

RESEARCHING THE THEATRE IN THE THIRD WORLD: Issues and Insights

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Abstract

Research, a committed scholar's delight and a fruitful fact-finding process is the hub of scholarship. Importantly, research is a catalyst and a strategy for sustainable development. However, the pedagogy of research in Africa has unfortunately created overlapping results or at best, a split identity a mere rehash of critical issues in the developmental process. Thus, this has led to the contention between adequate and inadequate research in African scholarship. This paper, therefore, examines the issue of research in the African theatre. Particular reference is made to Nigeria, a third world country. The survey method of research was adopted for this study. Subsequently, the final population for this study consisted of 90 well-administered questionnaires in 11 Universities in Nigeria, randomly distributed to lecturers. The simple descriptive statistics was employed in our analysis. Among several others, we found out that most Nigerian theatre arts' scholars have been (unknowingly) recycling and are not reading themselves. They avoid field or survey research, run away from traditional theatre research and are hemmed down by inadequate finance and facilities. For the theatre to play sustainable role in the developmental process, we concluded that theatre research in Africa must be re-invented and re-directed towards a positive paradigm shift.

Introduction

The university is the last factory for formal education. It is the highest hagiology of human learning. A place that housed the conservatives and the progressives, the radicals and the moderates,

the rabid theoreticians and the quintessential experimentalists, the peace-makers and the trouble makers, the leaders and the followers, sinners and saints, the contractors and the men of God, the senators and the “sinators”. Indeed, the metaphors, the conjectures, the main themes and tendencies within the local, national and international markets can be found in the university which can also be seen as the didactic structure of the universe. As the universal foundation of knowledge for knowledge seekers and searchers, the university is also a parable of the Biblical Tower of Babel whose researches and researchers have contributed greatly to the development of the global world.

Fortunately, most of the celebrated and glorified theories, innovations and discoveries within the humanities, social sciences and the sciences are the products of researches in the university by researchers. Research itself is a committed scholar's delight and a fruitful-fact finding process which is the hub of scholarship. As a catalyst and a strategy for sustainable development, research opens the unknown to the world and expands the known for modification and re-modification.

Paradoxically, the pedagogy of research in Africa has unfortunately created overlapping results or at best, a split identity a mere rehash of critical issues in the developmental process. Thus, this has led to the contention between adequate and inadequate research in African scholarship.

This paper, therefore, examines the issue of research in the African theatre. Particular reference is made to Nigeria, a third world country. The survey method of research was adopted for this study. Subsequently, the final population for this study consisted of 90 well-administered questionnaires in 11 Universities in Nigeria, randomly distributed to lecturers. The simple descriptive statistics was employed in our analysis.

Literature Review

Considering the relevant of some core concepts such as sustainable development, research, theatre and so on to this study, our

literature review is divided into two main sub-headings. This is with a view to linking them to our research topic and create corresponding analysis for relative discourse. The two main sub-headings are:

- A. Theatre and Sustainable Development in Africa and
- B. The Theatre Research and Researcher in Africa

a. Theatre and Sustainable Development in Africa

Freire (1972), Boal (1979), Abah (1980, 1985, 1990, 1994 and 1996), Etherton (1982 and 1988), Kidd (1984), Desai (1990), Malomo (1991), Drewal (1991), Obafemi (1996 and 1999), Musa (2006), Komolafe (2006 and 2008) and many other scholars across the globe have examined the evolution and the poetics of theatre and sustainable development. The argument as to the relevance and irrelevance of the theatre for sustainable development has also been laid to rest. The main thrust is that the theatre is, the theatre has, and the theatre will continue to play a role in sustainable development through conscientisation, engineering, re-engineering and the dramatic communication of all variables in the developmental process.

In sustainable development parlance through the theatre, some core concepts have also emerged. These are the concepts of:

1. Community Theatre (CT)
2. Theatre for Development (TfD)
3. Theatre for Integrated Development (TIDE)
4. Theatre for Integrated Rural Development (THIRD)
5. Community Theatre for Integrated development (CTHIRD)
6. Children Theatre for Development (CTD)
7. Street Theatre (ST)
8. Guerilla Theatre (GT) and
9. Prison Theatre for Development (PTFD)

Abah (1994 and 1996), Dandaura (1999) and Musa (2006) have written extensively on some of the above. What is important is that the theatre for sustainable development is a poetic of dramatic re-creation which involves theatre practitioners (animators) and the people (audience) who are the direct beneficiary of the performance. The people who serve as the audience are also the ones who will participate in the process of making the performance a reality. In fact, Abah (1994:82) reflects that:

Popular theatre in Africa is a hybrid practice encompassing dialogue drama, which is Western in orientation and origin and indigenous performance forms, such as singing, drumming, dancing, puppetry and mime. The emergence of this new mode of theatre practice is due to the disenchantment with the elite theatre of illusion and separation as propagated by Aristotle in his *Poetics*.

Rather than being flowery and dense, the dialectics of theatre for sustainable development breaks the barriers of metaphors, obscure dramaturgy and engenders efficient and effective, communication through African aesthetic resources in the total theatre idiom. The barriers of the Western theatre imposed proscenium stage and the glitz of modern lighting equipment are also discarded during the stage presentation of the performance of theatre for sustainable development.

Obafemi (1999:1) has also affirms that popular theatre “is a theatre of grassroots, popular awareness, mobilization and conscientization.” This theatre has a target and it is mainly targeted at “mass sectors of the society-peasants, lumpen and urban 'proletariat' and marginalized peoples-for the purpose of

confronting their political, economic and social deprivations” (1). Critically as well, the theatre for sustainable development is “a denominational theatre of mass appeal. Its taxonomy of socio-political, economic, religious and cultural reflections makes it an accepted theatre of the majority in a given ethno-traditional society although its claws often spread to neighbouring societies” (Musa, 2004:164).

Unlike the conventional theatre, theatre for sustainable development has a laid out methodology which must be followed. These are divided into seven steps: they include:

1. Preliminaries - visits to a community to identify a project and seeking permission from elders.
2. Community research - informal information gathering system involving the people rather than formal research.
3. A communal analysis of the data - this will lead to prioritisation of issues.
4. Scenario building - this will enable the community to create the story themselves.
5. Rehearsals - this will enable the community to try out its skills and explore the possibility of action in concrete reality.
6. Performance and post performance discussions.
7. Follow-through - this will enable the community to pursue strategies agreed upon as a result of the community theatre activity (Okwori, 2004:31-2).

Subsequently, community and societal development problems such as lack of pipe-borne water and electricity, bad roads, HIV/AIDS health pandemic, religio-political and socio-cultural strives and conflicts have all being dramatized through theatre for sustainable development which centres on “human development rather than material development” (Musa, 2003:17). This is what Nyerere (1968:13) says will bring freedom. The theatre is thus a

social instrument which is beyond the hilarity and epistemology of entertainment.

b. The Theatre Research and Researcher in Africa

The theatre discipline is housed in the Faculty of Humanities and Arts. It is, therefore, certain that the crisis of recognition and identity facing almost all courses in Arts will inevitably affect the theatre discipline. Adepegba (1999:3) in fact says that this has “created a foggy of perception of the art forms, it has also appeared as a dilemma in the creative efforts of emergent African artists”. This perception is in sharp contrast to the residual knowledge of an African man. Perhaps, Layiwola (1999:ix) captures the gift of knowledge of the African man more lucidly when he reflects that on the African continent that, “every old man or woman a living library; every economic tree an archive and every hillside and cave a museum”.

Theatre research in Africa is thus divided into two main poles:

(a) Those who are parodying Western imposed cultures, theories and ideals for the re-invention of Africa culture and theatre.

(b) Those who are struggling or fighting back to re-write and re-visit African glorious “pasts” in the gamut of African national rebirth and renaissance.

The struggle of scholars in literary studies to carry out research in what is beneficial or developmental has led to five types of critics in African literature. These, according to Gugelberger (1985:5) are the “Larsonist critics, African Euro-centric critics, Bolekaja critics, Ogunist critics and Marxist critics (radical chic-ists)”. The contention of these five critics can also find theoretical foundation in the cultural background to the transformation and evolution of African theatre scholars between the Evolutionists, Relativists, Referentialists, Diasporans and Alienists' schools. All these

schools have been sufficiently theorised by Uka (2001:1) who sees these contentions as our continuous search to “fighting the windmills of ignorance”.

Interestingly, Western scholars such as Berth Lidfors, Geoffrey Axworthy, Susan Wenger, Michael Etherton, James Gibbs, Ulli and Georgina Beier, Charles Larson, Peggy Harper and so on have carried out stimulating researches and help to globalised and popularised African cultural dynamics. To some African theatre scholars such as Adelugba (1991 and 2003), Osofisan (2001), Uka (2001) and Soyinka (1975) this over-intellectualisation of African theatre by Western scholars has, however, led to the hybridization of the performing arts. For instance, a tone of cultural crisis reflected that “the fundamental concern about the on-going vulgarization of the ethos of Yoruba social and cultural life is manifested most in the performative arts (Ogundele, Obafemi and Abodunrin, 2001:xiv). This cultural debasement is not peculiar to Yoruba theatre alone. This is a common trend in Africa cultural industry.

Theatre research in Africa is not insulated from African sheer political domination and suppression through colonisation. Our educational system is pro-Western and this has inevitably affected our culture which is the engine room of African theatre. Therefore, we are totally in support of Obafemi (1994:34) when he frankly concludes that:

Colonial hegemony in Africa did not only manifest itself in the political and economic life of the people, it also shaped the direction of African literature in a significant way. Early literate African art works, especially dramatic productions were largely informed by European entertainment forms like music hall, morality plays and operatic performances.

This has clearly shown that a scholar or a dramatist can only give what he has and that which he has learnt.

The key political bride of neo-colonialism has also affected African arts in general and the performing arts in particular. From Kenya to Malawi, Ghana to Nigeria, South Africa to Uganda, African theatre is currently hemmed down by underdevelopment in terms of manpower and material resources. A leading voice in African theatre, James Gibbs has mourned the underdevelopment of African theatre in Malawi, Ghana and Nigeria. In fact, Gibbs (2001:2) celebrates the productions of William Shakespeare's plays in African countries especially *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice*. We are not condemning the dramatic re-creation of these plays because of their political undertones especially for African leaders, what we are criticising is the neglect of African aesthetic resources within the elegance of these performances.

On the underdevelopment of material resources in the African theatre, with particular reference to Malawi, Magalasi (2001:19) has confirmed that:

To date Malawi has no theatre building except multi-purpose halls like The Great Hall at Chancellor College in Zomba, and Institute for Sports in Lilongwe, which theatre companies do not have full access to except on performance days. Performance had to and still continue to make do with either Open Air Theatres, School and club halls, pubs etc.

This is condemnable. The theatre artists in Malawi too are not helping the case for theatre infrastructural development because the "attempts at forming a national theatre organisation has been too erratic and ad hoc, with so many drama groups' tensions tearing

it apart" (Chimombo, 1994:19). Added to this, is the censorship of performances and plays that the African dramatists have to contend with as we research the theatre in Africa.

Research in the African theatre in the late 1950s to the present has also thrown up a few challenges. The first is that some African culture and oral performance forms have been under-researched. Schechner (1988) has partly dwelled on this although Akwang (2002) has also reviewed the essence of oral and pedlar performances within the academic circle.

African theatre scholars' over-reliance on Western popular theories has also become the bane of African theatre research. Karl Marx's Marxism, Jacque Derrida's Deconstruction Theory, Brechtian Epic Theatre, Classicism and so on have been turned into rituals of repetition in the African theatre research and this has led to hybridism. Certainly, most of these theories are intellectual heritage in the universality of theatre scholarship. However, Dapo Adelugba wants African literary researcher to explore indigenous theories and study the works of high-flying scholars instead of the unnecessary attraction that we are given Western scholars' works. He also condemns our bias towards one ideology:

If anything perhaps, we provide another platform for dialogues across ideological fronts - the socialist or the capitalist dialogue could take place within the framework of theatre arts projects. We need not make all theatre arts projects either capitalist-oriented or socialist-oriented. We can now start to have zero ideology in which there are perspectives representing the different ideologies, working together on the same project(Adelugba in Dasylyva, 2003:229).

Through his works in 1977, 1991 and 2003, Dapo Adelugba believes

that Marxist theatre is not the theatre of the people. This position is in dialectical conflict with that of the Ife - Ibadan, Nigerian Marxist's school radically led by Femi Osofisan and Biodun Jeyifo which later extended to the Ilorin Marxist's school championed by Olu Obafemi and Akanji Nasiru.

Research in the African theatre has also led to the articulation of some theories even though more are still expected. Soyinka's fourth stage, Sam Ukala's folkism, Femi Osofisan's theatre of poverty, Ola Rotimi's theatre-in-the-round, Segun Oyekunle and Tunde Fatunde's theatre-on-the-wheel of Pidgin-English, Sutherland's Anasegoro, Fugard's dialectical romance with revolution and so on are some good examples at originality in the use of African theatrical resource materials. Certainly, research output makes the individual. It is also "a very important measure of the esteem and relevance of a university" (Okebukola, 2008:11).

Researching the Theatre in the Third World: Data Analysis from the Nigerian Theatre

a. The Population of study

The Population for this study consists of 90 well-administered questionnaires collected back from selected theatre scholars and practitioners across the country out of the 110 questionnaires randomly distributed. We purposively selected eleven Universities in Nigeria where questionnaires were administered. The Universities chosen by us represented some of the Federal, State and Private Universities in Nigeria.

b. Sample and Sampling Procedure

Questionnaires were given to lecturers and theatre practitioners in 11 selected Nigerian Universities across the geo-political zones. This is to enable us to get to the root of the core issues and insights in relation to theatre research in the Nigerian theatre. Some of the

Universities in Nigeria that 70 to 100% of our questionnaires were well-administered and returned are:

1. University of Abuja, Abuja
2. University of Lagos, Akoka - Lagos
3. University of Ibadan, Ibadan
4. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
5. Kogi State University, Ayingba
6. Delta State University, Abraka
7. Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island
8. Redeemer's University, Mowe
9. Lagos State University, Ojoo
10. University of Uyo, Uyo
and
11. University of Ilorin, Ilorin

The simple random sample method was used in distributing the questionnaires on the basis of 10 questionnaires per university.

c. Method of Data Analysis

The data of the questionnaires will be presented through the table format and analysed through the qualitative and quantitative methods. The finding will also be analysed in form of brief statement based on the information gotten from the questionnaires. The simple descriptive statistics, using percentages, is going to be employed. Frequency of response will be converted to simple percentages. The percentage formula falls under the descriptive statistics and it will be worked out thus:

$$\frac{X}{N} = \frac{100}{1}$$

X here represents the respondents' opinions on the different questions raised which maybe positive or negative to the research questions and other demographic characteristics. N means the cumulative total of the number or figure of the respondents who

returned our questionnaires. The result of X over N will thus be converted to a simple percentage.

d. Data Presentation and Result Analysis

As discussed earlier, a total number of 110 questionnaires were randomly distributed to lecturers. However, our data presentation and result analysis for this study will be based on the 90 copies of the completed questionnaires returned.

1. The Demographic Tables

Table A(i): The main intention of this table is for us to know our respondents' age:

AGE	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
20 - 30 years	13	14
30 - 40 years	25	28
40 - 50 years	35	39
50 - 60 years	11	12
60 - 70 years	6	7
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: Clearly, majority of the respondents who responded to our questionnaires falls between age brackets of 30 to 40 and 40 to 60 representing (67%). The implication of this is that mature and young lecturers responded to our questionnaires. Most of our findings will thus be based on the opinions of the experienced and young scholars in relation to theatre research.

Interestingly, 75 or (83%) of our respondents are married while 15 or (17%) are single. 20 or (22%) of our respondents are female while 70 or (78%) are male. With this result, it is still clear that the male dominates theatre scholarship in the Nigerian theatre.

This will have far-reaching effects for theatre based gender scholarship.

2. Table A(ii): The main intention of this table is for us to know our respondents' educational qualification:

AGE	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
First Degree	10	11
Master Degree	34	38
Ph.D	46	51
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: 51% of our respondents have Ph.D degrees. Most of them are Senior Lecturers and Professors while 38% have Master Degrees. The implication of this is that Nigerian theatre scholars are now working very hard to obtain Ph.D degrees. This is very important because the regulatory body for university education in Nigeria, NUC has given a directive that any willing lecturer should obtain the Ph.D degree or face the music. For us in this research, the direction is that the opinions and results gotten from quality 46 Ph.D holders can, to some point, help in re-inventing theatre research in Nigeria, our module for a third world country.

It has come to fore through our survey that 89% of our respondents choose Theatre/Performing/Dramatic and Creative Arts related courses during their admission process for their first degrees. Paradoxically, 11% of our respondents who are mainly first degree holders did not choose theatre related courses during their admission process. The implication of this is that the theatre, to this insignificant population is chosen because they probably cannot be admitted into the so called high-flying courses such as law, accounting, engineering and medicine. Importantly, Secondary School students should be informed through sensitization and engineering, the potentials inherent in theatre

practice and scholarship. It is good to catch them young and give career direction to people at their young age.

3. **Table B:** This table is to find out from our respondents the main areas of arts of the theatre that they specialize in the course of getting their (B.A, M.A and Ph.D) degrees:

AREAS OF SPECIALISATION	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Acting	2	2
Directing	8	9
Technical Theatre	8	9
Dramatic Literature and Criticism	33	37
Traditional Theatre	3	3
Media Arts	10	11
Dance	7	8
Music	3	3
Playwriting	6	7
Theatre-for-Development	2	2
Theatre Management	6	7
Costume and make-up	2	2
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: This table has shown that most Nigerian lecturers (33 out of 90) or (37% out of 100%) have degrees in Dramatic Literature and Criticism. This should be seen as the inheritance from the British system of education. It is certain that the British theatre scholarship lies heavily on Dramatic Literature and criticism. The table has also shown that 12 main areas of the theatre are prominently being taught or represented in the Nigerian Universities where theatre related courses are being offered. Yet, there is one interesting dimension to this table. This is the fact that a few of our respondents have their first degrees from the areas that are different from their Master or Ph.D degrees and vice-versa. Though this may be as a result of our respondents' attempt at exploring their God-given potentials in other arts of the theatre, it is

most advisable for a theatre scholar to focus on one major arts of the theatre instead of supporting the age old proverb of "jack of all trades, master of none". Expectedly, most of our respondents are publishing or carrying out research in their areas of specialisation. Appalling also, is the fact that only 3% of our respondents have their degrees in Traditional Theatre.

On interdisciplinary research and discourse, 21% of our respondents have completed research works in interdisciplinary scholarship and on joint research efforts. This study has shown that 79% of our respondents have not carried out joint research efforts with their colleagues. This implies that research efforts in the Nigerian theatre re-affirm individualism as against collectivism which is the mainstay of the theatre. We should not forget that theatre is a group art.

4. **Table C:** This is to find out from our respondents, the research areas/ arts of the theatre they dislike.

AREAS OF DISLIKE IN THE THEATRE	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Technical Theatre	25	28
Dance	18	20
Music	12	13
Acting	2	2
Traditional Theatre	26	29
Theatre Management	7	8
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: No matter the numbers of respondents who responded to "research areas of dislike in the Theatre", what is important to note is that theatre research areas such as: Technical Theatre, Dance, Music, Acting, Traditional Theatre and Theatre Management have not been fully researched into and developed in the Nigerian theatre scholarship. Most researchers often concluded that the above research areas are "difficult", "dead end", "undignifying" and that they "don't have the inherent artistic

potentials” for them. On traditional theatre, the point is that most respondents cannot walk nor do a research in the jungle. Fortunately, the ignored jungle housed the best of our culture.

5. **Table D:** A table conceived to find out the likely problems facing the proper conduct of research in the Nigerian theatre.

PROBLEMS OF RESEARCH IN THE NIGERIAN THEATRE	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Inadequate finance/Research facilities and materials	62	69
Researcher’s unwillingness to work within the available resources	12	13
Researcher’s apathy towards theatre research	16	18
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: 69% of our respondents agreed that “inadequate finance/research facilities and materials” are the bane of theatre research in the Nigerian theatre. The implication of this is that Government and other financiers of education have been indicted for not providing enough finance, facilities and materials for theatre research. However, “researcher's apathy towards theatre research” (18%) should not be ignored.

6. **Table E:** This is an inquiry into the best method of research for theatre scholarship.

BEST METHOD OF RESEARCH FOR THEATRE SCHOLARSHIP	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Survey/Field research method	65	72
Deductive /analytical research method	15	17
Observer-participant method	10	11
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: 72% of our respondents are of the opinion that the “survey/field research method” is the best for theatre research and scholarship. This cannot be debated because the survey field research method is the conglomeration of opinions out of which aggregate will be qualitatively discovered. Ironically, a research question specially directed to our respondents for them to tell us the research method that they are frequently using while carrying out their theatre research showed that most of our respondents have preference for the “Deductive/analytical” and “the observer-participant” methods instead of the survey/field method. (14%) have, however, used the survey method once or twice.

7. **Table F:** This is an inquiry into how often our respondents read other researchers' works in the theatre.

HOW OFTEN DO RESPONDENTS READ OTHER RESEARCHERS' WORKS IN THE THEATRE	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Frequently	15	17
Not too frequently	55	61
Occasionally	17	19
Except if it is necessary	3	3
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: This result has shown that it is not only the semi-educated Nigerians alone that are not reading enough. Low reading culture has also crept into the culture of the academics. Invariably, therefore, 83% of our respondents are *NOT* reading the research works of their colleagues. This is quite unfortunately, although (17%) of our respondents cannot afford not to read their colleagues' works. This accounts for a non-research and non-publication trend of some of our respondents. 79% of them

objectively submitted that they have *NOT* done any research from January to December, 2008 (the period) of this study. This is an indication of a low output although credits should be given to the 21% who are constantly working and thus promoting theatre scholarship and practice.

8. Table G: A research question designed to find out from our respondents, the Nigerian theatre scholar whose research works influenced them most.

NIGERIAN THEATRE SCHOLAR WHOSE RESEARCH WORKS INFLUENCED ME MOST	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
Wole Soyinka	14	16
Femi Osofisan	8	9
Dapo Adelugba	10	11
Ola Rotimi	7	8
Dele Layiwola	3	3
Saint Gbilekaa	5	6
Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh	1	1
Mathew Umukoro	1	1
Jide Malomo	1	1
Ojo Rasaki Bakare	2	2
Olu Obafemi	5	6
Alex Asigbo	1	1
Victor Dugga	1	1
Austine Anigala	1	1
Chris Nwamuo	2	2
L. O. Bamidele	2	2
Effiong Johnson	1	1
Tah Ahura	1	1
Charity Angya	1	1
Steve Abah	5	6
Ayo Akinwale	2	2
Sunday Ododo	2	2
Musa R.A	1	1
Ahmed Yerima	5	6
Duro Oni	5	6
Olu Akomolafe	1	1
Sam Ukala	2	2
TOTAL	90	100

Result Analysis: Even if the frequency of response is (1), it is important to note that 27 respondents (lecturers/scholars) listed above have contributed significantly to the Nigerian theatre scholarship. Interestingly, Wole Soyinka leads this table through 14 or (16%) of our respondents who concluded that he has “significantly influenced” them. Dapo Adelugba is commended for having “a deep sense for details”, Femi Osofisan for “creative inventiveness and experiments” and Ola Rotimi for “changing the face of the Nigerian theatre”. The interesting development is that Table G included Nigerian theatre scholars from the first to the second and all through the third generations.

Other main results of our data analysis include the fact that:

- a. 97% of our respondents agreed that the theatre should play significant role in sustainable development.
- b. 88% of our respondents are of the opinion that Nigerian theatre researchers are unknowingly recycling themselves thereby losing the power and quest for original research works.
- c. 71% of our population in this study agreed that young theatre researchers have lukewarm attitude towards theatre research and that they are *NOT* adequately exposed to theatre research by their senior colleagues. Theatre arts' students, as agreed by 67% of our respondents are also not exposed to the rudiments of theatre research.
- d. Technical Theatre, Dance, Music and Acting are the least developed arts of the theatre in the Nigerian theatre. 61% of our respondents agreed to this.
- e. 55% of our respondents are of the opinion that researchers have turned conference venue into cultural jamboree instead of making it an avenue for serious intellection.
and that
- F. 64% of our respondents are of the opinion that theatre researchers are not making their research works available to their colleagues to read or learn from.

Re-inventing Theatre Research in the Third World: Suggestions and Recommendations

As a result of the related socio-political history and experience of one African country to the other, we are of the strong opinion that some of the suggestions and recommendations that will be made in this work can be adopted for the re-invention of theatre research and scholarship in most African countries.

First is the need for theatre researchers to seriously walk into the jungle to expose and research into the traditional African theatre. This, has shown in our study, is still under-researched. If a proper research is carried out to make the unknown culture known, the theatre can then be used as “cultural tourism” and this will help to sustain the economy. Most of the potentially viable and theatrically vibrant theatre-related performances must be researched into and made to be on the global map of theatre practice. Traditional African theatre is the theatre of the people whose identity with the people cannot be ignored.

Related and ignored arts of the theatre such as Technical Theatre, Dance, Music, Acting and Theatre Management should be developed and researched into. Most of these arts of the theatre are central to the development of theatre practice. They should not be ignored. We cannot have theatre or performance without technical theatre and the total theatre idiom, the core performance style rooted in the African festival mode can only succeed if dance and music resources are deployed to suite its aesthetics. Practitioners and scholars in Dance, Music, Acting, Technical Theatre and Theatre Management should, therefore, device means of making these arts of the theatre attractive and teachable to the students.

It is hereby recommended that the Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations through Private Partners' Initiative should fund theatre research in Africa. Funding theatre research should be seen as an investment. It will yield result and one day,

results of theatre researchers' efforts will be celebrated. It is some few theatre researchers, cultural ambassadors, foreigners, Kings, Emirs, Obis and Chiefs that made the now celebrated traditional festivals abode for tourists.

Although there can never be one permanent research method that can be used to researching the theatre, nonetheless, it has come to fore in this study that the survey/field research method is desirable for theatre research. Theatre researchers can begin to make use of this method of research while not ignoring at the same time, the beauty inherent in the observer-participant and deductive/analytical methods of research.

It is curious to note that low reading culture is affecting theatre researchers. It must be remarked here that research types all over the world are meant for the advancement and development of humanity. Hiding research works and preventing colleagues from having access to them should be condemned. It is retrogressive and extremely unacademic. Research works should be made available to colleagues, students and interested scholars. Low reading culture or ego should *NOT* stop us from reading research works presented to us by colleagues. Our growth, the growth of the third world economy depends on adequate research. If we have the opportunity of reading our colleagues' research works, the problem of recycling of research works will be eliminated and this will give room for originality.

Experience is the best teacher. It is, therefore, suggested that works of theatre scholars and researchers such as Wole Soyinka, Dapo Adelugba, Femi Osofisan, Ola Rotimi, Saint Gbilekaa, Olu Obafemi, Steve Abah, Ahmed Yerima, Duro Oni and so on should be studied. They comparatively served as hope for the sustainance and development of theatre practice and scholarship in Nigeria. We cannot all be Wole Soyinka but we can be more vibrant than Wole Soyinka if we choose to. That Dapo Adelugba is a gifted researcher is not in doubt, we can learn from him. Undertaking a study of

Osofisan's theatre may help to change our perception about theatre research in the African theatre. Linked to this, is the fact that senior colleagues should train the young scholars and the young theatre scholars should also make themselves trainable within the modern research instruments and academic mentoring.

The Conclusion

Research, especially in the humanities is a timeless intellectual endeavour. It gives the direction to scholarship and it is a permanent strategy for sustainable development. Consequently, we have attempted the re-invention of theatre research in this study. This is with the hope to changing (radically and progressively), the face of theatre practice and scholarship in the African theatre. Whereas Nigeria is used as our representative country, we are of the opinion that most of our findings and recommendations are applicable to other African countries.

Research is about sustainable development. It is about all of us. We must learn, relearn, change and modify our style of research especially in the third world. We are certain that if this is done, the theatre will play its role in the developmental process. Research in the African theatre must thus (as recommended in the study) be re-invented and re-directed towards a positive paradigm shift.

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