Volume 08 Issue 10, October 2020 ISSN: 2321-1784 Impact Factor: 6.319

Journal Homepage: http://ijmr.net.in, Email: irjmss@gmail.com

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## EDUCATIONAL THEATRE MANAGEMENT: AN ELIXIR TO BUSINESS

**GROWTH-** "the curriculum debate"

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## Abstract

Management is an activity that is common to all human endeavours; it is an organised way through which man achieves positive goals. Every business organisation has a managerial department that is meant to organise and enhances the profitability of the Organisation. Thus, Educational Management is practiced in an academic environment, while Educational Theatre Management is an arm within the theatre department in academic institution that manages artistic creations and transforms creative inventions into a sustainable financial venture. This paper focuses on the early exposure of theatre students to a robust, encompassing theatre management curriculum, business principles and practices. It introduces them to practical business theatre and reduces the phobia of not breaking-even in theatre business in Nigeria. Premised on the proposition that theatre management encompasses the running of theatre as business organisation that can generate income; the paper traces the origin of management from the 19<sup>th</sup> century when controlling and coordination was a major problem in company management. In achieving this, the Organisational Learning Theory that emphasised learning and change was adopted. The paper therefore posits that theatre management students who graduates after (4) four years study, be referred to as amateurs theatre business practitioners. This is due to lack of early exposure of students to the nitty-gritty and practical experiences of business management. On the overall, this could propel theatre arts graduate boldness, to take business risk and run effectively a viable theatre industry that is sustainable.

Key words: Business growth, Curriculum debate, Management, Theatre management.

## Introduction

Management is the arm of production meant to coordinate the corporate policy of an organisation; by performing such functions as organising, planning, controlling and directing resources towards attaining organisational goals and objectives. It is a universally acclaimed concept for a group of activities in an organisation, which borders on various levels of decision making. Management can be science as well as an art because its fundamentals are universal and cut across all professions.

Management is the pivot that steers an establishment, or any business venture to the main aim of making profit. Preceding the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, organisational managers witnessed anarchy and chaos in dispensing managerial duties because priority was given to the manufacturing section of the companies. The means through which finished products from the manufacturer were

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delivered to the door steps of the consumers were not properly attended. Hence a lot of wastage and disorderliness were experienced. (https://www//paperap.com). The business history affirms that Taylor as a business leader introduced the first three main principles of management and leadership that reformed the management feature of his company. He introduced the standardisation, and sone basic method of scientifically determining an individual performance level.

Going by the ancient archival materials there were a lot of signs of the age long managerial abilities which symbolised the existence of the formal dwellers and the exploit they did. (https:www//paperap.com). Management as a course of study began with the support from Frederick. W. Taylor (1856-1915). As an exponent of management, he listed what management does as designing jobs, providing incentives for the enhancement of workers' and facilitating a high level production for the growth of the establishment through its support system. Inventing modern managerial methods led to economic emancipation and slogan change from "entrepreneurial capitalism to managerial capitalism". This birthed massive development, instituted a globally acknowledged means of given back to the society. Thus establishing a repayment process where financial payment system were given to labourers whose work were outstanding. It was based on Henri Fayol's theory that proponents of this system concluded that management activities are totally comprehensive. (https://paperap.com)

## **History of Theatre**

Theatre is a collective act that uses actors, actresses, or inanimate objects to convey creative creation before a live audience in a specific place to achieve life performance. From its incipiency theatre as an art form was coined out of a ritualistic performance of the Dionysus festival in Greece. The Wikipedia Encyclopaedia had it that the beginning of documentation of theatre as an academic discipline is traceable to the Plato's concept of a broad education system for the Greek citizenry between (427-348BC). This led to the establishment of the first Academy in Athens, which was regarded as the first institute of higher learning in the western world.

# Theatre Management in Nigeria

Theatre Arts as a department in tertiary institution began in Nigeria from the University of Ibadan. As School of Drama in October 1963, admittance of students for Diploma courses were carried out. A six month group scheme using Kola Ogunmola Travelling Theatre, called Resident- Artist, and the School of Drama were initiated to serve as a short term course for the Ogunmola Travelling Theatre. In 1962, this relationship birthed the scripting of the literary works of Kola Ogunmola and the stage production of his outstand works. There was an exchange of knowledge between the two of them; school of drama acquired knowledge on practical theatre management styles while the Residence artist were exposed to methods and technics of private company management. The drama school started with 10 persons, supervised by Geoffrey Axworthy as Director and Martin Banham as Deputy Director. The formation of the school of drama gave an open access to the introduction of Theatre studies in tertiary institutions in Nigerian with different names. Furthermore, in 1970 to make the school of drama all-inclusive, there was a change in nomenclature to the Theatre Arts department headed by

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Professor Wole Soyinka. Even though the department commences operations in 1970, management as a course of study was not given attention until 1974 when it was written as a course in the departmental timetable (The Arts Theatre, University of Ibadan).

Wikipedia sees *Theatre* as

a joint effort of fine art, actors, actress which jointly produce and create imaginary actions and exciting experiences that can captivate the minds of life audience on stage in a fixed location.

Going by the Wikipedia assertion, the audience holds a central, and responsive role in a creative work of art. They give feedback which enhances the performance and complete the production. The audience ends and determines the financial viability of the production. Publicity and advertisement are the arms of theatre management that transact directly with the audience and thereby sell the performance.

# **Potentials of Nigeria Theatre Business**

Nigeria is blessed with multi-cultural and creative natural gifts. Namely artistic skills, festivals, cultural dance, natural and art gifts to be harnessed as source of inspiration for productions. In spite of the free endowment many theatre arts graduates struggled to processed the knowledge they resolutely attained for four years. Thus, those who ought to provide jobs going by the training they received are seeking for jobs. The underline fact behind obtaining higher degree is to enhance sustenance and upgrade the social position of the individual. Consequently, after several years of coming out of school as a Thespian, one cannot fend for himself, it was evident that an in dept knowledge of the profession has not been acquired. The Theatre profession is a unique carrier that does not rely solely on academic theories and classroom knowledge but advocate for the use of culture, cultural items and creative skills in the traditional space to achieve a total theatre. It has the capacity to create jobs by bringing together Individual creativities in a joint venture to reduce poverty and boost the social wellbeing of practitioners. Going by the amount of grandaunts on a yearly basis from the higher institutions in this country; is an indicator of the high rate of unemployed in Nigeria and especially among the youth. Thus, this alarming situation has made it obvious that the Government alone cannot create jobs for this teaming arm of the population. Hence the call to look inward and employ the most valuable, affordable and commonly reachable resources to solve the unemployment problems. The utilisation of creative inventions as a collaborative art for the purpose of performance on stage is the sole aim of a theatre practitioner. If these productions are properly managed and well marketed, it will serve as source of financial emancipation and creating job opportunities for job seekers. Theatre as a business is able to sustain and create a living for its practitioners.

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## Theatre as a Business Venture

Entrepreneur Press viewed business as a steady manufacturing and procurement of goods and services aiming at making profit and earning wealth through customers satisfaction. While, Business Organisation defines business as daily human buying and selling activities meant to produce or acquire wealth through the satisfaction of customer's needs.

Going by these definitions, business involves continuous production and supplying of goods and services to customers satisfying them thereby getting high turnover and also comply with sound business practices. The national and International market is cumbered with a lot of technological and innovative changes, which has created positive space for creative innovation. The era of theatrical knowledge has given way for creative thinking, creative skills, creative innovations, imaginative arts and inventive abilities; which is the hub of the 21<sup>st</sup> century business drive.

The universally acceptance of creativities as a saleable product in the business market is a plus for the theatre that must be exploited to the fullness. Thus, the creative market is highly competitive and proficiency, to blend and make a mark, creative organisational structure, individual creativity and creative management methods must be adopted to develop business that will have competitive stamina in the global creative market. Therefore, theatre as a business venture must keep pace with the creative world to make profit and keep the business alive. Doing these management must adapt to changing circumstances, create new method by branding the existing values and methods to create an added values that will attract patronage.

Theatre performance as a saleable commodity is fluidity, abstract and imaginary not substantive, tangible, concrete and perceptible. Hence dialogue is very paramount to the sales of the product. The dialogue between managers, directors, technical managers and costumers must be fluent, candid and realistically based to permit creative interpretation of script and enable each department to contribute their quota to the achievement of a total theatre.

Managing a theatre as a business enterprise is the sole job of the theatre managers; it presupposes that managers have been thought on the skills of operating theatre as a business outfit. To achieve these managers must be seen and treated as assets in a business venture, because the success of the organisation lies on the capability of the manager. They serve as a jimmy in the business outfit, so recruiting a strong, viable and creatively skilled manager is the first step to being successful in business.

Wills Tower Watson stresses that steady managerial observation helps to identify employees performances. Thus, recognising employee strength increases workers engagement by almost 60 percent; while this in turn increases engagement and leads to improved customer service. Furthermore better customer service gives birth to more loyal customers. Quoting Peter Drucker: "note that the productivity of work is not the responsibility of the workers but of the manager".

It is obvious that managers experiences implausible situations in the process of managing a business, achieving result and attaining leadership expectations. Managers scramble between competing goals, formulating new ideas and taking decisions; which often lead to working extra

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hours and critical thinking to achieve resounding success. Hence they must be exposed to thorough training and best business practices achieve best result

## **Features of Business Ethics**

Ethics are the rules on which a business is built, the rock upon which sustainable businesses stands without which the business objectives cannot be achieved. With a good understanding of business ethics practitioners will conserve competitive advantage over other forms of businesses. Thus, enhances the building of some level of trust between consumers and producers guaranteeing consumers protection and equal treatment. Features such as:

- exchange of goods and services between one or more persons.
- Different types of business transactions that will result into achieving the objectives of the establishment.
- Working towards achieving the main objective and desire of the business which is to make profit.
- In dept knowledge of running a good business through a display of business strategies, skills, and expertise in modern business venture.
- Developing a strong heart and attitude towards taking risk and taking some business risk...
- The business chain is made up of buyers and sellers thereby completing the marketing chain and enhances the objectives of the business.
- Products are delivered through the marketing and distribution channel.
- Productions and products of every business must elicit positive reactions, customers satisfaction, and sustain the production chain.

A business man must take cognisant and be concerned about response from consumers. Institute a method of given back to the people, environment and community were the business is situated. Also provide some basic societal needs that will endear people to the establishment.

Theatre companies as a business organisations must be in the acceptable format. Business managers must have an in dept knowledge about business fundamentals. Jayson Demers stressed that it is difficult to build a successful business without a collaborator. (https://paperap.com)

# Importance of education in business

Business leads to self-employment, reduces the level of unemployment and increases the GDP (gross domestic product) of a nation. Education is about learning and equipping the learner with the basics of business that will make them perform well. It exposes the recipients to business management ideals, financial management practices, marketing skills, modern advertisement method and practices and sharpens their intellectual skills. Education can be formal or informal. Formal education is training within the academic institutions while apprenticeship is an informal education that takes place outside an academic institution. Notwithstanding, both are geared towards impacting and equipping recipients with knowledge of becoming a successful business

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persons. Formal and informal education helps students to develop business culture and attitude that will sustain their business carrier in life and lunch them into the world business class.

Tim Scott in the UK Family Business Alliance stressed that,

Achievers in business circles are usually people with educational and financial knowledge that are based on business concepts and principles. Educational business studies entails taking students through the rudiments, theories, and processes of business. Modern business students develop personal practical skills and experiences as part of the knowledge acquired from business education classes. (Scott, 2014).

Formal or informal education helps the recipients to gain wider business concept that can in future enhance productivity. These early preparedness create competitive business advantages and brings out the intuitive creative and innovative traits in the acquirer. This shows why apprenticeship is a major criterion for starting a business in the Eastern Nigeria. 80% of business men and women from the Eastern State of Nigeria have gone through one form of apprentice or the other, serving under a master for years depending on the agreement signed at inception thereby becoming a literate person in the chosen business carrier.

Literate business persons have an edge over illiterate business persons because of the acquired education or skill (formal or informal) that will bring into limelight the intrinsic innovative ideals that can produce new method of doing business. Hence, customers and workers relationship is easier, management is less cumbersome and risk taking is not dreadful because of the early exposure to business education.

#### Attributes of a Successful Business

There are many determinant factors that delineate successful business from mediocre.

- Firstly the ability to take advantage of an opportunity/a minutest idea, transforming a small idea into a legendary business is achieved by a well knowledgeable, informed and erudite business minded person without a struggle.
- Also having a clear and distinct vision of what the business ought to be is a hallmark of a successful businessman. This is done by creating a mental picture of the kind of business and the type of customers you intend to serve.
- There must be a written down detailed business plans thus showing plans of how to make the business successful is an off shot of a clear vision of the business by the visionary. It encourages a review plan and on the sport assessment of the workability of the operational plans, financial plans, marketing plans and recruitment assumptions. Business plans helps to identify necessary adjustment, alteration recruitment modifications of all the assumptions on the written plans.
- Formulating plans for short and long time goals: Successful business have measurable terms goals which helps to specify what the company need to achieve quarterly, weekly and monthly. This enables the business manager to drive the business according to plans; thereby achieving large percentages of the annual goals. Setting a goal is a process that is not based solely on revenue generation but focuses on issues of service rendering,

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business growth, feedback from customers and other factors that can enhance business growth.

• Creating a picture of a continuous skill development: As part of running a successful business there must be a plan for a continuous skill development. Maintaining success is not a once for all affairs but the ability to expand knowledge and introduce new skills and develop the old once in other to provide investment, quality assurance and gain customers confidence. In achieving these, quality time and resources must be committed to training and retraining of staffs to ensure quality and efficient delivery of service. Enlightenment and education of staffs on the vision of the business is a skill that must be communicated to the generalities of the staff to put all on the same business page.

## **State of Theatre Management in Nigeria Universities**

- Exposure is an act of being open to new ideas, principles, methods and means of doing things in a new dimension different from already known one. Thus business exposure can have social and generational influence on the attitude and behaviour of the business manager. The level of exposure will directly or indirectly affect the business, depth of understanding of the business perception and the propensity to take a risk and act on issues on the spur. Though the intention of starting a business is central to establishing a business venture, but the pre exposure of the business manager to the nitty-gritties of business will enhance his pre business plans, broadened his business vision and the formulation of specific goals different from the existing once. New method of doing business evolves on a daily basis; hence theatre managers must be up dated in modern business practices.
- The reason behind students specialising in Theatre Management is to acquire proficiency in theatre management. Many students wished to run a private theatre company as a personal business organisation of which such desire has not be fulfilled. This was based on reasons that will be consider as a crux of this paper. Most management courses in Nigeria tertiary institutions started in 200 level second semester. They are taught in 300 levels as electives. Thus, Curriculum of this format inhibit students from getting an in dept knowledge of the discipline. Consequently, they are not grounded in the studies before allowed to make a choice. Many responsible students made choices early to avoid confusion while in 300 level first semester they consolidate effort on the already chosen area. Such limited curriculum will not instil the needed boldness and business consciousness that the students' needs to be a business manager. This has led to few have few students specialising in theatre management.
- Furthermore, theatre management practical's are not made compulsory like other theatre courses. Based on this, students do not participate in enough practical's were they can exhibit their managerial knowledge and talent. Which would have enhance their brevity and courage to dive into the business world and take risk. Thus, the word 'Theatre manager' in the tertiary institution is a title for theatre management lecturers not minding the fact that many don't have theatre company/ production to manage. The shallow treatment of theatre management has resulted into the endlessly seeking of jobs

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instead of establishing a theatre company or managing the existing established theatre organizations.

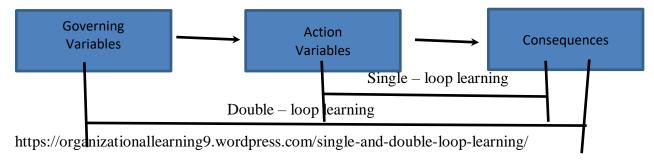
# Methodology

Organisational learning is a process of creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge within and outside an organisation. An organisation improves over the years as it gains experiences, from this experience knowledge is created. Such knowledge is broad and can cover any issue that can positively improve the organisation.

According to Organizational Learning Theory, Organisational learning (OL) is an outcome of organisational inquiry. It means that when the inquiry method is engaged the projected result will be different from the definite result . It is projected that 80% of students of theatre management wished to be theatre managers while in the real since only very few achieve this; thus employing the enquiring method. In learning ,formal interaction that is centred on the knowledge and understanding of the espoused theory and the theory-in-use takes place.

For learning to have said to have taken place in an organisation these three learning method must have been followed.

Fig.1 learning system that shows the duties of the Marketing manager.



The single loop learning system shows the duty of the marketing manager as the inquire method is employed. This suggests that when sales are very low the manager employs the inquiry method to detect the reasons, and take the necessary steps to restore sales. In this system the manager take decisions to prevent the occurrence of future problems such as strategising, repackaging of product, value addition and rebranding.

While Deuteron-learning method means - "learning how to learn" which involves learning outside the classroom. This has to do with acquiring practical knowledge by learning about the nitty-gritty of the organisation management. Hence it gives the learner an in dept understanding of identifying problems and propounding solution in an organisation. thereby creating a basic mental model of effective organisation management which in turn improves organisational effectiveness.

This theory is essential to the growth of a business because it encourages an organisational selfimprovement by utilising the experience gained over the years; transfer the knowledge within the

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organisation to strengthen the organisation as a whole. Organisational learning encourages learning culture which takes place as workers interact within the organisation. Thus, it enhances workers and management abilities to adapt to quick market changing conditions. Also, to thoroughly research on issues in other to discover the negative and positive part, learn from the failures and avoid such in subsequent time; utilise the positive lessons for the benefit of the business. Thus creating an environment for a free flow of information from top to bottom is a flexible way of doing business that allows for an injection of new ideas, methods, new experiences that will advance the business forward. It inspires the creation of a broad base knowledge that will improve the way the business is ran. Learning is achieved from four perspectives – the individual capacity, group level, organisation basis and inter-organisational level. All these work together underpinning the information acquired to increase the efficiency of the business.

According to the Toyota Way, the five whys theory is used to solve problems. Employing this theory the company sees opportunity in every problem hence identify the root causes of the problems and propound solutions by asking the why questions:

The questions: There is a splash of oil on the ground – clear up the splash.

- a) Why is there a splash of oil on the ground? the machine is leaking oil- fix the machine.
- b) Why is the machine seeping oil? Because the gasket has spoilt- replace the gasket.
- c) Why has the gasket spoilt? Because we purchased substandard gasket- order different gaskets next time.
- d) Why did we buy those gaskets? Because they were cheaper change the procuring procedures.
- e) Why did we choose gaskets based on price instead of quality? Because we assess purchasing agents based on short term cost savings –change our evaluation criteria.

By these the entire organisation learned from the negative experiences and change policies and procedures of doing business for the benefit of the company. Therefore adopting this theory is very vital because the business world is changing in quick succession while the invention and advancement of new technological means of doing business is emerging on daily basis. So to stay relevant in business and appeal to customers change is inevitable. It is not enough to be successful in business but to sustain the success is of most important.

To achieve this, there must be continuous learning, change as determine by the business environment and customers' needs will maintain long time success and enhance growth and expansion. According to Chris Argrys and Donald Schon theory, the anticipated result is that management graduates are anticipated to be effective and efficient managers which is different from the exact result hence the employment of the inquiry method of learning in discovering the problem and propounding a solution. Hence 50 students from 10 universities were interrogated and their course allocation forms from 2010 to 2019 were observed.

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## **Curriculum in Education**

The word curriculum has to do with the lessons and the academic content taught in schools or in a specific course of studies. This entails the total package of what is to be taught in each lecture period, semester and the academic year. Which is geared towards attaining a particular educational goal. In curriculum, the objectives are listed and breakdown into step by step; learning method is put into consideration. Thus enhances systematic implementation of the presupposed educational plans and programmes. It explains detailed process and procedures of achieving the course plans, and also listed the instructional materials needed. As the laid down/master plan of an educational programme, which helps the operator to streamline teaching and in other to achieve the main objective. Curriculum is the focal point for the formalisation of the anticipated result of an academic course. By so doing it helps to activate stable systematic structure- it is a kind of compass that shows the route to achieve a particular educational objective thus breakdown the whole objectives into smaller bit and pieces for the teaching purposes.

It Put teaching in the right track. Progress is important in imparting knowledge. So curriculum assists in transferring the right knowledge by designing the right concept with the components of making complex story easy. It shows the anticipated goal. To achieve the purpose of the lecture a goal is set and the curriculum explains in step by step on how the goal can be achieved. Thus shows step by step what the students want to learn. The instructor align to the teaching by using the curriculum.

Curriculum is not static though its written and most be followed. It can be updated yearly depending on the agreed time by the organisers to enable students get modern ideas and knowledge.

## **Results**

The research discovered that management courses in Theatre Arts Department in most Nigerian Universities are allocated as elective courses; the curriculum is not comprehensive enough because of the time space allocated to it. Thus to reduce unemployment, for youth empowerment, encourage entrepreneur skills and inspire the establishment of small and medium theatre companies; management courses must be given priority and the curriculum elaborate to accommodate modern trends in management. Theatre has the creative ability to create jobs, employ and occupy the youth in an income generating ventures.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Finally the research proposes that the courses should be introduced from first semester 100 level alongside with practical's and the curriculum should be all encompassing. Courses should be designed to be broad knowledge based with emphasis on the theatre as a business; and its connectivity to other subjects. Hence the development of the student's communication skills, business decision making abilities, practical skills and risk management practices must be taught. Students programmes should be elaborated to accommodate case projects, regular presentation,

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industrial visit, and interactive sessions with experts in the field of the industry. Students of theatre management should be made to take compulsory elective courses in business education, accounting and marketing department to heighten their business intention. These early exposure to a robust curriculum can arose students anticipatory instinct and build their potentials in identifying business risk before it becomes obvious.

The course should also include 4 weeks training for management students at 200 and 300 levels after second semesters known as Students Industrial Work Scheme. Furthermore students given to private Theatre companies where they can showcase their knowledge and talent that is relevant for the profession. At 400 levels they could upon their skills by managing productions in the department through joining the practical's and the theory together. To stimulate high performance special emphasis must be placed on the training of students (managers) and evaluating their managerial capacities. Thus, management is all about leadership and leadership involves innate abilities and extrinsic values properly harmonised to create a work environment that will produce quality products or services. This could bring courage and assurance that will properly them to be employers of labour not to job seekers. Theatre management should be taken as a way of getting entrepreneurship skills. There is the need to infuse a comprehensive theatre management curriculum into the theatre programme in higher institutions in Nigeria.

Formal training of students through various academic programmes in theories and practical's will increase performance and self-fulfilment at work place. The length and depth of early training can determine the quality of the person; which can be vital to the long-time success and profitability of a company. Employees routine access to training at work place enhances efficiency and competency of duty.

So exposing prospective theatre managers to formal training in a theatre company offers them several advantages, It increases the students interest in management, gives assurance of sound human resources for the growth and expansion of the theatre business.

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