Managing Organisational Change: The Experience of Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) of Ghana

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Abstract

The need for change in the public service is widely recognized by the public, professionals and government. In most recent times, reforms under the influence of the New Public Management (NPM) have been driven by a combination of economic, social, political and technological factors, which have triggered the quest for efficiency and effectiveness in delivering public services. A qualitative approach was adopted where respondents were interviewed. The study revealed that the changes such as the introduction of public-private-partnership and banking services have significantly transformed the activities of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) in terms of service delivery. The change that occurred at DVLA is a transformational one in the sense that it changed the structure of the organisation granting it more autonomy in the discharge of its functions. The process has not been an easy despite the successes chalked so far. It is self-evident that public sector institutions need to always adopt an approach to change which incorporates both the structural and cultural aspects of change, and which recognises the need to appreciate and address extensively the issues raised by employees.

Keywords - *Change, Experience, Ghana, Managing, Organisational*

Introduction

Practitioners and academics have considered the management of change in organizations ever since management emerged as a discipline. The arrival of large, complex organizations after the Second World War heightened interest in this subject and thus there is a large body of thinking about change that has been developed over the last fifty years. Many commentators on issues in public administration and public policy agree that there has been a paradigm shift in the last two decades from the older welfare assumptions about the state to an entrepreneurial model of government. Whilst New Public Management (NPM) and the more recent elaboration of regulatory capitalism have been helpful in explaining the growth of regulatory governance (Braithwaite, 2008; Le-

vi-Faur 2005, 2010), analysis of policy practice suggests there are more specific internal concerns at play shaping agency responses and their preference for regulatory solutions (Walker, 2010). Scholars have also observed that regulation (social and economic) tends to emerge out of crises (Braithwaite 2008; Haines et al., 2007; May, 2002). Regulation is seen to develop in spurts as interest groups and community members demand action in response to a scandal or catastrophe. The NPM was aimed at bringing about efficiency, effectiveness and economy in public sector organizations. The structure and advancement of society has created more risks and this in turn produces a regulatory society demanding better management and control of risks (Power, 2007).

Organizational change may range from introducing very micro-scale alterations, such as the introduction of new software in an office, to large-scale organizational restructuring, including the creation of new organizations and the termination of old ones. Policy change may also have an enormous impact on public sector organizations; particularly with privatization programmes or as new problems appear on the policy agenda that demand action from governments, such as demographic change. However, unlike managing finance, people and information, managing organizational change is not about the management of a particular set of organizational resources, or a particular organizational function. Rather, the primary focus is the organization as a whole, and our concerns are with the interactions between it, its sub-parts, and its outside world. In particular, an understanding of what is happening in the public sector is useful.

These changes might include organizational restructuring; improving performance, changing management practices or forms of cultural change. Although government has the responsibility for policy change, most public sector managers deal with change at an organizational level, and managerial approaches which take the organization as their starting point are likely to be more useful to them. Of course, there will be some very senior public sector managers charged with public sector reform in general. It is therefore important to note, that the ability to understand the management of change from the position of a given organization provides an important balance to sector-wide perspectives.

A formal, rationally organized social structure involves clearly defined patterns of activity in which, ideally, every series of actions is functionally related to the purposes of the organization (Walker and Lorsch, 2010). The system of prescribed relations between the various offices involves a considerable degree of formality and clearly defined social distance between the occupants of these positions. Formality is manifested by means of a more or less complicated social ritual which symbolizes and supports the pecking order of the various offices. Such formality, which is integrated with the distribution of authority within the system, serves to minimize friction by largely restricting (official) contact to modes which are previously defined by the rules of the organization. Ready calculability of others' behavior and a stable set of mutual expectations are thus built up. Moreover, formality facilitates the interaction of the occupants of offices despite their (possibly hostile) private attitudes toward one another.

The need for change in the public service is widely recognized by all stakeholders including the public, professionals, government and development partners. The challenges for those working towards meeting planned ambitious change agenda are clear. We

know that practicing managers and professionals are keen to meet these challenges, to improve services delivery and productivity by learning from extant literature and to base their decisions in evidence where possible. Change can either be planned or unplanned depending upon circumstances surrounding it. However, these decisions may be based on unspoken, and sometimes unconscious, assumptions about the organisation, its environment and the future (McGreevy, 2008).

Every organization must change not only to survive, but also to retain its relevance in a world of intense competition, constant scientific progress, and rapid communication. But in order for change to bring a benefit and advance an organization to a higher level of service delivery and operation, that change must be driven by knowledge. In Ghana, there has been various reforms geared towards quality service delivery and consequently increase in productivity. The previous government (NPP) instituted several reforms and even established a ministry (Ministry of Public Sector Reforms) to review the activities of the public sector by invigorating the need for organizational change. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) is one of such organizations that have gone through a tremendous change and that this work sought to examine the effect of these changes with particular reference to service delivery. In lieu of the above challenges, this study sought to investigate the relevance of organizational change in the public sector with particular reference to the DVLA in Ghana and its efficiencies in the attainment of the purpose for which the DVLA was established. This study laid emphasis on service delivery, the change processes and the need to improving upon performance in the public service delivery especially at the DVLA. In particular, it seeks to address the following questions:

- What types of changes have taken place at the DVLA?
- Has the DVLA realized improved service delivery by the use of ICT?
- What necessitated organizational change at the DVLA?
- What are the impacts of change at the DVLA?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organisational Change in the Public Sector

According to Serrat (2010) the public sector is the part of economic life, not in private ownership, that deals with the production, delivery, and allocation of basic public goods and services at global, regional, national, or local levels. Its processes and structures can take the form of direct administration, public corporations, and partial outsourcing. Its activities are funded through government expenditure financed by seigniorage, taxes, and government borrowing, or through grants. Organisational change may range from introducing very micro-scale alterations, such as the introduction of new software in an office, to large-scale organisational restructuring, including the creation of new organisations and the termination of old ones. Policy change may also have an enormous impact on public sector organisations; particularly with privatization programmes or as new problems appear on the policy agenda that demand action from governments, such as demographic change. The quote by Adei (2007) further illustrates the point. Don't

start any serious reform unless the leadership of the institution is committed. A good board is a jewel; a bad one is like a toothache! GIMPA has an experience of both, (Adei, 2007).

 "We think in generalities but we live in details" (Whitehead, 1996). This goes to suggest that change is inevitable and that efforts should be made to ensure its sustenance and survival. At its most common level, namely, that of the country, the composition of the public sector varies. Yet, public institutions typically deliver such critical services as national defence, police protection, public buildings, firefighting, urban planning, modes of transport, public transit, corrections, taxation, primary education, and various social programs. They might extend goods and services that non-payers cannot be excluded from such as street lighting; that benefit all of society, not just individuals such as parks and recreation areas; or that encourage equal opportunity such as subsidized rent. Sometimes, provision is moved from the public to the private sector. This is known as privatization, which has from the early 1980's taken place on a large scale everywhere in the world. Privatization is often thought of as 'liberalization' – where agents are freed from government regulations, or as 'marketization' – where new markets are created as alternatives to government services or state allocation systems (Levin, 2001). It could as well be referred to as the process of divesting the government stake both in terms of money and control from public companies. Privatization can also be called *denationalization* or *disinvestment*.

All three terms describe a situation where a government decides to transfer control of a government, and thus public owned, resource to the private business sector, either partially or totally. Sometimes, the government continues to exert a certain amount of control over the industry or service. For example the government may be able to limit prices and make certain demands through contracts, but private companies perform the work for a municipalized industry or service. The reverse process of privatization is called nationalization, when a government takes control of an industry or service from the private sector. In other, less common instances, provision may shift from the private to the public sector—health care is but one area where some public institutions now make available, or are experimenting with, goods and services previously furnished by the private sector. Elsewhere, with differing extents even within countries, areas of overlap exist: this is most often seen in water management, waste management, and security services, among others.

To note, the public sector routinely engages the private sector to provide goods and services on its behalf, a practice known as outsourcing. The public sector worldwide is undergoing change that must occur if it is to successfully compete in the market-place and thus grow (Ryan, 2002; Soltani et al., 2007; Denison and Johanson, 2007). Indeed, like Boyd (2008) rightly said, "The person who has nothing to learn is certainly incapable of creative dialogue". Change according to Holbeche, in *The High Performance Organisation:* Creating dynamic stability and sustainable success is a continuous process, not an event. Most organisational change succeeds after five years, if at all (it is estimated that 75 per cent of attempts to change organisations fail). It is in this vein that organisations need to build systems that are not just optimally efficient in a specific set of circumstances, but capable of changing to meet new circumstances: in other words,

organisations need internally generated resilience. In turn, that resilience is generated by creating shared terms of engagement – they cannot be imposed – that govern the relationships between different people and functions (Hewison, Holden and Jones, 2010).

Parallel to this, organisations must change the way they operate in terms of; technology, speed, outsourcing, communications, brand management, logistics and investment. In the current economic environment, remaining the same is not an option for many organisations. Survival and growth require a strategic response to pressures from the internal and external environment. These pressures or 'drivers' include, among other things, globalization, increasing competition, work reorganization and job intensification, organisational restructuring, changing demographic characteristics of the labour force, and technological progress (Dundon et al., 2003). While these drivers have affected organisations to some degree over the past 25 years, a recent study found that technologically driven change has had the greatest impact on the way employment is managed and organized (Taylor, 2003:13). Other pressures for change have been less predictable and more incremental. These include, inter alia, the privatization of government-operated services, pressures on companies to maximize short-term shareholder value, the desire to attract foreign inward-investment, exchange rate fluctuations, domestic inflation rates, and recessions, along with a variety of international disturbances and fluctuations to commodity prices. In the face of these environmental pressures that vary both in direction and intensity, organisations have responded with an attempt to improve economic performance (Dudon et al., 2003) by going through organisational change.

According to Blyton and Turnbull (1998), 'employee involvement and participation' has traditionally been the "Cinderella" of employee relations. The idea that consultation can, from the employer's perspective, fulfil a role in fostering good employee relations as well as improving productivity and profitability has remained the 'holy grail' of employment relations (Dundon et al., 2003). The literature on work motivation makes it clear that people prefer to be involved in decisions that affect them (Blinder, 1990; McCabe and Lewin, 1992). Involving workers in the processes that lead to organisational changes can help them to cope with change and adapt better to it.

The need to inform and consult with employees has been shown to encourage managerial creativity and innovation in the choice of information and consultation mechanisms adopted (Marchington et al, 2001; Boxhall and Purcell, 2002). This in turn helps to ensure that decisions are more robust and informed. Above all, employee knowledge and experience at the operational level can add to management's knowledge of markets, products and competitors. Although conclusive research data is patchy on the precise relationship between consultation and performance, it appears that including workers in change plans may facilitate greater acceptance of change, even if the changes require additional effort or sacrifice on the part of employees. The important point seems to be that workers have to believe they have a say in matters that affect them in order to regard the outcomes as positive (McCabe and Lewin, 1992; Oxenbridge and Brown, 2002). Some leading companies have formalized their approach to organisational change by means of partnership agreements, usually involving trade unions. Partnership normally requires representative structures engaging in dialogue about change in a focused and effective way (Marchington, 1998; Oxenbridge and Brown, 2002).

Furthermore, leadership plays an essential role in aligning the values of an organisation with strategic objectives and organisational change. In fact it is the job of leaders to develop both organisational interconnectedness, and the capacity of individuals and departments to work together instead of attempting the now impossible task of micromanaging specialized, knowledge-driven functions, leaders must pay attention to developing the norms of responsibility, honesty and trust within the organisation that enable people to work together (Hewison et al, 2010). To these scholars, internal change processes need to align with external conditions. This is because; creating a common understanding of external expectations of the organisation is one essential function of leadership.

Leading an organisation through change involves constructively balancing human needs with those of the organisation (Spiker and Lesser, 1995; Ackerman, 1986). This is because organisations consist ultimately of people, organisational change essentially involves personal change (Band, 1995; Steinburg, 1992; Dunphy and Dick, 1989). Although change as mentioned earlier is a continuous process, a recent review of organisational change by Weick and Quinn (1999) presents a detailed comparison of two different models of organisational change. They distinguish between change that is the first which is episodic, discontinuous, and intermittent, and the second change that is continuous, evolving, and incremental. These authors further assert that most of the analyses of organisational change written since the review by Porras and Silvers (1991) can be included within one of these contrasting forms of organisational change.

Many organisations are involved in continuous change processes. In fact, the challenge for modern organisations is to continuously adapt to their constantly changing environments (Munduate and Gravenhorst, 2003). Change processes start as a result of actions that actors enact over time at micro or individual level which is an ongoing adjustment usually small but frequent and considered as the essence of the continuous change model (Orlikowski, 1996). When these adjustments are sufficiently widespread, they often generate platforms for transformational change. As Weick and Quinn (1999) pointed out: The challenge is to gain acceptance of continuous change throughout the organization so that isolated innovations will travel and be seen as relevant to a wider range of purposes at hand (p. 381).

According to the organisational change policy (2009) of NHS Foundation Trust, the need to respond to new challenges or opportunities presented by the external environment could trigger change in an organization. The scale of this change will vary and in some cases will also require consultation with external partner organisations. However, in many cases the main intention is simply to improve the quality of service provided to customers or the operational effectiveness of the organisation. Whatever the reason or nature of the change, the staff is central to the success of the change. This is because, change can cause concern and uncertainty for employees and it should be managed with care and in accordance with legal and policy requirements and accepted good practice in as fair and consistent a manner and as sensitively as possible. The failure of many large-scale corporate change programs can be traced directly to employee resistance (Maurer, 1997; Spiker and Lesser, 1995; Regar et al., 1994; Martin, 1975). A longitudinal study conducted by Waldersee and Griffiths (1997) of 500 large Australian organisations dur-

ing 1993 and 1996 revealed that employee resistance was the most frequently cited implementation problem encountered by management when introducing change.

Individuals go through a reaction process when they are personally confronted with major organisational change (Jacobs, 1995; Kyle, 1993). According to Scott and Jaffe (1988) this process consists of four phases: initial denial, resistance, gradual exploration, and eventual commitment. Unconscious processes arise as individuals respond to the threats of change (Halton, 1994; O'Connor, 1993). Individuals unconsciously use well-developed and habitual defense mechanisms to protect themselves from change and from the feelings of anxiety change causes (Oldham and Kleiner, 1990; de Board, 1978). This defense can sometimes obstruct and hinder an individual from adapting to change (Halton, 1994).

It could be argued that the vast majority of organisational change is managed from a technical viewpoint without recognizing or understanding how the human element influences the success or failure of the change (Arendt et al., 1995; New and Singer, 1983). It is often easier for management to focus attention on, and to become preoccupied with, the technical side of change, dealing with quantifiable and predictable issues such as developing strategies and action plans, calculating profitability and rationalizing resources (Huston, 1992; Steier, 1989; Tessler, 1989). Management has a tendency to neglect and ignore the equally important human dimension when implementing change (Levine, 1997; Steier, 1989).

While it may be argued that change is mostly managed from a technical perspective without due consideration to human factors, there are times when the human side is accounted for in a token and instrumental way. For example, while management invests a significant amount of money into creating the planned change, little is invested in communicating, training and follow-up needed to successfully implement the change (Schneider and Goldwasser, 1998). Staff may also find their requested input into procedures for implementing change are subsequently ignored by management, leaving staff disillusioned (Weinbach, 1984). Hultman (1995) believes that most employees expect to have their views considered and to be treated with respect. However, some change initiators instead resort to questionable techniques to overcome resistance, such as manipulation and coercion (Hultman, 1995; Carr, 1994; New and Singer, 1983). These practices result in mistrust and resentment, making change more difficult to implement (New and Singer, 1983).

However, while most change involves new working practices or changes to contractual terms, some change entails uncertainty about future employment prospects. Organisations must thus seek to ensure that staff understand the reasons for, and that they are committed to, the change. In other words, change requires the participation of people who must first change themselves for organisational change to succeed (Evans, 1994). Organisations in the public sector must also aim to maintain stability of employment where this is consistent with the efficient provision of services and to act fairly and reasonably with staff whose jobs are affected by such changes.

TYPES OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Change is the norm in Organisational life' (Connor *et al*. 2003:1). Understanding that Organisational change is a process that can be facilitated by perceptive and insightful planning and analysis and well crafted, sensitive implementation phases, while acknowledging that it can never be fully isolated from the effects of serendipity, uncertainty and chance (Dawson, 1996).

People tend to blame the organisation or top management for the changes occurring within the organisation. Top management actions are usually reactions to some outside force, such as stiffer competition, shifts in the market-place or new technology or innovation. It is useful to note that change is a key to surviving and growing in today's global economy. It is therefore needless to say that change is inevitable and we will be surfing on this way of transition. Without change, we would run risk of becoming stale and unresponsive. The challenge then is to learn to move through this valve of transition as easily and creatively as possible (Marković, 2007*)*.

The management of change is a basic skill in which most leaders and managers need to be competent. We may work in Organisational functions that exist to create change and improvement in performance: evaluation; policy development; training and learning; or strategic planning (Clarke, 2008). Organisational change is about making a change in an organization, including re-organization or adding a major new product or service. This is in contrast to smaller changes, such as adopting a new computer procedure. Organisational change can seem like such a vague phenomena that it is helpful if you can think of change in terms of various dimensions as described below (McNamara, 2006).

Organization-wide Versus Subsystem Change

Examples of organization-wide change might be a major restructuring, collaboration or "rightsizing." Usually, Organisations must undertake organization-wide change to evolve to a different level in their life cycle, for example, going from a highly reactive, entrepreneurial organization to one that has a more stable and planned development. Experts assert that successful Organisational change requires a change in culture – cultural change is another example of organization-wide change (McNamara, 2006). Examples of a change in a subsystem might include addition or removal of a product or service, reorganization of a certain department, or implementation of a new process to deliver products or services.

Transformational Versus Incremental Change

An example of transformational (or radical, fundamental) change might be changing an organization's structure and culture from the traditional top-down, hierarchical structure to a large amount of self-directing teams. Another example might be Business Process Re-engineering, which tries to take apart (at least on paper, at first) the major parts and processes of the organization and then put them back together in a more optimal fashion. Transformational change is sometimes referred to as quantum change. Examples of incremental change might include continuous improvement as a quality management process or implementation of new computer system to increase efficiencies. Many

times, Organisations experience incremental change and its leaders do not recognize the change as such (McNamara, 2006). Kanter, Stein and Jick (1992) have noted that transformational change achieved either by a Bold Stroke approach (rapid overall change) or a Long March approach (incremental change leading to transformation over an extended period of time). In a similar vein, Beer and Nohria (2000) identify two basic theories of change namely Theory E and Theory O. The Theory E change seeks to maximise shareholder value which is applied in situations where an organisation's performance has diminished to such an extent that its main shareholders demand major and rapid change to improve the organisation's financial performance. These changes come in the form of downsizing, divestment of non-core or low-performing businesses, and the heavy use of financial incentives. Theory O, on the other hand, looks at improving an organisation's performance based on developing the organisation's culture and its human capabilities, and promoting organisational learning. Beer and Nohria (2000) continues to add that both are valid models of change but have their flaws.

Remedial Versus Developmental Change

Change can be intended to remedy current situations, for example, to improve the poor performance of a product or the entire organization, reduce burnout in the workplace, and help the organization to become much more proactive and less reactive, or address large budget deficits. Remedial projects often seem more focused and urgent because they are addressing a current, major problem. It is often easier to determine the success of these projects because the problem is solved or not. Change can also be developmental – to make a successful situation even more successful, for example, expand the amount of customers served, or duplicate successful products or services. Developmental projects can seem more general and vague than remedial, depending on how specific goals are and how important it is for members of the organization to achieve those goals. Some people might have different perceptions of what is a remedial change versus a developmental change. They might see that if developmental changes are not made soon, there will be need for remedial changes. Also, organisations may recognize current remedial issues and then establish a developmental vision to address the issues. In those situations, projects are still remedial because they were conducted primarily to address current issues (Tahilramani, 2010).

Unplanned Versus Planned Change

Unplanned change usually occurs because of a major, sudden surprise to the organization, which causes its members to respond in a highly reactive and disorganized fashion. Unplanned change might occur when the Chief Executive Officer suddenly leaves the organization, significant public relations problems occur, poor product performance quickly results in loss of customers, or other disruptive situations arise. Planned change occurs when leaders in the organization recognize the need for a major change and proactively organize a plan to accomplish the change. Planned change occurs with successful implementation of a strategic plan, plan for reorganization, or other implementation of a change of this magnitude. Note that planned change, even though based on a proactive and well-done plan, often does not occur in a highly organized fashion. Instead,

planned change tends to occur in more of a chaotic and disruptive fashion than expected by participants, (Tahilramani 2010).

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative study approach was employed in this study. Creswell (2003), notes that qualitative research is exploratory and therefore takes place in the natural setting. In this case, the researcher visited the study area. According to Neuman (2007), Qualitative research is interpretative and for that matter "the goal is to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings (Neuman, 2007). As an in-depth study, a case study was adopted. Case study is considered appropriate when little is known about the phenomenon, or unseen findings in a previous study suggest a need for a new perspective (Koski 2003). The primary data for this study was gathered from the interviews conducted. The secondary data was collected from policy documents, reports, research results, articles, textbooks, journals and other publications on the subject of the research. The population for the study were mainly made up of officials of the Driver Vehicle and Licensing Authority.

A purposive sampling method was used in gathering the data. The heads were chosen for the interview due to the fact that they have first-hand experience, information and requisite knowledge on the subject matter. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method which is sometimes called judgmental, selective or subjective sampling. The main goal of purposive sampling towards fulfilling the objective of the qualitative approach to research is to focus on identified characteristics of the population under study, which will best help to answer the research questions. In practice, the sample size used in a study is determined based on the expense of data collection, and the need to have sufficient statistical power. Twenty (20) departmental heads were selected and interviewed.

Primary data was collected for the study through interviews. The questions were prepared to cover the thematic areas of the study so as to obtain as much information as possible. The questions were pre-tested to identify its suitability for the research as well as capture some of the problems that may be encountered during the interviews. To make the data collection easier tools such as recorders, field log, and pens were used so as to provide a detailed account of the data collection process, and the transcription and analysis of the data. The interviews were self-administered. Due to ethical and administrative reasons, key steps were taken to ensure that data were collected with less difficulty. The responses from the interviews was analysed using the Miles & Huberman (1994) approach to qualitative data analysis. The Miles & Huberman (1994) approach consists of three concurrent flow of activity namely data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing.

<div align="center">PROFILE OF DVLA</div>

The Driver & Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) is a semi-autonomous public sector organization under the Ministry of Transportation. It was established by Act 569 of 1999 to be responsible for ensuring safety on our roads. Before the enactment of the DVLA Act, the Department was called Vehicle Examination & Licensing Division (VELD). The Act, gives the DVLA the legal and administrative efficiency to regulate the activities of road users. It is an agency that falls under the Ministry of Transport. Its stakeholders include the MTTD of the Ghana Police Service, Transport Unions, and National Road Safety Commission.

Vision, Mission and Mandate

Ensure world class driver and vehicle safety standards through; comprehensive, accessible, quick and effective testing of drivers and vehicles. The mission of DVLA is to provide the most efficient system of examining drivers and licensing vehicles to ensure road safety and enhanced records management. Also, the mandate of the Authority as provided in the DVLA Act is to promote good driving standards in the country, and ensuring safety of vehicles on roads and to provide for related matters. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority provides a wide range of driver licensing and vehicle testing and enforcement of services with the aim of ensuring that only competent, skillful and knowledgeable drivers drive the road; road worthy vehicles use the road and public place; as well compliance of drivers and operators of motor vehicles with road traffic act and regulations.

Functions of the Authority

The functions of DVLA as spelt out by the Act are as follows:

Establish standards and methods for the training and testing of driving instructors and drivers of motor vehicles and riders of motor cycles; establish standards and methods for the training and testing of vehicle examiners; provide syllabi for driver training and the training of instructors; issue driving licenses; register and license driving schools; license driving instructors; inspect, test and register motor vehicles; issue vehicle registration certificates; issue vehicle examination certificates; license and regulate private garages to undertake vehicle testing and maintain registers containing particulars of licensed motor vehicles, driving instructors, driving schools and drivers of motor vehicles. DVLA has twenty-four (24) Offices throughout the country. There are eleven (11) regional offices, including Tema and twelve (13) districts offices. There are offices at all the regional capitals as well as other centres considered as DVLA district offices.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND SERVICE DELIVERY AT THE DRIVER AND VEHICLE LICENSING AUTHORITY (DVLA)

The Change Programme

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority experienced a transformational change between 1999 and 2001 even though the Authority continues to alter its operations day-in and day-out. The Authority itself was established in 1999 to replace the erstwhile Vehicle Examination and Licensing Division (VELD) by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority Act of 1999 (Act 569). This enactment triggered a lot of structural changes at the DVLA. The changes have mainly been driven by the need for the authority to stay competitive, improve its service delivery, improve transparency and accountability, to better regulate the operation of vehicles in the country and also the need to maintain an efficient workforce. A major structural change was the changes in the organizational structure when the DVLA replaced the VELD. As a result, other specific changes in the administrative arrangement, the governing structure, structure of management, reporting mechanisms, communication arrangement, outsourcing, automation as well as reengineering of the existing structure.

The DVLA changed from being a division in the Ministry of Transport to an Authority with a corporate image. This change, has given DVLA the autonomy to undertake its duties. Unlike VELD, the DVLA at apex of its corporate governance has a governing board which is responsible for securing the effective implementation of the Authority's functions. Another dimension to the structural change examined in the study had to do with functional changes, some of which were performed by units and departments. It was further revealed that the divisions are now headed by directors which did not exist initially. According to the interviewees, the government sought to strengthen the VELD and make it an Authority with the necessary autonomy so that it will be able to regulate drivers and vehicles in the country. This also increased its scope of operation to perform functions such as licensing and regulation of driving schools as well as the licensing and regulation of private garages for vehicles' physical inspection.

The interviewees further mentioned that apart from the change in the administrative structure; through the creation of four divisions within the authority; and the change in the governing structure, through the creation of governing board, the Act seeks to strengthen the decentralized management structure of the DVLA. To this end, they indicated, would ensure that the DVLA has offices in all ten regions and some selected districts. The study further revealed that such regional and district offices have, as per the Board's decision, being given the necessary authority to perform major functions so that the pressure on the centre has been reduced.

Another major change identified was that the introduction of ICT at the DVLA. This has resulted in the aggregation and segregation of some functions and roles. The study also revealed that aside the structural changes presented in the previous section, there had been changes in the strategy of the DVLA in performing its functions as well. One most significant strategy change mentioned was the various public- private partnership (PPP) arrangements that the DVLA has entered into. One of such arrangements mentioned by the interviewees is the arrangement with The Trust Bank (TTB) (now Eco-

bank) to execute all financial transactions with the clients of the DVLA. This is to ensure efficient collection system, enhance accountability, minimize fraud and also minimize the rate of extortion by agents and employees. Also the old system where the DVLA collected its own revenues was fraught with several inconsistencies and delays, and thus making the clients culpable to extortion by agents who promise quick service delivery. The DVLA has also licensed private garages to undertake vehicle examination. Hitherto all vehicles had to be examined by the DVLA personnel on their premises before actual registration could be done. The findings reveal that this phenomenon has drastically reduced the number of hours spent at the DVLA.

Changes Introduced at DVLA

In order to achieve the objective of the Authority in promoting good driving standards in the country and also to ensure the use of road worthy vehicles on the roads and in other public places, a number of functions have been stipulated in the Act in order for the Authority to achieve its functions. It is important to note that functions formally performed under VELD have not changed much under the new Act. An important issue of concern is however is the autonomy that the Authority now enjoys in the performance of its functions.

> An interviewee had this to share "with the establishment of the Act, the Authority has a perpetual succession and a common seal and may sue and be sued in its corporate name. Again in the discharge of its duty under the Act, the Authority can acquire and hold movable or immovable property, dispose-off the property and enter into any contract or other transaction".

Furthermore the Act mandates DVLA to have a board in place that will be solely responsible for securing the effective implementation of the functions of the Authority. The introduction of the board system however, is a major transformation that has allowed innovative ideas and standards to be introduced were the central bureaucratic process had failed under VELD. Strides that have been achieved under the board system are the level of independence, freedom and autonomy enjoyed by the DVLA in the management of its affairs including, *inter alia;* determining the policies of DVLA within the broad framework of government policies; ensuring sound financial management; by recommendation of the board the sector minister may provide the following; guidelines on the organization of driving schools; syllabus for the training of potential drivers; standards for training drivers of motor vehicle and driving instructors; fees to be charged for services performed by the authority and guidelines for the licensing of private garages for motor vehicle inspections and to set standards for testing of motor vehicles. Also, the board of DVLA may with the approval of the minister establish regional and other offices in Ghana and can appoint public officers with delegated power. Again, the board may engage the services of such consultants and advisers as it may on the recommendation of the Chief Executive determine.

As part of the reform aimed at improving service delivery to the public sector, the board has established the following division and each division is headed by a director and shall consist of other employees as the board may determine .The divisions include the following; The Driver Training, Testing Licensing Division; The Vehicle, Inspection

And Registration Division; The Planning, Monitoring And Evaluating Division And The Finance And Administration Division. This would eventually lead to division of labour based on functional areas and expertise. As a measure to break the many bureaucratic processes, a chief executive officer has been appointed and has the responsibility of the day to day administration (effective implementation of policies) of the DVLA. In addition to the above an internal auditor has also been introduced as part of the reform and some of the responsibilities include the preparation of and submission of report of the audit of the Authority.

A number of services can be accessed from DVLA categorized into two (2) major areas namely; for Vehicles and for Driver License. As part of measures to improve upon service delivery to clients and also reduce corruption and provide clear line of actions DVLA has provided detailed information on the various processes that a potential clients have to follow in the acquisition of a specific services. These outlines are provided on the internet via the website of DVLA and also brochures with detailed steps of all services are available at all DVLA offices. Other set of services offered by the DVLA include: Renewal of Driver's License Procedure, International Driving Permit, Conversion of Foreign Driver's License, Driver's License Upgrading and Acquisition of New Driver's License. It must be noted that, Learners Driver License has to be acquired for a period of three (3) months before the license can be applied for. Applicants must be 18yrs and above. Procedures for acquisition are as follows: Physical presence of applicant, Purchase form for visual assessment, Learners License is provided after successful Visual Test and Physical Examination requirement, Successful applicant is then scheduled for in-traffic driving test (fee applicable), The applicant is then qualified to be issued with a drivers license if (he/she) passes the in-traffic test, Payment of fees, Issuance of cover note, Collection of license. Also, an applicant who wants to upgrade his license must have a valid driving license, fill form X and undergo a written and in-traffic test. Successful applicant is upgraded to the next class.

Registration by Vehicle Owner: The following documents should be submitted by the vehicle owner: Customs documents, two recent coloured passport size pictures of owner personal identification (Recent voters ID card, passport, or driver's license).

Registration by Agent: An agent registering on behalf of the owner is to submit all the requirement above and in addition presents Power of Attorney from owner (Authority note),Photocopy of owner's ID, and that of the agent, as well as passport size picture of the agent. The procedure is to present vehicle together with Customs documents to the customs officials located on DVLA premises for inspection and release for registration stamp. Present released document to DVLA officials for inspection, processing and documentation. A prescribed fee based on the cubic capacity/tonnage of the vehicle is charged for the processing. The applicant then acquires form A and VRC to fill. Affix photographs and sign appropriate places. Return completed forms to DVLA for processing; The Registration Number is assigned and the number plate is embossed by the owner.

Achievements and Challenges

Despite the enormous challenges uncounted by the DVLA, some achievements have been realized including: improved speed and efficiency in the delivery of services at DVLA, improved effective resource allocation, improved accountability and transparency, collaboration with Ecobank for efficient cash collection system, introduced a computerized driver's license to replace the old hard cover license and the introduction of Eye-Test as a means of testing applicant sight was in accordance of stated procedures, amongst others. In addition to the above the Authority have introduced complementary services to improve their service delivery these include the following;

Head Lamp Repair Services

DVLA has engaged the services of a private company, S-class Services to operate on headlamps which fail the head lamp test. Currently S-Class services are at 17 stations of the DVLA.

Issuance of Driver License

Qualified optometrists have been engaged to set up their Eye Test Centers at the major DVLA offices to conduct eye test for its clients. This has reduced inconveniences that clients go through by visiting the hospitals for eye test before continuing the process.

Client Service Unit (CSU)

The Authority has collaborated with Public Sector Reform Ministry (PSR) to establish a client Service Unit .The main objective of establishing the unit is to make the Authority more clients focused and also improve in the speed of service delivery and be more efficient, in addition DVLA charters are available for all customers.

Banking and Service Delivery in DVLA

Previously, the DVLA collected funds through its employees manually. The banking services facilitate the process of service delivery. It has been postulated that payments done through the banking system has helped to avoid time wastage and ensures that monies collected are not lost by means of pilfering and embezzlement. For instance, revenue increased by 200% during the first year of introducing the banking services at the DVLA. This enhances easy access to money by both the DVLA and Government for developmental programs and projects. It is therefore needless to say that a better collaboration with bank involved would lead to quality service delivery, hence improved accountability and transparency.

Outsourcing Service Delivery in DVLA

Certain services are also being rendered through outsourcing and this enables the Authority to off-load some of its responsibility and risk as far as losses and indemnity are concerned. By means of specialization, services rendered are of high quality, hence customer satisfaction. Outsourcing reduces the burden of management in terms of workload and this encourages better performance and higher output. Commercialization is a technique of managing public enterprises (PEs) or state-owned enterprises (SOEs) such

as the DVLA to make them profitable. In many public enterprises, performance problems arise primarily from insufficient autonomy and authority for managers at the level of the firm, particularly in relation to pricing, procurement, staffing, performance management, and marketing; and from the State's unwillingness to create owners who can protect the capital employed. By using the market-based solution, PE's become more like private enterprises by placing a stronger emphasis on profitability as the major criterion of performance. They are empowered with greater managerial flexibility in resources management, better pay and greater accountability for results.

Challenges of DVLA

Despite the achievements over the years DVLA is still faced with a number of challenges like any other public institution in Ghana. The following are some of the challenges faced by DVLA

- Poor remuneration of staff of the DVLA. For instance, there are no reward systems with respect to job appraisal and performance.
- the emergence of illegal middle men that serves as a link between staff of DVLA and the public popularly known as the "goro boys", has further exacerbated the situation at DVLA.
- Insufficient funds to augment the various laudable projects, programs and infrastructure.
- Lack of training for the technical staff for a long time.
- Lack of considerable control/ authority by the staff of DVLA in discharging their duties.
- Lack of space especially at the Accra Region.
- Little or no logistics, for example, the Weija District has no computers nor printers, as well as photocopiers.

IMPACT OF THE CHANGES ON QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The views presented in this subsection are views obtained in qualitative interviews with some purposively selected staff of DVLA. The interviewees mainly constituted workers in managerial positions and thus this sample does not represent a cross section of the staff at DVLA. However, the views are based on the experiences of these interviewees and also give in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the researcher validated these findings by relying on other methods (triangulation). Mainly the researcher adopted the non-obtrusive observational technique as well as the review of relevant reports to validate these findings. Thus though the findings are limited in terms of generalizability, their validity and reliability cannot be questioned.

The first issue the study sought to ascertain was whether the changes at DVLA have in any way improved the service quality. Interviewees responded positively to this inquiry. Their emphasis first and foremost was on the introduction of ICT. Respondents indicated how ICT had eliminated most of the difficulties they faced in the execution of their duties. Also, the fact that ICT had improved the speed of their work could not be over-

emphasized. Again, respondents indicated that the ICT has helped in the storage of data as well as enhanced in retrieving stored data. For instance, a client who was interviewed indicated that:

> *"Instances of lost or stolen licenses, or car documents had been hell for us because retrieving the documents alone is a nightmare. Prior to the introduction of ICT, the process of replacing driver licenses could last for over a month, but currently, automation has made things easier for us and also more convenient because of the ease of retrieving data and processing new documents."*

To buttress this point, interviewees were asked about their knowledge and perception about the changes in the duration of some selected services provided by DVLA. Interviewees gave varying responses but the average of these durations have been computed and provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Duration of services provided at the DVLA before and after computerization

Service type	Before computerization	After computerization
Acquisition of new driver license	6 months	1 month
Renewal of Driver license	1 day or more	30 minutes
Replacement of old Drivers License	1 day or more	30 minutes
Replacement of lost Drivers License	1 month or can take up to 6 months in the event when processes have to be repeated.	30 minutes

Source: Field data, 2014

The evidence provided by the respondents show that without doubt, the introduction of ICT (seen as a major change) has improved the quality of services delivered by DVLA. Another issue that interviewees raised as having improved the quality of service is the arrangement between DVLA and Ecobank which makes Ecobank the sole agent responsible for collecting all payments. They indicated that earlier when the collection was a responsibility of staff of the Authority, DVLA encountered several set-backs. These included delays and loss of revenue. Respondents said that the Ecobank with its qualified, competent and responsible staff has helped to remove all such bottlenecks. This, according to the respondents, is a remarkable improvement in the quality of service delivered by the DVLA.

Still concerning improvement in the quality of service, some respondents added that prior to the changes that DVLA initiated, there were several loopholes in driver and vehicle examination. The processes according to one interviewee were crude and unscientific in determining the suitability of a vehicle on our roads. There were a lot of loop holes and as such people could get road worthiness certificates without sending their cars to be examined. And as one of the interviewees mentioned:

"In the nut shell the service was bad!!!"

However, with the introduction of headlamp testing and other vehicles testing as well as on-site eye testing facilities, some of these loopholes have been blocked. That is to say,

the quality of services provided by DVLA have improved tremendously. However, as one interviewee concluded:

> "... although the changes have had some positive impact on the activities of the DVLA, more need to be done to bring the services to the standards in advanced countries ... for instance in ICT, automation alone is not complete; the Authority needs a complete reengineering."

Furthermore, interviewees were asked whether in their perspectives, the changes have led to a reduction in the forgery of documents. All the interviewees admitted that such practices have decreased with the inception of the changes. For instance, some interviewees mentioned that the old licenses were more prone to fordgery (as they could easily be fordged) than the new biometric ones. The interviewees indicated that the security features introduced (such as seals) cannot easily be duplicated and as such make holders of fake documents prone to arrests since such fake documents could easily be identified. One interviewee indicated that:

> "... holders of fake documents in Ghana have decreased by about 50%"

Generally, the study shows that the production and use of fake licenses has to a large extent decreased. Some interviewees added that initially, some users of fake licenses were persons with genuine ones but would want to upgrade and due to the cumbersome nature decided to take the short-cut. However, as they mentioned, since the process is less cumbersome now, some of these people have acquired genuine licenses. Nevertheless, all the interviewees added that the Authority has not been able to completely purged the system of fake licenses and as such would need to initiate more drastic changes.

Corruption has been one of the major 'hurdles' that face public organizations and the DVLA is no exception this. In addition, there have been numerous media and other reports about corrupt activities at the DVLA (and its predecessor VELD) and there is a wide perception that DVLA is one of the most corrupt public organizations in Ghana. The study therefore sought to establish whether the changes initiated at the DVLA have helped in reducing corruption and fraud. Interview reports on this issue indicate that interviewees percived a downward trend in the rate of corruption. They attributed this to 2 main reasons; being the ICT reforms as well as the DVLA sub-letting the receipt and payment of moneys to Ecobank.

A client interviewee noted that:

> "With Ecobank now incharge of most financial transactions of the DVLA, staff have limited access to funds and therefore have less avenue to engage in any fraudulent activities." Also, concerning the ICT initiatives, he added that:

> "The introduction of ICT have made the processes less cumbersome and more transparent, thereby reducing the avenues of corruption"

Interviewees also mentioned that the automation and other strudtural initiatives instituted to make the processes less cumbersome and user friendly have also led to a reduction in the operation of the 'goro boys' who also engage in fraudulent activities and sometimes defraud unsuspecting customers. The interviewees however again

indicate that, in their perspectives, the changes at the DVLA are not complete and still provide some leeway to fraudsters to carry out their fraudulent activities. They indicated that the only way to eliminate corruption is a complete transformation of the orgainzation's *"hardware and software"*.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the data obtained show that while some of the changes introduced had impacted positively on access to service delivery even though the cahnge has not been managed effectively. According to some respondents, the changes have significantly transformed the activities of the DVLA. In general, findings from the interviews indicated that the changes, to a large extent, have impacted positively on the activities of the DVLA. However, the respondents indicated that for more positive effects, the Authority and the Government should intensify the reforms and undertake a total transformation of DVLA. As has been outlined in the objectives, the major structural changes which have resulted from the change (as seen in ACT 569) were the changes in the organizational structure when the DVLA replaced the VELD. As a result, other specific changes in the administrative arrangement, the governing structure, structure of management, reporting mechanisms, communication arrangement, outsourcing, automation as well as reengineering of the existing structure has also occurred.

The change that occurred at DVLA is a transformational one in the sense that it changed the structure of the organisation granting it more autonomy in the discharge of its functions. The process has not been an easy despite the successes chalked so far. It is self-evident that public sector institutions need to always adopt an approach to change which incorporates both the structural and cultural aspects of change, and which recognises the need to appreciate and address extensively the issues raised by employees. There is also the need to constantly communicate the expectations to all stakeholders. Expectations can be communicated to an organization's stakeholders in a variety of ways including policy initiatives, outreach activities such as newsletters or meetings, and celebrations. Too often a goal is buried in an organization's strategic plan and is not well understood as part of day-to-day organizational practice which sometimes put fears in employees. Other non-performing public sector organisations in Ghana and developing countries at large can emulate the example of DVLA considering the positive impact this change has had on service delivery.

There is arguably no "one best way" to manage change. This implies that the approach is dependent on the problem at hand. As noted by Burnes (1996), the fact that an approach was deemed appropriate and worked over a period of time does not mean it will work in all situations or for all time. The change at DVLA can be said to be a combination both bold strokes and long march as identified by Kanter et al.'s (1992). Even though Kanter et al.'s (1992) "Bold Strokes" and "Long March", this idea goes beyond

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most other writers by pointing out that it is possible and sometimes necessary to combine approaches to change, rather than arguing for some sort of universal approach. Drawing upon the experience of both public and private sector organisations, in industrialized as well as in developing countries, I believe public sector managers should be ready to learn from experience in any quarter that suggests the possibility of improved practice. It is a fact that many of the innovations that have been adopted in developing and transitional countries have their origins in industrialized countries, including those in the private sectors. However, for adoptions to work in a given Organisational situation there has to be an understanding of context in addition to an appreciation of environment, although the two terms are often used conterminously.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure a successful management of change, the stakeholders (role-players) must be identified, to determine what their needs and expectations are. Managing stakeholder expectations may be challenging because stakeholders often have very different objectives that may come into conflict. The key stakeholders in this change program are the Management, employees, Government, legislature, and customers of DVLA. To really address their concerns, a comprehensive stakeholder analysis needs performed to ascertain the concerns and influence of these stakeholders. In fact the Stakeholder Analysis provides management with a detailed understanding of the political, economic and social impact of change on all these interested groups, the hierarchy of authority and power among different groups and the actual perceptions of the change among different groups, all of which were important to change that the change was a success. It provides an invaluable input for change strategies in overcoming opposition and resilience posed by some of the stakeholders.

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