

Bureaucratic Theory: Hiring in the Civil Services Sector

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1. Abstract

Hiring practices are vital for any organization because they have consequences for its success and goals meeting, and it has a significant effect on many other organizational variables as literature shows. In addition, literature shows common aspects of hiring weakness in the public sectors in many dimensions. This article aims to present the bureaucratic theory basis for hiring in public organizations. This research is designed as historical study that uses literature review for the studies and articles that tackled the Bureaucratic theory. This article presented the bases for hiring in the public sector especially for large ones.

2. Introduction

2.1. Civil Service Sector (CSS)

Musa (2016) defined Civil Service Sector (CSS) as an executive tool in any political system that constitutes the engine of development. The Civil Service Sector refers to the body of appointed officials who carry out the functions of government under the direction of the Head of Government (Imtiaz, 2013). It is very important because it is the basic engine for all government activities (Yaza, 2016). In Palestine, the formal definition of Civil Service Sector is the group of non-military public government departments, and this name was given (service) due to the service nature that differentiate the government sector from the private or industrial sector, it aims to provide services for citizens, where civil designation was given to distinguish between employees in the civil service and those working in the military service (General Personnel Council, 2017). According to Imtiaz (2013), Civil service is a new term used

to describe an old governmental feature where the phrase was first used in British administration in India and was popularized a little more than a century ago.

The effectiveness and productivity of any government depend on the efficiency of the civil service to a larger extent. Ion Chitescu and Lixandru (2015) defined CSS goal to achieve specific tasks through laws imposed by political power and assume accountability for implementation. According to Kairouza et al. (2016), the Civil Service Sector needs superheroes to prevent failure and gain success, because it is not easy to gain citizens' satisfaction, he added, corruption in CSS is devastating to the whole country.

2.2. Human Resources Management Concept

Many scholars provide definitions for HRM practices. But after reviewing them, definitions can be divided for the sake of better understanding in three categories of definitions: First category: definition from strategic point of view, which can be noticed in Armstrong and Taylor (2014) definition, it as philosophy and approach how to manage people because human resources are strategic in nature. It is a process of bringing people and organizations together so that the goals of each are met (Verma, 2016). The second category are definitions from its organizational effect, like Itika (2011) and Yaza (2016) definitions, it as techniques or methods that would improve production, reduce service delivery costs, and ensure sustained availability of competent staff in the organization. It is a way to help an organization to be more efficient, reduce the costs, raise the synergy, and empower organization capabilities. The last category are definitions that focus on functional perspective as Decenzo (2010) and Dessler (2017) definition, it is the function of how to attract, hire, train, motivate, and maintain employees. However, the Palestinian context define human resources

management as the comprehensive management of employees through a series of procedures and functions that aim to organize individuals to obtain the most possible benefit from human competencies, and to extract their best energies through planning, recruitment, selection, and appointment jobs, training, evaluation, and financial and moral incentives (General Personnel Council, 2017).

2.3. Hiring concept

Hiring practices are a major activity of Human Resource Management (HRM) (Abdul-Qadir and Jaafar, 2020). Al-Ghazali (2016) defined it as a pool of candidates that is generated to apply for employment to an organization, and the use of specific instruments and criteria to choose persons who are more likely to succeed in the job. Oluoch (2013) defined it as the process through which the organization seeks applicants for potential employment, and the process through which the organization selects applicants with the necessary characteristics that will help to achieve goals. Therefore, hiring importance comes from the dependency of an organization success on the quality of its human resources (Al-Sawsaa, 2018). Moreover, hiring practices consist of two main practices: recruitment and selection (Al-Qaralah, 2018; Dessler, 2017; Al-Ghazali, 2016). Recruitment practices are the process for which an organization seeks applicants and attracts potential employees (Al-Naqbi, 2011), they are applicants to be employed in or by an organization (Welasari et al., 2021). Where the selection practices are the process of assessing candidates to ensure that the most appropriate ones are hired (Oluoch, 2013), through selecting who are more likely to succeed in the job by using specific instruments and criteria (Al-Ghazali, 2016). In the coming literature review, another dimension is detected and will be presented in the Bureaucratic theory for hiring practices

3. Bureaucratic Theory

Max Weber is the “founding father” of the bureaucracy study (Page, 2008). He was born in West Germany and wrote several papers on law, social, political, and economic factors after joining University of Berlin as an instructor in law (Egyankosh, 2017). It can be said that bureaucracy is a 'rational' way to conduct the business subjectively (Gberevbie, 2004). The bureaucratic theory was presented in his book “The Theory of Social and Economic Organization” in 1947 (Visitchaichan, 2004).

Furthermore, Bureaucratic theory is one of the famous theories that have been applied in the public sector according to literature, because this theory is incredibly useful for managing large-scale organizations (Egyankosh, 2017) and it suits the public sector because it defines every single unit of effort, which is divided into the completion of duties that are handled to officials (Hollyer, 2011). Figure 1.1 shows bureaucratic theory components.

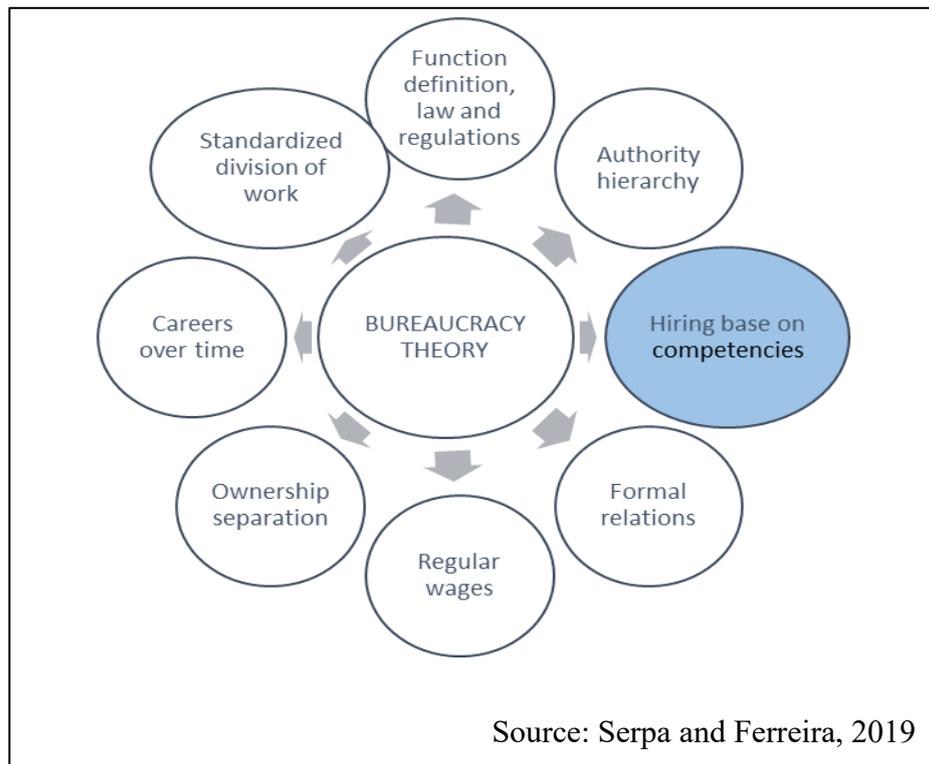


Figure 3-1: Bureaucratic Theory Components

3.1. Hiring in the Bureaucratic theory

Hiring is a main component of bureaucratic theory (Serpa and Ferreira, 2019), according to many schoolers who tackled this theory. However, there is another main sub practice for hiring according to bureaucratic theory literature in addition to recruitment and selection practices, which is employment policies implementation (Collins and Kehoe, 2008; McNeill, 2022; Egyankosh, 2017; Serpa and Ferreira, 2019; Visitchaichan, 2004; Baron et al., 2001). Accordingly, hiring practices according to bureaucratic theory have three main sub practices: employment policies implementation, recruitment, and selection. Employment Policies can be defined as all formal policies and procedures that ensure all employees become experts regarding their

jobs (Collins and Kehoe, 2008), which govern effective recruitment and selection processes.

Bureaucratic Theory focused on highly skilled employees who will devote greater effort to their official duties (Hollyer, 2011). It shows the concept of a merit system in the recruitment (Welasari. et al., 2021) and it attempts to achieve systematization through emphasis on rules rather than people and competence rather than favoritism. (Visitchaichan, 2004). In addition, it aims to raise formalization level through a process of rational action that aims to control uncertainty (Serpa and Ferreira, 2019). The central point of theoretical framework is that formal policies and procedures handle everything. Those policies ensure that employees are experts regarding their jobs (Collins and Kehoe, 2008). As well, it focuses on written documents related to all functions and practices (Egyankosh, 2017). While hiring practices are based on abilities (what you know) rather than on 'who you know' (Gberevbie, 2004). The theory is used in a more stable and predictable environment, focusing on long-term planning, with centralization as a main approach, and specialization is the base for hiring (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Finally, bureaucracy represents the most efficient way for big organization in public and private sector to organize employees and duties (Visitchaichan, 2004).

3.2. Employment Policies Implementation in Bureaucratic Theory

Employment Policies are all formal policies and procedures that ensure all employees become experts regarding their jobs (Collins and Kehoe, 2008), which govern effective recruitment and selection processes. Six main employment policies that must be implemented to govern hiring practices are presented after reviewing the bureaucratic theory literature:

- i. **Work force planning policy:** An organization must carry out an analysis and classification of jobs to determine needs and conditions to be met by candidates (Abdul-Qadir and Jaafar, 2020). Where planning is the first practice of hiring (Al-Qaralah, 2018). an organization will fail to perform hiring practices without appropriate processes of planning (Itika, 2011). In addition, hiring should be governed by clear workforce characteristics (Collins and Kehoe, 2008).
- ii. **Well-defined tasks policy:** Every job is based on well-defined tasks (Baron et al., 2001). Job descriptions outline the responsibilities of a position by listing the tasks to be completed and the skills required to do so (McNeill, 2022). Al-Sawsaa (2018) mentioned a clear defect in recruitment processes resulting from the absence of a proper job description.
- iii. **Written procedures policy:** Written documents are the base of all hiring activities for bureaucratic theory (Egyankosh, 2017). In addition, the standardization of procedures aims to control highly divided and specialized work (Serpa and Ferreira, 2019). Where administrators are subjected to strict rules, discipline, and controls regarding the conduct of their official duties (Visitchaichan, 2004).
- iv. **Values frame and cultural fit policy:** All hiring procedures must be aligned with organizational culture, which makes hiring practices serve the values frame and cultural fit (Collins and Kehoe, 2008). This principle helps to attract employees who will fit into the organization culture. Offices or positions were organized in a hierarchy of authority resulting in a chain of command or the scalar principle (Visitchaichan, 2004).

- v. **Centralized hiring processes policy:** With centralized processes, the ability to follow rules and procedures must be considered in selection decisions (Visitchaichan, 2004). The main goal of having Centralized hiring processes is to monitor selection processes and improve it continuously.
- vi. **long-term employment policy:** Every job is based on long-term employment conditions (Baron et al., 2001). This will make turnover at minimal while working under bureaucracy theory (Collins and Kehoe, 2008). Where officials are appointed, not elected, and work for fixed salaries (Visitchaichan, 2004).

In conclusion, employment policies implementation is the first sub practice of hiring in bureaucratic theory. The employment policies are workforce planning before hiring, defined tasks for each job through job descriptions, written procedures for hiring processes, values frame and cultural fit as a requirement of hiring, centralized hiring processes, and long-term employment for hiring.

3.3. Recruitment in Bureaucratic Theory

Recruitment is a process to search for and explore persons with competencies to occupy current or planned jobs in modern scientific methods and means, and to carry out an analysis and classification of jobs in the organization to determine needs and conditions to be met by the incumbent (Abdul-Qadir and Jaafar, 2020). Al-Qaralah (2018) defined recruitment as a set of activities to search for suitable candidates to fill job vacancies. It is the process by which a pool of candidates is generated to apply for employment to an organization (Al-Ghazali, 2016). In simple words, recruitment is a process of finding and attracting applicants to be employed in or by an organization (Welasari. et al., 2021). It can be seen from all these definitions that the ultimate goal of this practice is the generation of a suitable pool of candidates that a decision-maker

can choose from. Therefore, more effective recruitment will give more suitable options for selection. Nevertheless, there are two goals for recruitment practice: to obtain an adequate pool of applicants, and to provide enough information about the job to eliminate unqualified applicants (Decenzo et al., 2010).

Moreover, recruitment as sub practice has four main activities according to bureaucratic theory:

- i. **Wide labor targeting and sourcing:** Organizations must target many sources to get suitable candidates, which will give more appropriate persons to choose from. Some of labor sources are internal promotion, employee referral, recommendation from a current employer, educational institutions, job fairs, labor unions, unsolicited Applicants, and employee Leasing (Decenzo et al., 2010; Dessler, 2017). However, those sources can be differentiated to internal sources and external sources (Yaza, 2016).
- ii. **Recruiting on competencies base:** Candidates must have competency (Abdul-Qadir and Jaafar, 2020). Competencies can be defined as a cluster of highly interrelated attributes that give rise to behaviors which are needed to perform a job effectively (Dessler, 2017). Competencies are the person's knowledge and behaviors that lead him to be successful in a job (McNeill, 2022). Recruitment in bureaucratic theory is based on competencies to select the best candidates for the job, by comparing between candidates' skills (Welasari et al., 2021). Therefore, only candidates with high competencies can be recruited to avoid corruption and nepotism (Joostensz et al., 2015). Consequently, competencies-based recruitment leads to more productive officials (Hollyer, 2011). Thus, recruiting must target candidates with required specialized skills (Visitchaihan,

2004) and define the ways to acquire and retain them (Itika, 2011). Recruitment must create a sphere of competencies that is based on merit system, and it can produce more productive officials than other methods (Welasari et al., 2021; Egyankosh, 2017; Hollyer, 2011; Collins and Kehoe, 2008; Page, 2008; Gberevbie, 2004).

- iii. **Recruiting on experiences-basis:** Candidates must have experience (Abdul-Qadir and Jaafar, 2020). Comparing candidates' achievements is the way for hiring (Welasari et al., 2021), which makes experience is one of the bases for recruitment in bureaucratic theory. Specialized skills are a critical factor for hiring in this theory (Visitchaichan, 2004). Skills need time of experience to be specialized.
- iv. **Directly-job successors Recruiting:** Bureaucracy is perceived as a form of organization that emphasizes speed (Visitchaichan, 2004). It takes 12 weeks for a newly hired person to become fully productive at work on average (Boskamp, 2022). Therefore, recruiting must lead to employees' choosing who can succeed in their jobs directly (Collins and Kehoe, 2008). However, it means that efficient recruitment practices will make an organization choose employees who can success in the first three months of their employment.

As a summary, recruitment as a sub practice of hiring in Bureaucratic theory must be based on competencies and experiences to appoint candidates who meet the needs of the organization. Doing so will make the selected employee a successor from the first months in his job. In addition, there are lots of sources for recruitment, HRM units must be very efficient to use most of them to have the right pool of candidates.

3.4. Selection in Bureaucratic Theory

Selection is a practice that includes achieving the principle of placing the right person in the right place (Al-Qaralah, 2018). It is a process to choose among candidates depending on their skills, knowledge, behaviors, and other competencies (Dessler, 2017). It is the use of specific instruments and criteria to choose persons who are more likely to succeed in the job (Al-Ghazali, 2016), and the process of assessing candidates to ensure that the most appropriate ones are hired (Oluoch, 2013). While Al-Naqbi (2011) defined them as the process by which an organization identifies candidates with the characteristics that will help to achieve the goals of the organization. Accordingly, selection practices are crucial for any organization because selection mistakes have potentially catastrophic consequences for organizational success and survival (Collins and Kehoe, 2008). Lastly, according to bureaucratic theory literature, selection as sub-practice has five main activities:

- i. **Selection on skills-basis:** Skills are specific learned abilities that one needs to perform a given job well (McNeill, 2022). Selection on skills bases allows an organization to hire the most appropriate candidates who will ensure success (Oluoch, 2013). However, this comes after successful recruitment (as a sub practice of hiring) that is based on competencies. Bureaucracy emphasizes competence rather than favoritism (Visitchaichan, 2004).
- ii. **Selection on experiences-basis:** Selection is based on experience in bureaucratic theory (Welasari. et al., 2021). Candidates must have experience (Abdul-Qadir and Jaafar, 2020) in addition to achievements (Welasari et al., 2021). The aim is to get and create professional employees

(Serpa and Ferreira, 2019). Experience helps people to be better at doing tasks and duties, the idea is to hire already experienced officials.

- iii. **Formal examinations for selection:** Officials' selection is based on assessed skills by selective exams (Welasari et al., 2021). Where employers do not use tests just to find good employees, but also to screen out bad ones (Dessler, 2017). Officials' selection is rolled by extremely competitive nature in bureaucratic theory (Hollyer, 2011). Therefore, selectors can make subjective appointments (Itika, 2011) through formal examinations (Visitchaichan, 2004), which leads to better quality hires (Decenzo et al., 2010).
- iv. **Quick selection processes:** bureaucracy is perceived as a form of organization that emphasizes speed (Visitchaichan, 2004). Filling jobs quickly is a sign of a good hiring system in any organization (Dessler, 2017). Therefore, selection must be made as quickly as possible to fill all positions in bureaucratic theory (Baron et al., 2001). The global selection average is 23.8 days for hiring practices in all sectors, and it is 53.8 days for government official in USA (Chamberlain, 2017). While (Boskamp, 2022) mentioned that it will take 60 days to hire a new employee in the USA public sector which is three times more than private sector that takes only 20 days.
- v. **Inexpensive selection processes:** long hiring processes are costly (Chamberlain, 2017). Therefore, selection must be made as cheaply as possible to fill all positions (Baron et al., 2001). Cost per hire in USA varied from 354\$ to 4700\$ According to SHRM depending on the sector, company

size, benefits, and many other factors (Miller. S, 2022). It costs up to 20% of an employee’s base salary to hire a new one (Boskamp. E, 2022). However, the average salary for civil servant in Palestine is 1017\$ according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics of 2020. Respectively, the average cost per hire can theoretically hover around 200\$. In addition, and according to the general director of civil servants hiring directorate of General Personnel Council (GPC), the hiring cost is related mostly to the selection practices in Palestinian civil sector, because recruitment practices are done by advertising through GPC portal for all civil sector organizations, which make its cost close to zero.

To conclude, selection sub practice in bureaucratic theory has five main activities, they are selection process on skills-basis, selection process on experiences-basis, using formal examinations for selection, designing a quick selection process, and designing an inexpensive selection process.

To sum up, hiring practices in bureaucratic theory has three sub practices, they are employment policies implementation, recruitment, and selection. Each one of these

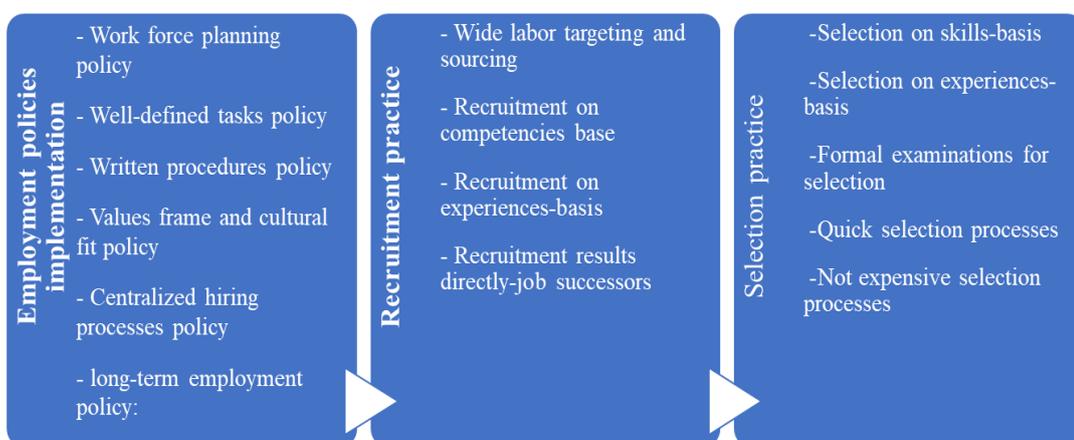


Figure 3-2: Bureaucratic Hiring Model

sub practices has a set of activities to be conducted. The following figure 2.2 shows Bureaucratic hiring model according to literature. The figure was developed by the researcher for the use of this study as shown below.

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