

The Crisis of Public Administration in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examined the crisis of Public Administration, using the Nigerian experience. This became necessary in view of the identity crisis of public administration. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. The findings of the study revealed that the crisis of public administration can be said to have at least three components: the mission of subject matter; the performance and its internal managerial qualities. These gave rise to myriad of problems which led to the question of the legitimacy of the field itself. Furthermore, the study revealed that the confusion from the historical antecedents of public administration has translated to the crisis among students, scholars and sometimes practitioners of the subject matter. The study concluded that having a generally accepted definition for public administration may not necessarily be the antidote to the identity crisis. Scholars should continue researches in the field to solve the identity crisis but should always remember that the interdisciplinary nature of the field remains an advantage.*

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I. Introduction

Public Administration is directed towards the understanding of governmental administration. It is concerned with the accomplishment of the authoritative purposes of the state. As a field of study, it is best considered as a branch of the social sciences because of the broad scope of what constitutes the subject matter, the whole range of the activities carried out by governments in different societies, it has not been easy for students and scholars interested in the field to determine its boundaries with precision. This problem of boundary definition has led some people to question whether Public Administration qualifies to be called an academic discipline Adamolekun (1983).

Public Administration simply means governmental administration. It is therefore the study of the management of the public agencies that carry out public policies in order to fulfill the state purposes in the public interest. Public administration means different things to different people. It lacks a significant definition that is acceptable to all. Some traditional writers of the field offered the following definitions.

According to Woodrow Wilson, "Public Administration is detailed and systematic application of law. Every particular application of law is an act of administration". L.D. White, on his part said that "Public Administration consists of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfillment or enforcement of public policy". Corson and Harris, said that "Public Administration is the action part of government, the means by which the purpose and goals of government are realized? Luther Gulick went further to define Public Administration as "that part of the science of administration which has to do with government, and thus concerns itself primarily with the executive branch, where the work of government is done, though there are obviously administrative problems also in connection with the legislative and judicial branches". Herbert Simon said "by Public Administration is meant, in common usage, the activities of the executive branches of the national, state and local governments". Pfiffner also contributed by saying that "... administration consists of getting the work of government done, coordinating the efforts of people so that they can work together to accomplish their set tasks".

Modern writers differ in their opinion and definition of Public Administration. It is used in a broader sense having some responsibility in determining governmental policies and programmes as well as in executing them.

All professions are intimately aligned with intellectuals whose role is one of defining what the profession is. Public Administration is no exception. This paper reviews the successive definitional crisis of Public Administration, that is, how the field has seen itself in the past. Public Administration is unique, it differs significantly from both Political Science and Management.

Public Administration has developed as an academic field through a succession of five overlapping paradigms. Each phase may be characterized according to whether it has "locus" or "focus". Locus is the institutional "where" of the field. An example of the recurring locus of Public Administration is the government bureaucracy, but this has not always been the case and often this traditional locus has been blurred. Focus is the specialized "what" of the field, its body of knowledge and expertise. An example of the focus has been the study

of certain “principles of administration”, but then, the foci of the discipline have altered with the changing paradigms of public administration. The paradigms of public administration may be understood in terms of locus and focus when one has been relatively sharply defined in academic circles, the other has been ignored and vice versa.

This confusion from the historical antecedent of Public Administration has translated to the crisis among students and sometimes practitioners of the subject matter.

II. Literature Review

Woodrow Wilson largely set the tone for the early study of public administration in an essay titled, “The study of Administration”, published in the *Political Science Quarterly* in 1887. In it, Wilson observed that “it is getting harder to run a constitution than to frame one”, and called for the bringing of more intellectual resources to bear in the management of the state. Wilson’s seminal article has been variously interpreted by later scholars. In reality Wilson himself seems ambivalent about what public administration really was. Wilson failed “to amplify what the study of administration actually entails, what the proper relationship should be between the administrative and political realms, and whether or not administrative study could ever become an abstract science akin to the natural sciences.

Nevertheless, Wilson unquestionably posited one unambiguous thesis in his article that has had a lasting impact on the field: Public administration was worth studying.

Public administration is both an aspect of governmental activity and an academic discipline. As an activity public administration is as old as political society. But, as an academic study public administration is only of recent origin. It is one of the younger social sciences. But it does not mean that nobody thought about Public administration in ancient times. In ancient India Kautiyas “Arthashastra” discussed principles and machinery of Public administration. In the West, Plato’s “laws” and Aristotle’s “Politics” contained some reflections on the art of Public administration. In the sixteenth century Machiavelli’s “Prince” dealt with administrative problems. In the eighteenth century the Cameralists of Germany and Austria showed interest in the study of public administration. They emphasized the descriptive studies of public administration. They emphasized the descriptive studies of governmental structures and procedures and professional training of public administration.

It is only during the last half-century or so that much academic attention has been given to administrative activity that goes back to the beginnings of civilization. Its modern phase began to take place in the U.S.A. towards the end of the nineteenth century. The history of the study of public administration in its modern phase falls into certain major periods. As developing countries emerged from their colonial status after the Second World War, the transition from dependent territories to independent nations was greatly facilitated by the existence of colonial civil service institutions. The post-colonial administrative machineries had to grapple with a new ethos, reflecting new aspirations demanded by their citizens. The inherited public administration system emerged as the natural choice through which the struggle toward development and national building could be archived. This gave rise to the emergence of public administration as a field of study in post-colonial Africa designed to reverse the socio-economic and political imbalances created by colonialism (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2011).

Public administration is that sector of administration found in political setting: concerned primarily with the carrying out of public policy decisions made by the authoritative decision-makers in the political system, public administration can be roughly distinguished from private or non public administration. Of course, the range of governmental concern may vary widely from one political jurisdiction to another. As a cooperative group activity, administration is truly universal and operates in all types of public and private organizations. Administration occurs in both public and private institutional settings. Its nature varies with the nature of the setting with which it is concerned. On the basis of the nature of the institutional setting, public administration can be distinguished from private administration. Public administration is governmental administration concerned with achieving state purposes. Private administration relates to administration of private business organizations which are not concerned with the archiving of state purposes.

In recent years, the dilemma of conceptual identity confronting the study of Public Administration has increasingly become more pronounced. Despite claimed methodological capacity to deal with standard and transient issues inherent in the conduct of governmental affairs and public policy making. Public administration as a disciplinary enterprise today continues to suffer-or so its scholars claim- from sheer ambiguity. If not absence of a well-defined and concrete normative and definitional theory. Public administration as a subject in tertiary institutions universally can be viewed as a distinct discipline in the same way that economics, history, psychology, political science, sociology, law, philosophy, accounting, geography etc are accepted as disciplines (Peters and Pierre, 2003). Despite several decades of development, consensus about the scope of public administration is still lacking and the field has been described as featuring heterodoxy rather than orthodoxy.

For many years public administration has struggled for its independent position in the social sciences. While in its early years, it was part of the more conservative fields of law, politics and economy, it has been developed today to a unique field, independent in many ways but still enjoying mutual contributions of other disciplines in the social sciences. Moreover, in the last century it has developed a theoretical but also an impressive practical agenda that created remarkable achievements in different ways. The public sector, both as a science and as a profession is responsible for much of these achievements. At the dawn of the new millennium, however, various new social problems still await the consideration and attention of the state and its administrative system. The question of independency of public administration as a science seems today less important than in the past. Instead, there are many calls to take advantage of multi-disciplinary orientations in the social sciences and to find better ways to integrate them in the current ethea of public administration. It is also suggested that such interdisciplinary ideas, tools and methods can help to overcome social problems and create effective remedies for the new type of state maladies. Interdisciplinarity is also translated into cooperation, collaboration and a share of information and knowledge. The multi-level, multi-method and multi-system analysis with a look towards the future are the main frontiers of modern public administration.

All professions are intimately aligned with intellectuals whose role is one of defining what the profession is. Public administration is no exception. This study reviews the successive definition crises of public administration, that is, how the field has “seen itself” in the past and how it sees itself now, it will also venture into projecting how the field may see itself in the future. These paradigms of public administration are worth knowing because one must know where the field has been to understand where it is and where it may be going. Public administration is unique, it differs significantly from both political science (public administration’s “mother discipline”) and management (public administration’s traditional alter ego).

In the year 1948, Dwight Waldo, citing John M. Gaus, paused to reflect on the direction and thrust of public administration as a field of study. Specifically, Waldo noted that students of public administration have become “more uncertain in recent years as to the ends, aims, and methods which they should advocate. The observation is significant considering the firm conceptual tradition inherited from the works of Woodrow Wilson, Frank Goodnow, Urwick and Gullick, and to some extent, Leonard White. The dilemma, as perceived, was one that inquired into the nature and definitional premises of the field especially where its theoretical postulates and principles are concerned. Up to that time, the discussion was confined to just that - ends and aims, or to be more specific, a reexamination as to what public administration really is, and what it hopes to be. Waldo describes the problem more succinctly in the following manner.

“in a period in which government is called upon to perform prodigies of administration unparalleled in history, the academic “sub-discipline” nominally charged with providing a base of ideas, education, and skills is having difficulty in defining its relations with its mother discipline, with the academic community generally, and with its external clientele”.

By the year 1968, two decades later, and in spite of the continued and determined efforts of scholars to derive a working theory of administration, the problem has reached serious proportions, so disconcerting that it has been elevated into the nature of a crisis, or what has now been termed as a “crisis of identity”. The issue that emerged was the question of determining the scope, nature and boundaries of the field, including the methods of studying and teaching it. As it is, the dilemma of role and mission posed in the forties was now securely amplified.

From the outset, public administration, it may be noted, means different things to different people. Since public administration lacks a significant definition that is acceptable to all, one can obviously find a wide variety of its definitions. Frederickson, in fact, has gone as far as suggesting, that for some time, public administration has been treated as a “second profession” that it “seemed to have a rather narrow definition of its purposes... and that most public servants, it was found, identify with one or another professional field such as education, community planning, law, public health or engineering. Ostrom echoes the same contention, maintaining what he calls a “crisis of confidence” in the discipline as one really symptomatic of a lack of identity, or what he simplistically defined as a “failure to know where we are (subject matter) or how we should proceed (methods) Ostrom, however, disagree with Waldo’s short-term solution to the crisis pending a “long run resolution” that public administration as a discipline should “try to act as a profession without actually being one, and perhaps even without the hope or intention to becoming one... Ostrom contends that this way of thinking leads to an even greater problem, one that may possibly affect the practice of the profession. Thus, Ostrom views the crisis of confidence in the following manner: if the methods of studying, teaching and practicing the subject matter of public administration have become problematical, then that profession cannot have much confidence in what it professes. The practice of a profession rests upon the validity of the knowledge which it professes. When the confidence of a profession in the essential validity of its knowledge has been shattered, that profession should be extraordinarily modest about professional advice it renders while keeping up

its appearances. In effect to put it awkwardly, how can a discipline such as public administration render advice when it in itself badly needs one? One can understand and sympathize with Ostrom's view, aggressive as it is for the simple argument that the crisis of confidence as brought about by the disciplines lack of identity has definite far-reaching implications on the field's relations to the public service profession.

In contrast to Ostrom, Frederickson views this as a thing of the past, a reality that belonged to the fifties and the sixties. Still, he concedes an identity crisis, to the extent that he accepts Ostrom's contention of an "intellectual crisis". Thus, he observes categorically that:

... It is clear that there is no body of theory which presently dominates the subject. Thus it is possible to argue that there is an "intellectual crisis" in public administration.

He continues to assert that the crisis is so only if "one assumes that there must be a single agreed-upon paradigm to which all in the field are committed". Perhaps, that is precisely the first issue that needs to be threshed out: agreement as to whether there is a paradigm or a cluster of paradigms in public administration at all that needs to be challenged, or simply a ragtag collection of thoughts and concepts from other fields and fitted to the discipline.

Public Administration as an academic enterprise has to the present day continuously languished under the predicament of being referred to as child of political science. Whether the child is now mature enough to be treated separately or independently of its mother is a problematical issue which scholars of the field of public administration hope to resolve. In dealing with the problem squarely, the question of public administration's conceptual base and definitional boundaries will continue to crop up. Caiden in fact asserts that the "discipline of public administration has outgrown its niche in political science but maintains its distance from management science or any other discipline that studies the organizational society and administrative behaviour in large-scale organizations".

The distinction between the concern of political science and public administration by way of standard or generic definitions of the subject matter has always been nebulous, although the dichotomy between political processes and those of administrative conduct has been considered as a potential point of delineation. Political science, for instance, has been defined as "the science of the state" and also, as "a branch of the social science dealing with the theory, organization, and government, and the practice of the state". Public Administration, on the other hand, has been defined by its leading scholars, Leonard White, for one, as "the management of men and materials in the accomplishment of the purposes of the state. Simon *et al*, describe it as the 'activities of the executive branches of national, state and local governments; independent boards and commissions set up by congress and state legislatures; government corporations and certain other agencies of a specialized character". At most, those representative definitions of both subject matters do not convey a marked and tidy distinction between the two fields. This all the more makes a derivation of a suitable boundary difficult.

According to Lambright, the politics-administration dichotomy is dead, but the ghost continues to haunt us, the dichotomy is no longer valid in spite of the fact that its legacies continue to intrude into the mainstreams of present thinking in public administration, to narrow the vision of even those who take the subject matter seriously. Virtually everyone now admits that public administration exists in a political environment and that the administrator must interact with forces in that environment. If this were so, and it appears to be so, then the task of boundary setting will have to require further theoretical inquiries into other conceptual realms. The unsettling question that remains now is whether it really is possible at all to distinguish, to mark boundaries especially given Caiden's confident assertion that "fields must overlap; and that their boundaries could not be defined precisely". The most serious and devastating attack in recent years, however, came with the categorical pronouncement made at the Minnowbrook conference in 1968. In advocating for a recasting of the study of public organizations, Todd la Porte, for instance, struck at the heart of the discipline by describing contemporary public administration as "subject to great conceptual confusion; encompassing basic underlying ambiguity in many implicit models. He goes on to lament that the discipline today exists in a "state of antique or maladapted analytical models and normative aridity".

Before the Minnowbrook conference of 1968, the Utopian vision of a better society generated by the post-war politicians and administrators in the 1940s and 1950s inexorably crumbled and fell during the 1960s and 1970s. A sizeable number of governments in the western world could not deliver to the people many of the social promises they had made. The challenge of creating a new society, free of crime and poverty, highly educated and morally superior, healthier and safer than ever before, remained an unreachable goal, so during the 1970s and 1980s citizens' trust and confidence in government, and in public administration as a professional agent of government, suffered a significant decline. The public no longer believed that governments and public services could bring relief to those who needed help, and that no public planning was good enough to compete with natural social and market forces. The promises of modern administration, running an effective public

policy, seemed like a broken dream. Political changes took place in most western states, largely stemming from deep frustration by the public and disapproval of government policies. The crisis in public organizations and mistrust of administrators were viewed both as a policy and managerial failure (Rainey, 1990). In addition, this practical uncertainty and disappointment with governments and their public administration authorities naturally diffused into the academic community. Theoretical ideas for policy reforms in various social fields that once seemed the key to remedying illnesses in democracies have proven unsuccessful. Within the last decade the search for new ideas and solutions for such problems has reached its peak, as premises originally rooted in business management have become increasingly adjusted and applied to the public sector. Among these ventures are re-engineering bureaucracies (Hammer and Champy, 1994), applying benchmarking strategy to public services (Camp, 1998), reinventing government (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992), and the most influential movement of New Public Management. (NPM: Lynn, 1998; Stewart and Ranson, 1994). These are receiving growing attention accompanied by large measures of skepticism and criticism.

III. Research Methodology

Primary and secondary sources of data were employed to gather information on the crisis of public administration in Nigeria. This was beefed up with information and materials gathered from primary and secondary sources too. Specifically, three Universities: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; University of Nigeria Nsukka and University of Ilorin were purposively selected for the study; some randomly selected public administration practitioners and scholars of public administration were interviewed to elicit information on the study and practice of public administration in Nigeria. Secondary sources of data were gathered from library materials, books, journals, the Internet, Government Publications, Newspapers and periodicals. The secondary sources of data enhanced the primary sources of data.

IV. Findings Of The Study

Public Administration in Nigeria

Public administration in Nigeria has been more interdisciplinary in approach than its Western counterpart. In Nigerian Universities the study of the discipline of public administration is strongly interdisciplinary with other social sciences disciplines such as: sociology, psychology, law, political science, economics and even accounting.

The practice of public administration in Nigeria is characterized by gross inflexibility, which involves clinging to “normal” practices. It is no news that many public service holders have a phobia for change because of the ease of application of the “normal” ways. Another major impediment to quick action can be traced to excessive red tapism. Again bureaucracy is often heard and used in connection with the conduct of public affairs and the activities of public officials in particular. What the term really means or what the average person thinks the term means is another question. The word bureaucracy therefore appears to have acquired an opprobrious meaning, an odious connotation. It is associated with inefficiency, lack of initiative, unintelligent rigidity in the approach to human problems, undue fussiness and bossiness on the part of officials and downright stubbornness. This appears to be the sum of impressions that spring to mind at the mention of the word ‘bureaucracy’, when applied to the way that public officials go about their business. This impression has a lingering effect on the Nigerian Public administration in practice.

Accountability is another reason for inflexibility, since government and all the public services are open to public criticism in any country practicing democracy, officials are constantly conscious of public accountability, therefore, anxious not to make mistakes that would expose them, and the system they operate, to public criticism. The result is that officials tend to take pains to examine every issue from all possible points of view. They endeavour to establish a uniform body of precedent for application to cases that arise, in order to prevent accusations of partiality or favouritism. In the pursuit of a reputation for accuracy and impartiality, forms are devised, circulars are issued and papers of all descriptions are multiplied. In the final analysis they are codified into rules and regulations. Since individuals operating them are bound by them, an element of inflexibility is created. All these necessarily result in a somewhat cumbersome process which slows down action and which members of the public often see as ‘red tape’.

The Crisis of the State

The crisis of the state is viewed from the point of the mission of the state which largely stems from the dramatic shift that has taken place in the role of the state and its public service since the time of independence. Nigeria has gone from being almost exclusively dependent on the state it is expected to be responsible for only a few basic functions. This has inevitably had ramifications both for state employees and the public.

In Nigeria, at the time of independence, the role of the state was systematically viewed as being that of development manager. Indeed, initial efforts at creating development administration institutions were premised on the colonial idea that the state had the responsibility for managing development, being the only modern

credible institution of governance. In the post-colonial period, this idea was given great prominence, as the public service became not only a regulator but also as a financier and entrepreneur of development. As a result, a large number of parastatal agencies were created and the dominance of the state over all other institutions was reinforced through administrative reforms, which subordinated them to the central executive branch and politicians. The state was to be supreme and its role comprehensive. The topmost positions in the civil service were politicized and merit was largely abandoned.

As a result of the lack of fit between developmental expectations and administrative capacity led to a sharp decline in performance. As a response, Nigeria joined other countries in the region, with the assistance of International Finance Institutions (IFIs), initiated programs of structural adjustment (SAP), Fiscal balance, macroeconomic stabilization and economic liberalization were SAP's key components. This meant the pursuit of economic outward-looking rather than inward-looking strategies, the exposure of their economics to international competition rather than protection. They were encouraged to develop an exportable agriculture rather than promote import – substituting industrialization. The mission of the state was reduced to its classical notion – a residual one, whatever the private sector could or would not do. Indeed, in the earlier version of these reforms, the state was perceived as the obstacle to development and growth. The strategy was to get the state out of the way – so that productive forces in society i.e. the private sector, recognized as the engine of development could lead the development process.

The Crisis of Internal Administration

Public administration systems in Africa and Nigeria in particular are also in a serious disequilibrium. Some of the most serious systems of this state of affairs include the absence of reliable information systems on staffing levels, sense of mission, or sense of performance, achievements over a period of time. Other administrative routines that are necessary for keeping the system going, like the system of monitoring and appraising the activities of personnel management, staff training and development, hiring, training, deployment and separation. The civil service procedures, financial regulations, and code of conduct for public officers, have virtually collapsed. The result today is a service which has all the manifestations of bureau pathology; characterized by low competence levels, inconsistency in upholding standards of performance, absence of sound financial systems and practices, failure to exact accountability, ineffective organization systems, pay and compensation systems that do not reflect market realities, low morale and inertia among public officials etc. (Kiggundo, 1998; Olowu, 1995). It is therefore, no surprise that in this kind of setting, corruption is rampant (Hope and Chikulo, 2000; Moody-Stewart 1997).

The Academic Crisis

The formation of public administration as an interdisciplinary academic field seems certain. Still, it is unfinished business due to the need and demand to make it more of a “harder social science”, one which is closer to management science, economics, or even psychology. Throughout those earlier years, administration as an academic field was also in transition. Today, many examples exist in Universities of independent public administration units; some operate as schools and some as free-standing faculties. But in at least equal number of universities, public administration programs on all levels are only part of larger units such as political science departments. Business and Management schools, or even Public Affairs Schools. This disciplinary discombobulating certainly yields a science that is more complex and heterogeneous, but also more challenging and full of promise. Hence, the state of the field is in dispute among academics and practitioners from across the world who seek higher and more extensive scientific recognition, by applying a higher level of empirical-based paradigm.

It is argued that such inputs may produce a more accurate self-definition and better applicability of the field to rapid changes in modern life. This process presents new challenges for public administration. Perhaps the most important is to integrate more widely existing knowledge of the social sciences with efficient public action and with quality governmental operation. In the coming year's public administration will be evaluated by higher standards of theory cohesiveness and by more comprehensive performance indicators rooted in a variety of scientific fields. The exploration of new interdisciplinary horizons for public administration is thus essential, and inevitable for the successful passage of the field into the third millennium. Somewhat contrary to the concerns of Waldo (1968), the identity crisis in its new form may carry a positive, not endangering, interdisciplinary merit. The interdisciplinary orientations have the potential of pulling public administration out of its perplexing stagnating status and leading it towards a more solid scientific position.

The scientific background and identity of public administration in the late 1990s and early 2000s is still not stable and has not overcome its childhood ailments. On the contrary, identity conflicts have only intensified with the years. About thirty years ago, Waldo (1968) noted that ongoing transformations in public administration reflected an identity crisis of a science in formation. During the last three decades Waldos' diagnostics on public administration as a science struggling with a pernicious identity problem has not changed

much. The evolution of alternative sub-disciplines inside and around the field (e.g. policy studies, public personnel management, information management, etc.) carried promises but also risks for its position and role as a central field of social study. Peters (1996), noted that modern public administration greatly reflects lack of self-confidence both as a science and as a profession. This lack is expressed in many ways, the most significant being; incapacity to guide governments through a safe circuit of public policy change. Much of the accumulated wisdom in the science of public administration has been obtained through social experiments, the commission of policy errors, and sometimes even learning from them about better ways to serve the people. But 'it is important to note that mistakes cost money, in fact much money, money from all of us, the taxpayers, money that should be channeled to more productive ventures. Just like good customers in a neighborhood supermarket, citizens should and have become aware of the services they deserve, of the high prices they are asked to pay, and of governmental actions that should be taken to produce useful changes.

Usually, the demand for better operation are generally aimed at governments, but they should be, and are, also targeted at the science and at academia. Science has the potential of exploring new knowledge, generating better explanations for relevant administrative problems, applying sophisticated and useful professional methods, and most importantly directing all available resources to produce successful and practical recommendations for professionals. Its prime goal is to design a comprehensive theoretical view of public systems that is clear, highly efficient, thrifty, and socially oriented at the same time. This cannot be achieved without extensive understanding of the diversity, complexity and interdisciplinarity of the science of public administration.

A consensus exists among scholars and practitioners that modern public administration decidedly benefits and will continue to benefit, from the seminal inputs of social and cultural motives and mainly from the impact of managerial and organizational theory. In keeping with these, modern societies question the current obligations of public personnel towards citizens and urge them to put people and social value first. These tasks can be achieved by treating citizens as customers or clients but also through building a different value of administrative spirit (Vigoda and Golembiewski, 2001). Yet managerial tendencies draw fire from those who argue that a client orientation of the public sector breeds citizen passivity and lack of individual responsibility toward the state and its agencies. It is further assumed that these obligations and commitments are not clearly decoded, manifested or satisfactorily implied. Consequently, they yield an identity problem of the field and strive for redefinition of its unwritten contract with the people. As it is, scholars are divided over the best way to obtain missions of good-management together with good cultural order. They do agree that much more can be done to improve responsiveness to citizens needs and demand without forgoing the active role of citizens in the administrative process which is within the purview of public administration.

V. Recommendations

Public administration in Nigeria is faced, with plethora of problems in its practice and its teaching as an academic discipline. This study recommends the following in order to reposition the study and practice of public administration.

The study of public administration grew out of the awareness that the machinery of government was inadequate and sometimes totally unsuitable to perform the functions of a modernizing government. Practitioners and scholars were quick to notice the deficiencies in the government administration and urge the need to improve the administrative institutions of government. It is important for the public sector to take their place and play their part in national development. The presence of the public sector is hardly felt in the Nigerian administrative space. The task of public administration is to straighten the paths of government to make its business less-un-business like, to strengthen and purify its organization, and to crown its duties with dutifulness. The concept of efficiency in the functions and processes of government administration should be adhered to. People should be held accountable for their actions and inactions. Government business should not be left in the hands of people who are not competent to deliver. The practitioners of public administration should lead the way in applying efficient processes of administration in business and also in applying those processes and principles to administration in government.

Going down memory lane in the Nigerian history, the power of public administration can be seen in what happened following the military coup in January 1966, the military government which assumed power was shaky during the first seven months and there were anxious moments when it looked as though the nation might face total disintegration. The division which came into the open in the military at that time found a parallel and was reproduced by similar divisions in the civil society. A situation arose, therefore, in which the army, which had intervened in politics to put an end to tribal and regional disputes in the name of national unity, itself became divided on those very issues which it purported to resolve. In those anxious moment when disintegration appeared to be imminent, it was the stabilizing role of administration the civil service, the regulatory commissions, the judiciary etc which kept the nation on an even keel until the military was able to find its bearing. In this way, administration can be regarded as the stabilizer of society and the guardian of tradition.

Therefore, it is not too much to assert that administration and not the gun is the key to stability and enduring power in any society.

Furthermore, something should be done quickly about the poor remuneration of public servants. The remuneration which includes salaries and wages of public servants in Nigeria is alarmingly low and this in fact causes serious problems. The salaries of workers at the Federal level are a universe higher than those at the State level. When the salaries of those involved in the administration of public resources are low, this creates a temptation for them to steal and act inappropriately. The current inflation rate in the country is not helping too, as it seems that the general price level has been multiplied by two or more. Inflation always adversely affects fixed income earners like public office holders. This pushes them to the edge. This cannot allow them work well given the fact that they barely have enough to survive.

Students of Public Administration should harness the benefits of the Universality of administration. This cannot be achieved without extensive understanding of the diversity, complexity and interdisciplinarity of the science of public administration. The identity/intellectual crisis should carry a positive and not an endangering interdisciplinary merit. A student of public administration must not succumb to any form of inferiority complex about the subject matter of public administration. The relationship that exists between public administration and other social science disciplines is an enrichment to public administration. It widens the horizon of the students of public administration in relating with people from all works of life.

The students of public administration should realize the position they would occupy in establishments or organizations which is both strategic and pivotal. The place of administration has come to be clearly recognized in every sector of human endeavour, as being the keystone to the success and indeed to the very existence of the enterprise. Being concerned with the planning, co-ordination, supervision and control of the enterprise or establishment with which it is involved, it is no overstatement to declare that 'whatever may be the future, the science of administration will be an essential instrument of human welfare. If the students of public administration can understand and realize the power embedded in their course of study, then the issue of identity-crisis will naturally be a thing of the past.

Scholars of Public Administration should continue researches in the field to solve the identity/intellectual crisis. The interdisciplinary nature of the field is an advantage because the knowledge of the other related disciplines provides an insight into the complexity of the field by combining different levels of analyses into an integral whole, which better accords with reality. This knowledge may well serve the understanding of how the state and its executive branches is managed and of the obstacles to better public performance and of course if these issues are properly solved, then the work of administration and administrators will become easier and development at all levels will thrive.

VI. Conclusion

In reality, everything in life is related in one way or another. The need for a clearly defined system of operation in any undertaking has been recognized from very early times. The tasks performed by modern administrators have been carried on throughout history. The study concluded that 'whatever may be the future, the science of administration will be an essential instrument of human welfare'. Indeed, so significant is the importance of this instrument of human welfare that one can agree with the writers of administration who asserted that "if our civilization breaks down, it will be mainly a breakdown of administration" and that 'the future of civilized government, and even of civilization itself, rests upon our ability to develop a science and philosophy and practice of administration competent to discharge the public functions of civilized society.

It is therefore not difficult to see that administration is the process on which social stability rests. This is because administration ensures the establishment of institutional processes and machinery through which the functions of the state or enterprise is carried out from day to day. These processes of organization and management ensure the smooth working of the various components that make up the state. Those processes constitute administration. The effect of these mechanisms ensure stability and continuity in periods of change and stress without them, changes in government, especially when accompanied or occasioned by violent means, for example during military interventions in governments, will result in disintegration of society and general chaos. The administrative function therefore ensures the continuance of the existing order. Therefore, the society cannot afford to have crisis in Public Administration.

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