

## AN APPRAISAL OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT IN THE YORUBA TRADITIONAL KINGDOM SYSTEM: PHILOSOPHIES, THEORIES & PRACTICES

By

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the core values and practices of the Yoruba traditional kingdom system that can be liken to modern management theories and approaches. Documented Western management concepts have dominated the thinking of academics and practitioners in Africa and Nigeria in particular for a long-time. However, communities like the Yoruba people of Southwest Nigeria for several decades had their unique ways and distinct cultures which for years had been managed subsistently. This study used qualitative research design and secondary sources to collect data from structured survey articles and texts published from 1961 to 2023 (Sixty-two years). The study argued that the Yoruba traditional kingdom system co-ordinated its affairs effectively in a similar approach to the Administrative school of thought, though it was not documented. The study revealed that many of the important features of the Administrative school of thought, especially the 14 principles of management, can be found applicable to the Yoruba traditional kingdom system of governance, hence portraying a managerial style that showed a high similarity to the administrative school of thought.*

**Keywords:** Administrative School, Philosophies, Practices, Theories, Traditional Kingdom, Yoruba

### **1.0 Introduction**

Management is an activity that is important to human beings (Adeoti, George, & Adegboye, 2013). It has been viewed as a process of designing and maintaining an environment where individuals working together in groups efficiently accomplish desired objectives (Wehrich & Koontz, 1983). As a human responsibility, management is seen as a process that drives economic development and its activities has been in existence since human civilization (Inyang, 2008). However, owing to the emergence of large industrial organizations and the ensuing problems associated with their structure and management, the systematic development of management thinking is viewed generally as dating from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Sheldrake, 1996; Flores & Utley, 2000). Furthermore, owing to the way modern management was developed and popularized, most of the thoughts, philosophies and practices were limited to the happenings in the Western world (Joullie, 2016). Thus, it was assumed that management developed in recent years and in modern countries particularly in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and the world before the modern times merely pieced together without much concern

about means and ends of human endeavours as well as goals and aspirations to attain them (Osuntokun, 2001 cited in Muo & Ogbojafor, 2012).

Despite the domination of Western management concepts and writings in the thinking of African academics and practitioners (Gbadamosi, 2003), Africa, which has existed for several decades and a part of the global community, has its own unique ways and distinct cultures which have long been managed subsistently (Ogbojafor, Idowu & George, 2012). This traditional Africa management practice, which is often referred to as indigenous management practices, (that is local approaches to management that reflect knowledge of the local context and local communities), was disrupted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the coming of the Europeans and thus marked the beginning of colonialism in Africa (Adeoti et al., 2013). However, the indigenous people of Africa, especially Nigeria, had their management philosophies and practices prior to the advent of colonialism, and were in fact able to survive the tortuous past slavery, colonialism, brutal economic exploitation and attempted cultural annihilation with the aid of these practices and philosophies (Muo & Ogbojafor, 2012).

These management activities in Africa and Nigeria were based on sound principles that serve as the foundation for the traditional management theories and practices (Inyang, 2008). A good example of such indigenous management practice is the "Ubuntu" which is a management philosophical thought system in South Africa that is derived from their culture, beliefs, values, and behaviour (Inyang, 2008). Consistently, it has been advocated by some African authors that there is need for the integration of African traditional thinking as a complement to the scientific and rational approach to aid decision making and accommodate and use some often-irrational desires and behaviours for better organizational performance (Mbigi, 2002 cited in Ogbojafor, Alaneme & Kuye, 2013). Furthermore, in line with theoretical point of view, the knowledge and understanding of indigenous management and practices can facilitate the building of universally applicable theories and concepts (Allwood & Berry, 2006; Kim, Yang & Hurang, 2006).

The traditional African society's styles, according to Economic Commission for Africa (Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), 2007 cited in Ogbojafor et al., 2013), were broadly classified as decentralized or consensus-based systems, and centralized or chieftaincy-based systems. While decentralized or fragmented traditional systems in which social control, law making, and allocations of resources are coordinated by entities like village groups, the supports techniques of control are revolved around the dynamics of clanship, and normative scheme which is made up of elaborate bodies of established rules of conduct enforced by heads of fragmented segments and spontaneous community action in some serious cases. The centralized traditional systems are organized under well entrenched highly structured political authority, a political sovereign backed by law enforcement agency and habitually obeyed by the people Otumfuo & Asantehe, 2004 cited in Muo & Ogbojafor, 2012).

The pre-colonial Yoruba society of Nigeria practised a centralized leadership system or state (Monarchy) that is a system and practice of governance that centralized power in the hands of a king (Oba). Although, the Western benchmarks used in the evaluation of African (including the Yoruba) management style has led to the conclusion that Africa's (including the Yoruba's) stunted growth or underdevelopment was as a result of poor management and the application of

Western management theories was the needed panacea for the complex social, economic and political problems of the continent (Inyang, 2008). However, as pointed out, the identification of management in Africa (the Yorubas inclusive) clearly presents sound basis and conditions for the nurturing of management principles, theories and practices similar to those developed in Europe and the United States of America (Adeoti et al., 2013). Despite this knowledge, the African (Yoruba's) case is complicated been that over time, colonialism had altered people's thought processes, experiences, and the environments in which cultures that had pre-existing forms of management evident in the organization of their ancient kingdoms and empires (Ifechukwu, 2010). Infact, in line with the view that indigenous knowledge is backward and of no relevance to modern management that its study had been previously neglected in the management literature (Marsden, 1991).

Thus, the research of this nature is required to provide a clear insight into the Yoruba traditional kingdom system and ascertain whether there is a comparison between the Yoruba traditional kingdom system and the Administrative school of thought developed in the Western world. Academic scholars in their studies have increasingly realised in the last two to three decades, the limitations of universal applicability of Western and/or Japanese management theories and practices (Hofstede, 1993). This had led to a growing interest in indigenous management theories (Rousseau & Fried, 2001). Furthermore, scholars have forcefully advocated for context embedded research, which is believed to be necessary for contextualisation of the current global management knowledge and such research must recognize the influence of cultural roots as well as modern political economy and emerging institutions in analyzing the behaviour of firms and individuals inside the firms. This they believed requires insightful knowledge of the local context (Chneg, 1994; Tsui, 2004).

A contextualised research must be indigenous and more relevant and necessary in emerging nations like Nigeria. The dearth of such an effort can be seen in the coverage of reading materials in various Business Schools in Nigeria (Yorubas inclusive). Most business schools in Nigeria prescribes either the edition of American and or British textbooks or books written by Nigerian authors in a predominant Western tradition (Panda & Gupta, 2007).

Traditionally, the Yorubas way of discussing and recording their history and experiences were not through written documentation. Instead, their stories and histories were passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth known as *Itan* (a term used for the sum total of all Yoruba myths, songs, histories, and other cultural components). However, probably because of the manner modern management was developed and popularized, most of the management thoughts, philosophies and practices appear to be limited to the happenings in the Western world. Moreover, these Western management concepts were well documented and dominated the thinking of academics and practitioners in Africa for a long-time (Gbadamosi, 2003).

Thus, the general notion in the Western world is that, as a result of the non-documentation of the indigenous management thought process, there was no existence of management principles and practices among the Yorubas. This notion has led to the view that indigenous knowledge is backward and not relevant to modern management and thus serious study on it has been previously neglected in the management literature (Marsden, 1991).

However, the traditional management practice among the Yorubas was extensively disrupted by the advent of the Europeans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Adeoti, et al., 2013). It was observed that this colonization altered the people's thought processes, experiences, and the environments in which cultures that had pre-existing forms of management evident in the organization of their ancient kingdoms (Ifechukwu, 2010). Thus, the Yorubas thought process and cultures were changed and it led to the Westernization of their indigenous management thought and practices.

Evidently, the Yorubas had been in existence prior to the colonization and have their own unique ways and distinct culture in managing their affairs. This study was conceived to provide a clear insight into the Yoruba traditional kingdom system by enumerating the principles and indigenous practices of Yoruba traditional kingdom system; highlighting the principles and practices of Administrative School of thought; and establishing the comparison between the Administrative school of thought and the Yoruba traditional kingdom system.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Philosophy has been seen as a system of beliefs or views about life, existence and human beings as determined by reason and logic (Eze, 1995). Whereas theory, is viewed as a systematic grouping of interdependent concepts and principles (generalizations or hypothesis which are tested for accuracy and appear to be true to reflect or explain reality) that gives a framework to, or link together, a significant area of knowledge (Olem, 2004). However, management thought is also viewed as a way of thinking of or about management and the management process peculiar to specific and defined groups of management scholars (or thinkers) (Asika, 1984). A central part of the study of organization and management is the development of management thinking and what might be termed management theory. Thus, management theory focused on the combination of concepts and principles of management (Nwachukwu, 1992). Thus, the drive behind the evolution of management theory is the search for better ways to utilize organizational resources.

The development and growth of theory of management and the practice and the philosophy of management led to the tremendous growth in the number of management scholars, practitioners, and thinkers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries which necessitated the taxonomical organization of their population (Asika, 2007). Management scholars and practitioners were classified into schools of management thoughts or approaches. A prominent classification is the one proposed by Koontz (Koontz, 1961) in his paper "the jungle of management theory". Today, these schools of thought are categorized as: Classical management theory or school which is made up of Scientific management, Administrative management, Bureaucratic management; Neo-classical theory or school which include - Human relations school, Behavioural school; Modern management theory or school which consist of - System school, Contingency school, Organizational humanism, Management science; and Other schools of thought which include -Total quality management approaches, styles, approaches among other. It is worthy of note that these schools of thoughts were developed with the aim of solving organizational problems and enabling them to achieve their objectives. The theoretical background for this study was developed around two major issues: Administrative school of thought and Yoruba traditional Kingdom System using the prototype theory to understand the process of similarity

between the two issues in context: Yoruba traditional kingdom and the Administrative school of thought.

## **2.1 The Prototype Theory**

Basic research on similarity recognition indicated that cognitive frameworks acquired through experience played a central role in this process. These frameworks provided the basis for individuals to notice connections between seemingly independent events or trends and to detect meaningful patterns in these connections (Baron & Ensley, 2006). While different theories of similarities recognition exist, a much supported one by a large body of evidence (Hahn & Chatter, 1997) and which appears to offer important insights into the nature of similarity recognition, is known as *prototype theory* (Whittlesea, 1997).

Prototype theory, which originated in the mid-1970s with Eleanor Rosch's research into the internal structure of categories and implied that basic ideas about categorization are that a concept is characterized by its inheritance relations with other concepts in the system and each inheritance relation is either extensional (by giving an exemplar) or intentional (by giving a property) to the concept. Rosch's work on categorization appealed extensively to features, attributes, and properties. Prototypical categories exhibit a family resemblance structure (Rosch, 1975; Rosch & Mervis, 1975; Smith & Medin, 1981; Lakoff, 1987; Hampton, 1993; Barsalou, 1999).

Prototype Theory is linked directly to similarity measures, whereby the judged similarity of any two items is measured by comparing the sets of shared and distinctive features that are associated with them. The theory suggested that prototypes are acquired by individuals through experience that is a cognitive framework which represent the most typical member of a category—the instance of that category that best capture its essential meaning or nature. Also, Prototype models of similarity recognition suggested that as individuals encounter new events or objects, their existing prototypes play an important role in the perception of these events or objects and in the detection of connections between them. In essence, prototypes serve as templates, that assist the persons who possess them to notice links between diverse events or trends and to perceive recognizable, meaningful patterns in these connections. In fact, this process involves comparison of new events or objects with existing prototypes. If the match is close, these events or objects are recognized as fitting within the prototype. If, instead, the match is not close, the events or objects are not perceived as fitting within this cognitive framework. In essence, prototypes represent the essential meaning of a given cognitive framework or category; thus, categories can be arranged logically in order of their grounding by similarity. Prototype theory states concepts specify properties that objects of class tend to possess rather than must have and argued that categories are defined by family resemblance; category members need not all share a definitional feature, but they tend to have several features in common (Rosch & Mervis, 1975; Rosch, Mervis, Gray, Johnson & Boyes-Braem, 1976).

Once prototypes for a set of concepts have been determined, categorizations can be predicted by determining how similar an object is to each of the prototypes. The likelihood of placing an object into a category increase as it becomes more similar to the category's prototype and less similar to other category prototypes (Rosch & Mervis, 1975).

Prototype models do not require "fuzzy" boundaries around concept (Hampton, 1993) but prototype similarities are based on commonalities across many attributes and are consequently graded and lead naturally to categories with graded membership. The similarity of an item to its category prototype (in terms of featural overlap) predicts the results from several converging tasks.

The general assumption is that entity X is categorized as an instance or subset of concept Y if and only if X possesses some critical features of Y, the prototype approach deals with resemblance, and this is all about degree. Thus, Yoruba traditional kingdom system is similar to the Administrative school of thought if and only if it processes some critical features of the Administrative school of thought.

## **2.2 The Administrative school of thought**

Classical approach to management is a set of homogenous ideas on the management of organizations that evolved in the later part of 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sarker & Azan Khan, 2013). This approach focused on the job and management functions to determine the best way to manage in all organizations. The classical school of thought consists of three schools: the scientific, the administrative and the bureaucratic school of thoughts. The focus of this study is the administrative school of thought.

The administrative school of thought concentrated on the management of an entire organization. This school of thought is also called Administrative or Traditional principles of management, Management process school, Administration management, Comprehensive analysis of Management or Classical organizational theory. It grew out of the need to find guidelines for managing complex organizations such as factories, and focused on identifying principles that will lead to the creation of the most efficient system of organization and management. The aim was to develop an organizational structure that leads to high efficiency and effectiveness. This organizational structure is the system of task and authority relationships that control how employees use organizational resources to achieve the organization's goals. Thus, the school focused on the total organization and discovering the best way to run an organization. It generally presses for a formalized administrative structure, a clear division of labour, and delegation of power and authority to administrators relevant to their areas of responsibility (Cole, 2005; Sridhar, 2008; Lunenburg & Irby, 2013; Sarker & Azan Khan, 2013).

The administrative approach was seen as a rational and orderly process and as a continuous process (Sridhar, 2008). Among the well-known contributors to the field of administrative school of thought are Henry Fayol, Luther Gulick, Chester I. Barnard, Lyndall Urwick, J. Mooney, Alvin Brown, A. C. Reily, and Henry Dennison (Sridhar, 2008; Heames & Breland, 2010; Lunenburg & Irby, 2013). However, the most notable contributor is Henri Fayol (1841-1925), a French industrialist who is the chief architect and the father of the administrative management theory. His book "General and Industrial Management" presents a management philosophy that still guides many modern managers. Sridhar (Sridhar, 2008) revealed that Fayol worked from the apex downwards with management centered philosophy. He approached the study of management from the viewpoint of upper-level administration. It was posited by Fayol that all managers perform five basic functions: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling (Lunenburg & Irby, 2013). Besides these five basic management functions, Fayol identified fourteen principles he felt should guide the management of organizations.

The principles are: division of work, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, and subordination of individual interest to general interests, remuneration, centralization, scalar chain, order, equity, stability of tenure of personnel, initiative, and esprit de corps.

Although the administrative school of thought involves many important concepts, these concepts, can be placed into three broad categories (Grimsley, 2014):

- **Formalized administrative structure:** This theory posited that an organization should be designed using a very formalized structure with clear lines of authority from the top down. This is a hierarchical structure.
- **Division of labour:** A second key structural feature of an organization designed by administrative management theory is a clear division of labour between the organization's departments. Thus, each department is responsible for a particular aspect of the organization's activities towards achievements of organizational goals.
- **Delegation of power and authority:** Another key feature of the theory is the delegation of power and authority to administrators commensurate with their responsibilities in the organization. If you don't have the power and authority to engage in tasks necessary for achieving specific objectives you are charged with achieving, the organization can't meet its overall goal.

### 2.3 The Yoruba Traditional Kingdom System

The style of administration that was introduced by the British in the colonial period and adopted by successive post-colonial Nigerian leaders changed the indigenous administration style to the British style of administration. This style of administration destroyed the basic indigenous administrative system that was practised by various ethnic groups in the present day Nigeria which included the Yoruba (Adegbamigbo & Nofiu, 2013).

In pre-colonial times Yorubas were the most urban of all African people. They inhabited densely populated area (many over 100, 000 in size) and constitute about 21 percent of the population in their Nationalities. Although the Yorubas are found throughout of West Africa, up to Benin, Ghana and Togo; the greatest concentration of them is found in the South-Western part of Nigeria, an area which is considered the nexus of the Yoruba Cultural identity. The Yoruba people (*Yorùbá* in Yoruba orthography) speak the Yoruba language (*èdè Yoruba*). Sub groups of the Yoruba in Nigeria include the *Awo21qa*, the *Ijeshas*, the *Oyos*, the *Ifes*, the *Egbas*, the *Egbados*, the *Ketus*, the *Ijebu*, the *Ondos*, the *Ekitis*, the *Yagbas*, and the *Igbominas*. Today, majority of the Yorubas in West Africa live in the states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. The Yoruba do not only live in Africa nowadays, as a result of migration and the slave trade to the Americas in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Yoruba communities can now be found throughout the Western world, especially in the Caribbean, South America and North America. In fact, these days one can find clear elements of Yoruba culture in Cuba and Brazil (Federal Republic of Nigeria & UNICEF, 1990; Gonzalez-Wippler, 1992; Murphy, 1994; Warner-Lewis, 1996; Voeks, 1997; Olatunji, 2013; Olufayo & Jegede, 2014).

The Yoruba had a complex pre-colonial system of urban residence (these towns were composed of enclosed compounds with descent groups varying in size from 20 to 2,000 persons living together in each compound), economic production and trade (Bascon, 1969). As noted that during the pre-colonial era, there was no organizational management, rather there were family work, community work, and kingdom work

(Eze, 1995). The advent of the Europeans and the attendant commercial activities gradually uttered this picture (Inyang, 2008).

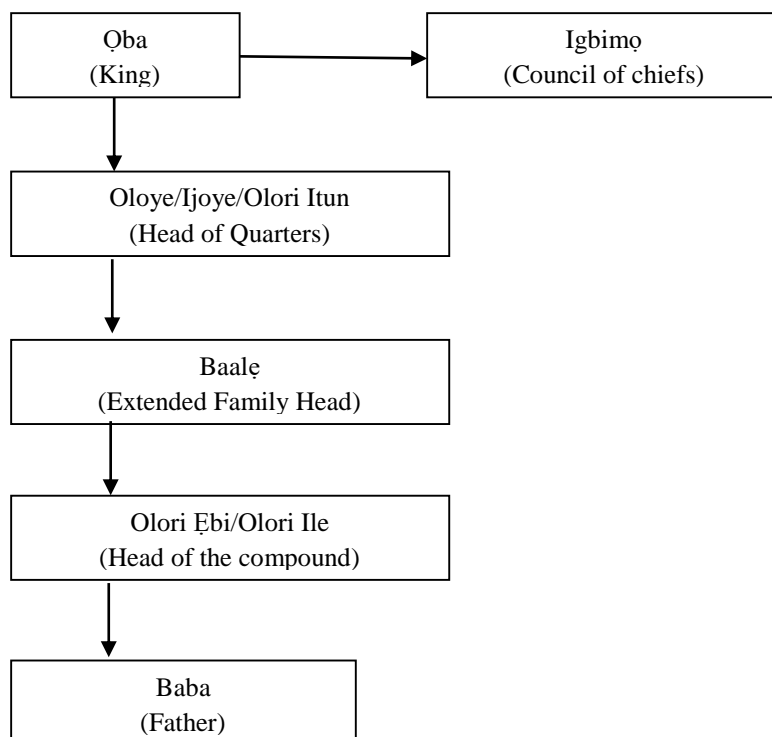
The Yoruba kingdom of Southwestern Nigeria was one of the most invisible cultural entities of pre-colonial Africa. It was indeed the dominant politico-administrative cum cultural entity in the whole of the Southern part of the country (Curtin, 1995). According to Adegbamigbe and Nofiu (2013), Yoruba land had a well-established administrative system before the advent of the Europeans that colonized and subsequently supplanted their system in the region in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Traditionally, the Yorubas discuss and record their history and experiences through stories which are passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth known as *Itan*. Historical and mythical legends, fables, poetry, folks tales are very important. The people who preserved cultural memory were known as *Arokin*. They were functionaries, official historians who performed as poets and drummers. The Yoruba management philosophy is a narrative philosophy which is reflected in the core values of Yoruba culture as pointed out in the *Itan*. Africans inclusive Nigerians gave serious thought to effective management for achieving organizational and state goals. The Nigerian culture similar to African culture stresses the following values: extended family or relationship, co-prosperity, age grade system, competition, respect for tradition, hero-worship, consensus (Ifechukwu, 1994). Thus, in the view of Osuntokun (Osuntokun, 2001), Africans, for example, have been skillful managers and have a systematic approach based on historical and practical experience to move from the real to the ideal. However, the application or practice of these core values enjoys illustrations among the major Nigerian tribal groups of Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa/Fulani (Oghojafor, et al., 2012).

Thus, the Yorubas has existed in her own unique ways and unique cultures and managed their environment subsistently throughout history. There is no doubts as pointed out by Fashoyin (2005) that management in Africa (Yoruba inclusive) is strongly embeded in cultural beliefs and traditions. Pre-colonial Yoruba societies were kingdom based. Among the Yoruba, the act of organizing society is called *Ijoba* which literally means rulership. The structure of government (kingdom work) was however, the same throughout (Curtin, 1995). Although, within the Yoruba county' there were several states that existed during the pre-colonial period, each of these states or kingdoms had centralized political and social organization with wide geographical limits (Raji & Abejide, 2013).

This Yoruba pre-colonial societies were kingdom based and each of the kingdoms consists of a central town, provinces and several villages. The kingdom work (*Ijoba*) of the Yoruba People was stratified into hierarchical units each under the jurisdiction of an appropriate ruler.





**Fig.1: Hierarchical Structure of the Yoruba Traditional (Kingdom) System.**

**Adapted from Onadeko (2008)**

At the apex of the pyramid is the *Ọba* who is considered first among equals and head of the administration. The title the *Ọba* (king) in Yorubaland is known as *Ọoni* in *Ifẹ*, *Alaafin* in old *Oyo*, *Awujale* in *Ijebu*land, and *Alake* in *Egbaland*. He was supported by a council of chiefs known as *Igbimọ* which had specific names, in different Yoruba kingdoms, for example *Oyomesi* in old *Oyo*, *Ilamuren/Imule* in *Ijebu Ode*, *Ogboni* in *Egba*, and *Osugbo/Iwarefa* in *Ifẹ*. Directly under the *Ọba* and *Igbimọ* is the Head of *Adugbo* (Quarter) known as the *Oloye/Ijoye* or *Olori itun* whose appointment was ratified and approved by the *Ọba*. Below this stratum was the *Agbo ile* (extended family compound), headed by the *Baale* (head of the extended family). This is closely followed by the head of each compound called *Olori ẹbi/Olori ile*. The lowest unit was the individual nuclear home headed by *Baba* (father). Since the family was the basic unit of the kingdom, it expedient to recognize it as the fundamental unit of the kingdom's administration. Each of these stratification is interconnected with each other and have their respective internal administrations. The choice of the *Baale* and the *Olori ẹbi* is mostly based on age and prominence in the ancestral tree of the village or compound, and each has a member of royal families among which the *Oba* is chosen (Salami, 2006; Onadeko, 2008; Sunmi, 2010, Adegbami & Nofiu, 2013).

The Yoruba traditional system allowed the *Ọba* to exercise direct control while allowing heads of kinship groups to govern their wards. The administration of a province was an indirect control to allow local authorities a say and minimize tension with the central authority. These kingdoms believed in and practiced the *Ẹbi* system of administration. Under this system, a kingdom was regarded as a larger version of family (Akinjogbin, 1966). The *Ẹbi* system made all the towns part of the same big Yoruba family.

### 3.0 Methodology

The study area is the Yorubaland in the South-Western part of Nigeria which consists of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states. Ontologically, this paper is a qualitative research design work based on literature review. The paper has employed a qualitative approach using narratives that lean towards the interpretive approach which presupposes that a researcher being part of the object of study cannot be value neutral. Interpretivist approach seeks to appreciate issues through observation and in – depth interviews, unlike the positivists who assume the existence of objective reality and facts which is examined through verifiable research methods (Rieder, 1985). As pointed out, interpretivists try to understand phenomena as described by participants rather than testing through scientific standards of verification (Roth & Metha, 2002).

The study relied primarily on secondary information sources gathered by the authors through in-depth review of literatures. The use of secondary information sources was primarily to collate historical information recorded by others (Adegboye, 2013). Although, a limitation of this is that the original research was conducted for purposes other than for the current researchers' purpose, however it is an essential line of inquiry in qualitative research (Harris, 2001). Moreover, secondary data do not require access to respondents or subjects making it a less expensive mode of research (Ember & Levinson, 1991).

Thus, this study is a product of structured survey of 73 articles (1961 to 2014), covering books and business and social science publications. The comparative analysis technique was used to analyzed the information gathered from the study.

### 4.0 Results and Findings

A look at the Administrative school of thought approach in management revealed that this approach is not totally alien to African culture and the Yoruba culture specifically. The Administrative school of thought sees organization as being managed by a manager, while the Yoruba traditional kingdom system sees the society (a form of organization) being managed by the Oba (who in today's management would be referred to as a manager). Furthermore, those who assisted the Oba in the kingdom work would be likened to employees in present day organizational setting. The employees in the present-day organisation are remunerated using salaries and wages, while in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system those who assists the Oba are remunerated using *Eṣakọlẹ* (food basket and cowries). The findings from this study when comparison is made between the Yoruba traditional kingdom and Fayol's Administrative school of thought bringing the 14 principles of management into perspective revealed the following:

#### 4.1 Division of Labour

Another key feature of an organization, designed by Administrative management theory, is a clear division of labour between the organization's departments. This feature is apparently evident in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system. The Oba is in charge of everything and all decisions are made by or in his name. However, the Oba shares power with certain individuals, groups, and institutions for the smooth administration and stability of the society. The *Igbimọ* who represent the principal non-royal lineages to which a Yoruba community was divided has supervisory authority over lesser communities or divisions of the main town. Members of this group act as the chief spokesmen and middlemen between the palace and the people.

Also, the *Olori itun*, *Baale*, *Olori ebi* and *Baba* all performed similar functions in this regard. They also see to the general welfare of the members under their jurisdiction and performing functions such as settlement of disputes.

The *Ogbonis* are to maintain law and order in the society, while the Guild system are responsible for co-ordinating the varied economic processes or practices. The *Arẹ Ọna Kaka-nfo* is the overall leader of the *Ẹsọ* (warriors) and was expected to defend the city and win all his wars. Furthermore, the pre-colonial administrative process involved the youth, and the elders, male and female, in the running of the Yoruba society, each with its own peculiar tasks.

#### **4.2 Delegation of Power and Authority**

Authority refers to the right to give orders and the power to extract obedience. Fayol suggests that authority and responsibility are related with the latter arising from the former. However, organizations should enact controls to prevent managers from abusing their authority. The *Ọba* in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system is regarded as divine in consequence of his scepter which derived from the divinity to whom he is vice-regent (Idowu, 1995). *Ọba alaṣẹ ekeji Orisa* (holders of authority, the second-in command to the supernatural being) and *Kabiyesi*, an expression which is a contracted form of the sentence *ki a bi nyin ko si* (there is no question of anybody querying your authority or action) are expressions use in Yorubaland that shows the authority of the *Ọba*. Thus, the Yoruba adage *Ti Ọba laṣẹ* that is the king has the authority. He is also addressed as *Ọbatoba lori Ohun gbogbo* that is king reigns over everything in his domain. He is in charge of everything. Nevertheless, there are checks and balances in the administration of Yoruba community. The *Ọba*'s power are constantly checked by the council of chiefs known as *Igbimọ* who are also put in check by the *Ogbonis*. The administrative structure prevented the *Ọba* and other heads in the hierarchy from exercising absolute power as everyone -young and old, men and women- took part in the affair of the state.

#### **4.3 Discipline**

Clearly defined rules and procedures are needed at all organizational levels to ensure order and proper behaviour. Thus, discipline means a respect for the rules and regulations of the organization in Administrative school of thought. The pre-colonial constitution of Yoruba were not documented, however, the elders, family heads, chiefs, kings and the subjects within the community or town were aware of the do's and don'ts in their various environment and these unwritten rules and regulations were strictly adhered to as applied (Adegbamigbe & Nofiu, 2013). The proverbial word among the Yoruba is *Ilu ti o si ofin, ẹsọ osi*. That is a society with no law, has no punishment. Also, *ika ti oba ṣe loba nge*. that is the one that violates the law is the one that the king punishes. Punishments are meted out by the *Ogbonis* who are responsible for maintaining law and order in the society. Likewise, the civic duty of the chiefs of various grades in specific towns and villages were to enforce laws, for instance, *Ọlomode Ifẹ* (Ifẹ youths) in Ifẹ were the public enforcement officers. They had underground dungeons (*Gbẹrẹ*) where they kept offenders awaiting trial or execution (Buscom. 1969).

#### **4.4 Unity of Command**

This principle emphasizes that employees are to receive orders from one superior only. Fayol believed that if an employee reported to more than one manager, conflicts in instruction and confusion in authority could result. The Yoruba traditional kingdom system is structured in a way that every member on the hierarchy knows

who is his superior and who is his subordinate. Thus, Baba takes instructions from the Olori ẹbi who in turn receive instructions only from Baale. The Baale takes order from the Olori itun, who in turn is responsible to the Ijoye and to the Oba and in the other way, information is passed down from the king through the line of authority to the Baba at the bottom of the hierarchy. For instance, when there is conflict or dispute or grievances the Baba reports to the Olori ẹbi and where the issue could not be settled the matter is then taken up to a higher authority, which is the office of the Baale. Also, if the issue is still not resolved, it is taken to Olori itun to Ijoye and finally to the Oba who after due constitution with his Igbimọs has the final say in the matter.

#### **4.5 Unity of Direction**

This principle stipulates that similar activities which are directed toward a singular goal should be grouped together under one manager. This is similar to the *Egbẹ Ibile* (guild system) in the Yoruba traditional system. The *Egbẹ* process was a coordinated effort through which an organisation is authorized to have responsibility for the monitoring of activities of its members in order to ensure that production relation is smooth (Raji & Abejide, 2013). Majority of the guilds in pre-colonial Yoruba traditional system were organized on the basis of what they produced or manufactured, the services they render or their articles of trade. Examples are: *Egbẹ Alajapa* – guild of general traders, *Egbẹ alata*-guild of pepper sellers, *Egbẹ oniṣona*-guild of carvers, etc. They often had a leadership structure in its organization for example *Bale ahunso* for weavers; *Parakoyi* for the traders; *Bale agbe* or *aare agbe* for the farmers, *Araba* for the diviners; *Olori ode* for the hunters and *Ojugbade* for the blacksmiths, et cetera (Raji & Abejide, 2018). The *Egbẹ* (guild system) play important role in the development and growth of the economy of the Yoruba traditional system.

#### **4.6 Subordination of Individual Interests General Interest**

This principle by Fayol implied that the interest of one individual or one group should not prevail over the general good that is employees should surrender their personnel interest in favour of the general interest of the organisation (Cole, 2005). In essence, the primary concern of the individuals should be the growth and development of the organisation. The Yoruba human relation is guided by a sense of community. The Yoruba kingdoms believed and practiced the *Ebi* system of management (Akinjogbin, 1966). Under this system, a kingdom was regarded as a larger version of a family that is the thought pattern is based on the idea of a kingdom as a large family. The *Ebi* family system saw all the people and towns as part of the same big Yoruba family. Although, the Yoruba traditional system encourages use of initiative among its people, their individual interests are subjected to the overall good of the system as a result of the *Ebi* family system ideology. This is evident in the proverbial say that *ti Oba lase* that is the king has the final say.

#### **4.7 Remuneration**

According to Fayol compensation of work done should be common to both employees and employers that is both employees and the organisation should perceive compensation been fair and satisfactory. Thus, employers are encouraged to give employees incentives for successful efforts.

Thus, remuneration can be based on rewarding people through monetary means or with holding or supplying other tangible resources or intangible resources related to remuneration (Jackson, Amaechi & Yavuz, 2008). Most work in the Yoruba

traditional system were done on a cooperative basis, as pointed out by (Iwuji, 1968). and people of the same age group tended to work for themselves in turns. Consequently, remuneration was transacted mainly through barter and reciprocation through good gestures when required. However, those who assists the *Qba* are remunerated using *Iṣakolẹ* (food basket and cowries).

#### **4.8 Centralization**

This principle posits that authority should not be concentrated at the top of the chain of command. Fayol believed that the managers should retain the final responsibility but should at the same time give their subordinates enough authority to do the jobs properly. The Yoruba traditional system form of administration was concentrated around the *Qba* and the *Ijoye*. The system allowed the *Qba* to exercise direct control while allowing the *Ijoye*, *Olori itun*, *Baale* and *Olori ebi* to govern their various wards. Thus, each of the stratifications in the hierarchy is interconnected with one another with respective internal governments (Salami, 2006). Hence, the administration of a province (*adugbo*) was an indirect control to allow local authorities a say and minimize tension with the central authority.

#### **4.9 Scalar Chain**

Organization, according to this principle, should be design using a very formalized structure with clear lines of authority from the top down. Fayol referred to it as line of Authority or Hierarchical structure. Traditional Nigeria kingdoms are highly structured and hierarchical with wide spans of control and organized communal work forms (Iwuji, 1968). Hence, the social structure of the Yoruba people was stratified into hierarchical units (Olufayo & Jrgede, 2014). These units are under the jurisdiction of an appropriate chief. Thus, the Yoruba traditional kingdom system had a hierarchical administrative system which had at the apex of the pyramid the *Qba* supported by the *Igbimọ*, followed by *Oloye* or *Olori itun*, then by *Baale*, and closely followed by *Olori ebi*. At the bottom of the hierarchy is *Baba*, the head of the family. Every member knew who is superior and who is subordinate.

#### **4.10 Order**

By order Fayol meant a place for everything and everything in its place; that is human and material resources are coordinated in a way for them to be in the right place and at the right time (Dale, 1978). The Yoruba traditional system belief that *agba ki nwa loja ki ori omotuntun owọ* meaning that where good elders exist, there is orderliness. This orderliness is displayed in the co-ordination of human and material resources. For instance, seniority traditionally determined task allocation and resource distribution in the labour system of the household unit. They have specific time when they plant crops and harvest them, and no member of the society dare violate this timing without been properly punished. There are markets days when goods are brought for sales. A typical example of order can be seen among the *Mogan* people where due to malnourishment during the dry season, the *Mogan* pond catfishes are reduced in quantity. The *Baale* who is the *agba* (elder) would declare the village *ipeja* (fishing) day for the village men and youths to be at the pond to capture most of the fishes. There was no one allowed to fish alone at the pond except on the day of *ipeja* and the proceeds are shared among members of the village through the head of the households.

#### **4.11 Equity**

Fayol (1961) noted that all organizational members are entitled to be treated with justice and respect. The Yoruba traditional system belief that *ibiko yatọ, bi a se bi eru*

*ni abi omọ* literally meaning there is no difference in childbirth, the way a slave is born is the way a son is born too. This depicts equity among members of the system. Also, it is a common adage in Yoruba that *agbọ ejọ enikan da, agba oshika ni* (meaning he who gives judgment without listening to the other side of a case is an unjust elder). Also, Olufayo and Jegede (2014) noted that the Yoruba traditional recognized the worth of every member of the community and also bearing in mind that every member of the society has a role to play in the society no matter how small or irrespective of the social class and status. Even, in the hierarchical structure, one of the most important duties of the family head (the elders inclusive) is to ensure that every member's opinion was heard and also ensure that every member was encouraged to express his/her opinion. This principle is evident even at the highest level, which is the palace, leadership at the family compounds was treated as a very important level of authority.

#### **4.12 Stability of Tenure of Personnel**

Successful organizations need a stable work force. The principle encourages long-term commitment of employees to the organization as a result of its management practices. This principle of Administrative school was also present in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system. The office of an Oba is hereditary and patrilineal and so were the *Igbimọs* and *Oloye*. The appointment of the *Olori itun* is ratified and approved by the Oba. Inherent in the concept of lineage structure is the system of seniority. The selection of who takes up these various levels is done through democratic means. The selection of the *Baalẹ* and the *Olori ẹbi* is mostly based on age and prominence in the ancestral tree of the village or compound (Salami, 2006). Thus, the most senior person is appointed as the *Baalẹ* and the *Olori ẹbi*. This work force that assists the Oba in the kingdom work are not removed arbitrarily except in violation of the *Ofin* (law) of the land or misuse of their office rights. They held the office until they died and thus encouraging stable workforce and long-term commitment to the kingdom work and the society at large.

#### **4.13 Initiative**

This principle stipulates that within the limits of authority and initiative, all levels of staff should be encouraged to show initiative (Dale, 1978). It entails that employees should be encouraged to develop and carry out plans for improvement. It has been pointed out that the Yoruba traditional kingdom system recognised the people's right and freedoms (Salami, 2006). The system accommodated the participation of both the rulers and the ruled. It encourages the use of initiative among its people. Furthermore, individuals who excelled in one way or the other are rewarded by the Oba through the title system known as *Oye* in Yoruba land such as *Majẹ ko ba jẹ ilu* (preserver of the society), *Gbọba niyi* (one who enhances the king's honour), *Ogbeni oja* (head of trader or market). These titles are used as a benchmark for measuring the individual's contribution to, and success in the community. Also, they are meant to motivate the young to aspire to greater heights.

#### **4.14 Esprit de Corps**

Managers, according to this principle, are to foster and maintain teamwork, team spirit, and a sense of unity and togetherness among employees. Thus, managers should encourage the development of shared feelings of comradeship, enthusiasm, or devotion to a common cause. The aim is to encourage the development of a strong sense of morale and unity among workers that facilitate coordination of efforts. The Yoruba traditional system emphasised these principles as propagated in the adage

*agbajọ wọ la fin soya, ajeji ọwọ kan ko gberu do ri* meaning it is through collectivity that we can achieve a thing. It pointed out that *isọkan ni agbara* (unity is strength) and thus build team spirit among its people. The Yoruba traditional kingdom system not only promotes team spirit, it also encourages promotion of team formation known as *Egbẹ* (age grade system). Common in the Yoruba traditional system is *Aaro* (group-labour-by-turn) a non-group and loose labour type where people agree to assist, and to work for each other on trust, and by terms. Youths that are within the age bracket of 20 to 35 years in the village or community take turn to work for each other without monetary gains. Another type of labour system which is similar to *Aaro* in purpose and function but differs in its structure is *Qwẹ*. *Qwẹ* is like a club or association formed by people of the same age group members when the need arises. Under this system, members are summoned, or notified by the group leader the nature of the task, the time, and the date. This showed that the principle of Esprit de Corps has been in practice in the Yoruba traditional system before the popularization of this management principle by the Western culture.

#### **4.15 Management Functions and Decision Making**

Fayol identified the functions of administration as to plan, organize, command, coordinate and control (Dale, 1978). These functions are clearly seen in the Yoruba traditional system. The administrative style of pre-colonial Yoruba traditional kingdom was centered around the *Qba* and the *Ijoye*, however, the *Qba* remained the overall head (Adegami & Nofiu, 2013). They are responsible for conceiving, planning, implementing and managing the community's development project like building public infrastructure, king's palace, markets, and general maintenance of all the projects within the town. They meet at the palace to deliberate on a regular basis matters affecting the community such as security, diplomacy, boundary adjustment between villages, preparation for yearly festivals, payment and remittance of taxes (including levies, tribute and gifts) to generate a public treasury, filling of vacant stools et cetera. They plan for the festivals on a yearly basis and the planting season. Committees (at times Adhoc) with terms of reference were always set up to work on execution of the plans and sometimes look into matters with a view to finding a solution. Decision making and settling of disputes in the Yoruba traditional system is hierarchical in nature and starts from the nuclear family to *Olori ẹbi*, to *Baalẹ*, to *Olori itun*, and finally to the *Qba*. This is similar to an organization in which decision making goes through different levels of management and finally to the board or top management as the highest making body of an organization under the administrative school of thought. Although the Yoruba traditional system encourages use of initiative among its people, their individual interests are subjected to the overall good of the system. This is evident in the proverbial say that *ti Qba lase* that is the king has the final say. Consequently, individuals who excelled in one way or the other are rewarded by the *Qba* through the title system known as *Oye* in Yoruba land such as *Majẹ ko ba jẹ ilu* (preserver of the society), *Gboba niyi* (one who enhances the king's honour), *Qgbeni oja* (head of trader or market). These titles are used as a benchmark for measuring the individual's contribution to, and success in the community. Also, they are meant to motivate the young to aspire to greater heights.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

Although, the Western management concepts and writings dominated the thinking of African academics and practitioners and the Yoruba land for decades; however, the

identification of management style in Africa and Yoruba land presented a sound basis and conditions for the nurturing of management principles, theories and practices that has similarity to the ones developed in the United States of America and Europe (Adeoti et al., 2013).

The period of colonial rule from 1885 to about 1951 in Nigeria saw the Yoruba people disconnected from their root. A lack of proper records in the pre-colonial era and with the view that indigenous knowledge was not relevant to modern management led to its serious study been neglected in the management literature (Mardsen, 1991). However, from the study, there are indications that are present in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system features of principles and practices of the Administrative school of thought. A significant feature of the Administrative school of thought present in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system is the formalized hierarchical administrative structure.

Similarly, principles and practices of division of labour, delegation of power and authority, stability of tenure, unity of command, unity of direction and centralization are all common features practised in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system. The principle of order is seen in the Yoruba traditional system belief that *agba ki nwa loja ki ori omọ tuntun wọ*, while principle of Equity is depicted in *ibi ko yatọ, bi aṣe bi ẹru ni a bi omọ* and *agbọ ẹjọ enikan da, agba oshi ka ni*. The principle of Espirit de Corps is clearly seen in *agbajọ wọ la fin sọya, ajeji ọwọ kan ko gbẹru do ri*

Furthermore, as management function and decision-making process lies in the hands of managers and top management in modern organizations, likewise the practice of planning, organizing, directing, controlling are carried out by the *Ọba* and his *Ijoye* the supposed managers of the Yoruba community. The final decision after proper consultation with the *Igbimọs* and *Oloyes* resides in the *Ọba* hence the adage *tọ Ọba laṣẹ* depicting decision making function in the administrative school of thought.

Thus, from the study, many of the important features of the Administrative school of thought can be located in the Yoruba traditional kingdom system. It can be affirmed that the Yoruba traditional kingdom system management model depicts a managerial style that shows a high similarity to the Administrative school of thought. Consequently, there is a need for integration of Yoruba traditional philosophy with the Western management school of thought in order to enhance best management practices that is people oriented.

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