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# **Internationalisation of Korean Performing Arts: A Case Study Analysis**

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## **Abstract:**

**Purpose** – Cross disciplinary research is carried out on the internationalisation process and experiences of Korean performing arts companies. Factors investigated include cultural issues, production values, the roles of entrepreneurial marketing and creativity and barriers to performing arts internationalisation.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A case study approach is used to investigate the performance and internationalisation activities of five Korean dance companies which participated in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

**Findings** – The exporting of Korean cultural products contributes to the perception of Korea. Small dance companies with a tolerance of risk-taking, and with entrepreneurial marketing competencies can minimise the effect of problems experienced during internationalisation of their productions.

**Research limitations/implications** – The case study approach uncovers data which would not have been unveiled through questionnaire analysis alone. The findings can also contribute to future large scale surveys of the arts.

**Practical implications** - The issues identified are also relevant for other forms of internationalising artistic productions. Internationalisation strategy constructed from artistic and entrepreneurial marketing perspectives results in 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, arts marketing and internationalisation.

**Keywords** performing arts, creativity, entrepreneurial marketing, internationalisation

**Paper type** Research paper

## **Introduction:**

Developing a creative orientation is one of the best ways for small enterprises to survive and grow (Agor 1991; Amabile 1997; Fillis and Rentschler 2006). Performing arts creativity serves as a signal to other arts 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 ability and word of mouth communication (Stokes and Lomax 2002; Shaw 1999). The marketing/entrepreneurship interface can be used to understand these and other factors including judgement, positive thinking and innovation (Carson 1993; Brownlie 1998). 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 also contribute to smaller enterprise internationalisation (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, while also impacting at a local level (Yang and Xu (2006; Ritchie and Lam 2006). Participation by performing arts organisations enterprises in festivals and other events enhances this contribution.

Companies which produce cultural commodities sell aesthetic experiences (Björkegren 1996). Aesthetic interpretation is likely to vary internationally due to cultural differences in interpretation of meaning. Arts festivals are concerned with the commodification and promotion of these experiences through their facilitation of sensing, feeling, thinking, 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). Basic needs are met through exposure to new experiences, being entertained and escaping from boredom and routine (Cooper and Tower 1992; Boudier-Pailler 1999). Ideal needs relate to aesthetics, beauty, transformation and greater awareness of the product. Emotional needs deal with stimulation, fantasy, imagination and relaxation. Personal needs include education, growth and spiritual nourishment, while social needs are met through interaction, sharing, contact and social play. Creative thinking also aids this process 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).

### **Internationalisation of the Smaller Enterprise**

Internationalisation has been used to describe the increasing involvement in a firm's international operations (Johanson and Vahlne 1977; Yip et al. 2000). Due to globalisation and technology effects, smaller enterprises are now experiencing greater opportunities in the international marketplace (Wright and Etemad, 2001). Here, 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 (Chandler and Hanks 1994; Yakhlef and Maubourguet 2004). The stages theory postulates that, in order to develop international operations, organisations use a stepwise approach along an organisational continuum (Bilkey and Tesar 1978; Lloyd-Reason and Mughan 2002). However, it is believed that such stepwise advancement is not generally exhibited in SMEs due to their alternative behaviours and

that alternative modelling is needed. Recent conceptualisations have, for example, centred on the network approach which more accurately portrays actual SME behaviour (Fillis 2002a; Keeble et al. 2004) and international entrepreneurship. This is a proactive and innovative firm-level business activity which crosses national borders, involving inter-relationships between the business and the international environment in order to create future goods and services (McDougall and Oviatt 2005; Wright and Ricks 1994). Its emerging innovative organisational forms such as the instant international and the born global challenge long held perceptions of how both high and low technology organisations internationalise (Knight and Cavusgil 2004; Rialp et al. 2005). The internationalising arts organisation is a particular type of SME and can contain international entrepreneurship dimensions. Entrepreneurially inclined start-up companies can quickly pursue global strategies by leapfrogging some of the internationalisation stages to become] an international player (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 2000b; Zontanos and Anderson 2004). 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. With internationalising Korean performing arts organisations, aspects of exporting are involved and overseas production of artistic output also occurs. Obviously these forms differ significantly from conventional notions of internationalisation but the categories are still useful in terms of describing what happens in artistic terms.

### **Researching Performing Arts Marketing**

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; Slack et al. 2008) and audience development (Bernstein 2006; Scollen 2008). Other issues 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). Consumption of particular products and the display of specific consumption styles result from a desire among individuals to create distinction and declare their social position. Cultural activity associated with higher

level tastes are 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 research to date on performing arts marketing is largely focused on Western cultures, whereas this paper develops insight into the emerging internationalisation of Korean performing arts organisations.

### **Entrepreneurship, creativity and the arts organisation:**

As an SME, arts organisations tend to operate using informal, unstructured, reactive mechanisms. The entrepreneurially inclined develop a proactive and skilled approach where innovation and identification of opportunities give them a competitive edge. Their entrepreneurial marketing decisions can be haphazard and opportunistic (Carson 1990; Kaish and Gilad 1991). The situation is further compounded by resistance by some to marketing in any guise and their strong art for art's sake philosophy over business beliefs (Harrison et al. 1998; Fillis 2004b). Day (2000) feels that marketing is different for the small firm due to its intuition, creativity, networking ability, operating under extreme time pressure and not being able to make decisions in an ordered and linear fashion. Creativity has been evaluated from a range of perspectives relevant to the arts, such as cultural policy (Landry 1994), psychology and social psychology (Guilford 1950; Amabile 1998), creative leadership (Amabile and Khaire 2008) and entrepreneurial marketing (Fillis, 2002a, 2002b; Fillis and Rentschler 2005).

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).

### **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 are seen as having considerable potential for exporting. The government consequently recommended that there was a need to support cultural products and subsequently encouraged entrepreneurship in cultural businesses in order to promote export growth, resulting in increasing numbers of small arts organisations looking to exploit new opportunities in the international marketplace. The main reasons behind internationalisation of these companies is twofold: generating increasing profit levels and the obtaining of international artistic recognition.

Internationalisation models originally developed by Bilkey and Tesar (1978), Cavusgil (1984) and Dalli (1995) include sets of internal and external factors which move the organisation towards international involvement. 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 and audience expectations also 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 arts manager has a crucial role to play here by either shaping the artists' work in line with customers' expectations or by acting as a broker of creative ideas coming from the artists themselves. The artist develops and promotes a particular creative language based on imagination, inspiration, aesthetic standards and style as a form of sensorial perception which 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, together with the impact of alternative aesthetic beliefs relating to the perception of the particular performing arts activity. 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 which are psychically and culturally close to the domestic market, but culturally distant markets are also 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 impact of artistic values and resource limitations mean that these enterprises do not follow a stages approach to internationalisation, instead mirroring a similar pattern of

behaviour in the smaller instant internationalising company due to the international appeal of the artistic product. Networking, opportunity recognition, relationship building, word of mouth marketing and creative use of limited resources are used by the more entrepreneurial arts organisations in order to gain competitive advantage. Although there may be a dominant art for art's sake philosophy embedded in its organisational values, the 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 which 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 that of goods and services in general. Here, any utilitarian dimensions are outnumbered by hedonic, affective and intangible dimensions (Bouder-Pailler 1999).

### **Performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe:**

The vast majority of Korean arts organisations employ fewer than 50 workers. Increasing numbers are now attempting to reach out to new international audiences as they move away from the overly-concentrated domestic market. 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. This

is despite the perception that the performing arts industry is now considered to be highly important from cultural, social and economic points of view. Nevertheless, many entrepreneurial Korean productions are still willing to take risks and stretch the boundaries of their artistic thinking and practice.

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 various productions. Arenas such as the Edinburgh and Avignon Festivals have been identified as important facilitating channels in entering the wider international market. The promise of potential future touring opportunities has served to increase the number of participating smaller Korean productions. 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 research discussed here conveys how Korean performing arts companies survive and grow internationally through their ability to respond to differences in culture, while also overcoming other barriers in the international marketing environment.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is a long established series of arts events which attract large numbers of domestic and international visitors. Insight into the motivation for festival attendance can be informed by examining contributions from the tourism literature which can then be incorporated into subsequent internationalisation modelling; for example Crompton and McKay (1997) identify a number of push-pull factors such as escapism, excitement, event novelty and socialisation. The success of the festival is partly the result of an appropriate 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 2003:13).

Festivals are found across societies and they are increasingly seen as unique tourism attractions and destination image makers (Grant and Paliwoda 1998; Peterson 2009). They normally have a specific theme and take place once a year at a particular period of time. The Edinburgh Festival uses creativity to position the city within the wider domestic and international tourism market (Richards 2001). Insight can be gained by thinking about the personality of these festivals, in the same way that consumers attach personality traits to commercial goods (d'Astous et al. 2006; Ouellet et al. 2008). The consumption which occurs at festivals is socially and artistically based. Audience experiences tend to occur outside the everyday environment and can be highly hedonistic (Bourdieu et al. 2001). For many people, attending a festival is also the main reason for visiting the city or other location.

Culture impacts on tourism demand and affects participation rates by creating new emotions and experiences (Marciszewska 2005). The creative approaches of managers and experiences of tourists also matter (Richards 2001). International festivals expose the visitor to be exposed to the performers' cultures as they, in effect, represent their wider country level culture. The choice of venue is also important when attempting to ensure the success of an event (Mencarelli and Pulh 2006). The notion of value is used to understand the impact of the physical surroundings on the overall arts experience, in addition to aesthetic, hedonistic and other intangible dimensions involving the performance and the audience (Mencarelli 2008). An audience member forms a perception of a venue based on its physical characteristics which, in turn, can influence the behaviour of that individual attending the event.

## **Research Design:**

The overall aim of this research is to analyse the internationalising experiences of Korean performing arts organisations in attempting to achieve success in both business and creative terms. A case study approach is adopted and the qualitative results are analysed (Yin 1989; Bryman and Bell 2003). The approach is particularly useful in new and under-developed areas (Sorjonen 2008; Peterson 2009). The methodology also 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 is able to identify similarities and differences by looking for evidence of cross-case patterns. The researchers analysed five Korean theatre companies which performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2006 (Companies A,B,C,D and E). One of these (Company A) achieved the most ticket sales in both 2005 and 2006. The 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 the 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. The theatre groups were selected by purposive sampling (Coolican 2004). Respondents were identified through face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and follow-up e-mails.

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, attitudes and motivations 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 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 performance and the production company, including its origins, how it was produced, developed and nurtured 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, Sep 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. An article in the Korean 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 relating to adaptation, cultural understanding and the subsequent preparation for different market environments:

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, Mar 2005)

The high quality and unique character of the performance was highlighted in most reviews, with an average grade of 4 to 5 stars out of 5 being achieved. The storyline reflecting traditional Korean culture and family life, was emphasised strongly in several reviews. The performance made connections with other cultural forms such as the comedy of Laurel and Hardy and the musical creativity of the Pyjama Game. 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, Aug 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, Aug 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, Aug 2006)

The production also demonstrated the value of pursuing localisation strategies to suit the requirements of different international audiences. 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 1. 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.

Take in Table 1

### *Motivation for internationalisation:*

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. Respondents were asked about their motivations for participating. Company A said that it was because the style and 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 which impact on internationalisation (Dalli 1995; Ruokonen et al. 2008).

*Strategic approaches to internationalisation:*

The length of festival preparation time differed. Company A held advantages since they had participated the year before and their performance had already proved popular in Korea for over two years. 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.(Company A principal). They developed comical elements which 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 came to Korea to watch the performance. 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.

*Overcoming internal and external barriers to internationalisation:*

Respondents gave details about the management difficulties in performing overseas. All said that finance was an exceptionally important contributing factor in planning for an international tour (Shaw and Darroch 2004; Nummela et al. 2006). Barriers can be viewed as either internal or external to the organisation and positioned as structural, procedural or operational. Viewed from a network perspective, this allows for their positioning as obstacles which can be overcome through the sharing of resources among network partners (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 here is fundamentally different to that in international marketing elsewhere due to the necessary 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 (Ojala and Tyrvainen 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 (Company B Overseas marketing manager).

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. Company 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 business competencies in order to guide internationalisation efforts (Fillis and Rentschler 2006). 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 (Company D principal).

Many of the issues identified here are also typical of SME internationalisation in general (Fillis 2002a). 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 companies felt that they had no truly innovative marketing tactics, although they mentioned several methods such as street performances which they used to create awareness. Company C was not concerned with marketing values since its defining characteristic was artistic integrity, again raising product versus market orientation issues. They 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 which 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 amount 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 which 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 to selecting where to promote their performance. This is an entrepreneurial form of marketing based on

sensing where the appropriate location advantages might exist (Fillis 2000b; 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; Monthoux 2004). 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).

*Reflecting on the internationalisation experience:*

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 it 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. 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 served as a stimulus for international market entry, rather than any planned strategic response (Bendixen 2000; Fillis 2003). 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), while 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). 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 market (Bouder-Pailler 1999; Calatone et al 2004). Aesthetically, they believed that the performance needed to cater for different cultures and that international market segmentation analysis and audience research should be carried out. Each company gave advice 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 which motivate the company to extend its international activities.

### **Conclusions:**

This paper has adopted a cross-disciplinary perspective in researching the internationalisation of Korean performing arts organisations by analysing the intersections between international marketing, entrepreneurial marketing, arts marketing and creativity. It should also be remembered that the arts organisation is an SME. Creativity provides these enterprises with competitive advantage via imaginative thinking in 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 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. Cultural activity with higher level aesthetic tastes equate with higher levels of cultural capital, but such is the nature of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe that wider social interest equating with lower cultural capital levels is possible. Opportunities for

widening this appeal and raising cultural capital levels can be addressed by the cultural entrepreneurs involved with the festival; for example, responding to wider aesthetic and emotional needs. There may be reasons to customise the production but this is balanced by growing international demand for the core product form. Successful internationalisation is the result of being able to balance sets of market and artist priorities and there are lessons also for organisations in the wider cultural and creative industries. Decision making can be a potentially complicated scenario, with managers, artists and agents being involved to varying degrees.

Internationalisation modes adopted here are somewhat different to previously accepted paths due to the impact of artistic factors and their trade-off with business principles. Some performing arts organisations are capable of early internationalisation, mirroring born global and instant internationalisation behaviour elsewhere. Exporting and other international marketing terms are still appropriate, although their specific nature will be different due to artistic intervention. Internal internationalisation drivers include sets of entrepreneurial marketing competencies such as networking, word of mouth marketing, reputation, relationship building, opportunity recognition and creative ability. The main external driver of internationalisation is the growing international demand for the performing arts, from consumers looking for new experiences and programmers searching for new acts to stimulate international audiences. The resultant internationalisation does not match the stages approach as perceived elsewhere and, in any event, this interpretation has been found wanting in its ability to describe actual internationalisation behaviour by the smaller enterprise (Cort et al. 2007).

The real value of this paper is in constructing an understanding of the performing arts based on marketing principles shaped by the needs of both artistic and business 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. There is also a need to be prepared to make short term losses in order to make longer term gains through the heightening of international reputation. Internationalisation success factors include having an audience appeal influenced by the existence of a creative language based on culture, plot, narrative and style. Other contributing factors include the ability to carry out in-house international market research and the successful exploitation of business and personal contact networks in developing performing arts activities. There is also the continued requirement to be able to overcome financial barriers, as well as a good working relationship with agents and other bodies. Being willing to overcome perceived psychic distance issues in working with other cultures and experimenting with alternative techniques also shape future success.

Arts marketing strategic objectives must result in securing the economic well-being of the organisation (Fillis 2002b). These objectives consist of tangible and intangible commercial and non-commercial factors. Attention given to securing funding support and identifying unique selling potential is crucial. Governments must be fully aware of the importance of fostering international opportunities for artists to travel, research new work, perform and cultivate artistic exchange. 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

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.

Events at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe attract 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 prepared 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. Research should also focus on large scale audience analysis and the comparison of audience experiences. The construction and interrogation of longitudinal multiple case studies could also contribute to theory development. A further contribution to understanding is the longitudinal analysis of the internationalisation process of performing arts organisations, so that behaviour can be analysed over time. Here, both success factors and mechanisms which contribute to failure should be investigated.

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**Table 1. Company Background Information**

Company	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
Established	In 2003	In 2005	In 2001	In 1961	In 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 Philippines Britain Spain Germany U.S.A	Japan Egypt Armenia France Germany Britain	Japan Taiwan Singapore Hong Kong Israel Britain Poland New Zealand	Britain U.S.A

