

연구논문

## Organizational Red Tape in the Public Sector\*

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### 〈 Abstract 〉

In general, red tape is considered to have diverse negative effects in organizational management by impeding organizational goals, performance and individuals' behavior in public organizations. The present literature review investigates the following questions: 1) what is red tape; 2) how we recognize red tape in public organizations; and 3) how we measures red tape in public organizations. This study is also interested in the two faces of red tape in public organizations: both its negative (red tape or ineffective rules) and positive (green tape or effective rules) sides. Further, this study suggests that public administrators are more concerned about objective measures for red tape even though many previous studies have depended upon subjective measures such as survey methods. The study findings indicate that the appropriate use of both subjective and objective indicators for measuring red tape will increase our understanding of public organizations and their constituents.

[ Key words: public organizations; red tape; objective measure;  
(in)effective rules ]

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## I . Introduction

In general, organizational red tape is regarded as a big obstacle to leading and motivating leaders, managers and employees in public organizations. Furthermore, the effect of red tape can spread to citizens and society beyond public organizations. Bozeman (2000) argues that red tape has a negative effect in public organizations since it wastes organizational resources and detracts from the achievement of legitimate organizational goals and objectives. An understanding of red tape provides us with signals as to which aspects of public organizations need change as well as red tape is something individual organizations can change (Bozeman, 2000, p. 5).

Studying red tape in the public sector is not an easy for the following reasons. First, red tape has not yet been clearly defined because it is considered a subjective or perceptual concept. Generally, red tape is associated with organizational inefficiency, delays, unnecessary paperwork, incompetence, vexing rules/regulations, overcontrol, rigidity, and unresponsiveness (Bozeman, 2000). The concept of red tape is ambiguous because it is closely related to human cognition. Second, there are no consistent and robust standards to evaluate and measure red tape. It is very difficult for internal and external stakeholders such as civil servants and scholars to understand whether or not red tape exists in a public organization because red tape is strongly linked to organizational members' perception or feeling. Scholars who study organizational red tape (Dehart-David & Pandey, 2005; Turaga & Bozeman, 2005 et al.) use subjective data obtained by survey for its measurement. A good quantitative yardstick for red tape has not yet been developed.

Studying red tape is meaningful due to its powerful effect on organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Organizational red tape influences individuals' behavior in public organizations and is closely associated with citizens' lives because the behavior and thoughts of front-line public servants are affected by ineffective rules and procedures in public organizations. This article is a literature review of organizational red tape in the public sector with the twin study goals of proposing a

quantifiable measurement for reifying red tape and of studying the influence of red tape in public agencies and organizations. Rich and accurate information may be obtained about red tape by using both subjective (survey) and objective (quantifiable) measurement scales simultaneously. Since Buchanan's (1975) pioneer study, most studies of red tape have mainly focused on conceptualization or operationalization due to the ambiguity of the red tape concept. However, beyond the conceptualization and operationalization of red tape, a study about the relationship between red tape and public organizations will provide organization and its constituents with substantive benefits. This study mainly focuses on the following questions: 1) what is red tape; 2) how we recognize red tape in public organizations; and 3) how we measures red tape in public organizations.

This study is divided into four main parts. The first analyzes the research trend of the existing red tape studies. The second presents the summary and critiques for red tape studies and the concept of red tape. In the third part, this article discusses objective or quantitative measurement of red tape in public organizations. In the concluding part, I discuss the theoretical and practical implications of this study.

## **II . Research Trend of the Existing Red Tape Studies**

The main themes examined in the literature on red tape are as follows: 1) conceptualizing or recognizing red tape what is red tape?; 2) operationalizing or measuring red tape how can we measure red tape?; and 3) differences of red tape in public and private organizations. The conception of red tape has been greatly solidified by previous researchers' efforts.

### **1. Early Works on Red Tape**

In organizations, the empirical and academic interest in red tape was instigated by Buchanan's (1975) study (Pandey & Scott, 2002). He does not present a clear

definition of red tape; instead, he argues that public managers have relatively many fixed rules and procedures through the comparative study between public and private organizations. He compares public and private managers' perceptions to understand the usefulness and validity of public-private distinction. He operationalizes the concept of red tape through a structure salience scale by measuring the extent to which managers feel constrained by various rules and procedures under a hierarchical system. Buchanan pointed out that red tape is a composite product due to hierarchy with constraints that emanate from rules and procedures. The findings are very interesting because private managers feel a higher level of red tape than public managers do in the working process. Buchanan attributes this surprising finding to the greater influence of hierarchical constraints found in private organizations. However, follow-up comparative studies between private and public organizations do not support Buchanan's findings on red tape.

The locus of red tape study is within public organizations in Rosenfield's (1984) study. Unlike Buchanan's study (1975), Rosenfield clearly defines red tape as guidelines, procedures, forms, and government interventions that are perceived as excessively, unwieldy, or pointless in relationship to decision making or implementation of decision (Rosenfield, 1984, p. 603). He focuses on organizational red tape in terms of federalism and intergovernmental programs. The starting point of his research provides empirical evidence of Kaufman's assumption. Herbert Kaufman (1977), in his book, *Red Tape: Its Origins, Uses, and Abuses*, argues that red tape results from intergovernmental programs having to deal with many external constraints. Rosenfield presents the four potential sources for reifying red tape: political culture, Congress, federalism as an external source, and the departmental policies as an internal source. The unit of analysis is public managers who work at community development block grants. He finds that Congress actions or requirements related to taking community block grants, outside political culture (activities of pressure or interest groups), and bureaucracy's actions to enact new legislation play an important role as a source of red tape in public organizations. However, Kaufman's study suffers the limitation of being too context-specific with

respect to the block grant program and hence not being applicable to other studies (Pandey & Scott, 2002), although interesting findings on red tape are presented.

Baldwin's (1990) study stands on the opposite side of Buchanan's findings and shows that public managers face greater red tape than private ones do. He differentiates the concept of red tape as two dimensions: formal and informal red tape in an organization. Formal red tape is associated with official things such as laws, rules, regulations, and procedures, whereas informal red tape is related to various constraints or restrictions by subjective or external factors such as the media, public opinion, political parties, interest groups, and public officials. Baldwin depicts red tape as constraints employees face in carrying out their day-to-day activities, not the constraints members of the public face (Pandey & Scott, 2002, p. 561). He is interested in the personnel system in organization and the data are from public and private sector personnel managers. The empirical findings support that public personnel managers feel a higher level of red tape with respect to personnel administration.

Baldwin's results contrast with Buchanan's (1975) mainly due to differences in the samples surveyed and scaling procedures that selected items that focus on personnel procedures (Baldwin, 1990, p. 20). Specifically, Buchanan's scales for operationalizing red tape rely heavily on the general structures (formal red tape) such as rules, regulations, and formal authority relationship (bureaucratic hierarchy), whereas Baldwin's scales also consider informal factors of red tape and flexibility of personnel procedures.

Baldwin (1990) reports that red tape has a significant impact on individuals' motivation. In general, many studies have presented that red tape weakens motivation by restricting individuals' flexibility and autonomy. However, some previous studies insist on the absence of any relationship between red tape and motivation in public and private organizations. Baldwin (1990) notes two methodological shortcomings of the prior studies (pp. 20-21): 1) regression analysis among variables with restricted ranges i.e., one to five scales, sometimes yields artificially low relationships between red tape and motivation; and 2) some of the

self-assessments of motivation may have been artificially inflated by managers providing socially desirable responses.

## 2. Red Tape as Delays

Public administrators focus on 'administrative or procedural delays' in the performance of certain core organizational tasks rather than rules and regulations in their red tape studies (Bretschneider, 1990; Bozeman, Reed, & Scott, 1992; Pandey & Bretschneider, 1997). For instance, Bozeman, Reed, and Scott (1992) distinguish between formalization and red tape in organizations. Formalization is described as the extent to which rules, procedures, instructions, and communications are written (Pugh et al., 1968: 75). Pugh and his colleagues (1968) reify red tape as the delays and subsequent irritation resulted from formalization and stagnation rather than unnecessary or inefficient rules, regulations, and procedures. This conceptualization not only highlights the difference between formalization and red tape, but also enables us to study red tape through a quantifiable method to some degree. That is, they operationalize red tape as the amount of time it takes to perform key managerial tasks. However, their study has two limitations: first, it does not capture other key negative effects of rules and procedures; and second, administrative delays are not separately identifiable and is not the only factor that contributes to delays.

## 3. Elaboration or Operationalization of Red Tape Study

I draw attention to several factors of organizational red tape: focusing on rules or procedures (early studies) or red tape as the concept of time - administrative delays. However, scholars recognize that a study that depends upon one or few dimensions does not appropriately assess the influence of red tape in public organizations. Rainey, Pandey, and Bozeman (1995) use comprehensive and comparative methods for measuring red tape in organizations. They describe red tape as rules, regulation, and procedures that remain in force and entail a

compliance burden for the organization but have no efficacy for the rules' functional object (Rainey, Pandey, & Bozeman, 1995, p. 567). For specific analysis, the authors divide red tape into personnel red tape and general red tape. A variety of operational definitions of red tape is used in this research. They use diverse variables for assessing red tape, including general (global) measure of red tape (asking the negative relationship with organizational effectiveness), a measure of formalization, personnel rule constraints, administrative delays, and the number of decision-makers.

#### **4. Need to Distinguish between Red Tape and Formalization**

The terminology of formalization has often been used by many organizational researchers (Inkson, Pugh, & Hickson, 1970; Price & Mueller 1986). However, it is not easy to separate red tape from formalization in that the two are a conception based on an individual's cognition or perception. Whether the many rules and procedures in public organizations are organizational red tape or formalization depends heavily on organizational members' cognition.

The separation between formalization and red tape is very important because of the functional differences between the two conceptions. Many scholars distinguish differences between red tape and formalization in the aspect of each function within an organization. Price and Mueller (1987) define formalization as the degree to which norms of an organization are explicitly formulated (p. 137). However, this definition is ambiguous for differentiating between red tape and formalization. Hage and Aiken (1969) divide formalization into two dimensions: job codification and rule observation. Job codification is an attempt to control organizational members' behavior through rules and regulations relating how organizational tasks should be performed. Rule observation is associated with the degree to which job occupants are supervised in conforming to the standards established by job codification (Hage & Aiken, 1967; Pandey & Scott, 2002). Bozeman (2000) separates red tape from formalization by using the following medical metaphor: Red tape is a pathology

affecting a bureaucratic organization's physiology. A significant part of an organization's physiology is the set of officially sanctioned behaviors embodied in the codified rules to which the organization is subject (65). That is, Bozeman depicts red tape as pathology and formalization as physiology. Pandey and Kingsly (2000) insist that formalization can be considered the primitive terminology in defining red tape. In this sense, they define red tape as the impression on the part of managers that formalization (in the form of burdensome rules and regulations) is detrimental to the organization (p. 782). In a similar context, Bozeman and DeHart-Davis (1999) argue that public organizations have red tape when public managers consider formalization as burdensome and harmful to organizational goals or performance. The confusion between red tape and formalization leads to the debate among scholars i.e., is red tape good or bad in public organizations?† In general, the positive functions of red tape are directly or indirectly associated with formalization, whereas we regard negative functions as red tape in public organizations.

Many scholars considered red tape harmful to public organizations, whereas formalization is regarded as beneficial. In this context, Pandey and Scott's (2002) description of formalization is very helpful to distinguish between two concepts: formalization is operationalized by the use of official organizational records and documents, including employee handbooks and standard operations manuals (p. 563). Furthermore, Pandey and Rainey (2006) show a new viewpoint of formalization; unlike red tape, they point out that formalization could be considered the reification of organizational goals or activities.

## 5. Red Tape Studies in Korea

In general, there are the two types of organizational red tape studies in Korea. First, many scholars pay attention to red tape as an independent (explanatory) variable when they develop academic researches. In particular, public administrators are concerned about the relationship between red tape and organizational performance. Seo (2012) empirically investigates the impact of red tape on

performance in Korean nonprofit organization. This study reveals that complex procedures and administrative delays as concept of red tape have a negative effect on organizational performance. Park (2014) explores the relationship between red tape and organizational performance in Korean local governments. The result shows that administrative delays and external control red tape are statistically significant factors which affect performance of local governments.

Second, many researchers focus on red tape as a dependent (response) variable when they conduct red tape studies. Many scholars examine a variety of factors that influence on red tape in public organizations. Hwang (2015) investigates various influence factors which can affect red tape in police organizations. According to his study, goal ambiguity, promotion system, and hierarchical organizational culture are positively associated with organizational red tape. Ahn (2009) presents centralization, auditing system, formalization, and workload as important influence factor of red tape in the public sector.

### III. Summarizing Red Tape Studies & Defining Red Tape

#### 1. Summary & Critiques for red tape studies

There are five dimensions in the study of red tape:

- 1) Establishing red tape through comparing private and public organizations (Buchanan, 1975; Rosenfield, 1984; Baldwin, 1990);*
- 2) Seeking to define red tape conceptually and theoretically (Bozeman, 1993, 2000);*
- 3) Focusing on the operationalization of the concept of red tape (Rainey, Pandey, & Bozeman, 1995);*
- 4) Studying red tape as administrative delays (Bretschneider, 1990; Bozeman, Reed, & Scott, 1992);*
- 5) Differentiating red tape from formalization (Bozeman & DeHart-Davis, 1999;*

*Pandey & Scott, 2002).*

There are two substantial agreements regarding the concept of (organizational) red tape: first, red tape and formalization are theoretically distinct concepts, and second, red tape is chiefly focused on the negative effects of rules, regulation and administrative procedures in the previous studies. Although various studies have their own definition of red tape, Scott and Pandey's (2000) study most broadly defines the concept of red tape in public and private organizations. They describe red tape as an experimental treatment that combines various constraints because of unnecessary procedures, rules, and bureaucratic climates including specialization, hierarchy, and formal recording.

Most studies of red tape do not specifically show how organizational red tape affects public organizations and their constituents, even though these studies expect red tape to be associated with negative organizational impacts. Many studies mainly focus on the conceptualization or operationalization of red tape, rather than on its impacts on private or public organizations. A problem also arises in the process of data collection that is, most studies of organizational red tape are concentrated on middle- and upper-level managers (Rosenfield, 1984; Baldwin, 1990; Rainey, Pandey, & Bozeman, 1995). This trend excludes a large number of organizational members that are located at low and front-line levels. There are big differences of bureaucratic structure between middle-and-upper levels managerial group and low/front-line employee groups in public and private organizations (Argyris, 1964). The perspective or perception of managers or leaders on rules, regulations and procedures can provide information on organizational red tape to some degree, but this is more likely to distort or bias the reality of organizational red tape because it provides a partial view.

## 2. Two Faces of Red Tape

The early academic research of red tape was mainly from the standpoint of

sociology (Scott & Pandey, 2000). The sociological approach (Merton, 1940; Gouldner, 1952) considers red tape as pathology of bureaucracy, based on Weber's ideal-type formation. For example, Merton (1940) posits that adherence to formalized procedures or rules is more likely to make organizational red tape because the real organization is not fixed or formalized. Gouldner (1952) suggests that red tape is about perceptions of powerlessness, alienation, and lack of trust. Many scholars describe red tape as the evil of public organizations or the pathology of bureaucracy (Bozeman, 2000).

Some public administrators pay attention to the positive aspects of organizational red tape (DeHart-Davis 2009; Bozeman 1993, 2000; Benveniste, 1987; Thompson, 1975). Red tape can confer benefits as a form of procedural safeguards that guarantee accountability, predictability, and fairness in administrative and policy decisions (Bozeman, 1993, 2000; Seo & Ryu, 2012). Duplication and overlapping of procedures or works can provide important benefits (Landau, 1969). Without rules, procedures, and regulations, public employees are likely to face uncertainty or ambiguity when they carry out their own duties or working.

Unlike red tape or ineffective rules, effective rules have a positive effect on organizational behavior and achieve better performance in public organizations. Such effective rules are considered normal and good bureaucracy in public organizations (Seo & Ryu, 2012: 29). DeHart-Davis (2009) labels effective rules as green tape. Green tape or effective rules support various stakeholders, including organizational members in and around public organizations. For instance, written rules can help public employees to enhance rule compliance. Optimal control and valid means-ends relationships enable effective and efficient pursuit of rule objectives and consistent application of rules and procedures can promote cooperation of outside stakeholders (DeHart-Davis, 2009, p. 375). In sum, the positive effects of green tape or effective rules are closely associated with redundancy, accountability, and rule abidance in and around public organizations.

The harm of organizational red tape is related to inefficiency, excessive regulation, and the frustration it creates, whereas the benefits come from its

redundancy and accountability. However, the differences partly result from the ambiguity of the concept of red tape.

### 3. Conceptualizing Red Tape

Fundamentally, the concept of red tape is closely related to organizational inefficiency, bureaucratic pathology and organizational rigidity. Researchers from various fields including public administration, sociology, politics, law, and business administration are concerned about red tape and there is no consensus among researchers regarding what red tape is. This study presents some common characteristics that construct the concept of red tape depending upon the existing literature (Seo, 2012; Seo & Ryu, 2012):

- (1) high formalization and constraint (Hall 1968);*
- (2) excessive or unnecessary paper work (Bennett & Johnson 1979);*
- (3) unnecessary rules, procedures and regulations;*
- (4) inefficiency (Bozeman 1993: 274), and;*
- (5) unjustifiable delays (Bozeman, Reed, & Scott 1992).*

In view of diverse discussion on red tape, this study conceptualizes red tape as something to result in organizational rigidity and inefficiency. Such rigidity and inefficiency are made by excessive rules, regulations, and procedures inside and outside the organization.

## IV. Measuring Red Tape

Previous empirical studies of red tape have mainly depended upon perceptual data such as obtained by survey methods. There are the three main reasons why we pay attention to objective or quantifiable data for understanding and measuring red tape in public organizations. As this study mentioned above, Baldwin (1990) pointed

out the two limitations of the existing red tape studies: 1) regression analysis among variables with restricted ranges; and 2) limitation of the self-assessment. Additionally, we pay more attention to objective measure of organizational red tape to mitigate or overcoming common method bias in self-report measures. It is a kind of the measurement error that is made by the sociability who want to provide positive answers (Chang, Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010; Conway & Lance, 2010). In this section, this study suggests quantifiable or objective scales of measuring organizational red tape through the literature review. The use of both objective and subjective measures can increase the precision of our understanding of red tape.

## 1. Hierarchy as Red Tape Measure

Many empirical studies have used hierarchy as a criterion in order to measure of the concept of organizational red tape (Turaga & Bozeman, 2005; Welch & Pandey, 2006). Hierarchy can be defined as a stable set of relations in which the positions are arrayed in a pattern of formally superior-subordinate authority links (O'Toole & Meier, 1999, p. 508). In other words, a hierarchy is a system of ranking or organizing members in the level of organization. In many existing studies, hierarchy is considered a perceptual variable. For example, Turaga and Bozeman's (2005) study uses a 10-scale survey measure for reifying and measuring hierarchy in an organization: *Please assess the extent of hierarchical authority in your organization (0 = few layers of authority, 10 = many layers of authority).*

Along with organizational constituents' perception of hierarchy, we can also use an objective tool for measuring hierarchy - i.e., studies are able to count the number of hierarchy through an organizational chart. Generally, an organizational chart depicts the relationship between managers/leaders and employees that constitute the organization. Specifically, an organizational chart shows 'line' (hierarchical level among organizational members), 'lateral' (horizontal relationship among departments), and 'staff' (relationship between a managerial assistant and line workers) relationships. The use of an organizational chart could transform a

hierarchy into a numerical or objective variable. However, an organizational chart sometimes does not represent the actual reality of the hierarchy in an organization. Thus, choosing a scale or using both the chart and employees' perception can be more useful by considering the organizational contexts. For example, measuring red tape by using hierarchical structure or organizational may be inappropriate because each individual organization has different organizational structure and decision making. In this situation, research can consider a perceptual tool for understanding organizational red tape e.g., *your organization has multiple layers of authority; your organization have hierarchical processes for implementing programs.*

## 2. Goal as a Proxy Tool for Measuring Red Tape

Organizational goals are an important factor that can influence organizational red tape. Practically, goal ambiguity or goal clarity is used as a criterion for operationalizing the concept of red tape in public organizations (Coursey & Pandey, 2007; Welch & Pandey, 2006). Researchers hypothesize that an ambiguous goal setting has a negative effect on public organizations. Ambiguous organizational goals are related to administrative or procedural delay. These studies seek to measure goal clarity or ambiguity through individuals' perception. For example, using Rainey's (1983) conception of goal ambiguity, Welch and Pandey's (2006) measure the size of goal ambiguity through the survey method. Their survey questions are as follows (p. 400):

*This organization's mission is clear to almost everyone who works here. It is easy to explain the goals of this organization to outsiders. This organization has clearly defined goals (Using a 1 to 4 point scale 4 means strongly agree)*

Some scholars argue that the degree of goal ambiguity can be specified as an objective or quantifiable method. For instance, in their article, *Goal Ambiguity in U.S. Federal Agencies*, Chun and Rainey (2005) categorize four dimensions of goal ambiguity: mission comprehension goal ambiguity, directive goal ambiguity, evaluative goal ambiguity, and priority goal ambiguity. Among the four dimensions,

both priority goal ambiguity (the number of goals and performance objectives that an agency states) and mission comprehension ambiguity (how understandable is the mission statement?) are not directly related to the concept of organizational red tape. Directive goal ambiguity is defined as the level of interpretive leeway that an organizational mission allows in guiding specific actions to be taken to accomplish the mission (Chun & Rainey, 2005, p. 5). This is measured by the ratio of the number of pages of administrative rules to number of pages of legislation (Chun and Rainey, 2005, p. 24). A high ratio of directive ambiguity indicates many administrative rules in public organizations. Many rules have a highly positive correlation to the size of organizational red tape. Evaluative goal ambiguity is depicted as the level of interpretive leeway that an organizational mission allows in evaluating the progress toward the achievement of the mission (Chun & Rainey, 2005, p. 4). This is specified by the percentage of subjective or workload-oriented performance indicators out of total performance indicators for an agency (Chun & Rainey, 2005, p. 5). It is difficult for public employees to get the orientation of their works when public organizations have many subjective goal indicators. This can lead to unnecessary administrative or procedural delays.

Although Chun and Rainey' study provides a more objective method for measuring goal ambiguity, it is impossible to show complete images of organizational goals. That is, this tool can specify the partial feature of organizational goals. However, the measurement tool of organizational goals as an objective indicator can make up for the weak points of the survey method, i.e., the distortion from self-assessment. Similar with the case of hierarchy, we can use scales or measures under the appropriateness of contexts or situations.

### **3. Administrative Intensity as Red Tape Measure**

We can quantify the degree of organizational red tape as the concept of administrative intensity, which was initially introduced by Pondy (1969). The early definition of administrative intensity in an organization was the number of

managers, professionals, and clerical workers divided by the number of craftsmen, operatives, and laborers employed by the organization (Pondy, 1969, p. 47). However, in the field of public management or administration, administrative intensity is more frequently described as the ratio of the number of the staff (support personnel) to the number of the line who employ policy implementation (Jones, 1977). Generally, in many previous studies, administrative intensity is measured by the ratio of administrators to other public officers or employees (Lan & Rainey, 1992; Blau & Schoenherr, 1977; Sine, Mitsuhashi, & Kirsch, 2006). McKinley (1987) examines the relationship between technical and structural complexity and administrative intensity by surveying 110 New Jersey manufacturing plants. In this study, administrative intensity is measured by the ratio of full-time supervisors to remaining plant employees (McKinley, 1987, p. 93). On the other hand, Im (2007) uses a different method to measure administrative intensity in public organizations. This study measures administrative intensity by using time ratio (ratio of time spent in administrative tasks to time spent in total workload) because it is not easy to differentiate between line and staff in public organizations.

The administrative intensity is closely related to organizational red tape. Fundamentally, staff officers have a positive effect on organization and its members; however, an excessive number of staff officers are more likely to result in organizational inefficiency or time delays. However, most organizational theorists have focused solely on the relationship between the size of an organization and its administrative intensity (Parkinson, 1957; Clarke, 1983; Akers & Blowers, 1971). Some previous studies reveal that administrative intensity has a negative effect on organizational performance in private organizations. Scholars have verified the negative relationship between the increased number of staff officers and organization performance (Bidwell & Kasarda 1975; Peters & Waterman 1987; Timmons & Spinelli 2003). A strong administrative intensity is more likely to increase unnecessary administrative procedures or regulations, and time delays in (public and private) organizations.

## V. Conclusion

Many empirical studies on red tape have mostly used perceptual and subjective measures, which depend heavily on survey data. As concept of organizational red tape is very perceptual, many scholars rely on survey methods. However, surveys are heavily influenced by the subjects' motivation, honesty, memory, and ability to respond. In this respect, it is very difficult to reify the size of red tape objectively and scientifically if researchers stick to survey method.

In addition, previous studies relying on surveys sometimes find contradictory results or outcomes. For instance, Buchanan's (1975) study contradicts others (Baldwin 1990; Rainey, Pandey & Bozeman 1995). In comparing the size of red tape between public and private organizations, Buchanan concludes that private organizations are more affected by red tape, whereas the other studies argue that public organizations are more affected by red tape than private ones are. As mentioned above, biased sampling data are a problem in red tape studies. Many red tape studies are mainly concerned with the level of managers or leaders as a unit of analysis and thus do not consider the other levels of organizational members. In general, biased data are likely to distort the real world.

Some quantifiable measures could help to mitigate or supplement the weak points or problems of perceptual data in organizational red tape studies. Although hierarchy, goal ambiguity, and administrative intensity for operationalizing red tape are considered a perceptual concept, some previous studies (Chun & Rainey, 2005; Pondy, 1969) present more objective ways to reify these conceptions. In addition, it is impossible for these tools to cover the whole conceptions of hierarchy, goal ambiguity, and administrative intensity; however, using both survey and objective methods will make red tape study richer and broader.

The relationship between red tape and its influence in public organizations needs more research. I conceptually and theoretically expect red tape to negatively affect public managers' leadership, employee's motivation, and organizational performance. However, few studies have examined this relationship, although a few have reported

the negative effects of red tape in the behavior of bureaucrats (Scott & Pandey, 2000) or public managers' decision-making processes (Turaga & Bozeman, 2005). We need to concentrate more on examining the relationship between the two. Red tape studies have paid serious attention to its conceptualization, definition, and operationalization. Scholarly debate should move from such areas to the substantive issues about red tape such as motivation, leadership, and performance that pervade public organizations.

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