

FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

Lecture-14



MAX WEBER'S SIX PRINCIPLES OF BUREAUCRACY

There are specific features of Max Weber's bureaucracy, which are also known as Max Weber's six principles of bureaucracy.

Here are the six major Max Weber characteristics of bureaucracy:

1. Task specialization
2. Formal selection
3. Impersonal (impersonality and personal indifference)
4. Hierarchical layers of authority
5. Rules and regulations
6. Career orientation

TASK SPECIALIZATION

The Max Weber Theory of Bureaucracy proposes that all business tasks must be divided among the employees. The basis for the division of tasks should be competencies and functional specializations. In this way, the workers will be well aware of their role and worth in the organization and what is expected of them.

The theory states that division of labor based on expertise and skills is immensely beneficial for any business. This also ensures that each department has specific tasks and workers to oversee those tasks.

The tasks are carried out smoothly and easily in this manner because managers know who is working on exactly what. The accountability of each task and each department is transparent. In Max Weber's bureaucracy, each employee is clearly aware of their responsibilities and going beyond your specialty or helping your colleagues is not allowed.

FORMAL SELECTION

Hiring and on boarding of employees in the bureaucracy are done exclusively according to the specialties and technical skills of the candidates. These skills may have been acquired by the candidates through education, training and experience.

After on boarding, workers must be compensated for their services, which depend on their position in the organization. Their contract must be designed according to the rules and regulations of the organization and the employee can't hold any ownership interest in the organization.

IMPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Another principle of the bureaucratic theory is that the relationships among employees and between managers and employees must be impersonal. They should only be of a professional nature and, thereby, distant. Weber included this principle in his theory because he felt it would eliminate nepotism, politics and outsider involvement.

The impersonal relationships are a prominent feature of Max Weber's bureaucracy. Employees are not allowed to interfere with the affairs of other employees, managers and the organization. Communication among the employees should not involve emotions, personal sharing and feelings. The decision-making process must only involve rationality instead of emotions.

HIERARCHICAL LAYERS OF AUTHORITY

In bureaucratic management, the managerial structure is organized into hierarchical layers. Each layer of management has a team of employees under them. These managers are responsible for the performance of their team.

These hierarchical positions in bureaucratic organizations are essentially the trademark and foundation of Max Weber's bureaucracy. In this hierarchy of authority, positions are ranked in order of precedence and the highest position in the ladder generally has the highest authority in the organization. The bottom hierarchical layers are generally the positions that are supervised by higher layers.

Such hierarchy in a bureaucracy reflects the degree of delegation and gives a clear picture of the division of authority and responsibilities.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy clearly layout that every 'rational organization' must have a set of rules and regulations. These rules and regulations must be followed without any fault. This ensures uniformity in the business and the staff members know what is expected of them.

Strict rules allow better coordination of employee performance and efforts. Administrative processes should also be clearly defined in the official rule book or reports. When new rules are introduced in the organization, the senior management must be notified. They will then pass on the information to their respective departments.

CAREER ORIENTATION

The Weberian model of bureaucracy selects employees on the basis of technical skills, which helps optimize human capital. According to Max Weber, selecting candidates according to their competency and skills ensures that the right people are in the right jobs.

Consequently, Max Weber's management theory states that through the formation of a bureaucracy, people can build a career upon their expertise and competency. A bureaucracy offers lifetime employment and the right division of labor lets employees improve their expertise in a given field.

CRITICISMS OF WEBERIAN BUREAUCRACY

Max Weber's contribution to management is highly noteworthy, but his bureaucratic management theory has faced several criticisms over the years. Here are some of the major ones in modern times:

- The bureaucratic management theory given by Max Weber has highly rigid and strict regulations to follow for the employees and the managers
- Informal groups such as contractors play a significant role in most business organizations, but they aren't important in Max Weber's management theory
- The Weberian model of bureaucracy requires a ton of paperwork which contributes to a huge waste of money, effort and time
- A large number of rules and formalities tend to delay the decision-making process and, thereby, important business tasks
- The bureaucratic structure usually suits government organizations, but businesses need quick decision-making, which is not a characteristic of Max Weber's bureaucracy. That's why it is not beneficial for corporate organizations
- Human Resource management has limited scope in this type of organization structure.
- Max Weber's bureaucracy only focuses on the technical skills of workers and neglects the employee's dedication, hard work and commitment
- In a bureaucratic structure, it can get difficult for employees and managers to communicate and coordinate among themselves

The bureaucratic management theory of Max Weber is practiced widely in government organizations today. However, it can't work in corporate business environments due to its various shortcomings and so, private organizations usually do not implement Max Weber's management theory.