

# Celebrating the Incarnates of Ancient Cults: The Structure, Hierarchy and Management of the Egungun and Sangotimi Festivals of Ede Land

Dominic Fayenuwo; John Iwuh, Ph.D

Department of Theatre and Film Studies, Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.806165>

Received: 30 May 2024; Revised: 13 June 2024; Accepted: 18 June 2024; Published: 15 July 2024

## ABSTRACT

Modern corporate management styles appear to undermine the traditional but highly organized management system of indigenous African festivals. Despite lacking organized schools or training outfits, or profit oriented drive, traditional institutions such as the Egungun cults present in Yorubaland have survived through convention and long history of an ancient cult management system. However, little is known of its link and attachment to royalty on which the kingship, culture, and tradition of the people revolve. The Yoruba people are a major ethnic tribe domiciled in the western region of Nigeria, West Africa. This paper examines the Egungun and Sangotimi festivals of an ancient Yoruba town, Ede as performances, with an emphasis on the history, structure, hierarchy, and administration of the cyclic ritual, providing an action plan in terms of committee set-up, publicity and media coverage. The study adopted an empirical approach through personal interviews with heads of guilds, community leaders, members of royal descent, and library sources to assert that the modern celebration of Egugun festivals is based on the inherited ancient structure established by the people's ancestors and whose management approaches are in tandem with basic management principles.

**keywords:** traditional management, Yoruba land, indigenous festivals, cult system, festivities, management.

## INTRODUCTION

Many traditional managerial structures and practices have been abandoned, with limited attempts at repackaging, as a result of modernization, urbanization, and migration. There's a strong belief that the decline of some of these indigenous performances is directly related to the younger generation moving away from their place of birth or origin, in search of greener pastures. As a result, a group of people have been produced who are not well-versed in the advantages that indigenous performances offer for both cultural and national development. The communal and ritual significance of these indigenous performances have trumped their commercial possibilities over the ages. Financial management and funding methods have not gotten much attention, and their overall management patterns or functions have been neglected.

Through personal interviews with heads of guilds, community leaders, members of royal descents, and library sources, this study aims to assert that the modern celebration of Egugun and Sangotimi festivals of Ede, -an ancient Yoruba town,- as performances, with an emphasis on the history, structure, hierarchy, and administration of the cyclic ritual festivals, is based on the inherited ancient structure established by the people's ancestors and whose management approaches are in tandem with basic modern management principles.

Different scholars have made various attempts to enumerate the functions of management while discussions

from multiple schools of thought also gave birth to numerous ideas about the functions of management. Krishali (2020) opined that, “The chief reason for this lack of unanimity is that the different management experts discussed the management functions by studying different organizations and from different angles.” (p.1)

But perhaps the most widely accepted functions were those given by Koontz and O’Donnell (1972), in which they have classified management functions into five. They stated that “the most useful method of categorizing managerial functions is to group them around the activities of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling.” This also supports Williams Byrnes (2009) assertion that the fulfillment of the management functions shall determine if an enterprises goals are successful or not, regardless of the situation, “as without proper planning, good organization, creative leadership, and some control over the enterprise and its budget, the chance of success is greatly diminished.” (p.16)

These management functions encapsulate all the tenets of any management definition, regardless of the theory or school of thought one ascribed to, as each function leads to achieving organizational goals. Although this paper aligns itself with the modern theory of management, with its System and Contingency approach to work, other theories, like the Classical and Human resources theories also relies on these basic functions to get things done, no matter the circumstances. Notwithstanding the grandiosity of theories and frameworks, which has characterized the notion of management over the years, the concept of management has existed in its raw form over the centuries, especially in the area of indigenous performance.

It is evident from research and literatures, that indigenous performances from various ancient cultures and civilizations exhibits the contingency approach of the modern management theory, thousands of years before the theory was even postulated. The public gatherings connected to religious rites in these ancient communities served as the first instances of performance management. The priest “supervised” these performances, which were woven into the social fabric. The effect of the event was enhanced and heightened by the theatrical embellishments, such as costumes, dramatic settings, music, dance, etc. “However, these staged events did provide a model for organizing large-scale public gatherings.” (Bynes (2009) p.19)

Brockett and Hildy’s (2003) History of Theatre puts a spotlight on the Archon Eponymous, a principal magistrate in the Greek city of Athens, who supervised or managed the production of the state sponsored play festivals, while the choregoi, another state office reserved for rich citizens, provided the financial back up and support. These two offices, in collaboration with the playwrights who has a total artistic control over each performance, provided the management structure for the successful planning and execution of the Greek arena theatre festivals. (p.24)

Somewhat mirroring the Athenians, the Romans also organized state-sponsored arts festivals as a part of a yearly cycle of public activities. The performance for each community was organized and coordinated by the city magistrates. In their capacity as producers, the managers (domini) assemble the play and the actors to the festivals. With the help of the local magistrate’s money, these early managers put together all the components required for the production process. Oscar Brocket (2023) noted that as many as 100 days in a year were committed to the various theater festivals of ancient Rome, meaning that, it must have taken an excellent managerial skill to plan and execute these activities. Across the globe, indigenous forms of music, dance, and theater were being created, performed, and sustained by other cultures, especially in the African and Byzantium civilization, with India and China all having vibrant arts cultures. Byrnes (2009) opined that as there were various levels of state and private sponsorship, and the tasks needed to plan and coordinate arts events were almost the same across all cultures, the manager’s position was significantly distinguished (p.26).

Therefore, it is safe to say that before Nigeria’s colonization and the advent of Eurocentric forms of

management practices, its many societies have thrived with unique cultural and management principles which most times borders on communality, hard-work, clan loyalty and integrity (Olusoji (2022). The Yoruba ethnic society, which is the focus of this paper, Adeyori et al. (2017) opined that, the Yoruba clan has its own distinct cultural orientation that includes respect for elders, an emphasis on seniority in decision-making, views of the Obas' as the head of the overall community and the chief custodians of their local deities who are in a position of authority to make pronouncements, and anyone who violates such authority among its subject incurs the wrath of the gods( p.20)

This ever-fluid management practices draw on the contingency approach principle of modern management theory, which, according to Stoner et al. (2008), states that in the contingency theory, it is the responsibility of managers to determine, in a proactive and strategic manner, the most effective techniques for solving a problem under a specific circumstance. As a result, managers must respond to situations quickly because a principle that works for one circumstance might not work for another.

This dynamism is evident in the ways indigenous performance managers across the Yoruba ethnic community can sustain and preserve their performances amidst economic, environmental, and urbanization challenges. Giving credence to this fact, is Oghojafor et al's (2013) submission that, like the Yorubas, the indigenous management thoughts, concepts, and practices in Ndigbo (Igbo culture from Nigeria) are also similar to Western management practices of human relations, team, motivation, management functions and decision-making, which has contributed to the preservation of their cultural identity.

## **YORUBA PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TRADITIONS**

It is evident, therefore, that indigenous performance management traditions have existed through centuries and have helped civilizations and empires maintain their cultural identity, preserve their culture, and play a huge factor in smoothening the indigenous day-to-day activities of the people. This is because Indigenous Management incorporates those management principles, theories, and practices that 'recognize and accommodate' Africa's 'cultural, social, political, and environmental factors. The existence of one form of management or another has always been obvious in Indigenous cultures' and traditional communities' religions and festivals, according to other pieces of literature like Wren (1994) and Muo et al.(2012), which also highlight their ability to organize and govern themselves. Interestingly, these management traditions existed and were widely used hundreds of years before the discovery and documentation of what is considered the earliest form of management principles—classical scientific management theory.

Performances are an integral part of the African culture, as it permeates every facet of the indigenous African way of life. The intensity of the celebrations varies, and participation witnesses an uncontrolled energy limit. Individuals could take a quantum dose of the fun and express their fancy. Thomas Melone (1971) could be right then in his assertion, "A mere glance at African life is enough to convince one that it is eminently theatrical." (p.144) Most, if not all of these performances are symbolic and vital, with requisite management structure indigenously developed for effective organization and management to ensure continuity and stability. The presence of these indigenous management traditions strewn across the African continent perhaps informs Kiiza & Basheka's (2018) assertion that, before colonization and the influence of Western beliefs and methods, Africa, like any other continent, had benefited from indigenous management systems. They noted that "It is historically known that the people of Africa have enjoyed a wealth of indigenous knowledge in management practices... This knowledge draws inspiration from cultural values and core structures within the community." (pp.98,99)

In Nigeria's Yorubaland, some of these performances are managed by notable individuals or a particular family or clan, which have become a family heritage over centuries. Professional guilds such as the hunters' or fishermen's guilds also manage performances unique to their guilds and profession. Some performances are controlled by individual groups who, in other to protect the sanctity of the tradition and performance

entrusted to them, metamorphosed into a cult, and members must be initiated before they belong. These cults decide when and where the performances are done. They also have rules and determine succession methods, evolved detailed transition processes, and performances unique to it.

With the political structure of most Yoruba communities democratically set up, the leadership or administrative cadre comprises of community leaders, who also provides the management structure of each important indigenous performance for a particular community. As Yerima (2019) informs, the king is usually the natural head of the committee, with various High-Chiefs and community heads (called Baale) taking up logistics and administrative roles toward these performances when needed for the society's benefit.

These different administrative cadres, (generally referred to Oloye), draws on age long tested and trusted pool of knowledge, with yearly experience providing the much-needed managerial skills to organize and execute their entrusted performances. The officers within this indigenous management structure will do whatever it takes and employ whichever system necessary, -much like the contingency approach to modern management theory- in preserving and promoting the cultural identity entrusted to them, which they have done every year since their community's inception. Therefore, as Uzor et al. (2018) noted, Yoruba's indigenous management comprises of social concepts and methods that are present in the people's indigenous cultures and have been used by Africans in general to address the socioeconomic problems in their communities, as "this knowledge is invaluable to the processes of social organization, human resource management, resource allocation and individual motivation to meet societal goals." (p.5)

With these different traditional structures put in place, most indigenous performances withstood the test of time, growing into internationally acclaimed annual events that bring together people from all walks of life. Examples are the *Osun Osogbo* Festival, *Igue* Festival of Benin, Emirate *Durbar* of Kano, *Offala* festival of Onitsha, and others across Nigeria. Many indigenous performances across Nigeria have become prominent; some have died slowly or barely clinging to survival. The actual root cause of their extinction is yet to be thoroughly investigated and determined. There is still a need to interrogate these festivals' organizational structure to understand the management styles and why many have had little social relevance to excite the current technological age.

## MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND ORGANOGRAM OF EGUNGUN FESTIVAL

Just like in any other place in *Yorùbá* land, the *Egúngúns* are regarded as sacred, as they are ancestral spirits that occasionally descend from the metaphysical plain to dwell amid their children and partake in their earthly celebrations. Poynor (cited in Drewal(1978) explained that the "*Egúngún* (*egun, eegun, egigun, eigun*) refers to any masquerade or masked figure,...representing *Òrìsà* (gods), while others state that they are the "incarnated spirit of an ancestor.(p.18)". This explanation should not be confused with the Masquerades {*égún aláré*} that birthed the famous indigenous *Yorùbá* travelling theatre popularly known as the Alarinjo theatre. As history puts it, the Alarinjo was greatly influenced by the Ancient *Yorùbá* Masque performances administered by the *Òjè* family lineage.

The authenticity of the original art form from which the masque theatre developed has been debated over the centuries, as many have disputed its authenticity. It is still contested whether the male-dominated cult is guilty of deception or whether the *Egúngún* are supposed to be worshipped at all since they are not *Òrìsàs* (gods). Henry Drewal's (1978) conclusion seems to dispel all disputes, or at least, alleviate the tension by concluding that; The fact that both gods and ancestors are viewed as *ará orun*, or "beings from beyond," whose power and presence can be evoked by the living, seems to be more fundamental. These are some of the ideas reflected in the term *Egungun*, a conception of supernatural power.

According to legend, this indigenous art form of ancestor worship, or veneration took off from Katunga, old *Òyó*. It spread to all other parts of the world where the *Yorùbá* Race settled, possibly influencing other ethnic

groups, as different masquerade traditions can be found in almost all the over 250 diverse ethnic groups present in the country of Nigeria. It is then natural that Ede, a town which rose out of the trading settlements and outposts of Old *Óyó*, will harbour an abundance of *Egúngún* worship, celebrated yearly with an elaborate festival that brings together the whole town, especially those from the cult of ancestral worship, usually from the *Òjè* family lineage.

According to Prince Adewale Laoye (*Crown Prince of Ede-Land*. Personal Interview. 24 Apr. 2020), most of the masquerades that come out for performances during the *Egúngún* festival are pretty much modern masquerades, created by young men of the town who wants to join in the fun after they must have gone through strict regulations from the cult. However, there are still in existence Masquerades that are personifications of an ancestor, referred to as *éégún ñlá*, whose appearance and performances are very much celebrated in Ede. This is because, according to Biere (1958), “The *Yorùbás*, like most African tribes, worship their ancestors, as this worship is based on the firm belief that the spirit of a human being never dies and that it will continue to influence the community's life from another sphere.” (p.3).

Therefore, the worship and celebration of the *éégún ñlá* is usually cause for a huge festival that involves both nobles and commoners alike. The *Egúngún* festival is one of the four principal festivals in Ede that involves the political hierarchy from the king himself to the nobles, and commoners, right down to the youths and little kids, whom one can always find having a lot of fun as part of the Masquerade’s entourage.

According to Chief Adedeji (*The Sobalaju of Ede-land*. Personal Interview. 9 Jul.2020) -and directly supporting the theory that the *Egúngúns* are ancestral spirits, called *ará òrun* - some of the masquerades present in Ede belong to some of the past *Tìmi* that have reined in Ede, that is, the spirits of these past kings come back periodically to their kingdom in the form of masquerades.

A prime example of this phenomenon is the story, as told by Chief Adedeji, of a king who went to war for such a long period that rumours of his death at the battlefield began to filter into town. The people of Ede were left without a leader, and there were threats of invasions. The kingmakers decided not to wait for his return and therefore installed another *Tìmi* to fill the power vacuum. Unfortunately, the war-stranded king returned to town, found his throne occupied, and thereafter became a masquerade still being venerated yearly at the *Egúngún* festival.

A further search of this story brought to the fore an account of a similar tussle between two brothers. The story was about how *Tìmi Ikúbolájé* went to war against *Oníkòyí*, and then his brother, *Bámigbáiyé* was installed as *Tìmi*, because *Kúbolájé* was assumed to have died at the battle. This story was found in the account of Chief Olunlade, a Historian of Ede. He narrated that it was in the Tamo war that *Tìmi* Kubolaje sustained injuries, of which he died (Olunlade et al.(1961) p.15). As soon as Kubolaje's younger brother, called Bamgbaiye, learnt that his brother had died in the war, he put out the fire ‘of war that his brother had lighted.

This was a ritual; the fire lit whenever a ruler went to war and kept burning as long as he stayed away in battle. It was believed that: as long as the fire was burning, the ruler was sure to come back home. To prevent a ghost from coming back home, Bamgbaiye put out the fire and ordered that funeral rites and celebrations proceed. But on the eve night that these rites and ceremonies started, it was reported from the city gate that, Kubolaje was asking to be admitted into town. The janitors replied that their ruler was presumed dead, and funeral rites were in progress. Then the voice, Kubolaje's voice, ordered Bamgbaiye be summoned and proceeded to ask Bamgbaiye whether the fire of war" had been put out and was told it had. Then he turned away, But soon after, the guards reported that he was heard beating the state drum in the Ogboni Chamber.

Generally, the *Ògbóni* are a powerful secret society in *Yorùbá* land, and likewise, the state drum that’s usually beating during special rituals and ceremonies was naturally kept in their possession.

Therefore, a supposed dead king's spirit beating the state drum is an overwhelming development, which must have been met with swift action, including raising alters and performing rituals to mollify the situation. It wouldn't be far-fetched, therefore, that the spirit of *Timì* Kubolaje became one of the *éégún ñlá* being worshipped and revered in Ede Today.

*Áándu* is another *éégún ñlá* that takes centre stage during the *Egúngún* festival. This masquerade is a huge part of Ede's culture, and he's so revered to the extent he alone has the opportunity or the right to sit on the throne of the *Timì* whenever his performance tour takes him to the palace. Sitting on the king's stool denotes that *Áándu* is the spirit personification of royalty, and he's therefore treated with all honour meant for a king. It is wildly believed that *Áándu* is the masquerade carrying the spirit of one of the Prince of Ede from centuries ago, whose brother, the *Timì* loved so much to the extent of invoking and venerating his soul in the form of *Áándu*, the masquerade. This prince was said to be Prince *Mope* and was said to be the brother of the first king ever to rule in Ede.

As far as the masquerades belonging to the *Egúngún* cult go, *Gbájèèrò* is one of the most dreaded, and his outing is often looked upon with trepidation. This is because *Gbájèèrò* is the one usually called upon when an evil deed has been done in the community, and some people are suspected of witchcraft. His name literally means 'the hanger of witches'. He is believed to possess the power to spot witches or fish out any evildoer hiding among the people. This masquerade, *Gbájèèrò*, acts as a sort of policeman in the community and helps the people of Ede to curb crimes, spiritual attacks, and other forms of evil in their community. This type of indigenous policing is not unusual in Africa and Nigeria. Each ethnic group or culture usually has its form unique to the locality. For example, the *Zangbeto* of the *Egun/Badagry* people serves a similar function.

Another powerful masquerade in the *Egúngún* celebration of Ede is called *Òndòru*. This is a very fierce masquerade with equally fearsome attire. His trademark is a big Club that he usually carries around on his outings, which is believed to contain extraordinary powers. This is why when he is on the move, with so much power and energy oozing around him, the ordinary person of the town is always running helter-scamper. His followers, usually referred to as *Atónà-Eégún* are also carrying menacing whips and canes in their hands.

*Òndòru* is also revered and respected to the extent that he has a cordial rapport with the king during his yearly visits to the palace. It is no surprise, and also a great shock to many, to see the masquerade hitting the *Timì* with his club during one of their playful banter. This act also sends a clear message to the townsfolk, according to *Sàngó-Yemi's* Mother, that if *Òndòru* can beat the *Timì*, the ruler of the town, then who else can he not hit with his club? Hence the running around of passers-by whenever *Òndòru* is on the move with his Whip carrying followers to avoid a beating.

According to Prince Laoye, more than forty major Masquerades are present in Ede, with other numerous minor ones, usually referred to as modern/New masquerades adding colour, pomp, and spectacle to the *Egúngún* Festival. It is very unfortunate, however, that some of these masquerades have gone into extinction and their veneration either forgotten or neglected, due to the influx and widespread of foreign religions, with Islam and Christianity taking the lead. As noted by Prince Adewale Laoye, some of these traditions of Masquerade veneration phased out gradually from the community as a result of the fact that most parents or heads of family who are in charge of a particular masquerade did not educate their offspring's on the ways and duties of their family to such Masquerade, therefore, when such family head dies, there's no one qualified enough to pick up the mantle on tradition.

It is therefore not surprising that the *Egúngún* cult is filled with older men who are trying very hard to hold on to the thread of tradition while fighting battles on all sides with Religion, Modernization, Urbanization, etc., which has deprived the cult of having young and able-bodied initiates to pass on this unique form of the indigenous way of life. Other major masquerades in Ede town include; *Alapamoro*, *Eléfunlójú*, *Epéte*, *Tééré bi Abéré*, *Alápalà*, *Olúkòtún*, *Dàgboro Látéjú*, *Ribiríbí*, *Aresewosun*.

These masquerades can be seen performing at various venues during the *Egúngún* Festival, and each visiting family houses and relatives, who shower the masquerade with gifts, drinks, and other items. Before the start of the festival, the adherents and *Egúngún* cult members journey to *Igbó Ìgbàlè* (Sacred Groove), which is famed for being the abode of the ancestral spirits, to perform rituals and private ceremonies unique to each masquerade, for a successful outing, blessings for the family lineage, and of course, growth of the Town.

*Dàghoro Látéjú* is said to be an agile, energetic masquerade who is a very talented stuntman and very good at climbing things. Many town youths love to follow this masquerade around town, as they get entertained with daring jumps, backflips, climbing, and other various athletic feats from this masquerade. Helped by the drums and fuelled with intoxication from the praise chants, the performance display of *Dàghoro Látéjú* is indeed a sight to behold.

Masquerades (*Egúngún*) are believed to be ancestral spirits, and these spirits come from a particular lineage, clan, or family. In the *Yorùbá* tradition, communal living, or large gatherings of the extended family, is a default mode of living. Family compounds – large houses with many rooms- are prevalent. Each family compound is presided over by the *Báálé/Olorí Ebí*, usually the oldest male in the large family.

Therefore, the head of this masquerade family oversees all administrative decisions concerning their masquerade. Generally referred to as the *Elégún*, (owner of the masquerade), they or their kin are usually members of the *Egúngún* secret cult, and they preside over the rituals or ceremonies needed for the successful outing of their ancestor. For example, in the case of *Áándu*, one of the *éégún òlá* present in Ede, the *Timì* is the *Elégún*, (owner of the masquerade), who receives the masquerade at the palace every year.

According to Chief Adedeji, At the preparation of the festival, all the various *Elégún* come together in a meeting with the Jagun and his Lieutenants, along with the other members of the *Egúngún* cults, to determine the process and modalities that the year’s festival is going to take. This meeting is presided over by the *Baba Kekere*, who is like a deputy King, he represents the *Timì* on matters of state and other ceremonial duties.

According to Prince Adewale Laoye, the office of the *Baba Kekere* (small father) is usually chosen from the same family as that of the reigning *Timì*. He must be a prince of the ruling household and either be a younger brother, cousin, or uncle to the *Timì*. He enjoys certain administrative privileges befitting the deputy King of Ede. The decisions reached by this council concerning the modalities of this festival are then finally communicated to the *Timì*.



Figure 1: Organogram of Egungun Festival of Ede land?

The major financial implication for the *Egúngún* festival goes into the preparation of the sacred groove, the building, or repairs of the *Àgó*, (Masquerade costume), and provision of the ritual materials used in the opening and closing ritual ceremony. Since a masquerade often belongs to a particular family or lineage, such a family's cost of said preparations is covered by said family.

These funds can be obtained from a joint account, managed by the *Báálé/Olóri Ebí*. in which all male-born of the family are usually levied a particular amount of money every year or monthly, which is meant to be used for various purposes, like the repair of the family house, and maintenance of the family property, or heritage, which includes the veneration of the *Eégún*.

The family also gets donations and gifts from friends and well-wishers in the community, including food items, local drinks, and cash gifts. Each family unit in the usually large family is also levied items ranging from foodstuffs to beverages and other celebratory items used for the yearly festivals. Other miscellaneous expenses, including payments for the drummers that make up the orchestra during the performance tour, are taken care of through the cash collected during the performance. The drummers tend to outdo themselves in order to wow the audience and onlookers so that they can drop more money as tokens for a job well done.

## MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND ORGANOGRAM OF SANGOTIMI FESTIVAL

In Edeland, *SàngóTìmi* Festival, as its name suggests, is a royal festival and unquestionably one of Ede's four major annual celebrations. It is a celebration that draws devotees from Oyo, the devotion headquarters for *Sàngó*, as well as the kingdom that *Sàngó* ruled while he was the Alaafin of Oyo. Every year, worshipers troop to celebrate the *SàngóTìmi* festival from nearby towns and abroad. *Sàngó* is one of the main *Òrìsà* (deities) that make up the Yoruba pantheon, as it applies to various other indigenous religious traditions of the Yoruba people. According to some mythological accounts, he was one of the important *Òrìsà* sent by *Olódùmarè* on an expedition from heaven to Earth along with *Òrúnmilà*, *Èshù*, *Ògún*, *Obalúayé*, and several other principal *Òrìsàs*. The *SàngóTìmi* festival is often celebrated over two weeks, and the god *Sàngó* is revered throughout this time. Various spectacles, demonstrations, and manifestations of *Sàngó* are part of this celebration.

There are several subgroups in the cult of *Sàngó* worship that are identified through incarnations unique to sango as the originator. Traditionally, the *Tìmi*'s household and the palace, in general, have a *Sàngó*. Occasionally each group, supported by a specific family or an *Adósù-Sàngó* (Initiate), engages the cults and the community in a public display/performance on chosen days with the two weeks.

The management structure of the *Sàngó-Tìmi* festival is similar to other major festivals in Ede land. The festival does not just occur, several powerful consultative meetings take place in the weeks preceding of the festival, chaired by the *Tìmi* as the natural ceremonial head of all indigenous performance committee. All meetings are held together with the Council of Chiefs and the leadership of the *ÒrìsàSàngó* cult in Ede. According to Chief Adedeji, this meeting occurs at the beginning of the year in the main palace chamber.

As a result of the *Sàngó-Tìmi* festival being the king's festival, and therefore a critical festival unique to the history of Ede herself, the administration of this festival is shared by two significant offices which are very similar in name but way different and unique in purpose and functions. In the Yoruba phraseology, these two titles are both military and usually given to a war general. Technically therefore, one fights in the interest of the *Tìmi*, and the good of the town, while the other fights in the god's interest and the cult he leads. These offices are; *Jagun-Tìmi* and *Jagun -Sàngó*. These two offices both work in parallel and together to seamlessly bring about the successful execution of the *Sàngó-Tìmi* festival. The *Jagun-Tìmi* has some lieutenants that aid in carrying out duties. These lieutenants also play a significant role in the planning, preparation, and execution of the indigenous festivals and performances in Ede.



According to Chief Adedeji, the *Sóbalójú* of Edeland (a title for the third in command in the ranks of the lieutenants of *Jagun*) at the beginning of the month that was approved by the council meeting for the celebration of the festival, the Lieutenants of *Jagun* summons the leadership of the *Sàngó* cult to a meeting to agree on a date that will mark the beginning of the festival. Both management arms must agree to this date as preparations must be made from both quarters to execute the festival successfully. The choice of the dates (*Idajo-Sàngó*) -the main festival starts 25 days after- is marked with *Gbegiri* (an indigenous soup prepared from Beans) and *Eko*, with *Eran Agbo* (Ram), which are believed to be the favourite foods of the god *Sàngó*.

According to him, as the intermediaries between the different religious cults in Ede and the *Ìmì*, the lieutenants then communicate this agreed date to the king. His final word kick-starts the preparatory process. The cult, through *Jagun-Sàngó*, communicates their needs and demands to the lieutenants, who then, with their general, *Jagun-Ìmì* tables such requests before the king and his council for immediate intervention, all to ensure a seamless and hitch-free festival.

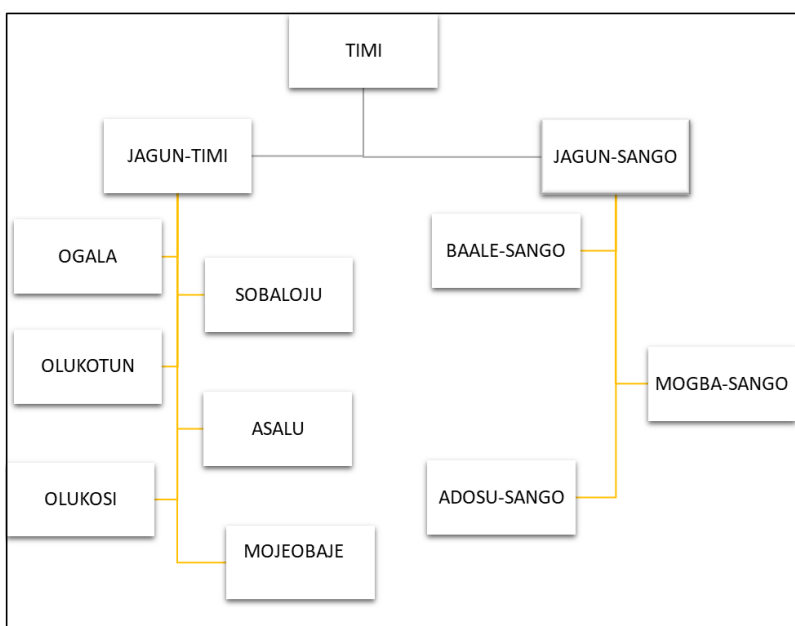


Figure 2: Organogram of *Sàngó-Ìmì* festival of Ede

A week before the start of the festival, as explained by Chief *Sóbalójú*, the *Jagun-Ìmì* calls on his lieutenants, together with emissaries from the King's Palace and men from the ruling houses called *Mógàjí*, to embark on a journey which has come to be popularly known as '*Oko Sàngó*'. This journey aims to visit all the farmlands belonging to the king of the town, which have been placed in the care of caretakers, or those that have been loaned or gifted to nobles in and around Ede's kingdom. They visit all these farmsteads to collect the '*Ìsákólè*,' which is the mandatory royalties, tributes and proceeds from the king's farm. In the old days, these royalties and tributes came in the form of farm produce, food items, livestock, enslaved people, and even young marriageable age ladies are sent to the capital as gifts to the *Ìmì* and other important nobles. However, as explained by the *Sóbalójú*, these royalties are monetized in this modern age. These caretakers must remit a certain amount to the royal emissaries on their yearly visits.

They also visit small settlements that are under the jurisdiction of the *Ìmì*. These settlements raise funds from market levies, and other taxes levied on the dwellers, no matter how little the population. These funds are then collated by the *Báálè*, who is the towns head, and a certain percentage of these levies must be remitted to the *Ìmì*, through the emissaries. Chief Adedeji says these annual take nothing less than three days. Even if they were able to round up due to fast transportation or cashless bank transfers, none of the lieutenants or other members of the royal emissaries must return to the palace or even loiter around the capital for risk of being spotted by the king. He maintained that tradition states it and it must be strictly adhered to.

Moreover, these annual trips are always a fun period to look forward to, according to Chief Sóbalójú. There are always some festivities set up for the royal emissaries wherever they get to, with enough food and drinks to welcome them. Therefore, they often spend the night at certain places to enjoy the hospitality to the Maximum. It is a road trip cum picnic and exercise for most of the older men, who have spent most of the year in the capital, mainly in the palace, serving at the pleasure of the Jagun, and the *Ìmì*. After they must have gone around Ede, the last point of call of the emissaries is at *Abeere*, where the *Alábeere* would have collated his part of the tributes, waiting for the emissaries so it can be handed over. *Abeere* is a reasonably big area on its own, as it borders Ede and Òsogbo, the state capital. *Abeere* also has a big market called *Owóde*, with commerce coming in and out of town every five days. Therefore, the emissaries are expected to find a good treat and a sizable royalty to return to the Palace.

Apart from the funds gathered from the *Oko-Sàngó*, another primary source of funds for this mighty festival is from the town's treasury account, allocated by the *Ìmì* himself. After the budget for the year's festival has been submitted and approved, the *Ìmì*, who is a principal signatory to the treasury account, writes a cheque to the office of the Jagun-*Ìmì*. He (Jagun) then disburses said funds among his lieutenants for administrative and logistics purposes and the Jagun-*Sàngó* for other critical ceremonial purposes. According to *Sàngó-Yemi*, the Jagun-*Sàngó* also relies on gifts and donations from friends and well-wishers, and lovers of indigenous art forms in and out of the country. Likewise, the *Ìmì* also has donations and cash gifts from wealthy nobles, politicians, and friends in high places, including the state or local government, who send in money, which serves as indirect funding for this great festival.

The logistics is a shared responsibility between *Omo-Jagun* (Jagun's lieutenants) and the *Adósù- Sàngó* (*Sàngó's* initiate). The initiates take care of the monitoring of indigenous artefacts around the palace grounds. Also, supervised by the Jagun-*Sàngó*, the initiates handle the raising of different ritual alters and taking them down a month later. The logistics in this forte is huge and expansive. It includes the handling of ritual materials, clearing a dedicated part for the *Arugba-Sàngó* during the procession, and collecting donations and cash gifts during the various *Sàngó*-manifestation outings and performances.

On the other side of the festival execution, the lieutenants of Jagun and their men deal with the logistics involved in the various ceremonies, especially those involving the *Ìmì's* appearance, ensuring that each is conducted without any hiccup. From crowd control to security of lives and properties of visitors and guests, a seamless and fluid movement of the *Ìmì* during the processions and outings, to renovations, decorations, and the creation of an ideal environment for this great festival to hold successfully.

The task of orientation and publicity is a shared responsibility between the lieutenants of Jagun and the initiates serving under the *Jagun-Sango* called the *Adosu Sango*. Both offices control the flow of information and are responsible for how the public is exposed to the cult's activities and the festival proper.

## CONCLUSION

Management structures of indigenous performances have been a distinctive feature throughout history, as ancient civilizations have practiced them in varying forms over the centuries. From research and other literature, it is increasingly evident that Indigenous cultures and traditional communities have found ways to organize and rule themselves, and their religion and festivals have always been evident of the presence of one form of management or the other. Indigenous African performances are integral and symbolic to each African society, so much that most, if not all of these performances, require management structures indigenously developed for an effective organization to ensure adequate continuity and stability.

These management structures include a family or clan, unique individuals, professional guilds, cults, and other management structures unique to the community. These management structures also have rules, and they determine modes of succession and have evolved a detailed process of transition and performance. The

leadership or administrative cadre consists of the community leaders who provide the management structure of each important Indigenous performance of a particular community. The king heads the committees, while his chiefs drive logistics and administrative roles involving these major annual ritual community performances.

With these different traditional structures put in place, most Indigenous performances withstood the test of time, growing into internationally acclaimed annual events that bring together people from all walks of life. These indigenous festival performances, such as Sango-Timi and Egungun here studies, have a robust central management structure comprising of officers in the town's administrative cadre, supported by the chief priests who are heads of various orisha cults.

These Festivals' management and organizational structure as a form of indigenous African performances are akin to any theatrical performance or activities by any modern organization or company. Therefore, this is so that important decisions, assessments, and resolutions that would affect the organization or the performance would have been deliberated upon by the highest echelon of management, thereby assigning duties and tasks through the hierarchy. The difference here is that rather than financial profit, harmony with gods for societal survival is the motive. It is a very sturdy management structure, with a sufficient delegation of duties and power, which gives room for checks and balances but still provides different channels for teamwork, collaboration, and cooperation to achieve the laid objective.

Ede's Indigenous management structure also brings together religion, culture, and administration in the execution of their festivals. That is, the heads of the various cults and religions present in Ede come together with the professional guilds and other departments that represent the way of life of the people of Ede, and together with the town political structure, they contribute their quota to the effective and successful execution of their major festival and performances.

The rules guiding the succession and installation of the officers in the central management structure are in their way, efficient in building experiences, hands-on the-job training, and the opportunity to avoid the mistakes and errors of their predecessors. This has created seasoned managers and administrators throughout their service. By the time they attained the highest level, the office of Jagun-Timi, they could rely on such a wealth of experience in discharging their duties.

Despite its modest nature, continuous or permanent sources of funds and resources for these performances have been carefully and skillfully created, practised, and perfected over the decades. This has ensured sustainability and the continuous execution of these festival performances annually.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Though the management structure and practices is strong, and the officers involved are all experienced on the job, there's a need for young, educated, and well-seasoned indigenes to get involved in the management cadre, or in a consultation capacity so that modern management principles and programming ideas can be integrated into the system, so that festivals and performances like the above can be appealing to the younger generations, thereby helping to preserve these indigenous cultural identities. Additionally, there is need for improvement in the festival performances' marketing and publicity plans. This can be done through organizing proposals and advertising these indigenous festivals to large corporations in order to acquire their support as contributors and sponsors, which will draw merchandising opportunities media attention to the community.

The vast majority of activities in numerous indigenous African performances and festivals are veiled in secrecy, which has become a concern in the current era of widespread information and awareness dissemination. If these performances are expanded and accompanied with extensive multimedia coverage

and captivating highlights, they have the potential to progressively transform into a more famous tourist destination than they already are. Consequently, they might enter the esteemed league of other big festivals and carnivals in Nigeria.

## REFERENCES

1. Adeyori, R. et al. (2017). "Appraising Management Theories and Practices in Nigeria." *Journal of Management and Corporate Governance*, Vol.9, No.4, Pp 15-33.
2. Beier, U.H. (1958). "The Egungun Cult among the Yorubas." *Présence Africaine*, no. 18/19: pp. 33–36. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/24345513](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24345513). Accessed 1 Sept. 2023.
3. Brockett, G.O. & Franklin H.J. (2003). *History of the Theatre*, 9th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, pp. 13–69
4. Byrnes, J.W. (2009). *Management and the Arts*. USA: Focal Press, Elsevier.
5. Drewal, H.J. (1978). "The Arts of Egungun among Yoruba Peoples." *African Arts*, vol. 11, no. 3: pp. 18–98. JSTOR, [jstor.org/stable/3335409](http://jstor.org/stable/3335409). Accessed 1 Sept. 2020.
6. George, R. T. (1994). *Principles of Management*, R.D. Irwin, 1953, 1960; 1968; 1971; 7th edition 1977; 8th Edition with Stephen G. Franklin.
7. Haimann, T. & William G.S. (1985). 5th ed. Houghton Mifflin: pp. 638
8. Karmakar, A. & Sarkar, B. (2013). *Principles and practice of management and business communication*. Dorling Kindersley.
9. Krishali, S. (2020). What are the Functions of Management? <https://www.economicdiscussion.net/management/7-functions-of-management/31965>. 25 May 2020
10. Koontz, H. & O'Donnell, C. (1972). *Principles of management: an analysis of managerial functions*. McGraw-Hill.
11. Kiiza, M. & Basheka, B.C. (2018). "Indigenous knowledge and sustainable development in East Africa: Lessons Buganda in Uganda". *IJOTM Journal*, Uganda. Retrieved from [Http:ijotm.utamu.ac.ug/index/phd/ijotm](http://ijotm.utamu.ac.ug/index/phd/ijotm)
12. Louis, A. A. (1958). *Management and Organization*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
13. Urwick, L.F. & Brech, E.F.L. (1945). *The making of scientific management*. Management Publications Trust, London.
14. Melone, T. (1971). "La vie Africaine et le Langage Théâtral," *Le Théâtre Négro- Africain: Actes du Colloque D'Abidjan*. Paris; p. 144
15. Muo, I. & Oghojafor, B.E.A (2012). "OHAZURUME: The Philosophy and Practice of Decision Making and Consensus Building among the Ndigbo of Nigeria". *American Journal of Business and Management*, Vol.1, No. 3: pp.154-161.
16. Olunlade, E A, et al. (1961). *Ede, a Short History*. Ibadan: General Publications Section, Ministry of Education, Print.
17. Oghojafor, B. E. A., et al. (2013). "Indigenous management thoughts, concepts and practices: The case of the Igbos of Nigeria." *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 3(1), pp. 8-15.
18. Olusoji, G.J. (.2012). "The Evolution of Management Theories, Philosophies and thought in Nigeria." *Economics and Management Research Projects: An International Journal*, 5(1), pp.1-9.
19. Stoner, J. et al. (2008). *Management*. Sixth edition. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited
20. Uzo, U. et al. (2018). "Indigenous Management Practices in Africa". *Indigenous Management Practices in Africa (Advanced Series in Management, Vol. 20)*, Emerald Publishing Limited: pp. 1-7
21. Wren, D. (1994). *The Evolution of Management Thought*. 4th ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
22. Yerima, A. (2019). "Performance management: Festivals and Carnivals." M.A. Class Lecture. Redeemer's University, Ede, 23 Oct.