Creative Thinking and Cultural Entrepreneurship in Africa

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Abstract
This paper attempted to extricate creative thinking as a basis for cultural entrepreneurship in Africa. It is a critical aspect of arts management that advances creativity which is a product of thinking. Creative thinking in entrepreneurship is a rarely considered discourse in arts management. It stressed the need for entrepreneurial creative thinking so as to create jobs and services and reduce poverty. It further stressed the need to strengthen creative thinking and its process of imparting on entrepreneurship. It identifies creative thinking as a platform for entrepreneurship within the cultural industries and enterprises. It recognized cultural entrepreneurship and its strength to impart on development in Africa. It suggested the need for creative thinking application on existing cultural products, services and identify gaps and fill them with creative improved products and services. It concluded that the shift caused by African’s urban development should be managed to minimize effect on indigenous creative thinking.

Cultural entrepreneurs are people who think creatively, initiate, expand new ideas as well as maintain and sustain these ideas as basis for cultural enterprise. Cultural entrepreneurs, in all tendencies have been found to be people with high drive and very active thinking acuity, constantly struggling to achieve something which they could call their own accomplishment that will benefit them and others. They strive to be different from other people through the accomplishment of goals which are enterprise oriented within the cultural industries. It has been found that some of the highly motivated entrepreneurs have developed awareness of their strength and weakness and also about the facilitating factors and constraints in the environment, while striving to reach their goals (Rao, 178:8) even in cultural entrepreneurship. There are factors which form the basis which cultural entrepreneurship is dependent upon.
First is creative thinking. Everything that was created by man came from creative thinking. Creative thinking is the base of all created works either by a single individual or collectively. This sprouts the initiative to establish, maintain, sustain and expand new cultural enterprise. In terms of discourse, thinking is broad. There are three types of thinking that we have to do in order to achieve our goals: thinking about decisions, thinking about beliefs and thinking about our goals (Baron, 1993:3). These three types of thinking are related to creative thinking without which creative thinking will not realize its material essence.

**Creative Thinking and Entrepreneurship Motivation**

Cultural entrepreneur started from the traditions of family and society where various cultures were initiated and managed for the survival of man, who is informed in turn by his culture which impacts norms and values on him internally as cultural resources which he externalizes in his creative endeavours. These cultural resources are filtered by individual creative thinking process, with a view to establish an enterprise that will be of service to the people and of benefit to the entrepreneur. Creative thinking is a very important element in cultural entrepreneurship. Thinking refines the idea that initiates and harmonizes the various cultural entrepreneurship. It therefore, becomes very important to examine the factors that strengthens creative thinking. One of such factors is individual endowment. These individuals are gifted in manners that they are naturally motivated by their internalized gifts or endowment. Endowment brightens the creative thinking of an individual especially in their area of interest which could be referred to as calling or rare talent. This enables the individual to do something new and unique. The individual’s ability to do something new and unique is powered by three elements. They are entrepreneurial motivation, cultural knowledge and acceptance.

**Entrepreneurial Motivation:** This is the ability to establish an enterprise in an individual area of rare talent and training which could enhance rare talent to its optimum level. **Cultural knowledge:** This is a product of the immediate society that gives birth to an individual. The individual learns from his society consciously and unconsciously the various cultural activities. These cultural activities form bulk of the individual’s knowledge which he or she exerts on basic daily activities. An individual is often gifted in any area that interests him or her in his or her culture or the culture that nurtures him or her. It is not certain if an individual without culture would be culturally gifted. It is then certain that no matter how gifted or uniquely gifted a person is, his or her gift is an up-shoot of his or her culture. However, a gifted person could advance on the culture of his people as a result of intercultural training. Intercultural training enables an individual to advance beyond the limit of the culture of his people. For instance, music and drama were advanced by western training in Africa. More so, the norms and values of every individual culture in Africa power the ability of the individual to establish his creativity in concrete terms. Cultural knowledge in this case, is the root of creative thinking because one’s thinking must be based on knowledge of an existing experience which is one’s culture.
Acceptance: This is willingness or courage of an individual to continue with creative thinking, which is an abstract until it is developed into a cultural product of enterprise value. For instance, a piece of music, drama, painting etc, music which has not be sung or recorded, drama not yet written or acted, a piece of drawing not yet drawn is yet within the creative thinking process. If eventually the song is sung or the drama acted and drawing drawn, it then indicates that the individual has accepted to continue. The individual has accepted his talent or gift having put to use his cultural knowledge strengthened by motivation. Acceptance is very important because it sees the cultural entrepreneur through rough times and crumbling ideas, striving to entrench entrepreneurial motivation and cultural creativity. Acceptance ensures that the individual submits to the totality of his mental and physical energy, time, finance and it makes the individual sensitive to internal and external directions. Internal directions include mental attitude, skills, craftiness, resilience, risk capability and enterprise spirit. External forces are majorly forces generated by market demand, support programs and government policies. The two directions are knit and harmonized through thought processes of creative thinking by the individual.

A thinking person is virtually close to being an entrepreneur. Equally true is the fact that no thinking and emotionally developed person can remain different to literature, poetry, music, painting, sculpture and architecture. One may be, to some extent indifferent to some highly specialized sciences. (Spirkin, 1983:53). In essence, creative thinking generates cultural entrepreneurship ideas which trickle down to form lake of the various cultural enterprises. These include; poetry, exotic craft design, exotic painting, magnificent designs, breath talking architecture, weaving, pottery, music, drama, dance, costume and all other culture related enterprises. These cultural enterprises exist in every tribe which forms the various communities in Africa. Creative thinking empowers the individual to develop his thinking process from its imaginable state to reality within the culture content of his people.

Creative Thinking and African Culture

Creative thinking is a precious intellectual exercise which transforms thoughts into attractive images through the mental strength of a creative thinker. Artists generally engage in creative thinking. Those who have no creative thinking ability may have little to offer with common sense and mere skill acquisition. The creative thinking artist consciously or unconsciously is engrossed in imaginative exercise which draws from the abstract or from the natural colourful environment and convert his imaginative experience into product for his enterprise. Cultural entrepreneurship if so distinctly structured could provide employment for a reasonable number of people. It is a means through which a creative individual fully come to terms with reality having undertaken necessary risks in deep intellectual struggle. Reality comes to us actually as a chaos of fragmentary impressions interrupting each other… reason shapes them into an “abstract system of hypothetical laws”. Thus we transform what comes “into a totally different world as a mode of our struggle to survive and a means and process of survival, each uniquely according to its volitional nature”. What attracts our attention from outside,
the life of the mind inside goes on as a jingle like stream of ideas, “a nature wealth of inner forms”. (Kallen, 1973:33) The cultural experiences of an individual provoke internal and external forces to exert their effects as forms of creativity in turn as a means of survival. Further more, Kallen (1973) argued that, our means for any “invasion of the future is remembered past as our imagination forms. Taking it from our instinct or a weapon of our struggle to live on, we deliberate, we extrapolate, anticipating now a latter shape of things and we start reshaping them now from the formation which had us anxious into the formation we hope for. (44).

Cultural entrepreneurship involves intellectual imagination and risk taking with a view to enhance the entrepreneurial inclination of an individual. All cultural entrepreneurs evolved through creative thinking. This made them geniuses. In Africa, cultural industry and enterprises have had brilliant contributors who strived gallantly to move cultural enterprises forward. For instance, baskets, garri fitter and some other materials were woven from locally sourced materials. Now, it is done with synthetic fiber which last longer than the local material. Before now, there was no means of mass producing African drama, music and other recorded materials. Today, it is part of our cultural enterprise experience. Even the intellectual atmosphere has been charged through creative thinking. This has helped to invigorate new thoughts and feelings aiming to advance development.

Africa culture has grip on every African, his thinking and world view. This grip has been further strengthened by western influence at the advent of books written by Africans and others on Africa and Africans, African sculptures, paintings, music, dance, weaving, carving, including natural treasures scattered all over the landscape of Africa. All these have helped to transform our thinking towards cultural entrepreneurship, which exist within the vast cultural industries. The cultural industries are; performing arts, audio-visual, publishing, craft, media and other. The various segments within these industries, which include festivals, museums, visual arts, film production and distribution, broadcasting, media and multi-media etc form the various enterprises within the cultural industries.. Each of these cultural industries creates opportunity for cultural entrepreneurship. In the cause of reshaping thoughts and feelings, more entrepreneurial thinkers become creative. Creative thinking comes from a broad background and it spurs the hypersensitivity of the creative thinker whose impulse responds swiftly. This brings about the advent of significant works from their creative enterprise. This is, however, not without the support of the individual’s inherent culture. All creative enterprises are culture related. The creative thinker is a cultural rationalist with aesthetic appreciation for the needs of his society. The attempt to meet human needs, drives creative thinking and creative enterprises.

Creative Thinking and Cultural Entrepreneurship in African Societies

It is obvious that creative thinking and cultural entrepreneurship in African societies have generated outstanding cultural enterprises in the area of music, drama, dance, painting, sculpturing etc,. Creative thinking has aided advancement in these
cultural fields. To a large extent, western characteristics have had a very high toll on the streak of cultural entrepreneurship in Africa, that is, its services and products have had significant changes over time as a result of western characteristics influence on creative thinking in Africa. This has made creative thinking a powerful catalyst for such ability as deep imagination, keen intuition and ability to coordinate, streamline and make ideas materialize through the enterprise medium. Creative thinking has helped to reconstruct the base for cultural enterprise in Africa through the application of western influence and technology.

Environmental influence also informs creative thinking through recognition and application of cultural and natural materials within the environment. The environment has ability to communicate and suggest creative functions to a creative mind. The individual mind is able to turn environmental suggestions into an ideal product that will meet human needs. The entrepreneurship idea is then pushed into reality. It then means that the creative thinker does mental surfing in relation to environment, initiates artistic process control towards articulation of an entrepreneurship product or service. Creative thinking is meant to meet the need of the bearer at first instance, by granting the thinker the grace to realize the aim of his or her thinking. This gives the thinker personal satisfaction and compensation for his service or product. The thinker benefits from the society on a large scale depending on how suitable his product or service meets the needs of the people. Creative thinking borrows from the past, present and the environment to meet human needs. In this process, creative thinking gave birth to creative work, which is the product of entrepreneurship. Irrespective of artistic class and quality of artistic work, it is a product of creative thinking which is intended to meet human need, including the artist who enjoys the gain. This indicates that creative thinking if properly harnessed has the ability to provide economic relief in immediate societies within and Africa at large.

Creative Thinking in Africa and Poverty Relief

The search for economic relief within economic crisis which has given rise to mass unemployment has directed our attention to revaluing areas initially neglected to find values in them because they are capable of creating jobs. Job creation is basically intended to meet individual need. Creative thinking, if it must provide economic relief, it must also consider mass production and quality of products and services. For instance, clay pot was used in the past only for water storage and some other indoor activities. In recent times, clay pots have metamorphosed into ornamental and decorative art works. It could singularly or in combination with other items of artistic class be used for this purpose. At the moment, they are used in hotels, churches, offices, banks and individual homes. That indicated that the demand for such art works has increased. Other art works like woven materials, painting, textile, drawing, as in the visual art works have all assumed proportional commercial size due to improvement exerted on the various areas due to creative thinking. The audio visual; music, drama, dance, jokes etc have also been improved upon as a result of creative thinking and they could be recorded in larger quantities for sale.
Creative thinking has taken African art to an appreciable level considering the employment provided by the cultural industries and enterprises. This means more should be done in the area of policies and training that would enlarge the scope of the artists in Africa whose vast artistic inclination and environment have been influenced towards entrepreneurship. These policies and training should be tailored to provoke the creative thinking capacity of an average African artist to create new artistic works from his creative thinking or create from an existing one a hybrid type. The creation of new independent artistic works from an existing artistic work enlarges creativity in whatever area of artistic works and it will create more enterprises towards job creation and poverty relief. Some African arts have been adjudged dead. They are not because if creative thinking is exerted effectively, they could be revived. The arts die and lose their meaning when dissected from the content and embrace of life. Creative thinking is the embrace of life which revives work of art. The employment potential of creative thinking to poverty relief in African is enormous if properly applied and backed with adequate polices.

Conclusion
Creative thinking, no doubt forms the basis for cultural entrepreneurship considering its importance. This is not an easy task considering the effect of development which is patterned after western development. This is seriously affecting our own civilization which kept us before colonialism. It then becomes difficult to develop our cultural industries and enterprises to create jobs because our culture of urban industrialization has moved us far away (Davidson, 1969:160). We are left with no option than to come close and apply creative thinking to each unit of our cultural enterprise so as to lift our people out of the arms of poverty. So it is that the creative thinker is behind the success of a viable and many-sided cultural industries and enterprises that expresses complex realities that are imagined and created in the dawn of cultural enterprise evolution in Africa before colonialism. This was meant for clear cultural entrepreneurship pursuit for awakening creative thinking in Africa.

Recommendations
With creative thinking the cultural industries and enterprises could be expanded. That implies that;
(a) government should provide enabling environment with policies that will allow artists to assess existing art works with a view to be inspired and extend or expand its utility.
(b) creative thinking artists with viable project should be given financial assess or assistance.
(c) cross cultural creative thinking that is capable of producing useful hybrid or independent material should be encouraged across Africa. Cultural industries and enterprise studies should be encouraged.
(d) creative thinking artists within the various industries should meet at reasonable intervals to develop new trends in their area of work.
(e) no area should be neglected, all artistic or creative areas should be given consideration provided they are artistically and employment viable.

(f) finally, quality and usefulness should be key factors in realizing the product of creative thinking.

References


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