

NIGERIAN THEATRE AND THE CREATIVE SPACE; THE MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING EXTRACTION

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ABSTRACT

The nomenclature ‘Nigerian Theatre’ is a means of creating a niche by looking inward and uncovering the traditional and cultural attributes that distinguishes us as a people. This notion is a deviation from the total dependence on Western culture to a local content concept. Employing marketing, publicity and advertising as a driving force to achieve economic viability, self- sustenance and cultural relevance in the Nigerian theatre has become crucial and necessary. This is done by adapting the local cultural content thereby creating a synergetic and methodological approach. In today’s business world, by empirical observation it is evident that any art that introduces new ideas, methods and indigenous materials into the business space is widely accepted. The creative environment in Nigeria is endowed with diverse theatrical and creative natural aptitude that must be showcased to the world through the medium of marketing and publicity. Marketing and publicity have the capacity to enhance organizational goals by increasing the sales cycles of the company. Its effectiveness is determined by the influx of viewers, whose patronage is measured by the positive impact on sales. This paper x-rays how adopting rigorous marketing and publicity methods can enhance the economic viabilities of the creative space. It is in this regard, that the old ‘Learning theory’ was adopted to show how advertising can positively stimulate creative patronages.

KEYWORDS: Advertisement, Creative Space Publicity, Marketing, Nigerian Theatre

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

The nomenclature Nigeria Theatre is a means of creating a niche by looking in word touncover the traditional and cultural attributes that distinguishes us as a people. Formalizing Nigerian theatre and publicly standardizing the world view of the global theatre space. Ogunbiyibuttrekking this point declared that;

The specific origin of Nigeria theatre and drama is uncertain. What is not predictable is the existence, in several communities of a holistic cultural performance. The foundation of the tradition must be sought in several religious sacrifices and festivals that exist in many Nigeria states. Explaining the relationship between man, society and nature, drama came out of basic human needs in the wake of human civilization and has continued to show those needs since then. This public acclamation encourages a shift from the “Western Culture” which was the old dominant culture where most theatrical stories emanated from; to an introspection act to discern those cultural materials that can be utilized for theatrical performance. For the theatre to be relevant, it must continually adjust its performance to the taste of its immediate environment. This necessitates the change from Western dominant culture to reflecting on how to develop the local content

art materials, package, and sell to the global art market. Hence it will encourage sustainable competitiveness and the projection of Nigerian culture and art endowments. To survive and compete favourably in the global market several measures must be embarked on in a responsive manner and the marketing and publicity arm of the Nigeria theatre must be proactive. (Ogunbiyi³)

HISTORY OF NIGERIAN THEATRE

The word Nigeria theatre emerged in the theatre space in the early 1940s. through plays performed solely in Yoruba language, themes based on Nigerian story lines were understood and appreciated by the Nigerian and the foreign audience. They projected the Nigerian folktale, historical, mythological, oral tradition and liturgical allegory. These resulted to the establishment of many travelling theatre companies of which three were distinguished – Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola and Duro Ladipo. They created notable styles and produced plays, arranged music, folktale, employed praise poetry, incorporated Nigerian proverbs and incantation into their dialogues; hence, they preserved, transmitted and projected these traditional arts, and wrote cultural dramas derived from historical materials. Traditional costumes that were fitting for specific historical and religious performances were adopted. They took the theatre from the street developed it into a serious theatrical form which stimulated the growth and development of the Nigerian theatre. Traditional performance made the basics for the coming of the Nigerian theatre. It employed the in-dept usage of some elements of traditional drama such as myth, festivals, idioms masquerades, proverbs costumes and make-up were all functional part of the Nigerian theatre performance. Aduku argued that

It is often said that Africa art has never been art for art sake. It is for the most functional art. An art that was part of the principal arts works of a society that had its aim and objectives, the augmentation of the vitality and potential strength of the social body. It has for example, been stated that Africa art is utilitarian. Cited in (Aduku³)

The Nigerian theatre mirrored its functionality by creating cultural exposure, cultural re-awakening and re-energized the relationship existing among the Nigerian theatre and global theatre market. The functionality of the Nigerian theatre has been one of the active ingredients that has continued to inspire traditional performance right from inception till now. Buttress this point Ogunba sees it as native cultural activities, a form of art from the African soil over the centuries that developed unique attributes and whose approaches are occasionally different from the borrowed from now practiced by many present artists. He added that a festival is the main evolving part of the culture of an un-alienated African, an occasion to which he response spontaneous.(Ogunba:⁴) The concepts of Nigerian theatre brought about professionalism, enterprising, theatrical research methodologies, people-centered development and social change. It initiated the categorization of theatre into sectional parts such as playwrights, directors, choreographers, designers, costumers, stage managing, advertising and publicity. By these the economic prospects of the theatre was introduced, which made the theatre acceptable for economic sustenance unlike when it was jointly owned and practiced as traditional entertainment affair.

THE CONCEPT OF CREATIVITY IN NIGERIA

Creativity is an irrevocable commodity for the growth and sustenance of theatrical performance. It brought about new methods, ideas and the garnishing of the existing practices to meet the needs of the century. Practical creativities combine with new methods leads to innovation. Which can only be achieved by risk taking, in making creative decisions, adopting new ideas and methods, maintain originality and foresight about the formation and practicability of the creative innovation.

Creativity is defined as “the tendency to processor form ideas, alternatives that may be useful in solving problems, reaching others, and entertaining everyone”. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/59533>

Creativity is an in-built intrinsic quality in man which can be expressed through different levels and indifferent disciplines cognitive, intellectual, social, spiritual and economical levels. Thus, it involves changing unrealistic imaginative ideas into a new captivating reality. This can be achieved through deep critical thinking method and the ability to process such thought into a finish product.

IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY

Creativity and innovation are entwined; they exist side by side. Although creativity produce new ideas innovation processes the ideas into a finished product. Creativity and innovation lead to success because it stimulates increase in productivity and encourages employees to think outside the box and dive into new areas. Creativity strategizes and devises means of solving problems. Thereby being ahead of competitors and creating a positives edge over others around. Creative ideas place business in an advantageous position over others without which there will be monotony and humdrum which can lead to the collapse of the venture. The collaboration between creativity and innovation is very crucial to business growth in this technological age. So creative and innovative minds are assets in the business world; because they possess the innate ability to break new grounds, bring in fresh perspectives to issues and channel their creative minds to making profit for the establishment.

MARKETING

(Ringold, and Weitz. 251-260) defined marketing. “as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that meet personal and company missions.”Marketing create a process and a delivery chain from manufacturer to customers, manage customers relationship, and achieve the company’s objectives. The production chain is incomplete without the consumer, marketing makes goods and services available at the point where consumer needs them. It gives specification of consumers preference and advice management on designing consumers’ needs. Marketing employ the use of communication information to create customers for their goods and services. Thus, create a venue for follow-up after supply to ascertain customers satisfaction. The core function of marketing is the “exchange process” which is consummated by creating exchange relationship depended on the economic value. (Barksdale, Hiram1-3) described the importance of marketing concept thus;- “It seems plausible to explain the development of exchange as a new approach which helped to start primitive man on the way to civilization” Marketing makes production system meaningful and profitable to the company as well as the consumers. Marketing enhance management focus on customers’ needs and satisfaction.

MARKETING THEORY

Theory is a set of rules or regulations guiding a subject. Theory aids development so is essential for the creation of knowledge and for the interrogation of academic prowess. Different disciplines formulate their own theories to be applied in their area of discipline. While marketing gathered theories from different disciplines; such as psychology, and economics worked upon them to arrive at what is now termed marketing theories which has stimulated variety of academic works from different perspectives. Marketing is a practical issue that must translate its theory into reality. To achieve this marketing anticipate competitiveness and long-time organizational development. Strategic business development is formulated to gain efficiency in the operation of a modern market economy. By these companies analyze internal and

external methods, investigate consumer's needs, and new trends to allow for improvement of marketing strategies. The world is a changing place so companies must re-examine its productive principles, marketing laws, and customer relationship system to improve the present and move into the future. Thus, take advantages of opportunities and prevent occurrences that might work against the company's objectives. Marketing strategies are classified in this format – planning, process, evaluation and control which is a chain through which marketing activities are carried out. Thus, as a vital part of a company's efficient and effective delivery of goods and services marketing must be given a free hand to operate within the confine of the company's laws and jurisdiction. (Shelby D. Hunt 77-103).

MARKETING MIX CONCEPT

It deals with the methods, principles and tactics a company employs in promoting its product in the market. Originally the market mix was made up of 4ps which is price, product, promotion and place but with the development of technology and the advancement of knowledge the marketing mix has increased to include packaging, positioning, people and policies. Every element in the marketing mix is as important as the product is to the market. The mix influence each other and base its success on a thorough understanding of marketing principle, market research, and consultation with others at the marketing strata produces a strong force. The progress and transformation in the business world has brought about high level of competition in industries. Hence the introduction of marketing strategies and techniques in attracting customer patronage of product. Employing marketing mix enhances open and quick access to customer's needs, creating a unique customer and marketer relationship. (Ring, Lawrence J. et al. 394-404.)

PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISEMENT IN MARKETING OF CREATIVE MATERIALS

Advertisement and publicity are the same in term of the information they carry their purpose which is to reach their audience but the distinction between them is in the area of definition. "Advertising is paid message that shows that the message is sponsored while publicity in contrasten forces editorial space in media. Space not paid for but used for promotion information."

Advertising and publicity are imperative tools for the internal and external function of an organization. They are vital to the survival and fulfillment of company's objectives and aims. They enhance the marketing arm of the establishment, promotion devises employed to exhibit services, images, ideas, commodities by controlling information and influence. Advertising and publicity are indispensable concept in the promotion strategies. No company can thrive without its goods gotten to the consumers. Daily advertisement messages are displayed for the attraction of prospective buyers. These messages encourage and lures prospective buyers to buy product, advertising is a form of persuasive communication, disseminating of information meant for individuals or the public through the medium of appealing and fascinating pictures. Through this medium, advertising and publicity offer a constructive presentation of a product, ideas or services by instituting clearly defined goals to enhance the purpose of the advertisement. Advertising and publicity sell the brand name, promoting programmes and creating awareness about the product. Though both used the mass media to reach its audience technically they are different in terms of their functionality even though both have the same focus which is the audience. Majorly marketers placed more importance on the use of advertising rather than publicity; While public relation practitioners employ the use of publicity in reaching their audience instead of advertising. In advertising the advertiser purchases an airtime on radio, television and print medium acquire a definite time space to deliver enticing messages. The advertiser has the right to choose the media that can reach its target audience. The organization through advertiser is in control of the message, the content, timing and the time-space used for the advertisement. Even though it came with a high

price, it accommodates advertorials, image, and assert advertising views which are solely the opinion of the advertiser. While publicity employs the use of the mass media because its “newsworthy” and can “make a news”. This is gotten free from the editorial table. Advertising is of a dual discipline. It can be said to be Arts because of its creative inclination and science because of its organized knowledge. As a non-personal communication, it focuses on the masses. Informing them, given a true and complete information to a buyer about a product. Through the vehicle of persuasion to convert a prospective buyer into a customer. Advertising does not make profit by increasing cost but promote sales by using a buyer sales method and not a higher cost approach. Going by the late president Roosevelt of the U.S.A. “Advertising draws the awareness of a larger number of individuals actual knowledge regarding beautiful things: it is a form of education and the progress of civilization depends on education”

PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING IN THE CREATIVE SPACE

Advertising plays a dual role in conveying a company’s message or introducing a product to viewers. Its market as well as promote as it persuades customers to accept its product over others. While publicity also serve as a promotional medium not sponsored by anyone or controlled by any person company / its representatives. Advertising is expensive but far reaching with a positive sponsor message done in various channel like radio, television, websites, newspapers, hoardings, social media like Facebook WhatsApp, magazines. It leaves an impact on the buyer’s mind concerning the product. Publicity is not paid for by any company. It is an announcement that can either be positive / negative message from an independent person. It can be used to ruin a company’s image/boost its image depending on how it is used. This depends on how consumers perceived the company and the product. Modern Advertising can be traced to Edward Bernays as cited by Richard Gunderman in the introduction of the Tobacco Advertisement in the 1920s. The theatre and creative space are a changing world governed by different creative intellects, of which only the best survives. So, advertising helps viewers to determine which performance to patronize. (Svetlana Frolova 2-10) asserted that Advertisement is very important in the society that it determines the political candidates and the part of political development in a country. Despite the long discovery of advertising, its existence and function is traceable to the modern-day advertising which came into practice in the 20th century. Due to the emergence of technology, growth on the industrial world and the unprecedented mood of advertising such as multicolor printing, machine analog system, television satellite communications targets later digital, computers and internet. Since the purpose of Advertisement is to reach different classis of consumers by introducing different products to them; to achieve this advertisement is classified according to target market. Advertising is classified into 8 main group namely: Large market portion- These are portion of consumers that can be tagged as one body. This has to do with social status, and profession. They are the narrow part of the consumers chain in which advertisement are targeted to. The narrower the audience the easier to reach them. Target impact- This is created to maintain or increase demand of product. It helps to attract attention and build positive image of an organization. ‘Advertisement can be categorized by its distribution area. This can come as global, national, regional local or international, it focuses on reaching population within and across boundaries. Also, the new method of transmission which include electronics, printing etc. method of implementation is another category that directly or indirectly advertise a product to consumers without the consumer knowing that they are gradually being influenced by the advertisement. Advertisement can be categorized according to mode of payment, free or paid most commercial advertising, public and social is paid for. While all these categories can come under seven 7 types of advertising namely Brand advertising, commerce and retailing, policies, feedback, corporate, business political / public / social advertising. The purpose is to serve economic, social, marketing and communicating functions inviting consumers to make decision favourably to the advertiser. (Svetlana Frolova 2-10)

LOCAL CONTENT

Natural Resource Governance Institute sees indigenous approach “as the value brought to the indigenous, regional or country economy from an extraction project” Advocating for a local content is instituting that a company employ local labour, goods and services from the host country to achieve a finished product. So, to encourage local content in Nigeria in March 2010, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan signed into law the Nigerian local content Act with the purpose of strengthening the local economic and workforce. Many resource- rich nations are burdened with many economic issues that has affected their National economic structure negatively. This has brought about high unemployment rate, weak industrial base, and reduced economic structure. In other to reduce, / eradicate this negative phenomenon nations employs the use of local content policies to increase local supplies, boost labour force, protect the investment environment of the nations and refocus the nation into accepting and using locally made materials. This policies covers various areas from “mandatory targets to soft requirements to supportive policies such as education and capacity building” The main purpose of adopting the local content policies is to boost the economic status of the nation by encouraging indigenous people inputs and services in the running of industries. By these employment for local workforce is created. Economic growth is advanced, and transformation of local firm is visible; hence increased in participation, infrastructural development job creation and backward linkage were all developed. (Adedeji, Abdulkadir Niran, et al. 61-73). Thus, in Nigerian it is evidence that the activities of the oil sector do not have positive economic influence on the host communities. Which was due to the inability of the host community to compete with the foreigners who has vast knowledge of the business requirements. The active participation of locals resulted into the transfer of investment from foreign dominance to local investors covers. Hence increase the economic status of the locals, which also implies wealth transfer in terms of encouraging local entrepreneurship. Through this industrialization of a Nation can be kickstarted, while domestic capacity needed for quality service and product delivery that are useful in an industry will emerge. In addition, infrastructure is viewed as a complementary condition that influences business ventures and economy. So, such facilities are committed into the hands of the locals to enhance the creation of job opportunities. Local content targets the exordiums of industrial and technological development, value creation or addition, wealth increase, employment and service creation and development of backward, forward and sideways linkages along the value chain.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL CONTENT ON CREATIVITY

At inception creativity posed esthetic and recreational values alone. But with the advancement of technology and the creative revolution across the globe its economic value is brought to limelight which makes creativity an asset. Creativity influence economic development by concentrating on the tangible and intangible cultural resources to attract tourist. Multidimensional nature of creativity enables practitioners to harness its diverse potentials together. These has allowed for positive economic impact on local area. Furthermore, as a non-replicable resource, creativity could positively influence the socio-economic condition of his environment which made it unique. This uniqueness is brought about by the re-arranging of different cultural elements in a define scheme / order. Thus, this inspiration is termed creativity, employing this creative skill to harness cultural heritages, cultural elements, cultural myths, cultural proverbs, cultural dances, cultural songs etc. into a content that is attractive, inviting and appealing to tourist is what create wealth for practitioners. Thereby having a significant effect on regional economic growth. Furthermore, the rationale behind adopting the local contents act is to boost economy by empowering the locals. Thus, encouraging the local creative personnel should be the starting point. Boosting of local creative ideals, repackage in an advertising parcel and rebranding old tales with a modern feature that will garnish

creative performance for public consumption. Adopting this will mean investing in local creative heritages and building the local personnel to compete favourably in the global cultural market. Hence, it culminates into indigenous creative industries, income generation and empowerment of indigenous people. (Kay, Alan 414-424)

BENEFITS OF LOCAL CONTENT TO CREATIVITIES

Development is “a specified position of growth or progress; a new and advanced product or idea; an event making a new stage in a changing case” (Oxford dictionaries.com). Also, according to chambers development is “avoid progress”. Development brings about change and change is identified through new ideas, new inventions, new methods etc. that occurs and can be seen. The advent of the 21st century has introduced diverse kind of changes that has made information dissemination globally..<https://en.m.wikipedia.org.wikin> defined globalization as a “process of interaction and integration among people, companies and government worldwide. Hence the world is a global village, which implies that local creative resources ought to have exposure that will expedite global creative acceptance. The cultural resources in which countries are identified with reside in the custodian of the indigenous populace. All Africa villages have cultural and creative products that are economically and socially viable if accorded a voice through the local content act. Engaging the local content policy gives rise to community development through the birth of creative industries. Which are sustaining and creating economic empowerment for practitioners thereby economically affecting the locals positively; encouraging local creativity will bring about the emergence of tourism. Thus, attracting local / international tourist from across the globe. Thereby projecting the nations to the international communities. (Brouder (Patrick 383-396) sees tourism as a “Catalyst for innovative local development”. Furthermore,(Esteves, Ana Maria, Bruce Coyne, and Ana Moreno)explains that the local content policy is an attempt to give local stakeholders access to economic chances for employment, participation in supply chain and the provision of other related accompanying services”. Thus, this paper is saying that if this policy is extended to the creative arts, it will create employment opportunities and boost the supply chain – from the local creative personnel to the international creative market.(Kay Alan 414-424) stating the importance of art in community development emphasizing that local communities live communal lives hence have residual power that enables them to act indigenously and be a voice to the voiceless and inspire community progress. Adapting the local content methodology help to develop social and economic skills and grant the locals the power to determine their own future. Empowering the local’s creativity through the medium of the local content will alleviate the adverse excesses of globalization. It will boost a long term social, artistic, educational community-based arts acceptance. This will enhance a through and in-dept understanding of cultural projects, broaden leadership and management skills among youths. Creating this awareness will attract more youths into the creative activities. Expose them to get the local basic knowledge of creative skills from the local adults and build their pride in their local creative inventions thereby being part of the team as well as generating income.

“In the USA, there has been a move to change the image of the need to encourage opinion leaders and people in general to recognized that the arts have a role in the wider society (Phillips 3).

In a bid to achieve community – based arts projects in 1995, the Irish government decided to take care of poor people using the arts. Hence creating an evaluation of Arts Awareness Intervention (Akay 3). The result was that participants witnessed dramatic shift in attitude and appetite for arts education and training which show that it has an impact on their self – expression, communication, feeling good, working hard, pride, having fun, feeling part of the team as well as income generation”. Investing in creativity brings about reformation of the area, attracts creative arts investors, consumers of arts products and facilitate the production of commercial and non-commercial arts works. Thus, it triggers

self-confidences, self-identity and social interaction between participants and consumers. There by addressing serious contemporary social, economic and community issues.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs the qualitative research method to collect data, using the old learning theory. According (Akdeniz, Celal.57-105) “The notion of a theory is defined as set of predications that produces plans in order to find the motives why things happenings. Is also a strategy that aids the realization of reliable thoughts in line with earlier planned designs. Thus, is a part that is taken as the basis that must be abide by appropriately”. The behavioral learning theory focus on how learning is gained. That knowledge takes place when a relationship between the stimulant and the behavior interface which is possible only through reinforcement. Behaviorists sees learning as a mechanical process and gives priority to objectivity. The focus was on six selected villages with unique creative activities that have not been known outside their communities.

THE INTERVIEW

According to Nick J. Fox et al 3) sees Interview as important data collection technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the interviewee. Thus, it is commonly used in survey designs and exploratory and descriptive studies. This can be unstructured whereby the researcher asks questions about any topic or highly structured whereby the questions and answers are limited to direct questions alone. A total of 3 (three) towns were randomly selected based on the three senatorial districts in the State. The selection was based on the three unique cultural and traditional festival in these communities. And, because these cultural activities are not popular within the state let alone outside the state. The community leaders and the group leaders were interviewed which made up 12 persons in each community.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

An unstructured interview was used among the selected cultural groups. Section one carries information about demographic knowledge of the group and group leaders. The second part of the interview covers the levels of exposure of the group to the outside world. The advertisement, publicity strategies adopted by the group in the bid to promote the activities of the group within and outside the state.

The descriptive data analysis was employed to analyze the data collected Loeb, Susanna, et al. describe “descriptive analysis as a phenomenon employed to answer questions which borders on who, what, where, when and what extent. The basis might be to identify, describe issues, show differences in population, discover new ways of doing things, or describe the aims of the study and its effect. It plays a very important role in educational researcher analysis; because it can stand as a research product as well as identify/ bring to limelight important areas that have not being recognized previously. Delta state is blessed with diverse creative and cultural heritages which translate into traditional festivals celebrated in various communities across the state. Almost all the villages and towns have unique traditional festivals that takes place between January and December every year. These celebrations have been a point of convergence, relaxation and refreshing to the indigenes and some few non indigenes.

THE OLOBOR FESTIVAL FROM OGWASHI-UKU

Olobor is a traditional masquerade festival from Ogwashi-uku in Aniocha South Local Government of the Delta North Senatorial district of Delta State. Its origin is as old as the kingdom of Ogwashi-uku, an embodiment of a revered rhythmic dance with the use of cane or wiper by the masquerade escort. It is a beautifully colorful masquerade of various shapes and

sizes. Locally produced raffia palms with creative and attractive head mask that depict the sex and age of the masquerade. Though it is majorly male festival the colorful built head mask and create a scenic female face with the marching lip stick, ear shadow along with female masquerades with their beautiful costumes gestures the male masquerade through their flexible dancing movement to communicate on the dancing floor. The major point of attraction of this masquerade is the eye catching beautiful colours, the dance movement, the flogging of both masquerade and escort that is tolerable to them.

ADE WRESTLING FESTIVAL FROM UWHERU

The Ade wrestling festival from Uwheru community in the Ughelli North local government of Delta central is a festival that exhibits strength, vigour and power amongst the youth in the community. Performance is during the groundnut harvesting season which is mostly in April. The festival is celebrated in honour of Onedjor eponymous deity who was said to bless the land with bountiful harvest. It is a male dominated festival that showcases the strongest, bravest, swerve and bold males in the community.

The performance is divided into two categories. The first is the individual capacity which is popularly referred to as “challenged”. In this category the young energetic, burly, strong, male who has confidence in himself and volunteers to challenge any prospective champion in a wrestling bout. Is presented. While the second part of the festival is on street by street basis popularly referred to as “quarter”. The best from these different parts of the community, which formed the ‘quarters’ are presented for the competition. There are five quarters in Uwheru community namely – Egbo, Oreorho, Ehere, Eroovie and Urede.

The best from these 5 quarters will compete for five days in the village square which is the wrestling bout festival days. The competition is accompanied with a lot of drumming of high tempo and dramatic display of dancing steps with deep proverbial songs in Urhobo dialect. At the end of the fifth day, a champion emerges.

THE AMAPINADE-UGE FESTIVAL OF OKERENKOKO

The Amapinade-Uge festival is from Okerenkoko, an Ijaw community in Delta South Senatorial district of Delta State. The people are majorly fishermen and women. The Amapinade-Uge festival is strongly rooted in the culture and tradition of the people of Okerenkoko. They hold tenaciously to their tradition & cultural practices and have not allowed any kind of infiltration whatsoever. This festival is as old as the Okerenkoko community.

The performance is for three days which is mostly December 22nd to 24th of every year. It is a period of relaxation and rest for the villagers. Thus, the festival serves as the entertainment and leisure period. The cast and crew are strictly restricted to members of the community and few trusted hands from the neighboring communities that have ancestral links with the Okerenkoko community. The purpose of the festival is to preserve, protect and promote the cultural heritage of the Okerenkoko people.

The festival is celebrated once a year with an audience made up of mostly indigenous people and few from the neighboring communities. The festival is organised yearly by a committee set up by the king made up of chiefs, youth leaders, women leaders and the “Amaokosuowe” (eldest man in the village). Production and performances are sponsored from the community account and other influential sons & daughters of the land.

The performance showcases different types of masquerade groups in the community. These are the owu-sei masquerade dance, owigiri dance, Ijusei canoe competition dance and the traditional drumming display. The costumes were provided by the community through the chief in charge. They are strictly ijaw traditional attires “cuge toiket” is the playground where performances were performed.

Although there is no structured marketing and publicity method employed by these three different groups from the three different senatorial districts of Delta State. They only employed traditional methods of advertising the festivals which has a limiting capacity. This includes the use of traditional gong, town crier, sending of emissaries to neighboring towns and kings to advertising the festivals. Publicity is also done using sending messages to sons and daughters in the diaspora. Even though there were no gate fees realized, the hospitality sector of the community always receives a boost because of the in flocks of indigenes known as “abroad members” into the community. Increase in the patronage of local food sellers, hotels, motels and fashion designers were higher than normal. These festivals serve as medium of handing down cultural values and norms to the next generation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

It was discovered that these festivals have unique features that will be of interest to tourist. The masquerades display, wrestling festival and rhyming, drumming and dancing steps coupled with the beautiful traditional coloured costumes and make ups that are inviting, catchy and arresting to the creative world. Many countries in Africa have harnessed their creative endowment to attract tourist for economic development. Creativity is not only a matter of the arts, cultural industries or media industries alone, but it has metamorphosed into a central and important input in all sectors where designs and content form the basis for competitive advantage. It is associated with innovation which leads to economic competitiveness. Thus, birth a new thinking and vision of artistic quality that will enhance the already existing creative ability for a repackaging for the creative market consumption. Creativity, traditional / cultural outputs are the most important resources for tourism industries, while tourism open up an area to development at all levels.

“Tourism is a powerful means for economic growth, development and job creation all over the world” the sector is directly and indirectly responsible for 8.8% of the world’s jobs (258 million); 9.1% of the world’s GDP, 5.8% of the world’s exports and 4.5% of the world’s investment. The world travel and tourism council estimates that 3.8 million jobs (including 2.4 million indirect jobs) could be created by the tourism industry in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) over the next 10 years.

It was observed that most audiences were from within the town and neighboring towns and performances were for entertainment and relaxation and not for job creation. Publicity and advertisement were not seen as very important/ necessary hence little consideration was given to it. Thus, productions were performed locally and consumed locally. No meaningful sponsorship and support that should have enhanced the production of performances was discovered.

CHALLENGES

The researcher gathered that finance was a major challenge experienced by the organizers of these festivals. Also marketing publicity and advertisement were not prioritized.

Conclusively, there are mass movement of youth to urban cities daily in search of greener pastures, which are not available. Thus, the transformation of these cultural festivals from the local perspectives to a more acceptable international standard. The establishment of an effective marketing, publicity and advertisement arm of these festivals will serve as a catalyst to the unemployment challenges bedeviling rural communities in Delta State.

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