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Internationalisation of Korean performing arts

A case study analysis

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this research is to focus on the internationalisation process and experiences of Korean theatre companies. Factors investigated include cultural issues impinging on production values and the roles of entrepreneurial thinking and creativity. An analysis of impacting barriers on performing arts internationalisation is also carried out.

Design/methodology/approach – A case study approach was used to investigate the performance and internationalisation activities of five Korean theatre companies that participated in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Findings – The exporting of Korean cultural products contributes markedly to the perception and understanding of Korea. Small theatre companies with a tolerance of risk-taking, together with competencies in creativity and entrepreneurial thinking, can help to minimise the effect of unforeseen problems experienced during the internationalisation of theatre productions.

Research limitations/implications – The in-depth case study approach adopted here has resulted in the uncovering of data that would not have been unveiled through questionnaire analysis alone. The findings can, however, contribute to future large-scale surveys of the arts industry.

Practical implications – The issues identified in this study are also relevant for other forms of internationalising artistic productions. The successful combination of artistic ability and the implementation of entrepreneurial competencies, together with the creative use of limited resources, serve as competitive advantages for the arts organisation.

Originality/value – This research promotes a cross-disciplinary approach to arts marketing in general by encouraging the interrogation of fields such as entrepreneurship, small business marketing and internationalisation research.

Keywords Performing arts, Entrepreneurialism, International business, Theatre, South Korea

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The focus of this paper is the examination of the internationalisation process and experiences of Korean performing arts organisations at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The increasing effect of globalisation in general means that the initial focus on Western organisations has now been impacted by Asian and other geographical areas. The entry modes of performing arts organisations differ from the traditional perspectives of exporting, licensing and franchising. What occurs instead is a combination of overseas production and performance, in combination with the exporting of a variety of cultural dimensions that are ultimately consumed and experienced by the audience. Using case



study analysis, this paper explores how both conventional marketing approaches and artistic influences contribute to performing arts internationalisation.

Developing a creative orientation is one of the best ways for small enterprises to survive and grow (Amabile, 1997; Fillis and Rentschler, 2006). Performing arts creativity serves as a signal to other art forms, and smaller organisations in general, that competitive advantage can be achieved through lower cost directions such as the use of imagination and the development of entrepreneurial marketing competencies such as networking, word of mouth communication, innovation and judgement (Shaw, 1999; Stokes and Lomax, 2002). Creativity acts as a common link between marketing and entrepreneurship in that it impacts on problem solving and leads to innovation (Hackley and Mumby-Croft, 1998). These factors have also been shown to contribute to smaller enterprise internationalisation by facilitating lower cost modes of entry (Fillis, 2001, 2008). The performing arts can be located within the creative industries, where internationalisation and entrepreneurship are increasingly influential factors (Flew, 2002; Henry, 2008). Small and medium-sized enterprises in Asian countries now contribute to international economic development (Ritchie and Lam, 2006; Yang and Xu, 2006), while participation by performing arts organisations enterprises in overseas festivals and other events enhances this contribution. In recent years, there has been growth in research on small business in Asian countries, including China and South Korea (Dana, 1999; Li and Matlay, 2006). Korean manufacturing and services industries have shown growth in smaller firm activity through their ability to specialise and offer economies of scale in their collaborations with larger organisations. Aspects of exporting are involved through the promotion of Korean culture, while overseas production of artistic output also occurs. These forms differ significantly from conventional notions of internationalisation but the categories are still useful in terms of describing what happens in artistic and creative terms. Creative thinking aids understanding of performing arts internationalisation by influencing the balance of artistic versus market orientation in developing audiences (Rentschler, 2002; Fillis, 2004a). Any conflict should be seen as an opportunity to construct innovative ways of both creating and responding to demand when the need arises (Searles, 1980; Fillis, 2006). Companies that produce cultural commodities sell aesthetic experiences (Björkegren, 1996). Aesthetic interpretation is likely to vary internationally due to cultural differences in translation of meaning. Arts festivals are concerned with the commodification, promotion and aestheticisation of these experiences through their facilitation of sensing, feeling, acting and relating dimensions (Schmitt, 1999). Arts marketers are responsible for packaging and communicating the product in appealing to the audience by meeting their needs and preferences (Kotler and Scheff, 1997). Internationalisation activities provide increased opportunities to meet these needs.

Internationalisation of the smaller enterprise

Internationalisation has been used to describe the increasing involvement in an organisation's international operations (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Yip *et al.*, 2000). Smaller enterprises are now experiencing greater opportunities in the international marketplace (Wright and Etemad, 2001). Their internationalisation is driven by a small number of key decision makers with relevant managerial knowledge, experience and international outlook (Miesenbock, 1988). Success is partly due to accessing lower cost resources, managerial competence and networking expertise (Yakhlef and

Maubourguet, 2004). The stages theory postulates that, in order to develop international operations, organisations use a stepwise approach along an organisational continuum (Lloyd-Reason and Mughan, 2002). However, it is believed that such stepwise advancement is not generally exhibited in SMEs due to their different behaviours and that alternative modelling is needed. Recent conceptualisations have centred on the network approach that more accurately portrays actual SME behaviour, and international entrepreneurship (Fillis, 2002; Keeble *et al.*, 2004). The latter is a proactive and innovative firm-level business activity that crosses national borders, involving interrelationships between the business and the international environment in order to create future goods and services (McDougall and Oviatt, 2005). Innovative organisational forms such as the “instant international” and the “born global” concept challenge long-held perceptions of how both high- and low-technology organisations internationalise (Knight and Cavusgil, 2004).

Some of the main difficulties experienced when endeavouring to initiate internationalisation activities include exposure to increased competition in the overseas market compared to the domestic market, a lack of knowledge of the process and problems with identifying target foreign markets. Other factors include motivation and support for internationalisation, insufficient personnel, cultural issues and a lack of relevant competencies (Osarenkhoe, 2009; Ojala and Tyrvainen, 2009). Ultimately, the key decision makers in the organisation serve as gatekeepers to international markets since it is their decisions which will either spur on the organisation to future internationalisation activities or serve as barriers to entering overseas markets. Barriers can be both internal and external to the organisation and may be just as much about the mindset of the key decision makers as about physical constraints.

The internationalising arts organisation is a particular type of entrepreneurial SME. Entrepreneurially inclined start-up companies can quickly pursue international strategies by leapfrogging some of the internationalisation stages (Jolly *et al.*, 1992). In order to progress theory, testing existing conceptualisations and constructing new frameworks based on industry specific studies and emerging behavioural patterns is needed. Much internationalisation theory has examined industries where firms can progress to carrying out mass production and specialisation. An analysis of the performing arts offers the opportunity to examine what happens when the product relates to the creativity of the artists and where artistic philosophy is just as important as many external motivating influences. An internationalisation scenario emerges based on culture, artistic expression and entrepreneurial marketing activities. Such organisations can thrive through their ability to offer a flexible, customised product enhanced by entrepreneurially based competencies in marketing, creativity, innovation and relationship building (Fillis, 2000; Zontanos and Anderson, 2004).

The application of entrepreneurial marketing and creative marketing concepts enhance understanding of the internationalisation of the performing arts organisation through their ability to provide alternative perspectives based on informal, creative ways of entering, surviving and growing in new markets (Fillis and Rentschler, 2006; Martin, 2009). Many organisations carry out business via highly informal, unstructured, reactive mechanisms while others develop a proactive and skilled approach where innovation and identification of opportunities result in a competitive edge. Formal marketing involves highly structured, sequential decision making while entrepreneurial decisions tend to be haphazard and opportunistic. The practice of

entrepreneurial marketing can result in superior value for both the customer and the organisation through its ability to develop new products, processes and strategies (Miles and Darroch, 2006). It also helps to explain differences in internationalisation behaviour, given that many organisations compete unequally in terms of business and marketing skills and other resources. International progression will only reach a certain point beyond which only those organisations with appropriate sets of creative and entrepreneurial marketing competencies can pass. Driven by severe resource limitations in many instances, the manager develops creative approaches in order to redress the situation. The marketing/entrepreneurship interface links creativity to innovation where creativity is the development of new ideas and innovation is the application of those ideas in practice. This approach creates value for customers by bringing together unique combinations of public and private resources to exploit economic, social and cultural opportunities.

The creativity in individuals and teams is often the origin for innovation and the performing arts organisation provides such an arena for its development. Akehurst *et al.* (2009) believe that, instead of focusing on individual talent, we should be more concerned with creating and sustaining an internal environment that is supportive of collective support for creativity and innovation. Collective entrepreneurial endeavour within an organisation has been termed “internal entrepreneurship” (Casson and Wadeson, 2007) and is closely related to the notion of entrepreneurial teams of employees (Stewart, 1989). Entrepreneurship from the bottom up, where creative thinking and innovative behaviours originate from team members rather than a sole entrepreneur, has been referred to as intrapreneurship (Huse *et al.*, 2005). This paper demonstrates how a collective approach to creativity can contribute positively to the internationalisation of the performing arts through the impact of the creative imagination and an appropriate balance of creative and traditional business skills.

Performing arts organisations can resist attempts to embrace marketing and instead follow their strong “art for art’s sake” philosophy (Harrison *et al.*, 1998; Fillis, 2004b). Marketing is different for the small firm due to its use of intuition, creativity, networking ability, operating under extreme time pressure and not being able to make decisions in an ordered and linear fashion (Day, 2000). Creativity has been evaluated from a range of perspectives relevant to the arts, such as cultural policy (Landry, 1994), psychology and social psychology (Amabile, 1998), creative leadership (Amabile and Khaire, 2008) as well as entrepreneurial marketing. A creative leap, innovation or discovery is not always necessary in order to progress thinking and practice. Instead, much smaller innovations within an existing process are also effective. Creative competencies in the smaller entrepreneurial organisation include risk-taking behaviour, being able to control rather than be controlled, not being afraid to fail and having the perseverance to succeed. A strong knowledge base, an ability to identify opportunities and a mixture of business and social networking competencies are also needed (Fillis, 2005; Ko and Butler, 2007).

Researching the performing arts

Previous research has focused on the economic and financial aspects of the performing arts (McCarthy, 2001; Kirchner *et al.*, 2007), public accountability versus artistic development (Rentschler and Potter, 1996), consumer behaviour and repurchase intentions (Hume *et al.*, 2007; Hume and Mort, 2008; Slack *et al.*, 2008) and audience

development (Bernstein, 2006; Scollen, 2008). Other issues researched include the use of relationship marketing in retaining audiences (Rentschler *et al.*, 2002; Conway and Whitelock, 2007), the service experience (Hume *et al.*, 2006; Hume and Mort, 2008), marketing orientation and planning (March and Thompson, 1996; Sorjonen, 2008), public relations (McDonald and Harrison, 2002) and the use of online communities in extending audience relationships (O'Sullivan, 2007). The appeal of performing arts events can be understood using the concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Caldwell and Woodside, 2003). Audience norms, values, beliefs and other psychological responses shape purchase choices and consumption activity (Holt, 1998). Cultural activity associated with higher-level tastes is equated with higher amounts of cultural capital, and vice versa. The performing arts are deemed to contain higher levels of cultural capital than, say, watching popular television programmes. Rentschler (2007) connects this concept with the notion of the cultural entrepreneur as an individual who identifies and develops artistic opportunities. As well as expressing the key artistic values of the director and performers, any performing arts production must also relate to the cultural and artistic goals of the audience and communicate effectively with them in local and international contexts (Moses, 2001).

The reconceptualisation of the organisation as an art firm provides an additional perspective on performing arts internationalisation through its ability to embrace both artistic and business modes of understanding (Guillet de Monthoux, 2004). This allows the application of the methods used by artists in creating value to sit alongside more conventional notions of market making. The art world and the marketing environment are visualised as a mutually beneficial permeable boundary and this helps to explain how performing artists visualise and practise their own form of marketing (Fillis, 2004a; Fillis and Rentschler, 2006). Instead of continually responding to demand, artists can also create it via artistic reconstructions of marketing practice, helped by their entrepreneurial marketing competencies such as curiosity, embracing ambiguity, flexibility and being opportunity focused. Successful internationalisation develops as a result of the use of both formal marketing competencies alongside more creative entrepreneurial marketing skills.

Internationalisation of Korean performing arts organisations

Global demand for cultural goods and services has grown considerably in recent times (UNESCO, 2000). The Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2000) analysed globalisation and the future of the cultural industries as a major sector for national economic growth. It found that the Republic of Korea had a high percentage of export and import activity compared with other countries. Alongside technology-based products, cultural goods had considerable potential for exporting. The government consequently recommended that there was a need to support cultural products and encouraged entrepreneurship in cultural businesses in order to promote export growth. The Korean creative industries in general have changed significantly since the nation entered the world market in the 1980s. Before this time, international communication was difficult and human traffic in and out of the country was limited. Despite the potential benefits of outward internationalisation, the level of international touring Korean productions is still relatively low. Inadequate financial support from the government for both domestic and international performances has also created restrictions for independent artists. Nevertheless, many entrepreneurial Korean productions are still willing to take risks and stretch the boundaries of their artistic thinking and practice.

Korean performing arts organisations enter new markets such as the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and stimulate demand for their work using their entrepreneurial marketing and artistic abilities. Demand may then increase as the relationship strengthens with the audience over time. The success of any international endeavour is due partly to cultural understanding. Historically, Korea existed as one country with both Chinese and Japanese cultures impacting on Korean identity. South Korea as a separate nation was established in 1948 and, due to political separation, there has subsequently been a divergence of contemporary cultures between the North and South. More recently, South Korea has been culturally influenced by the USA and other Western societies. The Korean performing arts contain both traditional and contemporary influences and in order to increase the likelihood of successful internationalisation, performances often include Western cultural references.

Internationalisation models include sets of internal and external factors that move the organisation towards international involvement (Dalli, 1995; Chetty and Campbell-Hunt, 2003). Push or internal factors in small performing arts companies include the drive of the key decision maker to internationalise, the desire to increase artistic reputation and the creative competencies behind the construction of a unique artistic product. External pull factors include overseas opportunities for touring and sufficient financial support from arts and government bodies. The reputation and networks of the artists, as well as audience expectations, affect the internationalisation process (Bendixen, 2000). Reputation contributes to the formation of image in the audience's mind stemming from the creative ability of the artists (Fillis, 2003). The artistic manager has a crucial role to play here by shaping the artists' work in line with customers' expectations and by acting as a broker of the creative ideas of the artists themselves.

Artists develop and promote a particular creative language based on imagination, inspiration, aesthetic standards and style as a form of sensorial perception that must then be interpreted by the audience. Stock (2001), however, believes that this international language is difficult to achieve due to tensions created through globalisation effects and cultural differences and variations in aesthetic perceptions. Interpretation can become complex as different cultural codes can cause interference in deciphering the message being communicated (Ricks, 2006). Conventional internationalisation theory suggests that organisations initially choose export destinations that are psychically and culturally close to the domestic market, but culturally distant markets are often quickly selected by entrepreneurial organisations (Vahlne and Nordstrom, 1993). However, the greater the cultural difference between the host country and the visiting arts organisation, the higher the likelihood for misunderstandings to be made.

The international appeal of the product, together with the impact of artistic values and resource limitations mean that these enterprises do not follow a stages approach to internationalisation, and instead mirror the behaviour of the smaller instant internationalising company. Although there may be a dominant "art for art's sake" philosophy embedded in its organisational values, the performing arts enterprise should also be willing to create new products and adapt existing ones when needed in order to satisfy international audiences with potentially different tastes (Calantone *et al.*, 2004). The creativity that appeals to one culture may not necessarily have the same attraction in another culturally distant society. Performing arts products can be altered with respect to their general content, structure and technical aspects, as well as

their intellectual and emotional content (O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan, 1995; Bennett and Kottasz, 2001). These latter factors also impact on the demand for the performing arts product in different ways to many other goods and services. Here, any utilitarian dimensions are outnumbered by hedonic, affective and intangible dimensions (Bouder-Pailler, 1999).

Arenas such as the Edinburgh and Avignon Festivals have been identified as important facilitating channels in entering the wider international market. During the past number of years spent working with Korean theatre companies in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, one of the authors observed cases of the relative success and failure of the productions. The promise of potential future touring opportunities has served to increase the number of participating smaller Korean productions, helping to counter the low level of touring productions in general. However, many productions entering the market armed only with their artistic integrity have suffered financial failure due to their inability to translate their indigenous art into internationally appealing productions. The success of the festival is partly the result of a product offering based on international and domestic dimensions such as the style of the production:

The [...] style may be termed place non-specific [...] as the quality and variety of international performances rather than the particularly Scottish location are the drivers to attendance (Prentice and Andersen, 2003, p. 13).

Research design

The research aims are:

- to enhance understanding of the internationalisation process of Korean performing arts organisations through case study analysis;
- to improve the comprehension of internationalisation of arts organisations in general;
- to create more relevant smaller enterprise internationalisation theory by utilising entrepreneurial marketing and creativity constructs; and
- to improve understanding of internationalisation theory and practice by opening up the research process to include those organisations from non-traditional, non-Western backgrounds.

A case study approach is adopted and the qualitative results are analysed. This method is particularly useful in new and underdeveloped areas such as this (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). The case study approach is deemed appropriate when there is little known about a phenomenon, where current perspectives bring little new understanding and where existing theory is deemed inadequate or not relevant. It is believed that such circumstances apply here since the majority of internationalisation theory to date has a business rather than artistic focus and is often more relevant to the larger organisation. Performing arts internationalisation can be viewed as a particular subset of smaller enterprise internationalisation where growth may only ever occur up to a certain point, further conflicting with existing internationalisation modelling. Case study methodology permits several levels of analysis to be carried out using data collection approaches such as interviews, archive material and observations. By analysing a number of cases, the researcher can identify similarities and differences by

looking for evidence of cross-case patterns. The particular cases selected for investigation were representative of Korean performing arts organisations in general, as well as being typical of the type of organisation participating at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Therefore, the chosen cases were a representative sample, and offered variation in the factors being investigated (Coolican, 2004; Seawright and Gerring, 2008). There were a total of seven Korean theatre companies performing at the festival in 2006 but two of these only participated for a very short period. The five remaining companies were selected for case study analysis. Respondents were identified through face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and follow-up e-mails.

The selected cases reflect the increasing impact on internationalisation by non-Western organisations and are deemed appropriate due to their theoretical and practical usefulness in terms of generating new knowledge. The number of cases chosen for analysis is also deemed appropriate in minimising replication of findings (Yin, 2009). As the results will show, there are some similarities but also differences between the cases in terms of success, failure and adoption of marketing practices. It is these differences that make the process of case study analysis more transparently observable (Pettigrew, 1988). Of the five Companies A, B, C, D and E, Company A achieved the most ticket sales in both 2005 and 2006. This company has toured the UK and other destinations including Johannesburg, Moscow, Tokyo, Barcelona, Jerusalem and Thessalonica. Data on internationalisation processes and experiences was acquired through analysis of in-depth interviews with respondents from each company, together with an examination of press reviews by UK and Korean theatre critics. The collection of press articles relating to Company A consisted of 20 national and regional reviews and news articles. Details of the specific publications are available from the authors. By reading the reviews, the researchers became familiar with the background of the companies, the aesthetic advantages achieved and the distinguishing features of the performance.

A largely open-ended research instrument was used to generate responses from the principals or marketing managers of the theatre companies. The five Korean theatre companies were compared in terms of their international experience, as well as their marketing skills. The characteristics, motivations and competencies of the key decision makers were investigated in order to understand the perceived potential benefits of performing outside the domestic market. Other issues included company background characteristics, performing experiences, presentational styles, the perception of critics' reviews, the use of networking, the logistics of touring overseas, the difficulties encountered when doing so and their overall experiences of performing at the festival. Respondents were also probed for their thoughts on the need for artistic changes to the performance and were given the opportunity to detail their aspirations within the wider international arts market, as well as their advice for other theatre companies thinking about internationalising their offering.

Newspaper analysis of Company A performance

Korean newspaper articles identified the performance as the most recent example of a national theatre company achieving a positive reception in the international arts marketplace. They outlined background information concerning the company and the performance such as its origins, how it was produced and developed in order to achieve success:

While he was touring Europe with the xxx troupe, Italian producers suggested to [the director] that a performance based on Tae-kwon-do would be appealing, planting the seed of the idea [...] Initially the male actors were martial arts masters and the female characters former gymnastics champions. After two years' hard training, all of them turned out to be masters in martial arts, acrobatics, gymnastics, and comic acting (*Korean Times*, September 2003).

The director had previously been an actor in the early stages of his career and his ambition and creativity subsequently drove him to become a successful director. His previous performance was his first production in which he gained crucial international experience. These factors demonstrate how a combination of artistic competencies and overseas experience can impact successfully on decision making. An article in the *Korea Herald* in May 2004 outlined how modifications were made to the show in order to appeal to overseas markets. Unnecessary scenes were taken out, and the setting, sound and lighting were upgraded to provide a more dynamic staging of the performance. The company utilised expert advice on overseas markets, including assistance in management and creative production issues relating to adaptation, cultural understanding and preparation for different market environments. The core offering was immediately identifiable as Korean but adaptation meant that the production had widened its appeal:

The cultural gap is not fatally wide, but needs to be narrowed because the show organisers want to enter overseas markets. Identifying and smoothing out such rough edges is what xxx, a renowned comedy specialist from Spain, has done for the show [...] [He] says "In general, it's easy for foreigners to follow the story, but I work on the storytelling to make it better understood by Western audiences [...]" He has also focused on changing rhythms and bringing in cinematic style, an effort that he hopes will lead to an easier understanding on the part of European and American audiences (*Korea Herald*, March 2005).

The high quality and unique character of the performance was highlighted in most reviews, with an average grade of four to five stars out of five being achieved. The storyline, reflecting traditional Korean culture and family life, was emphasised strongly in several reviews. The performance also made connections with other cultural forms such as the comedy of Laurel and Hardy and the musical creativity of *The Pyjama Game*, and therefore minimised the likelihood of cultural misunderstanding by providing these recognisable Western references. Although its limitations were also identified, the positive aspects of the performance outweighed any negative issues:

Though the plot may be a little thin, it doesn't matter – it's full of laughs and scripted cleverly to allow the performers to display their skills, and that's what you're there to see (*Three Weeks*, August 2005).

The amazing cast don't let us down in storytelling as they let their bodies do the talking, showing that physical comedy is a universal language (*British Theatre Guide*, August 2006).

[...] xxx's strength lies in its universality. Like Charlie Chaplin films where physical movements expressed more than words could say, the nine performers are masters of physical comedy (*Edinburgh Evening News*, August 2006).

The Western references served as a form of localisation strategy in order to relate to the international audience. The innovative nature of the performance meant that something new and culturally authentic was being offered, thus serving as a form of competitive advantage for the organisation.

In-depth interview analysis

Companies B, C, D and E were participating in the Festival Fringe for the first time. Company details are shown in Table I. All five are independent and small, with fewer than 30 members including performers, and are managed by principals or directors. The genre of the performance differs, although Korean cultural background has a strong influence on their artistic production values.

Motivation for internationalisation

The reasons given for participating in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe were mostly the same. The companies wanted to gain opportunities to perform overseas by attracting the attention of international promoters and venue directors, while also developing their reputations and enhancing their artistic quality. They also believed that the experience gained by participating in the world's largest arts festival would contribute to their future development. Company A said their style and the concept of their performance was well matched to the nature of the festival. Company B was encouraged by earlier successful examples from Korea, while Company E perceived certain advantages of working in an English-speaking country. These factors can be viewed as types of push-and-pull stimuli that impact on internationalisation. However, the types of stimuli tend not to be the usual ones identified in the literature beyond internal managerial competencies. External stimuli include requests from overseas venues and agents. Market opportunities are both artistic and business in nature, although competition effects and government assistance in stimulating internationalisation also occur (Dalli, 1995; Ruokonen *et al.*, 2008).

Strategic approaches to internationalisation

The length of festival preparation time differed between companies. Company A held advantages over the others since they had participated the previous year and their performance had already proved popular in Korea. Apart from Company C's production, the other three performances were new to the market. Before participating in the 2005 festival, Company A had planned for the unfamiliar Western market by customising the production to suit the tastes of an international audience (Knight, 2001; Calantone *et al.*, 2004):

We spent more than three years creating the show before its first showcase. Since the showcase and its premiere some six months later, we have kept refining it and received consulting [advice] from overseas show doctors [...] to make the performance more appealing to international audiences (Principal, Company A).

They developed comical elements that made the show more accessible to non-Koreans. Performances were showcased in front of Western critics in Korea. Edinburgh journalists and the Festival Fringe director also travelled to Korea to watch the performance, demonstrating a degree of entrepreneurial proactiveness in promoting the production. As a result, networks were established with the media sector and the festival management team (Gilmore *et al.*, 2001). This facilitated the company's ability to secure location advantages at the largest venue at the festival, while also guaranteeing media coverage and customer awareness.

Table I.
Company background
information

Company	A	B	C	D	E
Established	2003	2005	2001	1961	1995
Type of performance	Martial arts comedy	Hip-hop street-dance	Mimed drama	Puppet theatre	Musical
Language	Non-verbal	Non-verbal	Non-verbal	Non-verbal	English
Means of performing overseas	Participate in festival Invitation Network Agency	Participate in festival Invitation Network	Participate in festival Invitation	Participate in festival Invitation	Participate in festival Invitation
Toured and performed in these countries	Japan China Vietnam Hong Kong Malaysia Britain Spain Greece Germany Israel India Dubai	Japan China Taiwan Thailand The Philippines Britain Spain Germany USA	Japan Egypt Armenia France Germany Britain	Japan Taiwan Singapore Hong Kong Israel Britain Poland New Zealand	Britain USA

Overcoming internal and external barriers to internationalisation

Respondents gave details about the management difficulties in performing overseas. All said that finance was an important contributing factor in planning for an international tour (Shaw and Darroch, 2004; Quinn *et al.* 2009). Viewing internal and external barriers from an entrepreneurial marketing network perspective allows for their positioning as obstacles that can be overcome through the sharing of resources among network partners (Shaw, 1999; Johanson and Vahlne, 2003). The British currency, the high costs of the production, employing an agent, and promotional expenses affected all the companies. The agent is fundamentally different to that in international marketing elsewhere due to the balance of artistic and business priorities (Peng and York, 2001). All five companies agreed that there were inadequate numbers of specialist agents who had the appropriate level of experience and professionalism. Most had no established overseas network and appeared only to work to earn more money. It was felt that an agent who was not an expert can ruin a company's passion and self-confidence. However, an experienced agent can help artists who wish to perform overseas to overcome barriers.

Cultural differences also caused problems for the performers, from macro level psychic distance issues to micro level operational factors specific to the performing arts (Ojala and Tyrvaainen, 2009):

[...] it is usually only people who have had some kind of international experience already who think about cultural differences. People who have lived in one cultural environment their entire lives tend to take the ways of their own native culture for granted. This is the case for many Koreans. Often, cultural differences can become a problem in very subtle ways. For example, there are certain ways of doing business in Korea that many Koreans are used to. Koreans can often be very lax about rules and guidelines. For me, this occasionally became a frustrating problem (Overseas Marketing Manager, Company B).

The impact of language is a crucial element in the internationalisation process, as it permeates virtually every facet of an organisation. All the companies, apart from Company E, presented non-verbal or limited use of language performances. In order to communicate effectively with international audiences, they tended to avoid verbal expression. Instead, it was crucial to communicate using physical actions, emotions, sounds, lighting effects and stage sets. Promotions and public relations, however, required language exchange and communication, and most of the Korean productions faced difficulties here, despite the fact that they all employed either translators or specialist agents. They were all aware that careful communication was needed in order to deal with the stage productions, audiences, venue management, journalists and promoters, as well as in everyday matters. The overseas manager from Company B expanded on this:

Language was definitely an issue. I served as the company's main interpreter, and there were times when the language barrier became an unexpected problem. For example, I was the only member of our company who was able to speak English fluently, and therefore I was required to personally convey every message that any given member of our company wanted to give to the venue management. Often these might be messages that I personally did not agree with. For example, if the message was of a negative nature, then I felt uncomfortable delivering it; because I felt that my main job was to maintain good relations between my company and the venue management [...]. Language is an issue whose importance cannot be overestimated. It affects every part of the experience of taking a production abroad. Companies from Korea wishing to take a production overseas must not forget to consider the language issue because it is one of the most fundamental problems.

Other problems included not preparing for the performance early enough, and not having enough authority to make appropriate decisions; for example, Company B's performers found that their creative ideas for overseas markets were not always accepted by their managers, and this demotivated them. Companies D and E noted that most of their major decisions were made by their agents and they were then obliged to follow them. The managers and art directors believed that they themselves had the most authority concerning their shows. However, an agent who represents directors and managers in negotiations can exert decision-making power, and even try to have a say in artistic thinking. Disagreements and poor communication among the parties also caused difficulties. Venue regulations meant that certain rules had to be followed, although there were also perceived problems with poor services and facilities at the venue, despite the companies paying for a performance slot. There were also concerns about the dilution of the impact of performances due to too many shows being held at the venue.

Success was achieved by developing a balance of artistic and entrepreneurial marketing competencies in order to guide internationalisation efforts (Fillis and Rentschler, 2006). The former include the production of non-literal evocative statements as part of the performance, as well as the persuasion and illumination of the artistic message among the audience. Implementation of entrepreneurial marketing skills centring on personal and business contact networking, word of mouth marketing, judgement, creativity and innovation also influenced success. Improved performance could have been achieved if more time was allocated to marketing analysis and the raising of sponsorship and other funds. Overseas markets offer different challenges to the Korean market; for example, the same methods, strategies and forms of marketing used in Korea were not applicable in the UK. Advantages of participating in the festival included the ability to interact with more culturally diverse audiences. It was also felt that UK audiences were generally more open-minded to serious or experimental shows. The disadvantages experienced related to audience size, often making the performance unviable financially, while in Korea audience levels guarantee profitability. Companies also experienced difficulties in collecting information about the venues in advance, such as its reputation, facilities, ease of access, marketing and promotion. They felt that these factors served to limit audience numbers and that in future it was crucial to have good knowledge of the venue in order to make informed decisions. Those companies performing in venues in remote locations with poor services and inadequate facilities were immediately disadvantaged.

Companies D and E both relied totally on their agent, who had previous festival experience. Company A did not employ an agent for the 2006 festival due to a negative experience in 2005. Companies A, B, D and E hired public relations companies based in London or Edinburgh, assisting with media communications, press calls and releases. Companies A and B also carried out some basic research themselves through websites and published articles since they had English-speaking company members. Companies D and E were unable to understand English, which is why it was crucial for them to employ an agent who was able to provide a range of research information. In addition, the Korean Arts Council organised forums for theatre companies to exchange news and market knowledge about domestic and international market opportunities. However, despite these sources of assistance, problems still occurred:

We just listened to the advice furnished by our agent for everything [...] following the specific instructions she gave us. We did not conduct any specific market research or study this market segment at all. That was a big mistake for us, that with everything different to our situation, we had to have a different preparation which suited us. We were not focused on our target market (Principal, Company D).

This indicates that each company had reached different states of business development, even though they were all artistically advanced. In addition, the influence of art for art's sake thinking occurs in related fields such as the crafts sector and the wider creative industries (Botti, 2000; Fillis, 2006). Not being focused on a specific target market suggests a lack of necessary strategic and other decision-making competencies (Carson and Gilmore, 2000; Hill, 2001).

Promotional activities

All the companies felt that they had no truly innovative marketing tactics, although they mentioned several methods, such as street performances, that they used to create awareness. The data shows, however, that there is evidence of use of entrepreneurial marketing activities in combination with creative marketing thinking and practice. The fact that companies do not necessarily recognise that they are adopting this form of marketing relates to its intuitive, implicit nature. Company C was not concerned with marketing values since its defining characteristic was artistic integrity, raising product versus market orientation issues. Market and customer orientation have received a large amount of attention in the literature but product-centred market creation has largely been ignored (Fillis, 2009). Some studies have found that market orientation is positively linked with improved performance but others have not, showing that the relationship is tentative at best. Butler (2000) discusses the merits of product-centred marketing in the arts, noting that artists do not necessarily follow the market but instead practise a form of product orientation that is not anti-marketing but is, rather, a refreshing re-take on the marketing concept. Company C believed that their audience attended for reasons of appreciation of their art. Their past experiences at the Avignon Off festival had encouraged them to present what they felt was a high-quality piece of art that guaranteed high audience satisfaction. However, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is deregulated and uncontrolled so that productions with high-quality artistic values can often become lost among the large number of competing productions. In terms of promoting their work through posters, brochures and flyers, each company held slightly different views. Company A said that capturing a good image that appealed to audiences was crucial, while the quality of printing was also important. Company B regretted that their poster lacked a photo-based image, while Companies D and E both used photograph-based graphics of their theatre work.

Evaluation of marketing strategies

Each company was asked how successful they thought their marketing strategies had been. Company A demonstrated an intuitive approach in deciding where to promote their performance. This is an entrepreneurial form of marketing based on sensing where the appropriate location advantages might exist (Fillis, 2000; Durkin and McGowan, 2001):

There were so many street performances on during the festival, but we knew the best place at the appropriate time for our show promotion to meet our target audiences in the best way (positive review by their manager).

Company B's marketing manager viewed their marketing strategy as embracing a variety of artist versus manager-led thinking which resulted in both positive and negative outcomes.

My biggest criticism of the marketing approach of our company would be that the senior members gave too much authority to the performers of the show when it came to marketing decisions. Marketing, while closely tied to the artistic product, is a separate discipline with different goals. It should not be approached in the same manner or with the same mindset as creating a work of art [...] In some cases, it might be better to let the artist make his own marketing decisions, but in most cases it is probably not. This is because marketing is a full-time endeavour that requires the work and research of a specialist. In most cases, an artist cannot work on his art and the marketing at the same time.

This manager clearly sees little merit in empowering the artists to construct their own form of marketing, but an art-based form of marketing decision making has been shown to be possible where the creative competencies within art can overlap and even enhance those found in marketing (Brownlie, 1998; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004). Viewing marketing in an artistic sense means that situation-specific interpretations emerge that are grounded in individual and group values. An artist may align to a specific school of thought but the art produced will be unique due to the subjective interpretations of the artist. In addition, artistic intuition can complement existing ways of knowing about marketing (Fillis, 2009). Company D's manager gave a very negative evaluation of their approach which lacked any meaningful marketing, entrepreneurial or otherwise:

It was not strategic at all. It needed more preparation in advance such as for street promotion. We did not know where we were going and when, also what you needed for it. For example, we had the problem of having such a small sound impact to receive attention from the public, especially as it was outside.

A reactive approach to thinking about marketing strategy was also demonstrated by the manager of Company E:

Marketing and any promotional work was not started early enough, and when everything started there was no exceptional way of doing it rather than grabbing people passing by. It was very hard [...] but somehow facing audiences on the street increased our confidence.

This range of attitudes towards marketing strategy conforms to the evolutionary development of marketing in small firms identified by Carson (1985, 1990), from the reactive stage to tinkering, entrepreneurial and proactive orientations. This modelling has ultimately led to the formation of the entrepreneurial marketing construct.

Reflecting on the internationalisation experiences

The companies were asked what they believed they had achieved from the experience of participating in the festival. Artistically, Company A's performance was the most successful show of the five analysed, but they felt they could not make any profit from it:

We put on a performance in Korea at the same time as we participated in the festival. We knew the market, in that we were not going to make any profits from the festival even if the

ticket sales were good, as it required considerable expense. However, we can increase our profits from the market in Korea as the reviews and news from the festival affected Korean audiences.

The company therefore understood that longer-term profitability gains in the domestic market were, in part, influenced by being prepared to incur losses in the shorter term in the overseas market. The fact that the company had performed to Western audiences meant that Korean audience demand was stimulated further. At the same time, artistic benefits were shared across markets. Due to their inexperience, the other companies were left in deficit and their ticket sales were disappointing.

In addition to each production being reviewed by international critics and journalists, advantages of participating in the festival included opportunities to meet other performing groups and promoters. These interactions contributed to the development of personal and business networks. Company A signed contracts for a tour of over ten countries, including Britain, Spain, Germany, Saudi Arabia and China, while Company C was invited to tour Singapore and Germany. Artistic reputation and image served as aesthetic and visual stimuli for international market entry, as well as contributing to audience demand at the festivals (Bendixen, 2000; Fillis, 2003). Image and reputation are seen as different concepts, with the former relating to current beliefs about an organisation and the latter focusing on interpretations based on behaviour over a period of time. This is why the artists place so much emphasis on performing in order to maintain and hopefully enhance their reputation over time in both domestic and international markets. Having a strong reputation may mean that an organisation is able to set premium prices for its offering, despite competition setting lower prices. This can also mean that the pace of internationalisation accelerates. Although agents, venue directors and publicists can impact on reputation management, it is strong internal entrepreneurial leadership that ultimately dictates how image is constructed and promoted.

Company D intended to perform in Hong Kong while Company B received a reasonable amount of interest from promoters, but nothing was realised because the company was no longer working with the dance troupe. The festival experience was deemed very meaningful for the organisations:

It was like a war experience. Now, we are much more knowledgeable than before, we know what kind of performance will be welcomed by audiences here, and we gained experience in ways of promotion and marketing ideas. It was a precious experience to feel in your bones, totally different from studying by the book (Company E).

The war metaphor is grounded in the development of strategic thinking built on tactics, intelligence deployment and other military constructs (Hunt and Menon, 1995). Adoption of metaphor also serves to rationalise any uncertainty that exists in performing to unfamiliar overseas audiences (Cornelissen, 2006). “Feeling in the bones” relates in a sensory way to how arts marketers use aesthetics to create the desired creative impact among the audience (Venkatesh and Meamber, 2006). “Aesthetics” also refers here to the entrepreneurial style of marketing shown by these organisations as they attempt to internationalise their offerings. Further benefits included the belief that by interacting with other artists and exchanging creative ideas, this provides the company with relevant strategic insight into internationalisation opportunities.

Applying the benefits of international experience

Subsequent to appearing at the festival, all five companies were in the process of creating their next performances to present overseas. They felt the necessity for additional artistic changes to their shows in order to be more suitable for the international market (Bouder-Pailler, 1999; Calantone *et al.*, 2004). The performances needed to cater for different cultures while international market segmentation analysis and audience research is also required. Advice was given to emerging companies who were planning to perform overseas. Respondents from Companies D and E both strongly emphasised the importance of preparation, with detailed planning and pre-checking being essential for success:

Going abroad – is not the most important thing; it is important to produce a show which can be performed everywhere, and receiving applause from the audience is important. And don't rely on the narrow views from your own directors or producers who always think their performances are the best. Only objective judgements from an audience can improve the quality of the show. If Korean audiences are not satisfied with the show then new audiences in other countries will react in the same manner. If people think, "Korean audiences would not understand my art, I will go abroad!" – This is a mistake (Company A).

Respondents also stated that experience is one of the main influencing factors that motivate the company to extend its international activities.

Comparing the overall characteristics of the five companies, Company A had achieved the greatest amount of success through its ability to exploit competitive advantages via product and performance differentiation. The development and exploitation of networks and the use of entrepreneurial marketing activities contribute to the construction of successful internationalisation strategies. Company A was able to utilise its creativity in order to achieve both business and artistic success. Company B faced a number of internal conflicts or dissonance surrounding artist versus market orientation that impacted directly on its internationalisation efforts. Company C persisted in adopting an art for art's sake strategy and did achieve some internationalisation success, despite its lack of marketing strategy and planning. Company D tended to adopt successful performance examples from other companies, letting them take the risks initially. They showed awareness of internationalisation opportunities but were slow to gain competitive advantage through their lack of individuality. Finally, Company E tended to lack any real commercial appeal and coherent marketing strategy, even though the performance itself was of high quality. The results show that the impact of creativity and artistic thinking and practice has resulted in different forms, interpretations and degrees of internationalisation.

Conclusions

In terms of contribution to knowledge, this case study analysis heightens understanding not just from performing arts or internationalisation perspectives. It develops cross-disciplinary insight by amalgamating theory and practice in arts marketing, internationalisation, entrepreneurial marketing and creativity. This approach also relates to the call by Gummesson (2002) for more creative ways of knowing within marketing in general in order to close the theory versus practice gap. Creative insight can be generated through the juxtapositioning of different, and even diverse literatures and theories.

This constant juxtapositioning of conflicting realities tends to “unfreeze” thinking, and so the process has the potential to generate theory with less researcher bias than theory built from incremental studies or armchair, axiomatic deduction (Eisenhardt, 1989, pp. 546-7).

There are common competencies located in each of these disciplinary areas, such as visionary awareness, intuition and creativity, and so it seems appropriate that contemporary performing arts marketing theory should acknowledge these factors, since they already occur in practice. This hybrid construction helps to overcome any natural resistance to marketing within the industry. The resultant behaviour can be viewed as an art-based form of marketing achieved through the implementation of an internationalisation strategy shaped by a balanced competency portfolio. The paper has shown how the international entry modes of performing arts organisations differ from the usual ways of accessing overseas markets. This paper also raises the issue of the internationalisation of aesthetic experiences and the production and consumption of culture in new and developing markets. It also demonstrates what happens when product and market orientations intertwine in order to achieve a satisfying experience for an international audience. Even though the appeal of Korean culture is undoubtedly a factor in stimulating internationalisation success, the intrinsic creativity of the performers is also a contributing factor. This research has introduced an arts-based way of knowing into internationalisation theory that should not necessarily be confined to arts organisations alone. It could also be used to refresh and enliven smaller enterprise internationalisation theory in general.

Creativity provides these enterprises with competitive advantage via imaginative thinking in developing their marketing strategies. Internationalisation is driven by a combination of internal competency factors such as networking, word of mouth marketing, judgement, innovation, opportunity recognition and risk taking, as well as external drivers such as international demand for the performance and the desire of the overseas venue to forge links with the performers. The research field, although growing in the western world, is very much in its infancy in Asian countries and this study adds to the knowledge base. In addition to economic benefits, there are also wider social benefits as the result of the raising of cultural capital levels locally and internationally. Cultural capital also impacts on consumption via socially based audience norms, values and beliefs relating to the performance. This, in turn, can affect future internationalisation strategies in terms of developing performances targeted at traditional audiences, as well as to those new to the performing arts. This latter group may well have pre-existing lower levels of cultural capital that can subsequently be raised through exposure to new art forms. This exposure can occur both in local venues and in international markets where the culture of the performers is unfamiliar. Successful internationalisation is the result of being able to balance sets of market and artistic priorities. There are also lessons for organisations in the wider cultural and creative industries, as well as in the smaller enterprise environment generally where a similar orientation may be beneficial.

Arts marketing strategic objectives in general must result in securing the economic and social wellbeing of the organisation. This can be achieved by ensuring that an appropriate balance of commercial and artistic competencies is developed. Governments must be fully aware of the importance of fostering international opportunities for artists to travel, research new work, perform and cultivate artistic exchange, since this then results in a mutual exposure to new cultural opportunities.

The exporting of cultural products contributes to our perception of the overseas country due to the “tangibilisation” effects achieved during the consumption and reflection of the performance. The internationalisation of the performing arts does not just concern art and economics. It is also a sociological issue involving the presentation of the self to the other, with the self relating to national identity and the other being the overseas audience and other relevant parties.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe attracts an international audience based on shared aesthetic appreciation, but Stock (2001) also promotes the belief that the interaction between postmodernism, globalisation and internationalisation effects can also perpetuate heterogeneity of experience and interpretation, rather than homogeneity. So researchers should be willing to incorporate both standardised and localised aspects in their research designs, while also being prepared to develop competencies in cultural literacy. Stock calls for cross-cultural research projects and this is certainly a potential future direction in performing arts research. Research should also focus on large-scale audience analysis and the comparison of audience experiences, as well as revisiting sample cases over time in order to monitor changes in behaviour and attitude. Both success factors and mechanisms that contribute to failure should also be investigated. Additional areas for future research are the impact of the international performing arts on tourism and consumption behaviour.

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