

Smart Governance: Reducing Red Tape for Effective Public Administration

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Abstract

The focus of this article is to understand problems and prospects of bureaucratic hurdles in public administration. It explores one of the most chronic issues: overregulation that hinders the flexibility and adaptability of governmental organizations. Thus, with the help of the given article, it is possible to identify new effective approaches and tendencies in the economic process of utilization of the administrative activity, which has the principal objective to improve service delivery and the further performance of the public sector. In the following discussion, the answers that I received are grouped around several themes: identifying bureaucratic hurdles and pressures, understanding digital endeavors, and cultivating an outcome-focused culture. In adopting smart governance initiatives some countries have come up with success stories as illustrated in the article which makes it easier to reckon the gains of cutting on administrative barriers. Particular importance is attributed to the implementation of innovative technological approaches, including e-governance platforms that enhance communication, data exchange, and delivery of essential services. Furthermore, the ideas discussed in the article regards the essence of leadership in creating the climate for reform and innovation. It also highlights the challenges and the importance of enhancing the professional competence of incumbents through the introduction of new methodologies and tools. Recommendations for policy are made with emphasis on the deregulatory policy, on business process reengineering, as wells as on the adoption of an effective performance management system. The article offers a much broader global view on how to reach efficient governance through integrating perspectives of practical public administration, information technologies, and organizational behavior. The final section offers a vision towards the future of public administration and how it requires continuous assessment and further transformation to address current and future needs of the citizens and other players. Altogether, this paper acts as a valuable source of instructions and guidelines for policymakers, administrators

and scholars who strive to renew the bureaucratic systems in order to enhance the effectiveness, openness and responsibility of the public sector.

Keywords- Smart Governance, Reducing Red Tape & Effective Public Administration

Introduction:

Public administration is universally recognized by the multitude of rules and regulations that check the implementation of decentralization reforms, which is also referred to as 'red tape.' Thus, red tape means a set of bureaucratic processes and numerous forms under which people have to operate. This bureaucratic structure can impede the flow and organization of work as it fixes time-consuming hoops for each step to be followed in the government. This is evident because citizens have to undergo through a time-consuming and a winding maze so as to get the services they need in a facility owned and operated by the government. Such elaborate measures may erode confidence in public entities and generations and frustrate good leadership and governance (Osborne, 2006). Autocratic bureaucratic structures are often bureaucratic in their processes, and certainly not as adaptable: They may inadequately respond to emerging issues, rein in innovative ideas (Bozeman, 2000).

In the recent past, the application of the traditional public administration model has been considered unsustainable, hence the adoption of smart governance as a new concept of public administration. Smart governance particularly looks at the application of the technology and new reforms to improve on the working of government institutions. Outcome 1 of this approach is to remove unnecessary bureaucracy through process simplification and enhancing service delivery by embracing digitization (Meijer & Bolívar, 2016). The opportunities of introducing e-governance platforms, data analyzing, and artificial intelligence will help governments dematerialize and minimize administrative procedures and make them graphic and comprehensible for a common populace. Not only that, it also provides improvement to the use value for users, thus increasing the level of organizational openness of public institutions (Nam, 2012).

In smart governance, there exists a procedure of rethinking and reconstructing the governmental processes for the purpose to adapt the new context of today's society. For instance, interactions between the citizens and government agencies can be enhanced through digital platforms, eliminating the need for civil servants to attend calls of duty physically or the citizens to spend

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time preparing paper documents (Anthopoulos, 2017). However, it also makes it possible for governments to forecast potential challenges and then solve them before they become a concern, thus improving the quintessential service delivery. Therefore, smart governance exists as a significant opportunity to revolutionize public administration by bringing about enhanced public solutions that are flexible and more focused on the citizens. The use of this approach is a shift towards managing organizational problems and achieving efficiencies that are not possible with bureaucratic systems as implementing this approach offers an enhancement of the continuous flow of relevant and timely information within the organization (Gil-Garcia, and Pardo, 2005).

The Burden of Red Tape:

Bureaucracy appears in many forms and has a direct effect on the effectiveness of public administration. Paperwork is another form of bureaucracy where the citizens and the officials are bogged down with so many forms to complete and so many procedures to follow. Bureaucratic procedures also become a hindrance to efficiency as they complicate the overall system of approval which in most cases lead to long intervals before specific services are rendered. Similarly, lack of information also reduce people's abilities to exercise governance or even to follow through with certain formalities hence leading to poor participation of citizens. Not only does this bureaucratic inefficiency irk the citizens, but it also greatly limit the governmental capacity to extend basic essential services to cater for the public needs, thus slowing the pace of innovations together with developments (Bozeman, 2000)..

However, red tape which refers to bureaucratic procedures and formalities continues to be an issue in the delivery of public services to citizens and the implementation of public policies by officials. Thus, while citizens cannot afford the time and efforts to navigate bureaucratic procedures and often are coerced into becoming passive recipient of services delivered by public entities, their trust in the latter is undermined. Self-interest or bureaucracy For the public servants especially, it becomes more centralized on process at the neglect of outcomes resulting in bureaucratic culture rather than performance and creativity. This culture can prevent the modification of challenges faced or handle pertaining to service delivery methods. Hence, red tape is a major negative factor in public administration since it involves many formalities which slow down progress and create bureaucratic structures that may not fully address the needs of the society (Osborne, 2006).

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Measures towards the simplifying bureaucracy are crucial in order to improve and increase the delivery of solutions in the ministries. Removing barriers in organization and increasing the population's information input can lower the time otherwise wasted on business and facilitate civil interaction with the state. Allowing citizens to be satisfied with governments is critical by providing better and more efficiently organized bureaucratic systems. Furthermore, official procedure simplification provides prospects to achieve the optimization of changes within the structures of public administration. This is especially the case especially given that this is happening at a time when technology is rapidly advancing and so is the society making governance to become multifaceted whereby different forms of structures are required to fill various gaps of demand in governance (Anthopoulos 2017).

The Rise of Smart Governance:

Smart governance is inclusiveness that acts as a revolution of new school public administration, designed with emphasis on citizen and information technology. Among them there is, for example, the orientation towards technological optimization of processes which means that procedures are evolved, repeated actions are roboticized and interactive portals for government services provision are designed. Not only does this result in greater efficiency but also it relieves citizens and public servants from the otherwise time-consuming activities (Meijer, 2018). In addition, smart governance use big data to gather information it needs to collect and analyze with the aim of making informed decisions which will aid policy making. Hence, by incorporating data into its decision-making process, government stands to benefits from improved policies that address current gaps and future prospects in efforts to support society (Gil-Garcia, Helbig, & Ojo, 2014). Transparency forms another key aspect of smart governance since it paves the way for divulging as much as possible. Through the adoption of open data initiatives and increased government information share with the population, smart governance helps establish a culture of transparency and confidence between the government and the people (Janssen et al., 2012). It also strengthens the citizens' participation and involvement with their government through the adoption of smart technology which offers users the option to pass their concerns directly to the government and work together with them to find a resolution for the problems presented. Some of the tools include on-line computer forums, mobile applications, and social media to enable users to give real-time feedback and hence be actively involved in the operations of the government. It does so effectively in a way that not only increases the level of engagement that citizens have with governments but

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also allows governments to be as well more able to address the need and demands of the masses (Linders, 2012).

Benefits of Smart Governance:

Smart governance offers numerous advantages, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration. One of the primary benefits is improved efficiency, achieved through streamlined processes and automation. By reducing processing times and minimizing manual tasks, public administration becomes more efficient, allowing for quicker and more accurate service delivery (Dunleavy et al., 2006). In addition to the gains in efficiency for governmental functioning, this translated into better service delivery and outcomes for citizens afforded by increased efficiency. Also, the promotion of efficient measures of transparency in governance is among the key benefits of smart governance. Through provision of information and enhancement of accountability at the decision-making level, people develop confidence in the leadership and good governance which enhances the transparency and accountability elements (Meijer, Curtin, & Hillebrand, 2012).

Smart governance also means better citizen services, which implies that authorities will be able to offer improved services and solutions. The use of technology is a smart way to deliver individual services to fit everyone's expectations, therefore improving the public services delivery system in order to satisfy citizens' needs' (Bekkers & Homburg, 2007). This way of civil servants' engagement guarantees that the citizens get the targeted services at the right time, and as a result, the general satisfaction with public administration is increased. Also, smart governance enables the promotion of innovation and collaboration, which is a significant advantage for business entities. Smart governance makes public service delivery more efficient, increases the involvement of citizens in decision-making and is based on the use of innovation strategies while interacting with the government (Nam & Pardo, 2011). It also promotes the fact that many a time, those involved in formulating public policies and delivering public services have a better understanding of the morale of the society.

Challenges and Considerations:

There are various aspects or measures involved in achieving smart governance, which also present certain challenges that require cautious application. A significant problem of digital citizenship is the digital divide, namely the inconsistent availability and adoption of technologies and

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variability in computer usage. The presence of this issue raises concerns on how citizens might be connected to the Internet and this would warrant policy measures like making the internet affordable, facilitating the availability of ICT skills particularly through offering digital education and ensuring that the information technology organization's platforms are more open to each and every citizen as proposed by Van Deursen and Van Dijk (2014). The consequences of smart governance for human capital development may not be inclusive enough to be extended to all citizens and members of society without bridge the gap in the digital humanities that allows for digital divides which may worsen or deepen the already existing inequalities in regards to marginalized members of the population.

Another emerging threat is cyber security which is playing an important role in many organizations. Following the principle of smart governance and usage of digital platforms as well as managing sensitive data, cybersecurity becomes crucial to safeguard the information and trusted environment. Moreover, cybersecurity is a cause of concern and governments need to spend on better security tools and measures to refrain from internal data leak and external hacking (Dawson et al., 2016). It involves periodic review of security measures, encouraging employees to observe standard security protocols, and implementation of the security response mechanisms in case of a breach. However, there are also certain difficulties which may occur on the way to technological integration: these difficulties are connected with the fact that the costs, needed for the technological integration, can be high. A clear value proposition is required to consider smart governance that includes investment in infrastructure, software, and training. They can exerting significant pressure to public budgets, especially when funds are scarce especially in developing countries (Anthopoulos, 2017). In strategic planning and funding, it is particularly important to provide constant, sufficient and efficient funding so that the transformation to smart governance treatments is not only efficient but also sufficiently funded to cover the costs of short-term work against the long-term benefits of smart governance.

Path Forward:

Despite the challenges that can be foreseen, smart governance offers a huge prospect for the improvisation of public administration in Pakistan. Pakistan could better target overall goal of having value-added service-oriented government through citizen-centric service delivery so that its services are more citizen-friendly. Maximized use of such technologies would mean that there would be lesser encumbrances and hoops that the government has to jump through in terms of

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administrative procedures and thus provide the public with faster and more accurate results. Additionally, to mitigate the gap that has been created, it is paramount that the different levels of the digital divide are resolved. This involves innovating and ensuring equal distribution of such tools; promoting increased literacy of the population in those tools. Since many Pakistanis cannot afford technology and automation, it is crucial for the government to invest in infrastructure, educational programs and tangible and intangible community programs for all Pakistan's citizens, so that all of them can have a chance to enjoy smart governance. For the country to achieve these goals and employ technology in making the government become effective, efficient, and easily accessible to the people, Pakistan needs to strengthen its cybersecurity to prevent the leakage of vital information of the government and also to gain its citizens' trust. Some of them are as follows: Emulating high end security measures, periodic security audits, awareness of security threats and IS among government employees and citizens. Furthermore, smart investments could be made on the use of technology in governance whereby institutions make strategic investments on the integration of technology to their systems including infrastructural development, software acquisition, and implementation of orientation programs to enhance on the use of technology in governance. When calculated with these costs against the potential future benefits, Pakistan might develop a reliable model of its smart governance to improve on the service delivery system and possibly foster public trust in the government entities. By these combined endeavors, Pakistan will be able to realised the optimal potential of smart through the efficient and responsible management of entities of the government and other multiple public opportunities with greater fairness and effectiveness.

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