Managing and leading people essay examples

Business, Management

Features of a Bureaucratic organization.

Max Weber (1864-1920), a German sociologist proposed different elements found in a bureaucratic organization, which assist in resource control, aid decision making process, accomplish organizational objectives, and protect employees. Weber conceived bureaucracy as an abstract for rational decision making procedures with minimal frictions from human emotions and errors. According to Weber, bureaucratic institutions are most rational in carrying out impartial control over workers (FISCHER and SIRIANNI, 1994). The theory of bureaucracy is founded upon the nature of power and authority relationships. It is concerned with how organizations operate rather than how they function. According to Weber, there are three forms of power in organization; Traditional, charismatic, and Bureaucratic or legal power (GANE, 2002). Weber visualized the bureaucratic model as an ordered structure of power that achieves rational human behavior under a hierarchy of workers. He conceived bureaucracy as the ' ideal type' of administration in an organization. The features of bureaucracy are as discussed below:

Bureaucracy involves a hierarchy or structure of authority. It functions under sets of controls, and supervision usually from the high ranked offices. The lower offices or subordinates should respect and honor the higher offices. For instance the secretaries should respect their managers, mangers respect the directors etc. This ensures compliance of instruction and orders (SIMS, 2002).

Bureaucracy organizations have fixed labor divisions or specialization. The lines of duty or jurisdictional areas are highlighted in specialty. There is systematic division of labor. Each set of duty should also have set of rules or

official expectations, and rights that cannot be changed at the will of the management. This ensures competence by; providing obligations to perform specific duties, providing necessary authority to guide on carrying out these duties, and provision of a compulsion means to coordinate these duties. For example accountants are expected to carry their duties, and provide them to the management. Bureaucracy organizations have sets of written rules that guide work procedures. They function under a framework of regulations, which formulate all administrative roles, functions, and decisions in an organization. These rules form a base of uniformity and equality of treatment. They assist in solving problems, and act as a guide to managers and workers.

Bureaucracy organizations separate personal property from office property. They separate the administrative staff from ownership of factors of production. The organization's property is controlled within the specialty of the office entirely separating it from personal property. This ensures respect of office property, and accountability to such property. It also ensures distinction of personal life to office life (DU GAY, 2000). Bureaucracy also involves a set of trained personnel. The administrative staff is provided with specialized technical education and training. This ensures full application of rules and norms of an organization. The bureaucrats derive their authority and justifiable command from technical knowledge and skills acquired from these trainings. It provides that employees should be handled under a command of competence

(SAPRU, 2006).

Finally, bureaucracy involves organizational freedom. Weber viewed that for effective output and running of an organization, official positions should be freed from any controls outside the organization's system. All positions should be allocated or re-allocated according to an organization's need, and not monopolized by incumbents (HARDINA, 2007).

Extent to which Weber's idea is relevant in 21st Century.

The Weberian bureaucratic idea has been under several revolutionary stages since development. This has ranged from demonstrations of concerns with conflict, authority, power, as well as development of broader social structures in organization systems (DAFT, 2010). While there has been an overall secular decline in citing the theory, there is significant application of the concepts in social organizations, as well as intra-organizational dynamics.

Weber's bureaucratic theory provides a set of theoretical ideas in many institutions, in the 21st century. It provides hypotheses concerning relations between administrative, organizational patters, expected performance, behavior, and overall growth (GANE, 2002). It contributes to the organization of public administration, and brings sanity in management of organizations where every member knows his/her rights, duties, expected behavior, and levels of power. It protects workers from being overpowered by high ranked officials, and provides remedies in instances where such problems arise. Bureaucratic theory aligns supply chains in many organizations, which enhance growth and development (HARDINA, 2007). Every participant in a business knows what should be done, at what time, and where it should be

done. It protects ownership of actors of production from personal interests. Take an instance of the running of McDonald's restaurants; in this company the hierarchical structure is determined by the levels of power and authority stipulated under the company's regulations. This boosts smooth operations of the business considering it deals with perishable products.

Bureaucracy has also been seen as a rational tool in implementing commands of elected administrators (DAFT, 2010). It is in an organization's apparatus to get things done, and assess on the basis of effectiveness the efficiency of predetermined objective. It determines the authority or levels of power to be used in different scenarios, what resources to use, how, by whom, when, and where. It provides commands and rules to be followed by officeholders or trustees in developing administrative responsibility and legitimacy (DU GAY, 2000). In many organizations, like the structure of the federal government, the idea of administrative legitimacy is built on the facts that tasks are technical in nature. This adds to the provision of logical and correct solutions by reference to written rules and facts, and applying expertise causal knowledge.

In the 21st century, bureaucracy is been used in expressing the reigning values and norms of different organizations (HARDINA, 2007). Take an instance of the ExxonMobil Company, which is a global producer of oil related products. The workers in this company are hired according to specializations and tasks allocated. This allows all members to feel at comfort and assimilated in all corners of the company. The company allows workers to balance between work and their private life. This is done by provisions of free time and paid leaves. In doing this the company

distinguishes between its operations, and personal lives of employees. The workers perform their individual life without interfering with the operations of the company. The company's structures are separated from individual lives of the workers. This has enhanced the separation between skill ownership, and personal life, amongst the workers. By doing this, this company has ensured that workers perform their duties as expected, and to the success of the company.

Relevance of values and ethics that underpin post-bureaucratic organizations, and their relevance to form controls.

Bureaucratic theory and analysis has contributed significantly to radical continuity of growth of values and ethics in many organizations. The recent reforms in the public sector management have increased the concern on the state of values and ethics that most post-bureaucratic organizations apply in their operations (GANE, 2002). Most of the values and ethics have been compromised by the private sector, and left to operate in the public sector only. These reforms aim at creating relevance and importance of ethics and values in organizational operations.

Adherence to values of an organization creates an environment where every worker is comfortable to execute the assigned duties (TREVINO and WEAVER, 2003). The workers become responsible and accountable in their roles. The values ensure that the objective of the post-bureaucratic organizations are set, and create a platform on how to reach such targets (COLE, 2004). Values dictate power and authority in post-bureaucratic organizations. They determine the extent of power given to any worker, and

applicable scenarios to exercise such authority. They provide for rights of workers, and minimize overexploitation of resources as well as labor. Ethics, on the other hand, can be said as pillars of operation in post-bureaucratic organizations. They dictate on the levels of power and authority, norms, and values of an organization. They express the expectations of all workers from the high ranked officials to the lowest possible ranks (SAPRU, 2006). They determine the systems to use in running an organization, and when changing such systems becomes of importance. They dictate expected behavior and character of workers. They allow professionalism practice, and ensure that workers execute their duties in a comprehensible manner.

Values and ethics play a crucial role in formulating policies, rules and regulations, and organizational controls (ERCHUL and MARTENS, 2010). They lay a platform on how to reach the mission or objective of an organization (COLE, 2004). They form a structure of expectations from the organization as well as from the workers. They display a code of conduct and behavior expected from every participant. They provide the culture of an organization that should be adapted by every worker.

The foundation of an organization's rule is based on values, intentions, and objectives of the organization. With a proper set of values, policies, rules and regulations, and controls can be formulated (DAFT, 2010). The controls are based on the concepts depicted under the values of the organization. Ethics, on the other hand, provide for the expectations, which control behavior and code of conduct among workers. They control the levels of power and authority, standards of behavior, and act as a reference in decision making.

Values and ethics provide also act as points of reference when solving problems in an organization. They provide for expectations, and disciplinary measures, which control the behavior of workers and management.

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