



The Role of Administrative Transparency in Enhancing Administrative Citizenship: A Descriptive Analytical Study



Received: 21/02/2024 ; Accepted: 30/03/2024

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Abstract

The study aimed at exploring and investigating the role of administrative transparency in enhancing administrative citizenship. The study used the descriptive analytical methodology to reach the targets in question. To gather the required data, a review of literature was administered. The study came to the finding that getting citizens participate in planning, implementing and assessing of the administration's policies and activities is key to promoting administrative citizenship. The study recommended enabling citizens to be knowledgeable about the processes, rules and regulations of the public administration.

Keywords

Administrative Transparency ;
Administrative Citizenship ;
Citizen ;
Access to Information.

الكلمات المفتاحية

شفافية إدارية؛
مواطنة إدارية؛
مواطن؛
الإطلاع على المعلومات.

دور الشفافية الإدارية في تحقيق المواطنة الإدارية (دراسة تحليلية) ملخص

استهدفت الدراسة الحالية إبراز دور الشفافية التنظيمية في تعزيز المواطنة الإدارية واعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج الوصفي. واستندت – في إطار ذلك – إلى الأسلوب التحليلي. وتمثلت أداة الدراسة في مسح الأدبيات المتعلقة بموضوع الدراسة. وأسفرت الدراسة عن النتائج أبرزها أن إشراك المواطن في صياغة السياسات العامة، وتنفيذها، وتقييمها يعد إحدى السبل الهامة لتدعيم المواطنة الإدارية. وأوصت الدراسة بضرورة تمكين المواطنين من الاطلاع المستمر على أهداف الإدارة العامة، وهيكلها، وتنظيماتها، وعملياتها لتكريس المواطنة الإدارية.

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I- Introduction

Administrative transparency is one of the modern and sophisticated administrative concepts that must be taken by conscious administration. It is important in bringing about successive administrative development, in addition to its contribution to the development of administrative organizations and access to a successful organizational structure that is capable of meeting new challenges and surrounding changes. Many of management scientists have called for the need to make efforts to meet administrative problems and identify the obstacles facing administrative development, such as administrative corruption, routine, boredom, ambiguity in working methods and procedures. Attempts to apply transparency in administrative processes were important to be considered in administrative practices in different administrative bodies¹.

Because of the importance of administrative transparency to the organizational processes, the current study seeks to explore and investigate its role in fostering administrative citizenship. This topic will be dealt with in further detail in the coming lines.

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1. Definition, Importance, Types and Dimensions of Administrative Transparency

This section sheds light on the definition, importance, types and dimensions of administrative transparency. These points are tackled in detail as follows :

1.1. Definition of Administrative Transparency

Administrative transparency is defined as "full clarity in the decision making, planning and policies, and its presentation to the concerned authorities in monitoring the performance of the state on behalf of the people and subjecting administrative negotiations and accounting policies and continuous monitoring². In other words, transparency in administration is a state in which there is complete openness between the administration and its citizens. It includes simplification of procedures, elimination of routine, dissemination and disclosure of information, and allowing access to information for all³.

The principle of transparency requires that any information addresses to the public or to the data subject be concise, easily accessible and easy to understand, and that clear and plain language and, additionally, where possible, visualization be used.

Transparencies have five attributes: comprehensiveness, relevance and timeliness, reliability, comparability and materiality.

Transparency is different from accountability. Transparency focuses on clarity and openness of the culture at the workplace. Accountability focuses on the ownership, or the responsible behavior shown by an individual. Transparency can be observed at the level of team or organization policies. Accountability starts with every individual in the workplace.

1.2. Importance of Administrative Transparency

Administrative transparency is of utmost importance. It helps organizations to fight corruption. It enables to take sound management decisions. It facilitates and encourages investment. In addition, it removes routine bureaucratic hindrances.

It involves providing clear and accurate information to relevant stake-holders and the public. Transparency helps build trust, fosters integrity, and allows for better understanding and evaluation of decisions and actions. It also enables effective oversight, prevents corruption, and promotes fairness.

Openness strengthens democracy and promotes efficiency and effectiveness in government. Transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what government is doing.

1.3. Types of Administrative Transparency

Transparency is classified into three degrees: opaqueness, translucency and clarity. Opaqueness is when a work group does not disclose any information to its stake-holders and hence an opaque work group is not a transparent work group. Translucency is when a work group discloses its information partially.

1.4. Dimensions of Administrative Transparency

Administrative transparency have three dimensions⁴:

a. Transparency in decision making:

Transparency in decision making is the involvement of all the staff working in the organization in the process of decision making, taking into consideration the internal climate of the organization as well as the values, the trends and the governing laws.

b. Transparency in administrative accountability:

Administrative accountability is a method created mainly to combat administrative corruption, bias, favoritism and abuse of power.

c. Transparency in administrative procedures and instructions :

This means adopting clear and explicit actions to shorten the time span needed for administrative processes.

2. Definition. Importance and Legal Framework of Administrative Citizenship

This part deals with the definition, importance and legal framework of administrative citizenship. These points are spotted in two sections as follows.

2.1. Definition and Importance of Administrative Citizenship

Citizenship is a legal status and relation between an individual and a state that entails specific legal rights and duties. That is, it is the character of an individual viewed as a member of society, behavior in terms of the duties, obligations, and functions of a citizen.

There are skills that are associated with citizenship. These skills are critical thinking, problem solving, advocacy, representation, initiative, social interaction and teamwork.

Good citizenship includes truthfulness, justice, equality, respect for oneself and others, responsibility in daily life, and participation in government by educating oneself about issues. In other words, a good citizen is a person who does his share to help his communities to be better. He obeys rules, laws and cooperates with others. He respects those who are in authority. A responsible citizen takes responsibility for their actions and understands their roles in the community. He engages in his communities by working collaboratively in order to promote the welfare of others. He volunteers to be active in his community. He is honest and trustworthy. He respects the rights of others. He is informed about the world around him. He is compassionate.

The administration is an organization created by the state to fulfill its aims and put its policies into practice in a way that rationalizes use of resources and meet people's needs and interests.

Administrative citizenship is the outcome of combining citizenship and the public administration in a way that emphasizes the relationship between the administration and the citizen through intensifying the citizen's right before the administration and his duties towards it⁵.

Administrative citizenship is so important since it enables citizens to explore personal and social values in light of concepts such as diversity, equality, justice and democracy.

2.2. Legal Framework of Administrative Citizenship

The Algerian decree no, 88-131 relating the relationship between the administration and the citizen regulates the relationship between both parties. It defines the rights and duties of both. That is, it delineates the legal framework of administrative citizenship.

This decree covers the administrative citizenship through demonstrating the rights and duties of both the public administration and the citizen. Articles 2 and 3 of this decree state that the first obligation of the public administration is to protect the citizen's freedoms and rights that are recognized and emphasized by the Algerian constitution. They also intensify respecting him and treating him gently. The second chapter of this decree mandates that the administration has to adjust its tasks and structures to meet the citizens' needs. Article 6 of this decree necessitates that the administration ought to provide them with good services. Article 7 confirms that the administration should apply strict supervision over its staff at all levels and to check the extent to which they do their duties and keep to their commitment to citizens.

In addition, the Algerian lawmaker observes the principle of administrative transparency. This is revealed in enabling citizens to be knowledgeable about the processes, rules and regulations of the public administration through having them published in the official gazette as shown in Articles 8 and 9. Articles 10 and 11 give citizens the right to be acquainted

with the administrative documents and information through free consultation or through submitting copies of these documents and information at the expense of the applicant. These Articles also prescribe that if the citizen is banned from getting informed about these documents and information, the administration is obligated to notify the citizen about the reasons for that. This is to fulfill the citizen's right of being administratively knowledgeable.

Articles 12, 13 and 14 of this decree also obligates the administration to receive citizens well through securing highly equipped receptions and direct them to the necessary measures through clear guidelines. Articles 21 to 30 necessitate that the administration should continually improve its services, simplify its processes and work departments and creating attractive, simple, readable and easily understood booklets, pamphlets, leaflets and brochures. Too, it has to update its way of running and regulation. It also should adopt and generalize digital information. Specialized formation of the staff is to be enhanced. Distributing the duties between the central and local administrations is to be fostered. Furthermore, the lawmaker puts, in Articles 34 to 40, the methods of appeal for the service of the citizen and obligates the administration to reply to all the requests, letters and complaints that the citizens make.

The Algerian legislator also prescribes that the citizen has responsibilities he should take when dealing with the public administration. Articles 31 to 33 of the presidential decree no 88 – 131 confirm that the citizen ought to be respectful to the administration, avoid any act that disturbs the course of work and to preserve the public property. Moreover, these Articles make it obligatory for the citizen to participate in improving the work of the administration through suggestions, recommendations and proposals of innovation and modernization⁶.

3. Administrative Transparency as a Mechanism to Foster Administrative Citizenship

Administrative transparency plays a great role in reinforcing administrative citizenship. The characteristic of this role is shown as follows:

a. Clarity of the administration vision :

The administrative transparency demands the clarity of the administration's mission, objectives and procedures and revealing all these matters to the citizens.

b. Simplicity of procedures:

Mechanisms, measures and planning of work have to be simple, clear, flexible and easy to do and understand. Too, they are to be continually modernized and updated with the participation of citizens.

c. Keeping to laws and regulations:

It is mandatory that the public administration to abide by laws and regulation texts. When issuing rules, pamphlets, notices, reminders, handouts or brochures, the administration keeps to related laws and statutes. It is also obligatory to educate citizens of all these issues⁷.

d. Ensuring the access to information :

The administrative transparency ensures freedom of information flow. That is, providing access to all data and information needed for the citizens that help them preserve their interests; take right decisions and discovering faults and correcting them. Too, this information is to be widely published. Guides are recommended for the public and concerned parties to supervise the work of the administration and to follow its development.

e. Enhancing participatory democracy:

Transparency obligates fostering participatory democracy. This is through getting the citizens and civil society organizations to share the public administration with taking decisions, obtaining information easily and respecting and upholding freedom of access to information and documents related to administrative corruption. Citizens and civil society organizations participate in running and assessing the work of the public administration.

f. Equal and indiscriminating access to public services :

The public administration secures equal and indiscriminating routes to public services. It creates simple and easy paths to these services to enable all citizens obtain them without difficulty.

g. Enhancing equality of opportunity:

This requires the administration to keep away from suspicious practices and keeping to clear and continual publication of activities and practices. It enhances principles of equality and justice and raising the awareness of different citizens of their rights⁸.

h. Making programs to raise awareness of transparency:

It is necessary for the public administration to design programs to increase the awareness of citizens of transparency, the importance of adhering to it and the methods that help put it into effect.

i. Creating e-portal for the public administration :

It is necessary for the public administration to create e-portal to facilitate dealing with it. This e-portal ought to be continually updated⁹. It ought to give a true and honest picture of what is running inside it. The administrative bodies ought to be ready to listen to citizens' different opinions about their work and improve their services to meet the citizens' needs and demands¹⁰.

j. Disclosure of financial declaration statements of the administration staff

The administrative transparency necessitates that the persons occupying higher positions in the public administration disclose their financial declaration statements to ensure that they deal with the citizens on bases of integrity, equality and fairness¹¹.

k. Periodic Assessment of the Administration's Program :

The administrative transparency requires adopting effective accountability and monitoring system. The administration submits continual reports on the financial and administrative matters of the organization. This is to make sure that the resources are optimally used when doing services to the citizens¹².

l. Facilitating means of complaining and appealing:

The principle of transparency demands that the public administration ensures ways of making complaints and appeal for every citizen. These complaints and appeal proceedings are to be welcomed, facilitated and clarified. The administration is obligated to give answers to citizens' complaints. It has to give reasons for its decisions if they are not in the interest of the citizen¹³.

Furthermore, the administration staff is to be endowed with organizational citizenship behavior: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. Altruism entails discretionary assistance to peers, colleagues and citizens concerning job-related tasks such as helping newcomers and freely dedicating time to others. While directed at individuals, it enhances group efficiency.

Conscientiousness alludes to behavior that surpasses the minimal expected levels like efficient time use and exceeding base expectations, thereby enhancing both personal and group efficiency. Notably, conscientiousness epitomizes diligence and self-discipline. Additionally, conscientiousness is the most influential predictor of problem solving coping with in response to stresses.

Sportsmanship is an individual capacity to endure suboptimal situations without complaints, such as refraining from unnecessary grievances thereby enhancing productive organizational time. Good sports not only tolerate inconveniences but also maintain positivity despite setbacks; do not take offense easily, sacrifice personal interests for collective good and handle rejection gracefully. Sportsmanship enables the staff to tolerate imperfect organizational conditions without dissent. High sportsmanship fosters a positive climate, promoting collaboration and creating a harmonious work environment.

Courtesy is characterized as polite and thoughtful actions toward others. Employees exhibiting courtesy evade causing issues for others, thereby reducing managerial burdens and amplifying organizational performance. Such behavior is proactive, preventing issues rather than addressing existing problems. Examples include giving advance notices and reminders which helps avert issues and ensures productive time utilization. In essence, courtesy fosters positive relations, crafting a conducive and amiable work setting.

Civic virtue encompasses behaviors emphasizing participation in overarching organizational issues, like committee work and voluntary attendance at events, bolstering the organization's interests. Civic virtue implies that organizations empower employees to enhance the quality of their work. Broadly, it signifies an employee's inclination to represent and elevate their organization's image positively¹⁴.

So, transparency demands that administration staff is characterized with organizational citizenship behavior: altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. These characteristics assist creating an effective working

setting that enhances administrative transparency, thereby satisfying the citizens' rights and interests, and fostering administrative citizenship.

II- Conclusion

The current study aimed to explore and investigate the role of administrative transparency in fostering administrative citizenship. It reached the coming results:

1. Administrative transparency is clarity in objectives, policies, decision making, planning and procedures of an organization. It is a state in which there is complete openness between the administration and its citizens. It includes simplification of procedures, elimination of routine, dissemination and disclosure of information, and allowing access to information for all citizens.
2. Administrative citizenship is the outcome of combining citizenship and the public administration in a way that emphasizes the relationship between the administration and the citizen through intensifying the citizen's right in relation to the administration and his duties towards it.
3. The role administrative transparency performs to enhance administrative citizenship is shown as follows:
 - a. Protecting the citizen's freedoms and rights.
 - b. Respecting the citizen and treating him gently.
 - c. Adjusting the administration's tasks and structures to meet the citizens' needs.
 - d. Providing citizens with good services.
 - e. Applying strict supervision over the administration's staff at all levels and checking the extent to which they do their duties and keeping to their commitment to citizens.
 - f. Enabling citizens to be knowledgeable about the processes, rules and regulations of the public administration through having them published in the official gazette.
 - g. Allowing citizens to be acquainted with the administrative documents and information through free consultation or through submitting copies of these documents and information at the expense of the applicant as well as notifying the citizen of the reasons for not allowing him to be informed about them.
 - h. Receiving citizens well through securing highly equipped receptions and direct them to the necessary measures through clear guidelines.
 - i. Continual improvement of the administration's running, regulations and services, simplification of its processes and work departments and creation of attractive, simple, readable and easily understood booklets, pamphlets, leaflets and brochures.
 - j. Adopting and generalizing digital information.
 - k. Enhancing staff's specialized formation and training.
 - l. Enhancing decentralization of administration.
 - m. Reinforcing methods of appeal for the service of the citizen and obligating the administration to reply to all the requests, letters and complaints that the citizens make.
 - n. Preparing the citizen to be respectful to the administration, avoid any act that disturbs the course of work and to preserve the public property.
 - o. Urging the citizen to participate in improving the work of the administration through suggestions, recommendations and proposals of innovation and modernization.
 - p. Fostering staff's organizational citizenship behavior that includes altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue.

Results and discussion:

In light of the previous results, in order to enhance administrative citizenship through administrative transparency, the current study makes the following recommendations:

- a. Enhancing clarity of administration vision.
- b. Fostering simplicity of administrative procedures.
- c. Keeping to laws and regulations.
- d. Ensuring free access to information.
- e. Enhancing participatory democracy.
- f. Securing equal and indiscriminating access to public services.
- g. Enhancing equality of opportunity.

- h. Making programs to raise awareness of transparency.
- i. Creating e-portal for the public administration.
- j. Disclosure of financial declaration statements of the administration staff.
- k. Periodic Assessment of the Administration's Program.
- l. Facilitating means of complaining and appealing.

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