

**DANCE PEDAGOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A STUDY
OF FOOTPRINTS ARTS AMBASSADORS, LAGOS**

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Abstract

This work examines the pedagogy of dance and entrepreneurship in the society. In other words, it seeks to engender dynamic essence between theory and practice, dance scholar and choreographer, and their impact on students/dancers with respect to teaching dance as a career for profit making against art for art sake. The teaching approaches provide for managing dance establishments as well as the art and act of dancing. In doing this, we adopted the managerial system of the Footprints Arts Ambassadors in Lagos, Nigeria as a prototype. We apply some fundamental tools of entrepreneurship that determine efficiency and effectiveness of a particular approach to business to empower the trainees. In the deductive method, we carefully derived some assertions and information that would later become helpful for this study through the structured one-on-one interview held with the director of Footprints Arts Ambassadors. In analytical method, we did cursory analysis of dance pedagogy and entrepreneurial study as well as review related literatures, magazines and journals. We identified some pedagogical yardsticks and entrepreneurial approaches which have been used in successfully managing the fledging dance company. We also discovered some considerable factors to establishing a successful arts entrepreneurial company in Nigeria. We found that economic and social trend, as well as some personal entrepreneurial attributes play key role in an entrepreneur's approach to arts and theatre management. Therefore, we conclude that, whatever approach, style or operation mode a dance/theatre entrepreneur chooses; his aim should be for the success and development of both individuals and company. Thus, we recommend that dance scholars and practitioners update their teaching approach to making dance pedagogy a viable and self-reliant endeavour, rather than being a tool for entertainment, body therapy and cultural propagation alone. This will undoubtedly position dance on the same

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pedestrian with other art forms globally making wave in the entertainment industry today.

Keywords: Dance pedagogy, Entrepreneurship, Trainees, *Footprints Arts Ambassadors*, Management

Introduction

As part of the submissions at the African Summit on Economy held in Abuja in May, 2014, it was established that, there is a persistent rate of industrial growth in innovations and human consumptions in the continent, particularly Nigeria. This reinforces the contributions of entrepreneurs in developing several remedial approaches posed by global economic crises. Roy and McCann (2011, p. 16) observe that “when a nation enjoys international attention on economic matters, the entrepreneurs of such nation have made great impacts”. This is why Esuh (2015, p. 138) informs that, “entrepreneurship has recently become the most dominant economic force the entire world has ever experienced. It has succeeded in revolutionizing and changing the manner and areas in which businesses are being carried out and conducted in every countr”. In this respect, it is evident that an entrepreneur is bothered about many things among which are self-reliance, profitability and the effects of his establishment on human and national development.

In political economics, entrepreneurship is the process of identifying and starting a “New” business venture, sourcing and organizing the required resources, while taking both the risks and rewards associated with the venture. Olagunju (2004, p. 7) opines that ‘entrepreneurship is an undertaking in which one is involved in the test of creating and managing an enterprise for a purpose. The purpose may be personal, social or developmental’. To Arowomole (2002), Oni (2006) and Maiwada (2009), entrepreneurship dwells on capacity building which stresses value creation by bringing together unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity. An understandable equilibrium in the avalanche of submissions on entrepreneurship concept is the theory of innovative character. This implies that entrepreneurship activity attempts to come out in new form and shape.

This study analyses the dance teaching approaches vis-à-vis entrepreneurial prospects in the various managerial approaches to the Performing Arts in Nigeria. Effort is geared towards highlighting typical and general managerial principles adopted by different entrepreneurs, with particular attention on Performing Arts. Having made this review, we thereby concentrate on the presentation of the managerial model of the Footprints Arts Ambassadors, Lagos, which

remains the mother hen from whom other successful entrepreneurial Performing Arts company such as Footprints of Africa and Footprints of David (Children Theatre Company) among others have emerged. This study aims at pointing out the essence of dance training and managerial theories, and its courteous implementation in order to enhance the anticipated growth of a given arts outfit. In the same vein, a prospective arts entrepreneur enjoys the benefits of being exposed to the numerous styles, techniques and approaches of dance training and organisation management. Thus, the impetus behind all issues addressed in this study is dance pedagogy and entrepreneurship, with particular reference to the Performing arts using the Footprints Model.

Theoretical Framework

Basically, this paper adopts an approach, "*fernandeism*"; which is an advancement upon the "Contingency entrepreneurial management approach" of William Richard Scott, Jay Lorsch, James Thompson and Fred Fiedler among others. We shall expatiate on the *fernandeism* approach later in the body of this work. However, it becomes imperative to shed light on the entrepreneurial management theory of the aforementioned theorists which forms the bedrock for our theoretical framework. This theory primarily concerns itself with the concept of coordinating an organization by taking full and/or adequate control of responsibilities. It pictures entrepreneurship as an embodiment or a court-yard of risks, with the entrepreneur standing as a symbol of leader whose efficiency would directly translate into an inevitable gain or loss. A prominent feature of this theory is adaptability. Another characteristic of this theory is that, organizations are open systems that need careful management style to satisfy and balance internal needs, and to adapt to environmental circumstances. Also, the only best way of organizing- the appropriate form depends on the kind of task or environment one is dealing with; in addition to this, management must be concerned, above all else, with achieving alignments and good fits.

Literature Review

If entrepreneurship as a business concept deals with risk-taking and resource control, the entrepreneur then becomes the leading personality that takes up the function of uncertainty and risk-bearing. Also regarded as a sole proprietor, the arts entrepreneur is perceived to be a versatile personality with eclectic thoughts; particularly in the theatre, possessing expert teaching and leadership skills, by having reasonable knowledge of several arts of the theatre. In their view,

Deakins and Fred (2012, p. 4) submit that, “an entrepreneur is a leader who is willing to take risk and exercises initiative to take advantage of the opportunity in the market by planning, organizing and executing resources”. An entrepreneur in the performing arts concerns himself with the smooth administration through adequate financial control, appropriate marketing and courteous house management. He also concerns himself with quality presentations of artistic works before a given audience.

In an attempt to evaluate the entrepreneurial approach to business, especially the dance pedagogy, it is expedient to note that entrepreneurial activities, styles, techniques and modes differ substantially depending on the type of organization and creativity involved. Thus, Carl (2009, p. 19) asserts that “entrepreneurship ranges in scale from solo projects; and even just part-time projects; to major undertakings that create many job opportunities”. Whatever the size and nature of an artistic enterprise is, agreeing and ability to meet up with pressing consumer (primarily audience) needs could be termed to be a justifiable result of entrepreneurial pro-activeness. From the foregoing conception of entrepreneurship, its realistic comprehension through style and technique could be driven by several forces under the shield of personal entrepreneurial characteristics. Most probably, the following features are primarily part of what defines a productive entrepreneur; gender imperative, physical and mental agility, level of education, training or work experience, initiative and opportunity seeking, ability to network and persuade, risk-taking propensity, systematic planning and monitoring, ability to seek and utilize information, goal setting with pro-activeness and focus, dedication, endurance and commitment.

It is noteworthy that the performing arts in Nigeria as a form of business has, over the years, thrived on the pedestal of entrepreneurship. This fact is evident in the numerous repertory theatres, which are mostly owned, co-ordinated and managed by a sole-proprietor. Notable among are the Ogunde Theatre Company, PEC theatre by J.P. Clark, RemiAdedokun’s Osogbo city theatre troupe (1974 – 1988), House of Dance in Lagos, Crown Troupe of Africa, Eda Theatre Company, Ijodee Dance Company and Footprints Arts Ambassadors amongst others. Particularly, Hubert Ogunde’s theatre widely thrived on Ogunde’s unique managerial approach; as he would be at the helm of affairs, thereby having his wives, children and some other members of the troupe perform. Record has it that, Ogunde was the troupe’s proprietor, executive artistic director, choreographer, and chief administrator. This character thus, refers us back to the essence of versatility as an entrepreneur in the performing arts.

Describing characteristics of arts management; particularly, the performing arts' manager, Adedokun (2001, p. 37) is of the view that: ...he has one onerous responsibility because... he combines both artistic and administrative tasks. He is several things rolled into one. He is any person who manages a theatre, who coordinates all economic activities, a publicity director, a match maker who brings together the idea, the artist, the place and the audience. He sets goals, selects plays, books in touring troupe, finds money or raises funds, hires personnel, controls expenditure and promotes income prospects, supervises and controls theatrical operation from the beginning to performance. This multidimensional responsibility demands high sense of commitment, intelligence and dynamism.

However, in considering the management approach of an arts entrepreneur, Kerr and Jermier (1978, p.375) reveal that, 'one of the interesting things about managerial approach is that managers with the most flexibility in style get the best outcomes for their people'. Naturally, an arts entrepreneur, administrator or manager takes upon himself the role of a leader. In this vein, he makes himself a model with which all other team members look up to role-taking, professional responsibility and organizational management. Leadership style is not about good or bad, right or wrong; rather, leadership style depends on the task, people, environment, resources and situation to be managed. It is on this note that we shall examine Hay-McBer's management theory as listed by Rosalind Cardinal. According to Hay-McBer (2002), there are six key leadership or management approaches, these are: directive, authoritative, affiliative, participative, pacesetter and coaching.

Being an upshot of entrepreneurship, arts entrepreneurship is predominantly concerned with the management of arts establishments without financial intervention by the government. When this relates to the performing arts, it becomes complicated, as the production processes of the performing arts which are usually geared towards a successful production of theatrical components like dance, drama and music on either stage or screen traditionally require serious managerial prowess. This is because the artistic management of the performing arts is further compounded with its human and financial managements which entrepreneurs in the performing arts require. As a result of this fundamental relationship between normal entrepreneurship and arts entrepreneurship, it is appropriate to briefly explore some of Hay-McBer's elements of leadership, as identified above, because those key components are important to virtually all forms of management. This is important at this juncture because they are related to the management approach of the Footprints Arts Ambassadors. The three elements explored here are directive, participative and coaching.

Directive: The directive (coercive) style has the primary objective of immediate compliance from employees. To a large extent, he is the “**do it the way I tell you**” manager; he closely controls employees and motivates by threats and discipline. This type of leader is effective when, there is a crisis and when deviations are risky. On the other hand, he stands ineffective when, employees are underdeveloped-little learning happens with this style. When employees are highly skilled: they become frustrated and resentful at the micromanaging.

Participative: The participative (democratic) style has the primary objective of building commitment and consensus among employees-the “**everyone has input**” manager. This type of administrator encourages employee’s input in decision making; He motivates by rewarding team effort. A Participative manager remains effective when employees work together as a team; when staff has experience and credibility and if steady working environment is in place. However, he is least effective when, employees must be coordinated. Also, in times of crisis, there is hardly time for meeting. When there is a lack of competency, close supervision is required. For close supervision to be attained, some other duties of the participative manager will be consequently affected.

Coaching: The coaching style has the primary objective of long-term professional development of employees. He is the “**developmental**” manager who helps and encourages employees to develop their strengths and improve their performance. He motivates by providing opportunities for professional development. He is effective when skills need to be developed and when employees are motivated towards development. This kind of style is ineffective when the leader lacks expertise. When performance discrepancy is too great, coaching managers may persist rather than exit a poor performer.

Dance Pedagogy and Entrepreneurship: Footprints Arts Ambassadors

Footprints is an artsentrepreneurial organization founded by Fernandez, Michael O.He is a Nigerian choreographer and dance scholar, who was born in Lagos Island, Lagos, Nigeria. He received his dance training at an early age and began his performing arts career as a dance artiste from Starlight Troupe of Africa in the early 90’s. As a young boy, he gained skills in dexterous drumming, acting, singing, directing and flute playing. Fernandez can be referred to as a rounded artiste in the profession of performing arts. He led his troupe on a national assignment to take part in the “COJA 2003 All African Games”

opening ceremony performance hosted by Nigeria in Abuja. This was the first prominent achievement among several others after establishing the dance company (early in 2003). The formed company is today popularly known as Footprints Art Ambassadors as against the former name Footprints Ambassadors and Children Theatre. Fernandez attended the prestigious C.M.S Boys Grammar school in Bariga, Lagos. He obtained his first degree in Performing Arts from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State in 2008, observed his NYSC in Kogi State in 2009 (and was awarded the Most Popular Corp member via the art of dance and drumming mastery). In addition, he acquired a M.A. Performing Arts degree from the University of Ilorin, with major strength in choreography and dance ethnography. Among other achievements, he was awarded the NYSC National best solo dancer cum drummer of the year at the National Sport and Cultural Festival 2009 in Abuja; NUTAF three years most spectacular drummer. Fernandez is presently a dance lecturer in Lead City University, Ibadan.

Founded in 2003, Footprints Arts Ambassadors is situated in a ghetto-like area of Lagos and fully controlled by Fernandez Michael. It is a dance repertory that engages mostly in cultural and contemporary dance gestalts. The artistic director who is also the founder of the troupe takes charge of decision making, even while members of his troupe often play advisory role. According to the CEO, he is always willing to learn from people (positively). However, he made us to realize that an entrepreneur in Nigeria will soar high if his determination remains undaunted and the government creates a befitting environment for business captains. The CEO of the Footprints Arts Ambassadors, Fernandez Michael (2014, p. 1), in an interview, explains that "the beginning was quite rough and tough". He further describes his leadership qualities which have been imparting meaningfully to the entrepreneurial sustenance of his arts establishment. In this respect he says, "I'm a very sensitive, diplomatic and flexible leader, self-exploration and contribution to decision making could be allowed, but where and when necessary alone". Perhaps, his acclaimed sensitivity, diplomacy, flexibility and self-exploration greatly helped him in the management of this popular and growing theatre outfit. According to Fernandez, for effective and efficient dance training, he has propounded a style known as *fernandeism* which serves as a pedagogical approach for training budding dancers and potential entrepreneur.

Fernandeism

This approach is an improvement on the canon and tenet of the contingency entrepreneurial management approach. It advocates

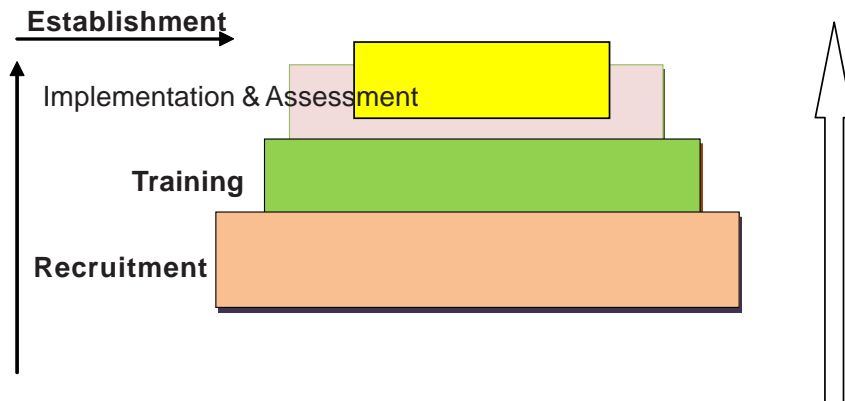
dance pedagogy within the geographical space of humanity to descend on the ideology of human life transformation through dance art. This must apparently involve developing self-esteem, redefining the image of dance as against its wrong and barbaric perceptions, and making dance pedagogical observation a viable and self-reliant endeavour rather than just recreational, therapeutic or mere culture representational tool. In other words, *fernandeism* is a philosophical postulation that emphasizes the efficacy of dance pedagogy as an entrepreneurial channel for job creation, human empowerment, poverty alleviation and elevation of means of livelihood.

Features of *Fernandeism*

- (a) Human empowerment through dance arts
- (b) Artistic job creation for self reliance
- (c) High self esteem
- (d) Unemployment alleviation

Application of *Fernandeism* to Dance Pedagogy and Arts Entrepreneurship

This approach has four basic systematic methods to dance pedagogy and the making of an entrepreneur within the human geographical placement. The approaches include recruitment, training, implementation and assessment and establishment respectively.



From the above diagram, it is apparent that recruitment is the foundation upon which the pillow of establishment relies. This has a strong connection with mental and physical instilling of knowledge and confidence, which in turn makes an entrepreneur; that is, “teaching one how to fish, rather than just giving a fish to eat”.

Recruitment

This is the preliminary stage where dance enthusiasts, untapped talents and less privileged gets an open enrolment into Footprints Dance Company which particularly deals with youths and children with theatrical talents by consciously or unconsciously developing them through dance for positive impact. With all sense of emphasis, Footprints recruitment is usually done from a ghetto-like area of Lagos for life transformation and entrepreneurial empowerment.

Training

This structure involves the creative, patterned and rhythmic demonstration and utilization of the bodily movements in space for adequate sharpening of the dancers' instruments (body) so as to prepare the dancers' body but mind, spirit and soul. This has a lot to do with teaching, skills acquisition and impartation of knowledge via engaging the trainees in a broad-spectrum of physical and mental exercises and dances from different parts of Nigeria, Africa and beyond so as to create a stimulating atmosphere for versatility.

Implementation & Assessment

Implementation and assessment lean strongly on two distinctive tenets which are the secondary and primary assessment forms.

- i. Secondary assessment: Herein, trainees are being involved in the company's internal and external dance performances as an avenue for the implementation and test-running of acquired skills within the course of training. At this point, a thorough assessment is being put in place to determine the strength and knowledge of the trainees in the Performing Arts.
- ii. Primary assessment: This basically concerns the trainee's evaluation via assigned field work to elementary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. This is to test the trainee's efficacy on his acquired training.

Establishment

Having graduated from the stage of implementation and assessment, Footprints as a company source for job opportunities through elementary, secondary and tertiary institution where the assessed and thoroughly bred trainees function as artistic consultants (for event planning) and dance instructor. Whilst knowledge impartation cannot be over emphasized, creation of means of livelihood for the trainee remains the paramount aim of the organisation. On the other hand, a freehand opportunity is given to trainees to perform with other dance

companies still with the sole aim of sustainability, while a certain percentage of their honorarium comes to the company's purse for troupe management. Thus, trainees with satisfactory results are encouraged and assisted to attain entrepreneurial height for sustainability and life transformation.

Through *Fernandeism* which has been the bedrock upon which Footprints operates, Fernandez's artistic enterprise has been able to create self-employment for some of his troupe members after undergoing series of training with him. Below are some notable art entrepreneurial companies established by trained and graduated members of Footprints Arts Ambassadors:

- (i) Footprints of David (one of the best children theatre in Africa)
- (ii) Footprint of Africa
- (iii) Pathfinders Production
- (iv) House of Phoebe
- (v) Magnificent Arts company
- (vi) Afro-jo Theatre Company
- (vii) Etc

The above art companies just as Footprints Arts Ambassadors (their predecessor) has provided and is still providing many individuals with job opportunities in the artistry; and this has been having direct positive effect on the society at large.

Necessary Factors to be considered by an Arts Entrepreneur

Prior to the establishment of an entrepreneurial art company, the following are to be strictly considered by an entrepreneur for the purpose of a successful company establishment that would stand a test of time:

- (a) The geographical status/ place of arts in the chosen area
- (b) Socio-political situation
- (c) Economic prospects
- (d) Acquiring and maintaining audience
- (e) Finance
- (f) Ability to create and recreate for the sake of consistency

In corroboration with the above, Terpstra (1978) in Oyewo (2000, p.55) asserts that "performance in any organization does not depend on financial and technological facilities alone; religious, economic and socio-cultural influences have also been identified as critical determinants of management". The above factors among others are the considered canons upon which Footprints has been operating

from inception till date. It is then apparent that the theoretical styles adopted for this study are suitable to Fernandez's managerial style. This is because he reveals that, he does not have any fixed plan or style of dealing with both administrative and artistic situations; rather, he gives thorough observation to every given situation and addresses it in the best possible way. This behaviour adequately fits into the realities of contingency viewpoint management approach as it depends solely on situation at hand.

Findings

Our findings reveal that, *fernandeism* and the contingency entrepreneurial management approach adopted by Footprints Arts Ambassadors have been of immense benefit to the management of the theatre outfit in its bid towards ensuring a smooth and profitable running of the organization. It is important to state that our arguments above have proved that the management approach is evidently not an invention of the theatre outfit; rather, the pre-existing entrepreneurial management approach has merely been adopted by the founder. What is however unique in this adoption is the perceptible modifications which Michael has been able to infuse in the adopted approach to govern the company.

Notable instances include the perception and treatment of the staff members as not merely employees, but collaborators. This implies that, the troupe members enjoy preference in submitting their opinions and concerns in the outfit's administration- there is cordial relationship between them and the chief administrator. This would have naturally boosted the morale of the staff-collaborators. Also, these staff-collaborators are given freehand and encouragement to perform and work with other theatre outfits, provided such external romances are approved by the manager to enhance means of sustenance. And these external relationships for the company, help in developing the repertory of the company's creativity, and invariably helped in the company's quest for profitability and popularity.

Conclusion

Thus, we strongly submit that dance scholars and practitioners update their teaching approach to making dance pedagogy a viable and self-reliant endeavour, rather than being a tool for entertainment, body therapy and cultural propagation alone. This will undoubtedly position dance on the same pedestal with other art forms globally making wave in the entertainment industry today.

Recommendations

Subject to our arguments so far, we recommend that entrepreneurs should submit themselves for proper training and acquisition of managerial skills by attending business management seminars, exhibitions, conferences, workshops and some other related programmes. By so doing, entrepreneurs tend to benefit more, especially in the areas of networking and getting new dimensions of administrative values. In cases where *fernandeism* to the management of the performing arts is considered suitable, the arts entrepreneur is not expected to submit himself to or be solely dependent on a particular recommended management style; rather it should be taken as a framework, foundation or structure under which the most suitable organizational management structure must be developed. With our exploration of *fernandeism* to the management of performing arts through Footprints Arts Ambassadors, the previous recommendations would go a long way in making an arts outfit more productive as well as aiding national sustainability.

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