

**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACING NIGERIA THEATRE
MANAGEMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

BY

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY**

JANUARY, 2025

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE
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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A)
DEGREE IN THEATRE ARTS.**

JANUARY, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by OJOMI, MIRACLE OKEOGHENE in the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Dr. J. N. Bardi

DR. J. N. BARDI

Project Supervisor

DATE

PROF. J. E. ABBE

Head of Department

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, the source of my strength, wisdom and unconditional love which saw me through my academic pursuit at the University of Benin, and to my grandma Eunice Ojomi, my mom and late dad.

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My sincere and unreserved appreciation goes to God almighty who has made my four years of sojourn within the walls of this learning institution possible and for seeing me through thick and thin. For it is his grace that I stand to put to paper this work and to see the completion thereof. Also, my appreciation goes to my supervisor, DR. JOHN NDUBUISI BARDI a man who is working hard to see that the best comes out of every pupil. For his positive contribution and criticism towards the success of this work, his words spurred me to work and brought out this best in this work.

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ABSTRACT

This research examine the Challenges and Opportunities Facing Nigeria Theatre management in the 21st Century .The Nigerian theatre industry has a rich history, but in recent years, it has faced numerous challenges that have hindered its growth and sustainability. The study utilized a survey-based approach with 50 respondents comprising theatre management students and practitioners from university of Benin. The data collection involved structured questionnaires focusing on their experiences, opinions, and observations regarding the challenges and opportunities in the Nigerian theatre industry. The finding reveals that inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints, audience engagement and lack of government support are the challenges face in the theatre industry. However, the sector is not without its opportunities. Digital transformation, collaboration and partnerships, community based theatre and youth engagement can serve as catalysts for transforming Nigerian theatre into a globally competitive industry. The study concludes that with the right investment in infrastructure, training, and digital adaptation, Nigerian theatre management can thrive in the 21st century, contributing significantly to the nation’s cultural and economic development.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Theatre is regarded as a composite art, in the sense that it has various aspects of the arts that make up the whole called theatre. Some of these theatrical arts include: drama, music, dance, technical theatre, costume design and make-up, media arts, management, etc.

For the purpose of this study, we shall define the meaning of theatre and according to The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, and cited in Ayakoroma (14), theatre is a building or open space where dramatic performance are given, furnished with a stage for the actors, a set for the audience; the written dramatic literature of a county, period of people; a place where dramatic events occur; room furnished with a demonstration bench and tiers of seats, used for teaching and demonstrating; an operating theatre (1024).

In Nigeria, there are several types of theatre that have evolved over time, reflecting the country's diverse cultural heritage and artistic influences. Some of the most notable types of theatre in Nigeria include: commercial, educational, amateur and community theatre. However, for the purpose of this study, we shall take a look at the most common types of

theatre in Nigeria: commercial and educational theatre. Commercial theatre in Nigeria refers to theatrical productions that are primarily created and performed for the purpose of generating profit and entertainment Ogundeji (118), while the Educational theatre in Nigeria focuses on using theatre as a tool for learning and teaching various subjects, skills, and values.

According to Bardi The concept of Management in general is the art of coordination geared at achieving set out goals. In business it implies the coordination of human, financial and material resources of an organization for the purpose of achieving desired objectives” (2).

Management is essential to the success of any theatre or theatrical production, as it ensures that all aspects of the theatre are running smoothly and efficiently, while also promoting artistic excellence and engaging with audiences. The outstanding performance of an organization is dependent mostly upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the management team and its ability to utilize the resources available to it for the day to day running of such an organization. Diligence at its height is required by the manager for effective supervision, organization, coordination which of course, informs his choice of those to delegate responsibilities to that can properly employ sourced resources - human,

material and financial, to attain the organization's set objectives. The basic function of management is to co-ordinate both the human and material resources of an organization to achieve maximum profit with minimum waste. Theatre management seeks to balance artistic excellence, financial stability, audience engagement, effective administration, and community building to create a thriving and sustainable theatre environment. This study also explores the positives of its effective management, leveraging potential strategies and interventions with a view to addressing the identified challenges. The study recommends that finding new and diversification of funding sources, fostering partnerships with external organizations, encouraging collaborations with other institutions and enhancing marketing and publicity efforts can help to promote institutional theatre in Nigeria. In addition, this research considers the potential roles of technology and digital platforms in expanding the reach and impact of institutional Theatre.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The main problems facing Nigerian theatre management in the 21st century are the lack of infrastructure and basic amenities, the lack of qualified theatre managers, and the lack of funding. These problems have led to a number of challenges, including the difficulty in attracting and retaining audiences, the difficulty in producing high-quality productions,

and the difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified staff. In addition, there is a lack of coordination and collaboration between different stakeholders in the industry, including government agencies, private sector organizations, and theatre companies. This makes it difficult to develop and implement long-term strategies for the growth and development of the industry.

1.3. Objective of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Examine the state of infrastructure in the Nigerian theatre industry
- Evaluate the training and development needs of theatre managers in Nigeria
- Assess the level of funding available for the Nigerian theatre industry
- Identify and analyze the challenges facing the theatre industry in terms of coordination and collaboration between stakeholders.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the major challenges facing Nigeria theatre management in the 21st century?
- What are the potential opportunities for Nigeria theatre management in the 21st century?

- What strategies can be implemented to mitigate the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides insight into the current state of the Nigerian theatre industry and the challenges facing its management. The findings of the study can be used to develop strategies for improving infrastructure, increasing funding, and providing training and development opportunities for theatre managers. In addition, the study can contribute to the development of policies and programmes that support the growth and development of the Nigerian theatre industry. This will benefit the industry as a whole, as well as the individuals and organizations that make up the industry.

1.6 Scope of the Study

In Nigeria, the types of theatre that exist mainly include commercial, educational, amateur and community theatre. However, this study will focus specifically on the most common types of theatre in Nigeria which is the commercial and educational theatre

1.7 Definition of Terms

For proper understanding and flow of the content of this research, it is essential for some key terms and words to be defined.

Below are some necessary definitions of term and words used in the course of the study.

Management: Management is the coordination and administration of tasks to achieve a goal. Such administration activities include setting the organization's strategy and coordinating the efforts of staff to accomplish these objectives through the application of available resources.

Management can also refer to the seniority structure of staff members within an organization. To be an effective manager, you'll need to develop a set of skills, including planning, communication, organization and leadership. You will also need extensive knowledge of the company's goals and how to direct employees, sales and other operations to accomplish them. (Chrome)

Theatre: is a collaborative form of performing arts that uses live performers, usually actors and actresses , to present experiences of a real or imagined event before a live audience in a specific place, often a stage. The performers may communicate this experience to the audience through combinations of gestures, speech, song, music, and dance.

In the same way, the word “theatre” is also use to refer to a Places where performances regularly take place. As derived from the Ancient Greek (θέατρον) a place for viewing.

(Wikipedia)

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2:1 Overview of Existing Research on Theatre Management in Nigeria

Theatre management generally refers to the administration, organization and coordination of theatrical productions and the venues. It involves overseeing various aspects of a theatre's operations, ensuring that productions run smoothly, manage the financial aspects, marketing and public relations, personnel, facility operations and the overall business management of the theatre. Theatre management whether in Nigeria or elsewhere plays a crucial role in creating an environment where artistic vision, financial viability and audience engagement are harmonized. It is also balancing artistic vision with financial considerations to create successful and sustainable theatrical experiences for audiences. The Society for Human Resource Management's "Theatre Workplace Guidelines" emphasizes the importance of "recruitment, compensation, training, and fostering a positive and inclusive work environment"(12). In addition to human and material resources, theatre management can control various other factors to achieve its goals. Some areas that theatre management may have control over are: financial resources, programming and production, ,marketing and promotion, staffing and team management, facility and technical resources, audience development and outreach, strategic planning

and goal setting, amongst others. Theatre management has control over a variety of factors beyond human & material resources. By effectively managing these aspects, theatre management can enhance the theatre's artistic, financial, and social impact; ultimately leading to the accomplishment of its objectives. Theatre management requires strong organizational skills, leadership abilities, deep understanding of the theatre industry, and a passion for the performing arts to flourish. Therefore, the Manager is expected to make conscious and concerted effort in bringing his managerial expertise to bear in attaining his set goals, because theatre management entails utilizing ideas and techniques to obtain optimal outcomes in theatrical processes and operations which the Manager is expected to know and see to happen. The above implies that all the commercial dealings of the theatre by way of financial management, staff management, production coordination, marketing and promotion, operations and logistics, box office management, etc, are seamlessly coordinated by the theatre management through the Manager and his team to ensure the realization of set objectives.

Theatre management can effectively utilize the efforts of people to achieve its set goals by implementing various strategies and practices such as: recruitment and selection, clear communication and goal setting, empowerment and delegation, training and development,

recognition and rewards, foster teamwork and collaboration, regular feedback and evaluation, and so on. By implementing the above stated strategies and more, Theatre Management can effectively harness the efforts of people and create a productive and inspired working environment. This ultimately leads to successful productions and a thriving Theatre Management. In another vein, Adedokun believes that Theatre Management goes beyond the usual "commercial aspect of the theatre" when he defines it, "as the art of running the operations and the activities of a theatre company or a theatre building" (3). Adedokun's definition becomes holistic, in that, he outlined more detailed work description for the Theatre Manager. According to him, managing a theatre involves more than just overseeing the "operations and activities of a theatre" but also includes managing and maintaining the theatre's physical structure or space, which is also an important aspect of the theatre management's job. Adedokun's view goes a little in contrast with that of Voltz that concentrates on the "business end of the theatre.." Adedokun believes that theatre management goes way beyond that. However, part of theatre management oversight functions is overseeing the physical space and facilities of the theatre building, which includes maintenance, repairs, renovations, and ensuring the building meets safety standards and regulations. Collaboration and partnerships are essential elements of theatre management in today's interconnected artistic landscape.

Forging strategic alliances with other arts organizations, educational institutions, corporate sponsors, and community groups can provide valuable resources, expertise, and opportunities for cross-promotion. As Bronwyn Cosgrave highlights in *Strategic Alliances in the Performing Arts*, "Effective partnerships can unlock new funding sources, expand audience reach, and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices" (47). Theatre managers must possess strong negotiation and relationship-building skills to navigate these collaborative endeavors successfully, leveraging the strengths and resources of multiple organizations to create mutually beneficial outcomes. Besides that, theatre management also manages other facilities related to the theatre, like the box offices, dressing rooms, rehearsal spaces, storage areas, and other auxiliary spaces. Managing these areas efficiently is crucial to the smooth operation of the theatre and ensuring a positive experience for the audience, performers and smooth running of the theatre to attain goals. Theatre management involves running a successful theatre production and venue. It also includes managing the administrative, financial, marketing and operational aspects of a theatre, ensuring smooth operations and a thriving artistic environment. Effective administration of a theatre requires clearly understanding of both the artistic & commercial aspects of the theatre industry, as well as excellent organizational and leadership qualities.

2:2 Theatre Management in Nigeria

The movement of theatre for the business entrepreneur started with Hubert Ogunde in 1944. He was commissioned in that year to produce a play as a fund raising activity for the church of the lord in Lagos. It marked the beginning of the organized commercial theatre in Nigeria by a Nigerian on a fairly large scale. The director-manager system, therefore started from Hubert Ogunde. He was the artistic director, composer, and manager of his theatre. This organizational approach was adapted by the succeeding founders of theatre like the late Duro Ladipo and Late Kola Ogunmole. In spite of pioneering difficulties, they made successes of their executive posts. One of the results of their successes was the theatrical upsurge of the sixties and the seventies, an upsurge which led to the founding of several Yoruba traveling companies in the country. In the South- West of Nigeria, alone we have like eighty or so theatre groups. Some of these groups are; Duro Ladipo theatre and Isola Ogunsola theatre specialize in historical plays. While others such as the Ogunde theatre built their reputation on social drama. The comedians amongst them include Moses Olaiya and his Alawada group, Papilo e.t.c. Three features are common to all these groups. First, they all operate on common to all these groups, they all operate on commercial basis and are absolutely independent i.e.

they do not enjoy any financial assistance from government.

Secondly, the groups are itinerant in nature. Thirdly, the companies have similar organizational setups. In 1974, an association of Nigeria theatre practitioners was formed as the first theatrical syndicate in Nigeria with Hubert Ogunde as the president. The aim of this association is to meet and deliberate on theatrical issues in the country, and to also to share ideas of common interest which will help to promote theatre in the country. The second aspect of theatre management in Nigeria is to be found in institutions. For instance, the department of English at the University of Ibadan mounted a production in their 300 level set arts theatre and the purpose was to provide a training ground for the future theatre artists. The problem of administrative coordination within and among these theatre demands great attention. According to Akpodiete, (107) "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)". However, with that spark in 1957, it is believed to be the brainchild of Theatre Management in Nigeria from where other Institutions of higher learning in Nigeria copied. Thence, it became customary that Institutional Theatres gradually developed management components to oversee and

handle the running of the Theatre, which is not limited to the physical structures alone, but the elements and the needed resources for the attainment of its laid down objectives. Thus today, the management factor of the Theatre is it institutional or professional Theatre cannot be overemphasized, because without it, the goals & objectives of the Organization may not be fully.

2:3 The Current State of Theatre Management in Nigeria, Including Challenges and Opportunities

The theatre industry in Nigeria has witnessed significant growth in recent years, with an increasing number of productions and performances across various genres. However, the management structures and resources available to support this burgeoning sector remain a cause for concern. According to Obafemi, "the development of theatre practice in Nigeria has been hampered by a lack of adequate infrastructure, funding, and professional management" (23). This lack of resources has hindered the ability of theatre practitioners to fully realize their creative potential and reach wider audiences.

Challenges

1. Inadequate Infrastructure

When we say lack of infrastructure, we are actually considering the structure of the

theatre including facilities needed to achieve the ultimate aesthetics desired in a performance without necessarily compromising the welfare of the participating cast and crew.

Many theaters in Nigeria lack modern facilities, adequate seating, proper lighting, and sound equipment. These limitations affect both the production quality and the audience experience. According to Akpan, "the absence of dedicated theatre spaces has hindered the growth and professionalization of the industry, as well as the ability to attract and retain audiences" (119). Due to a shortage of dedicated theatre spaces, many performances are staged in unconventional venues such as hotels, event centers, or open spaces, which often lack proper technical support for professional productions.

2. Financial Constraints

Theatre management is a multifaceted and demanding endeavor, fraught with a myriad of challenges that require deft navigation. One of the most pressing challenges is financial sustainability, as highlighted by Rick Lester in his seminal work *Theatre Administration*: "Securing adequate funding is a constant battle, as theatre managers must strike a delicate balance between artistic ambition and fiscal constraints" (74). No doubt, there is no way a theatre can be managed without adequate funds. This is because there are a lots of needs

to be put in place before a production is staged, and as it is known that money is essential in keeping those things in place which means every production has a budget which must be met before it is executed. Theatre in Nigeria often struggles to generate significant revenue from ticket sales, as the cost of attending a play can be prohibitive for many Nigerians. Financial instability is a recurring theme in research.

3. Professional Training and Education

The professionalization of theatre management is gradually becoming a priority, with more focus on formal training for practitioners in areas such as arts management, production design, marketing, and fundraising.

According to Ekwuazi, "the lack of structured training programs and professional development opportunities has resulted in a dearth of skilled personnel, from stage managers to technicians and administrators" (112). This skill gap can lead to inefficiencies, subpar production and a high turnover rate among theatre staff.

The lack of a formal structure for developing theatre managers and producers has resulted in a gap in skilled personnel capable of running profitable and sustainable theatre businesses.

Hence, in most cases, non-professionals, who lack basic theatrical training, take over the practice. This is not a healthy development in terms of professionalism. Also, some theatre organizations (even educational ones) do not have a specified position of a theatre manager or rather business manager. Rather the director of the group acts as the manager; hence, there is no division of labour and a proper professional management necessary for a successful theatre.

4 .Audience Engagement

Audience engagement is critical to the success of any theatrical production. It refers to the ability of theatre practitioners to attract, maintain, and interact with their audience, ensuring that they are not only entertained but also emotionally and intellectually involved in the performance. However, theatre today faces numerous challenges when it comes to engaging and sustaining its audience. As Jennifer Radbourne notes in her book. Audience Behavior, "Theatre managers must contend with shifting demographics, changing leisure patterns, and a diverse range of audience preferences, all while fostering a sense of loyalty and engagement"(42).Some of the major challenges that affect audiences engagement are; cost and affordable, infrastructural challenges, changing audiences preferences, crisis and external factors, educational and cultural gaps.

Audiences now have a multitude of entertainment options that are easily accessible from home, making live theatre less of a priority. This shift in consumption habits, especially among younger audiences, has reduced live theatre attendance.

5. Government Policies and Supports

Cultural policies in Nigeria have not always been favorable to the development of the theatre industry. There is still a need for a comprehensive Cultural Policy that prioritizes the arts and provides consistent support to the sector. Government support for the arts, particularly in the realm of theatre, has been inadequate and inconsistent Okagbue (41). While institutions like the National Theatre in Lagos exist, they are often underfunded, poorly maintained, and underutilized also The lack of substantial government support has led theatre practitioners to seek private sponsorship, which is also limited, as many corporate sponsors tend to favour music and film (e.g., Nollywood) over live theatre.

Opportunities

1. Digital Transformation

Digital transformation in the theatre is the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of theatre production, management, marketing, and performance. Adeosun

highlights the potential of "digital marketing strategies, online ticketing systems, and the use of social media to reach broader audiences and streamline operational process" (79). Digital transformation in theatre is essential for enhancing creativity, expanding audience reach, improving operational efficiency, and adapting to the demands of modern audiences. As technology continues to evolve, the theatre industry must embrace these tools to remain relevant, accessible, and innovative in the 21st century.

2. Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism plays a significant role in the development and sustainability of theatre, especially in regions like Nigeria, where theatre is deeply rooted in cultural traditions. Cultural tourism is vital for the theatre because it promotes the preservation of cultural heritage, stimulates economic growth, fosters international visibility, and encourages innovative and inclusive forms of storytelling. By attracting tourists to theatre, the cultural and economic landscape of a region is enriched, helping to ensure the sustainability and continued relevance of theatre in society.

3. Collaborations and Partnerships

Forming partnerships with international theatre companies and cultural institutions can provide access to new resources, expertise, and markets. Olaoye suggests the creation of

"regional or national theatre associations that can facilitate communication, joint programming, and the exchange of best practices" (32). In addition, partnerships with other sectors, such as education, government, and advocacy groups, can increase the impact of theatre on social and cultural issues, while fostering sustainability and long-term success.

4. Youth Engagement

Engaging the youth through educational programs and contemporary productions can foster a new generation of theatre enthusiasts. Establishment of private theatre should be encouraged to flourish to ensure that graduates of theatre studies find jobs in their area of specialization, which will cut down the rate of graduate of Theatre Arts crossing over to allied professions due to lack of jobs in their specialized areas. It will also ensure that the best hands are retained to help sustain professional theatre practice.

5. Community-Based Theatre

Community-based theatre is a vital tool for cultural preservation, social empowerment, and collective engagement. By involving members of the community in the creative process, it fosters unity, personal growth, and societal reflection. Adebajo suggests "the development of community-based theatre initiatives, workshops, and public

performances that not only showcase student talent but also foster a deeper connection between the programs and the communities they serve" (31). Whether used for education, advocacy, or entertainment, community-based theatre has a profound impact on both individuals and the broader community, helping to create meaningful connections and catalyze social change.

Furthermore, while theatre management in Nigeria faces significant challenges, such as financial constraints and infrastructure deficiencies, there are numerous opportunities for growth and development through technological advancements, educational initiatives, cultural diversity, and strategic partnerships. Addressing these challenges and seizing these opportunities requires collaborative efforts from stakeholders across the industry and supportive policies that prioritize the cultural richness and artistic vibrancy of Nigerian theatre.

2:4 The Impact of Globalization, Technology, and Cultural Policy on Nigeria Theatre

● Globalization:

Definition of the theme Globalization by Inyang is a structural adjustment in a rapidly heightened tempo of the operating patterns and existential dynamics of the current society.

It aims chiefly to dislocate existing conditions. Human and non human spaces have been

redefined. A state of borderless universe in mental, cultural, economic systems and physical contacts is being imposed on humanity” (2).

Globalization has facilitated cultural exchange, influencing Nigerian theatre by exposing practitioners to diverse styles, themes, and techniques from around the world. With increased access to international festivals and platforms (e.g., the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, African Diaspora Festivals), Nigerian theatre has gained visibility beyond Africa.

Also Nigerian theatre has gained international visibility, with productions reaching global audiences through festivals, tours, and Global issues such as human rights, migration, and environmental concerns have increasingly become themes in Nigerian theatre, reflecting interconnected global concerns. Adelugba and Awodiya. *Rethinking African Cultural Production*. (45-70) Discussion on how globalization impacts African theatre, specifically in Nigeria, the This text explores how Nigerian theatre has adapted to globalization, especially through collaborations between Nigerian and Western theatre practitioners.

- **Technology:**

Today the world is a global village. Technology also has achieved a global dimension ,advances in technology have transformed production techniques, enhancing stagecraft, set design, lighting, and sound capabilities in Nigerian theatre. This fusion of

technology and live performance has been a key factor in modernizing Nigerian theatre. Digital technologies like Virtual reality and Augmented reality can create immersive experiences, allowing for new forms of storytelling. These technologies enable theatre productions to explore new dimensions of visual effects, set design, and audience interaction, expanding creative possibilities. Bolanle Austen-Peters Productions often uses high-quality multimedia components in productions like "Fela and the Kalakuta Queens" to create visually immersive experiences. Developments in lighting especially has affected and redefined the role and work of the theatre director and the placement of the actor on stage in relation to the audience. Digital platforms and social media have expanded audience reach and engagement, enabling real-time feedback, promotion, and distribution of theatrical performances, for instance the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual performances, offering new avenues for Nigerian theatre to reach global and domestic audiences amidst physical distancing measures. Developments in technology have changed how we see in the theatre. This shift not only supports the survival of theatre but also opens up new possibilities for artistic expression and audience engagement.

- *Cultural Policy:*

Cultural policy plays a critical role in the development and sustainability of theatre by shaping the environment in which theatre practitioners operate. It is a framework established by governments or institutions to guide the preservation, promotion, and evolution of culture, including the performing arts. Cultural policies in Nigeria impact funding, infrastructure development, and the regulatory environment for theatre. Supportive policies can enhance the visibility and sustainability of theatre activities. Policies promoting indigenous cultural expressions support the preservation and promotion of Nigerian theatre traditions, languages. Cultural policies also influence content creation and dissemination, balancing artistic freedom with societal norms and values. Bennett, "Theories of the media, theories of society." In *Culture: A Reformer's Science* (29-62). This book looks at how cultural institutions, including theatre, are shaped by government policies and broader cultural frameworks. . By creating a supportive framework for theatre practitioners and making theatre accessible to wider audiences, Cultural Policy helps enrich the cultural life of society and promotes theatre's role as a tool for education, entertainment, and social change.

Overall, while globalization and technology offer opportunities for Nigerian theatre to thrive on a global stage and innovate technologically, cultural policies play a crucial role

in shaping the sector's development, ensuring it remains culturally vibrant and sustainable. Balancing these influences requires strategic planning and adaptation to leverage global trends while preserving and promoting Nigeria's rich cultural heritage through theatre.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3:1 Research Design

Research design is a structured plan or strategy that outlines how a research study will be conducted to achieve specific objectives. It provides a framework for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. (google Crome)

It is pertinent to note that the researchers would be making use of survey method of research which entails the use of questionnaires instrument to collect data from the study population.

The survey method of research is the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions Check & Schutt (160). This research method is adopted as a result of its perceived advantages over other methodologies. A major advantage of the survey method of research includes its ability to be administered to a larger number of people, focus on a wide range of topics and its flexible method of

answering questions.

Putting into consideration the Challenges and Opportunities facing Nigeria Theatre in the 21st Century, there is need for the survey research method to be adopted for careful investigation and to find out the perception of theatre practitioners as it concerns Theatre management and it's actual place in the Theatre.

Generally, the technique used for questioning respondents will be online based questionnaires.

This method therefore guarantees the researchers objective description, explanation and exploration of the subject matter of this study.

3:2. Populations of the Study

Polit and Hungler (37) refer to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. The population to be studied by researcher include persons who have made tangible contacts with theatre, persons who have experienced the practice and operations of the theatre.

The population in this study is mixed as regards level of expertise, denoting that the researcher will interrogate theatre managers, those who are conversant with the

nitty-gritty of theatre management as well as those who are undergoing training in the aspect of theatre management.

3:3 Sample size and Sample Technique

For this study, purposive sample technique will be considered more appropriate for this research. Staffs of the University of Benin Theatre Arts department who have practiced theatre management together with Theatre management major students of the aforementioned institution will be considered as respondents.

The sample size targeted 50 respondents due to the niche nature of the research population, which includes theatre management practitioners and theatre management major students. This sample size is adequate to capture a diverse range of perspectives while being manageable for in-depth analysis within the scope of this study.

3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument designed for this study is questionnaire. This instrument was chosen for its ability to gather a broad range of opinions and perspectives efficiently from respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A, which captured demographic details, and Section B, which addressed thematic areas such as audience engagement, funding, and cultural policies. It included a mix of Likert-scale, Yes/No, and

closed-ended questions, ensuring a quantitative data collection. The instrument was pretested for reliability and distributed to respondents via google form.

3.5 Reliability and Validity of Instrument

Reliability and validity is essential to demonstrate that the tool consistently measures what it is intended to measure and that the results are credible and accurate.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the instrument in producing similar results under similar conditions;

- Internal consistency: The internal consistency of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a reliability.
- Pilot test: pilot study was conducted with respondents from the target population to test the instrument's clarity, feedback from the pilot test was used to refine the questions for better precision.

Validity

According to Egbule validity is used to refer to the accuracy and truth of the data and findings that are produced". (360) In this study, content validity was carried out during the formative stage of the study. Most importantly, the instrument was subjected to the

thorough scrutiny of my indefatigable supervisor.

3:6 **Method of Data Presentation**

The data gathered during the research work will be analyze using sample percentage to determine the perception of the respondents in relation to the question raised in the research and the result will be presented in a tabular form.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4:1. Data Presentation

The presentation and analysis of the data collected from respondents based on the research question asked in the questionnaire are the topic of this chapter.

A total number of 50 questionnaires was distributed by the researcher to respondents who are theatre management practitioners and also students undergoing training in the area of management.

The researcher digitally dispersed the questionnaire and as a result, every distributed questionnaire was recovered. To demonstrate the response to the question, a table will be used and the percentage of each response will be shown.

SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 1: Gender of respondents

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Male	17	34 %
Female	33	66 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of Data: The majority of 33 (66%) respondent were female,

while 17 (34%) were male. This suggests higher female participation in the survey.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
18-26	37	74 %
26-50	13	26 %
50 and above	0	0 %
total	50	100 %

Implication of Data: A significant majority of 37 (74%) respondents were aged (18-26), indicating that the survey primarily captured the views of younger individuals.

A smaller percentage 13 (26%) respondents fell into the (26-50) age group, and none were above 50.

Table 3: Educational Background

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
SSCE	3	6 %
Bachelor's Degree	45	90 %
Master's Degree	1	2 %
Doctorate	1	2 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of Data: The above shows that 45 (90%) of the respondents were Bachelor's Degree holders, with a small percentage holding Master's Degree 1 (2%) and Doctorate Degrees 1 (2%). Only 3 (6%) had completed secondary education (SSCE). This highlights a highly educated respondent group.

Table 4: Years of Experience

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Less than a year	3	6.3 %
1-5 years	46	91.7%
6-10 years	1	2 %
More than 10	0	0 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of Data: this table above show majority of the respondents 46 (91.7%) had 1-5 years of experience, while 3 (6.3%) had less than a year. Only 1 (2%) had

(6-10)years, and no one had more than 10 years of experience. This indicates that most respondents were relatively early in their careers.

SECTION 2: CHALLENGES IN THEATRE MANAGEMENT:

Table 5: To what extent do you agree that lack of government support affects theatre management?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Strongly Agree	24	24%
Agree	26	52 %
Strongly disagree	9	18 %
Disagree	3	6 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of data: The above table shows that 24 (24%) of the respondents strongly agree that lack of government support affects theatre management, 26 (52%) Agree lack of government support affects theatre management, 9 (18%) strongly disagree, and 3 (6%) disagree that lack of government support affects theatre management. This result show that majority of the respondents agree that lack of government support affects theatre management.

Table 6: Do you agree that funding is a significant challenge for theatre management in Nigeria?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Strongly agree	39	78%
Agree	11	22%
Strongly disagree	0	0 %
Disagree	0	0 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of data: The above table shows that 39 (78%) of the respondents strongly agree that funding is a significant challenge for theatre management in Nigeria. While 11 (22%) agree that funding is a significant challenge for theatre management in Nigeria. None of the respondents strongly disagree nor disagree with the assertion. This result shows that 100% respondents concur with this assertion.

Table 7: Is audience engagement a challenge for theatre management in Nigeria?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	42	84 %
No	5	10 %
Neutral	3	6 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of data: The table above shows that 42 (84%) of the respondents affirms that audience engagement is a challenge for theatre management, 5 (10%) disapprove

audiences engagement as a challenge for theatre management, while 3 (6%) are uncertain in their disposition. This result show that majority of the respondents affirm that audiences engagement is a challenge in theatre management.

Table 8: Are there shortages of skilled professionals in the Nigerian theatre management industry?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
yes	20	40 %
No	9	18 %
Neutral	21	42 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of data: The table above shows that 20 (40%) of respondents affirm that is shortage of skilled professionals, 9 (18%) disapprove to that, while 21 (42%) are uncertain in their disposition. This result show that majority of respondents are uncertain if there is shortage of skilled professionals in the theatre management industry.

Table 9: Do you think that inadequate infrastructure affects theatre productions?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Strongly Agree	35	70 %
Agree	15	30%
Strongly disagree	0	0 %
Disagree	0	10%
Total	50	100%

Implication of data: The table above show that 35 (70%) of respondents strongly agree that inadequate infrastructure affects theatre production, while 15 (30%) agree that infrastructure affects theatre production. None of the respondents strongly disagree nor digress with the assertion. This result shows that majority of the respondents strongly agree that infrastructure affects theatre productions.

SECTION 3: OPPORTUNITIES IN THEATRE MANAGEMENT

Table 10: What do you think is the best opportunity for growth in Nigeria theatre?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Digital platform	8	16 %
Cultural tourism	1	2 %
Sponsorship and partnerships	35	70 %
International collaborations	12	12%
Total	50	100%

Implication of data: The table as presented above shows that 8 (16%) of respondents believed digital platforms will help grow Nigeria theatre, 1 (2%) went for cultural tourism, 35 (70%) believe sponsorship and partnerships will grow the theatre, while 12 (12%) believe international collaboration will grow the Nigeria theatre. The results show that majority of the respondents think sponsorship and partnerships will help grow the Nigeria theatre.

Table 11: Do you think that technology have positively impacted theatre productions in Nigeria?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Strongly agree	15	30 %
Agree	33	66 %
Strongly disagree	1	2 %
Disagree	1	2 %
Total	50	100 %

Implication of data: The table above as presented shows that 15 (30%) of respondents strongly agree that technology have positively impacted theatre production in Nigeria, 33 (66%) agree to that, 1 (2%) strongly disagree, and 1 (2%) disagree. This above results show that majority of the respondents agree that technology have positively impacted theatre production in Nigeria.

Table 12: Are there potentials for Nigeria theatre to gain more recognition on the global stage?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Yes	45	90 %
No	4	8 %
Neutral	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Implication of data: This table shows that 45 (90%) of respondents affirm that there is

potential for Nigeria theatre to gain recognition on global stage,1 (2%) disapprove to that while 4 (8%) are uncertain about their disposition. This results show that majority of the respondents agree that there is potential for Nigeria theatre to gain recognition on global stage.

Table 13: Do you believe that theatre can play a role in addressing social issues in Nigeria?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Strongly agree	7	14 %
Agree	38	76%
Strongly disagree	1	2%
Disagree	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Implication of data: This table shows that 7 (14%) of the respondents strongly agree that theatre play a role in addressing social issues, 38 (76%) agree to that also,1 (2%) strongly disagree and 4 (8%) disagree that theatre does not play a role in addressing social issues. This results shows that majority of the respondents agree that theatre play a role in addressing social issues in Nigeria.

Table 14: Will partnership with educational institutions benefit theatre management?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Strongly agree	18	36%
Agree	30	60%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Implication of data: The table shows that 18 (36%) of the respondents strongly agree that partnership with educational institutions will benefit theatre management, 30 (60%) also agree, none strongly disagree that partnership with educational institutions will benefit theatre management, while 2 (4%) disagree. This results shows that majority of the respondents agree that partnership with educational institutions will benefit theatre management.

Table 15: Do you agree that Nigeria theatre play a role in promoting cultural heritage?

VARIABLES	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Strongly agree	17	35%
Agree	28	58%
Strongly disagree	2	4%
Disagree	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Implication of data: This table shows that 17 (35%) of the respondents strongly agree that Nigeria theatre play a role in promoting cultural heritage, 28 (58%) also agree to that, 2 (4%) strongly disagree, while 1 (2 %) disagree that Nigeria theatre does not play a role in promoting cultural heritage. This result show that majority of the respondents agree that Nigeria theatre play a role in promoting cultural heritage.

4:2 Discussion of Finding

The study's findings provide a thorough grasp of the opportunities and difficulties Nigerian theatre management faces in the twenty-first (21st) century. The replies from 50 participants—a mix of students and theatre management professionals—offer insightful information on the realities of the industry. These results are consistent with the reviewed literature and draw attention to recurrent themes of limited government support, audience engagement, poor infrastructure, and funding constraints. They also point to possible growth paths through partnerships, globalisation, and digital transformation.

Challenges in Theatre Management

1. Funding Constraints

According to the findings, 78% of respondents strongly agreed that money had an impact on theatre administration in Nigeria, making it the most major challenge. This result validates the claims made by academics like Rick Lester, who highlight the challenge of striking a balance between artistic aspirations and financial limitations. Nigerian theatre's financial volatility restricts its capacity to make investments in essential resources like cutting-edge facilities, top-notch productions, and successful marketing plans. Theatres find it difficult to remain stable operationally, much less produce works of art, when they lack sufficient money.

This difficulty is made worse by the inability to make a sizable profit from ticket sales because of the financial circumstances of many Nigerians. This supports Ekwuazi's prior findings that the expansion of theatrical companies in Nigeria is frequently hampered by budgetary limitations.

2. Inadequate Infrastructure

The issue of inadequate infrastructure was also prominent, with 70% of respondents strongly agreeing that it affects theatre productions. As noted by Akpan, the lack of

dedicated and adequately equipped theatre spaces hampers the quality of productions and diminishes audience experiences. Many productions are forced to rely on unconventional venues such as hotels or event centres, which often lack the technical resources necessary for professional theatre.

Respondents further noted that poorly maintained existing facilities, such as the National Theatre in Lagos, highlight the lack of prioritisation for infrastructure development in the arts sector. This corroborates findings in the literature that infrastructure deficiencies limit the capacity of theatre practitioners to fully realise their creative vision.

3. Audience Engagement

Audience engagement was identified as a critical issue, with 84% of respondents agreeing that it poses a challenge. Shifting audience preferences, the proliferation of alternative entertainment options, and the high cost of live theatre have contributed to a decline in attendance. As noted by Jennifer Radbourne, theatre managers must navigate these challenges by fostering a deeper connection with their audiences.

The findings suggest that younger generations, in particular, are increasingly drawn to digital and on-demand entertainment, creating a significant challenge for theatre practitioners to capture and retain their attention.

4. Lack of Government Support

The findings indicate a significant lack of government support for theatre, with 76% of respondents agreeing that it adversely affects theatre management. This aligns with Okagbue's observations that inconsistent cultural policies and underfunding have long hindered the development of Nigerian theatre. Respondents noted that the absence of government funding forces theatre practitioners to rely heavily on private sponsorship, which is often directed toward more commercially viable sectors such as Nollywood and music.

Opportunities in Theatre Management

1. Digital Transformation and Technology

Respondents were optimistic about the role of technology, with 66% agreeing that it has positively impacted theatre production. Adeosun's work highlights how digital platforms and online marketing strategies can expand audience reach and streamline operations. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of virtual performances, demonstrating the potential of technology to sustain the industry amidst external challenges.

The integration of technology into production design, such as the use of advanced lighting and sound systems, was also noted as a means of modernising Nigerian theatre

and making it more competitive on the global stage.

2. Sponsorships and Partnerships

Sponsorships and partnerships were identified as the most promising avenue for growth, with 70% of respondents selecting them as the best opportunity for Nigerian theatre. Collaborations with corporate sponsors, educational institutions, and international organisations can provide the resources and expertise needed to overcome existing challenges. Bronwyn Cosgrave's analysis of strategic alliances emphasises how partnerships can unlock new funding sources and facilitate knowledge sharing.

3. Global Recognition

The potential for Nigerian theatre to gain global recognition was affirmed by 90% of respondents. Increased participation in international festivals, collaborations with foreign theatre companies, and the incorporation of global themes into productions were highlighted as pathways for achieving this goal. As noted by Adelugba and Awodiya, globalisation has exposed Nigerian theatre practitioners to diverse styles and techniques, enriching their creative output.

4. Cultural Preservation and Social Impact

The findings also emphasize the role of theatre in promoting cultural heritage and addressing social issues. A significant majority (93%) of respondents agreed that theatre

can play a vital role in these areas. Community-based theatre initiatives, as suggested by Adebajo, offer a platform for cultural expression and societal reflection, fostering unity and social change.

Conclusion of Findings

The findings show that theatre administration in Nigeria in the twenty-first century (21st) faces a challenging environment. Although the sector has many obstacles to overcome, such as limited finance, inadequate infrastructure, and problems with audience participation, there are also many of chances for expansion and innovation. Theatre professionals may overcome these challenges and establish Nigerian theatre as a dynamic and competitive force on the international scene by utilising technology, establishing strategic alliances, and pushing for improved government regulations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The potential and difficulties that Nigerian theatre administration faces in the twenty-first century were examined in this project. The study addressed issues like funding, infrastructure, audience involvement, and government backing, highlighting the vital role theatre management plays in maintaining and advancing the performing arts. The results showed that the theatrical sector still face many challenges, despite its significance as a cultural and economic force.

Lack of sufficient finance was one of the main problems found, which restricts theatre professionals' capacity to make investments in high-calibre productions and state-of-the-art facilities. In a similar vein, inadequate infrastructure was identified as a major obstacle, with many theatres being either badly maintained or unfit for stage shows. The emergence of digital entertainment and changing leisure tastes have made it more difficult to draw in and hold on to audiences, making audience engagement another urgent topic. The results also highlighted the effects of uneven government assistance, which has forced theatrical professionals to mostly rely on private funding.

However, the study also identified a number of prospects that have the potential to revolutionize Nigeria's theatre sector. Technology was viewed as a key facilitator, with digital platforms providing fresh approaches to enhance production quality and reach larger audiences. Partnerships were shown to be essential for gaining access to capital, knowledge, and new markets, both domestically and abroad. Nigerian theatre has a great chance to become well-known throughout the world by utilising its rich cultural legacy and collaborating with other countries. Additionally, theatre's contribution to social transformation and cultural preservation was emphasised as a means of promoting national identity and tackling urgent societal challenges.

Overall, the project showed that there is a lot of space for improvement even if Nigerian theatre administration faces significant obstacles. The industry may get past these obstacles and become a powerful influence in regional and international arts communities by embracing innovation, establishing strategic alliances, and pushing for improved regulations.

5.2 Conclusion

The theatre sector in Nigeria is at a turning point, juggling both enormous obstacles and exciting prospects. This study has shown how important theatre administration is to the

nation's performing arts' long-term viability and expansion. The sector's advancement is nevertheless hampered by major issues like poor audience participation, limited infrastructure, a lack of finance, and little government assistance. These problems restrict the industry's capacity to compete globally in addition to lowering the calibre of productions.

Nevertheless, the results also show a great deal of unrealized potentials. Modernizing theatrical operations and reaching a wider audience through online platforms and virtual performances are made possible by digital transformation. Partnerships, sponsorships, and international cooperation can provide Nigerian theatre with much-needed funding and visibility. Additionally, Nigeria's cultural diversity offers a solid platform for using theatrical works to address social issues and promote cultural heritage.

In order for the theatrical sector to prosper, stakeholders need to cooperate in order to tackle the issues that have been identified. Education institutions, private sponsors, legislators, and theatre management practitioners must embrace innovation, invest in infrastructure, and give priority to sustainable practices. Government action is essential for the sector's long-term growth, especially in the form of steady funding and encouraging regulations.

In conclusion, despite the considerable obstacles Nigerian theatre administration must overcome, these difficulties also offer chances for development, creativity, and international acclaim. The industry may develop into a dynamic, influential, and fiercely competitive force on a worldwide scale with careful planning and teamwork, guaranteeing that theatre will always be used as a medium for artistic expression as well as a means of bringing about social and cultural change.

5:3 **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings and objectives, here are recommendations:

- Establish a systematic challenge identification and resolution process, involving regular reporting systems, quarterly review meetings, and task forces to address major issues like funding constraints and facility inadequacies.
- Develop a structured collaboration program with other theatre institutions, focusing on knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and joint productions to enhance management practices and artistic quality.
- Implement a comprehensive fundraising and resource development strategy, including establishing an endowment fund, developing revenue-generating activities, creating business partnerships, and exploring grant opportunities to ensure long-term

sustainability of theatre programs.

- Create programmes that appeal to various demographics and interests. This can involve staging plays that reflect and speak to contemporary issues and offering accessible ticket pricing to ensure inclusivity.
- Fostering collaborations and partnerships with private sector and non-governmental organizations and even international organizations. These partnerships can provide access to funding, expertise and technical support. It can also open ways to explore sponsorship opportunities, seek grants and donations from foundations.
- Theatre industries must constantly find new ways to use technology to spread up their processes, reach more audiences and deliver their products and services better.

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APPENDIX

Department of Theatre Arts,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Benin,
Benin City,
Edo State.

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR THE COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

I am a final-year student of the department and institution named above, carrying out a research on the topic Challenges and Opportunities facing Nigeria Theatre Management in the 21st Century. I hereby request your assistance in the completion of this questionnaire.

Be assured that any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

OJOMI MIRACLE OKEOGHENE.
Researcher

SECTION ONE (DEMOGRAPHIC DATA)

1. Gender: Male () Female ()
2. Age Bracket : ()18-26 () 26-50 ()50 and above
3. Educational Background: SSCE() Bachelor's Degree () Master's Degree () Doctorate ()
4. Years of Experience: less than 1year () 1-5years () 6-10years () more than 10years.

Section 2: Challenges in Theatre Management

5. To what extent do you agree that lack of government support affects theatre management.
()Strongly agree () Agree () Strongly disagree () Disagree
6. Do you agree that funding is a significant challenge for theatre management in Nigeria.()Strongly agree () Agree () Strongly disagree ()Disagree
7. Is audience engagement a challenge for theatre management in Nigeria. () Yes () No () Neutral
8. Is there a shortage of skilled professionals in the Nigerian theatre management industry.() Yes () No () Neutral
9. Do you think that inadequate infrastructure affects theatre productions.() Strongly agree () Agree () Strongly disagree () Disagree
10. What do you think is the best opportunity for growth in Nigerian theatre.()Digital platforms () Cultural tourism ()Sponsorship and partnerships ()International collaborations
11. Do you think that technology has positively impacted theatre production in Nigeria.() Strongly agree () Agree () Strongly disagree () Disagree.
12. Is there potential for Nigerian theatre to gain more recognition on the global stage () Yes () No () Neutral
13. Do you believe that theatre can play a role in addressing social issues in Nigeria. ()Strongly agree () Agree () Strongly disagree () Disagree

14. Will partnerships with educational institutions benefit theatre management. ()Strongly agree
() Agree () Strongly disagree () Disagree
15. Do you agree that Nigeria theatre play a role in promoting cultural heritage. ()Strongly agree
() Agree () Strongly disagree () Disagree