A STUDY ON THE STAFF MEMBERS OF PUBLIC THEATRES

ANALYSIS BASED UPON NATION WIDE SURVEY OF PUBLIC CULTURAL HALLS IN JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the ploblems and possibilities of the human resource management of public theaters. The author carried out a nationwide survey by quetionnaire on the staff members of public cultural halls (i.e. public theaters) concerning to their actual situation of employment , career development and vocational consciousness . As a result it was found that the characteristics of the staff differed significantly according to the type of the management organization. And the factor analysis focused on the staff 's recognition of "professional knowledge, experience or interest " extracted two factors .One is "theater management factor" and the other is " community management factor". Furthermore the regression analysis indicates these factors are correlated at a significant level with the population of the city where the hall is located, the varieties of art programs of the hall, and the job description of the worker.

keywords: Career Development Public theatre Human Resource Management Community Needs, Arts Management Education

INTRODUCTION

There are more than 2,000 public cultural halls established by the local municipalities in Japan. As the current number of the municipalities are 1,766, the public halls outnumber the municipalities. These halls are equipped with acoustic and lighting facilities in high quality, so you can present beautiful performing arts show or fabulous music concerts. However, they are quite different from what we can call 'theater' in European context. Some of them don't have the budget for preforming arts programs at all, only renting the halls to amateur groups or show business company. Or even if they have some budget for arts programs, just presenting popular touring shows or packaged programs created in Tokyo. There are very limited numbers of public cultural halls that have professional staff and system to produce their own performing arts works. It has been often said that there are many 'theater "buildings, but they are not 'theater' as creative entity(Nakagawa 2009, Shimizu 2006).
In Japan libraries and museums have had legal basis for long, but there used to be no rules and regulations regarding theatre facilities (whether it was nonprofit or for-profit). So local municipalities could build theatre-like halls quite easily under the article 244 (Local Autonomy Law) which regulated "public facilities" in general. Reflecting such a situation, a new act on activation of theatres and concert halls, etc. so-called 'Theater Law' "was enacted in June 2012. Its preamble says "Theaters and concert halls are expected to support the community development as 'new agora for people', getting citizens' sympathy and participation." This implies 'public theater' should not only be a venue to present or produce performing arts programs but also a place for local people to think about their community through performing arts (Shimizu 1997).
To activate the public cultural halls as such 'public theater', and to make citizens become to understand that theater is necessary to their community, the human resource management of those halls is more important than ever. There are more than 20,000 staff members are working for public cultural halls. As they are huge resource for the 'public theatre', development of their ability and quality is urgent issue. Unfortunately there are few studies on human resource management of public cultural halls, focusing on career development and vocational consciousness.

Human Resource Management in Non-profit Arts Organization

The studies focused on the human resource of public cultural hall had been very limited so far in Japan. As mentioned before, due to the absence of legal standard it was easy to establish cultural halls without clear purpose and professional staff. The public cultural hall directly operated by the municipal government (here after MG) has been considered just one of the many divisions of municipal government, where the public officers are posted by periodical personnel reshuffle. Or even in the case

of a public cultural hall operated by the other entity, it was often an organization largely funded by the municipal government. So before the revision of Local Autonomy Law, few people thought that the public halls were self-directed organizations. In other words, the public cultural halls had been lacking the sense of organizational management.

But this ambiguous management circumstance has changed. After the revision of the Local Autonomy Law in 2003, the operater of a public facility was separated from its founder and private sector such as for-profit company obtained the qualification to make operation contracts for public facilities (i.e Designated Management Organization System). Further more, the appearance of talented people who learned arts management in universities at home and abroad, and in 90s several 'genuine public theatres' have been established by the local municipalities which produce their own creative works and employed skilled staff for producing and management. In this context, improvement in the way of organizational management and human resource development has become critical issue for public cultural facilities.

Regarding the human resources management in non-profit arts organizations, DiMaggio (1988) conducted the research on the arts managers of art museums, symphony orchestras, resident theatres, community arts agencies in 1981.The research clarifies the employment condition and career development such as background, recruitment, work experience, training and professionalism of the arts managers. Explaining the reason why the interest in the career development and human resource management in non-profit organization has icnceased, he points out the growth of arts organizations,-the complexity of the management methods, and more needs for fundraising in the economically competitive social conditions.
Even in the U.S. studies on the management of non-profit arts organization are mainly focused on strategic planning, fundraising ,marketing and board development(Townsend 2000).Therefore in order to develop the arts manager's quality and ability, the more researches on the human resources are needed.

Research Question

WHO really are the staff members working for the public cultural halls as non-profit arts organization First of all this study aims to grasp the background, employment condition and career development and vocational consciousness of the current staff members by the quantative survey.Based upon the result of this survey, their recognition of professionalism for the 'public cultural facility is analyzed .The analysis will answer the question what kind of aspects effect the professionalism of staff members.
These discussions will give implications for the possibility of human resource management and education system to make public cultural facilities function as "new agora for people"

Outline of Quantative Survey
Survey design and implementation-

- period : from Feb.20 2012 till Mar.31
- target : all the staff in 1,384 public halls which have the annual budget for performing arts program.
  Selected from the year 2011 list of "The Association of Public Theaters and Halls in Japan ". Public halls in Tohoku area are not included, in consideration for the damage of the 3.11 earthquake.
- method : self-completed. Distributed and collected by mail.
- number of respondents: 2,522 (collection rate 21.5% the number of full time staff 11,718)

Questions

- personal information : sex, age, family members, arts activities until now
- information of the hall where the respondent works : location, seating capacity of auditorium, management organization, genre of performing arts programs, annual budget for performing arts programs, type of performing arts program
- employment status : employment pattern, number of years with current work place, organizational type of employer, annual salary, job specification, Were you willing to apply for current job? , reason for apply, job satisfaction
- educational background, major or specialty in school, employment history, number and contents of job training which the respondents gained before
- relationship and communication with the people or groups related to the job
- staff 's recognition of "professional knowledge, experience or interest "

The responses were collected from all 41 prefectures that the questionnaire was sent to. Though the response rate of MGstaff (25.4%) is higher than the rate of DMOstaff (20.1%)significantly, the whole picture of genre, type and budget size for arts programs of respondents are similar to that of public halls in general. So it is reasonable to use the result of this survey to illustrate the overview image of public cultural halls in Japan.

Methods of Analysis

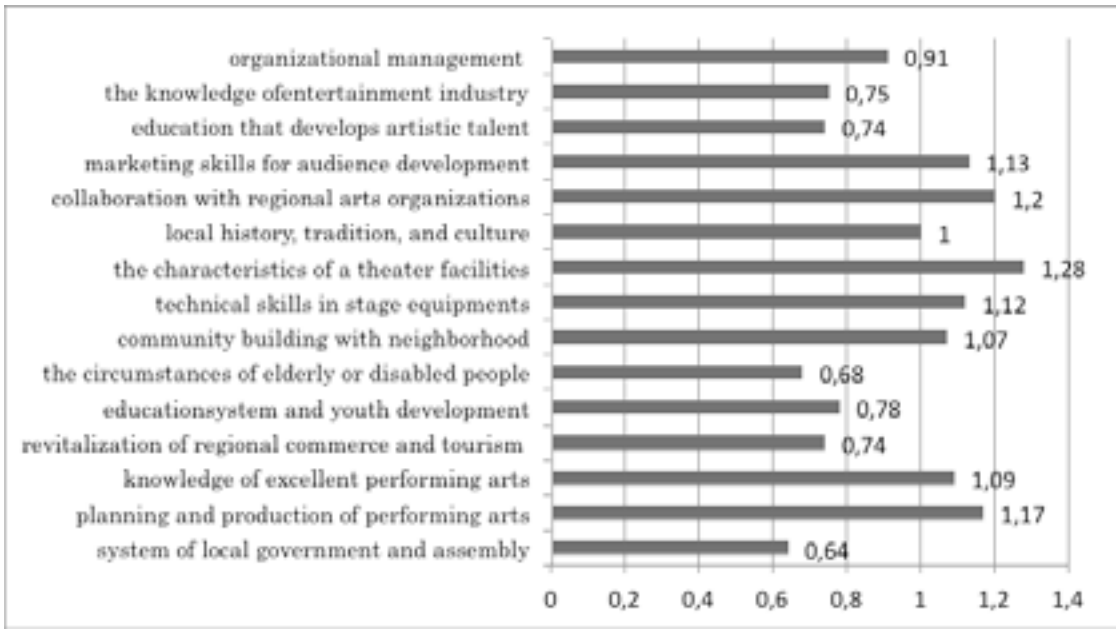
Conditions of Staff Members

Based upon the result of questionnaire, the conditions of staff members in public cultural halls are examined by cross table analysis, from the point of the type of management organization which respondents are belonged, the population size of the location and career development (educational background, major and employment history) of respondents.

Vocational Consciousness

Based upon the answers to the questions asking staff's recognition of "professional knowledge, experience or concern " for public cultural hall management(figure 1), the author examined the vocational consciousness of the staff by factor analysis. In addition, the factors that explain these vocational consciousnesses are explored through regression analysis.

FIGURE 1 :HOW IMPORTANT IS THE KNOWLEDGE , EXPERIENCE OR CONCERN RELATED THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS FOR THE STAFF OF PUBLIC CULTURAL HALLS?



The numbers shows the average points converted from original answer of SD method.

The result of the factor analysis extracted two factors (Table 1). The first factor shows high factor loading with the matters related to the performing arts and theatre facilities, and the second factor is related to the concerns for various community needs. This indicates that the staff members recognize the role of the public cultural halls in two directions; one is as 'theater' producing and providing professional arts programs for citizens, the other is as community agency to explore and deal with the community needs. The author named the first factor "theatre management factor" and the other "community management factor". To find out what kind of conditions determine those two directions, the regression analysis was used, 17 variables were entered with a stepwise procedure.

The result indicates(Table 2) that educational background and former career in cultural organization do not contribute both factors. On the contrary, the trainings are very effective to both factors. The "theatre management factor " is affected by the facility's annual budget for arts programs and job specification of the respondent. The population of the city where the public cultural halls is located affects "community management factor". While in the cities with population of more than 1 million don not care too much about community matters but those the working for the halls in smaller cities have more concern to community needs and circumstance.

TABLE 1 : THE RECOGNITION OF PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE OR CONCERN(RESULT OF FACTOR ANALYSIS)

	theater management factor	community management factor
characteristics of a theater facilities	0.871	-0.169
technical skills in stage equipment	0.862	-0.179
planning and production of performing arts works	0.65	0.123
knowledge of excellent performing arts	0.632	0.105
the knowledge of entertainment industry	0.537	0.157
marketing skills for audience development	0.43	0.286
organizational management	0.417	0.285
system of local government and assembly	0.086	0.473
local history, tradition, and culture	0.224	0.505
community building with neighborhood residents	0.044	0.634
the circumstances of elderly or disabled people	-0.098	0.759
revitalization of regional commerce and tourism	-0.041	0.775
education that develops artistic talent	-0.079	0.828
factors correlation matrix 1	1.000	.551
2	.551	1.000

method of extraction: principal factor analysis rotate method: promax with Kaiser normalization

TABLE 2: RESULT OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Theatre management factor

N 964

Variables	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	
number of trainings	.126	.000	**
variations of arts programs	.086	.019	*
number of trainings	.124	.000	**
age	-.072	.025	*
annual budget for arts programs	.130	.000	**
job specification dummy(technical)	.115	.000	**
job specification dummy(technical and planning)	.117	.000	**
sex dummy(female)	.101	.002	**
Adjusted R square		0.135	

Community management factor

Variables	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	
number of trainings	.163	.000	**
variations of arts programs	.149	.000	**
number of relationships	.156	.000	**
sex dummy(female)	.152	.000	**
population dummy(more than a million)	-.094	.002	*
population dummy(more than 50 less than 100 thousand)	.073	.018	*
Adjusted R square		0.134	

Note **: p<0.01, *:0.01< p<0.05

Findings and Discussions

The existence of differences between urbanized area and small town

Through the comparison between the public cultural halls according to the population size , there are significant differences in the age, sex, and educational background of staff members. Professional staff that has learned arts management or other arts discipline is concentrated to the DMO located in urban area. Especially MG located in small city shows its difficult situation, such as small budget for arts programs, inability to implement the arts programs and no arts management staff. On the other hand, the factor analysis indicates that the staff of public hall in small cities tends to have very close relationships and communication with local community. It suggests that if the staff could find the community needs and connect them with performing arts programs successfully, the inactive public cultural halls could have the possibility to be "public theatre "as new agora for the people.

The existence of the differences between DMO and MG
Compare to the MG staff, the DMO staff are in poor employment condition, as evident by the lower salary level and unstable employment status. However, DMO staff shows a strong tendency to have higher motivation for the job, attend more job trainings, be greatly satisfied with the job, and have educational background related to arts management. While the DMOs have to operate the public halls within limited period and budget that they contracted with municipal government, the mission and goal for the organization is much more clear than its for MGs. This implicates the possibility to improve the job motivation of staff and develop the employment policy of arts management staff in public cultural halls, by sharpening the missions and goals that are indispensable to non-profit arts organization. On the other hand , because of the current economic circumstances, the worsening employment situation in DMOs is a matter of concern. More studies on developing the recruitment and education for excellent human resource , and on systems to train current staff are needed.

No existence of the specific career path for the staff (exclude the tecnical staff)

The tecnical staff in charge of operating such as sound and light had studied thecnical field related to theater in schools, and also had job history as tecnical staff in another organizations or for- profit company. On the contrary , the staff members in charge of planning and producing performing arts programs have more various educational backgrounds and work experiences comparing to another staff such as general affairs . It is difficult to find certain volume of staff that has job history specializend in arts management or performing arts. To develop the arts management education in the future , further research and study is needed to answer the question if the career path for the staff of public cultural halls should be established or not.

Two directions : 'theatre management factor' and 'community management factor'

The factor analysis indicates that there are two-direction in the staff's recognition of professional knowledge and experience. These two directions are effected by the characteristics of the cultural hall itself such as the variation of arts programs and population size of the city the hall located, and also the employment condition of staff member himself such as job specification, training and relationship with community members.

CONCLUSION

This paper tried to grasp the whole picture of employment conditions, career development and vocational consciousness of staff members working for public cultural halls in Japan. The nationwide survey clearly illustrates the merits and demerits of the designated management system, and also the differences between urban area and small cities. Such a management system and the location of the hall affect the employment status and motivations of staff members significantly. The survey found out the two factors in vocational consciousness of staff members. There are two types of staff members, one is "theater oriented" and the other is "community oriented". To make the public cultural halls function as "true public theatres", human resource management is greatly important. Depending on the characteristics of the local community and the mission of the public cultural hall, it will be necessary to recruit, post and train those "theatre oriented personnel " and "community oriented personnel" appropriately.
Also focusing on these two directions, the arts and management education in universities and on the job trainings should be to systematize.

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