

ADMINISTRATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the importance of Administration and Good Governance and its basic processes in Nigeria. It evaluates the crucial ways of improving administration and good governance as a distinct skill and its objectives. New ideas and interpretations were inculcated to give a balanced and integrated view of administration while relating administrative processes to other business functions. The paper also brought together existing knowledge regarding the basic processes of administration while stating the ideas in practical and useable form. The paper concludes that lack of administrative processes are key factors that affects the smooth running and growth of an organization. The paper recommends that administration which is guidance, leadership and control would promote sound growth of an organisation.

Keywords: Administration, Good Governance, Administrative Process, Organisation, Guidance, Leadership, Control

INTRODUCTION

Experts in administration are vital to every dynamic and successful enterprise. Other things, such as capital and technical knowhow, are also needed, but without competent executives no organisation can long hold a place of leadership. These men must plan, direct, and control the operations of the business.

The task of directing the cooperative efforts of individuals toward some common objective is as old as civilization. The paper illustrates using the Bible comments briefly upon the administrative problems of Moses as the leader of the children of Israel. The pyramids have borne witness through the centuries of the administrative, as well as the engineering, skills of the ancient Egyptians. In the church, in the government, in the army, as well as in business enterprises, administration plays a dominant role. To be sure, the specific activities of these various enterprises differ greatly. Yet in each there are problems of organizing, of selecting executives, of establishing plans, of measuring results, and/or coordinating and controlling the activities to accomplish agreed-upon ends. It is with these basic processes, which are common to all cooperative effort that the paper deals with extensively.

Background

Administration is the guidance, leadership, and control of the efforts of a group of individuals towards some common goal. Clearly, the good administrator is one who enables the group to achieve its objectives with a minimum expenditure of resources, efforts and the least interference with other worth-while activities.

a. Crucial Importance of Improving Administration:

Not only is the work of administrators vital to a particular enterprises; it is also a crucial activating element in building strong nations. In industrialized countries like the United States there is wide spread expectation and insistence on rising standards of living for expanding populations. And less-developed countries throughout the world are facing a revolution in the aspirations of the common man. Political and social stability-perhaps international peace-is closely associated with fulfilling such aspirations.

The stability of nations to meet these rising expectations depends to a significant degree upon the competence of their managers. The initiative, the drive, the translation of idealistic goals into tangible results, the persistent concern with efficiency, and the readjustment to new demands and new technologies are all typical of the qualities business leaders are expected to provide. Increasingly, the general public is looking to the administrators who guide the productive enterprises of a country to serve as the catalysts that convert resources into goods and services.

At the same time, administration is becoming more complex. Speedier transportation and communication have greatly expanded the events that may have a direct impact on a firm in, say, Memzeen Group Limited. Interdependence of companies, and of nations, is increasing.

Technology is changing at an accelerating pace. Meanwhile, employees from Office Boys to Managing Directors are becoming less tractable.

The combined pressures of achieving better results while dealing with more complex situations place a high premium on improvements in administrative ability. Whether we like it or not, business enterprises has become one of the most powerful social institutions in Western civilization. Our quest in this paper for ways to improve administrative skill, then, has significance far beyond helping an individual win a promotion.

b. Administration – A Distinct Skill:

Administrators are men who possess outstanding ability in particular activity that they are directing. For example, the manager of a baseball club may have been a star player, the production manager of a radar company may be an expert electronics engineer, or the merchandise manager of a department store may be a canny buyer of women's glove. Distinguished performance in such specialized jobs probably leads to promotion to broader responsibilities. Such intimate knowledge and firsthand experience with specific operations is of great value to an executive.

Yet, unusual operating skill alone is not enough. Ample evidence exists that a star performer on the sales force or at the drafting board does not necessarily make a good executive. On the other hand, a man with only average operating skill may prove to be a very capable manager. This suggests that administrative skill is something different from technical proficiency in the operations being managed.

In fact, this administrative skill is so important that capable executives can move from one post to another and do an outstanding job in each spot. One man, for example, has successfully held positions as sales manager of a cracker company, general manager of a hosiery mill, and managing director of a chemical concern; and this is no isolated case. Perhaps even clearer evidence that administrative ability is a distinct skill is found in the use of army and navy officers as executives in business firms. These ex-officers usually have no background in their new company or industry, but they do have a basic grasp of the processes of management.

In this paper interest is on those skills that versatile executives are able to focus on entirely new and divergent administrative problems. If we can identify and understand the techniques used by such skillful executives, we shall have tools that will be highly valuable to the administrators of the future.

Whenever an administrator is given responsibility for an operation that is new to him, of course he must learn as much as he can about that operation and secure the counsel of men

who know it intimately. The man who has both personal experience with the operations and administrative skill undoubtedly has a considerable advantage. The point being made here is that management talent and technique are something in addition to, and distinct from, the substantive aspects of the work.

c. The Development of Principles of Administration:

Although administration has been essential in public, private, and eleemosynary enterprises for centuries, written discussion of the basic techniques used prior to 1900 are very few and far between. Before the twentieth century, training of an administrator typically consisted of informal apprenticeship in single enterprises. The young man, perhaps fourteen years old, was put to work without much thought of training beyond instruction in his immediate task. A general attitude of secrecy and high regard for tradition prevailed. Any discussion of one's own problems with men in other companies who faced similar difficulties was usually looked upon as a breach of confidence. If useful innovations were made, knowledge of these spread slowly.

Attitudes about administration have shifted, however, especially in the last few years. Techniques of management are now freely discussed by associations of businessmen and in professional schools. The volume of written material, usually descriptive in nature, is staggering. In this new development several, somewhat independent, currents of thought have strongly influenced our present ideas about administration.

Scientific management, personnel administration, accounting and budgeting, military administration, decision theorists, and operations researchers have all made major contributions. In addition, many other groups or schools of thought are concerned with administration. The public administrators, office managers, social anthropologists, purchasing agents- these and literally thousands of other organizations all deal to some extent with administrative problems.

Although there is now much talk about administration, two observations are pertinent here. First, most of these groups are interested in only some limited area of activity, and quite naturally they confine their attention to related subjects. Even those groups that broaden their scope to embrace administration generally are inclined to emphasize some one aspect, such as the budgeting process, a technique for analyzing managerial situations, or the treatment of people as individual personalities. The tendency is for each group to think it has the best – perhaps the only–road to salvation. For purposes of this paper of the basic processes of administration, we shall have to draw ideas from many sources.

Second many of the ideas with which we shall deal are new, or less than a generation old. Here, as in other fields, our knowledge of social relations lags far behind our understanding

of the physical environment. Hardly surprising, then, are the gaps in the information we possess, the inconsistencies in other places, and frequently the hypotheses not substantiated by demonstrated facts. Nevertheless, the body of knowledge we do have is large enough so that the executive who has it at his command will be more effective in his work.

Objectives

This paper explores the intangible and vital processes of administration. Its three primary purposes are to:

- a. **Bring together existing knowledge regarding the basic processes of administration:** As we shall see, many sound ideas are already recognized by leaders in business, government, and military administration, but these ideas will be more useful when we treat them systematically as parts of an integrated whole.
- b. **State these ideas in a practical and usable form:** Rather than stop with descriptions and observations regarding administrative processes, effort is made to express the concepts in the form of general guides, or principles, for executive action. At many points, existing knowledge (and the complexity of administration) will not permit us to go very far with specific recommendations, but such concepts as we do have will be stated in a way that relates them directly to concrete management problems.
- c. **Add new ideas and interpretations:** The summarizing and writing down of administrative concepts and the extensive experience that lies behind this paper naturally result in some new interpretations and insights.

Implied in these three points is a fourth objective, namely, to give a balanced and integrated view of administration. This is the most difficult task of all. It calls for much judgment, and since the importance of the several aspects of administration will vary from company to company, the view presented will be at best an approximation. Moreover, knowledge is more fully developed in some phases of management than in others. Under the circumstances, the paper recommended that the most we can do is emphasizes on time and gain the interdependence of administrative processes, and seek a balanced view of existing knowledge of administration.

BASIC PROCESSES OF ADMINISTRATION

Administration has been defined as the guidance, leadership, and control of the efforts of a group of individuals toward some common goal. This indicates the purpose or functions of administration but tells us little about the nature of administrative processes that is how the administrator achieves these results. And, unless we can dig into the and how of administration,

it will remain an elusive ability acquired by the fortunate few through inheritance, in tuition, or circumstance. One way to analyze administrations is to think in terms of what an administrator does. Using this approach, the work of any administrator can be divided into the following basic processes:

a. Planning – That is, determining what shall be done. As used here, planning covers a wide range of decisions, including the clarification of objectives, establishment of policies, mapping of programs and campaigns, determining specific methods and procedures, and fixing day-to-day schedules.

b. Organizing – That is, grouping into administrative units the activities necessary to carry out the plans, and defining the relationships among the executives and workers in such units.

c. Assembling Resources – That is, arranging for use by the enterprise the executive personnel, capital, facilities, and other things or services needed to execute the plans.

d. Supervising – That is, the day-to-day guidance of operations. This include issuing introductions, motivating those who are to carry out the instructions, coordinating the detailed work, and also cultivating normal personnel relationships between the “boss” and his subordinates.

e. Controlling – That is, seeing that operating results conform as nearly as possible to the plans. This involves the establishment of standards, comparison of actual results against the standard, and necessary corrective action when performance deviates from the plan.

A sixth group of activities takes more or less of the time of every administrator, namely performing non-delegated activities. For instance, the sales manager may call on customers, or the production manger may spend some time in the designing of a new product. Even the administrators of very large enterprise are not able to delegate all actual performance to subordinates.

Important among non-delegated duties are the external contacts that the chief executive of a large enterprise must make personally; he must meet important customers, deal with union officials, appear before congressional committees, and take part in certain civic activities. In fact, a detailed analysis of how two top-flight executives actually spent their time revealed that one spent over a third of his working hours on such outsides contacts while the other spent approximately 29 percent of his time in this manner.

Strictly speaking, the performance of non-delegated duties is not part of administration, and the activities involved are of almost infinite variety, depending upon the local situation and the particular interest and capacity of the executives concerned. Consequently, in the lecture we will do no more than recognize that non-delegated activities do limit the time an executive has to spend on administrative duties.

While all administrators engaged in the five basic processes just listed, clearly the proportion of time they spend on each will vary from time and from one executive to another. For example, in day-to-day operations at lower administrative levels, organizing and securing resources may receive very little attention, and the executive will spend his time planning, supervising, controlling, and performing non-delegated duties. On the other hand, certain executives have one or two principal assistants to whom they delegate most of the operating responsibilities may spend the bulk of their time in planning. Nevertheless, the five processes are sufficiently universal in application, basic in nature, and comprehensive in scope to provide a useful framework for our analysis of administration.

RELATION OF BASIC PROCESSES TO OTHER DIVISIONS OF BUSINESS

Administration cannot possibly take place by itself; it is inextricably tied to actual operations.

- a. **Relation to business functions:** The work of executives may be divided into subject fields, such as sales, production, or finance. It may also be divided into administrative processes; for example, planning directing, and controlling. These are simply two different approaches to the same body of activities; as is shown in Figure 1. The sales manager must plan, organize, assemble resources, supervise, and control, just as any other executive. Administration, then is not another of the so called “functions” of business. It is a necessary part of the work found in any and all of the subject groups.

Figure 1. Two Different Ways of Analyzing the Work of a Business Administrator

Project Process	Sale	Purchasing	Production	Finance	Personnel	Others
Planning						
Organizing						
Assembling Resources						
Supervising						
Controlling						



Most of the discussion of administration in the past has concentrated on some one subject-field. Emphasis has been on current issues in the particular field (union recognition, resale price maintenance, depreciation rates, and the like), with only secondary consideration of administrative processes. In this lecture, the emphasis is reversed. Major attention will be on the

underlying problems faced by executives in any field, and the more specific issues will be of interest only as illustrations of the basic processes. Of course, a top-management level in every enterprise is concerned with over-all administration rather than with a single field.

Generally, however, the nature of administration is similar at all executive levels, and in this lecture no sharp line will be attempted between top, near top, and not so near top, management. The words, administrator, manager, and executive will be used interchangeably, and except when narrowed by context, will apply to any executive from a first-line supervisor to the chief operating official. Here, again, we are primarily interested in the basic management skills that every executive should possess.

- b. Human Relations:** Throughout this lecture the theme of human relations will recur. Plans are made to guide human activity, and they should be formulated in light of their effects on many people. Organisation deals with jobs for people and the established relationships between these people. Assembling executive personnel is 100 percent human relations. Supervision is concerned with the daily interaction of executives and subordinates. Control is effective only if human behaviour conforms to plans. In other words, human relation is not a separate issue, but an ever-present one.

Our viewpoint here is that of a manager; we are concerned with his task and what he can do about them. Consequently, it will be most helpful to tie human behaviour to each of these tasks as we go along rather than discuss it separately. This is more than a convenience in writing; it is what the executives in fact do. He thinks of the human, economic, technological, and legal aspect of each problem as part of the operating situation in which he must work. The absence of more discussions on human relations, then in no way denies its importance. Instead, it reflects a deliberate plan to include human behaviour as an integral part of each administrative process.

CONCLUSION

As stated earlier, administration which is the guidance, leadership, and control of the efforts of a group of individuals toward some common goal is a very important and widespread activity, being essential to united human effort in government, military, charitable, and business enterprises.

Skill as an administrator is quite different from ability to perform the work being directed. For this reason, successful executives are able to move from one job to another even though they have had no personal experience in the detailed operations involved. It is this distinct administrative skill that is discussed in this paper.

Furthermore, administrative skill involves mastery of five basic processes: (a) Planning, (b) Organizing, (c) Assembling Resources, (d) Supervising and (e) Controlling. These processes are present to a greater or lesser extent in all executive jobs at different levels and in various fields. The subject matter will vary, but the underlying processes will be similar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper therefore recommends that information and ideas regarding sound administrative practice should come from a variety of sources. Scientific management, personnel management, accounting, public administration, military administration, psychology and sociology, industrial engineering, operations research, and other disciplines, all have made contributions. Thus implying that although this knowledge is still scattered and incomplete, a body of ideas should exist that can be highly valuable to every executive while promoting sound growth of an organisation.

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