ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Public Administration and Public Safety in Anambra State

NGOZI B OSY-AGBATA

Unizik Business School Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka ngoosyagbata@yahoo.com;

Abstract

The study is on public administration and public safety in Anambra state. The essence is to examine how public safety is influenced by public administration. The study was necessitated by the poor nature of public safety in the study area. The survey design was used for the study. Three basic objectives guided the study and accordingly three research questions were raised. The population consists of citizens residing in Awka town the capital of Anambra state. A sample of 150 respondents was drawn using convenience sampling technique. A researcher made questionnaire titled Public Administration and Public Safety Questionnaire (PAPUSQ) was used for data collection via direct delivery method. The Cronbach-Alpha reliability index of the questionnaire was 0.82 which is indicative of high reliability. Simple percentage was used for the analysis of the three research questions raised for the study with 50% as bench mark. Results indicated that nature of public safety in the state is rather poor. Many citizens do not enjoy the dividends of good governance. In the same manner, the study discovered that one of ways to improve public administration in order to forestall public safety is by eradication of corruption, prosecution of corrupt public administrators among others. It was suggested that the masses should elect only credible persons to hold public offices. Also, there is need to put systems and structures in place to checkmate the excesses of public administrators. The study therefore concludes that public administration has a critical role to play in ensuring public safety.

Keywords: Corruption, Democracy, Governance, Public administration and Public safety,

Introduction

Public administration is the act of ensuring the goodness, comfort and safety of the citizens. It entails the government seeing to it that the public (masses) are kept in good condition and that they are free from any form of harm or danger. The government is responsible to the citizen on the issue of public safety. All over the world public safety is the most important task facing every government. In many poor and developing countries, crime holds back the kind of urbanization essential for economic development. Public safety is the function of government that ensures the protection of citizens, persons, in their territory, organization and institution against threats to their well being and to the prosperity of their countries. When the citizens are not secured they cannot thrive in their endeavours. Safety is defined as the condition of being free from harm, danger, or any form of threats (Webster, 2018). In the same vein, the American Heritage Dictionary (2019) saw safety as the state of being certain that adverse effects will not be caused by some agent under defined circumstances. Based on these definitions, safety could be seen as a state of being free from any form of danger or attack. In this regard, public safety therefore means a situation whereby the citizens are free from any threat to their life, existence, properties or their businesses. It is the duty of the government to ensure that lives and properties of the citizens are secured. Public administration is centered on the total well being of the citizens. Agu (2018) argued that any government in power is being elected by the citizens and as such the citizens' wellbeing should be of paramount importance. One of the cardinal yardsticks to measure the effectiveness of nay government is the extent of public safety enjoyed by the citizens of that country.

It is on this note that Andre (2020) stated that public administration is a venture in which leaders serve communities to advance the common good and effect positive change. Public administration means that leaders are equipped with skills to manage at all levels of government (local, state, and federal) as well as nonprofit organizations, and to ensure that citizens enjoy security and are safe in their own land. Public administrators promote urban development, implement public policies, and

protect public safety.

In recent times, public safety has become an issue of great concern in most countries especially in Nigeria. Anambra state is not an exception. In the present day Nigeria, there is general insecurity, there are few or no functional social amenities; some areas in Anambra state do not have good access roads. In the same vein, businesses are not thriving as expected, most families are finding it difficult to feed their children, the cost of living is rising greatly daily , our hospitals are not well equipped leading to deaths which could have been prevented. All of these are indicators of poor public safety. It seems as if there is a great problem with governance in Nigeria. The citizens seems not to be enjoying the dividend of democracy and it looks as if the citizens are regretting electing some leaders into power.

Public welfare is very cardinal in governance because according to Maxwell (2018) a prominent principle of public administration has been economy and efficiency. That is, the provision of public services at the minimum cost. This has usually been the stated objective of administrative reform. Despite growing concern about other kinds of values such as responsiveness to public needs, justice and equal treatment, and citizen involvement in government decisions, efficiency continues to be a major goal. An efficient government or administration is one which ensures that the masses are well catered for by providing them with the basic necessities of life as well as making their environment safe and conducive for the citizens to live in. Where crimes and threats to safety abide, public safety is threatened.

In the views of Orgainsation for Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD) (2012) public administration is the key tool for promoting economic growth and ensuring that its fruits are shared among all citizens. Today, it is also a tool for restoring trust in government and public institutions, as well as in the banks, enterprises, rating agencies, etc. We are in a crisis of trust, and restoring trust will depend on the quality of public administrations. But these objectives or dividends are far cry in Anambra state. Many citizens are not getting any fair share of the fruits of economic development, crime is on the increase due to hardship, workers are being owed salaries while a lot others are losing their jobs daily and insecurity has become a norm. The question is what are the factors that lead to such scenario in Anambra state? How could public administration be improved to help forestall public safety? These and other related questions are the main import of the present study.

Statement of The Problem

The core goal of public administration is the well being of its citizens. The citizens or the masses are the centre of attraction of every government- be it at the federal, state or local level. Any government that does not cater for her citizens is regarded as a failed government. This is because public administration is about the common good of the populace. In Nigeria, many citizens are no longer secured. One of the cardinal roles of the government is to secure the lives and properties of their citizens as well as shield them from every form of threats or attacks—physically, emotionally and otherwise. It is the duty of the government to ensure safety of lives and properties of the masses. Public safety is a situation whereby people are free from all forms of harm or danger and they are free to conduct their businesses without fear of molestation. A good administration is known by the extent to which the citizens are catered for through provision of essential social amenities and policies that promote growth and wellbeing of the citizens. However, in Anambra state, at present, there is poor public safety. A lot of social amenities are lacking, there is high rate of crimes, drug abuse by youths is on the increase, and many businesses are no longer thriving coupled with high inflation, In the same vein, daily, there is security threats to human lives, people are no longer free to move about in their own fathers' land and most hospitals and schools are no longer functional leading poor health and deaths. A lot of citizens are not enjoying the dividends of good governance in Anambra state. It seems as if there is a problem with the state of administration in the study area and public safety is threatened. Now the problem of this study is embedded in this broad question, "what is the role of public administration in ensuring public safety in Anambra state?

Purpose of The Study

The general objective of the study is to examine how public administration will help facilitate public safety in Anambra state. The specific objectives are to:

1. Ascertain the state of public safety in Anambra state.
2. Unravel factors that threaten effective public administration in Anambra state.
3. Suggest measures to improve public administration to enhance public safety in Anambra state.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of public safety in Anambra state?
2. What factors pose threats to effective public administration in Anambra state?
3. How can public administration be improved to enhance public safety in the study area?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and Importance of Public Administration

The term public administration has lent itself to diverse definitions from various scholars. For example, McDonald (2020) defined public administration to include legislative activities, taxation, national defense, public order and safety, immigration services, foreign affairs and international assistance, and the administration of government programs are activities that are purely governmental in nature. Also Gucelin (2019) saw it as the act of carrying out government policies in a particular area. Similarly, based on the views of Davidson (2018) public administration can be defined simply as public leadership or public affairs directly responsible for executive action. A cursory look at these definitions points to one cardinal issue which is public interest. It then means that public administration can be defined as the act of securing, catering and ensuring the total well being of the masses (public) or the citizens in a country or a place. It includes but not limited to provision of basic social amenities, safe and conducive environment, enactment of laws and policies that promote the well being of citizens among others. In short public administration is all about public governance.

Akpan (2012) contends that public administration is the organ that carries out the programmes and manifestos of politicians in power. He sees public administration as the servant of politics. He went further to say that public administration covers every area and activity related to public policy. Accordingly, it includes the formal processes and operations through which the legislature exercises its power. The functions of the courts in the administration of justice and the work of the military agencies all form part of the Public Administration.

According to Balogun (2017) public administration is the fusion of human and material resources in order to achieve the objectives of public policy. One cardinal issue here which attention must be paid is the issue of policy implementation. This is a very focal point in the study of public administration.

Public administration is all about making sure that the people are catered for and made safe and secured. It is often regarded as including also some responsibility for determining the policies and programs of governments which is geared towards improving the welfare of the populace. The whole essence of public administration is well being of citizens. The activities of public administrators are planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. It is synonymous to personnel management in the sense that the target group in public administration is human beings {Explicit Success Scholars (E.S.S) 2019}.

Public administration is very important in any nation. This is because the hallmark of any administration is to ensure that the masses are in good condition and safe in their own domain.

Some of the key importance of public administration have been well documented in literature . For example according to Wilson (2017), public administration is important for the following reasons:

i. Public administration serves as an instrument for providing public services
ii. It is government instrument for ensuring safety

and security of citizens.

iii. Public administration helps to see to it that peace and order are maintained in society, hence, our lives and properties are protected from any unforeseen danger.
iv. It establishes a stabilizing force in our society- it ensures that there is no disorderliness or sense of confusion whenever a new government exists.
v. Public administration is an instrument for implementing policies- Implementation of laws, policies, and programs, as well as their execution, is solely rested on Public administration.

Similarly, Negero (2013) stated that the real essence of public administration is in the important basic services which the administrators give to the general masses. It is the duty of the administrators to see that citizens' lives and properties are safe through maintenance of law and order in the society. Lending a voice to the importance of public administration, Ahmed (2014) noted that it is the duty of public administrators to ensure the economical, cultural and even spiritual advancement of any nation. Continuing, Ahmed averred that the day to day functioning of the Government machinery, external affairs and the national defense are other important functions performed by public administration of the country.

Meaning of Public Safety

Public safety is all about removing any conditions or situations that may cause harm, danger or threats to the wellbeing of the citizens. According to United State Legal Law (2020) public safety refers to the welfare and protection of the general public. It is usually expressed as a governmental responsibility. Freebase (2019) saw public safety as the authority and responsibilities the entity oversees. It involves the prevention of and protection from events that could endanger the safety of the general public from significant danger, injury/harm, or damage such as crimes or disasters. In a nut shell one can define public safety as public well being or public progress. It is the function of governments which ensures the protection of citizens , persons in their territory, organizations and institutions against threats to their well being and to the prosperity of their communities (Abubakar, 2019).

Laurier University (2019) report stated that public safety encompasses the diverse needs of citizens, communities, and the nation as a whole. Public safety is necessary because a safe and healthy environment not only protects citizens from injury and illness, it can also lower injury /illness costs, reduce wastages, increase productivity and quality. Public safety is about the general public feeling safe, whether at home, in the street or at work. It relates to quality of life and being able to pursue and obtain the fullest benefits from domestic, social and economic lives without fear or hindrance from crime and disorder.

Public Administration and Public Safety

There seems to be a connection between public administration and public safety. It is interesting to note that public administrators are elected by the public to legislate over the affairs that concern the entire citizens in a particular state. Aghenta (2014) opined that for the people to elect anybody to be in charge of their affairs it then means that such an elected person has earned the trust and confidence of the masses. As a result, the public expects that the public administrator must see to their welfare. This is because administrators are overseers and managers of the resources in the state. They (administrators) are duty bound to live to the oaths of their offices. According to Wikipedia (2014), one of the duties of public administrators is to ensure public safety. Safety in this sense is used in its universal sense which means that it covers all areas of life that are expected to make citizens comfortable and relaxed in their country or state. In essence anything or condition that threatens the peace of mind, stability and progress of the citizens constitutes a breach of public safety. For instance, Akpan (2012) noted that when the resources meant to be used to finance projects (like electricity, pipe borne water, good roads , schools and hospitals) in the state which are meant to benefit the populace is diverted by administrators to personal use, and the beneficiaries suffer and the suffering threatens their

peace and stability which leads to public nuisance. At such cases public safety is thwarted. Public administrators at all levels as custodians of the resources of the state are to ensure that citizens enjoy the good governance.

THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

Classical Public Administration Theory

The classical, or structural, theory of public administration projects public administration as a science. It lays more emphasis on the organization rather than the workers. The theory centers around a complex set of variables, ideas and concepts that govern public administration, or state bureaucracy. There are several important themes attached to the classical theory. These variables are explained in the following paragraphs.

i). **Specialization and Command:** Classical administration theory centers around the division of labor. In the views of classical theory modern administration is about increasing specialization of labor. This means that a central bureaucracy must exist that keeps these functions coordinated and connected through an impersonal chain of command. Therefore, the emphasis in this approach is on both the decentralization of functions and specialties, and the centralization of administrative command to keep the functions working together.

ii). **Unity:** The classical theory stresses the singularity of command. This means the structure of the organization must develop ascending levels of authority. Each level takes from above it, and transmits to what is below. Hence, the system revolves around levels, rationality and command. It is a system that, in all its manifestations, is hierarchical. In addition, this also implies a great degree of discipline. It is also a radically impersonal system, because it is the organization and the offices that make it up that matter, not the individuals. Individuals in this theory are functionaries of the organization.

iii). Efficiency: Classical theory stresses efficiency in organizational work. The command structure is designed to manifest both the overall objectives of the organization as well as the specific purposes of the functional units. Although the classical system stresses structure over everything, the basic issue is efficiency in communication. This requires certain things to be in place: a strict definition of duties and objectives, the control over all labor functions and a rational connection of one functional unit to another. Without these basics, no organization can function efficiently, according to the classical argument.

The adoption of the classical theory of public administration for the study stems from the fact that one of the indicators of efficiency in public administration is public safety which is the focus of the present study. Also division of labour and special command are emphasized in classical theory. At each level of government, there is division of labour and each public administrator in charge is expected to see to the smooth running of the affairs within his or her jurisprudence. Every leader at all level has a designated assignment or roles to play to enhance the efficiency of the system.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Awka the capital of Anambra state. Survey design was used. The researcher elicited data from selected civil servants, media practitioners (journalists) and some business men and women, rural men and women, and youths residing in Awka. These categories of respondents were considered ideal because they represent all calibre of citizens in any state and it will equally help the researcher to get a wider and balanced view of the topic of discourse. A sample of 150 respondents was drawn and used for the study by means of the convenience sampling technique. A researcher made questionnaire titled Public Administration and Public Safety Questionnaire (PAPUSQ) was used for data collection and was distributed to the selected respondents in Awka town which is the capital of Anambra state. A period of five (5) days were used for data collection via direct delivery method. The reliability of the questionnaire was

established via the Cronbach-Alpha method and a reliability index of 0.82 was obtained which showed that the instrument is reliable and could be used for data collection. Data obtained were analysed using the simple percentage for the three research questions raised for the study with 50% as the cut off. The use of percentage is due to its simplicity and ease of interpretation by the readers. Items whose percentage responses are less than 505 were not regarded as influential and vice versa.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the nature of public safety in Anambra State?

Result in table 1 shows that all the six items in the table have percentage responses below the bench mark of 50%. This is an indication that majority of the respondents disagreed to the views posited. In essence, it them means that the state of public safety in the state is not conducive.

Research Question 2: What factors pose threats to effective public administration in the study area?

Going by data a table 2, corruption in high and low places (92.0%) and nature of administrative control (86.7%) are the lead factors that hinder effective public administration in the study area. The least observed factor is institutional weaknesses (71.3%). However, it is interesting to point it out that all the items in table 2 are valid as each has percentage response above the bench mark of 50%.

Research Question 3: How can public administration be improved to enhance public safety in the study area?

Table 1: Nature of public safety in Anambra State

S/NO	Statement	Agreed		Disagreed	
		Freq	%	freq	%
1.	Citizens of Anambra state enjoy good democratic governance	43	28.7	107	71.3
2.	There are functional public medical and health services in the state	50	33.3	100	66.7
3.	The security network in the state is impeccable	30	20.0	120	80.0
4.	All social amenities are working well in Anambra State	48	32.0	102	68.0
5.	Economic activities are thriving	38	25.3	112	74.7
6.	All government policies are carried out to favour the welfare of citizens	60	40.0	90	60.0

Table 2: Factors that pose threats to effective public administration in Anambra State

S/NO	Statement	Agreed		Disagreed	
		Freq	%	freq	%
1.	Corruption in high and low places	138	92.0	12	8.0
2.	Poor information and communication technology	120	80.0	30	20.0
3.	Nature of administrative control	130	86.7	20	13.3
4.	Poor management of human and material resources	110	73.3	40	26.7
5.	Use of poorly trained administrators in administration	115	76.7	35	23.3
6.	Institutional weakness	107	71.3	43	28.7

Table 3: Ways of improving public administration to enhance public safety

S/NO	Statement	Agreed		Disagreed	
		Freq	%	freq	%
1.	Enactment of polices that fights corruption	150	100.0	00	0.0
2.	Prosecution of bad public administrators	135	90.0	15	10.0
3.	Public administration reform	140	93.3	10	6.7
4.	Deemphasizing of control over administration	128	85.3	322	14.7
5.	Development and improvement of information technology	105	70.0	45	30.0
6.	Engagement of citizens in public administration	120	80.0	30	20.0

Data in table 3 reveals that fighting corruption (100%) and public administration reform (93.3%) are the lead measures suggested that could help improve public administration and enhance public safety. However, the least observed measure is development and improvement of information technology in public administration (70.0%). All the items in Table 3 are valid and accepted because each has a percentage response above 50% bench mark.

Discussion

The study to on public administration and public safety aimed at examining how public administration could help enhance public safety in Anambra State. The study was necessitated by the dissatisfaction of citizen about the nature of governance in the state.

The analysis of research question one which bothered on nature of public safety discovered that the nature of public safety in the state is rather poor. Many citizens do not enjoy the dividends of good governance. A lot of social amenities like pipe borne water, good hospitals, roads, school are not provided. The few that are available are dilapidated and hence unfit to render good services. This is in tandem with OECD (2012) who stated that in most states of some countries governance is poor; a lot of citizens are suffering as they are not favoured by the perversity policies imposed on broacher. Public safety is a crucial factor, hence when public safety is not guaranteed, there will be danger or threats to citizens. This will create a huge fear which will later lead to bad governance.

Research Question two unraveled factors that pose threats to effective public administration. The factors include corruption in high and low places and poor management of human and materials (80%). This is in line with Aghenta (2014) who asserted that poor management of resources causes a great leak in public administration. This leak is in form of wastages and poor supervision. When the administrators in charge are not prudential in the use resources, desired results (which include but not limited to public safety) will be a mirage. It takes good administration to achieve success.

In the same manner, it was gathered that one of the ways to improve public administration in order to forestall public safety is by eradication of corruption. Corruption means dishonest or unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority or responsibility (Wikipedia, 2014). Corruption is a product of greed, an act which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the action of someone in a position of public authority because of private or personal motives such as wealth, power or states. Corruption has lately become a common phenomenon. The rate of corruption in the country is becoming an issue of threat to public sanity and administration. In fact the world all over is decrying the rate at which corruption has permeated all facets of the society. A lot of persons (public administrators inclusive) engage in one form of corruption or the other. It has become an integral part of the Nigerian economic, political, educational and social life. Corruption is found at all sectors of the economy and at different

levels of government. Public administration is not left out in the scourge of corruption. The high rate of corrupt practices exhibited some public administrators have caused serious problem in the smooth running of the state. Some of the corrupt practices include embezzlement of public funds, inflation of budgets, diversions of public funds to personal use among others. Each of these corrupt practices does not make for good public administration. A lot of corrupt practices go on daily in our nation. It is multifactor. It ranges from monetary to other forms. When measures are put in place to checkmate corruption, then to achieve public safety will be a possibility.

Conclusion

The study dealt with public administration and public safety in Anambra State. it was gathered that public safety in the study area is not yet adequate. Many citizens are yet to reap the dindends of good governance. A lot of security threats still abound. In the same view, some factors were identified as head causes which include (but not limited too) corruption, poor information and communication technology among others. In order to improve public administration and achieve public safety, nipping of corruption was suggested and prosecution of bid administrators among others. The study therefore concludes public administration has a critical role to play in ensuring public safety.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following are recommended.

1. The masses should elect only credible persons to hold public offices.
2. There is need to put systems and structures in place to checkmate the excesses of public administrators.
3. People elected into public offices should be taken through an orientation exercises to understand the tenets of their offices.
4. The general public should be empowered to be part of public administration in the state.

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