

ABSTRACT

Sustainability is a concept that has received a lot of attention in arts management discourse. It is also a concept that many theatre organisations grapple with both in developing and developed countries. Practitioners, managers and scholars have been trying to find solutions to the growing need for sustainability of arts organisations. While a number of strategies have been proffered, most of them have been focusing on financial sustainability. This study argues that if arts organisations are to achieve sustainability, the issue must be looked at from a broader, holistic perspective.

In pursuing a holistic perspective on sustainability, the overarching argument is that for a theatre organisation to achieve sustainability, it must be guided by four pillars. These pillars are artistic vibrancy, community relevance, capitalisation and good governance. The focus of the study is on not-for-profit theatre organisations operating in Zimbabwe. Savanna Trust, a theatre organisation based in Zimbabwe is used as a case study. The study starts by looking at the external and internal challenges that are faced by theatre organisations operating in unstable socio-political and economic environments such as Zimbabwe. These challenges are some of the major impediments to organisations that pursue sustainability. The study then uses the four pillars to examine Savanna Trust and its capacity to become a sustainable organisation.

This study recommends some strategies that not-for-profit theatre organisations can implement in pursuance of sustainability. It is hoped that the study will also contribute to a body of academic literature on theatre and sustainability with a specific focus on not-for-profit theatre organisations.