

Reflections on the Mission and Vision Statements of Selected Public Arts Institutions in Nigeria

RUFAI-AHMAD, Kazeem

+2348086972433

[Email-rufaiperform@gmail.com](mailto:rufaiperform@gmail.com)

rufai.ak@unilorin.edu.ng

Department of Performing and Film Arts
University of Ilorin

Abstract

The state of the administration of public arts institutions in Nigeria calls for the attention of stakeholders especially in the area of policy formulation to achieve positive actualisation of their statutory functions. No doubt, Nigerian arts institutions have performed excellently well in the past. However, recent discovery indicated a backward shift in the delivery of services when compared with private arts institutions in Nigeria. Some of the factors responsible for this, are low funding, inexperienced staff and inadequate modern facilities but incoherent, illogical and immeasurable mission and vision statements have not been given adequate scholarly attention to have had influence on the backward shift in the delivery of functions. Through the descriptive method, the paper identifies the incoherence and illogicality in the contents of the mission and vision statements of the selected arts institutions. The paper reveals that the mission and vision need to be refocused, narrowed down and measurable over a particular period of time. The paper concludes that understanding how arts and cultural institutions operate according to their mission and vision is an important aspect of arts administration. The paper, therefore, recommends that arts and cultural administrators and managers should be versatile in both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in arts and cultural administration.

Key words: Arts, Administration, Institution, Mission, Vision

Introduction

The contextual view of arts institutions in Nigeria can be examined from three major perspectives of ownership structure. There are arts institutions owned, controlled and financed by the government and these are termed as public arts institutions. This assertion is supported by Irek (2020, p. 148) that “some of the arts and cultural institutions that arts administration is eminent are situated at the federal and state level”. Some examples of public arts institutions in Nigeria are the various council for Arts and Culture, National Theatre and National Troupe of Nigeria, Nigerian Institute for Cultural Orientation, National Council for Arts and Culture, National Gallery of Arts, National Council for Museum and Monuments, etc. Examples of private arts institutions are Didi museum, Nike Arts Gallery, which are operated, owned and

controlled by individuals with the aim of profit maximisation. They are profit-driven unlike the public arts institutions that are seen as public goods. The third category is the traditional arts institution. According to Akpoworo (2010, p. 64) “established practices based on ethnicity, language and social institutions define the traditional context. Each cultural area accepts unconsciously a distinct body of practices that creates and maintains its own art forms”. In this category are various traditional arts centres such as pottery making centres, blacksmith, leather making, carving and sculpturing, traditional festivals, etc.

The impacts of public arts institutions which are the focus of this paper have been felt in the past especially in the late 70s and early 90s. However, recent development indicated that there are lots of problems militating against their proper administration and management. Among the factors militating against the proper management of these centres are; funding, inadequate modern facilities and inexperienced staff, (Ojewuyi 2011, Irek, 2020). It is imperative to state that the importance of a logical, inspiring and exciting mission and vision statements cannot be over-emphasised. Mission and vision statements are core of arts administration and management because they shape the direction of arts organisations. Ododo, (2022, p. 251) while emphasising the value chain in the Nigerian cultural and creative industry contends that “there is presently no such thing as a well-articulated Nigeria national cultural vision that can guide and synergise such abounding cultural products and the existing creative energies”. This contention bothered on lack of a clearer and realisable vision in the administration of arts and culture in Nigeria. This is succinctly corroborated by Wehbe and Kestner (2024, p.1) that strategic planning thrives more on clearer mission and vision. According to them:

A compelling mission statement is the cornerstone of any strategic plan...effective mission statements are specific, inspirational, and actionable and answer the core question of 'who are we and why do we exist?'. Periodic reviews of the mission are essential to ensure alignment with contemporary goals and community needs.

The terms 'cultural administration' and 'arts management' are connected within the context of realising goals and objectives of arts and cultural institutions bearing in mind the mission and vision statements as exemplified in the policy document which, of course, require periodic review. Administration is that level of conception of ideas on how a new or existing organisation will be driven. Association of Arts Administration Educators (AAAE) (2019, p.1) identifies that institutions covered by Arts and cultural administration include “museums, think tanks, artist residencies, galleries, festivals, orchestras, foundations, arts council, theatre companies, presenting organisations, opera companies, cultural ministries, arts education centres”. All these

arts institutions need clear and direct mission and vision statements which will enhance the actualisation of the set aim and objectives of the institutions.

The focus of this paper, therefore, is to reflect on the mission and vision of the selected public arts institutions in Nigeria to evaluate their level of conformity to the general features of a typical mission and vision statements. This is necessary because of the importance space that mission and vision statements occupy in the administration and management of arts institutions. For the public arts institutions to attain maximum performance in their statutory functions, their mission and vision statements should be unique, exciting, state the main objectives of the institution, the institution's central philosophy, narrowed down and measurable.

Conceptual Perspectives on Arts Administration in Nigeria

The field of arts administration involves vast area of arts and culture and these areas include administration of traditional arts institutions, private arts institutions and government arts institutions such as arts or cultural festivals, theatre, music companies, museum, arts galleries, arts councils, etc. The traditional arts institutions according to Awodiya (2005, p.73) are “festivals, drama, bronze-casting, ivory-carving, sculpture, painting, ceramic, weaving, and divination”. He refuted the common belief that traditional arts institutions do not have managers. Awodiya, therefore, argues that the traditional arts institutions “are managed by authorized individuals, families or guilds” (Awodiya, 2005, p. 73). The issue of administration and management of arts institutions in Nigeria permeates through, whether arts institution is traditional, privately owned or run by the government. For this reason, the essence of arts administrator in the development of arts and cultural sector of the economy is germane. This made Oyewo (2019, p. 154) to opine that “arts administration is an essential components of arts and its functionality; its concern is with the management of cultural institutions. It is the deployment of a state's artistic and cultural resources in support of its policy on arts and culture”. There are diverse views on the state of arts administration in Nigeria. Various research have been conducted pertaining to the state of arts and these works as will be reviewed here, will serve as background or foundation for already established views and our positions on the state of arts administration in Nigeria.

First and foremost, the state of arts administration is germane to this discourse because of the role of arts and culture in the development of our national heritage which bind us together as a people. The survival and continuity of effective administration and management of cultural resources determine to a large extent our cultural positioning in the global cultural context. Arts administration in Nigeria is facing a lot of challenges, part of which are the bureaucratic system of administering arts institutions in Nigeria, besides the issues of low budget and funding. Ojewuyi, (2011, p. 17) attests that “the new crop of technocrats heading our cultural institutions, usually have their jobs cut out

for them before they even get into the offices”. Irek (2020, p. 149) in his study titled “Arts administration and national integration in contemporary Nigeria” corroborates Ojewuyi's opinion when he states that:

Political ruling class who are not knowledgeable and gamesome in imperatives of arts and culture to national integration serves as personal assistant, or special assistant to states Governors on culture and tourism matters, subjecting the services of professional arts administrator with cultural vision and mission orientation for nation building to redundancy.

This view falls within the purview of bureaucracy which degenerate into complicated administrative procedures. Therefore, this act, led to mediocrity in their operation and ineffective arts administration in Nigeria. Irek (2020, p. 150) further re-emphasises that “the arts administrative positions are filled by non-professionals who lack the basic training, skills and talents to create and produce inspirational artistic productions necessary to ginger people's consciousness and co-exist possibilities for nation building”. Wroblewski, Dacko-Pikiewicz and Liu (2018, p. 20), however, provided a subtle way of achieving effective arts administration when they suggested that people who will be in charge of the affairs of arts and culture industry should possess basic knowledge in the administration of arts and culture or in other creative industry. This implies that the appointment of arts managers or administrators should be based on years of experience in arts and culture related fields and such individuals must have a prerequisite academic qualifications in addition to the on-the-job experience. This suggestion is supported because it is imperative for effective application of theoretical knowledge and the practical experience to achieve maximum performance in arts administration in Nigeria.

Administration of arts and culture, therefore, connote that there is need for enabling and conducive atmosphere for arts administrators to nurture and develop their ideas. According to the Association of Arts Administration Educator (AAAE), (2014), development and acquisition of knowledge in the area of cultural dynamics and their significance in cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations is of utmost importance to arts administrators and cultural managers. Arts administrators must, therefore, possess in-depth knowledge of arts and cultural manifestations which exist within their environment, the cultural history of the people and develop means to bring the people and arts and culture together in mutual understanding and appreciation of the context with which such arts and culture are promoted.

Reflections on the Mission and Vision Statements of Selected Public Arts Institutions in Nigeria

The presence of arts and cultural institutions in Nigeria has been felt in the development and the promotion of cultural products to the people. Therefore, there is the need to highlight and discuss their vision, mission and mandate and identify areas where there is need for improvements. The Nigerian public arts institutions include the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, National Council for Arts and Culture, National Theatre and National Troupe of Nigeria, National Institute for Cultural Orientations, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization, National Commission for Museum and Monuments, Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation, National Gallery of Arts, Nigeria Copyright Commission among others. For the purpose of this study, four of these cultural institutions will be discussed.

Federal Ministry of Information and Culture

The Federal Ministry of Information and Culture is the apex cultural body responsible for the administration of arts and culture in Nigeria. Prior to independence, series of government agencies have discharged the roles of culture preservation, presentation and promotion before the establishment of Federal Department of Culture. Umukoro (2014, p. 228) notes that “cultural matters were the responsibilities of four ministries, viz, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Trade and Industry”. By 1972 when Federal Department of culture was established, all the cultural responsibilities shared among those above mentioned ministries were vested in the Federal Department of Culture. Since inception, the Federal Department of Culture became sole administrator of arts and culture in Nigeria alongside National Council for Arts and Culture.

The Federal Department of Culture has been given different names as new government came into power. Culture department was sometimes merged with other related ministries. “In 1990 for example, culture was moved from the Ministry of Information to the newly established Ministry of Culture and Social Welfare” (Oyesoro, 1999, p. 103). Furthermore, the return to democracy after a protracted military rule brought about modifications in the manner in which Nigerian culture was administered. Consequently, during Olusegun Obasanjo's civilian regime, culture was merged with tourism and national orientation. This continued during Umar Musa Yaradua and Goodluck Jonathan's administration. Thus, President Muhammed Buhari merged culture with information and culture became the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture.

Vision Statement of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture

To build a dynamic and participatory public information system that fosters national unity and positive values of the Nigerian people and culture.

Mission Statement of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture

To establish and maintain a robust information dissemination mechanism that promotes our tourism potentials and enhances our cultural values (*Federal Ministry of Information and Culture*, 2018).

From the mandate, the vision and mission statement of the Ministry of Information and Culture, it is imperative to state that the Ministry is a fusion of two separate entities. While one entity (information) is being catered for in the vision, mission and functions of the ministry, the other entity which is culture, is not well catered for. Culture is seen from the above vision and mission statements as a sub unit to information. Ojewuyi (2011, p.9) observes that the mission statement of the ministry “projects the same short-sighted or confused thinking”. It is not specific, not direct and therefore, not measurable in terms of realisation. The mission statement fails to identify aspect of culture to be promoted at a specific point in time. This is because it focuses more on information than culture. Conte and Langley (2007, p.3) define mission statement as an idea that “serves as the standard by which a venture is ultimately judged to be a success or a failure. It can be thought of as the constitution or conscience of the operation”. To this end, it is also important to say that National Council for Arts Culture is a parastatal under the ministry; it is germane that cultural presentation, promotion and preservation should be included in the functions of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture. This is, however, important because all the parastatals under the ministry receive directives from the Honorable Minister of Information and Culture. The inclusion of functions on cultural promotion will give a clear direction about administration of arts and culture in Nigeria as part of the mandate of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture.

National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC)

This is another prominent body in the administration of arts and culture in Nigeria. The National Council for Arts and Culture came into existence as a result of fallout from the defunct Nigerian Arts Council. The Nigerian Arts Council was established in 1956 as a body responsible for the administration of arts and culture. Umukoro (2014, p. 233) is of the opinion that:

The conversion of the Nigerian Arts Council into the National Arts and Culture was probably necessitated by the federal government's intention to have a body which would be fully representative of all interests concerned with arts and culture in the country and which would be charged with the function and objectives of the federal government's overall commitment to the promotion of arts and culture.

Consequently, the National Council for Art and Culture came into being through

Decree No.3 of 1975. The National Council for Arts and Culture is responsible for the presentation, promotion, coordination and packaging of Nigeria's arts and cultural resources.

Vision of National Council for Arts and Culture

To use culture as a cornerstone in contributing to building a solid nation where the citizens shall see its cultural diversity as a source of strength.

Mission Statement of National Council for Arts and Culture

The National Council for Arts and Culture shall be dedicated to the development and promotion of the best of the living Arts and Cultures of Nigeria, using it as resources for National integration and unity as well as to serve as catalyst for sustainable growth and development of the Nation (*National Council for Arts and Culture*, 2018, n.p). The impact of the National Council for Arts and Culture on the preservation, presentation and promotion of Arts and Culture in Nigeria is being felt. This can be observed from the series of programmes of the council. For instance, the council was empowered by the decree that established it to create cultural centers, theatres, arts galleries and craft centers for the purpose of promoting Nigerian cultural heritage. Also, to be noted is the development in the establishment of National Research Centers on Boat Regatta, Durbar, masquerade and textiles traditions. Of importance is the contributions made so far by the National Festival of Arts and Culture in the promotion of unity in diversity in Nigeria, which is one of the major programmes of the National Council for Arts and Culture.

Furthermore, the council had embarked on major cultural activities both local and international. The efforts to promote Nigerian culture made the council to organise African Arts and Craft expo in 2014 which was attended by 15 countries and more than 200 Non-governmental organisations. It is also a tradition of National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) to organise biannual meeting of Chief Executives of Culture of the Federation, National quiz competition for secondary schools in Nigeria, engaging in local and international exhibition, conferences, seminars and workshop. Although, the vision and mission of the council are explicit, its objectives lack a clear direction according to Awodiya (2017, p.163):

These objectives are controversial and incapable of being perceived and implemented. Besides, the duplication of functions with the National Arts Theatre in “promoting and coordinating cultural activities in Nigeria” creates unlimited targets for the objectives. The objective would be achievable if phrased thus; “to promote Nigeria arts and culture in each community in

every local government, among the local cultural groups for 5years”. Or to “plan and coordinate cultural activities among the youths, the blind, the deaf or the disabled in a 10-year period”.

The observation by Awodiya is apt and succinct to drive home the point that for a clear direction on goals and objectives of an organisation, there must be a clear nexus among the three major variables that give a clear direction for an enterprise – vision, mission and objectives and these variables should be narrowed down and measurable.

National Theatre and National Troupe of Nigeria

The birth of the National Theatre was connected to FESTAC `77. It came into existence as a result of the need to create a national edifice and monument where Nigerian diverse culture can be showcased. Consequently, major cultural activities took place in national theatre during the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC `77). According to Awodiya (2005, p.137) “the idea of National Arts Theatre was initiated by the Gowon administration. The hosting of the World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture in 1977 (FESTAC `77) was the motivation for its birth”. Since inception, this cultural monument has promoted the Nigerian culture through series of theatrical performances within and outside the shore of Nigeria. This is made possible through the National Troupe of Nigeria which the National Theatre housed. Furthermore, the impact of the National Troupe of Nigeria on the popularisation of Nigerian culture cannot be quantified even though these establishments are facing certain challenges in the course of discharging their cultural duties. The popularisation of Nigerian culture by the National Theatre through the National Troupe of Nigeria is attested to by Musa (2004, p.71) that:

The National Theatre of Nigeria has packaged numerous theatrical and artistic performances to international festivals as representing the Nigeria cultural heritage and it has also consistently entertained, educate and engineer the Nigerian audience about our unity which is shrouded in diversity.

Awodiya also buttressed further that “since its opening in 1976, it has hosted a good number of national and international activities which include musical concerts, dramas, dances, film shows, symposia, exhibitions, conventions, workshops and even sports” (p.137). With all these points of reference to the contributions made so far by both the National Arts Theatre and the National Troupe of Nigeria, there was a call to sell the edifice. This has generated a lot of reactions both positive and negative. Having understood the significance of an edifice of this nature, one will rather support government control and finance of the national theatre than to sell it to private

individuals or corporations. “The Nigerian National Theatre, in spite of its dwindling fortune, is still, Nigeria's symbol of multicultural theatre that celebrates our diversified artistic types” (Musa, 2004, p. 72).

National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO)

The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO) is also one of the organs which the Federal Government of Nigeria employed to promote cultural awareness among Nigerians. The institute which was set up in 1993 came into existence as a result of the implementation of the World Decade for Cultural Development (Utoh-Ezeajugh, 2015). Since the establishment of this organ, dissemination, promotion, cultural orientation, research and documentation have been among the several functions and responsibilities of the institute. These responsibilities are indications of the involvement of the institute in the administration and management of culture in Nigeria. The objectives of NICO include;

- (a) To serve as a focus for orientation in cultural matters for Nigerian policy makers;
- (b) To promote, revive, develop and encourage Nigerians' culture and history (*National Institute for Cultural Orientation*, 2018, n.p).

With all afore-mentioned, Utoh-Ezeajugh (2015) observes improper documentation of Nigerian history and culture by NICO. It is our opinion that documentation is important because it is a medium of transferring knowledge and ideas to the coming generation. However, documentation should not be emphasised at the expense of cultural awareness. Public enlightenment through appropriate dissemination of cultural practices, values and norms of the people are as important as documentation. The objectives of the institute are clearly stated and taking a cognizance look at its implementation depicts certain level of readiness and the desire to accomplish the set aim and objectives of the institute. The institute has organized various programmes; workshops, seminars, lectures, conferences, symposium, exhibitions and has published books on cultural administrations and management to promote cultural awareness. It is also important to add here that a careful look at the institute's website showed the availability of few pictures and video excerpt of Nigerian culture. Suffice it to say that providing enough pictures and video excerpt with a wide coverage of Nigerian culture will no doubt increase the traffic on the institute website and at the same time create awareness at the local, national and international levels.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that understanding how arts and cultural institutions operate according to their mission and vision is an important aspect of arts

administration. Arts administration is germane for the development of arts and cultural sectors of any country. In view of this, the arts and culture stakeholders within the Nigerian public arts and cultural institutions must ensure adequacy and appropriateness in the actualisation of operation of the institutions to conform to their mission and vision. The mission and vision have been discussed in this paper from the perspectives of arts and cultural scholars and it revealed that the mission and vision need to be refocused, narrowed down and measurable over a particular period of time. The paper, therefore, recommends that arts and cultural administrators and managers should be versatile in both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in arts and cultural administration.

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