

# Management of Professional Theatre Groups in Ghana: A Case Study of Abibigromma, the Resident Theatre Group of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana

Ernest Adu-Gyamfi, MA<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

---

*This study set out to investigate management of professional theatre groups in Ghana using the Abibigromma, the resident theatre group of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana as a case study. The main challenge facing professional theatre groups is that of management-poor management of fund, material and human resources. Any well-managed sector of the economy is a welcomed contribution to the development of the economy and culture for the society. The study took a descriptive approach method for the study. Questionnaires and interview guide were used as the research instrument to collect data from sixty respondents. Purposive and Convenience sampling methods were selected for the study. Results showed that application of management principles are vital element in any organization and therefore, there is the need to apply managerial and administrative principle in professional theatre groups to sustain and survive in the entertainment industry which is one of the best business sectors in the country today. The study recommended that members of professional theatre groups should be innovative and creative to sustain their business. This study sought to contribute to an understanding of theatre practice within the existing theories and framework of theatre management.*

---

**Key Words:** theatre group, drama, theatrical performance, Ghana, Management

## 1.1 Introduction

In modern society, theatre is an important part of the culture of any country. While researching the theatrical culture of a particular period, one can draw conclusions about the specified era, people, social and national identities and issues. Therefore, theatre holds an important position in investigating the culture of any country and significantly expands the knowledge of that country and its identity. Theatre contributes its quota to the development of every nation and no country can advance rapidly without society viewing itself in order to correct the mistakes of the past and also contribute to the economic development of every state.

Theatres have been among the favorite places of recreation for both intellectuals and the wider population for many decades. They are an important segment of a state's culture and play a significant role in representation of the moods of society. They express the social, economic, moral, political, philosophical issues of the particular era and affect the formation of public opinion.

---

<sup>1</sup> Affiliation, Ghana Education Service, Diaso Senior High School, Diaso, Central Region, Ghana  
Corresponding Authors Details: Ernst Adu-Gyamfi, Ghana Education Service, Diaso Senior High School, Post Office Box Dw 13 Diaso, Central Region, Ghana. Phone: 233243553874

The legacy of all performing arts is believed to have been preserved in the back of one's mind. And every mind has its own version that makes it the richest cultural heritage. Out of all these arts, the art of theatre is the most appealing genre not just in carrying on with its physical form or style but in its expression. As more often than not, I have been saying that a nation without theatre is a dead nation. It is not just a statement of mental luxury but a hard fact that theatre has been a prime institution in preserving not only the cultural ethos and heritage of a nation but plays a healthy and key role in shaping the mental state of a nation as well.

Theatre makes a nation wise, vigilant and vibrant. It is not just living in a society but changing it. The contemporary theatre of a nation speaks not just what do they eat and wear but what they think about, thus specifically the contemporary theatre is art of reading and reflecting the mind of the nation. It is why every developed and the developing nation has endorsed and recognized theatre as an important institution in nation building, to be protected and promoted.

Around 1950s, "the National Theatre Movement" sought to fight and redeem indelible foreign influence left by the crown colony administration by the British and to deprogramme, as it tries to build 'African personality' who will take pride in African cultural identity. It is a leading wise saying that "The theatre can be a dangerous weapon when placed in the hands of people who have not been trained to handle it. The Ghana National Theatre Movement Programme therefore tried in building sense of tradition, values and arts to the brain washed Ghanaians due to the legacy left by the colonial government. The use of theatre still emerges the sub-consciousness of most educated Ghanaian. The Ghana Dance Ensemble was first established in 1962 as the national dance company of Ghana and has since been steered on behalf of Ghana by the University of Ghana through the Institute of African Studies, Legon. The sole purpose of founding the National Dance Company was to develop, re-organize and arranging Ghana's Cultural Policy. The group has over the years served as the sole artistic group used to further Ghana diplomatic drive in international arena. The Ghana Dance Ensemble had never been seen as either a commercial outfit or profit making group.

In 1985, during preparation towards the Non-Aligned Movement Conference in Accra, a group of energetic dancers were given to the Dance Ensemble, to be trained for national duties. The new dancers were workers of the National Commission for Culture. After the Non Alliance Movement conference, the new dancers settled at the national theatre under the name "The National Dance company" The new group, however, inherited all the drawbacks of work culture of the old Ghana Dance Company who will want to build on a fruitful future from the old GDE which was modeled on the 1960s socialist theatre movement.

Abibigromma reflects a commitment to the creation of modern African Theatre that draws from and feeds upon the accumulated resources and heritage of oral and written performance literature of the continent of Africa. Abibigromma has traveled extensively in Africa and Europe to portray Ghana's rich cultural heritage at international festivals, conferences and fairs promoting cultural co-operation for development between Ghana and the world at large. This occurs as a result of bilateral exchanges between the University and other institutions. The group comprises of highly versatile, talented and well trained people with diverse backgrounds.

Abibigromma's mission is to promote and research into the Arts of Ghana and Africa. The group seeks to create and present, scripted and unscripted theatre, our unique socio-cultural music, plays and dance pieces inspired by the oral and written literature of Ghana and Africa, drawing from history, culture, folklore and traditions of Ghana into beautiful artistic expressions on stage. Abibigromma the resident theatre group of the SPA, University of Ghana was established in May, 1983 after a three-member committee consisting of Dr. Mohammed Ben Abdallah, Mr. Asare Newman and Professor William Ofotsu Adinku had been charged earlier to come up with a proposal for the establishment of such a theatre.

However, some members of the resident theatre group of the SPA were later attracted to the National one in 1990 creating two Abibigromma groups, one at the School of Performing Arts and another one of the national Theatre, Accra. This division from the Abibigromma, the resident group of the school of Performing Arts even resulted conflict between some of the teaching staff of the school of Performing Arts. Some of the personnel from the Legon Abibigromma theatre group moved to the National Theatre in 1990 when the National Theatre of Ghana was established as a body corporate by the National Theatre law 1991 PNDC 259 with its objective assigned in Article 2 of the law which states to “the promotion and development of performing arts in Ghana”

Article 3 of the same law also says “for the purpose of achieving this objective, the National Theatre shall establish in such parts of the country as the council may deem it” the National Theatre shall establish in such parts of the country as the council may deem it”. The National Theatre law of Ghana clearly stipulates therefore, the promotion of the performing arts and the establishment of more theatres across the country. These are the two main functions of the National Theatre of Ghana.

Programmes for the promotion of the performing arts and the establishment of more theatres and schedule for building of more theatres were left to the executives in charge of the Theatre. Section 7 of the same law however, recognised the three performing arts groups as part of the theatre’s promotional strategies. The law states that “The Ghana Dance Ensemble, Abibigromma and the National symphony orchestra shall be resident performance groups of the national theatre in areas of dance, dramatic art and music respectively.” The law establishing the National Theatre of Ghana is clear about the objectives of the promotion of performing arts mandate and also clearly identified the agents of the resident theatre groups to achieve these objectives. The law also makes provision of funding or providing a resource base for the promotion of the national theatre activities.

Abibigromma, the resident group, under the SPA, University of Ghana strives to exist to this day in spirit of problems it’s faced when some of its members joined the one of National Theatre, Accra. According to Abibigromma, (2004) Abibigromma derives its name from two African words: Abibiman (Africa) and Agromma (players). The name also contains the concept of ‘Abibigro’, which loosely translated, means “African Theatre”. Among the aims of Abibigromma is to be engaged in research, performances and experimentation in Ghanaian and African Arts forms paying due attention not only to their roots in society, but also to cultural developments elsewhere in the world. Again, another aim is to develop adequate professional attitudes, systems and techniques of professional theatre management and provide an adequate and effective outlet for creativity stimulation of professional staff of the School of Performing Arts and to provide internship in the School with inclination towards theatre work. Moreover, they provide, through a programme of constant performance, an artistic antenna for gauging the nation’s responses to creative and cultural experiments and feeding these responses back into the University and thereby enhancing the School’s capacity to respond to national and cultural needs, Finally, the group seeks to cultivate in the School, University and other educational institutions the kind of education which will assist devoted people with creativity and knowledge to inspire people to look forward to a great future. The group has a management committee under the chairmanship of the Director of the School of Performing Arts. This committee includes a representative of the Ministry of Chieftaincy & Culture. Headship of Abibigromma Theatre Group is by an appointment letter from the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana, for a two-year term and is renewable for another two- year term. The staff includes Music, Dance and Drama Directors, Public Relations Officer, Administrative Secretary and a group of professional performers.

Abibigromma is willing to work with any institution or organisation with the aim of achieving an acceptable and meaningful production. It is possible to use their services to enhance the image of your institution, to launch, re-launch and market your products.

They are proficient in using theatre plays as a strategy to sensitise and educate the public on consumer behavior and protection of a product by what we term 'Theatre for Development'. Crafting and creating unique dramatic improvisations to suit your institution's needs is an effort they can single-handedly or severally work to achieve. Abibigromma Theatre Group can also provide very authentic traditional and exciting dances,(from all the regions in Ghana as well as Africa), musicals, dance-drama, choreographed and contemporary dance pieces and dramatic performances at functions such as congregations, organizational dinners, cocktails, conferences and summits (both local and international),end-of-year get-togethers etc. They do educational outreach programmes linking with other higher educational institutions, national and international organisations, to contribute to the development of arts and culture. Also reaching out to Basic and Second Cycle schools through theatre;

- to enrich the cultural activity curriculum
- to encourage the appreciation of literary text
- to stimulate awareness about the moral/educational value of traditional Ghanaian Arts.

People and students who have some interest in participating in any of their theatre, dance or drama forms may find limited attachment opportunities (short or long term). They do encourage all those interested to make a personal contact with their office. They also help to prepare students and pupils, churches for cultural performances and plays for various occasions such as speech and prize giving days, Christmas plays etc. Abibigromma Theatre Group enjoys an internationally acclaimed honor and reputation for good performances and Ghana is proud of their achievements in bringing Ghanaian culture to the notice of Africans and the world. Highlights include their splendid performance in France and Egypt where the group was adjudged the best cultural performer. A lot of theatre groups considered themselves as a professional group with the sole aim to producing artistic African Plays on stage for audience to appreciate African plays and at the same time inculcate in the audience the sense of African values, arts and culture. These professional groups also perform modern and Western plays to their audience.

Also, majority of the few professional theatre groups do not have permanent places for their theatrical performances. They may hire or rent theatre facilities like the National Theatre building, Centre for National Cultures buildings in regional capitals and town halls in some district capitals to perform plays to people. Hiring of these halls is expensive which many of the theater groups cannot afford. Also, the few professional theatre groups compared to the community ones in the country continue to perform plays to the university populace and outside the university campus. Some of the groups go out to the teacher training colleges and senior secondary schools in the country to perform plays, which these schools are required to teach and students study for examination purposes. Currently, professional theatre groups mostly recruit their members from amateur drama troupes. The opportunities for employment currently afforded to actors, actresses, directors, producers, playwrights, technicians and other theatre personnel are extremely limited. There is no organised and systematic method of discovering and encouraging young talents. Majority of people working in the so-called professional groups, as in other creative professions, were encouraged and inspired by chance through the support and encouragement of an enthusiastic and sympathetic teachers or parents.

Only few professional theatre groups like Abibigromma, the Resident Group of the School of Performing Arts recruit its staff from the graduates of the School of Performing Arts. The Abibigromma, Resident Group of the National Theatre also recruits professional or qualified people to join them. Working in the theatre sector is still not a generally respected career partly because it does not offer sufficient and economic rewards. Therefore, although there is support and reassurance amongst the circle of culture practitioners, and to a certain extent also from close friends, often people who have chosen to work in the theatre sector frequently lose the support from their families and immediate community. In some cases threats and acts of intimidation have been carried out.

### ***1.2 Statement of Problem***

It will be very imperative to find out some of the problems facing professional theatre groups in Ghana and find solutions to these problems in order to sustain these theatre groups and advance their image. It is suggested that if these professional theatre groups are managed well with administrative principles and managerial practices, the work of these theatre groups will be more economically viable for other people who have the intention to partake in this business entity under the entertainment industry. It is pathetic and outlandish to find these theatre groups made up of young and skilled personnel unable to sustain themselves in the theatre sector because of inadequate financial support. Some of these highly skilled personnel then decide to travel outside the country to find greener pasture. However, it is very difficult to understand these theatre groups finding it difficult to survive in the face of growing interest in theatrical performance.

This research project investigates and highlights the potentials of professional theatre groups in Ghana as big business activities under the entertainment industry. There is little literature review on how theatre groups can sustain themselves. Most literature on theatre groups concentrate on forming theatre groups, their contribution to national development and the role they play. Therefore, there is a research gap on how to manage professional and community theatre groups particularly those in developing countries.

### ***1.3 Objectives of the Study***

The purpose of the study is to examine management of professional theatre groups in Ghana.

The specific objectives of the study are the following:

1. To find out how people see theatre groups as a business venture.
2. To find out if theatre groups have been placed in the right business perspective.
3. To examine the extent of application of administrative and scientific management practices in their groups.
4. To give recommendation to the study

### ***1.4 Research Questions***

1. How do people see theatre group as a business venture entity?
2. Have theatre groups been placed in the right business perspective?
3. Do theatre groups apply administrative and scientific management practices in their groups?

### ***1.5 Significance of the Study***

This project is very vital in the sense that it will help founders of professional theatre groups, those who have the interest to join this business and working personnel to know some of the problems facing their working activities and how to solve some of these problems. The research finding will try to fill gap on the need to applying managerial and administrative practices in their business which will ensure efficiency and effectiveness leading to sustainability.

It may also through more light on how theatre groups can run their work with profit-oriented motive. These project findings to the study can also be used additionally to further investigation in the area of running theatre groups more effectively and efficiently.

### ***1.6 Limitation of the Study***

This project will investigate some of the problems facing professional theatre groups in Ghana.

A case study of the Abibigromma, a resident theatre group of the School of Performing Arts, Legon and as such any result that emerges from this study must not be hastily generalized over all professional theatre companies in the country.

### ***Literature Review***

2.1 Professional theatre group is an organisation or established group with the basic idea of profit maximisation. It is a professional work which actors and actress with the technical crew get income and these theatrical performances meant for the audience help them to get to get money through the box-office. A resident professional theatre group is a non-profit, professional theatre group that hires professional actors, technicians, office staff, and directors in order to produce theatre for a specific community. The resident company may consider itself as a community theatre in the sense that they serve an artistic function within the community. It does not, however, utilize the amateur talent within the locale and often imports all of its personnel from outside the community.

Professional theatre groups normally work with fine artists from the performing arts institutions and the amateur groups. They also provide the medium of giving the professional theatre troupes artists to work with them. Most professional theatre groups in the country do not have the theatre facility meant for theatrical performances. Most groups do not have their place of condiment where they meet for their rehearsals and other related business activities concerning their incoming production performances.

Producers or administrative managers may have their own offices by renting building or using their homes as their offices. Professional theatre groups normally have a line of authority through the hierarchical system of administration where by several works are grouped into different departments with their lines. The line of a system of administration is where power is vested with division of labour. These theatre groups do not stay at one particular town or district but usually tour cities, towns and urban areas to perform for audience. Professional theatre groups may be owned by individual, group of people or body of institutions like the SPA, Academy of Arts, Screen and Television Acting Troupe.

A lot of investigations and findings from research have clearly dealt with professional theatre groups in relation to the role they play in national development and how theatre groups both community and professional groups can be set up. Reid (1996) in his "Theatre Administration", he clearly stipulates that professional theatre group is a group of people with the basic knowledge on theatrical performance, using theatrical performances which they produce by themselves as their full work and are being paid by the service they render to the companies and depend on them for their survival. Their work is not voluntarily or depends solely on financial donations and aid from individuals, group of people or the institutions that they work with.

Professional theatre groups face a lot of problems or setbacks which impede and negate their smooth running of their activities. Professional theatre group need effectiveness and efficiency, organizing proper budgeting, good publicity, reliable source of funding, equipment procurement, audience consideration, hiring theatre space for theatrical performances, good marketing, public relations and other required activities or productions. Professional theatre groups operate largely on matters of scale (Gatewood, 1997).

According to Mirembe-Ntangaare (2001), theatre is riddled with internal managerial, organisational, financial and scholarship challenges. She concludes that more government involvement is needed and that artists need to train in theatre. This study was not focusing on policy and competition and nor did it treat the concept of entrepreneurship nor innovation in depth.

Passive resistance is more common and the techniques used in overcoming this attitude by Reid includes yearlong production schedule table, lobbying with student directors, when to go for theatrical performance and schools being strict to their activities for the semester.

It is further stated that most professional theatre groups in Ghana do not follow the line of system of administration and power. Decisions making are totally in the hands of the producers and directors and the system of delegated power is also common.

Here, authority delegates limited powers to other heads of departments concerning that particular group to exercise powers to co-ordinate and help the group to achieve and accomplish its set goals and objectives.

Professional theatre groups mostly generate their resources and funds from the box-office or the gate fees from the audience to run that their activities and use some to pay the director as well as the whole working team and monies needed for publicity, securing theatre space and other production expenses.

2.2 Budgeting is one of the aspects of professional theatre groups and tackled by Reid. He says conventional items, materials and running cost are probably some of very significant factors that are considered. Inflation affects the cost of materials and where to get these needed items are written down without considering both external and the internal environment through which businesses are operated.

Although rental terms may be secured, professional theatre groups make sure that all contracts concerning the production is legally protected like securing the right to reproduce a play on stage from the playwrights. To what extent they should go on with their publicity? Few companies may choose to sponsor professional theatre groups' activities whether in kind or in cash. These professional theatre groups will go to some extent to acknowledge the sponsors or advertise for them during the theatrical performances to the audience.

Methods of publicity used by professional theatre groups in Ghana include posters, leaflets, newspapers, invitations, radio announcements and orally. Individuals and volunteers usually help with the distribution of posters and leaflets to shops and public places. When these theatre groups go into villages, smaller towns and camps, very often the arrival of the company alone arouses sufficient interest. Publicity for theatrical performance tends to stay within the immediate locality.

2.3 Concerning the rates for the production, (Reid, 1996) states that professional theatre groups may hire the theatre space and other facilities. The tickets for the production are mostly sold at the entrance when the production is about to start. It is not customary norm for people to buy tickets in advance. Majority of drama groups use friends and local contacts to help arrange venue, publicity and tickets.

Also, there are certain basic principles which are not found in almost professional theatre groups in Ghana in terms of their exercise of duties with the sole aim of satisfy audience and improve audience attendance. There are only few theatre administrators in most of the professional theatre groups. All the administrative works including drafting contracts, book keeping, fund raising, public relations, publicity, health and safety, box office organisation and production management are shared amongst group members. This creates a diversion of time and energy which could better be dedicated to artistic creativity, innovation and development. It also means that important tasks such as the keeping of statistics, audience attendance figures and other necessary data in order to analyze and improve performance is badly neglected.

The work of an administrator is a highly skilled and specialised one and is essential if a good theatre group is to be sustained and developed. Audience interest and satisfaction must be considered

according to Reid. He says if one is working for professional theatre group, the theatre administration should not leave all the audience care to the resident house manager and staff.

Some of the staff of the group must be in the auditorium to simile during welcoming the audience and saying inspirational words to them. This simple act is not common with most of professional theatre groups.

2.4 Theatre is one of the services where the change price does not necessarily lead to increase in demand. It does not respond to price elasticity of demand. Kellerman (2001) showed that marketing mix and the product is one of the “4 Ps” along with Promotion, Price, and Place.

Sometimes price cuts in theatre tickets for the show are a result of a strategy to negotiate different ticket rates for the audience.

2.5 In ‘Economic Potential in Promoting Professional Theatre Groups’ by Abdulai (1995) in his research, he points to the fact that it is high time various drama and theatre groups seen their work as a profitable business venture in spite of the various problems and challenges. Theatre business is now a good business perspective ( Abdulai 1995). He says, in the past, it was seen as a gift of nature and artists depended on donation for their ends-meet. This past episode does not augur well for modern trends in African Drama. The central position of tourism in recent times has warranted a paradigm shift in creating drama and theatre outlook as profitable business activity.

Modern research must be conducted in theatre management; competitive pricing policies must be adopted as well as product packaging to give professional drama presentation a business outlook (Gatewood, 1997).

2.6. What is Management? As there is no definite definition for management, it is generally accepted as a set of activities designed to achieve organizations objectives by using resources effectively and efficiently in a charging environment. Management has a positive impact on these professional theatre groups and mismanagement has negative consequences on any business organization.

Basically, management is viewed as a process involving the functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling in which decision-making is a unifying factor. At every point in the process the manager is called upon to make critical decisions and to be responsible for them. He plans budgets and time allocations in response to the goals of the firm. Organizing requires the manager to decide how to unify the various parts of the enterprise and to determine the systems for communicating and reporting. In staffing, the manager must find the right person for each position and direct the people in their work to see that the goals are fulfilled. Finally, in the controlling function, managers may have to adapt the plan to meet unforeseen circumstances or to decide to change the whole system (Nwamuo, 2003).

It is important to recognise that all management decisions have consequence. Individuals’ management practices affect more than the person himself or herself, decision making and competing work task because such activities are not carried out in isolation, management reaches several groups connected with organization. Management is the area of theatre involving all the daily operations. Theatre managers face the difficult job of making human resource productive by making people work together, bringing individual skills and knowledge and making job more productive.

Management is also the principal activity that makes a difference in how well organisation serve people affected by them. It can be said that, it is how successfully on organization achieves it set aims and objectives and satisfies social responsibilities as well as an organisation will probably achieve if goals through efficiency and effectiveness. It has been made crystal dear that the works at professional theatre groups must incubate the managerial principles and administrative theories and in my opinion about this research, it will motivate professional theatre groups to know where they stand with their kind of business and know how to address problems facing them.

Entertainment industry can be considered as an export industry, especially in the case of music and theatre (performing arts.) An industry can be conceptualized into two broad categories, one, where the product is sold in the place of production that is the customer consumes the service by coming to the country in which it is produced. For example, music festivals and visual spectacle stage periodically in a year. This is a kind of tourism related to product. In the other export category, is where the product is sold in the foreign export market as an audio recording or live performance. This market, which may seem at first, as an ethnic niche may become more universal in character (Borne and Allgrove, 2004).

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In the study, the descriptive survey design was used. This design was found convenient because it is a tool that helps to search for detailed information about the characteristics. The usefulness of this method for this type of research study, recommended by Gay (1987), is an attempt to collect data from members of the population in order to determine current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. Osuala (1993) also sees the descriptive survey design as suitable for purposes of making generalisations from a sample to a population so that inferences could be made about some attitudes or behaviours of the population. A descriptive survey design can take various forms.

#### **3.2 Research Population**

The research population as defined by Jaeger (1988) as the group of persons, objects or institutions that define the object of the investigation. In this study, the research population is the entire staff of Abibigromma, a resident theatre group of the School of Performing Arts, University Of Ghana, Legon.

#### **3.3 Sample Size**

Sampling is the process involved in selecting respondents from the population under study. It is sometimes impossible to examine every item or person in the population under study as a result of limited time and resources hence sampling becomes very important in the study. A sample is a subset of a population. It consists of individual objects or events that form the Population. The sample size was sixty respondents

#### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

Purposive and Convenience sampling methods were selected for the study. Purposive sampling is a method where the researcher selects respondents who can answer his research questions. It is a type of non-probability sampling where the researcher picks the respondents he wants to include in his sample or those respondents he believes are representative of the group under study. Convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of population which the researcher has access to or can reached. That is, a sampled population is readily available and convenient. Purposive sampling was used.

Respondents were selected on the following criteria:

He or she must be a staff or member of the group. Since the unit of analysis for the study is management of professional theatre groups in Ghana. A case study of the Abibigromma Theatre Group, a purposive sampling was used to select sixty Respondents. Forty respondents are the workers of Abibigromma Theatre group representing both cast and Technical crew. This was to ensure a good representation of their opinion on the topic of investigation and also to enable the representation complete the study within a limited prescribed time.

Also, the current artistic director of Abibigromma troupe and the current director of the school of performing Arts were interviewed. 18 members of the teaching staff of the school of performing were selected. It helps me to probe any contradictory information because it was possible for me to observe closely the sentiments and expectations that accompany answers. This method enabled the respondent to express themselves fully during the interview.

### 3.5 Research Instrument

The researcher designed questionnaire and interview guide. According to Marzillier and Hall (1992), questionnaire is composed of questions which require respondents to fill in the answers themselves. Opened-ended as well as closed-ended formats of questionnaire were used to collect data for analyses. Opened –ended questionnaire give respondents the freedom to respond with their own words and therefore ensure that responses are objective since clues are not provided. Closed-ended questions try to find out the extent of agreements in the thought patterns and response relationships of respondents. The interview helped the researcher to meet the respondents face to face for interaction. Since the items were structured in the interview guide, they (items) aided the researcher to collect specific information from the respondents.

This instrument was chosen for the study because in considering the sampling size and time available for the research the method was considered the most appropriate method for obtaining information from respondents. The questions were designed to solicit information on this study. A pre-test was done to make sure that questions were easily understood and are meaningful to the study.

### 4.1 Results and Discussion

**Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Respondents**

Gender	Value	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Male	1	27	45	45	45
Female	2	33	55	55	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid cases = 60 missing cases = 0

Table 4.1 shows a total of 60 respondents involved in the study whose ages range from 20-55 with a greater number of male respondents. Males were 55% of the study and females constituted 45% of the study.

**Table 4.2 Profession Theatre Groups a Business Venture or a Hobby**

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Business Venture	1	54	90	90	90
Hobby	2				90
Both	3	6	10	10	100
	Total	60	100	100	

This table valid case = 60 missing case = 0

It reveals that out of 100%, 90% of respondents think most of the members in Professional theatre groups are there as a profitable business venture. The underlying factor of joining the group is to make their living and thereby attracting people. 10% of respondents see the groups of professional theatre companies as a business venture and a hobby because one must have the passion for acting in other to market theatre products and make money for an acceptable living.

None of the respondent thinks joining a professional theatre group is just a hobby and passion for acting, singing or dancing but a recognised professional economic activity.

**Table. 4.3 Lack of Commitment and Dedication as Well as Mismanagement are Some of the Problems Facing Professional Theatre Groups in Ghana**

Value Case	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
AGREE	1	51	85	85	85
DISAGREE	2	6	10	10	95
UNDECIDED	3	3	5	5	100
	Total	60	100	100	

From the valid case = 60 missing case = 0

From the table above, it is clear that overwhelming 85% of respondents confirm the fact that most professional theatre groups are not employing managerial tools, lacking commitment and dedication in steering the affairs of theatre groups in Ghana. Members are not committed and dedicated to the group since there is no clear system of administrative structure. 10% of respondents disagree to this fact and 5% respondents out of 100% on the other hand were undecided.

**Table 4.4 The Respondents Were Asked to Diagnose What They Consider to be The Major Problem Facing Professional Theatre Groups in Ghana**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Poor funding	1	30	50	50	50
Mismanagement	2	9	15	15	65
No organization Structure	3	6	10	10	75
All the above	4	15	25	25	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

From the above table, 50% of respondents believe that funding is the main cause of problem facing professional theatre group in Ghana. Where to secure a loan or financial assistance is a problem and the respondents believe that inadequate funding is impeding and negating their growth thereby rendering some of the professional theatre groups in Ghana staying off from the entertainment industry.

Another group of respondents also believe that most professional theatre groups in Ghana lack management practices in most cases. There is no effective and efficient board to manage affairs since members or workers do not see their work as both providing services to the nation with profit oriented mind.

Again, set of respondents 10% also say that most professional theatre groups in the country have no effective organisational structure in place. There is no theatre administrator to plan and implement policies for most of these professional theatre groups. Besides, other respondents feel these groups face all the above problems stated.

**Table 4.5 Performing Arts have not been placed in the right business perspective**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	1	60	100	100	100
Disagree	2				100
Undecided	3				100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid = 60 Missing case = 0

From the above table, all the respondents, 100% agree with the fact that the performing arts have not been placed in the right business perspective but just providing social services to the society looking at current developments in the entertainment industry.

**Table 4.6 Professional Theatre Companies in Ghana is Making Profit in the Entertainment Industry or Not Making Profit**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Profit	1	24	40	40	40
Non-Profit	2	9	15	15	55
Both	3	27	45	45	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

The above table shows the distribution of responses making theatre group profitable or not?

45% of respondent believe that it is both profitable and non-profitable. Professional theatre groups are there to render services and at the same time be paid for the services they offer through the box office. 40% of the respondents believe that professional theatre groups are purely commercial entity and there for profit unlike the community or amateur drama groups. Profit is their sole aim of establishing these theatre groups. On the other hand, 15% of the respondents believe that, in Ghana today, these theatre groups are just rendering services to the society but failing to know that, these groups have economic potentials to gain profit.

**Table 4.7 Difficulty in Finding Places for Rehearsals and Performances**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	1	45	75	75	75
Disagree	2	6	10	10	85
Undecided	3	9	15	15	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

From the above table, it indicates that most theatre groups find it difficult to acquire places do to their rehearsals and getting venues to do theatrical performance for the audience is very difficult to come by. What is the cause? It was suggested by 75% of respondents saying that it is very difficult for most professional theatre companies in Ghana to get theatre buildings to do rehearsals and performance. Most of the stages they use to perform on them lack many basic equipment and facilities. Even the cost of renting a theatre for a day is very expensive.

**Table 4.8 Shows Opinion on Audience Attendance for Theatrical Performances**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	1	3	5	5	5
Above average	2	27	40	45	50
Average	3	30	50	50	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

From table 4.8, it shows 50% of respondents say most of the performances put up by these professional theatre groups are good but there is few theatre audience in the country apart from students of the various tertiary and second cycle institutions who are prepared to go to theatres unlike the motion photography like cinema and concert party programmes which the audience are available already to watch movies and attend live concerts.

The purpose of this study is to find out if theatre groups in Ghana make use of effective marketing strategies. The table below shows the distribution of respondents and what they think.

**Table 4.9 The Use of Effective Marketing Strategies**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	1	24	40	40	40
Disagree	2	30	50	50	90
undecided	3	6	10	100	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

It can be seen from the table above that most professional theatre groups in Ghana don't make effective use of marketing strategies. 50% of the respondents confirm this fact. 40% of the respondents support the notion that professional theatre groups in Ghana use effective marketing strategies. 10% of the respondents on the other hand were undecided. This is not a good result for the professional theatre groups in Ghana. There is the need for an improvement in this area.

The study also tried to find opinions of Respondents about what they say about the running of Abibigromma theatre group a resident troupe of the school of performing Arts.

**Table 4.10 Running of Abibigromma Theatre Group**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Excellent	1	36	60	60	60
Encouraging	2	24	40	40	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

From table 4.10 above, 60% of respondents see the Abibigromma Theatre Group as the best professional theatre group in Ghana and with the required assistance; they can emerge to be one of the best theatre groups in the sub-region. 40% of the respondents also claim Abibigromma group seems encouraging as compared to the other professional theatre groups and can rub shoulders with any professional theatre group in West Africa.

The study also tried to find out if professional theatre groups in Ghana are able to sustain its self.

**Table 4.11 Workers of Abibigromma's Knowledge on Sustaining Professional Theatre Groups in Ghana.**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facing out	1	12	20	20	20
Groups Must be helped	2	30	50	50	70
Groups must be screen	3	18	30	30	30
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

From the above table, 50% of respondents propose that professional theatre groups must be helped especially securing funding and other necessary assistance in order to sustain these groups to provide services and make money to expand their business thereby creating employment.

Also, 30% of respondents say that professional theatre groups must be screened in order to eliminate the non-serious groups who are tarnishing the image of professional theatre groups not as a business enterprise. On the other hand, 20% of respondents have the view that professional theatre groups are collapsing gradually as at the time of this research. Some theatre groups are not operating anymore and serious attention with solutions must be taken to revive these non-performing theatre groups in the country.

The purposes of this research also include finding out the future of professional theatre groups as a business prospects and having the potentials to sustain itself in the entertainment industry. The table below shows the distribution of respondents and what they think.

**Table 4.12 Future of professional theatre groups as a business and having potentials**

Value Cases	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Promising	1	36	60	60	60
Poor	2	9	15	15	75
Bleak	3	15	25	25	100
	Total	60	100	100	

Valid case = 60 Missing case = 0

From table 4.12, 60% of respondents see a promising future for professional theatre groups in Ghana since there is a competition in the system, Theatre audience is increasing gradually, each group has to work hard to attract audience and fulfill audience satisfaction. 25% of respondents also see a very bleak future for the professional theatre groups if the appropriate measures are not taken to revamp and promote its sustainability. On the other hand, 15% of the respondents also think that their professional theatre groups are rather deteriorating and retrogressing that is why they are currently in a poor state.

### 5.1. Summary of Major Findings

1. After a critical analysis of collected data, it is obvious fact that management is a vital element in any organization and therefore there is the need to apply managerial and administrative principles and practices in professional theatre groups to sustain and survive in the entertainment industry.

2. Leaders and practitioners of professional theatre groups have failed to place their activities or groups in the right business perspective. There are no administrative measures in place to sustain these professional theatre groups. They have overlooked the necessity of applying congenial tools such as organizing, planning, marketing, public relations and controlling.

3. Abibigromma theatre group was established in 1983, rubbing shoulders with other professional groups in West Africa. They are very serious and excellent in their organizational activities but they face inadequate funding. The group has a reputable name in the entertainment industry but it needs to be sustained in this era of competition and improved theatrical performances.

4. Most of the professional theatre groups are collapsing because there is no acceptable and required organisational structure in place for theatre groups compared to corporate institutions.

5. Attitude of members in most professional theatre groups is not encouraging. They must be punctual, discipline and be ethical.

6. Professional theatre groups have bright future and stand to gain much profit if they adopt some cost effective measures in their operations.

7. Marketing skills are not employed mostly by professional theatre groups to sell their theatrical performances to increase box office success.

8. From personal interview I had with some of employees of Abibigromma theatre group at their office, it reveals that the group is being funded by government subventions and with the current economic constraints, attention is directed to other sectors like health, education, mining and agriculture. It is only when those sectors are satisfied that the arts are given little attention, having in mind that the arts only entertain.

9. Also from my personal interviews I had with some employees at the office of Abibigromma theatre groups, it indicates that most of the employees in professional theatre groups want to go abroad to seek greener pasture thereby rendering professional theatre groups lacking the required expertise and skilled personnel.

10. After a critical analysis of collected data. It is obvious that there are few theatre attendants in the country and people need to be sensitised about the prospects of theatre groups and their impacts.

11. According to the research done, most professional theatre groups find it difficult to hire a theatre facility meant for performances and rehearsals due to high cost and there few available theatre spaces.

## 5.2 Conclusion

It is an established and undeniable fact that, professional theatre groups are places where people's talent are exposed to help consolidate every country with its national theatre and culture, putting arts and values in their performances, educating and providing education apart from being a business venture. From this research using Abibigromma Theatre Group of the SPA, this study identified many problems impeding professional theatre groups in Ghana. However, if any professional theatre group makes use of the recommendations the study suggests, there will be a tremendous improvement and success in running their groups as a business entities and would then be able to attract a full house of audience; to maximize profit through the box office proceeds and to guarantee audience's satisfaction.

It is my hope that if effective management and well-structured administrative principles are set up and put in place, professional theatre groups would be one of the best profit making sectors in the entertainment industry. I would appeal to all those who have the resources and stakeholders to invest in professional theatre groups without any hesitation because of the economic potential that exist in the entertainment industry.

## 5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered.

1. With the lack of funds, it is recommended that theatre groups should not wait for government to sponsor their activities or rely on government subventions but rather go into private business partnership, merging of theatre groups and seek sponsorship from corporate institutions. If well-planned programmes are organised, private companies wouldn't hesitate to sponsor them, since a well-organised programme will draw more audience.

2. Plays performed should be chosen based on what audience prefers to watch. It is recommended that audience research is taken into consideration before a play is chosen. If this is well done, most theatre groups will always have full houses and there will be realisation of huge box office returns. This can also solve the issue of lack of funds that is preventing most professional theatre groups for having effective management and administration.

3. From the study, it is recommended that members of professional theatre groups should be serious and disciplined. Theatre administration takes into consideration all these aspects which are equally important and relevant to effective management of theatre groups.

4. Box office activities should be properly done by professional theatre groups. Ticket numbers should also correspond to seat numbers. If this is well prepared, there will be no diversion of money realised from box office. Ushering work should be perfectly administered during performances and attend to the needs of audience when their services are demanded.

5. Professional theatre groups must identify themselves as a business venture which can be self-sustaining and profit making. If the theatre of today is to live with the realities of tomorrow, then the theatre as a profession and a concept should be critically looked and assessed. Theatre practitioners themselves have to identify themselves as a people worthy of dignity and honesty.

6. There should be some kind of board in every professional theatre group to screen members who join the various groups to inject some kind of discipline, write acceptable contract with the employees, and artistic persons must give adequate time to their heads when they want to quit their job.

7. Theatre practitioners must make good polices and lay down proper regulations to control and guide their work.

8. Heads of various professional theatre groups must provide better remunerations and good condition of service to artistes to help motivate them to give off their best. This will help artistes to appreciate their work and prepare to stay on the job for longer period of time.

9. In service training must also be given to employees of theatre groups to upgrade artistic skills, grant study leave for members to acquire more knowledge and expertise. Theatre groups should avail themselves with the opportunity of performing practical and realistic plays to impact positively on the lives of citizens.

10. Theatre administrators should also be employed in all professional theatre groups in Ghana. This is one of the surest ways of realising the greatest potentials of theatrical theatre and these administrators will offer the best methodologies to promote and strategise for theatre groups.

11. Theatre producers and artistic directors must focus on their service that is the performance they render to audience. They should critically analyse them before determining the price. They must factor the cost elements of the theatrical productions.

12. The practice where by members issue free tickets to friends and family should be discouraged. Fee per ticket of theatre show must be conventionalised and standardised since the employees are conscious to maximize profit through these theatrical performances

### **References**

- Adinku, W. O. (1994). African Dance Education in Ghana, Accra: Ghana University Press.
- Bourne and Allgrove (2004). Prospects for Exports of Entertainment Services for the English Speaking Caribbean: The Case of Music
- Gateword & Taylor F. (1997). Management, Comprehensive Analysis and Application, Holt, Rinehart & Wiston; London:
- Journal of Performing Arts. Vol. 2. 1996
- Nketia, J.H.K (1977). Development Programmes for Music and the Performing Art. Legon: Institute of African Studies.
- Nketia, J.H.K. (1965). Ghana Music, Dance and Drama, Accra: Ministry of Information.
- Nketia, J.H.K (1977). Guidelines for Action Programmes of the Arts Council of Ghana, Legon: University of Ghana.
- Nwamuo C. (1997). Basic to theatre Administration, AP Publications; Owerri: 1997.
- Nwamuo, C (1966). Orientation to the Theatre, Optimist Press; Calabar: 1996.
- Nwamuo, C (2003). Essentials of Theatre Administration; University of Calabar press, Calabar.
- Opoku, A.M. (1993). International Reviews on the Ghana Dance Ensemble. Legon: University of Ghana.
- National Theatre Law of Ghana, 1991, PNDC 259.
- Rahama, A. (1989). Economic Potential in Theatre; E. Arnold. London 1989.
- Reid, F (2000). Theatre Administration; A & C Black publishers, 35 Bedford Row, London.
- Seavoy, M. (1996). The Ghana Dance Ensemble. Accra: Pierian Press.
- Stephen L. (1974). Theatre Management in America: Principle and Practice, (New York: Drama Book Specialists/Publishers.), p. 165.
- Survey of Arts Administration (1970) McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Thornsby, S & Withers D. (1979). The Economics of the Performing Arts, E. Arnold; London.
- Wilson, E, & Alvin G, (1994). Living Theatre: A History, 2ed. McGraw-Hill-New York 1994.
- Yirenkyi, A. (2000). Commercialization of the Theatre in Ghana: An opinion, Staff Seminar: November, 16.
- Young, S. (1963). The Theatre, Hill and wrong, New York.