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Public Administration Reform: The Case of Yemen

Dr. Morheb Al-Assad,

Faculty of Commerce & Economics, Sana'a University

Abstract The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of reform officials regarding the degree of success of different aspects of the reform program during the period of the years 1998-2009. Also, this research hypothesized that type of officials positions variable has impact on their different level perception of the degree level of success/failure of administrative reform program. Content analysis was used to analyze the responses of the interviewees and are subject to Comparison with the findings of the survey questionnaires. The results indicate that the reform program was not perceived as successful as expected. However, a minority of the interviewees (25 percent) argued that the program was successful. Type of officials (manager and non manager) variable was not significant to have an impact on officials perception. Lack of participation of key groups in design and implementation of the program, inconsistency between the reform objectives and the missions of line organizations, diversity of reform agencies, and lack of enthusiasm and commitment of middle and top level managers, extreme persistence of conflict among stockholders (politicians, bureaucrats, citizens, donors) , lack of government management, leadership and technical capacity, lack of private sector and market capacity, low political commitments, lack of congruence of bureaucratic incentives, structures with stated government goals, were among the perceived impediments to success of reform program. The originality of this research is that its first kind to tackle the evaluation of public administration reform issue in Yemen; its contribution to Public Administration literature reform; and its advanced methodology.

1.Introduction

The decade of the 1990s, has been very difficult for Yemen. The country has been struggling with the effects of unification, the Gulf War, political tensions stemming from unification, and a costly civil war. All this has taken place in the midst of a growing economic imbalance and weak public administration. The situation had been best described by a World Bank report:

Yemen's political stance during the Gulf crisis resulted in the suspension of aid and the return of some 700,000 to 1,000,000 Yemeni expatriates living in the Gulf states; the collapse of the former Soviet Union shut off an important source of aid and

left the unified country straddled with a large external debt that it refinanced by falling ever deeper into arrears (World Bank, 1995a, 1997,1-6, Al-Assad, 1998,2,19-23, Alhadramy, 2000,110-111).

Additionally, this report commented that:

...internally, the Yemeni unification of 1990 and the ensuing parliamentary elections of 1993 resulted in a coalition government of the largest three parties; the General Peoples Congress (GPC), the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP), and the Yemeni reform group (Al-Islah). These three parties had differing political and economic orientations which paralyzed political and economic decision making in 1992, and culminated in the Civil War of May-July 1994 (World Bank, 1995a).

These statements aid understanding of the problems of this new republic. Recognizing the urgent need to address the country's economic problems, the Yemeni Government in 1995, undertook economic adjustment and structural financial, and administrative reform efforts, including privatization. The privatization program was announced in January 1995. It was an important signal of the government's intentions of: withdrawing from the productive sector; encouraging the development of the private sector; promoting greater efficiency in the allocation and use of resources; reincorporating the maximum number of public enterprises (PEs) employees into the privatized enterprises; generating budgetary revenues; and diminishing the financial burden on the government (Decree No. 8, 1995; World Bank, 1995a). In 1998, Yemen government and with great help from the World Bank launched an administrative and financial reform program known later as civil service modernization program and was approved by the legislative body. The reform objectives as outlined by the World Bank experts in the following:

streamline government and eliminate duplication and non-essential services;

- thereby increasing the quantity, quality, and cost-effectiveness of essential public services;
- increase the transparency of procedures and the consistency with which they are applied;
- improve budgeting and financial management systems to help ensure efficient, transparent, non-corrupt use of public funds;
- restructure the public employment system to establish and maintain professional standards by
- developing a clear personnel management system that governs hiring, promotion, salary determination, delineation of duties, responsibility for results, and performance evaluation; institute effective controls on staffing levels, and redeploy or terminate (through a fair

process)redundant workers; and improve compensation to motivate civil servants and to retain high quality staff (World Bank 1998, Yemen government program, 1998).

The author believes that if the above have been implemented well, Yemen would guarantee not only a great civil service merit system, but also it will witness an administrative and financial revolution system that capable to address various problems and challenges we face today. The following will discuss the criteria through reviewing the literature that would help in assessing the current reform and address the purpose of this research..

2. Literature Review

2.1 Criteria for analysis of reform program

The review of the literature on administrative reform indicates that there is no consensus on the criteria for assessment of success or failure of reform efforts. In general, as Drucker (1968) argues, with the exception of business, measuring results in most organizations is very difficult. Kanter and Summers (2004, p. 220), too, argue that: although the measurement of performance is not a simple matter in any kind of organization... it is even more complicated for government organizations. Also Thomas (2005, p. 13) is explaining that the goods of public organizations and their programs tend to be multiple, vague, conflicting, and concludes that, “there is not a clear and unambiguous measure of success”.

Also, differences between countries makes it difficult (if not impossible) to extract some “common criteria” to assess the reform efforts. The differences, in broad terms, can be categorized as cultural, social, political, and economic one. For example, as Jreisat (2001) explains, the Arab countries have been searching in vain for a common Arab or Islamic approach to the administrative state and have their own idiosyncrasies. Even in the ASEAN bloc members differ quite substantially in public sector capacity and performance despite their proximity (Quah, 2004). Due to these differences it is hardly possible to reach a consensus on “common criteria” for assessment of degree of success or failure of reform programs in different countries.

One way of finding some common criteria to analyze reform efforts is the review of the contents, and outcomes of reform programs, together with relevant literature to find the principles that have been considered in design and implementation of programs and prescribed by the researchers as, say, success principles. For example, Philippe (2004, p. 41) asserts that some of the favorite expressions in modern administrative reform over the past 15 years throughout the world are: user access to administrative documents, quality circles, service projects, centers of responsibility, simplification of procedures, efficiency and productivity, contracting out services and openness.

Similarly, Thomas (2005) argues about an emerging standard formula, which could be a guideline for the “best” organizations to follow and achieve successful changes. The main ideas of formula are displayed prominently among the “ten principles” of Reinventing Government (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993) and Breaking Through Bureaucracy (Barzeley, 1992) and include:

...a belief in the superiority of private-sector approaches; development of a stronger external orientation; incorporation of foresight and anticipation into decision-making; a shift from process-oriented to result-oriented government; the importance of visionary leadership found at all levels throughout organizations; the need to change the culture of the public sector; the development of alternative organization designs based on the principles of decentralization, delaying and openness to outside influences; the promotion of continuous organization and individual learning, including the development of the key competencies of employees; the widespread use of empowerment, teamwork and participation in decision-making; the development of a focus on the customer or client as the chief source of feedback on how well the organization is doing... (Thomas, 2005, pp. 10-11).

However, the question is whether we can consider the above principles or ideas, as criteria for assessment of success of reform programs. If yes, does it imply that all the countries regardless of their stages of development, their socio-cultural differences, and the capacity of their administrative system should follow the same ideas and principles to be considered (if applied) successful in reform of their administration? Obviously, the above principles and ideas contain some interesting prescriptions and descriptions. However, they are too broad and too general to be considered as the criteria of successful administrative reform.

Another method for extracting some criteria for assessment of reform efforts could be modeling those countries labeled as “successful” in their reform efforts, and providing some principles as “criteria” for evaluation of reform programs in other countries. For example, some authors considered Australia and New Zealand as “successful” in their administrative reforms (see for example, Lockyer, 2007; Caiden, 1991; Hood, 2002; Mascarenhas, 2002). Caiden (1991, p. 9) in elaboration of the issue asserted that:

Australia and New Zealand were pioneers in ... public service reform ... for much of the century, they seemed to have discovered the keys to successful public administration . . . Generally things were well managed and the quality of public sector high. Public misconduct was rare and systemic corruption virtually unknown. Also, Hood (2002) believes that the success of New Zealand administrative reform was due to and/or led to: goal clarity, transparency, contestability, avoidance of capture, congruence of bureaucratic incentives, structures with stated government

goals, the enhancement of accountability and the cost-effective use of information (p. 210).

Al-Assad (2007) evaluated the experience of the UK in reform of administration as successful, which led to: better public services, effective and competent management, and awareness of the needs of citizen. Also, Quah (2002, 2003) argued that Singapore's experience in making the civil service competitive, can be considered as a "successful" attempt.

The foregoing examples and similar ones include interesting points about the reasons or outputs, or principles of "successful" reforms. Without denying the value of learning from the experiences of other countries, the investigator would argue that generalization of these principles and factors, and consideration of them as "criteria" for evaluation of reform efforts is not applicable in all countries. Firstly because there is not a collective agreement on whether these reforms were "really" successful. Indeed it is probable that the same reform, depending on its benefits for different stakeholders, could be classified as both successful and unsuccessful. It seems that most of the evaluations are judgmental and depend on the frame of thought and given context of analysis of the evaluator.

Therefore, as the second point, the question can be raised as "success or failure from whose point of view"? If the government succeeds in reduction of budget deficit, it would be assessed as a success from the government's point of view. If at the same time, to compensate the budget deficit, the government increases taxes, the same effort could be considered as failure from the citizen's point of view. As Steinman and Miewald (2002, p. 7) explain, "reform succeeds or fails because of the meaning attributed to a particular action of the bureaucracy and its network of sustaining relationships".

Therefore, before the utility of specific reforms can be assessed, "one must understand expectations about the performance of an agency" Steinman and Miewald (2002, p. 7) or networks of agencies. Hence, even if administrative reform considered as a rational behavior, and successful, the question remains, rational for whom? and successful from whose point of view? These questions imply that identification of stakeholders before assessment of reform is necessary.

From the researcher's point of view, none of the reform programs can be classified as "absolutely successful" or as "absolute failures". As a continuum with these extremes, almost all reforms are somewhere between the extremes. Simple dichotomy of success-failure is misleading (cf. Caiden et al., 1995; Kaul, 2000).

In general, as Olowu (2000) argues, "success is a difficult concept to define", and in the case of administrative reform, due to complexities, ambiguity and contradictions inherent in organizational reality (Quinn, 1995, cited in Caiden et al., 1995) and government (Harmon, 1995, cited in Caiden et al., 1995), it should be

added that, “it is more difficult to assess”. Governments and in general sense, not-for-profit organizations tend to provide services, and service is often intangible and hard to measure (Thompson and McEwen, 2006). This characteristic of nonprofit organizations makes the evaluation of their performance a challenging task. Also, it is argued that, “it may be inadvisable to search for universal, objective, operational performance criteria centering around goal attainment . . .” (Kanter and Summers, 2003, p. 225). Organizations of every country are established based on, inter alia, the requirements and specific situations of the given country. Differences of socio-economic situations, cultures, and even norms of each society are some bases of expectations of people from their own governments. So, if a country is looking for reform of its administration, it is looking to bring about changes to satisfy the needs and requirements of its own citizen.

Differences in needs, requirements and expectations of people at different societies calls for different approaches, and therefore, different criteria in assessment of reform programs. By this it does not mean the ignorance of the communalities and learning from the experiences of other countries. The point here is that prescription and application of specified criteria for all countries, without consideration of unique features of each society, if not impossible, is inadvisable.

2.2. Evaluation of reform success/failure based on specified objectives

Nevertheless, there are many good reasons for performance evaluation. For example, program evaluation can and should be used in improving the organization’s strategy (Sharp, 2000, p.4; Anderson and Anderson, 2001). Also, it could serve as an important tool to learn about a program’s operation and its effects, which could be important in reviewing decisions or drafting new guidelines, allocating resources and monitoring claims (Hellstern, 2006, p. 287). The results of performance evaluation can be tailored to the government (or whatever the unit of evaluation) and its planning system and implementation procedures to improve appropriateness of its plans and programs (Sharp, 2000). Also, evaluation can provide a base to understand the weaknesses and strengths, and helps to identify and understand what works and what does not work. At any level, assessment of results of performance is a challenging task. But, as Kanter and Summers (2003, p. 233) explain: the difficulty of assessing performance should not deter managers and leaders of nonprofit organizations from trying to set objectives and assess results – to determine if they are indeed “doing well while doing good”. In addition, the benefits of evaluation of any program are considerable enough to ignore some shortcomings in regard to selection of criteria, or technical problems.

The approach adopted in this research is based on evaluation of the degree of success of reform program of Yemeni government during the period of year (1998-2009) according to the objectives of the program. This approach is consistent with the

definition of performance evaluation offered by Arvidsson (2006, p. 627) that stated that performance evaluation means finding out and appraising how well an activity, a program or an agency fulfils or has fulfilled its objectives. Also, it is consistent with the argument of Pollitt (1995) which asserts that the most common and in many ways easiest approach in evaluation of administrative reforms is to measure the identifiable effects of a particular reform against its stated objectives or goals.

As mentioned above, the stakeholders of the government are different and each one represents a different set of concerns. It is argued that, “the ideal performance assessment system in a government organization would acknowledge the existence of multiple constituencies and build measures around all of them” (Kanter and Summers, 2003, p. 233). It is explained that this system is more appropriate because it develops an explicit but complex array of tests of performance that balance clients and donors, board and professionals, groups of managers, and any other constituencies with a stake in the organization. In response to the question raised above on “success or failure from whose point of view?”, in this research the focus is on the attitudes and opinions of an internal stakeholder, that is the reform agents who directly and indirectly involved in design and implementation of reform programs and also the opinions of some external stakeholders who were the subjects of in-person interviews.

It is worth mentioning that, “administrative reform is not some magical cure-all for a variety of political [economic, social, and cultural] ills” (Steinman and Miewald, 2002, p. 8). Any reform has advantages and disadvantages for various groups. Therefore expectation of a single reform to reverse all the things toward the benefits of all groups is misleading. So, the approach that will be followed in this study would be based on the notion of “relativity” of success of reform programs. By this the investigator means that reform efforts are not happening in isolation from the many social and political pressures with which they are interrelated. Both internal and external factors are influencing the efforts, and not all the factors are under the control of reformists. Although it is expected of the reformists to deal with all factors in a manner to reduce their negative effects and enforce the positive ones, however, not all the factors are controllable. For example, in Yemen, occurrence of the ALHOTHY War , or some global changes, such as structure of oil-based economies (with direct and indirect effects on Yemen) and occurrence of war on Alqudah and its direct and indirect effects on Yemeni’s economy were among the influential, and at the same time, uncontrollable factors..

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Methods

For this analysis, an analytical-descriptive approach is used to investigate the attitude of Yemeni government officials, toward Yemen’s successful/failure

reform. Two methods are used in this study: 1) quantitative method and 2) qualitative method.

3.1.1. Quantitative Method

In the quantitative method, a 4-point Likert type scale and demographic closed-ended questions were used to collect data. Likert-scales are known as additive scales, usually used to measure attitudes. In addition, they are flexible, economical, and easy to compose. They provide answers in the form of coded data that permit comparison and easy mathematical manipulation. Likert-type scales permit the researcher to use as much of the richness of the data as possible, and to avoid the inherent instability of single indicator measures of understanding (Kearney, 1988, 65).

Where appropriate, descriptive statistics were calculated for the demographic (such as officials positions) and scale data. T-tests and analysis of variance procedures for significance testing were also used. The scores of the ministries and agencies managers and non-managers officials were compared.

3.1.2 Qualitative Method

This method was used in collecting government and public documents and data.

Patton says:

qualitative data consists of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and a case history (Patton, 1980,18).

He also, pointed out that to understand fully the complexities of the issues under study, it is necessary to employ qualitative measurement data that provides depth and detail through real investigation and careful description.

Documents, government and public, and interviews of key informants, are used to supplement the survey in two aspects. First, they are used to provide the necessary information to highlight the historical, political, and socio-economic setting of reform. Second, they provide the necessary information and references for determining the successful/failure of Yemeni reform. Brewer and Hunter recommend the use of multiple information sources as a tactic to increase study reliability and decrease threats to study validity (Brewer and Hunter, 1989, 91-92). The justification for use of multiple sources of data is to allow triangulation of data. Patton stated that triangulation of methods strengthens study reliability and validity (1990,108). Therefore, in addition to the documents gathered, a selected group of individuals with special knowledge of reform were interviewed. Gorden justifies this type of selection process based on the type of information being sought. He identifies key informants

as those who give information directly relevant to the objectives of the study and who are selected because they occupy a unique position in the community, institution or group (Gorden,1987, 44).

3.2. Study Sample

Subjects of the study were 310 persons working as reform officials in different departments of the Yemeni ministries selected for reorganization reform. Only five ministries/agencies were selected for this study out of nine. After screening the questionnaires, 10 of them were dropped leaving the response rate at 97%. The subjects were in different positions: 74 at managerial positions and 226 at non-managerial positions. The population for this study was drawn from two groups.

The first population consists of ministries and agencies managers officials. Because of the small number of officials holding their manager rank, the criterion was used to ensure that all department heads participated. The study used a stratified sample of these organizations from the capitol cities of Sana'a or central government. All organizations respondents are top and mid-level managers. A two-stage sampling procedure was used. First, a sample of top-level managers (department managers) was drawn. Second, one to three mid-level managers were sampled from the same organization depending upon the size of the organization.

The non-managers sample was selected based on stratified random sampling to represent general administrations, administrations, and sections. Lists were obtained from the head of human resources at each ministries/agencies. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity to increase access and validity of information. The larger the number of respondents in a sample, the lower the standard error, and consequently, the more powerful the results (Hinkle, Wiersman, and Jurs, 1988, 305). The sample size in this study, 300, was very high. Using the table in Babbie (1992, A31), the estimated sample error was a plus or minus four point six percent ($\pm 4.6\%$).

The interviewees (N- 23) also were from different departments and agencies of Yemeni bureaucracy and educational and research institutions. Among them, seven persons together with participation in in-person interviews were among those who filled the questionnaires. The rest of them (16) only participated in interviews.

3.3. Survey Methods

This analysis utilized both the face-to-face (for some government managers officials) and self administered interviews. Ministries and agencies personnel managers participated in distributing the survey for managers, while a second check was made by the researcher to be certain that sample targets were included. In some cases, the face to face method was used to encourage respondents to participate. For the non-managers, five second-year college students in a research method class of 2008, and five senior students of administrative reform class participated in

distributing the survey. Many of the students had previous experience in executing surveys.

3.4. Validity and Reliability of the Perception Scale

The validity of any measurement can be determined by various means. A validity measure is one that measures what it is supposed to measure. According to Babbie, there are numerous yardsticks for determining validity: face validity, content validity, predictive validity, and construct validity. The later two are empirical forms of validity, while the former are based on expert judgment (Babbie, 1995). The questionnaires were designed in a way that minimized internal and external validity problems. Internal validity refers to an assessment of how well the research method will cause the effect while the external validity refers to the relations of how representative the findings are, or what can be extrapolated from them (Adams and Schvaneveldt, 1985). Thus, the validity of the measurement in this study was based on the judgment of academic experts.

Reliability refers to the likelihood that a given measurement procedure will yield the same description of a given phenomenon when that procedure is repeated. Types of reliability include test-retest reliability and split-half reliability (Rubin and Babbie 1989, 154; Welch and Comer, 1988). For the present study the researcher anticipated a threat to the validity and reliability due to the translation of the measurement into Arabic. Therefore, two strategies were used to overcome this problem. First, there was a back translation of the instrument from Arabic to English. Second, experts from universities in Sana'a were consulted. The survey was pilot tested among ministries employees. The Alpha reliability coefficients for the final survey were .78 for reorganization dimension scale, .86 for human resource management, .90 for expedite delivery service scale. The Alpha reliability coefficient of the total sample was an average of .83. These coefficients indicate that the instrument is very reliable since each coefficient is above .70.

3.5. Measurement

The questions of the questionnaire were extracted from the content of reform program, its objectives during the period of years (1998-2009), and as well as from various literature. The questionnaire includes 32 questions: 12 questions were about reorganization of public organizations and agencies, 12 questions related to reform of human resource management, and eight questions were about expediting of service delivery. In this section, a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (at a very great extent), where 3 represented as moderate level, was applied. The respondents were asked to indicate the degree of accomplishment of each of the 32 items. Also, the issue of degree of success of the program, and other relevant issues, including the reasons of success or failure of reform program were discussed with 23 persons as interviewees.

4. Results

4.1. Reorganization Reform

Section one of the questionnaire included three sets of items. The first set of the items inquiring about reorganization of public organizations and agencies at central levels (questions 1/1 to 1/12).

Concerning the importance of structural reform and reorganization of public agencies as the basis for successful administrative reform, Thomas (2005, p. 16) explains that, “despite a more realistic appreciation of the limits of structural change as the basis for lasting attitudinal and behavioral change, we have not completely abandoned our faith in redesigning organizations to achieve greater effectiveness”. Also an interviewee on the importance of reorganization and the attitudes of reform program designers argued that:

In the reform program priority was given to structural reform. It was argued by some of the designers of the program that, in the process of the revolution, the attitudes and behaviors of people changed fundamentally. So, we should put our emphasis on structural reform to increase public participation, coordination among the public agencies, and decentralization. This approach was not dominant in the ministries Council, and therefore a considerable proportion of the approvals of the council was related to structural and organizational aspects of the pilot nine selected ministries and agencies. Restructuring in the form of privatizing public sectors agencies such as Airline, bus transportation, cement, oil refinery sectors and others have been delayed and eventually the whole program of privatization were dropped.

Moreover, statistical analysis of the responses of the subjects indicates that despite the emphasis of reformers on structural issues, the results were not as acceptable as expected. The following includes the assessment of the questionnaire results.

Items 1 and 9 of the questionnaire refer to internal reorganization of ministries and agencies. Coordination and control are the essence of items 2 and 10. Items 3, 7 and 12 consider the improvement of administrative capacity of the central agencies, in general, and through enhancing the research and expertise capacities of public organizations. Item 4 is about providing a proper system for distribution of public services in more equitable manner. Decentralization, delegation, public participation in decision-making and implementation of programs, and distinguishing the line and staff duties and responsibilities of the government at central levels are the main theme of the other items (items 5, 6, 8 and 11) of this part of the questionnaire.

The respondents were asked to specify to what extent each of the above items (goals), during the period of the (1998-2009) have been accomplished. **Results.** The respondents believed that, on the average, the degree of accomplishment of goals

related to reorganization was less than a moderate level (mean = 2.3, SD =0.61) (see Table1). Among the respondents, 16.1 percent rated the accomplishment of goals as “not at all” (rated 1), or “to a slight extent” (rated 2). And about 1.7 percent believed that the goals were accomplished at “extent” (rated 4).

Also, there were slight differences among the views of respondents on the degree of accomplishment of the sub-sets of this part. Increase in the capacity of the public sector, acquired a mean score of below the midpoint (mean = 2.2). In other words, the reform program was perceived as not able to increase the capacity of public sector to attain the expected goals and deliver better services to the clients and customers. The building and enhancement of administrative capacity, has been identified as an integral part of the developmental process (Rondinelli, 1996; Iglesias, 2003; Uphoff, 1996). So, based on the results of reform program related to the capacity of the selected ministries and agencies, it may mean, accomplishment of the developmental goals, could be a great challenge for the government (see Table I).

Coordination and control, and proper system of distribution of public services received the lowest scores (mean = 2.4 and 2.3 respectively). Internal reorganization (items 1 and 9), and decentralization and participation (items 5, 6, and 11) were, subsequently, at the second level of perceived accomplishment (mean =2.2 for both).

This passive perception is in consistency with the International Country Risk Group saw “no improvement in Yemen’s governance during the review period of 2004”. Looking at some governance indicators, little change or a deterioration is observed. For example, in 1998, bureaucracy quality was rank worse or 1 at scale from 0-4 and it ranks the same in 2004 which shows no improvement in spite of Yemen administrative reform that took place in 1998 (World Bank , 2006).

Table I.

Summary results of the questionnaire analysis on reorganizational efforts

Item	Description	Mean	SD
1/1, and 1/9	Internal reorganization	2.3	0.76
1/2, and 1/10	Coordination and control	2.4	0.74
1/3, 1/7, and 1/12	Improvement of administrative capacity of the		
	Ministries and agencies (Tax &Custom)	2.2	0.74
1/4	Proper system of distribution of	2.3	0.90

	public services		
1/5, 1/6, 1/8, and	Decentralization, delegation and public	2.2	0.70
1/1 to 1/12	Reorganization of public organizations and		
	at central and branch/local, and private levels	2.3	0.61

4.2. Human resource management

Reform of “human resource management” was the main theme of the second part of the questionnaire. In this part, too, the respondents were asked to specify the extent to which they consider each of the goals of the period of (1998-2009), in regard to reform of human resource management has been accomplished.

Results. In general the mean response was below the midpoint (mean = 2.4, SD = 0.71). Again the items of this part can be categorized under different subjects. Item 1 was about “full utilization of potential of public employees”. The respondents did not perceive the efforts in this regard as effective (mean = 2.4) (see Table II). It means, for doing the same jobs, the government had to employ more people, because, on average, during the period under consideration, about half of the potential of current public employees was utilized.

“Pay system” was the main theme of items 2, 6 and 7 of the questionnaire. The mean responses to all these three items were below the midpoint (means were, respectively, 1.8, 1.7, and 1.6). The results of the survey indicate that, the efforts of government in establishing a unified pay system throughout public organizations were perceived less successful, at below a “moderate extent”. In other aspects related to reform of pay system, especially in “adjustment of pay level in the public sector based on pay level in the private sector (mean = 1.7) the success rate was perceived as slight or nothing.

The above results and comment might be one of the reasons why the concerned reform program was not as successful as expected to “attract and retain the experts and professionals to the public sector” (item 4, with mean = 2.4).

To improve the capacity of reformed organizations in order to enhance the quality of public services delivery at local levels through “proper distribution of personnel between central and local levels”, and “filling vacant positions in less developed regions” were the essence of the items 3 and 5 of this part. The respondents believed that the results were less than what might have been expected (means were respectively, 2.3 and 2.4). Hence, strengthening institutional capacity of

local organizations through, inter alia, improvement of the performance of these organizations by better and more qualified personnel remained a major challenge for the government. The author knows that administrative reform has taken place at the central and in Sana'a for the current time but when some function and services have been delegated/decentralized to the branch or local, its capacity sever.

Pre-professional education and in-service training are considered as two major ways of preparation of public employees and their development to work as qualified civil servants. Professional knowledge is diffused through public administration education and training. To gain job-specific knowledge by public administrators, government-sponsored training programs are considered as the primary means (Sun and Gargan, 1993, p. 283).

In Yemen, the reform intends that those who are to be qualified, must participate in certification training programs prior to their appointments. Therefore, there should be consistency between educational programs and in-service training, if public employees are to be more qualified in their jobrelated practices in the future.

On the average, the mean score for the issue of training, whether "expansion of training" (item 8), "empowering the training units (item 9), and "improving the quality of training courses" (item 10) was 2.5 (means = 2.4, 2.3, 2.7, respectively). Therefore, the government's success in regard to the issue of training improvement seemed to be at less "moderate level". Although there are different factors influential in "changing the attitudes and skill levels of the public employees" (item 11), and "generating greater managerial capacity at top levels" (item 12), training was considered as an important factor. "Change of attitudes and skill level of public employees" (mean = 1.7), and "generation of managerial capacity" (mean =2.2), were below the midpoint or moderate level (see Table II).

These results are in contrast with the beliefs of those reformers who gave priority to structural reform, as against to changes in behaviors and attitudes of people. Although behavioral and attitudinal changes during post-revolutionary period were considerable, however, it was not so pervasive within the bureaucracy.

Table II.

Summary results of the questionnaire analysis on HRM

SD	Mean	Description	Item
1.01	2.4	Full utilization of public employees	2/1
0.77	1.7	Pay system	2/2, 2/6,
		Attract and retain the experts and	2/4
1.10	1.4	the public sector	
0.81	2.5	Improving the capacity of central	2/3, and 2/5
0.75	2.5	Effectiveness and quality of training programs	2/8, 2/9,
		Changing the attitudes and skill levels of	2/11
0.91	1.7	employees	
0.94	2.2	Generating greater managerial capacity	2/12
0.71	2.4	Human resource management	2/1 to 2/12

In general, the government objectives to reduced the Wage Bill, increase real wage, attract and retain best employees, down size public employees have failed and lead to hindrance the reform, and the attitudes of public employees. For improving the managerial capacity, the government established an executive public administration master program with assistance of Netherlands government. This MPA program needs to include in its curriculum local knowledge and practices and local cases to make it more effective. For those managers in the middle level, they attend a diploma program at the National Institute of Administrative Science.. After few years from now, future study may be able to assess both programs impacts.

4.3. Expediting service delivery

The third set of items of the questionnaire was on expediting service delivery. This objective expected to be achieved through: reform of procedures (items 1 and 2); provision of new technologies (item 3); and simplifying the procedures of law ratification; removal of contradictory laws (items 4 and 5); reduced and element corruption (items 6,7, and 8).

Results. “Reform of procedures and elimination of superfluous ones” (item 1), according to most of the interviewees (about 30 percent) was the most successful part of the reforms. However, the respondents to the questionnaire did not agree with the interviewees and tended to view the reform of the procedures at less than “moderate” level (mean = 2.3) (see Table III). As one of the interviewees explained:

Although there was a great emphasis on reform of procedures, however, those which virtually approved and were applied were not too much. Also, those that applied had no great impact on daily life of the greater portion of the population.

Also, another interviewee, with reference to the content and the approvals of the reform program in regard to reform of procedures argued that: “Overall, the administrative reform program was not developmental-oriented. So, even those approvals related to the reform of procedures, although in some senses had positive outcomes, had no connections with development of the country”.

The influence of new technology in the ministries and agencies was observed by the researcher during his doing field research. Overall, almost all the public departments were equipped, more or less, with equal number of computers, faxes, and other automated instruments. But the rate of application of the instruments was highly different. Almost all the offices of middle and high level managers were equipped with computers. However, some of them did not even know how to use them. On the other hand, these instruments in some departments were in continuous use. For example in the Ministry of Finance, one of the top-level managers argued that they are in line of establishing a paper-less communication system. The respondents to the questionnaire, too, were in a “moderate” level satisfied with the effectiveness and efficiency of new technology in the offices (mean = 3).

Considering “simplicity in ratification of laws”, and “removal of contradictory laws” and reduced or element “Corruptions” were the essence of items 4 and 5 and 6. The responses of reform agents imply that complexities were dominant in ratification of laws (mean = 2.3), and also public sector was suffering from contradictory laws and corruption (mean = 2.2, 1.4, for both respectively). Overall, service delivery, as perceived by respondents, was not as satisfactory as they expected (mean = 2.5, SD = 0.69) (see Table III), and there should be more efforts to expedite service delivery.

The public in large, public employees, experts are in total agreement that public administration reform faces major challenge to resolve the widespread corruption problem. This is due to the current reform failure and the government consists change in its priority. The government gives the security issue is its top concern that deserves its actions.

Table III.**Summary results of the questionnaire analysis on service delivery**

Item	Description	Mean	SD
3/1, and 3/2	Reform of procedures	2.3	0.80
3/3	Provision of new technologies	3.0	0.87
3/4, and 3/5	Simplifying the law ratification procedures and removal of contradictory laws	2.3	0.83
3/6 to 3/8	Reduced /element Corruptions	1.4	0.49
3/1 to 3/8	Expediting service delivery	2.5	0.69

Table IV includes the results of the degree of success of reform program as perceived by reform agents categorized as managers (n = 74) and nonmanagers (n = 276). Based on Table IV, the responses of both groups on the perceived degree of success of part 1 of the reform program were equal (mean = 2.4 for both). Regarding parts 2 and 3 of the first section of the questionnaire, the mean scores of non-managers were slightly higher than those of managers, resulting to a very slight difference in the total result (mean = 2.4 for managers and 2.5 for non-managers).

The analysis revealed no significant overall difference between the perceptions of managers and non-managers regarding the perceived success of reform program ($t = 0.62$, $df = 296$, $p = 0.53$).

Table IV.**Degree of success as perceived by managers and non-managers**

	Reorganization	Reform of HRM	Service delivery	Total
Managers (n = 74)	2.4 (0.53)	2.4 (0.61)	2.5 (0.60)	2.4 (0.51)
Non-managers (n =	2.4 (0.60)	2.5 (0.65)	2.6 (0.75)	2.5 (0.57)

Note: Parentheses indicate the standard deviation

Also, if we suppose that the reform agents were satisfied with the results when the mean score was 3 or above, and dissatisfied when mean value was less than 3, then it can be said that, about 20 percent of reform managers and 8 percent of non-managers were satisfied with the results of the reform program (see Table V). However, in both cases the majority were not satisfied with the results of the program (80.9 percent of managers and 92.4 percent of non-managers).

Table V Number and Percentage of Satisfaction-satisfied reform agents

Notes: S = Satisfied; NS = not satisfied

In the preceding sections the results of survey questionnaire were discussed. In the following, together with the analysis of opinions of the interviewees, where it is possible, these comments will be compared with the results of the questionnaires.

		Part one	Part two	Part three	Total (percent)
Managers	S	12 (19.4)	14 (18.9)	14 (18.9)	19.0
	NS	62 (80.6)	60 (81.1)	60 (81.1)	80.9
Non-managers	S	6 (6.25)	8 (8.3)	8 (8.3)	7.6
	NS	270 (93.73)	268(91.7)	268 (91.7)	92.4

5. Discussion

5.1. Comparison of the qualitative and quantitative results of the survey

About the “reform program” the interviewees presented different observations. It is argued that: “this is for the first time that the government tackling the issues of public organizations parallel to and consistent with economic, social and cultural goals of the development plan”. This considered, at least theoretically, as increase in political and administrative backing, because it was supported by both Executive power (as initiator of the program), and Legislative power (which approved the program).

The majority of the interviewees (about 75 percent), however, evaluated the content of the program as: “ambitious”, “non-attainable”, “non-coherent”, “no logical relationship among different parts of the program”, “not development-oriented”, “not fundamental”, “auxiliary”, “not based on feasibility study”, an incremental, not comprehensive or radical like the one in USA or UK, and “contradictory”. Some of the reasons were elaborated by one of the respondents:

Past-practice approach was dominant in whole aspects of the reform program. Those who were involved in the design of the program had no expertise, knowledge and courage to break from the old practices. Most objectives of the program (at micro and macro levels) were based on traditional way of thinking about public administration and bureaucracy. Therefore, even if the program was implemented, it could not bring about fundamental changes in the Yemeni bureaucracy.

On the other hand, a minority of the interviewees (about 25 percent) assessed the content of the reform program as “favorable”, which if implemented could change the face of the Yemeni bureaucracy. For example an interviewee pointed out that:

In the reform program, the designers considered three general areas as targets of the reform: reorganizational structure, human resources and management, and systems and methods of public sector organizations service delivery. The program covered the issues of central institutions. So, the program was comprehensive, and if all aspects of the program was implemented, could bring about an effective and efficient bureaucracy.

In regard to the implementation of the program, or its outcomes, there was significant consistency among the survey subjects. The process of implementation is often considered as the heel (March and Olsen, 2001; Seidman and Gilmour, 1996; Caiden, 1991) for most of the reforms; and the reform of the Yemeni bureaucracy, too, could not get rid of this vulnerable point. Most respondents to the interview questions (about 90 percent), the same as respondents to the questionnaire, assessed the implementation as “unsuccessful”, “weak” or “far from the original expectations”.

Most actors, involved in the design and implementation of the reform program, claimed that it has not done well, that reform of the bureaucracy is still desperately needed, and that too much time was lost that could have better been spent on addressing the critical issues of public administration to realize the development of goods of the whole program. Some of the reasons are discussed in the following.

Participation of key groups in the design and implementation of reform programs is essential to overcome resistance (cf. Caiden et al., 1995; Watson, 2004, Kotter and Schlesinger, 2002). Also, the development of partnership with non-governmental organizations, based on Kaul (2000, p. 144), “has emerged as a key

element in implementing development policies". Implementation of reform programs rests ultimately with departments. Departments had to translate these reforms into their own specific terms, and into specific time and resource targets, whereby to make use of the bureaucracy as a means to achieve their pre-specified targets. However, lack of active participation of departments in design of the reform program, apparently led to resistance and/or ignorance of the implementers. As one expert in Ministry of Civil Service and Social Insurance (MCSSI) argued:

Most of the stakeholders, even those who expected to implement the [reform] program, were overlooked. It is said that, "if we would stay waiting to hear the interests and ideas of different groups, it would have delayed the launching of the program". But, they did not consider that, even with more delay in the design stage, greater participation by more stakeholders would have speeded its implementation, on the one hand, and reduced the resistance, on the other.

Incongruity between the reform objectives and the missions of line agencies is considered as second reason of failure in implementation of the reform program. It was argued by several respondents from different departments that, the development plan obligated the departments to increase their outputs and services, quantitatively and qualitatively. At the same time the focus of the reform program was on downsizing, cut-back of personnel, and decrease in the number of managers in the public organizations. Contradiction of the reform objectives and line agencies, in some cases led to overlook of reform program, as explained by one of the directors in a government department: We were confused. On the one hand, we had to increase our domain of services and outputs. We had to satisfy the needs of our people, and also acquire some part of our necessary foreign currencies, through export of our products. But the [reform] program was forcing us to shut down some of our offices, to reduce our personnel and decrease the number of managers. So, as much as it was possible, we ignored the program to be able to realize our objectives. It was expected that the program just settle the general policies and overall directions, and leave the rest to the departments to adjust the policies, based on their missions, capabilities and so on.

The capabilities and skills of reform officials were another issue of concern. Lack of expertise of the designers of the reform program, and more importantly, skills and expertise of the implementers considered as a barrier to implement the program. Reform agents, according to the author, should: have knowledge, expertise, experience, support and commitment from top leader of the country and more importantly, courage; have global and intra-national perspective, to be able to analyze the interrelationships among different systems; and be able to communicate, and through transfer of new ideas, create incentives and enthusiasm among the line agencies to get rid of status quo. The reform program, however, was designed by some people, "who most of them had no clear idea about the job entrusted to them".

If the reform program is to be implemented successfully, as it was argued by one of the interviewees:

It [reform program] should be designed with participation of learned and capable persons from universities, from private sector, and from all other sectors. This would help to move away from the current way of thinking, which focuses on sectoral interests, to a more global and comprehensive approach to see all sectors and sub-sectors as a system.

This transformation calls for establishment of more comprehensive and powerful reform agencies with matrix-based organization. This arrangement will let the reformers to see both sectoral and global issues, as a series of interrelated issues.

One of the respondents, on shortcomings of the reform program raised the issue of “diversity” of reform agencies and non-existence of effective coordination, in regard to the policies and strategies of reform, among them. He believed that, if the reform program is expected to be designed and implemented effectively, there should be one “reform agency”, rather than a variety of agencies with different approaches and policies:

We should have one reform agency with necessary legal and political support. Existence of different agencies with diverse directions led the reform programs to paradox and inconsistency. Having more than one reform agency, is not necessarily bad. What is troublesome, is the different approaches adopted by each of these agencies. We could have different centres of decisionmaking in regard to the reform of administration, and lead them toward unified policies and objectives. This method needs a lot of work and time. Or we can forget this method and create one centralized agency to follow one specified set of goals, one coherent program and one philosophy for reform of the bureaucracy.

The next barrier to successful design and implementation of reform program discussed by respondents was lack of enthusiasm and commitment of top and middle level managers to reform their administrations. As one of the respondents explained:

Reform of public administration calls for competent reform agents. The competent agents are necessary, but it is not sufficient. What is more determining for implementation of the reforms is commitment of reform managers, and those managers in line agencies. Again commitment is essential, but not sufficient. The reform managers should be innovative and emphasize research, and redesign of out-moded systems. They should be effective, bold, imaginative and courageous to introduce and implement new ideas to make the government more customer-oriented, cost-effective and accountable.

Absence of systematic monitoring, lack of follow-up, planning and programming without consideration of financial resources, ambiguity in priorities,

goal displacement (reform as an end not a means), lack of coherence between developmental objectives and reform objectives, persistence of traditional way of thinking about bureaucracy and change management, and lack of experience in planning, were among other factors related to the shortcoming of reform programs. In addition, some respondents argued that as long as the reformers are from within the bureaucracy, there is no hope to achieve desired results. The bureaucrats to preserve and strengthen their positions, may never consider the real needs of the society. As one of the respondents explained:

The design of the reform program was based on the attitudes and experiences of the bureaucrats. Therefore it was an “administrative-oriented reform program” based on the attitudes of the bureaucrats. While what we needed was a “people-oriented reform program”, to consider the needs and benefits of the whole society. The dominance of the former approach led to the lack of acceptance and in some cases resistance of people at implementation stage.

Not all the interviewees believed in shortcomings of the reform program. Some were of the belief that the program was successful at a reasonable level and realized the expected objectives. The reasons of this group are analyzed in the following.

Some of the respondents (about 25 percent), together with the acknowledgment of deficiencies, focused on some other aspects, as the criteria of success or failure of the programs, and based on their own criteria, evaluated the reform results as successful. Among them, one pointed out that:

More importantly, at the end of the reform, “thinking of reform” became an integral part of the routine job of the directors and managers. Now, every public organization is trying to find the best ways of reform of its organization. These attitudinal and perceptual changes are the signs of success, and despite the shortcomings of the reform program, overall, the evaluation is positive and the program could achieve most of the targeted goals.

Reform of the bureaucracy, as argued by some respondents (about 25 percent), should not be considered as magical cure for all society’s deficiencies. It is unlikely that any single reform could produce expected efficiency, lower cost, and accountability to the public sector employees. The reform efforts during the period of (1998-2009), as an interviewee explained was successful because:

. . . it [reform program] made it right to question the status quo and existing practices. It changed the prevailing self-oriented culture to program-oriented culture. Now administrative renewal and greater attention to the needs of the clients and customers is among the agenda of all public organizations.

6. Summary and conclusion

In this research, the perceptions and attitudes of the survey subjects towards the success degree of administrative reform during the period of 1998-2009, have been analyzed. The purpose was to review and assess the rationale and reform efforts in Yemen, during the given period. The statistical results of the survey indicate that, based on the perceptions of reform agents, the reform program, in the average was not seen to be as successful as expected. The degree of success varies from item to item. In the aggregate, they fell short of the original, and ambitious expectations of even the program designers and the respondents evaluated the reform at “below the midpoint”.

The interviewees, were asked about the reasons for success or failure of the reform program. The findings of the study reveal the following as some of the reasons of deficiencies of the reform program:

- limited participation of key groups in the management of reform programs;
- inconsistency between the reform objectives and the missions of line organizations, as the implementers of the program;
- diversity of reform agencies;
- limited enthusiasm and commitment of top and middle level managers;
- lack of knowledge and expertise of reform officials;
- lack of congruence of bureaucratic incentives, structures with stated government goals; and above all low top leader commitment especial with regard establishing Public Personnel Merit System and privatizing large profitable public enterprises

Not all the respondents to the survey believed in the deficiency of the reform program. A few believed that the reform program was a good effort and its positive consequences were visible in attitudinal change of public managers to adopt program-based way of thinking. Also, they believed that the reform of administration is a continuous process and what have been done during this period, paved the road for fundamental changes of administration in next period(s). Quantitatively, the number of proponents of “success” of reform efforts was about 25 percent of the interviewees.

In general, the overall responses of the survey subjects reveal that, the established goals of public administration reform was not accomplished as expected. This conclusion is based on the assessment of the reformers, implementers, and consistent with the evaluation of the public at large (74 percent of people as

recipients of public sector services were apparently dissatisfied with the bureaucracy).

Limitations

The study presented in this article has some limitations. One limitation is that, the data are based on reform agents' own perceptions of the degree of success of the reform program. Of course other commentators such as citizens, as recipients of the government services, and other government employees might have different views of the issues examined. Also, the results presented in this article are mostly the perceptions of the subjects of the study, not actual outcomes (successes or shortcomings) of the efforts of government in reform of the bureaucracy.

Also, as it was mentioned, the adopted approach was based on assessment of success degree of the reform program based on the objectives of the program. In this approach, as discussed by Pollitt (2002), there are at least two drawbacks: this kind of evaluation may miss unintended effects; and some of the official goals may themselves be very difficult to pin down.

Notes:

1. While it can be argued that methodologically, it is unsound to use individual level variables to measure system level phenomena, the degree of success of reform efforts is determined, in part, by expectations which are primarily individually based (cf. Sun and Gargan, 1993). The use of individual judgments as the dependent variable suggests that administrative reform can be evaluated according to the assessments of experts. This is especially applicable in the current study, which the subjects (reform agents) were the designers of the program; and assessment of the reform programs, in part, is the performance evaluation of the respondents.

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For Correspondence: Morheb Al-Assad, Faculty of Commerce and Economics, Sana'a University, E-Mail: d_morheb@hotmail.com

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