratic practices in educational institutes

Education



Bureaucracy is the structure and set of regulations in place to control activity, usually in large organizations and government. As opposed to adhocracy, it is represented by standardized procedure (rule-following) that dictates the execution of most or all processes within the body, formal division of powers, hierarchy, and relationships. In practice the interpretation and execution of policy can lead to informal influence.

Of the most famous political persons responsible for the making of bureaucracy, and its effects on society would be Max Weber, the German sociologist who set the course of the field in foundations of Administration and Politics. Weber established there were three different types of authority which helped to set the stage of public administration and helped to direct the forms of government which exist today. The three types of authority that dominate the governmental and societal settings of the present are traditional, charismatic, and legal rational.

The third type of authority is the type which we are most familiar with. Legal rational authority dominates the modern world, and can easily be thought of as a closed system of regulations and rules forming a bureaucracy. This authority is purely devoted to impersonal and functional purposes, thus giving the perfect stage for bureaucracy, where all focuses are impersonal and functional alone. "... the bureaucratic system of organization is primarily characterized by the existence of a series of relatively stable vicious circles that stem from centralizations and impersonality" (Crozier, 1964, p 193)

Bureaucracy in Educational Organizations Bureaucracy manifests itself in schools in the several ways. One key feature of a bureaucratic organization is presence of a formal hierarchical structure. Each level in a bureaucracy

controls the level below and is controlled by the level above. A formal hierarchy is the basis of central planning and centralized decision making. In the school setting, the school headteacher tops the hierarchy, followed by his deputy. The teachers come next, then the prefect. The students lie at the bottom of the hierarchy.

A bureaucracy runs by some well defined rules. Controlling by rules allows decisions made at high levels to be executed consistently by all lower levels. In the school, there are certain rules that students are supposed to abide by. The teachers also have a general code of conduct which they are supposed to observe. In a school, there is functional specialty. Every teacher has a special subject that he/she teaches, and is not expected to venture into other subjects. This is another key feature of a bureaucracy.

Another characteristic of a bureaucracy is purposeful impersonality, whereby the idea is to treat all employees equally and customers equally, and not be influenced by individual differences. In the school, a school head is not supposed to talk to his children, who attend the school, about family matters. He is supposed to act like he does not know them in any other way apart from that they are his students. A school can therefore be said to be a typical bureaucracy. During volunteer work at Thika Primary school, I noted several cases in which bureaucratic tendencies of the school, led to compromised results

How Bureaucracy Causes Poor Results In Schools Bureaucracy has been hailed as an excellent system of management in the organizations. In fact, no single system of administration has been adopted more widely than the bureaucratic system. Unfortunately, the system has largely failed to impress

<https://assignbuster.com/bureaucratic-practices-in-educational-institutes/>

in education institutions, especially the academic institutions. During the course of volunteer work, this fact was manifested in a number of cases. Bureaucracy in school leads to a situation whereby students find it extremely difficult to secure audience with the head teacher.

This is because, for a student to report a problem to the head teacher, he has first to report to the class prefect, who informs the teacher. The teacher informs the deputy head teacher, who consequently forwards the issue to the head teacher. In this case, addressing the problem takes a painstakingly long period of time. If the issue required fast action, the intervention might come too late. The student ends up bearing the brunt of a bureaucratic system, which reflects negatively on his academic performance.

This case was evident in Thika Primary School, whereby several children admitted to have sought audience with the head teacher, with little success. Another negative consequence of bureaucracy notable is in the procurement of learning resources. The process of purchasing books for the school takes too long, since approval must be sought from the head teacher, who takes the issue to the board of governors for a final decision on whether to place a tender. The tender is advertised and awarded to a book distributor.

This whole process can take more than one school term, delaying the time that the students have to interact with the books. This consequently leads to poor results. At the time of volunteer work, several story books had been ordered for purchase, but the process was taking too long. Bureaucratic practices in academic institutions also dent school student performance, whereby students are given insufficient feedback of their performance in a

term. Here, the rules oblige the head teacher to write his feedback on the student's performance, in the report form.

However, due to the large numbers of students, he is not able to follow up the individual performance of each student. What he does to fulfill his obligation is fill all the report forms with the same comment, for example, 'fair'. The student ends up not well guided on how well or bad he has performed. In such a case, he does not know whether he is faring poorly and needs to improve, or is performing well and needs to improve. This leads to bad grades in the subsequent terms. Conclusion It is important that schools abandon bureaucratic tendencies that lead to poor academic performance of the students.

The head teacher must ensure that he is approachable, not seated in some hierarchically elevated seat. Process of purchasing learning resources must be made faster and simpler. Once such steps have been taken to streamline how schools run, the performance of the schools will improve, and the students will be able to achieve their academicgoalsandcareerambitions

References Bureaucracy. Anti Essays. Retrieved October 23, 2008, from the World Wide Web: Crozier, M. The Bureaucratic Phenomenon . 1964. London: Tavistock Publications. <http://www.antiessays.com/free-essays/1895.html>
www.wikipedia.org/bureaucracy