

## Economic Challenges, Entrepreneurship and Orientation of Costume Production in a Recessed Contemporary Economy

Sunday Peter UMANAH<sup>1</sup>  
[sundaypumanah@uniuyo.edu.ng](mailto:sundaypumanah@uniuyo.edu.ng)

Anietie UDOFIA<sup>2</sup>  
[aniudofiancis@gmail.com](mailto:aniudofiancis@gmail.com)

Aniebiet Unwana MBEDE<sup>3</sup>  
[aniebietmbede@aksu.edu.ng](mailto:aniebietmbede@aksu.edu.ng)

Mary Emmanuel EMAH<sup>4</sup>  
[marytonyomoregie@gmail.com](mailto:marytonyomoregie@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>Department of Theatre Arts, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

<sup>2,3,4</sup>Department of Performing Arts, Akwa Ibom State University, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

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### ABSTRACT

The need to regenerate entrepreneurial consciousness in along with scholarship to tackle unprecedented social threats has reflected that there are measures to take and curtailed recession to its barest minimum, which the identification of human nature in natural desires along with their attitude to esteem, love and outlook has opened some gaps for scholarly engagement. Drawing from Peter Drucker's conception of Market Orientation Theory, which explains the basis for adaptation and survival through productivity entrepreneurship, this paper uses qualitative approach to discuss economic challenges, entrepreneurship and orientation of costume production in a recessed economy. Findings show that a recessed economy is a period people focus only on survival, ignoring savings and investment due to challenges. Even as situation goes hard, the need to appear attractive for esteem and admiration is constant, making dressing and body accessories a viable adventure for the costume to engage at all time. The challenges of initiative, finance, innovation and investment can bring down the progress of a costume designer, while creativity, investment, innovativeness, currency to design trends and customer demands elevate costume business to a relevant practice that can protect existence and investment in a recessed economy. The study concludes that a designer who devotes his mind to entrepreneurship in tandem with design principle is unrestricted at all times. It recommends that Nigerians should focus on human nature to identify the gaps in human needs from natural inducement to create products that intensify a constant entrepreneurial command to counteract the menace of recession in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *Economic, Challenges, Costume-Production, Entrepreneurship, Recessed-economy*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the global threats to the nascent global economy is the pundits to regenerate confidence to rekindle the survival impulse in the retrogressing system "which economic activities diminish considerably and renders many people... and the society inactive" (Duro, 2022: pp 23). The

alarming part is that the cravings to consume is soaring bereft of the futility beclouding human endeavors across the various sectors the economy birthing what Udofia (2025: pp 54) describes as “an economic condition that reflects a rise in price followed by a complementary rise in demand”. As the nations of the world dialogue to regenerate life in alternative means, the notion of the human reaction to the circumstance of appeal opens an outlet through which bodily gears can dismantle some of the major challenges that subsume even the most resourceful persons’ effort in the nascent moribund economy.

Prominent among these challenges is recession, which is a period numerous economic activities undergo a steady fall. According to Duro (2022: pp 23), in this kind of situation, “many people scramble for what they can do to survive but struggle in vain”, reflecting is as a negative human condition evolving from both human and natural causes. Funny enough, many people resolve in consuming instead of producing because hunger, thirst and the urge to exist are natural in man. To allow humanity drift into this abyss is tantamount to abetting evil. Thus, there is need to detour to self-reliance and dependency on local raw material for reforming of finished products with... focus on comparative advantage for survival (Umoh, 2023). Once survival is restored, the society begins to nurture “people yearning for life” Udofia (2024: pp 221). As Umoh (2021) intones, this can help in “managing the problems of high unemployment..., improving human productivity in diverse economic areas” (Umoh, 2021).

According to Mbede *et al.* (2024), “The ability of drama to continuously draw from life, in reflecting the realities of the nuances of the society it is imitating situates such artistic expression in context of the times of the production”. The rise in theatre entrepreneurship is a testament of the times that we operate not just for a struggling theatre, but a thriving theatre.

Apart from searching for a way to survive, survival may be hindered by many factors even when the processes of survival are carried out by an expert or someone who is knowledgeable. An identifiable factor is entrepreneurship. Many world discoveries and inventions in science, arts, technology, religion and communication are products of entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at advancing the economic strength of the society (Umoh, 2021). According to Akpan (2024), “entrepreneurship is risk taking so make imagination and coordination over time to manifest towards a income generation and future savings”. That means, entrepreneurship emphasizes thinking, planning, execution and saving. These factors have been a subsidiary weapon of destruction in the economic scheme of the nation affecting many people. However, in a situation entrepreneurship is properly managed, it may tone down loss, despair and despondency; but encourage lucrative ventures especially in the entertainment sector.

One of the lucrative areas in the entertainment sector that actually defiles the stranglehold of recession is costume production. Umana *et al.* (2026) confirm that the needs to situate the role of costumes and makeup in the protection of human values have to the increase interest in performance and trends of production including films. Studies have shown that many people would prefer their outlook even during pandemic to their life. “The creation of illusion that can make the audience gasp in admiration for a character may not be ordinary” (Umoh, 2025). An instance is recounted of the Covid-19 pandemic about people’s attitude towards dressing and dying by Margaret Akpan and Anietie Udofia (2024: pp 229-230) thus:

It was surprising that the self-preservation notion was intensified in the general lockdown which people were asked to keep away from crowds, disengage from group or shun clusters of people since the pandemic was easily spread through contact. In Nigeria, it was a

harsh experience following the fluctuating index of Nigeria's economy... The fight against the pandemic and scare of famine smoldered to despondency. The only option to survive rested on self-isolation and costume and accessories... In the face of this oppressive atmosphere and near-death predicament, people in Nigeria, found it hard to conform to the government directive, but the desire to impress through outlook set a longing for dressing to attract.

In Performing Arts Industry, much attempts have been made to salvage mankind using the various areas of the theatre “the use of costume and makeup for model conception is one way of stimulating the human consciousness towards boundlessness of innovative powers” (Umana et al, 2026). Costume production has been at the forefront of this service to humanity. However, challenges in costume making may be numerous, yet in a recess economy, savings are usually problematic while design, appearance and wearing of clothes are constant. One of the topmost entrepreneurial outfit that focuses on costume design is on the aspect of performance in which costume is used to communicate, and costume being daily dress which people put on for beauty, protection and for appearance. “Costume design enhances visual appeal. Aesthetics were reflected in the choice of the style, texture, colour, fabric and the fitting of these elements to the age and class of the character portrayed” (Mbede, 2023). This area yields a considerable output as a unit of the theatre and exists as a hub of easy breakthrough for those who focus on the rules of the career and update themselves to fit in to the trends of design.

The problem of profit or income retrogression especially in recessed economies has made many businesses to face a sudden fold-up (Aji et al, 2023). Perhaps one of the major challenges according to Umoh (2023) is that “excessive patronage is tilted towards foreign products”. Recession pushes or compels many business owners to veer into numerous alternative businesses. A prominent trade that accommodates all levels of people in attraction and productivity is costume production being a basic necessity. Local productions play an impactful role in the nation's economy by not only reducing importation rate but improving and encouraging human capacity development (Umoh, 2024). However, a major setback in a recess economy is proper management that allows for savings and a return of investment. This has led to the fall of many mega business hubs without tangible reasons. Without a reassessment of the managerial strategies to sustain the costume designer, efforts may appear glaring, commendable and attractive but unproductive.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The argument of this study is drawn from a theoretical position of Peter Drucker's Market Orientation Theory. The focus of the theory is on how the content of transaction can be improved despite challenges and social circumstances that discourage personal effort and creative consciousness.

Market Orientation Theory was propounded in 1973 by Peter Drucker but developed by Kohli and Jaworski in 1990. The focus of the theory is on the measure and attitude in which the costume producer adopts to send his intent to the public along with the measure to negotiate the worth of his services, and the outlets to secure the consumers' compliance. According to Doyle (2002), market orientation theory advocates “managerial concept and orientation which recognises that success primarily depends upon identifying changes in persons and changing customer wants and developing products and services that match these better than those of competitors”. The theory embodies the factors and measures to negotiate a producer's content with the consumers, which is expounded in John Engel *et al* (1998) that creating orientation should be accompanied

with the sacrifice and output for the sacrifice. Thus, the major factor of orientation is the way it is carried out not the product itself.

Market orientation advocates for in-depth knowledge of the site of production and outside world. By knowing the content and the measure that is meant to be bought for design or sent out and for what price to which customer, the knowledge of the buyers and the nature of their relationship based on demand and supply relationship would be known. That means, it entails the orientation of the possible pitfalls in a business and the possible loophole to escape even when others are collapsing in it. It also reflects the producer's knowledge of content at hand along with the intent to update on what is produced and the various people to offer the product within which the price tag for each category based on the nature of service rendered, the place of delivery designated and the time of consumption conceived are put to action. In the view of Ajay and Bernard (1993), the theory's tenet focuses on the scheme for engagement and the tool for attracting and negotiating a company's product. The relevance of this theory to the paper is that costume production in a recessed economy focuses on human survival instead of a code to communicate values to the audience. Local products play an impactful role in the nation's economy by not only reducing importation rate but improving and encouraging human capacity development and entrepreneurship (Umoh *et al.*, 2024).

### **3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP ELEMENTS AND COSTUME PRODUCTION IN A RECESSED ECONOMY**

Entrepreneurship, viewing from its elementary meaning, suggests management of a sector or a thing. This line of thought sees management or entrepreneurship as the coming together of numerous fields of life (Uford, 2022a). Similarly, Oyedijo (2020) mentions that, it entails the unification of a vast knowledge to coordinate a business. This suggests the unification of logical fields to build a mindset that can harness human interaction and transactional duties in the system. It is "the purposeful activity of an individual or group of associated individuals, undertaken to initiate, maintain or aggrandize a profit-oriented business for the production or distribution of economic goods and services" (Cole, 2020). From the organization of the mind, the activities done are bound to be organized. Entrepreneurship is a general organisation from the mind.

Entrepreneurship does not only focus on the attitude or the goodness of character from the well-shaped or configured mindset. The major aspect of entrepreneurship is the use of the mind to explore economic ventures, cutting across human involvement and interaction to the engagement in business, transaction and output from goods or services creation (Uford, 2022b). According to Akpan (2004), "entrepreneurship is the venture-source spirit that predispose a person to undertake new ventures or try new methods or ideas... characterized by creativity, innovation and novelty". This suggests a state of mind for improvement on the managerial orientation brought to bear in management, which is "a transformation of situations from established or expected courses to radically different ones. It is also a shift in circumstances, from the unknown to something anticipated by innovating new interacting and delivery method" (Ogbuji and Walter 2020). Therefore, the determined person needs to takes the risk of investing and facing the ups and downs of the development in the channel and tunnels of the course. "Entrepreneurship is risk taking for effective placement of investment and security" (Kotler and Hague, 2010). Observing entrepreneurship, from this angle, it is more of a strategic deployment of skills based on the market outlook and team's focus. Therefore, "the planning process is concerned with the development of strategies that are based on the planning team's assessment or the contract, intent, expectation and the capacity of the firm" (Galligan and Wilson 2007). It is more of risk taking but risks taken without focus may ruin a company.

#### **Costume Production**

Apart from communicating human values through costume, there are others purposes which make costume production very important to the society. Nonetheless, as a tool used in theatre and film production, costume is produced because it codes information. Mask being a component of columns “are carved and designed symbolic to spirits of the ancestors” (Umoh, 2019). This perhaps put the performer and the performance within the spiritual enigma he particularly represents “Symbols makes more meanings contextually within cultural confines” (Umoh, 2021). A costume designer puts into consideration a whole lot of factors involving, significantly the cultural signs and symbols. “Signs and symbols denote and connote social concepts” (Umoh, 2021). According to Barranger (2002), costumes include all the character’s garments and accessories... and as visual signals, they add colour, style, and... they help to clarify relationship.... Ornament, line, and colour can tie together members of a family, group, faction, or party. Social responsibility disclosure can be said to be a practice that involves reporting to stake holders about the social and environmental impact of economic activities of an organization (John et al., 2025; Akpan 2016).

Costume production is the creation of dress or body accessories worn by actors in a production to signify the approximated age of the performer, what he or she does for a living, the place or city or culture the character is, the period or historical age in portrayal, as well as relationship and feelings for other characters. Fiscal deficit is caused and enhanced by factors such as a shortfall in revenue from taxes, large public sector, non-diversification of the revenue base of the economy, the rising cost of government activities due to rising inflation rate, corruption and mismanagement of available public funds, demographic changes and decline in terms of trade as stated by (Ekpo et al., 2024). According to Michael Gillette (2000), “what a person wears and how it is worn, says a great deal about that person and the society in which he or she lives”. Costume production is meant to enhance or anchor the focus of theatre message. This makes for socialization that can influence societal change. “Beyond the socializing feature of such interactions, the sense of unity and close kinship births an accountability structure which positively influences the behavioral pattern of the community members” (Mbede, 2026). Economists are vastly divided on the desirability and impacts of fiscal deficit on the economy (Ekpo et al., 2024). This is the other essence of costume production, especially, in theatre and filmmaking is for role establishment. Costume situates the very role an actor is playing. Apart from gender generalization, occupational generalization, a costume can identify one person out of many in a kind from inception, costume is considered along the role first as an agent of socialization, identity and belonging. Costume and makeup are interwoven aspects of design in every dramatic performance & production (Umoh, 2019). Therefore, the costume designer also considers the creative dynamics and applicability of other theatrical elements. The historical conception can give evidence to this claim. In the idea of Brockett and Ball (1998), dresses were made on purpose. Each dress had a direction and target it fulfilled in life. Therefore, The goal of microcredit is to enable individuals to generate income and improve their economic situation, (Ekaetor, 2026).

Costume production also convey entrepreneurial idea in which the creation of costume is intended for economic purposes, meant to generate income and create a return of investment to costume designers. On the other hand, costume design is not just an all-comers area in Performing Arts Department. Since it yields immediate economic output when the students gains proficiency, it is very expensive and cumbersome handled. For instance, Nkanga (2005: pp 196) writes this about costume area:

Many theatre students shy away from specializing on costume and makeup due to the demanding nature of the course. This area of specialization is one of the most demanding in terms of its

professionalistic nature, time, finance and availability of material. Students usually gets scared over the level of commitment that will be required from them if they eventually end up as costume/makeup majors... Due to the finance at the disposal of the students, the very high financial demand of this course to be simple, unrealistic.

As an area that demands money, so does it produce money to those who painstakingly gain expertise in it. According to Obafemi (2011), “costume making harbour ‘inalienable wealth;... When a person dies, he or she is also covered with plenty of clothes, people support them by buying and paying for the cloths”.

Producing of costume for entrepreneurial purpose is acknowledgeable in the contemporary deployment of body accessories, especially for filmmaking. According to Uwemedimo Atakpo (2018),

For a graduate of theatre who had diligently worked... as a costumier, he can become a designer of clothes like Ejiro Amos Tafiri and Adora Mbehi who have had opportunities to show at reputable platforms such as Arise Magazine Fashion Week and the MTN Lagos Fashion and Design Week... Another very important area this crop of artists earns a comfortable living is in interior and outdoor decorations from the background of the tailor/seamstress...

That is to say, costume production is the creation of costume for a purpose not just to dress or put on clothes to impress the society, but to communicate and to make a living from the career.

### **Costume Production in a Recessed Economy**

Recession has been the most significant shift in the world economy in recent years, affecting virtually all aspects of life. A recessed economy is a period of negative economic impact in the society. According to Claessens and Kose (2019),

There is no official definition of recession, but there is a general recognition that the term refers to a period of decline in economic activities. Very short period of decline are not considered recessions... It is a significant decline economic activities spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in production, unemployment, real income, and other indicators. A recession begins when the economy reaches a peak of activities and ends when the economy reaches its trough... Because recession has many potential causes, it is a challenge to predict them.

In a recession, economic activities that make life easy to life cease to yield positively. Crops may fail to yield to expected quantity, they may be lack of raw materials for industrial production (Akpan et al, 2024). Edet et al. (2024) mentioned that SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning tool used to identify and analyze the internal and external factors that can impact a startup's success.

Produced goods themselves may not be adequately consumed, leading to perpetual loss and a sharp decline in growth. Being that it is an unusual period in world history, specific definition is not put up for it (Asuquo et al, 2024).

A recess economy affects farm produce and marketing index and it leads to the collapse of export and export ties (Amos et al, 2021). Inflation happens when the prices of goods and services rise, which reduces the purchasing power of money (Edet et al., 2024). A collapse in export-import

transaction actually leaves both ends wanting. “No product, no service, not labour need, and not bustle of life except complain, aggressiveness for lack of food and good life, hunger, and lack of obvious progress evidence” (Mulgan 2000). Consequently, banks function as debtors to depositors and creditors to borrowers. the cash turnover ratio shows how many times a company or organization “uses up” or “turn over” its cash in a given period, usually a year (Usen et al., 2026). Still to corroborate the menace, Bovens (2007) mentions that “a recession cuts the flow of human resources.,., cuts the flow of human relationship, and lengthen the period of obvious progress in human beings and the society”. Minor human activity like trade is affected during recession. Ekaetor and Udom, (2026) mentioned that one of the most common ways governments use taxes in fiscal policy is by adjusting the tax rate. When there is nothing to sell in the market, there will be nothing to buy; and if everyone is caught in the same fume of despair, a general meltdown has prevailed; nothing to show for labour; nothing to do as labour. The proper management both human and the of the aspect of costuming will make for effective audience engineering and theatre patronage. According to Mbede et al. (2024), “audience engineering in the theatre is the ability to creatively compel audience members to patronize theatre performances”. Such creative inclusions will drive recession backwards, because of profitable theatre patronage. SWOT Analysis is a strategic planning tool used to identify and analyze the internal and external factors that can impact a startup's success (Edet et al., 2024).

Recessions are usually viewed to spring from the centre or government's policy. It is hardly a lucrative intent than an individual planting, let's say cocoyam, pepper, cassava and yams to feed his family. If such fail to yield, it may be the soil or bad method of cultivation, or may be one out of ten people did not do well. Then, there are those who plant well; who then have harvested well. Efficient energy generation and distribution through green sources is key to improving environmental quality, plummeting energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and stimulating green economic and financial development in particularly in MINT countries endowed with immense REN and green energy sources (Prince et al., 2023). When that is shift in government action which spreads to affect how people begin to look at ordinary domestic productivity, something like being too genteel to farm or too galvanized to work for a living, recessed economy may set in. actually, the major indicators of a recessed economy are that “unemployment rises, company, profits fall, and the housing sector collapses; and it is followed by intermittent spread of crisis” (Claessens and Kose, 2019). This position is further elaborated in Olanny and Ogbeta, (2020) submission that:

Recession is a downturn in any economy. A recession is associated with high unemployment, slowing gross domestic product, and high inflation. An economic recession is typically defined as a decline in a gross domestic product (GDP) for two or more consecutive quarters: economic recession is a period of economic decline and is typically accompanied by a drop in the stock market, an increase in unemployment, and a decline in housing market. Generally, a recession is less severe than a depression. The blame for a recession generally falls on the federal leadership, often either the President himself, the Head of Federal Reserve, or the entire administration. Arising from the above, one can say that Nigeria is currently recessed economy.

In a situation many production practices have failed to respond to the robust of the economy, life itself gets stifled and the bustle of life begins to go meltdown with the economy. However, a significant reassurance of aliveness in such period is acknowledged in Mohammed Imam and Ridwan Suleiman, who acknowledge that refocusing the aspects of the society which are vital

and constantly engaged in the daily interaction and social expression may revive economy of a nation. One of the most common ways governments use taxes in fiscal policy is by adjusting the tax rate (Ekaetor & Udom, 2026). The use of theatre and drama is recommended for awareness while the use of costume is figured out as the necessary human need that the costume designer can turn to for an effective entrepreneurial breakthrough in theatre performance.

In the case of theatrical performance, upon the numerous areas incorporated to develop, equip and enrich the inclined student, recession can still sneak in, and if care is not taken, may render an entrepreneurial robust area like lighting, makeup, and costume inactive. According to Ebo (2013),

... a depressed economy where salaries are meager; and apart from being meager, are irregular, one does not expect a favorable theatre going culture. A depressed economy where business cannot flourish and business men live from hand to mouth does not encourage theatre going culture... Gate takings in a depressed economy are low because most people cannot afford the money to pay for leisure.

The above idea about recessive economy on Performing Arts situation is that a period like this, people do not have interest in leisure such as seeing theatre performances or visiting film halls. This may be psychological. For instance, if one is not in a good frame of mind, one may not willingly pay. Energy efficiency, renewable energy and economic growth nexus on CO<sub>2</sub> emission: Evidence from MINT countries (Abner et al., 2023). If one does not have money, one cannot remit at the box office. All these are circumstances of recessive economy.

However, costume is a more dynamic craft that can still sale and upgrade the adroit performing artist even in the worse time than recession. Prince et al. (2023) mentioned that efficient energy generation and distribution through green sources is key to improving environmental quality, plummeting energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and stimulating green economic and financial development in particularly in MINT countries endowed with immense REN and green energy sources. On instance is during the COVID 19 pandemic period, which the only remedy for survival was on costume. It may be interesting that Nigerians refused to conform to the directives because they need to go out for hustling to feed their family and survive also. Udoinwang and Amonyze (2023) puts, “they had to lock themselves down for a longer period than manageable to avoid death”. The glory of costume surfaced in a special way. This way,

The fight against the pandemic and scare of famine smoldered to despondency. The only option to survive rested on self-isolation and costume and accessories, which was the practical thing along with incessant hand washing to rinse off the pervading virus. In the face of this oppressive atmosphere and near-death predicament, people in Nigeria found it hard to conform to the government directive, but the desire to impress through outlook set a longing for dressing to attract. The people rather resorted to an innovative approach which in the designing and creation of anti-pandemic costumes in the form of face mask “to match” aesthetic cravings to avoid seclusion. Dressing to match began to stimulate appeal. The desire to look good spurred the urge to heighten new fashion in the art of human contract, and surprisingly, adherence to the appeal persuaded the people to conform to the Covid 19 directives and protocol (Akpan and Udofia, 2024: pp 233-234).

Considering human attitudes to circumstances of outlook, esteem and the need to be admired, there is no limit to desires to love or be love; there will be no boundary to human cravings to devour or the urges so savour; so does the need to wear clothes and look attractive remains constant as the most likely avenue to upturn the menace of the nascent economic meltdown in our society.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Conclusion

The study has acknowledged the place of the costume designer in the circle of a nation's economy. It has identified the challenges that practically surface in costume productions militating against entrepreneurship and has been able to establish the strategic measures to curtail losses in a recessed economy. A recessed economy is a challenging time to both individuals and the nation, which neither side is at ease. Such period requires a total calm-down-to-think than normal bustle of the accomplished design entrepreneur. For the fact that in lack or in abundance, people must cover themselves, the costume designer has a wider opportunity to sort her errors and recoup her loses while renegotiating her creativity to take advantage of economic meltdown or rising up. Without the recognition of weaknesses in costume production, strength may not be appreciated, let alone being magnified for progress even in a normal economy.

The Department of Performing Arts is a discipline which harnesses many entrepreneurial areas in which competence, focus and discipline predetermine the character of the good performing artist who intends to survive. Costume production deserves a personal determination to imagine, coordinate and sacrifice to bring one's mindset to the limelight.

##### Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of this paper, it is recommended that Nigerians should consider the areas of life that season and even phenomenal changes such as beauty, esteem and human and research. Such areas can revamp innovation, which the need to dress well is one.

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