The Impact of Bureaucracy on Strategic Decision-Making Process in the Islamic Call Society

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Abstract: Bureaucracy represents the top of authority pyramid in the Islamic Call Society and forms one of the administrative systems in the organization that creates an atmosphere of order and commitment inside the organization and provides confidence and trust within the organization. The study has found that there is a need to implement the principles of bureaucracy more professionally and not subjectively, especially with regard to strategic decision-making and thus will lead to achieve balanced performance and efficiency in all its branches around the world. According to that the study emphasized on the need to adopt professional bureaucratic approach and abandon Subjective bureaucracy because of many of the defects because of applying Subjective bureaucracy that may lead to inefficient performance and lack of self-development. The study confirmed that combining the standardization and decentralization of bureaucratic systems at the same time will achieve the goals of the organization to a large extent, and adopting decentralized and constant approach in management will produce predicted results matching with the goals of the organization. This study will attempt to verify and measure the level of bureaucracy applied in the Islamic Call Society and make it restricted to develop comparing to similar organizations in the developed countries.

Key words: Bureaucracy, Bureaucratic System, Subjective bureaucracy, Professional bureaucracy, Islamic Call Society (ICS).

INTRODUCTION

The bureaucratic system has been established with the emergence of the modern state and development in business systems and the concept of management in the last century with the increasing number of companies and workforce as well as hiring many experience managers within single companies and giving them various tasks. The bureaucratic had presence in several areas of life, including the economy, business and politics. In the past the groups of bureaucrats were impressive and achieve significant influence to the state and their political decisions was fulfilled, showing their personal benefits, or directing the public state policy according to their own desires,. Bureaucracy was representing the power and authority imposed and practiced on the citizens at that time by a group of people called bureaucrats.

The principles of bureaucracy was reinforced with the fast development in Europe until the end of the renaissance in Europe, and had been established with the political, economical, and social transformation in Europe, also with the huge transformations in industry during the 19th century, and the initiating of organizations and corporations all over the world and in particular in Europe and United States. The concept of bureaucracy was connected with the work of organizations and was being the main factor for decision making inside the organization, in addition to that the concept of bureaucracy was associated with the a pyramid summit structuring the organization and going down to the lowest managerial levels, at that time bureaucracy represented the authority of bureau.

The concept of bureaucracy in the current time represents the fulfillment of rules and regulation forced on civilized societies. The bureaucratic systems depend on common procedures and distributing authorities in a hierarchical way depending on personal relationships. There are many instances of bureaucratic system used in the current time such as (governments, army, companies, hospitals, courts, and schools). The origin of the word bureaucracy came from the word (bureau), which means an office, and this was the expression used at the beginning of the 18th century, but it did not express the writing desk, the expression of bureaucracy represented the company, and the workplace. The word (Hippocrates) which is derived from the Greek (Krats) and means power or authority and the whole word means the power of the office or authority of the office.
Bureaucracy represented the top of the hierarchal authority of the organization, and form a management system with multiple faces, for example bureaucracy in the Islamic Call Society contribute to create a climate of order and commitment as well as providing trust inside the organization, but in the same time create recession in the work and mistrust between employees and managers. Bureaucracy in the Islamic Call Society has two contrast faces, but in most of case it represents an imminent need in the work of the organization. The extreme bureaucratic system and rules has greatly affected the development of work as well as performance in the Islamic Call Society.

2- Bureaucracy and the Management Systems in Advocacy Organizations:

Bureaucracy has emerged as a new concept in business and management in Germany because of the efforts of Max Weber (1864-1920). The main researches of Max was associated with the impact of bureaucracy management system on organizations and companies, and in particular his theory of authority structure, and he divided these authorities to 3 types (heroic authorities, traditional authority, rational legal authority). Max has confirmed that the 3 types of authorities would not be possible to exist in one organization, and he also explained that the first type (heroic authorities) used by presidents and senior managers to practice their personal desires and reflect personal characteristics. While the second type (traditional authority) used by the president or manager to exercises authority through their position in the organization, as well as through the traditions inherited in the administration and the common rules of organization, while the third type (rational legal authority) used a modern form of bureaucratic way which is called (bureaucratic organization form ) and adopted by many modern organization nowadays.

The main characteristics of bureaucratic model:
1) The division of work based on specialization only
2) The direct supervision of higher level on lower level of organizational sequence and following the directions and instructions of the higher level
3) The control of official relations between the members and of the organization and the absence of community spirit
4) Total separation between senior management and the employees in the organization

The study emphasizes that the adoption of bureaucratic system has become a problem for many organizations and represents a significant constraint to the development of work in line with technological development, as well as scientific and management development. The bureaucratic obstacle does not relate to the performance of organizations only, but even communities. Karl Marx had confirmed that the bureaucracy represents the expression and embodiment of the bourgeois state that was unable to develop and move forward, while Hegel stated that the state represents the ultimate expression of the public interest that is far from the bourgeois and bureaucratic.

From this point Marx saw that because of bureaucracy, there is a disconnect between the community and the state, and he explained that bureaucrats always claiming that bureaucracy is the embodiment of the public interest which counteracts with personal interests of people working in government, and this counteracts is unrealistic and imaginary which is used by bureaucrats to serve their personal benefits.

From this basis the study believes that the idea of government and society in the state is a symmetry to the principle of management with employees in organizations, according to that bureaucracy should not be separated from reality and to be a reason for the dichotomy of senior managers from reality in practical life, in addition to that senior managers must follow development means, and should not separate the management from employees.

The extreme bureaucracy without limitation will kill the spirit of creativity and eliminate any room for development among employees; and keep them away for team spirit, and becomes the main reason for compliance because of restricted rules imposed by the senior management. Extreme bureaucracy damages the interest to work by employees and innovation in working style.

The study concludes that the ideal bureaucratic system should be based on the following basis:
1) The accurate specialization of jobs and not to be confused with organizational professions
2) Distribution of tasks and activities inside the organization according to qualifications of employees
3) Assign authorities in a responsible manner and according to experience in management
4) Identify new ways and modern techniques to do jobs and tasks from the highest level in the organization with fair flexibility to be giving to the employees in order to do their jobs depending on their experience and their perspective to their jobs
5) The highest level in the bureaucratic system supervises the activities and works of the lowest level
6) Set specific rules and regulations for the work in order to harmonize the work between all departments which enhance performance of personnel and employees and motivate them to give better outcome.
7) The separation between bureaucratic system and employee’s activities
3- Types of Bureaucracies:

Many researchers in sociology and management showed that the malpractices of the concept of bureaucracy has led to the consolidation of the idea that bureaucracy was unsuccessful and restricted the work of organizations. This study confirms that the main reason for the consolidation of the bureaucracy concept is due to the improper implementation of bureaucracy in the reality of business life and the lack of precise understanding of the subjective meaning to the concept of implementation and the improper selection to bureaucratic structures. The senior managers of the Islamic Call Society should aware the importance of bureaucratic concept and practicing bureaucracy in the right way, as well as what suits their work and serve the administrative decision-making process and thus achieve the objectives of the organization.

According to the above, the study identify two basic types of bureaucracy, as shown below:

A- Subjective Bureaucracy:

Standardization is the basis which every bureaucratic structures build on, and the subjective bureaucracy consist of standard routine and operational tasks and procedures characterized by high formal rules and centralization of order, and the decisions are taken through a series of commands inside the organization.

The core strength of subjective bureaucracy comes from its ability to accomplish standard tasks efficiently as well as reducing duplication of tasks and produce effective performance that obtain psychological satisfaction among employees. The main weaknesses of subjective bureaucracy is the extreme specialization of tasks and jobs that may create many types of conflicts and divisions between the employees, and the main reason for that could be the strict rules of subjective bureaucracy in general, as well as the weaknesses sometimes due to breaking the rules by the employees.

According to that subjective bureaucracy is suitable for big organizations that work in simple environment and stable society without crises, and it is also suitable for organizations that are capable to be measured.

B- Professional Bureaucracy:

This system appeared in recent decades that allowing organizations to recruit qualified, highly professional, experienced employees to work in operational centers and production organizations and institutions as well as service organizations. This form of bureaucracy, which combines standardization and decentralization at the same time to achieve the goals of the organization to a larger extent comparing to subjective bureaucracy, this means that professional bureaucracy is not centralized, and its constant work leads to predictable behavior and results according to the goals of the organization.

The strength of professional bureaucracy comes from its ability to perform specialized tasks at high efficiency and achieve the goals of the organization with a high degree of perfection.

Professional bureaucracy is similar to subjective bureaucracy in terms of efficiency, and from this point of view, the study highlighted the need to apply professional bureaucracy in Islamic Call Society in order to achieve high commitment for obtaining the goals of the organization as well as provide more space for workers to use their expertise when needed from senior management in the Islamic Call Society which reduces the absolute control and doing the tasks through a long series of orders, however doing this will affect the performance of employees and makes them slow and ineffective because they are they have the experience and qualifications, therefore restricting their ability will produce job dissatisfaction.

4- The Negative Impact of Bureaucracy on Strategic Decision-Making Process in ICS:

The structural bureaucracy could lead to a lack of encouraging to innovation and development in all aspects and department of Islamic Call Society, and regardless of the development level of senior management, adopting wrong bureaucratic system will hinder the work of ICS and produce wrong decisions that may change the original path of ICS at the current time. Many researchers in the field of bureaucracy confirmed that even with the presence of competent managers, they will not be alone able to manage the operations of the organization in the right direction.

Individual decisions cannot only generate a set of strategic ideas with a presence of a wide range and experiences of professional employees in the Islamic Call Society. Also the front line employees with customers will be less satisfied in a bureaucratic and strict organization. Islamic Call Society will find itself bound by a set of strict orders and thus will not be able to adapt strategic development plans within a fast changing conditions of communities where they are calling to Islam.

The changes to routine in doing the work is correct from the practical view and may help the employee as well as the management to predict the future, but it may make the employee unable to self-developing and attain better performance. Therefore the employees will show resistance to improvement even for limited progress. Therefore adopting incorrect bureaucracy will hinder the process of decision-making and produce a rigid management system in ICS that may not accept new ideas easily.

The senior managers should protect the individual authority because most of senior managers as well as department managers are only interested to extend their authorities and not interested in developing their work in
general. According to that the strict bureaucracy lead to slow decision-making process and this is not identical with the principles of effective management that was adopted by the Islamic Call Society.

The researchers and scientists in the field of management, politics, and sociology in general stated that the systems of public authority should have a structure of public administration agree to the principles of bureaucracy standards. The activities nature of public authority requires the presence of organizations with significant management with bureaucratic structural arrangements and the presence of specialty of jobs designed and efficient. Also the existence of qualifications to apply bureaucratic systems in the organization, and this does not mean in any case that there is a complete unification even in the structural characteristics but it only means that the foundations upon which all bureaucratic systems are in general are common.

5- The Results of the Study:

The results of the study showed the importance of involvement everyone within the Islamic Call Society in the decision-making process and the standardization work within the administrative systems of the Islamic Call Society; also combining the works inside the organization in a sequential and organized manner concurrent with monitoring and following-up of the performance of management.

The study also showed the existence of medium degree of bureaucratic authority in Islamic Call Society, as well as the need for more development in applying the principles of bureaucracy properly and in particular professional bureaucracy that lead to hiring experienced and qualified employees and giving them a space of flexibility and freedom in doing their jobs and advocacy duties depending on their experiences, and also the need to reduce the reliability on long series of orders issued by the senior management to implement all organizational functions.

The following table showing the items of fourth axis of the study which is related to the impact of bureaucracy on strategic decision-making process and the percentage of agreement of each item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Agreement rate</th>
<th>Kα*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ICS does not accept new ideas because of bureaucracy and laws.</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>403.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is requires to get approval from senior management before every initiative.</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>97.419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinates are free to ask for orders from their managers.</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>103.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The management process in ICS is centralized.</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>93.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The financial management in ICS is centralized.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>40.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All procedures in ICS are centralized.</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>40.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employee must follow the procedural processes set by the ICS even if these processes do not achieve the desired results.</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>319.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The general atmosphere inside ICS is traditional.</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>337.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is believed that a person acquires sufficient wisdom and qualification from long experience.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>34.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table above, which shows the answers associated with the fourth axis regarding the control of bureaucracy on the strategic decision-making process in Islamic Call Society, the phrase showed in the following answers:

- World Islamic Call Society does not accept new ideas because of bureaucracy and laws, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 22.7% of respondents.
- It is requires to have prior approval from senior management before on every initiative, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 40.2% of respondents.
- Subordinates are free to ask for orders from their managers, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 61.5% of respondents.
- The administrative process is central in the World Islamic Call Society, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 45.1% of respondents.
- The financial management in World Islamic Call Society is centralized, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 44% of respondents.
- All procedures in are centralized in the World Islamic Call Society, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 43% of respondents.
- The employee must follow the procedural processes set by the ICS even if these processes do not achieve the desired results, 23.8% of respondents.
- With regard to the phrase that the nature of the atmosphere to work in the World Islamic Call Society is traditional, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 23.4% of respondents.
With regard whether a person acquires sufficient wisdom and qualification from long experience, and have agreed with this view a percentage of 52.6% of respondents.

The majority of opinions of respondents tended to reject the phrases of the fourth axis, and is reflected in a mean value (1.98) which is less than the weighted mean (3.00) and these opinions was reflected on the views with regards to a phrase that the World Islamic Call Society does not accept new ideas because of bureaucracy and laws, the mean value associated with this phrase was (1.13) and a rejection rate was 97.09%. The study sample also rejected the phrase stating that the nature of the atmosphere to work in the World Islamic Call Society is traditional with a mean value (1.17) and rejection rate (98.84%).

6- Summary:

Bureaucracy represents the top of authority pyramid in the Islamic Call Society and forms one of the administrative systems in the organization that creates an atmosphere of order and commitment inside the organization and provides confidence and trust within the organization. Bureaucracy at the same time leads to recession in the work and mistrust between employees and managers. Bureaucracy in the Islamic Call Society has two contrast faces, but in most of case it represents an imminent need in the work of the organization.

The study has found that there is a need to implement the principles of bureaucracy more effectively and not subjectively, especially with regard to strategic decision-making and thus will lead to achieve balanced performance and efficiency in all its branches around the world.

The study showed that there are negative points in the decision-making process made by the Islamic Call Society, and one of these points associated with the low rate of women involvement and responsibility in the decision-making process. There is also rejection by the senior managers to new ideas because of existence of some subjective bureaucracy and less practicing to professional bureaucracy.

According to that the study emphasized on the need to adopt professional bureaucratic approach and abandon bureaucratic subjectivity because of many of the defects when using the last one that may lead to inefficient performance and lack of self-development.

The study confirmed that combining the standardization and decentralization at the same time will achieve the goals of the organization to a large extent; in other words adopting decentralized and constant approach in management will produce predicted results matching with the goals of the organization.

7- Recommendations:

Based on the discussions and results above, the study set a number of recommendations below:

1) The need to build the basis of professional bureaucratic approach properly and abandon subjective bureaucracy
2) Attending seminars and regular meetings by the department managers in order to find out their opinions on the work of the organization and contribute to the efforts for improving the overall performance and provide transparent working environment. These meetings should be held in all branch of ICS and periodically.
3) Adopting professional bureaucracy and recruit employees who have competencies and long experience in the field of calling for Islam.
4) Giving the employees enough freedom and flexibility in order to do their jobs according to their expertise in advocacy work without the need to return to a long series of order hierarchy for executing simple tasks
5) Establishing special committees that will be responsible for sending employee’s comments and feedbacks to the senior managers in all branches of the Islamic Call Society.
6) Applying the principle of rational authority, and practicing this type of authority through modern bureaucratic way, which is adopted in most modern organizations nowadays
7) Continuous improvement in all administrative divisions and focus on material and moral incentives
8) The need to involve all employees in the decision-making process through specialized committees that enhance the atmosphere of democracy inside the organization.

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