

## **Administrative Principles, Processes And Practice: An Overview**

**Ugo Chuks OKOLIE**

*Department of Political Science  
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria  
E-mail: [ugookolie3@gmail.com](mailto:ugookolie3@gmail.com)*

**&**

**Aghogho Kelvin EMOGHENE**

*Delta State Institute of Continuing Education, Ughelli  
E-mail: [kemoghene@gmail.com](mailto:kemoghene@gmail.com)*

### **Abstract**

For all administrative activities to be purposeful and effective, they must be governed by some fundamental rules and regulations that help the administrator to determine what to do in a given problem situation. It is these fundamental rules and regulations that are normally referred to as “principles of administration”. For organization to achieve its set goals and objectives, administrators are required not only to deal with the traditional concerns of administration and management, policy development and service delivery but increasingly, the job of administrators in contemporary times will be that of fostering citizenship and identifying, creating and managing public values by applying administrative principles and processes. Therefore, an overview of administrative principles, processes and practice is the objective of this paper. This paper adopted qualitative research design and draws its argument basically from secondary data which include journal articles, textbooks and internet sources. Finally, the paper concludes that organization will grow from strength to strength if administrators will stick strictly to the general goals and objectives of the organization through the implementation of the 29 administrative principles

**Keywords : Administrative Principles, Processes And Practice**

**JEL Classification : M1**

### **Introduction**

The term ‘management’ is the art of getting things done through the effort of other people (human aspect point of view). It could also be view as the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling of organizational resources to achieve set goals (management functions point of view). Administration on the other

hand, is the implementation of organizational policies already formulated by top management in order to achieve set goals.

Administrative management is derive from administrative principles and processes which define what good governance entails in practice and it also feature a monitoring framework enabling regular analysis of the

progress made in applying the principles and processes and setting country or state or organization benchmarks. However, in each state, the government's attention to administrative principles may vary depending on the governance structure, the administrative culture, the key state-specific challenges and the previous reform records. As a benchmark of good governance, administrative principles and processes enables a state or states of the federation to reach an adequate level of professionalism, sustainability and quality of public service in all parts of its administration and provide better services to the citizenry. Thus, an overview of administrative principles, processes and practice is the objective of this paper.

#### **Methodology**

This paper adopted qualitative research design and draws its argument basically from secondary data which include journal articles, textbooks and internet sources. The technique of content analysis was applied to analyze the data collected which helped us to make interpretations coherently.

#### **Administration: A Critical Look**

According to Wilson (1887), administration is the most obvious part of government; it is government in action; the operative and the most viable side of the government. Administration is the organization and direction of human and material resources to achieve ends. The art of administration is the direction, coordination and control of many persons to achieve some purpose or objective (Pfiffner & Presthus, 1967). Similarly, Nigro (1970) defined administration as the organization and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose. In the view of Adiar (1968),

administration is a long and slightly pompous word, but it has a humble meaning, for it means to care for or look after people, to manage affairs and it is determined action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose. Hollander (1964) sees administration as a type of cooperative human effort that has a high degree of rationality. In the context of this paper, administration signifies the organization, personnel, practices and procedures essential for effective performance of civilian functions entrusted to the executive branch of government.

The term 'administration' may be employed in Political Science in two senses. In its broader sense, it denotes the work involved in the actual conduct of governmental affairs, regardless of the particular branch of government concerned. It is, thus, quite proper to speak of the administration of the legislative branch of the government, the administration of justice or judicial affairs or the administration of executive branch as well as the administration of the affairs or the administration of the executive branch as well as the administration of the affairs of the administrative branch of the government, or the conduct of the affairs of the government generally. In its narrow sense, it denotes the operation of the administrative branch only. However, Wilson (1887) noted that it was more difficult to organize administration in a democracy than in a monarchy. Wilson strongly believed that unless a nation or state stops thinking with the constitution, it will be very difficult to concentrate on administration. In illustrating this point, he says that the broad plans of governmental action which are based on constitution are

not administrative, though the details execution of such plans is administrative. The distinction according to him is between general plans and administrative means.

To Wilson (1887), the objectives of administration is to discover what government can properly and successfully do and how it can do these things with the utmost possible efficiency and the least possible, either in terms of money or of energy. Another objective is to rescue the execution methods from the cost lines and confusion of empirical experiment and place them upon foundations laid deep on stable principles. This informed why Adebayo (1986) affirmed that the concept of good administration includes components such as reliability, predictability, accountability and transparency as well as technical and managerial competence, organizational capacity, financial sustainability and citizen participation.

### **Administrative Management Principles**

The administrative management was the second perspective of the classical school of management thinking. In the early twentieth century when scientific management movement was developing, this perspective was also developing concurrently. The proponents of the administrative management movement derived much of their ideas from the writings of scientific management ideas. However, there is a distinction between scientific management and administrative approaches. For instance, administrative management perspective focused on how to implement organizational principles. On the other hand, scientific management ideas, as represented by Taylor's work,

focused mainly on the operative level of individual doing their work and ignored the larger top-level issues. The administrative management experts concentrated on upper - level administration and worked downwards on the organizational hierarchy. The administrative management experts looked for common or universal principles that characterized successful management. Finally, they dealt with the functions of management. Among the prominent proponents of the administrative management movement were Henri Fayol, Luth Gulick and Lyndall Urwick (Peretomode, 2012).

The scientific management movement of Taylor prescribed a set of principles to be followed for an organization to be effective and efficient. These are:

- i. Systematic scientific methods of measuring and managing individual work elements;
- ii. Scientific selection of personnel;
- iii. Financial incentives to obtain high performance of workers;
- iv. Specialization of function, namely establishing logical divisions within work roles and responsibilities between workers and management.

Henri Fayol (1814 - 1925): Henri Fayol was a French geologist and a mining engineer, an industry executive and a writer and teacher of administration. He was one of the most distinguished figures that contributed to the administrative management movement. He saw Taylor's work as complementary to his own field. Due to his tremendous works in the administrative management movement, he

has been popularly referred to as the 'father' of what has come to be called the Administrative principles or methods in organization. Fayol was the first to present a breakdown of the functions of management in five broad areas, which he listed as planning or forecasting, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling (POCCC).

**Planning:** Refers to the activity that forecast the future and deciding today what shall be done in the future as regards the direction of the organization depending on occurrence of certain events.

**Organizing:** Is the process of establishing the organization's structure of authority, dividing work into units and allocating these units to people and departments, and building up both human and material resources of the organization.

**Commanding:** It means directing or issuing instructions to subordinates and making the staff does their work so that target can be met. This is an aspect of leadership and effective communication.

**Coordinating:** It refers to all efforts needed to unite, harmonize and correlate all activities of the organization in order to achieve a common goal or objective.

**Controlling:** It means ensuring that everything is done in accordance with established rules and regulations, "monitoring activity to ensure that set targets were met and taking remedial action to deal with divergences of actual from target performance" (Bennett, 1989:75 cited in Peretomode, 2012).

As a sequel to his wealth of experience and series of research endeavours, in 1916 Henru Fayol published the 14 principles of management which later appeared in his book *Administration Industrielle et Generale* in 1917 (Fayol, 1917). Management researchers over the years opine that the '14 principle management propounded by Fayol is what metamorphosed into present-day - management and administration, especially after 1949 when his book was translated from French to English, as *General and Industrial Administration* (Rodrigues, 2001; Wren, Bedeian & Breeze, 2002). It is believed also that every organization on the globe today is influenced by Fayol's principles of management given their applicability to burgeoning administrative formation without which there will be no organization - as a group of people pursuing a collective goal. The principles have had substantial impact on management operations in virtually all kinds of organizations. It is pertinent to observe that Henri Fayol's system of classification is still utilized today in most organizations that are set to achieve desirable result. Henri Fayol also believed in the universality of certain principles of administration. He was among the first to formulate a universal list of good management principles as a guide to management actions. These principles focused mainly on the administrative aspect of organization.

**Division of Work:** This means that jobs should be broken down into small parts and individuals are to work on only a limited number of parts. Specialization of labour result in increased productivity and

permits large-scale production at minimum cost. In other words, Organization's work should be divided and subdivided into smaller feasible parts and work should be assigned to workers based on their areas of specializations.

**Parity of Authority and Responsibility:** When job is assigned to subordinates, there must be correspondence authority to effectively carry it out. Therefore, responsibility should not be difficult than authority. There should be a linkage of authority and responsibility, so that the supervisor possesses authority needed to carry out his/her duties effectively. That is, each worker should be given a sufficient authority to carry out his or her assigned job responsibilities. Authority can be delegated but responsibilities cannot be delegated.

**Discipline:** Objectives, rules, regulations, policies and procedures must be obeyed by each member of the organization. There must be penalties for disobedience or indiscipline. Discipline is important because no organization can perform or work well without discipline, preferably self-discipline (Skelekar, 1984). However, the internal disciplinary system should be fair.

**Unity of Command:** An employee should receive orders, instructions from and in return be accountable to only one person. The purpose is to avoid confusion, conflict or indiscipline (i.e., one person, one boss).

**Unity of Direction:** Each group of activities with the same goal should be managed under one head and one plan. All members of an organization must work together to accomplish common objectives.

**Subordination of Individual Interest to the Common Goal:** This principle states that the overall objectives of the organization is to seek to achieve take precedence over the objectives of individuals. In other words, the interest of one employee or group of employees should not prevail over those of the entire organization.

**Remuneration:** It should be fair and as far as possible affords satisfaction to both personnel and organization. Remuneration should be reutilized so that unreasonable overpayment is avoided. The compensation of all workers for services rendered should be based on a systematic attempt to reward good performance.

**Centralization:** There must be a good balance between centralization and decentralization of authority and power. Extreme centralization and decentralization must be avoided.

**Scalar Chain:** Scalar denotes steps. The hierarchy from top to bottom defining the line of command and all communication flow must be practiced.

**Order:** This principle states that materials and people should be in the right place at the right time in order to avoid disorder or confusion.

**Equity:** It refers to justice, fairness and kindness. The use of established rules must be tempered by a sense of kindness and justice to all persons.

**Stability of Tenure of Personnel:** Employees and managers must have job security in terms of income and employment. This is to ensure a stable group and long-term committed employees.

**Initiative:** Creative thinking and the capacity to take initiative should be encouraged at all levels of the organization within the limits of each worker's delegated authority and defined jobs.

**Esprit de corps:** Fayol defined esprit de corps in terms of harmony, belongingness and unity of efforts among workers because 'Union is strength'. Every member of the organization should work as team to achieve results. This is because promoting team spirit will give the organization a sense of unity.

According to Urwick (1947) other administrative principles include:

**Delegation:** To avoid excess workload, it is advisable that supervisors or superiors transfers some of their duties coupled with authority to subordinates to carry out. Delegation ease top management headache that they could have encountered. Excess workload sometimes can kill due to excessive stress.

**Forecasting:** Organizations grow ahead when there is proper looking at the future, the possible ways of solving establishment issues

**Investigation:** Issues in education have to be looked into thoroughly before action is expedited

**Appropriateness:** Issues have to be decided in the best ways that will favour the organization and individuals. This means that issues to be decided should be suitable to everybody that is affected.

**Leadership:** The process of carrying subordinates along to achieve results and

the willingness of subordinates to carry out instructions of the leader. This can be achieved through the leader himself, subordinates and situation the organization finds itself.

**Interpretative:** To avoid crisis in organizations, all matters concerning the organization should be well explained to all staff.

**Applicative:** Issues in the organization should be used to solve problems. Good management issues should be applied to solve problems.

**Appropriate Staffing:** Organizations need qualified and quantitative staff to handle organization matters.

**Selection and Placement of Staff:** In the organization, section should be based on merit, for the pool of applicants, the best should be picked. Staff should be assigned to duties based on their degree of expertise.

**Rewards and Sanctions:** When staffs are doing well in organizations, they should be given some encouragements; this can be done through praise, promotion, induction or any other positive incentives. Sanctions are to be given to those who break organizational rules and regulations. For example, revealing official information to the public without the consent of the supervisor is a grievous offence.

**Coordination.** This has to do with the ability of the supervisor to carry the subordinate along to achieve effective and efficient results. Coordination must go with good communication.

**Command.** Authority flows from top management to lower management. It is expected that there must be total compliance from subordinates with feedback to achieve organizational results

**Exception Principle.** Only important issues should be handled by subordinates.

**Determination:** Organizations should ensure that everybody should work assiduously to achieve group result. Determination gives higher zeal to every staff.

**Orientation and Induction:** Orientation is the training given to staff who is newly employed in an organization. Induction has to do with work details training given to newly employed staff. Orientation deals with the rules and regulations while induction will help the employee to familiarize with the working tools of the organization.

### Administrative Processes and Practices

Ibodje (1999) has viewed administration as that part of the government process concerned with the institution and the carrying out of procedures by which the programme of an organization is laid and communicated. Thus, administrative processes imply the fragmented or polymorphic nature of the activities or procedures aimed at goal attainment. That is, for set goals to be achieved there must be systematized order in the process of administration. Since administration is not an end in itself and cannot exist in a vacuum (Cloete, 1985 cited in Marume, 2016), we must put the administrative process into relative perspective in the environment in which the processes take place. For example, when a problem or need exists, it is necessary to identify the problem or need as well as to conceptualize the factors affecting the problem or need, and to draw up a programme of action. Once the necessary action has been taken, the result is measured by the identified problem or goal as shown in the figure below.

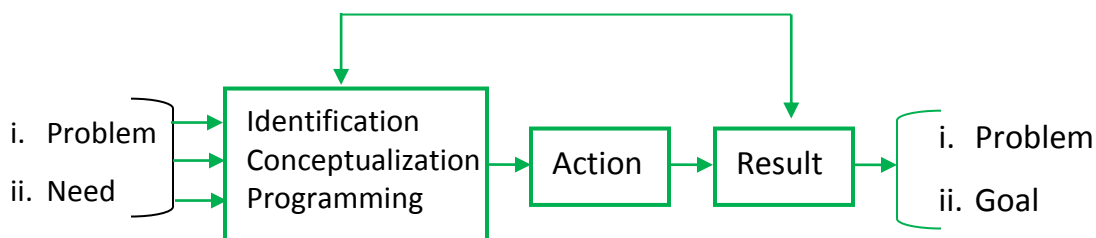


Fig 1: Administrative processes of simplified system for goal realization

Source: Marumee (2016), Administrative process.

Administrative processes can also be described as a number of related activities that need to be performed in public institutions. While administrative practices refer to methods and procedure that are designed to make it possible for administrators to carry out their daily

work. These methods and procedures are not law, but they are derived from a combination of the many agreed authorizations the institution gives to the administrators to do their work. Methods and procedures are usually put in writing in the form of manuals or managerial policies

and need to be revised regularly to ensure improvement and control. Thus, economy, efficiency and effectiveness are the pillars of not only financial administration, but also administrative practices as incorporated into methods and procedures (Sharkansy, 1995).

In Nigeria, the quest to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service has always worried successive civil and military governments. This is because the civil service has consistently been blamed for poor performance and for its inability to bring government policies and programmes to success. For the administration to function effectively it must be guided by the following considerations.

That administration should be unitary - an individual in the administration receives orders from one source. And the objectives to be achieved must be clearly defined. Lack of uniformity in the rule, in the standards, in the procedures and in the objectives breed's conflicts.

There should also be a simple system surveillance and control, governing everybody in the administration. While all information should be collected from a single source to avoid dual command.

The norms enforced by the administration must be uniform. And even if the administration system is unitary, the objective of the various units may not necessarily be different.

Objectives must be implemented. That is, from the beginning the design of the activities must be towards the implementation of the objectives. Thus, the activities of an organization should be

designed in such a way that it facilitates the realization of objectives of the organization.

There should be perfect compliance to the objectives and to the rules or norms governing the organization. And this reinforces the belief s that as individuals joins an organization, they are expected to sacrifice their personal values and beliefs and stick to that of the organization. When that is achieved, a form of coordination could be said to be achieved which is generally referred to as coordination through domination of an idea.

There should be adequate timing, sufficient resources, effective training methods, well designed information systems and clearly defined functions or roles and staff motivation.

However, it should be noted that the civil service enjoys a long time tradition of anonymity and political neutrality. And it was the instrument through which the government renders its service. Civil service is therefore endowed with adequate authority in order to enable it provides these services in accordance with the laid down rules and regulations. Notwithstanding, the way and manner these rules and regulations are applied by the administrators, more often than not create room for maladministration and ultimately inability to meet the laid down objectives. This concept, "maladministration", takes different forms:

- a. It could be in the form of pre-occupation with the protection of rules and regulations without bordering to match these rules and regulations with the very objectives



for which the civil service exists. That is to say, the mere application of rules and regulations does not necessarily mean to increase efficiency and productivity, as some of the rules may be obsolete and out of tune with the reality. If these types of rules are strictly adhered to, it could lead to maladministration.

- b. Another form of maladministration may be called 'technical obstruction'. This is a situation where the administrator insistently searches for another rule even when that rule is obsolete to support his arguments against the subject matter or the administrative issue at hand.
- c. Yet another form of maladministration may be called 'dubious obstruction'. This is a situation when an officer tempers with documents in files, either by removal or alteration of some of the contents or simply hides the file to get missing temporarily or permanently. All these are forms of maladministration that happens out of malice or lack of skill and self-confidence for effective and prompt utilization of the administration. Some of these happen deliberately and some happen out of sheer ignorance or incompetence (Abah, 2017).

Generally, administrators with questionable integrity misused their administrative discretionary authority imposed on them and this necessarily calls for administrative control which one divided into two. These are internal and external administrative control devices.

The internal administrative control devices are in the form of the administrative norms, rules and regulations all of which regulates the administrative behaviour. They are internal because they are in-built in the organization. In the civil service, there are set up rules and regulations to guide the civil servants in their behaviours. For example, Civil Service Commission's Rules, the Financial Instructions, e.t.c. Also, another important internal administrative control device is auditing. In most cases the civil service books are audited. The external administrative control devices on the other hand came about largely due to the ineffectiveness or misuses of the internal administrative control devices. The external administrative control include the legislature, the judiciary, the political parties, the mass media, commission of inquiries, public opinions, administrative tribunals, adhoc committee and public complaints commissions.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

For all administrative activities to be purposeful and effective, they must be governed by some fundamental rules and regulations that help the administrator to determine what to do in a given problem situation. It is these fundamental rules and regulations that are normally referred to as "principles of administration". For organization to achieve its set goals and objectives, administrators are required not only to deal with the traditional concerns of administration and management, policy development and service delivery but increasingly, the job of administrators in contemporary times will be that of fostering citizenship and identifying, creating and managing public values by applying administrative principles and

processes. Thus, administrators should strive towards maximizing economy, efficiency and effectiveness using practices similar to those prevalent in the private sector. Their focus should be on what government can successful do and how it can succeed with maximum efficiency.

In conclusion, organization will grow from strength to strength if administrators will stick strictly to the general goals and objectives of the organization, through the implementation of the 29 administrative principles, namely, division of work, parity of authority and responsibility, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination of individual interest to the common goal, remuneration, centralization, scalar chain, order, equity, stability of personnel, initiative, esprit de corps, delegation, forecasting, investigation, appropriateness, leadership, interpretative, applicative, appropriate staffing, selection and placement of staff, rewards and sanctions, coordination, command, exception principle, determination, and orientation and induction. From the foregoing, the following recommendations were suggested for effective administrative practices:

- i. Organizations should establish and maintain effective communication patterns to disseminate vital information to all members when the need arises
- ii. Employees should strive to understand what the administrators wants them to do, this is the principle of clarity.

- iii. Employees should intensify effort to comply with the directives of the administrators.
- iv. Employees must reason that the directives help to keep to organizational objectives.
- v. Employees must reason that the directives are not contrary to their personal goals.
- vi. A steady supervision of staff should be regularly done to correct errors that deviate from plans.
- vii. There is need for training and retraining of employees in organization, to enable them familiarize with more administrative principles.
- viii. Punishment given to employees should be mild and not to witch-hunt employees due to political affiliations.

## References

- Abah, E.O. (2017). *Administrative and management principles, theories and practice*. A paper submitted to the Department of Political and Administrative Studies. Kampala International University, Uganda.
- Adair, J. (1968). *Training for leadership*. New York: MacDonald.
- Adebayo, A. (1986). *Principles and practice of public administration in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Hollander, E.P. (1964). *Leaders, groups and influence*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ibobje, S.W.E. (1999). *Elements of public administration*. Warri: Meka Triikka Nig. Co.
- Marume, S.B.M. (2016). Administrative process. *International Journal of Engineering Science Invention*, 5 (5), 44 - 49.
- Nigro, F.A. (1970). *Modern public administration*. New York: MacDonald.
- Peretomode, V.F. (2012). *Theories of management: Implications for educational administration*. Benin City: Justice JECO printing & publishing global.
- Pfiffner, J.M. & Presthus, R. (1967). *Public administration*. New York: The Ronald Pres Company.
- Rodrigues, C.A. (2001). Fayol's 14 principles of management then and now: A framework for managing today's organizations effectively. *Management Decision*, 39 (10), 880 - 889.
- Sharkansy, T. (1995). *Public administration, policy - making in government agencies*. Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Co.
- Urwick, L.F. (1947). *Dynamics administration*. London: Pitman Publication.
- Wilson, T.W. (1887). *The study of administration*. New York: Dorsey Press.
- Wren, D.A. Bedeian, A.G. & Breeze, J.D. (2002). The foundations of Henri Fayol's administrative theory. *Management Decision*. 40 (9), 906 - 918.