

Journal of Tourism and Archaeology

(Refereed Scientific Periodical)

ISSN (Print): 1658-4570
ISSN (Online): 2676-251X

**Published by:
King Saud University**

Volume 35, Issue No. 1

January (2023) - Jumada al-Awwal (1444)



P. O. Box 68953, Riyadh 11537, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Journal of Tourism and Archaeology

ISSN (Print): 1658-4570

ISSN (Online): 2676-251X

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It is published by the College of Tourism and Archaeology, King Saud University; two times a year in January, May. The very first issue of JTA was released in 2009/1430H.

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Price per issue: SR 20 or its equivalent (excluding postage)

Subscription and Exchange: King Saud University press, King Saud University, P.O. Box 68953, Riyadh 11495, Saudi Arabia.

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Reconsidering Value Chain in Saudi Folk Performing Arts: A Methodological Framework

Dr. Ali Mohamed Aliraqi

Associate Professor, College of Tourism and Archaeology- King Saud University

Abstract: Folk performing arts are acknowledged as a special kind of intangible cultural heritage that upholds community identity, stimulates economic impact of culture, and embodies authenticity. Using value chain methodology as a framework, this study strengthens the Saudi folk performing arts sector, contributing to the Ministry of Culture's Vision 2030-based plan. In order to move folk performing arts from a semi-voluntary activity to a business one, the proposed framework focuses on business models. For this reason, it is advised to establish comprehensive partnerships with the developing audio-visual sector in order to ensure broader distribution and imaginative interpretation.

Key words: Saudi folk performing arts, vision 2030, cultural and creative ecosystem, business models, value chain

توظيف سلسلة القيمة في الفنون الأدائية التقليدية السعودية: إطار منهجي

د. علي محمد العراقي

أستاذ مشارك، كلية السياحة والآثار، جامعة الملك سعود

ملخص البحث: تعد الفنون الأدائية التقليدية واحدة من أهم مكونات التراث الثقافي غير المادي فهي الحامية لموروث المجتمعات والقيمة على أصالتها والمعبرة عن خصائصها الفريدة. وقد هدفت هذه الدراسة لتقديم مفهوم سلسلة القيمة والتنبيه لاستخدامه في تخطيط وإدارة الفنون الأدائية التقليدية في المملكة سيما وأن ذلك يتسق مع توجهات رؤية 2030 في محور الثقافة. رصدت الدراسة التغيرات التي طرأت على البيئة الثقافية في المملكة ما بعد الرؤية وقدمت مقترح تطبيقي لاستخدام سلسلة القيمة ونماذج الأعمال لضمان تنفيذ متميز لأهداف الثقافة الاستراتيجية وإسهامها في توسيع قاعدة العرض السياحي بإدماج الفنون الأدائية التقليدية وزيادة التكامل بين هذا القطاع وقطاعات وأعدة أخرى خاصة الفنون السمعية والبصرية والموسيقى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الفنون الأدائية التقليدية السعودية، رؤية 2030، البيئة الثقافية والإبداعية، نماذج الأعمال، سلسلة القيمة.

Introduction:

Folk performing arts interpret values and pass them on to future generations, acting as a vital conduit for cultural identity. Their collective nature and this pivotal function have placed them in the top potential area of the cultural and creative ecosystem.

In order to accomplish new objectives, including raising the economic and development prominence of Saudi culture, Vision 2030 restructured the Ministry of Culture. Therefore, in an effort to create a cultural ecosystem, eleven commissions were established. The Theatre and Performing Arts Commission is one of them, and it was given the task of overseeing folk performing arts.

In order to improve the place of folk performing arts in the cultural ecosystem, this research offers a value chain as a methodological and practical framework. It does this by elaborating on the notions of value chain and business models and how they might be integrated into the cultural ecosystem. Following that, the proposed model is described, and policy implications are discussed in the conclusion.

Theoretical Background:

Value is a cornerstone concept in culture and art; it must be viewed from both an intrinsic and an instrumental perspective, as well as from a spatial and social perspective.

It is embedded in social relations, which encompass cultural, economic, and political aspects; it can be understood and interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the

situation and period of time which is directly related to the social relations; and it is contingent, negotiable, and constantly evolving. Thus, "value" is a dialectic of these circumstances and ought to be interpreted as such, especially when impact-related issues are being discussed.

Thorsby (1994) affirmed that artwork was composed of two values; Cultural values and economic values. The two values are related because consumers' demand functions for artworks are likely to contain some measure of cultural values as a significant element.

We noticed that value in culture, for example, might come from an artwork's perceived aesthetic value or just from the work's provenance, history, or heritage (Einarsson, 2016).

Considerable discussion has been had on the importance of culture and the arts in order to provide an answer to the question, "What kinds of benefits are delivered by arts?" Figure 1 provided a summary of these advantages by McCarthy (2004).

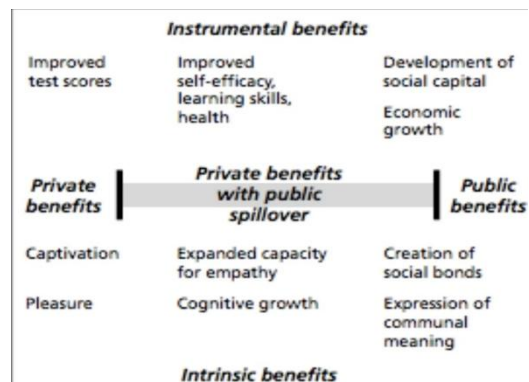


Figure No (1). Benefits are delivered by arts

Source : McCarthy. et al. (2004)

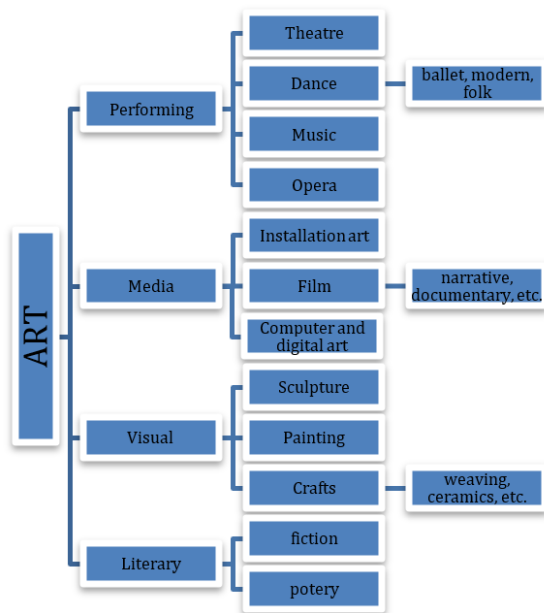


Figure No. (2). Types of art

Source: McCarthy, K. et al. 2001

Many researchers investigated culture-value nexus focusing on taste as a keyword; they asked how we can address the variability of tastes and aesthetic quality? How can people who depend on others and lack complete awareness of their own preferences make decisions? Lévy- Garboua and Montmarquette (2010) emphasized this concept "you will never know why you enjoy Manet's paintings, Puccini's operas, and Shakespeare's plays on stage?", experience is ultimately the complex alchemy of personal taste for the arts.

As opposed to most other markets, where most things are consumable or disposable, the art market differs in that some art products are viewed as investments that are bought in the hope that their value will

improve. Low-cost items make up the bulk of art products, although higher-priced pieces typically feed the auction market (Woodhead and Acker, 2014). Shank and Govindarajan (1993) defined a value chain as a "linked set of value-creating activities all the way from basic raw material sources for component suppliers through the ultimate end-use product delivered into the final customers' hands," which is what Dekker (2003) uses to present a clear analysis of a value chain.

Value chain analysis, then, is the dissection of these sets of operations into pertinent subsets to acquire understanding of how costs, value added, and the origin of product differentiation behave along the value chain. Every stage of the creation, manufacturing, and distribution of culture is encompassed within the value chain. The value chain mechanism allows one to see culture as the product of related sets of operations. Policy makers can assess what the cultural and arts sectors require by looking at the value chain. In addition to supporting project design, it can be utilized to answer the demands of entrepreneurs and to inform policies and procedures. Five steps make up the value chain: creation, production, dissemination, exhibition/transmission and consumption/participation.

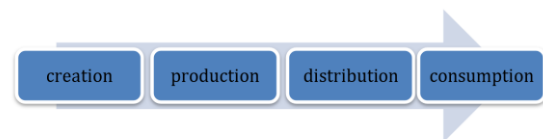


Figure No. (3). Value chain steps

A fundamental component of the value chain comprises the connections that exist

between an activity performed by a chain member and the impact that activity has on the performance of other chain members. Consequently, decisions made by input providers regarding the availability, price, or even quality of inputs may have an effect on the performance of companies further down the supply chain. When one activity's performance has a major influence on the actions of other value chain participants, that connection is said to be strong. The ability to find chances for production cost reduction, as noted by Dekker (2003), is the ultimate goal of value chain analysis, since it improves coordination and product differentiation when one activity's performance has a major influence on the actions of other value chain participants, that connection is said to be strong. Value chain analysis's ultimate goal, according to Dekker (2003), is to be able to spot manufacturing cost-cutting opportunities, which will improve the value chain's coordination and product differentiation. To determine their demands, requirements, and leaks throughout the chain, it is essential to track the stakeholders and components of the art supply chain. Figure 4 Stakeholder analysis.

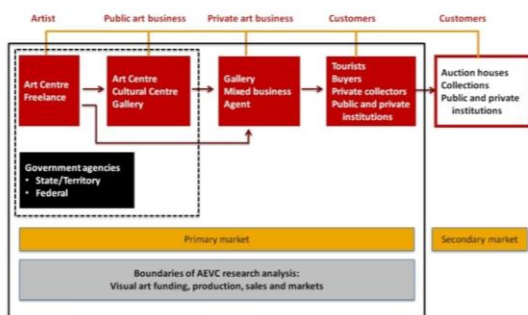


Figure No. (4): stakeholders in art value chain

Source: Woodhead and Acker (2014).

Applying value chain analysis on culture, the UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics examines flows in the cultural domain more broadly, views production, dissemination, transmission, consumption, creation, display, and participation as parts of the cultural value chain (UNESCO, 2009). These flows can also happen in the following domains: books and press; audio-visual and interactive media; design and creative services; performance and celebration; visual arts and crafts; cultural and natural heritage; and intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2009).

The degree and mode of participation in these activities can also be distinguished. A crucial divergence exists between the individuals who generate or manufacture a cultural product and the recipients of it, or audiences. Generally speaking, the latter greatly exceeds the former (European Commission, 2012). According to Walker et al. 2002, engagement can also take on more detached forms, such as making monetary donations or offering assistance in the implementation of an activity.

The ability to quantify cultural engagement has allowed for a better understanding of the heterogeneity in the degree to which governments within and between nations undertake and encourage it (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007).

No doubt, the activities that add value to a company or the supply chain as a whole, in order to provide a value chain analysis, serve as the point of reference for defining the parameters of an investigation into good art works and/or service.

Folk songs and fairy tales often employ magical elements in the forms of a word – a spell, and, first and foremost, they directly connect people with nature, especially with animals. They participate directly in human affairs, they communicate with people, they help them or hurt them, they are frequently equipped with special powers (Haratyk and Czerwińska-Górz, 2017).

Folk Performing Arts ecosystem in Saudi Arabia:

Indeed, folk performing arts have a long history in Saudi Arabia's intangible heritage. Through their practice, documentation of way of life, and celebration of diverse artistic expression, they represent and preserve cultural identity. The inscription of *Al-Mezmar and Al-Aradha Al-Najdiya* on the list of the world's intangible cultural treasures serves as a testament to its significance.

There are many folk performing arts in the county, we can mention some of them (Adra, 2002):

1. *Al--Ardha*: Najdi folk dance, is a form of Saudi folk art that originated during the conflict and quickly gained popularity at social gatherings and public events.
2. *Al-Dahya*: This art form is a Bedouin dance that was previously performed to rouse troops' courage and excitement before going into combat and to recount the events of the fight after it was over.
3. *Al-Samry*: Known by the name "ancient folklore," this popular singing is defined as a collective art form that employs marwas and a

tambourine for rhythm. By adding rhythms to it, such clapping and drumming, this art was developed.

4. *Al-Khubaity*: This is one of the oldest folk arts in Saudi Arabia, mostly including tambourine and *semsimiya* instruments, and it is symbolized by beautiful dancing.
5. *Al-ta'sheer*: This is one of the Hijazi arts in the county's folklore category. To avoid injury, one must be physically fit and skilled. The art aims to instill confidence and enthusiasm in soldiers prior to battle, and it is used to celebrate victories and instill terror in the hearts of adversaries in the aftermath.

It is evident that the collective style that characterizes Saudi folk performing arts is a common trait; these performances depict tribal ceremonies and solidarity, narrate stories of ancestors, and commemorate happy occasions.

Notwithstanding this similarity, Altwaiji (2017) makes a distinction between the cultural impacts and entertainment value of Najdi and Hijazi music.

This, folk performing arts, are poetry, song, music, rhythm, dance and costume all rolled into one.

In accordance with vision 2030 the goal of the newly established Ministry of Culture is to advance the Kingdom's cultural industry. The Ministry's vision and mission have established three key goals:

1. Culture as a lifestyle.
2. Culture for economic growth.

3. Culture in order to strengthen the Kingdom's international standing.

Undoubtedly, these new perspectives for the ministry's mission represent a paradigm shift as they embrace the creative economy and elaborate it within the ministry's organizational framework. Six specific roles were mentioned in the Ministry's 2019 strategy:

1. Leading the sector.
2. Developing the ecosystem.
3. Enabling regulations.
4. Becoming a bridge to the world.
5. Recognizing and nurturing talent.
6. Preserving Saudi heritage and culture.

The ministry formed the following 11 commissions in order to guarantee that its objective was fulfilled:

- Museums,
- Film,
- Music,
- Libraries,
- Fashion,
- Heritage,
- Literature, publishing and translation,
- Architecture and design,
- Theatre and performing arts,
- Visual arts, and
- Culinary arts.

Folk performing arts are included under the Theatre and Performing Arts Commission in the new organization. The performing arts commission oversees a wide range of events, including street performances, physical performances,

ballet, opera, stand-up comedy, theater, dance, and the circus. In addition to promoting the performing arts as a vital part of the national culture, its mission entails building and operating theaters and performance spaces, fostering high-quality content, and improving production.

The commission determined the scope of its work, which includes:

- Content creation: Enhancing the quantity and diversity of content while ensuring the highest quality standards.
- Production: Increasing the quantity and diversity of local production while ensuring the highest quality standards.
- Publishing and distribution: Ensuring accessibility of the theater and performing arts sector across all social groups and regions, for both audiences and practitioners.
- Awareness: Increasing awareness of the Saudi theater and performing arts sector among audiences and practitioners.
- Reception: Raising audience and generating demand for theatrical performances among different regions, social segments, and age groups.

The commission conducted the “Mountain Performing Festival” last year in Aseer as one of the initiatives launched in the sector. Despite their nationwide geographic reach, folk performing arts bands continue to operate under basic, narrowly focused business models that limit their access to the cultural and creative ecosystem launched by Vision 2030.

These groups, which operate on a semi-voluntary basis, lack a marketing and branding plan to guarantee the sustainability and preservation of Saudi distinctive folk arts. The Royal Institute of Traditional Arts is a prominent participant in the cultural and creative ecosystem. It tells the stories of the artists and the history of traditional artworks, thereby representing the county's culture. It also preserves the originality of these arts and inspires people with an interest in them to study, practice, and advance them.

Methodological framework:

The Ministry of Culture's strategy fosters a favorable environment for folk performing arts; hence, the framework that is being suggested aims to fortify this environment and guarantee its inclusivity. Value chain creation, of course, needs business models that have strong connections throughout the creative and cultural ecosystem. Table 1 elaborates this step.

	Government	Business	Local community	Consumer / audiences
Government	G2G Administration of institutions, digitalisation	G2B Information flow, support for R&D	G2LC building capacity, international promotion, regional and national competitions	G2C Information flow, consumers protection
Business	B2G Public procurement,	B2B classic business (production, trade, services)	B2LC sponsorship, procurement, branding, social responsibility	B2C classic trade, services
Local community	LC2G compatability with vision 2030, active engagement in government activities	LC2B partnership in events	LC2LC competitions,	LC2C quality

Consumer	C2G taxes, tickets	C2B price comparators	C2LC encourage local content	C2C
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Table No. (1). Folk performing arts business models

The stakeholders (government, business, local community, and audiences) are all represented in this table's business models matrix. Similarly, this matrix shows how the value chain for folk performing arts should be built on solid, inclusive business models in order to accomplish a number of objectives, including:

1. Make sure that policies for folk performing arts are designed and implemented with a comprehensive and inclusive approach.
2. Transform this sector from a semi-voluntary approach to business-oriented one.
3. Adopt folk performing arts is one of the county's main attractions to enrich supply profile in local tourism destinations.

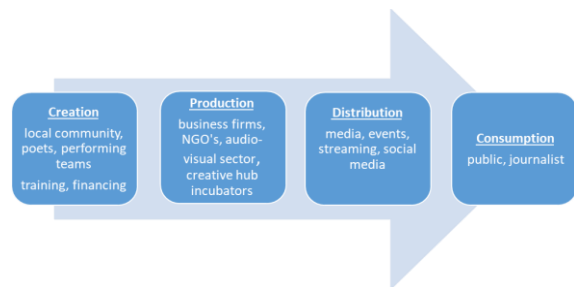


Figure No. (5): Potential value chain for folk performing arts

Figure 5 illustrates a potential value chain for folk performing arts that we could

develop based on previously discussed business models.

1. **Creation:** Local community members, who serve as the foundation for folk performing arts, kick off this stage. These genuine arts, which are largely found on the values and rhythms of the society, must be preserved, developed, and strengthened.
2. **Production:** Incorporating business firms into the development of folk performing arts guarantees that the marketing mix (7Ps) will be correctly implemented to capitalize on mass-cultural output in the media arts sector and expedites such sector. Remembering that, this action should be predicated on the concept of forward and backward linkages.
3. **Distribution:** Including a variety of supply chain elements in folk arts products would increase their worth. Consequently, planning competitions or presentations boosts the supply chain and guarantees a larger audience.
4. **Consumption / participation:** Global experiences have verified that audiences and consumers of performing arts can engage in the experience; this benefit provides them prominence in the creative and cultural ecosystem.

This suggested framework, which integrates business models and value chain, guarantees the place of folk performing arts in the county's tourist attractions' supply side as well as in the cultural and creative ecosystem. Undoubtedly, this framework needs comprehensive coordination

throughout line governmental agencies specially: Heritage Commission, Audio-visual commission, Regions Municipalities, Entertainment Commission, Tourism Commission, etc.

Conclusion and Policy implications:

This proposed framework aligns with Culture's vision by bridging gaps and guaranteeing best practices for the creative and cultural environment. These policy consequences need to consider in order to ensure optimal execution:

1. **Comprehensive and inclusiveness:** Stakeholders in the public and private sectors should be included in the implementation framework, covering all pertinent segments and sectors.
2. **Value chain analysis** should be conducted for stakeholders or content in order to enhance the county's brand strategy through the implementation of this framework.
3. **Developing skills** through training and education gives folk performing arts a competitive advantage.
4. **Encouraging programmes** that support folk performing arts, which can include finance, conservation, and event planning—will help to advance this industry.
5. **A successful collaboration** between the folk performing arts and the audio-visual industry enhances the cultural and creative ecosystem and offers a platform for engaging young people through streaming.

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