A STUDY OF ROVERMAN PRODUCTIONS IN THE PROMOTION OF THEATRE IN GHANA

BY

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10241471

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DECLAIRATION

I, Beatrice Akua Gyekye, do hereby declare that except for the references cited, which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis titled A Study of Roverman Productions in the Promotion of Theatre in Ghana is the product of my own research work in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ghana Legon, from August, 2013 to July, 2014. This thesis is not published or submitted either in part or in whole anywhere for the award of a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis first to the Dansel and Gyekye families especially my mother, Madam Margaret Ama Dansel. It is also dedicated to Professor Martin Owusu for his contribution to the pursuit of my studies. This is in recognition and appreciation to the sacrifices they have all made towards my education.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the promotion of theatre in Ghana, focusing on Roverman Productions as the current driving force in making theatre active. Both qualitative and quantitative research designs were employed for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and twenty five (125) respondents for the study. The results from the study revealed that Roverman Productions, though is contributing to theatre promotion, however, it targets only a section of the population of theatre goers or enthusiasts as a result of its business philosophies. The group runs on commercial basis and therefore, employs several marketing strategies such as sponsorship and advertisement to be able to promote its shows. It is recommended that more effort should be made by Arts Centres and other stakeholders by collaborating with Roverman Productions to create performance spaces in various regions. Policy initiatives specifically aimed at reducing the cost of productions must be implemented and strengthened by government. This would greatly enhance theatre groups’ abilities to produce quality theatre shows that have impact on the lives of audience. The study also recommends that players (institutions and stakeholders) in theatre sectors must strive to bridge the professional and managerial gaps between the educational institutions and the commercial theatre groups, to achieve best theatre practices.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Theatre practitioners, both dramatists and playwrights, as well as archaeologists and historians, point to the activeness of theatre performance being affected negatively as a result of the political upheaval that reigned over Ghana by various regimes. For Sandra E. Greene, coup d’état hinges on the growth and sustenance of theatre activities through which people learnt about their self-identity.

It must be emphasized that before Roverman Productions was established five years ago in Ghana, there had been vibrant groups such as Ghana’s Experimental Theatre, Studio Players, Kusum Agromma, and Workers Brigade Drama Troupe, all founded by Efua Sutherland (1956-97), and Freelance Players by Ansong Manu (1967-2005/6), The Legon 7 by James Gibbs (1970s), The Arts Centre Theatre headed by Felix Morrisseau-Leroy.

In an interview with Martin Owusu\(^1\), he posits that “other regions were not so endowed with literary theatre groups, except in Kumasi.” This is because, the Kumasi Cultural Centre hosted Kyerematen Players (named after the founder of the centre) and Anokye Players (after the legendary Okomfo Anokye). In Cape Coast, Martin Owusu and Yaw Safo Boafo, then lecturers at the University of Cape Coast, founded the Oguaa Players (around the 1973). These theatre groups, though amateur in orientation and outlook, were very ‘professional’ in the qualities of the plays they produced.

\(^1\) Martin Owusu, Professor and Lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon.
Indeed, plays such as “Sutherland’s *The Marriage of Anansewa, Edufa, Foriwa* as well as Joe de Graft’s *Sons and Daughters* and *Visitor from the Past* published as *Through A film Darkly* were presented by the Studio Players in 1960s.”²

This thesis, therefore, gives a general background information on the state of the theatre in Ghana and presents Roverman Productions as one of the leading theatre companies presently, and its contribution to theatre promotion in the country. Roverman Productions is a company that has three sub-divisions; the Theatre Production, the Publication (magazines) and the Business Development (strategic management abilities). The company was fully developed in 2008 with its first production in September. Its theatre performance sells the writer’s messages which appeal to the audience. Its dynamism towards theatre approach is feasibly the main factor to be considered in order to promote theatre. Critically, the thesis investigates the dynamism of Roverman Productions in theatre management: sponsorship, advertisement, audience development and the related issues as the significance inherent in the arts.

It also looks at some individuals as well as theatre groups that have contributed to the promotion and development of theatre in Ghana for national development. Furthermore, it provides details of the study and dilates on the problem statement that makes the research relevant. There is also a discussion on research questions which can help the researcher address both the objectives and the research problem. Issues that delimit the study as well as its significance, the methods through which data is gathered are discussed. Finally, the chapter outlines how other chapters are arranged in the thesis.

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² Sandy Arkhurst. Personal Interview. 4th October, 2013.
1.2 Background of the Study

Enekwe Ossie states that, “drama is a human art”\(^3\), it tackles all spheres of human endeavour, be it socio-economic, political or religious for development. It is based on this development that theatre groups have organised and staged productions in many countries as a contributing factor in nation building. The possession of a theatre company by an individual, group or the state should, according to conventional thinking, serve as a catalyst for socio-economic development. However, the view of some scholars regarding lack of funding, inefficient management of the theatre and the inability to sustain its activities have had a detrimental effect on groups that are endowed with great talents.

Roverman Productions, on the other hand, has soared through all the challenges and with appropriate management abilities, has been able to make its productions frequent and accessible in Ghana. It has become clear that its standard of production procedure regarding venue, ticket, advertisement, ushering and sponsorship must be recognised by other groups to improve upon their theatre activities. This has prompted many to question how Roverman Productions has successfully made it for the past five years with four plays spread (quarterly) in a year at the National Theatre and its massive attraction for the Ghanaian community.

Theatre has been part of Ghanaian history, contributing to the socio-political lives of the people. It is the representation of the people’s social and political ideals, values and beliefs of the society on stage, because it reflects the totality of man’s life. It serves the capacity for exposing the practicality of life on stage for teaching, informing and communicating to the people concerning their environment. Thus, whatever the people in the society do, their moral and social values which go against socially accepted principles are presented before the community as theatre that involves the mentality of man. Gow emphasises that, “no Nation that

sought to suppress the theatre has ever been truly great or religious or democratic.\textsuperscript{4} By implication, theatre transforms life and develops a nation. This is evident within Roverman Productions as it projects family issues - relationship oriented (neighbourliness) that surround the Ghanaian society on stage.

The fourth quotation above is from a speech by a character Abraham Lincoln in the play \textit{The Lawyer of Springfield} by Ronald Gow. The idea expressed in this statement underscores the role theatre plays in the development of a nation – culturally, religiously, socially and economically, which Roverman Productions justly demonstrates.

In Ghana, promoting theatre activity has helped in the development process of its communities. Notwithstanding, the deficiency in managerial activities coupled with political instability made the theatre “semi-active” in the early 1900s (before independence) through to the 1950s (neocolonialism) which was the peak. Also with the support from Unilever Company, the Concert Party became Unilever- Key Soap Concert Party in the 1990s, very active, especially at the National Theatre.

Before 1950, the conscious effort to promote the theatre seemed to be overlooked, until after independence when alongside individuals, the incumbent government at the time and later companies consciously supported it. However, the support to sustain it seems to be unreachable lately. Currently, the emergence of Roverman Productions’ activities has brought to the fore debates on how to manage theatre groups and their activities in order to sustain the groups and equally avoid certain problems experienced.

The political and economic history of African countries has shaped the kinds of theatres that exist. The dramatic works of Wole Soyinka and Femi Osofisan of Nigeria depict the state of governance in their country. Athol Fugard and Zakes Mda of South Africa also created their dramatic pieces which are a representation of the state of South African apartheid and post-apartheid period. Their works have been influenced by the sort of political reality they experienced under apartheid and post-apartheid rule.

James Gibbs notes the contributing elements distinct in the development of Ghanaian traditional theatre, including “dance, symbols, music, rhetorical forms and symbolic acts which are also common among African countries.” These elements are universal among most of the African countries and they form the basis for promoting African theatre. Nigeria had the ritual performance that is embedded with character of the mask. Performances of the Ghanaian theatre resided mostly on Anansesem (Ananse stories), and it is usually about Ananse, the Spider. However, it must be noted that Anansesem is not all about the character, Ananse, but “all attempts at storytelling” are also termed Anansesem. Anansesem is a Ghanaian storytelling tradition that is used for teaching moral lessons.

Awo Asiedu added that, Anansesem extends to a “situation where someone is perceived to be telling lies or to be playing imaginatively with the truth.” It is told as a myth that is of great imagination which is used to educate listeners. Gibbs further explains how Ananse stories attracted and inspired Ghanaian playwrights such as Efua Sutherland, Joe deGraft, Martin Owusu, Ama Ata Aido, Ben Abdallah, Asiedu Yirenkyi and Yaw Asare. Before the above

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8 Ibid. p. 267
mentioned playwrights were Kobina Sekyi, J. B. Danquah and F.K. Fiawoo who were also promoting the arts through their writings in the early 1900s. They realised the need to write plays which discussed the impediments of the social lifestyle of Ghanaians at the period.

Besides individuals promoting theatre in Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah institutionalised the promotion of theatre by establishing arts organisations to demonstrate his foresight in championing the course for Pan-Africanism. He created the necessary structures for the arts after Ghana had achieved independence by establishing the Arts Council and his own Osagyefo Players which was located at the Flag Staff House and managed under him. He as well assisted in the establishment of the School of Music and Drama at the University of Ghana, Legon, and the Ghana Drama Studio located in Accra but was moved to Legon Campus.9 Both the institutions and the groups with keen interest to promote the theatre were well managed and supported by the government.

The Arts Council of Ghana which was established for the arts industry along the line, was later abolished for the establishment of a bigger umbrella, the National Commission on Culture. In a discussion with two giants in the Arts, Sandy Arkhurst and Martin Owusu, they both established that, the change of name of the Arts Council was one of the reasons for the decline in theatrical activities in Ghana. The Arts Council was purposely formed to serve as a supporting and defending unit, and management of the Arts Industry or the creative arts (music, dance, drama, sculpture and painting).

Looking down the history lane, it appears theatre in Ghana has not been the same after the Arts Council was abolished. This was because there has not been much support from the state supporting agency that takes care of and promotes the arts after the abolishment of the Arts

Council. On this premise (lack of Government support), the arts, especially the theatre industry, face some resource constraints.

Culture is broad, it is our way of life, including our aspirations, hopes, food, languages, costumes and the arts. Culture manifests itself in theatrical performances done by individuals or groups that intend to promote the traditions of a society. That is why the Centres for National culture located in all the ten Regional Capitals have varieties of activities on its bill; artefacts, gallery, kente-weaving, bead-making, drama and dance. It can be deduced that government support for the theatre aspect is insufficient should the various sections that make up culture seek for government sponsorship. It is this lack of support from government agencies that has led some individuals like Ebo Whyte to establish and fund their own theatre groups (Such as Roverman Productions), in order to continue from where other theatre lovers left off. This is because Roverman Productions among other theatre groups understand the importance of theatre and the ability to channel their ideas through it.

As part of the promotion of theatre, the National Commission on Culture had a policy that was designed to require the National Theatre Company (used to be called Abibigromma), Ghana Dance Ensemble and Ghana Symphony Orchestra to move to the National Theatre as resident theatre companies. According to Martin Owusu, a theatre practitioner, “these were the only state supported professional groups that have been disclosed to be well managed till date.”

Yet, all other amateur dance and drama groups were and are still on their own, even those found at the Regional Cultural Arts Centres, currently the Centres for National Culture (CNC). In a discussion with Mr. Daniel Appiah Adjei, a former Artistic Director of the Kumasi Centre for National Culture, the two theatre groups (Kyerematen and Anokye Players) have collapsed for lack of government subventions and appropriate management structures.

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10 Martin Owusu. Personal Interview. 2nd October, 2013.
CNCs have equally collapsed due to similar challenges, and the performance spaces turned into facilities for weddings, funerals, graduations and other ceremonial activities. Other prevalent theatre groups were those of the Concert Party style. They were promoted in Ghana but it declined in the early 1980s because of political upheaval that destroyed the night life of Ghanaians due to curfews.

The Concert Party was revived when it had support from Unilever Ghana Limited in conjunction with the National Theatre. It was rebranded as a Key Soap Concert Party, after the ban on curfew was lifted. The principal idea was that there was a particular sponsor that saw the need to manage the theatre, Unilever. The Key Soap Concert Party helped the key soap company to make sales, but at the same time, they played down on the artistic presentation and made Concert Party lose its power as a viable theatre presentation. It was very “vibrant in the 1990s through to early 2000s, but it is now on the decline again and little is heard of it.”

In June 2013, during Joy FM radio discussion, on the topic Theatre in Ghana and its relevance; Theatre in performing Arts, How can it be revolutionised? Reference was made to the fact that “theatre used to be vibrant and it is now relapsed but not dead.” Further explanation admits that theatre has become devoid of its energy, enthusiasm and the passion with which people used to practise theatre. The few supported theatrical performances backed by good management are able to attract an audience for their shows. Performances take place in various parts of the country, but on a lower level. For example, dramatic performances take place at churches during festive occasions (Christmas and Easter), at schools celebration, and drama sketches to create awareness of prevailing issues by various Non-Governmental Organisations.

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(NGO’s). In the academia, especially in the State Universities with Theatre Arts Departments, Cape Coast University, Winneba University and the School of Performing Arts (SPA), University of Ghana, Legon, produce many plays every semester not forgetting productions by Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST).

Currently, one of the private universities in Accra, Methodist University College, with the assistance of Martin Owusu, has started producing plays to attract students and lecturers at the school. This is to pull and also strengthen the love of the theatre in the student and to start the Arts Faculty at the school this year, 2014. Promoting theatre in Academia is active for training artists, but it lacks large scale advertisement that could go beyond the university community to attract audience. Thus, not much is heard because of its mode of publicity that covers a specific area of the country. Sandy Arkhurst\(^{14}\) stressed that, there was a Theatre Season at the Arts Centre, organised by the School of Performing Arts of the University of Ghana, which started as far back in 1965. In an interview with Martin Owusu, he reiterated that this Theatre Season was an educational programme of drama meant for the public. It also took place annually during the long vacation at the Arts Centre in Accra in 1989 to 1997, which attracted both students and the public. It was to expose the essence of theatre and besides educate, entertain, and inform the public on some issues that affected the communities.\(^{15}\) It has been an on-and-off programme due to the issue of managerial activities under different supervisions. During Ghana’s Fiftieth (50\(^{th}\)) Anniversary in 2008, Martin Owusu produced twelve (12) plays, over 12 months, four nights each at the National Theatre under the Ghana @50 programme. In 2013, one of the most renowned schools in Ghana, Tema International School, produced *The Lion King*, directed by Alfred Kunutsor (lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon). The turnout of audience for these shows was encouraging and suggested that theatre is not dead.

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14 Sandy Arkhurst, Senior Lecturer at the Theatre Arts Department, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon
15 Martin Okyere Owusu. Personal Interview. 2\(^{nd}\) October, 2014.
rather, theatre practitioners are not making much publicity of it. Based on these observation, it can be said that in the midst of all these performances, Roverman Productions leads with the legacy attributed to good managerial skills that attract more audience for its regular performances.

It takes a lot of resources and managerial skills for theatre groups to sustain themselves, especially when there is inadequate financial backing from either individuals or groups to assist productions. It is surprising to identify the number of theatre groups that pop up and die out regularly for a number of reasons, but it seems the most common among them is financial support and to a larger extent, effective management. There used to be several groups such as Kusum Agoromma, Workers Brigade Concert Party, International Drama Group, Osagyefo Players, Free Lance Players and the Talent Theatre Group, which have died out and the Concert Parties on the decline. Plays that were performed by these groups included, *Odasani* (Everyman), *Yaa Konadu*, *Wo hyee me bɔ* (You promised me), and *Arms and the Man*.

Among the various theatre groups found in Accra currently include, Theatre Mirrors, Kodzi Kodzi, Vision Theatre, Silsi’s Productions, and Roverman Productions (the most popular of all). Significantly, the latter has been successful considering its style and approach towards theatre productions. The message it carries attracts audience participation as well as financial supports from companies in sustaining the group.

Roverman Productions is a registered company that plays a very important role in the promotion of theatre in Ghana. The company is owned and led by James Ebo Whyte, a playwright, director, an accountant by profession and a condolence motivational speaker. Research on Roverman Productions is minimal in the academic literature. However, credit is given to Roverman Productions for its immense contribution to theatre development in Ghana. There have been publications and reviews on its productions in the media. It is probably one
of the best and most popular theatre production groups and actively making theatre recognisable of late. Besides, Roverman Productions’ plays educate, entertain, inform and communicate with the society on current social issues which the audience identify with.

The style and form present situations that are serious on a lighter note which are based on the daily experiences of human life. Plays performed by the group dwell on themes of human existence that suggest solutions to family life experiences. For instance, the action and reactions of couples or spouses accentuate the plot/scenario. Roverman Productions has highlighted the role theatre plays in the development process of the country. Some of the plays it has produced at the National Theatre include; *The Last Flight, Men Run: Women Cry, Apartment N1, What is My Name?, Sins of the Fathers, Don’t Mess with a Woman, Everyone has a Secret* and *Terms of Divorce.*

Among the various theatre groups in Ghana, Roverman Productions has made the market through the various means of obtaining sponsorship, and advertising its product both electronically and in the print media. Apart from Roverman Productions that runs productions on professional grounds, it seems the majority of productions are done by amateur groups. In Accra, for instance, the Centre for National Culture coordinates an educational programme titled ‘Baajo’ that involves the amateur groups who perform to inform, educate, and entertain the public on the various traditional dances in Ghana. Participants are drawn from basic schools, and the general public.

Roverman Productions per description is suggestive as a professional body, because of its principles of management and the spirit of professionalism attached to its productions. Though, most of its members are nurtured and trained to gain theatre experience, they are given some remuneration for their contributions after productions. This is because most of them are in other
professions and therefore are not always available. There are also skilled actors from the School of Performing Arts, as well as permanent management staff who are paid monthly.

There are only a handful professional theatre companies that carry out the expected ‘professional’ performances. The few professional groups vis-à-vis the number of amateur groups in theatre productions, implies that, the promotion of theatre on a bigger platform is questionable. This is evident in the number of anonymous groups that exist in some of the regional/district capitals. Among the known groups are the Theatre Mirrors, and Kodzi Kodzi, Vision Theatre and Oswald’s Theatre groups (affiliated to CNC, Accra), Kyerematen players and Anokye players (Kumasi), and, Top 12 Entertainment Consult and Wesleyan Theatre Incorporated (Cape Coast). These groups put up performances in any given year.

The few professional companies; Abibigromma Theatre Company of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, and the National Theatre Players of the National Theatre are popular at the schools level than operating as commercial theatre. This is because they were established as an experimental theatre for students. Besides these educational performances, it seems that not much is happening, and individual groups that were making efforts to promote the theatre are dwindling every now and then. There were also the Concert Party Groups that used to crisscross the country with their productions, but are now on the decline in terms of theatrical activities. Hitherto, there used to be Kusum Agorumma founded by Efua Sutherland and based at the Ghana Drama studio, and the Workers’ Brigade Concert Party which have now collapsed.

This thesis therefore, seeks to investigate the situation regarding Roverman Productions, what accounts for its sustenance in contributing to the promotion of theatre in the haze of theatre decline in Ghana. It also seeks to point out the significance and challenges that Roverman Productions are confronted with and to explore how these can affect Ghanaian theatre. In
addition, it investigates how it is managed, the number of productions it mounts in a year (averagely), the impact on audience, methods of advertisement and its means of sustainability. Thus, a theatre company, though private, can promote Ghana’s theatre through the seeming impossibilities of sponsorship acquisition, among other challenges. This is one of the few among the theatre companies in Ghana whose performances the society has cherished and yearned to have for their well-being intended for growth and development. Regarding the success of Roverman Productions, can Roverman Productions be a model for aspiring amateur or professional theatre groups or both in Ghana? The study also seeks to inquire if the commercial and financial demands of such a group are beyond the reach of ordinary persons who just want to make theatre a hobby or a part-time activity.

1.3 Problem Statement

Roverman Productions in Ghana has an interesting and valuable information about the management of theatre in terms of structures put in place for attracting audience. These structures are highly phenomenal and they contribute to the promotion of theatre in the country which is very important in socio-economic development.

In the quest for Pan Africanism in Ghana, the first President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, fought, promoted and used the arts specifically, theatre as a medium for Africanism, considering the advantages theatre brings in fostering National Development. A. M. Opoku noted that, as part of Nkrumah’s vision in 1962:

Osagyefo, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, demonstrated his foresight by establishing the School of Music and Drama in the University of Ghana, for the training of actors, dramatists, musicians and dancers. In 1961, he personally encouraged the construction of the Ghana Drama Studio in Accra, whose programme has now become most useful integrated with the School of Music and Drama. Consistent with Osagyefo’s determination to advance the development of the Arts, is the establishment of the Arts Council that has become the Institute of
Arts and Culture, for the purpose of promoting and disseminating artistic developments in the country.16

Nkrumah was passionate about the arts so much that he included it in his developmental policies. Thus, he encouraged the establishment of the Arts Council in Accra to support the arts industry. He also helped to establish the Ghana Drama Studio in Accra meant for performance space and the School of Music and Drama in the University of Ghana, Legon, which was to serve as training centre for actors, dancers, dramatists and musicians. During the 1960s, theatre was beginning with new emerging playwrights like Efua Sutherland, Joe deGraft and Ama Ata Aidoo. Later theatre practitioners like Martin Owusu, Ben Abdallah, Asiedu Yirenkyi, and Yaw Asare also came into the scene assisting in the development of the theatre. There were also lots of theatre groups travelling all over the country with performances. There was a great deal of hope for the arts centres that supported the theatre industry to thrive. Somewhere along the line, the nation’s political disturbances caused the destruction of the theatre. It can be enumerated the several coup d’état that took place and when Nkrumah was overthrown, all the energy regarding the arts went down the drain. The vision for the arts was lost and Ghana went through a period of instability. During this period, theatre could not be active because people were not allowed to go out. Later, lots of effort were made by various theatre groups to revive theatre performances and Roverman Productions is not an exception.

There are many theatre groups in Ghana such as Globe Theatre, Wesleyan Theatre Incorporated, which have been in existence for some time now. There are also other NGO’s like the H4P Crew that uses theatre to propagate its messages. However, very little is heard about them compared to Roverman Productions, whose activities seem to have enhanced the role and achievement of theatre promotion in Ghana. These groups have the potential to be popular and be recognised so long as they get the necessary support, since they have the vision

of promoting theatre. Nonetheless, there seems to be lack of sponsorship (from both Government and private agencies), poor managerial operations during productions which have affected their theatre promoting activities.

Talk of theatre promotion by Roverman Productions has been as a result of its management qualities that factor in audience comfort. On the other hand, some theatre artists seem to have given deaf ear to audience development and it is depressing, since theatre performance does not occur in a vacuum. In this global dispensation where many individuals, organisations and industries strive to capture their followers/audience, it is necessary that the arts in general equally find means to attract audience for their shows.

Apart from Roverman Productions that is a constant user of the National Theatre and few active groups that carry out theatrical activities in the country, the National Theatre especially has been exposed to other events such as weddings, bank conferences, graduations, and other occasions to take place, thwarting the purpose for which the National Theatre was established. Once more, for the enormous hard work, determination, and commitment effort by members of Roverman productions, theatre performance is being felt periodically four times within a year. Thus, fulfilling an aspect of Kwame Nkrumah and Jerry John Rawlings’s vision for which the National Theatre was established.

There is, however, not much research work done in investigating the contributions of Roverman Productions to theatre development in Ghana. This research aims at obtaining information from the field and use it as a prototype for other theatre groups with similar managerial challenges. There are comparable theatre groups across the country whose attitude and level of knowledge in theatre practice must be improved upon to help in sustaining the group for assessment. It is imperative to encourage society’s patronage and appreciation for
live theatre as it used to be in some time past. This is done through the entertainment, education, and information part that addresses societal issues.

With all these in mind, it is necessary to examine through interactions with theatre practitioners and lovers, on proper managerial activities so that the awareness on the void created regarding theatre promotion in Ghana would be addressed.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the contribution of Roverman Productions to the promotion of theatre in Ghana. Specifically, the study seeks to:

i. Investigate the situation of theatre development in Ghana.
ii. Examine the role of Roverman Productions towards the promotion of theatre in Ghana.
iii. Examine how Roverman Production is managed to achieve its level of professionalism.
iv. Investigate the sources of Roverman Productions’ financial support.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions are;

i. How has Ghanaian theatre developed over the years?
ii. What is the role of Roverman Productions to the promotion of theatre in Ghana?
iii. How is Roverman Productions managed to achieve its level of professionalism?
iv. How are sources of finance generated for the sustenance of the group?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is basically on the contribution of theatre groups in the promotion of theatre in Ghana. However, it is limited to Roverman Productions in relation to its role and contribution to the development of theatre in Ghana. It additionally looked at the management of the company, their unique style in terms of securing sponsorship, advertisement, subject-matter and themes, and consistency in high standard delivery.
1.7 Methodology

The research employed the qualitative and quantitative method of data collection and analysis with emphasis on exploratory and interpretive approaches. It made use of both primary and secondary sources in order to obtain reliable information relevant to the topic. It is important for the researcher to thoroughly examine the recorded results, make analysis from the conclusion and draw some recommendations. Primary sources of data were the information gathered from the interviews, fieldwork, and observations. Interviews were organised with members (staff, and performers) of Roverman Productions and some theatre groups at their respective venues. Again, interviews were scheduled with some audience to acquire detailed information on Ghanaian theatre, its challenges and strengths.

There was also the employment of interview guide conducted with selected members of Roverman Productions to rate theatre performances in general. The interviews also sought their knowledge about the effectiveness of theatre productions in Ghana, the role of Roverman Productions as well as other theatre groups. Instruments such as audio and video recorders were employed by the researcher during the observation to assist unearth opinions from these audience. This body of data collected were analysed and interpreted to allow the researcher formulate deductions and make practical inferences. There were also interviews with other amateur/professional theatre groups and the public to discuss the challenges facing Roverman Productions and other theatre groups in Ghana.

Also, secondary sources from relevant literature included data from textbooks, theses, newspapers, letters, news, articles, internet, paper reviews, magazines and journals were consulted from library and other related places. These information of both print and non-print aided and gave clarity in understanding the research issues.
Active participant observation was utilised in order to gain a closer insight pertaining to theatre practices. Participant observations were considered for the researcher to distance herself and take note of activities during the group’s rehearsals and performances. The target population comprised theatre practitioners, the public, members of theatre groups with particular reference on Roverman Productions. The target population was chosen appropriately for the researcher to remain focused in order not to be disorganised and thwart the argument. Subsequently, data was thoroughly analyzed.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This research provides relevant information on the role and contribution of Roverman Productions toward the promotion of theatre in Ghana. It also seeks to add to existing literature on the practices and management of theatre groups especially on Roverman Productions. It as well provides the reasons of being a pacesetter for up-coming theatre groups in terms of theatre productions: style of productions, means of sponsorships, the kinds of plays and places for their productions. Most importantly, the research suggests ways to improve theatre activities of the group at large as they project the issues (culture of the people) that confront the nation. Finally, it serves as a document for future reference to potential researchers in Theatre Management. Additionally, findings from the study would provide relevant recommendations in moulding Ghana’s theatre policies and creativities relative to ensuring professionalism.

1.9 Delimitation

As part of the delimitation, the study looked at other theatre groups (amateur and professional) for certain comparison so as to clearly understand the various challenges faced. The comparative study was analysed subsequent to the issues raised and some observations made regarding the activities under their roles in promoting theatre in Ghana.
1.10 Organization of the Study

The research is arranged in five chapters in the following order: the first chapter covers the background of the study; problem statement, research questions, among others. Chapter two highlights related and relevant literature. The third chapter discusses the methodology and the specific methods that are employed in carrying out the research. The analysis and presentation of findings is done in chapter four, while chapter five provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of literature that were found to be relevant to this research. It explores whether or not in promoting theatre in Ghana, Roverman Productions is contributing to this fact and making its productions accessible in Ghana, and if it does, in what way its performance style or structure affects the populace. Undeniably, the perimeter in which Roverman Productions operates with regards to its activities and the impact it has on the people has been measured as a distinct way for promoting Ghanaian theatre. However, the argument the research explores is the medium Roverman Productions uses to be active and stand out among the many theatre groups.

Earlier to Roverman Productions, the promotion of theatre has been recognized in the historical overview of Ghanaian theatre focusing on traditional theatre, theatre in transition (Literary form e.g. *Anansegoro*) and Modern Theatre (Concert party/commercial theatre). These sub-headings provide details on how Ghanaian theatre has developed and been promoted over the years in general, with specific examples from the Ghanaian milieu highlighting some prominent personalities who have contributed their quota to theatre development. Furthermore, it explores the notable activities of Roverman Productions and assesses whether, it is promoting its own theatre or Ghanaian theatre at large, vis-à-vis other theatre groups. Finally, it discusses some current promotional concepts that Roverman Productions uses to make its performance successful.

As a leading theatre company currently, it is spreading theatre widely in some parts of the country especially in Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Cape Coast. Therefore, it can be said that
Roverman Productions is promoting theatre but other parts of the country are denied access to both scripts and performances.

To understand the promotion of theatre, the study briefly provides a discussion on theatre and drama. Theatre encompasses three items - dance, drama and music which form the wholeness of and plays an integral part of human life. Theatre has to do with the physical building where dramatic performance takes place on stage before live audience, whereas drama has sometimes been treated as literature that can be read. Drama subsumes abstract script, verse or prose that “pervades many activities of social life.”¹⁷ In simple terms, theatre is an experience whereas, drama is the text. From this distinction, drama can be taught in class. Notwithstanding, James Gibbs argues that, “children’s games, incorporate personification and performance elements that ensure they should be considered in any survey of dramatic tradition.”¹⁸ Drama can be an activity not meant for an audience but for participants to discover something from it for themselves. For instance, children playing the role of parents, can be classified as drama and not theatre. Sandy Arkhurst postulates that, when drama is translated into classical terms, it becomes theatre.¹⁹ This has been expressed by many authors and sometimes used interchangeably and other times clearly distinguished. For consistency sake theatre is used in this thesis.

Theatre is a reflection of life experience, therefore, it deals with the subject of humanity, consisting of individual, moral, social, cultural, historical, ethical and contemporary issues. Roverman Productions encapsulate these elements in its productions, however, the

contemporary social issues take precedence contributing to the socio-political lives of the people.

2.2 Historical Overview and the Promotion of Theatre in Ghana

The history of theatre in Ghana began from indigenous performances (ritual performances, festival celebration and rites of passage) that are part of the society. These include traditional, transitional and modern theatre practices. In commenting on Roverman Productions and its current theatre promotion trend in Ghana, it is of great importance that the history of theatre be looked at, in order to understand the operations of Roverman Productions, so that possibly some relationships can be drawn.

2.2.1 Traditional Theatre

Africans have a great history regarding the growth and promotion of theatre which helped in the socio-economic development of African nations. Precisely, West African theatre history originated from an indigenous performance of story-telling tradition that was part of the society and served as a catalyst to the socio-economic development. The considerable contested Eurocentric claim that in Africa drama did not exist before the advent of the colonialist is as much an issue of form.

J. H. Nketia has historically elucidated indigenous activities that embedded drama in them. He proposes different situations in this regard noting that, “in many Ghanaian societies, music, dance and drama are traditionally organised and practised as an integral part of everyday life.”

He further advances some occasions with theatrical elements:

> It will be evident from our review of the arts in traditional society that drama pervades many activities of social life. The organisation of music and dance has a dramatic orientation, while expressions of customary behaviour such as formalities governing the arrival and departure of important people, rites of transition, certain forms of transaction between individuals or social groups –including contractual

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behaviour- formal enactment of history and tradition-particularly during commemorative festivals, installation and deposition of chiefs, or the enactment of belief may also take a dramatic form.21

Art is seen in every area of the Ghanaian life. It is associational in form and very important in channelling information to the society. This situation is not only restricted in Ghana but almost all African Countries.

In reacting to European’s ideology and supporting Nketa’s assertion, Mzo Sirayi in his article Contemporary African drama: The Intercultural trend in South Africa, suggests that “Pre-colonial theatre existed in pre-colonial Africa.”22 He further demonstrates an unbroken continuity between pre-colonial African theatre and contemporary African drama, highlighting how modern context playwright employs some pre-colonial theatre traditions as means of communicating with the audience. The traditional African theatre style of actor-audience relationship takes precedence over form, however, apart from the breaking of the fourth wall, most elements identified in contemporary African performance have taken major elements from the West. Roverman Productions, though a contemporary theatre group that imitates the West, inculcates a major traditional element such as the breaking of the fourth wall in order to interact with its audience. While the researcher supports the idea that West Africa had its unique theatre, on the contrary, the manner of performance was not a conscious effort to promote the theatre. In a context provided by Martin Owusu, a theatre scholar, in his book Drama of the Gods, gave substantial information on the origin and development of theatre in West Africa, and comprehensively on Ghanaian theatre practices. In his view, West African drama can be seen in diverse forms that include:

[…] traditional, informal and spontaneous activities initiated in the villages and townships involving the entire community or section of it. “story-telling” or “Epic Narrative” falls under this category”…There are also the concert party plays of

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21 Ibid.29
Ghana and Nigeria folk – operas which similarly combine the spirit and style of the late and early 20th century vaudeville theatre in America and Europe…Another category of Drama is the imported western theatrical tradition with its scripted play and formal presentation in a theatre.23

From the above, one can deduce that, Ghanaian theatre evolved from traditional performances of the people through story-telling, to concert party and to the Western theatrical tradition. While acknowledging the contradiction in the concept and practices of these performances, Ernest Abbeyquaye, a theatre practitioner, sees indigenous art forms as a practice that “existed and evolved as a natural process of evolution.”24 This implies that, extensive practice that emerged from indigenous performance takes place during such mentioned events involved the entire community and there was no political agenda. For instance, Anansesem (Ananse Stories) are source of entertainment that consisted of members in the community. This kind of community theatre, perhaps the society’s own theatre of a sort, was more pronounced and identified. Theatrical performances were popular in traditional events.

2.2.2 Ghanaian Theatre in Transition

It was until independence, that West Africa experienced a massive transition in the promotion and growth of theatre activities. Rubin et al suggest that theatre has been assumed from the beginning as “an art form which grows its society and feeds back into it through reflection, analysis and challenge.”25 Theatre reflects the past and builds upon the future of the society. Imperatively, many analysts use this trend to represent new departure that holds out promise for a more hopeful future. Among typified analysts include, Wole Soyinka, Ola Rotimi, John Pepper Clark and Athol Fugard. The situation was not different from Ghana, and transition in Ghanaian theatre was associated with the influx of Western culture. Introduction of formal education and churches by the colonists was the inception of active theatre performances.

Certainly, this was not a conscious effort to develop the theatre but drama because theatre is slightly different as already noted. Not forgetting, “churches were performing plays which were musical plays and biblical based called Cantatas.”

The missionaries had a total control and actively used theatre as a tool to sensitize the society. Roverman Productions as well offers this style- moving to churches and performing plays to exalt the congregation and also to commercialise itself, but its stories currently are not strictly Bible based. Stories of the church performances were biblical, for example, *Daniel in the Lion’s Den, Joseph and his Brothers* and, *David and Saul* from the Old Testament which were dramatized for edification of the church and it was hugely supported by the missionaries. Gibbs affirms:

> With the establishment of a European community, churches and schools, the circumstances that would eventually lead to a theatre tradition that involved scheduled performances, paying audience, playscripts and other elements of ‘European theatre’ had been put in place.

The tendency for Western art forms with continuing influence on traditional art forms were the genesis of Ghana’s theatre. There were the anniversary performances in schools and churches established by the colonizers. However, to retrace our steps a little, the first two colonial educational reforms led to the establishment of Mfantsipim Secondary School (1876) and Achimota Secondary School formerly Prince of Wales (1927), which had lots of European teachers who performed Western plays for entertainment. The performances were part of their curricular school entertainment. It was therefore not surprising that they performed plays like *Everyman* and *The Bishop’s Candlesticks* to entertain themselves. Later Adisadel College formerly, St. Nicholas Grammar School also performed *Antigone*.

In the interview with Abbeyquaye, he revealed that the old King George V Memorial Hall, to our surprise was built as a theatre by the colonial government to celebrate King George V

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26 Ernest Abbeyquaye. Personal Interview. 1st April, 2014.
anniversary and later given as a gift to the Gold Coast and the city of Accra. It became our Parliament House and it is sometimes called the Jubilee building. While the state of the building cannot be explained currently, it is not to be political of the epistemologies that surround it but to interrogate why it has not been used for theatrical activities. The researcher undoubtedly agrees to this assertion that, it could serve as an additional performance space to stimulate theatre activities. Added to this, was the annual ceremonies that involved most of the schools, especially, Saturday entertainment night which included, singing, drumming, and dancing by individuals and group performances. Of all these shows, one of the contentions was that, it was a conscious development of theatre in the country. Furthermore, institutions that had performances were strongly supported by their administrators.

Studies of colonialism classified a massive differences in the lives of the indigenes especially, concerning the theatre and in pursuance to this, Owusu justly establishes:

> Until independence, education was wholly in the hands of Christian Missionaries. Students were taught that the only true religion was Christianity... Until recently, the “educated” West African did find it worthwhile to look at the religion of his fathers as a source of inspiration for arts... modern playwright has adopted a new attitude. No longer does he despise the religion and culture of his people; he is ceaselessly searching for meaning in traditional religion and folklore and creating new perspectives on his society. He is seeking to preserve the culture and social values of his people, instead of disdain them. Religion, myth, and tradition have become the most important sources for dramatic writing; a significant number of modern West African plays are infused with strong elements of myth and ritual which dramatists remould their cultural environment to suit their thematic purposes.28

As laid down earlier, education attached to colonialism, exposed the African to theatre practices. What the researcher is attempting to establish is that, after attaining independence, some educated Ghanaians faced the potent challenge for identity and the need to actively use the theatre to attain what had been lost to them. Thus, the local term “Sankofa” meaning going back to retrieve what has been abandoned. Ghana’s independence ushered in a booming of

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dramatists and playwrights like Efua Sutherland, Joe DeGraft, Ama Ata Aidoo, Martin Owusu, Asiedu Yirenkyi, Yaw Asare and Ben Abdallah.

### 2.2.3 Modern Theatre (Commercial and Popular Theatre)

This is the ‘circular’ side of the theatre and it began from Colonialism as described by Ernest Abbeyquaye. ‘Circular’ in this context is, moving out from basic teaching morals to more of theatre for entertainment. It was described as the “travelling theatre of the coast of West Africa-which was also known as the Folk Opera or Concert Party.”29 This travelling style was basically for entertainment but dealt with contemporary social problems, a perpetual feast of improvisation- visibly more vibrant. The concert party was a type of popular theatre that was hugely commercialised. It emerged from Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana with the Two Bobs (J. B. Ansah and Charles B. Hutton) led by Ishmael Johnson. Johnson contributed to the promotion of theatre as he led the Workers Brigade and started, a Popular Theatre Movement that became exemplary for most concert party groups in the country. Like other authors, Kwabena Bame in his book *Come to Laugh, A Study of African Traditional Theatre in Ghana*, saw the promising possibilities that accompanied this theatre movement that Johnson started. He narrated that:

> At first the performances were limited and irregular. Bob Johnson and his mates used to stage comic plays in their school compound to entertain people after Empire-Day or similar celebrations. Local theatre was as well received then as later the popularity of the plays encouraged the formation of a more professional troupe of comedians in 1920… At weekends the group made quite handsome money for those days by staging plays in villages in the Sekondi area. They sometimes travelled as far west as Axim.30

Historically, the Concert Party theatre took place at various periods in Ghana and its performance was a success. I stand to argue that, it is from this instance that theatre began to

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be more lucrative in terms of people paying to watch productions. This was a shift from voluntary to a professional theatre performance.

Owusu added that, though there was no permanent theatre facility, the group performed “in village courtyards, under Aladdin lamp lighting, in town halls, cinema places or sports fields, depending on the availability of any of these facilities.” In terms of publicity, members of the group normally were in a lorry or bus and as it moved slowly the troupe played their popular tunes to catch the attention of their audience. Intermittently an amplified voice announced the show as the community became aware of the event yet to take place. One interesting thing was that, popular lines in the play as believed to entice audience were said to pull audience who had been in waiting for weeks into the theatre. Thus, the community was “informed or reminded of their entertainment for which they had been waiting for weeks, perhaps months.”

Among the groups that followed to support this tradition were Sam and His Party, E.K. Nyame and the Akan Trio, Jaguah Jokers, Kaikiaku Concert Party, Bob Cole and His Trio, and Kwaw Mensah. The Concert Party tradition was an infusion of local and imported traditions comprising Empire Day Entertainment, church cantatas, American black-face minstrelsy, the silent cinema, and expatriate entertainments. They were well managed and their priority was to entertain and develop the audience by providing them with their needs. Awo Asiedu defines Concert Party in Ghana as “an indigenous form of itinerant theatre which dates back to the early 1900s.” She argued that this itinerant theatre has been practiced till date, and Roverman Productions takes this style though, it is entertaining, it takes a turn away from just entertainment to a real business venture. Its style bears certain elements and blends with other elements to suit this current dispensation.

32 Ibid. P.9.
Catherine M. Cole in her book, *Ghana’s Concert Party Theatre* postulates that, this type of theatre in Ghana started as a result of imitating the comic characters in American films, and that “Al Jolson and Charlie Chaplin in American silent movies influenced the original development.” She further states in detail that:

From colonialism through independence to present-day Ghana, concert parties have undergone constant transformation, readily incorporated new audience, venues, formats, and style. While shows were initially predominantly in English, they gradually shifted to Ghanaian languages. The format gradually shifted from an hour-long show of European songs and vaudeville sketches to a protracted event, beginning with an African pop music concert from 8 P.M to 1 A.M, followed by a full-length comic melodrama punctuated at emotional moments with well-known highlife tunes, the whole performance concluding at dawn.

From the above there is the indication of a transformation of concert party genre from one stage to another including performance space, type of audience, formats and style. This transformation has effectively taken place and Roverman Productions is an example of this current transformation.

Asiedu and Cole did not only look at how they started but similarly provided the characteristics of this form, how it attracted audience and promoted the theatre. An earlier definition by Asiedu on Concert party is again highlighted by Cole. Indeed African analysts like Mlama has done extensive work on popular theatre (Concert Party) in some African countries like Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. She tested the potency, and discussed how this kind of theatre in the 90s was effective in most of the African countries and its contribution to theatre promotion.

### 2.2.4 The Promotion and Development of Theatre in Ghana

According to Abbeyquaye, it was after independence that the development of theatre became the currency that was used. The African in totality has always observed the West for models.

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As much as the West looks down upon the form of theatre in Africa, the African also looks down upon his own culture to opt for European culture as a model to fit into his context. Asiedu further notes that:

One of the results of colonial education has been that often Africans look to the West for examples and models which may apply to their own contexts; rarely do we look within our own cultures for models which we might also contribute to other cultures.37

The attitude of looking at the Western culture for inspiration rather than from our own cultural context incited Nkrumah to employ the theatre to caution Ghanaians. Just like how every cultural and political leader exhibits an absolute passion for self-identification, Nkrumah was poised in using theatre and to revisit the authenticity of the Ghanaian tradition. Collins Steve in *The Growth of a National Form of Theatre in Ghana*, asserts that:

Theatre and the Nation are inextricably linked in Ghana. Since the establishment of independence, the country’s political and cultural leaders have engaged themselves with the fundamental question of identity [and] post-colonization.38

It was this period that we had the government pronouncing a policy that states clearly that the arts must be developed. Kwame Botwe-Asamoah in his book, *Kwame Nkrumah’s Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies, An African- Centred Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution State and the Arts*, brings out Nkrumah’s vision on development of the arts and the role it played for nation building.

Nkrumah saw the need for redefining and stimulating a national identity in a new nation. The foundation of Ghanaian theatre is said to be rooted in Nkrumah’s vision at the time of independence and how he envisaged the relationship between building a new nation and factors

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that will facilitate it. Thus, he established his own theatre company, Osagyefo Players. Botwe-Asamoah observes that:

Consistent with his ideas on the resurrection of African arts, Nkrumah urged drumming and dancing at the Accra Sports Stadium and other public parks or facilities in the country and art exhibitions to mark Ghana’s Independence Day celebrations. In 1965, Nkrumah inaugurated his theatre group, Osagyefo Players, and made it part of his presidency.\(^{39}\) In fact Nkrumah’s approach towards the theatre was phenomenal with regards to necessary things he put in place for the arts activities that marked the Independence Day, and he formed the Osagyefo players to propagate his course. According to Arkhurst, as cited by Botwe-Asamoah, “Nkrumah would occasionally show up during Osagyefo Players rehearsals at the Flagstaff House, give his comments and encourage us.”\(^{40}\) Nkrumah motivated and encouraged the actors with his presence during their meetings. For instance, the group performed the play ‘Arms and the Man’ for the participants of the Organisation of African Unity Summit in Ghana in 1965.

He also established the Arts Council, a state agency that was “to organise the arts and encourage their promotion.”\(^{41}\) Another creation was the National Theatre Movement which was supported by all those people believing in the arts. Among the people that complemented Nkrumah’s idea were, Nana Kwabena Nketia, Philip Gbeho, J. H. Nketia, Eflush Sutherland, and Joe de Graft. They were talking about a national theatre as a physical thing and as a movement. However, Nkrumah’s vision concerning the arts had already been launched in the Arts Council before the National Theatre Movement was formed. As part of this movement came the Institute of African Studies of which the School of Music and Drama (currently School of Performing Arts) is an extension. The impetus for theatre unification was greatly revived in the 1950s


\(^{40}\) Ibid. p. 155.

\(^{41}\) Ibid. P.158.
during Ghana’s independence. It was at this period that Efua Sutherland experimented her kind of theatre form and envisaged the construction of the Ghana Drama Studio (Accra) and the Kodzi dan (House of Story Telling in Atwia Ekumfi, Central Region), a reflection of Ghanaian Traditional setting that will erupt from and have some peculiar identity. Her vision was brought into fruition when in 1961, she established the Ghana Drama Studio. Efua Sutherland, in an interview given to Robert July, drew on the impact for her artistic work thus:

[…] came back and the writers’ movement was going on … we had started the idea of a magazine… I came back more resolved that this thing shall work, and suddenly saw the problem about dramatic literature, the creating of dramatic literature… We needed a programme to develop playwriting and I starting the thought that led to the beginning of theatre, the experimental theatre, the Ghana Experimental Theatre, I called it. And then in 1959 to 1960, we started building the Drama Studio…that comprised the programme…the idea of the programme… and we opened it and we were away…in October of 1961…

I knew that through that means that we would begin to create forms and style of dramas, of theatrical expression that would stand as Ghana… Between 1961 and 1963 was a very creative period for the Ghana Studio. And we were doing two things at once. We were finding talent and getting them involved in practical theatre work…and also developing an audience.  

Sutherland focused on theatre education that would feed the country with artists in the theatre business, when she conceived the idea of the studio. Arkhurst affirms that, the studio served as a centre for research development and training for theatre practitioners. Till date, the School of Performing Arts has used this resource as an experimental ground for theatre practices and it is solely managed under the University of Ghana.

If we consider the enthusiasm of the theatre practitioners, especially during independence – with institutional and commercial theatre enjoying a great support from the government, theatre was progressing steadily then. James Gibbs in his article, Ghanaian Theatre, A Bibliography, documented reviews and performances by individuals and groups and showed how they affected the society. He referred to theatrical activities that took place from the 1960s to 1994,

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sourcing from School of Performing Arts Newsletters published that covered productions put up in Legon and Accra. There were also materials from earlier publications like Okyeame and Sankofa which commented on the issues regarding the development.

Ghanaian exuberance, grace, powers of mimicry and rhetorical tendency are the stuff of which drama can be created- and to the need ‘for a theatre drawing on everyday life.’ For the pioneers of the Ghanaian theatre have not only to find and create the material and present it in a suitable- perhaps a specially created setting, they have to create and educate their audiences, a much more difficult task. In some ways the situation in Ghana may be compared with the beginnings of the main flush of Elizabethan drama in England. There is the same exuberance of language and spirit, the same readiness to experiment, the same emphasis on enjoyment and similar audiences in that there tends to be a gulf between the highly literate, highly sophisticated and illiterate ‘groundlings’ and a consequent ‘readiness to take in and appreciate an oral arts form.’ Noted that the courses struck a balance between theoretical and practical, and that the university can provide protection and encouragement for experimental, the daring and the really new.43

This shows how theatre was being energised by the educational institutions both the Secondary Schools and at the University level.

There were serious reviews in newspapers, journal, magazines, and books which observed theatre activities and also suggested means to promote them. Examples were, The Legon Observer, Daily Graphic, Weekly Spectator and New Theatre Magazine. In the Ghanaian newspaper were reviews by Kwabena Annan on “Thought of a Dangerous corner,” (April 1959). Other reviews, were by George Peter’s “Pick me a Paw Paw” (April 1959), George Williams Awoonor’s “Literature in West Africa” (March 1960), Effuah Nti’s “Theatre Talk” (August to October, 1959), and Joe Boakye-Obeng’s “Our Theatre cries for help” (1 Feb.1959).

Gibbs also referred to major Workshops and performances by groups who were based in Accra as well as those in the other regions, touring around with their performances. These groups were the Studio Players based at the Drama Studio and Legon 7 Players led by James Gibbs. Plays performed included Edufa, Foriwa and Hamile: The Tongo Hamlet. Also, shows like

The Day of the Lion performed on Oct.-Nov. 1974 and directed by G.A Wilson, Freelance Players did Government Inspector, The Lost Fisherman by Saka Acquaye and, A Yorkshire Tragedy was directed by Evans Hunter with the Young Actors’ Playhouse in early 1970s.

This article by Gibbs is a very crucial source for this thesis because, it focuses on theatre performances, providing a wide range of them as well as reviews in context of improving the theatre. Although it gave an extensive bibliography on the state of theatre in Ghana, it was weakened in details of the performances.

The former president of Ghana, Jerry John Rawlings took an interest in the establishment of the National Theatre under his administration. A multi-functional facility that suits the modern theatre architecture for performances and also provides avenue for drama, music, and dance performances, concerts, screen plays as well as, peculiar events of national interest. Nevertheless, Shipley among other scholars indicate that, hope was revived in the 1992 opening of the Theatre which was intended to “foster the development of traditional idioms of contemporary art forms and to preserve the roots, growth, and variety of artistic forms that represent modern Ghana.”

The National Theatre was envisaged to fulfil Nkrumah’s cultural and nationalist vision and the obligation of the association, National Theatre Movement. By then, National Drama Company (formerly Abibigromma), National Symphony Orchestra and the National Dance Company (previously Ghana Dance Ensemble) based in Accra and Legon, were asked to move to the National Theatre as resident theatre groups to develop theatre performances. The relocation generated contention with Abibigromma of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, and the University of Ghana. Most of the Abibigromma members left to join the new National Theatre group that was formed at the time.

On the contrary, Arkhurst explains, that the National Theatre is a representative theatre for the West with a proscenium stage meant for indoor activities (bed-rooms, sitting rooms). Consequently, it cannot really be used for an African play to present an African life. The African is identified by outdoor life that involves a communal activity such as the neighbours, street, beach, farm, and market place. Thus, it is not a suitable place to present African experiences on such a stage, since projecting African life will not surely bring out that true ambiance.

He further indicates that the African culture is presented on a flexible stage, example is the Drama Studio, where it has a modest proscenium-arched stage on one side. It was demolished in the early nineties and replaced with the National Theatre. Gibbs notes that:

Under the term of an agreement partly negotiated by Ben Abdallah, signed with the Government of China in 1985, the Drama Studio was razed to the ground and ‘rebuilt’ on campus at Legon. From 1900 to 1993 on the cleared site near the centre of Accra, Chinese engineers constructed a massive, some would say monstrous, National Theatre. The facilities it offers included a vast proscenium stage with a huge auditorium in which capacious seats mean that many members of audience are a great distance from the stage. The design of the whole building requires very considerable expenditure on air-conditioning –a cost that has rendered hiring the hall prohibitively expensive for many theatre groups.45

This is a symbolic factor of wrong action, where a whole theatre edifice of about twenty five years is destroyed. Instead, a modern theatre building which was totally new to Ghanaians was established at that time. No wonder Sutherland felt disappointed, banned the use of her plays and never visited either the new National Theatre or the reconstructed Efua Sutherland Drama Studio at Legon. This was a challenged towards theatre promotion since her works for the theatre were few of the incontestable. In reaction to her agony, she said:

The Drama Studio was there to help find out, and work with, and experiment towards new creations. But they didn’t look at that. So we have a National Theatre there now… I mean, that’s not a place for experimentation, though I haven’t really ever been inside it. But I can’t do The Marriage of Anansewa in that theatre, as we could in the Drama Studio, very beautifully. Not there! I can’t do Edufa there…

But they didn’t think of all that at all…but I’m sure, when the artists want to do something again, they’ll develop their own theatre. I can see that happening in the future. Because this one won’t allow developmental thinking…it’s a monument.46

The new Drama Studio ground has a proscenium, arena and an end stage to signify an African setting. The African Stage is a philosophy of life of which Efua Sutherland saw the need to have established as community theatre centres to boost African performance.

Also, it was the Rawling’s administration that saw the celebration of the First Festival of Historical Drama in Cape Coast proposed by Efua Sutherland. The first Pan African Festival (PANAFEST) or the international programme held in December 1992, which drew performances from Africans of all walks of life. Since then, PANAFEST performance contributed to the theatre activity in the country, however, it is on decline now for reasons best known to various organisers of PANAFEST. Gibbs asserts to the various fruitful meetings conducted to revive it “but all too often the events have been organisational disasters.”47

Besides, the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) brought attention of Ghanaian music and poetry; the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (a unit of the GBC) recorded dying musical forms, festivals and plays.48 However, it was sold to the Media Prima of Malaysia in 1999.

All the above efforts made to establish these institutions, were to train theatre practitioners-playwrights, directors, actors and audience in a bid to promote the arts. For the researcher, it will not be anachronistic to relate Sutherland to Ebo Whyte. For the reason that, both had the love and sought for theatre as a better medium to project their ideas to Ghanaians. They had invented a new trend of theatre genre from existing form, very proactive to suit recent day

theatre activities. However, these two personalities, depart from the period each individual came into the scene, and also the fact that one was in academia (Efua Sutherland) and the other (Ebo Whyte) is in the industry. This goes a long way to suggest the extent to which their theatre approach has been tackled in advancing theatre promotion activities.

On the other hand, factors that led to the decline of theatre, according to Abbeyquaye and Arkhurst refer to the de facto political instability in the country. The several recurring curfews demoralised the populace and killed the night life of entertainment in the country. The state faced a serious financial constraint and the support for the arts dwindled after Nkrumah had been overthrown. The second most crucial was the 31st December coup d’état under J. J. Rawlings, which activated a three-year long curfew. Other schools of thought have side lined the proliferation of films as contributing to the reduction of numbers of theatre lovers. However, Abbeyquaye disagrees and says, “That has been an ongoing argument but not here in Ghana. English theatre went down, hitherto, they are back again because there are people to perform and those to watch.” Rationally, a new thing can stop an old act but after sometime it will revive again when the people still want it.

The researcher stands to agree with others concerning the increase of films and videos as the main issue taking over the theatre industry. Both actors and the society share their interest; actors found the movie as an easy area to indulge in, while the society also realised the easy way of patronising the Compact Disc (CD) or the Digital Video Disc (DVD’s) to entertain themselves in the comfort of their homes. They also found out the ability of the film to provide realism compared to stage performance that makes use of symbolic features which require one to think deep before making a meaning in the play. Thus, they prefer the film making things easy for them to understand compared to theatre which makes use of lots of symbolism.

There have additionally been some argument among Ghanaian practitioners regarding the woes of the Arts Council as a contributing factor to diminishing theatre development. This started during the PNDC administration, when in 1983, under the political leadership of Mr. Asiedu Yirenkyi, the then Secretary for the Culture and Tourism and his successor, Dr. Ben Abdallah with other members drafted a policy of which the Art Council became a subset of the National Commission on Culture to “promote cultural awareness.”50 According to Martin Owusu and Sandy Arkhurst, the alteration crucially destroyed the arts, because, the money given to the National Commission on Culture was not different from what was due to the Arts Council earlier. The two organisations should have operated as different entities.

Culture is broad, encapsulating the totality of man: social, political, economic, aesthetics, religious practices, and folklore.51 With all these sectors in mind, government grants became insufficient for the smooth running of the Commission and to a larger extent, the arts (theatre) industry was affected. Nonetheless, in an interview with Michael Attipoe, the Director of Commission on Culture, he explained that, the administration of the Art Council at that time located in Accra was decentralised, so that the Arts Centre would generate their own funds and develop.52 Because of inadequate funds from government, affiliated theatre groups at the Art Centres had to operate with an Internally Generated Funds (IGF) to run their own theatre activities.

Moreover, the hustle and bustle that one can go through, considering the starting time, transportation cost, gate fees, security among other reasons deter one from attending the theatre. Yet, Roverman Productions has curved a niche for its audience and fills the National Theatre to its capacity.

52 Michael Attipo. Personal Interview. 11th February 2014.
Historically, in 1990s, when the ban on curfew was lifted, theatre began to rise again. This time around a more serious business venture with the same concert party genre. Jesse Weaver in his article, “The best tradition goes on.” *Audience consumption and Transformation of Popular Theatre in Neo-Liberal Ghana* echoes:

In the early 1980s, for a variety of reasons, this genre began to decline in popularity. In 1995 Unilever Ghana Limited- a local subsidiary of the multinational corporation Unilever PLC- in conjunction with the National Theatre, began sponsoring a new programme- called Key Soap Concert Party to promote the sale of its soap under the slogan “The Best Tradition Goes On.”

By this time, a new thing, very innovative ideas erupted with the backing of companies to assist and sustain the theatre. Shipley further states that, “Unilever’s sponsorship led to transformations in concert party in both content and form.” Sponsorship from Unilever made the theatre a vibrant one. On the contrary, it collapsed because of lack of proper managerial skills. In totality, two hypothesis derived from this problem deserve emphasis: firstly, it could be the ineffective agreement between the sponsors and the theatre groups, secondly, theatre practices were to transform the society with its messages rather than mere entertainment. Particularly, Roverman Productions’ approach has offered fresh insight concerning the managerial activities towards the theatre and its related functions. It is based on managerial ideas that, Whyte’s posits that to what extent the theatre can survive without good managerial prospects –sponsorship, advertisement, and good product. Hence, it is necessary for the “transformation form of what already existed be improved into a commercially- quality, sponsored, centralised program at the National Theatre.”

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54 Ibid. PP.1390-1410.
55 Ibid. PP.1390-1410.
2.3 Profile of Roverman Productions

In order to present Roverman Productions in the promotion of theatre in Ghana, it will be prudent to provide its profile. Roverman Productions, a company under the sole proprietorship of James Ebo Whyte56 has been in the Ghanaian media/entertainment industry over the past five years but its theatre activities started long before its name Roverman Productions. The company has three sub-divisions namely, Publication, Media Content Development and Theatre Production. From web page of Roverman Productions, one gets detailed explanation to the various activities it performs. The Rover Report Monthly Magazine is the product of the publication which first came out in 2004. According to Roverman Productions’ web page, it describes the content of the Magazine as,

[…] a monthly publication featuring a compilation of James Ebo Whyte’s (Uncle Ebo) presentations from the highly patronized Food for Thought program twice a week on Joy FM’s Super Morning Show. The magazine also features funny and informative articles, laugh-out-loud cartoons and great advice. The values incorporated in every issue of the Rover Report Monthly open the heart and mind of the reader and urges them to become more discerning and objective in dealing with those around them. Rover Report Monthly is suitable for all ages and appeals to a wide range of people regardless of profession, faith and status; the magazine is steadily heading towards its 60th issue and is attributed as one of Ghana’s longest running magazines.57

The magazine is the first medium through which Roverman Productions projects Whyte’s ideas for his audience as a reference to their lives and also remind them of their purpose in life. It is an opportunity for those who miss the ‘Food for thought’ show on radio to purchase the magazine so they will not be left behind. The stage production is also another medium through which Whyte’s ideas are projected to Ghanaian audience. Lastly, Media Content Development deals with all productions associated to the company’s programme. Thus, the company which is a “world class production house that encourages fellow Ghanaians to be hungry for value based knowledge and quality content on stage, television and the big screen.”58 Theatre

56 James Ebo Whyte, the CEO of Roverman Productions.
57 Ibid. 21/02/2014. At 4:29pm
productions, the core of this study, is a stage performance that produces plays in various parts of Ghana. Roverman Productions provides Ghanaians with quality, fun, family friendly live performances which are very entertaining and thought-provoking. This is because, it is promoting theatre for many Ghanaians, though persistent in producing hilarious yet challenging domestic messages. As a results, its live performances provoke the audience to learn and to understand family issues. Once noted for quality and fun it needs exquisite ideas for execution.

The plays are written and directed by the CEO of the company whose messages are on many platforms such as the Joy FM morning shows and many other newspapers like The Mirror. In the Mirror newspaper, dated Friday, December 13, 2013, giving the profile of Ebo Whyte states;

James Ebo Whyte (Uncle Ebo Whyte of *JOY FM*) is a publisher, playwright and theatre producer. He began producing his plays in 1975 when he became the artistic director of J-Theatre, the drama troupe of Youth for Christ (YFC) in Accra. His plays have been well received and have been performed in public halls, in churches and in schools. He has been commenting on social and political issues on JOY FM’s super morning Show over the past 13 years.59

The above quotation of the founder, James Ebo Whyte, suggests his effort to reach out to the Ghanaian society through his writing, speeches and theatre productions. He emerged in 1975 with his first play parodying other playwrights since he has had no training in playwriting or theatre. Through his speeches over the years, he has created the niche for his audience to be hungry for him wherever and whenever his voice is heard, even on stage. Therefore, it is not so surprising when Whyte’s listeners follow him to the National Theatre to watch his play productions, an original play by Ebo Whyte as stated in the adverts. Roverman Productions forms an integral part in Ghanaian theatre. This medium allows Whyte to communicate through stage performance, his philosophies and beliefs in relation to current social issues in Ghana.


The above plays highlight the strength and kind of messages preached.

### 2.3.1 Roverman Productions in the Promotion of Theatre

Roverman productions as a theatre company has contributed extensively by adding value to theatre. It has performed in many institutions such as schools, churches, corporate entities, hotels, and the most obvious one is at the National Theatre of Ghana.

This it does in the many structures laid down that help in its developmental process encompassing promotion. From 2008, James Ebo Whyte has written and produced regular Productions through Roverman Productions, and that has caught the attention of some sections of the Ghanaian society. Ebo Whyte, as a Columnist and also a “publisher, playwright, accountant and a theatre producer” has had a great impact on the community based on his

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motivational speeches and theatre shows. Through this art form, he has tried to educate, inform and entertain the society on issues that are of importance to them.

Roverman Productions communicates to its audience by the expression of ideas through theatrical performances. Roverman Productions’ role can be looked at in two ways. Firstly, it teaches, entertains, enlightens and provokes the audience’s analytical thought. Also, it serves as a therapy on the part of the actor to articulate his emotions through his/her role played. The director as well is given the opportunity to express and exhibit his artistic talent in terms of conveying his views and ideologies. Many scholars describe the functions of theatre in three fundamental ways. That is to inform, educate and entertain; nevertheless, other scholars add communication, which is the physical but deep interaction with the audience.

Roverman Productions performs these functions; however, its message mostly informs and entertains with little education. Comparing Efua Sutherland’s Experimental theatre to those of Roverman Productions, Sutherland’s plays had a post-productions discussion after which follow-up was arranged to ensure that the issues presented impact its audience and by default, life in the community. Not necessarily on the issues in the play but making the audience to be discerned and impacted with the theatre. Sandy Arkhurst affirms thus, “After productions we will not let them go, we served them with snacks and discussed with them how to watch plays and things to expect in productions.”61

Exploring this topic, Chinyowa, C. Kennedy argues in his article Evaluating the Efficacy of Community Theatre Intervention in/as Performance: A South African case study, suggests that “the evaluation of theatre production must be concerned with audience reception rather than

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what the audience consume."62 The end product of the performance must be the priority of both theatre artists not just the process of the performance. He further added that, “While evaluation focuses on audience reception, consumption remains the major concern. The primary goal (to transform the lives of the target audience) tends to be ignored, as most critics are still preoccupied with viewing it as a ‘showy spectacle’. Kennedy intends to portray how performance dwell more on the aesthetics (beauty) of the show and overlook the message that must impact the audience.

In the discussion with Sandy Arkhurst, he states that in so far as education is concerned, it affects human totality to cause a change in the society. For this reason, Roverman Productions’ plays, thus, informs more by making its audience know and take petty issues offered. It however, does not interact with its listeners to seek their minds and perception on what they have just seen. The researcher agrees to this assertion that, education is informing, motivating, and making your audience do what you require them to. Therefore, without the post production discussion to seek the audience’ view on the theme, fundamentally makes Roverman Productions’ plays ‘information distributor’.

There are some components that are basic for a theatre to be promoted and these include; the availability of playwrights, directors, the actors and the place for performance which must be a constant phenomenon. Meanwhile, it becomes necessary that with a play text, the audience must “familiarise themselves with the circumstances surrounding the actions in the play.”63 This propels the audience to understand the text, enjoy and get the issues related to. This is manifested in Roverman Productions’ package which centres on family oriented issues which

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are common among the Ghanaian society. In an interview with Ebo Whyte, he said, “there is the constant supply of new plays to be produced for our audience’s consumption. Besides, our audience are not bored since plays premiered are not repeated.”\(^6^4\) This is a good idea (though arguable) however, the researcher stands to disagree on this notion, this is because theatre at any point in time communicates and therefore, repeated plays are important. Also emerging audience must not be denied the opportunity to witness old shows.

Under the discussion, “Introduction: Drama, Theatre and Culture” in *The Wadsworth Anthology of Drama* by W.B Worthen, specifies that,

> In the theatre, a dramatic text is fashioned into an event, something existing in space and time. The space of the stage, with whatever is devised, becomes the place of the drama. The characters are embodied by specific individuals. How a given actor interprets a role tends to shape the audience’s sense of that dramatic character…\(^6^5\)

This clearly shows that, for a theatre to function and be promoted, there should be a play text which must be interpreted by actors and eventually occur on a stage before live audience. A group must ensure the availability of these components before it sets out for a production. In the traditional setting, precisely traditional art forms, dramatic performances of story-telling tradition (folklore/folktales), were performed in an open air space determined by the community. The Narrator or the story-teller sometimes dramatized some of the actions in the story and this style of performance is interactive in nature and requires audience participation as Abbeyquaye reported.

Undoubtedly, it becomes necessary for a theatre group to find a permanent space for its productions and Roverman Productions does the same with the National Theatre, the most suitable performance space for its shows. Besides, it is the only group that is recognised to be a constant user of the National Theatre among the many groups found

\(^6^4\) James Ebo Whyte. Personal Interview. 9\(^{th}\) January, 2014.

in Accra. However, its performance space is limited because, Ghana has limited theatrical spaces and moreover the Arts Centres are not suitable spaces with respect to the style of Roverman Productions.

Similarly, Sutherland established the Ghana Drama Studio to demonstrate her kind of theatre. Many of her plays were perfectly done at the Drama Studio by her professional theatre group, Kusum Agoromba. Imperatively, to promote the theatre in Ghana, Sandy Arkhurst attests that, the theatre space is very crucial in promoting theatre. This must be accessible and convenient to the audience.

2.4 The Definition and Concept of Theatre Promotion

This part of the discussion concentrates on some basic concepts derived from both lecture notes and literatures that are linked to Roverman Productions, as a result of Ebo Whyte’s accounting background. A Theatre Management course offered at the School of Performing Arts, treats the general principles of theatre management and their applications to performing arts, highlights on the need to execute a “marketable performance.” Sub topics discussed included; the product, budgeting, strategic planning, advertisement, publicity and public relations. The ideas generated are relevant in discussing the organisation of performance to attract audience.

Over time, a handful of important concepts in theatre management which are designed to assist in solving specific problems or meant to serve in communication with the selected audience (target) appeared. Encouragements for the development of theatre management concepts have been made for some time now. Besides this, the very theatre promotion activists were the result of experience, or have proved successful in the mainstream business promotion.

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B. Mullin, Hardy and Sutton gave the following definition of Promotion of an activity (such as theatre) “encompasses all those activities, using different processes of mutual exchange to meet the needs and wants of theatre audience.”67 Promotion of theatre has evolved in two directions: directly - in which the marketing of Roverman Productions shows are designed for its audience directly, and indirectly - where marketing is done through the promotion of Roverman Productions activities. In the performance of direct promotion, theatre activities are facing unusual challenges, which, in some cases may be quite different from traditional promotion for products and services.

The theatre promotional mix is the “use of different advertising and communication channels in a coordinated way to run an effective marketing campaign for theatre activities.”68 These coordinated campaigns are part of an effective integrated marketing communications plan that Roverman Productions uses for theatre activities. The four main methods of promotion within the theatre promotional mix Roverman Productions exercises are advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations. The most important factor in determining the optimal mix is identifying the target audience for its theatre activity. This can be determined through extensive market research. Once a theatre production house knows the target market for its performance, it can then research its use of various media outlets in order to come up with the best combination of marketing materials to reach the defined target audience. For instance, if the target audience are young professionals, the theatre production house might find that using billboards in downtown Commercial Street, and morning drive time radio advertisements are effective for getting the message to this target audience. Normally, the sizes of the promotional budget for theatre groups in Ghana are greatly influenced by the chosen mix as well. Television advertising can be very costly for smaller theatre groups and, therefore, may not be a feasible

option for theatre groups with a smaller marketing budget, at least not during prime viewing hours on major networks.

A key moment for a theatre group for the effective implementation of appropriate promotional strategies is to precisely define “what it wants to achieve (the target) and applying the appropriate promotional activities for the realization of the set goal.”69 In considering options to increase the number of audience to theatre productions, the theatre group must consider the kind of audience who come, and the profile of those who come to the shows. Also it must consider the various promotional activities and their effects on audience. It must also observe the activities and programs that can attract audience attention and to determine factors that repulse audience from attending the theatre.

2.5 Key Factors that Affect Theatre Promotion

Theatre Promotion is a complex process that requires the formulation of appropriate methodology and approach to the strategy of attracting audience. This formula consists of two separate, interdependent whole (2Ps – Product and strategic Planning), which change depending on the type of theatre production, nature of the production and target audience. Examining these two units assist in understanding the whole complexity of the promotional mix. McCarthy and Perreault promotional mix system is seen as the “ability to control those factors with which the theatre production group (such as Roverman Productions) wants to meet a specific targeted audience.”70

2.5.1 The Product (Theatre Performance)

Theatre productions as previously discussed, are unique, and have specific qualities and limitations expressing inability to use promotion as a tool in traditional theatre performances.

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Properties of theatre performance (shows) relate to the essential characteristics of the performance itself, such as the storyline, the quality (how educative, entertaining and informative i.e. a sign of recognition) and style of construction. These properties can be seen, tracked, measured and are essential for every theatre performance. Theatre performance benefits include all those observations of audience to whom it meets their needs. The next dimension, a promotional support system, includes some or all services related to the performance itself. These are security, ushering, comfortable seats and the performance itself. In addition, each performance is said to have its life cycle (before, during and after). The theatre performance life cycle, from the promotion aspect is, in simple terms, the life story of its sales performance.

2.5.2 Strategic Planning

Studies have shown that every serious theatre organization, must at least once a year, conduct a review of its promotion policy, the result should be a response to change, adaptation, and its reconstruction of programmes. A promotion plan “depends on the level of research activities and development of planning activities, which enable the theatre groups to gain insight into the effect of previous, present state and predict future trends and consequences.”

This plan seems to work very well for Roverman Productions as it evaluates the past and presents performance that propels planning to secure future shows. One of the basic and most important steps in the strategic marketing planning is the art of recognizing the target audience.

Market research must identify the cause of dissatisfaction or partial satisfaction. For the large differences in the desires, needs, habits and customs of the audience, it is impossible for theatre groups to satisfy all audience. This classification of audience falls in certain categories (like

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age, gender, education level, interests, etc.). Once the target audience have been selected, the theatre group can plan a methodology that will apply and begin the process of mutual exchange. An important phase of the strategic marketing for the theatre is analysing the situation that helps to formulate a plan and subsequently, implementing the plan for the success of pulling audience.

2.6 Promotional Mix for Theatre Productions (Performances)

Promotion represents a means and technique of communication with audience. Theatre promotion is considered to be most successful if the desired message of theatre practitioner is communicated directly to the target audience on the stage. Coverage of theatre on stage, in electronic and print media has grown and together with the existing competition between different entertainment products (musical, pageantry and comedy events), transformed theatre production to high profit industry.

2.6.1 Advertising

Advertising is a paid communication brought to audience through different forms of media such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and billboards. A theatre production house uses advertising to inform, persuade, or remind its target audience of its performances.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each media type, and when selecting the advertising medium to use, theatre production firms must understand who their target audience is and which is the most effective method for reaching them is. Marketers of theatre productions must be able to divide their budgets among the various media resources in order to stretch them the farthest to reach the most audience.72

Some of the most efficient advertising media for theatre performance include:

Television: Television advertising is the leading medium for reaching theatre audience. Although a very expensive form of advertising, television adverts reach the largest percentage

of the theatre audience at once and can be very appealing due to their visual nature as well as their sound. TV adverts can be classified into national, local, and cable advertisements. The type of network chosen depends on which audience the theatre marketer is trying to reach. Since Roverman Productions advertises to middle class audience, the production group choose to advertise only on stations or in ad space on cable channels or national networks that reach the middle class professionals. Examples are, Viasat 1, TV 3, GTV and GH One. On the other hand other theatre groups targeting local language audience may choose to advertise on a local language cable station or advertise during a television show, whose viewing audience is predominantly locals. The time an advertisement is shown is also an important decision that theatre groups must make in order to reach the target audience. Budgetary constraints will also be a factor in choosing time slots for advertisements.

**Print Ads:** Advertising in newspapers and magazines are other means theatre groups can reach audience with their performance messages. In Ghana, print ads are effective because of their visual quality, and can be run in many different types of publications. Theatre groups selling performances or shows to audience may choose national publications such as Rover Report Monthly Magazine or local newspapers such as the Daily Guide, The Mirror, Ghanaian Times and Graphic Showbiz. Roverman Productions for instance may target specialized publications depending on the target audience it wants to reach. Kent postulates that, “Print ads have a longer life than electronic media ads and are good for telling a story about the value of a theatre performance.”⁷³ Obviously, printed reports on Roverman Productions can be viewed at any time and for archival purposes, however, website can be altered or be updated at any time and this explanation provides preference to print document as against electronic media.

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⁷³ Judy Kent. “*Relationship Strategies for Acquiring and Retaining Customers.* “Credit (March/April 1991). P.21
**Radio:** Although lacking the visual appeal, radio can be an effective medium for reaching target theatre audience. According to Papatla, “the average radio listener tunes in for three hours a day, and often on a regular basis.”\(^7^4\) When using radio advertisements in marketing theatre activities, it is necessary to make sure that the theatre group and its theatre performance are clearly identified. This is evident in Roverman Productions medium of advertisement. With television Ads, necessarily, it employs almost all the television stations for advertising to the target audience. For instance, since its target audience for the theatre activity are senior citizens, its advertisement are shown on news stations or during talk shows.

**Sponsorships:** This is a well-used form of promotion and advertising that allows the companies to buy into theatre events or activities. Sponsorship involves “fetching for aid either in kind or cash from bodies, individuals, organisations so as to reduce the production cost that is to be borne by the director or the producer.”\(^7^5\) For instance, in the past five years of Roverman Productions’ existence, telecommunication firms like MTN and Airtel Ghana have been buying the theatre events or activities of Roverman Productions through sponsorships. In this case, the amount of investment in sponsorships range from a telecommunication company supporting a theatre event or activity by providing funds and logistics to the theatre firm (Roverman Productions) in order to promote the brand to a company (telecommunication firm) sponsoring a theatre production.

### 2.6.2 Sales Promotion

According to Robert Crockett citing Purushottam Papatla, “sales promotion consists of many activities used to sell theatre performances. They are activities that give audience a short-term

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incentive to make a purchase of tickets for theatre performances.” Sales promotions are also activities that change the price and value relationship of a product (such as theatre productions) as perceived by the target audience with the possible effect of generating immediate sales. It is possible that a sales promotion can also alter the long-term value of the theatre activity by making what might be a premium theatre production more affordable. Sales promotions are generally time-bound programmes that require participation on the part of the audience through either immediate purchase or some other action. The fundamental goals of sales promotion are tactical, strategic, and ultimate. The tactical goals are to combat a competitor’s increase in market share, to combat other competitors’ promotional efforts, and to move brands that are either declining, overstocked, damaged, or not selling fast enough. The strategic goals are to motivate audience to switch from rival theatre productions, to increase consumption of other theatre productions, to reinforce the marketing communications efforts for the productions, and to motivate audience loyalty. The ultimate goal of a sales promotion is to increase sales, profits, and market share. Example of this act is seen during the ‘2014 Joy FM Beauty and Bridal Fair’, when Roverman Productions had a stand where members intended to sell up-coming show (third quarter play), Rover Reports Magazines, and CD’s of Whyte’s motivational speeches on a discount base among other activities.

2.6.3 Personal Selling

Personal selling uses a personal sales presentation to influence audience to buy tickets for theatre productions. Personal selling tactics are most often used when there are a few geographically concentrated audience; the product is highly technical in nature; the product is very expensive; or when the product moves through direct distribution channels. It is a tactic often used by Roverman Productions to sell its theatre production tickets to audience. The sales

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process involves a personal seller identifying the target audience by determining who is likely to buy tickets for production. Once the target audience have been identified, the salesperson will contact them through advertisements. Upon meeting with potential audience during the show, the salesperson, that is Ebo Whyte will make a sales delivery, explaining how the audience needs the theatre productions sold to them. However, the salesperson is required to answer the audience’s questions asked after the presentation. Normally, members of Roverman Production as well as Ebo Whyte interact with their audience after production to close sales. The goal is to close the sale while the presentation/performance is still fresh in the mind of the audience. Following up with the audience after the theatre productions, this is a very effective strategy for developing long-term relationships.

2.6.4 Public Relations and Publicity

Roverman Production uses public relations and publicity activities as the means to foster its relationships with its various audience and to communicate with them. Public relations efforts are undertaken in order to form a favourable view of Roverman Productions in the public eye. Favourable publicity has enhanced the image of Roverman Productions and increased demand for its theatre shows. According to Kastratovic, “A positive article or review about a product or service adds credibility, believability, and legitimacy in a much more effective manner than paid-for advertising.”77 Negative publicity, on the other hand, can tarnish an organization’s reputation. Most public relations strategies that have been used by Roverman Productions include press releases, special events, and press conferences. Press releases are “articles or brief news releases that are submitted to publications by firms.”78 They often provide information

about company happenings: new hires, new products or services, or changes in management. They can be an effective way of gaining attention and creating or maintaining awareness.

Many organizations sponsor special events such as product launches. For instance, a theatre production house may hold a party for new theatre productions. The firm will often invite top clientele, industry insiders, and media to these events. News conference is an in-person announcement of recent organizational events to the media. It is an effective method of informing the public of recent happenings without causing rumours to be spread, because the information will come straight from the source.

2.7 Application of General Marketing Principles in Theatre Management

The theoretical foundations of marketing theatre is to analyse the application of these concepts to different situations in theatre marketing. Special significance has the ability to recognize the market focus on the selected audience. This is to a larger extent discover and highlight the various marketing strategies Roverman Productions adopt for its theatre development.

2.7.1 Strategic Market Management

Strategic market management is a system that is designed to help bring key leadership marketing decisions. Philip Kotler suggest that “strategic planning process sees the market as a managerial process of developing those strategies that fit the organizational goals, available resources, and changes in the market.”

79 Marketing managers in Roverman Productions use different research methods and techniques to detect, and then, classify certain elements of the theatre market.

2.7.2 Lifestyle and Marketing Activities

Although demographics provide lots of information on potential audience, this research does not include psychological and social aspects that affect audience. Marketing managers of Roverman Productions need to know why audience make certain decisions. One way is to decipher analysis of this coupling between demographics and lifestyles of potential audience. For the measurement, evaluation, and analysis of ways of life of audience, the manager needs to create a psychological picture (psychographics) of audience. In order to find out the activities, interests and opinions of audience, it is necessary to know as much about their work, entertainment, family, social life, education, political orientation - in a word, to know all about style and lifestyle of potential audience. The performed analysis is of great importance to obtain a psychological picture for obtaining a complete picture of the audience.

2.8 Related Literature

J. H. Kwabena Nketia wrote a book on Ghana- Music, Dance and Drama by discussing the inception of Ghanaian art. Though Nketia focused on the broader umbrella of Arts, this study however, throws light on indigenous performance as the inception of Ghanaian theatre. Nketia affirmed that Ghanaians had drama before the advent of Europeans, besides they introduced their kind of theatre during the colonial period.

James Gibbs article, “History of Theatre in Ghana”, described issues surrounding Ghanaian theatre history. He posited that the elements contributing to the development of a distinctive theatre tradition in Ghana include dances, rhetorical forms, symbols and symbolic acts. However, the most important and easiest to identify, has been the impact associated with the trickster, Ananse the spider. Thus, the transition of Anansesem (Ananse stories) into Anansegoro (Ananse play). This is relevant because it looks at the theatre from traditional art
forms through to the current stage of the works by Efo Mawugbe, David Dontoh and Kwaku Sintim Misa.

*Drama of the Gods* by Martin Owusu also assessed the growth of theatre in West Africa and narrowed it to Ghana and Nigeria performance structure. He classified West African drama under two sub-headings. Firstly, Traditional theatre which constitute sacred and secular drama. Myth plays are found under sacred drama whiles masquerades under secular. The second type is modern drama which encompasses folk opera/concert party and literary drama. Owusu draws more inspiration from traditional drama and indicates that the influence of Greek drama on the West African playwrights is undeniably strong. He shows the connection of the Greek drama and Ghanaian drama. This book is useful in the sense that, it helps to recap the build-up of theatre in diverse forms.

Jesse Weaver Shipley’s article on “‘The Best Tradition Goes On’ Audience Consumption and the Transformation of Popular Theatre”, provided valuable background on the Concert Party, especially during the early 1980s to 2000, how they collaborated with Unilever Ghana Ltd. and the National Theatre. Although, his concentration was on audience consumption and their reaction to this genre, he also situated the total situation alongside the political and economic circumstance of the state. At the end of Weaver’s article, it was realised that he sounded more political than the impact of the collaborators on the audience with regards to management. This paper highlights on the influences of sponsorship and good management as tools necessary to be considered in theatre promotion.

Botwe-Asamoah’s book on *Kwame Nkrumah’s Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies* dealt with Kwame Nkrumah’s vision and contribution to the arts as the head of state. At the emergence of independence, a new personality of the Nation, Nkrumah sets up institutions to promote the arts. Importantly, he examines the foundation of theatre in the new nation.
This chapter presented the practices of promotional mix as deeply rooted in Roverman Productions. In reference to the relevant aspects of the promotional mix from the historical overview of theatre previously, were the contributions and supports from both individuals and government, which were more of a voluntary than a commercial nature base. In terms of reviving the theatre over the past few years, Roverman Productions has adopted varied ways to attract some sections of the Ghanaian community.

References to this adoptions revealed in the related literatures testify to Roverman Productions’ success. In other words, information discovered shows the shifting paradigm of Roverman Productions in the light of running the theatre as a business entity, exposing sponsorship and strategic planning as an exceptional means towards theatre promotion for national development. As a result, majority of writers have provided relevant information regarding the current trend of theatre promotion. Although, some of the perception were arguable, the existing accounts were of great drive to the study.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the different procedures employed in establishing reliable data on and about Roverman Productions as a contributing factor to theatre promotion in Ghana. It contains the methodology that was engaged by the researcher to conduct the study. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It also involved the collection of both primary and secondary data for the purpose of ensuring that the study is well recorded and scrutinized to make informed analysis of various outcome. The primary source of data includes information obtained through interviews, field studies and observations, whereas the secondary data sources gathered from textbooks, articles, journals, the internet, newspapers, magazines and other relevant documents. Key headings explored under the methodology are research design, the target population for the study, the sample size and sampling technique, sources of data and data collection instruments, method of data analysis and presentation.

3.2 Research Design

Research design provided the procedures used for the investigation, that is, the set of techniques used in this piece of research. Thus, both the quantitative and qualitative methods but the latter gained more prominence. It was necessary and possible for this study since their unique approach conducted offered an in-depth information to enrich the study.

According to Patel and Davidson,

Quantitative research designs are methods for analyzing numeric information in the form of statistical methods. While qualitative research designs, on the other hand, are methods used for analyzing other information, such as interpretations of text.\textsuperscript{80}

The main difference between the two research designs or methods is that quantitative research method transforms the information into numbers and figures, whereas qualitative research method uses the researcher’s interpretation of information, which were not translated into numbers or figures. The main objective of the quantitative technique is to find out if the idea generated can be generalized. A qualitative research on the other hand is aimed at understanding the social or human problem from multiple perspectives of concept, meaning, characteristics, and analysis of a phenomenon or event. This research work was conducted in a natural setting and also relies on both methods so as to explore how Roverman Productions has contributed to the promotion of theatre in Ghana.

The method was mainly on qualitative research design and a bit on quantitative research design. This is appropriate for the research because qualitative research design is a scientific method that provided the platform to gather information about how Roverman Productions structure of theatre is loved by Ghanaians especially in some cities like Accra, Takoradi, Kumasi and Cape Coast. It also helped to observe and describe people’s perspective on how promotion of theatre has been and the way their socio-cultural environment has shaped their perception about Roverman Productions’ contribution to theatre “without influencing it in any way.”\textsuperscript{81}

A. L. Key added that “qualitative research design is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe "what exists”\textsuperscript{82} with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. For instance, participant observation that involved interactions with respondents such as members of Roverman Productions and other theatre practitioners enabled the researcher to describe and translate findings and also provide pertinent illustrations

\textsuperscript{81} W.L Neuman. “Social research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative approach”. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon Publisher. 2006. P.107-374-957.
wherever necessary. The researcher employed sample survey because there was the need to obtain the basic descriptive characteristics of audience of Roverman Productions.

The qualitative method enriched and provided quality information needed for the research to ascertain and be able to describe the characteristics of interest in situation. This was done through the use of survey (interview/questionnaire) procedures to describe, clarify and interpret existing variables (issues) that constitute the phenomenon. For instance, the questionnaires administered provided an avenue for the audience to express their views on Roverman Productions and its characteristics. This was found convenient in assisting to interpret the status quo of the theatre industry within which the research question sought to find answers to. Example, ‘will you suggest that Roverman Productions be a model to other theatre organizations and why?’

A major demerit of the qualitative research design is the difficulty of ensuring that the questions to be answered in a qualitative survey are clear and not misleading. This is so because “survey reports can vary significantly because of the exact wording of questions.”83 Neuman also claims that the method may produce unreliable results because questions asked may eat into private matters that people may not be willing to talk about. In other words, questions asked must not eat into the private affairs of the respondent. If not, it is likely that the respondent can be hesitant to provide wrong information.

The researcher adopted the qualitative design because it was found to be most appropriate for the study. This is mainly due to the fact that the design is considered to be relatively easy to conduct because data are fairly easy to obtain and interpret by the use of simple descriptive statistics. The qualitative survey was relatively easy to apply and also had the

advantage of producing a variety of responses from a wide range of respondents who normally watch Roverman Productions’ shows. Not forgetting, the qualitative approach became appropriate when Roverman Productions’ audience were given questionnaire to express their views on what they thought were some major problems incapacitating theatre groups in Ghana.

### 3.3 Target Population

For the purpose of this study, the target population constituted all the people who watched Roverman Productions’ show as well as theatre practitioners. A sample was drawn from the above population as the constraints of time and resources did not permit the inclusion of the entire population in the study. The target population included, lecturers, assistant lecturers, theatre arts students, cultural experts, theatre audience, and members of theatre groups especially that of Roverman Productions.

There were a total number of 125 audience selected for the questionnaire. The questionnaire encompassed the category of population of Roverman Productions audience that ranged from different age groups including both men and women. These were (a) 15-25, (b) 26-35, (c) 36-45, (d) 46-55 and (e) 56 and above. There were other category that inquired the status of the respondent whether single, married or divorced as well as a section demanding for the occupational status of the respondent.

For other respondents, a decision was made to work through existing practitioners of the theatre on the premise that, the researcher wanted to compare knowledge about the former and current trend of theatre promotion, particularly, Roverman Productions. For this reason, well informed Ghanaian scholars with explicit information were selected and consulted, so that the researcher would not lose track on the topic.
3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Sample is defined as a “portion or subset of the population, the size of which is determined by the type and objective of the study, as well as time and financial constraints”\textsuperscript{84} as A. Fink puts it. Sampling therefore is the manner of drawing the sample and it plays a vital part of this research as it allows the researcher to generalize findings since it is impossible to examine the whole population.

Sampling is divided into two main categories: probability and non-probability and these are used in this research. In probability sampling, the elements of the population have a definite chance, but not necessarily equal, of being included in the sample. On the contrary, in non-probability sampling, the odds that a particular element will be included in the sample are unknown. Random sampling method used, drew from the entire audience and theatre practitioners due to time, financial and human resource constraints. Thus, it is believed that the “sample would provide the researcher with more reliable results.”\textsuperscript{85} Findings from the selected total populations were reliable and can be generalized.

Simple random sampling technique was used where population was sub-divided into two groups; Roverman Productions audience and theatre practitioners. In this regard, one hundred and twenty five (125) respondents were selected among over six thousand (6,000) potential Roverman Productions’ audience that watched the production during the Festival of Plays held in December 2013, through to January 2014 at the National Theatre. Every individual that watched Roverman Productions’ show had an equal chance of being selected as a respondent for the study. Every one because, either the audience was watching for the first time or not, he or she was capable of answering the questionnaire after the show.

The other category of theatre practitioners selected were made randomly among lecturers, research fellows, cultural officers, assistant lecturers, students, members of theatre groups because of their knowledge on the growth and development of theatre and its promotion in Ghana. This technique was used due to its advantages. It was simple to use and highly representative, for all respondents participated in the data collection. It was very fast because no mathematical calculations were involved and also allowed the researcher to consider socioeconomic issues that affected data collection and drawing of conclusions. This grouping buttresses the available literature and assists in collecting views regarding the historical facts, the current state, as well as the future of theatre promotion.

Following the works of Bartlett et al., the researcher used the formula below to determine the “sample size for the study.”

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\frac{n}{(1 + n_0 / \text{Population})} = \frac{n_0}{(1 + n_0 / \text{Population})}, \quad \text{Where population size} = 6,000; \quad \text{Where } n_0 = \text{required return sample size according to Cochran’s formula} = 128 \quad \text{and } n = \text{required return sample size because sample > 5% of population}. \quad \text{Hence the sample size for the study was calculated as follows:}
\]

\[
n = \frac{128}{(1 + 128/6000)} = 125
\]

During the 2013 festival of plays by Roverman Productions, the selected audience were randomly selected to offer their views through questionnaires. The show covered a period of five days from 28\textsuperscript{th} and 29\textsuperscript{th}, December 2013, through to 1\textsuperscript{st}, 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} January, 2014. The researcher found it appropriate to administer the questionnaires at the Festival of plays because,

it was a theatre season and audience had come from far and near to entertain themselves and honour the Christmas and New Year Seasons.

Notwithstanding, the lecturers, assistant lecturers, theatre students and cultural experts in this category helped by providing the historical overview of the development of theatre in Ghana. They also observed that Roverman Productions continued theatre activities from where pioneers and other followers left off. Members of theatre groups as well shared their experiences in terms of the present state of the theatre industry, the challenges they face and the future of theatre which are very relevant to the study.

3.5 Type and Sources of Data

3.5.1 Primary Data

The collection of primary data formed the main analyses and discussion of the research. It involved the use of research instruments, such as questionnaires and interview schedules constructed exclusively for audience and theatre practitioners respectively for the purposes of the study. Primary data gathered “made available information that secondary data was unable to contribute in meeting the research objectives.” There seems to be no academic research work on Roverman Productions and based on this, some critical information could only be accessed on the field rather than in books. For the purposes of this research, information obtained from administered questionnaires, interviews conducted, participant and non-participant observation made up the primary data. Through interaction information was obtained from audience, lecturers, assistant lecturers, students, cultural experts and theatre lovers. The category of lecturers were people who have headed theatre institutions and groups, as well as witnessing the era of Kwame Nkrumah’s cultural policies. The essence for this was to weigh the different views of each respondent in order to strengthen validity of the research.

The main concern of the researcher was to ensure that the results of the research were accurate and applicable. Therefore, once the instrument used for the conduction of the research was ready, then the “reliability and validity of the measures were established.”\textsuperscript{88} In other words once the interview guides and the questionnaire were ready there is the assurance of authenticity in research findings. Video recordings, audio recordings were taken as well as pictures after permission was sought from the various respondents on behalf of the researcher. This was to gather all the necessary data for more understanding, clarification, authenticity and appropriate means of using them. Sometimes, when there were any discrepancies, more investigation were done with respondents for further comparisons. Substantial conclusion was drawn after all investigations (from books, observation, and participation) have been acquired and correlated.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

This complimented the primary data as it also served as a background information to the study. It included “published and unpublished documents related to the research, which were highly important, as it comprises the logical framework of the research.”\textsuperscript{89} The collection of secondary data helped the researcher to formulate and understand better the research problem, broadening at the same time the base for scientific conclusions to be drawn.

The collected secondary data sources on the history of theatre in Ghana included: textbooks, academic articles, internet sources, journals, magazines, brochures and newspaper reviews, related to theatre arts in Ghana and the concept of theatre promotion across the world. Others also provided the contribution of specific individuals that propagated the essence of theatre in nation building. Also, a number of online resources from Roverman Productions’ Website and

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid. P. 255-269.

others were used to get information for the literature review. This type of data collection was mainly used for the literature review since it was unable to meet the research objectives. Libraries consulted for the information were, African Studies, The School of Performing Arts, Balm and the Music Department.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaire, interview guide, a personal observation and participation guide, and photographs were used to collect data for the study. Prior to designing the instrument, a thorough literature search was conducted to determine and categorize concepts and variables used in similar past studies. These were then modified to suit the goal of the present study. The instruments (Questionnaire/interview guide) comprised a mix of open-ended, close ended and Likert scale questions. For questions that require a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response, the instrument provided an opportunity for respondents to explain the response they chose. The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses on issues regarding the background characteristics of respondents and responses about their opinions on Roverman Productions’ shows. An open-ended interview guide was designed purposely for flexibility and also give room for more interactions when needed. Notes were taken as well as tape recordings made available which was later transcribed. The researcher did not face much problem with language barrier, because most of the respondents could speak and write in English Language.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

3.7.1 Pilot Study

The pilot test was a useful tool for the researcher. Consequently, it helped the researcher to check the data collection methods and uncover any mistakes or misunderstanding of the questionnaire. The sample examined in the pilot study was part of the sample used to conduct the research. Thus, the “researcher discovered unexpected findings, based on which necessary
adjustment was made.”

This pilot study conducted before the administration of the questionnaire, detected some problems that arose as a result of difficulty in the interpretation of questions by respondents.

According to M. Blumberg “respondents in a pilot study could range between five and hundred”. Therefore, ten questionnaires were earlier distributed among the individuals who watched Roverman Productions’ show. The feedback given from the respondents was considered in remodeling the questions to suit the research objectives.

### 3.7.2 Questionnaires Administration

A questionnaire was structured for this research (Appendix 1) and was administered to the sampled individuals who watched Roverman Productions’ shows. The choice of the questionnaire as one of the means of gathering data was borne out of the fact that it was cheap. Moreover, it did not require much effort from the researcher as verbal or telephone surveys. It is also not time consuming and often has standardized answers that made it simple to compile data. It allowed the respondents to supply answers that were confidential to them. These questionnaires were handed directly to the respondents by the researcher and her team which gave the researcher the privilege to introduce the topic and provided encouragement in answering the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of sections, which focused on the areas of interest of the research.

The questionnaire consisted of closed ended and open ended questions. Open-ended questions used were questions to which there was not one definite answer. Open-ended questions were good ways that broke the ice with a survey, giving respondents an opportunity to answer in

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their own words. The responses to open-ended questions were very useful, yielding much material. The drawback to open-ended questions experienced was that the responses were more difficult to catalogue and interpret as agreed with Fink.

Closed-ended questions which have a finite set of answers from which the respondent chooses was used. One of the choices was "Other." It was a good idea to allow respondents to write in an optional response if they chose "Other." The benefit of the closed-ended questions was that they were easy to standardize, and data gathered from the closed-ended questions provided themselves to statistical analysis. The down side to closed-ended questions was that they were more difficult to write than open-ended questions. This is because the researcher designed choices to include all the possible answers a respondent could give for each question. This technique outlined by Fink was found useful in collecting data.

3.7.3 Interview Process

The interviews carried out to source for information conducted were unstructured\(^\text{92}\) so as to enable the researcher obtain clarifications of some variables which needed further in-depth investigation. An informal mode of interview was carried out because of the sensitivity of some personal issues. It was also for the need to remove bias on the part of the respondents who might present false information in order to put the group in better light just to earn some credibility. On the contrary, the researcher did not impose her own concerns when a respondent became overwhelmed out of his/her delivery and trying to divert from the topic. The researcher found tactful means to draw the respondent back to the original topic when he/she diverted from the topic under discussion. Some information gotten from the respondents needed

subsequent follow-ups for more clarification and confirmation. Both the questionnaire and the interview guide were designed based on the following:

i. The history and current state of theatre in Ghana

ii. The activities of Roverman Productions and its contribution to the theatre in Ghana.

iii. Ways to help improve theatre in Ghana, and the way forward.

The use of participant and non-participant observation also helped greatly in the accumulation of data. The researcher had the opportunity to observe and also be part of the activities during Roverman Productions’ meeting at the fieldwork session. This was to create a sociable atmosphere for easy communication with the members and staff of Roverman Productions and other theatre groups. The friendly relationship made it easier for the researcher to get access to information through informal means.

3.8 Data Processing, Analysis and Presentation

3.8.1 Data Collection Procedures

Data collected through questionnaires from the audience were edited to establish errors. This was because the questionnaire, though straightforward, required the respondents to provide explanations at some level. The respondents were not given the questionnaire to take home and provide answers to the questions because it was not feasible for the researcher to get most of questionnaire back from the respondents. Within the time of data collection, about ninety percent of the questionnaire administered were obtained back from the respondents. Data collected was processed in order to condense it in a more convenient form for data analysis, presentation, and discussion.

3.8.2 Data Analysis

The study examined the various elements that has been used for the promotion of theatre considering individual, government, and private agency. The researcher analyzed the data
through the use of coding system by grouping the responses. The information were also studied to ascertain the strength of their relationship. The social implications were highlighted to address the research problem.

### 3.8.3 Data Presentation

The researcher used percentage frequencies to summarize the data, in order to draw conclusions and recommendations in relation to the study objectives.

### 3.9 Fieldwork Experiences and Limitations

The entire research, specifically the fieldwork, has been an overwhelming and significant element in the life of the researcher. The choice of the research topic was much thought involving and needed lots of interactions with supervisors, lecturers and colleagues. Importantly, factors that were to be considered included balancing my interest, resources (knowledge base, finance and time) and relevance of contemporary issues.

The researcher went through stages of topic modification at the beginning and eventually found this topic under discussion appropriate. After the topic, another factor to be pondered over was the type of methodology to use in order to find answers for the research questions to achieve the research objectives. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods of research but more of the Qualitative. While the qualitative was extensively used in obtaining data to solve the research questions asked, it came with its own disadvantages. It is not straightforward compared to quantitative method and needed a careful and critical analyses in order to circumvent partialities.

It was interesting in the course of the fieldwork, although the researcher faced some challenges. The researcher had to use different strategies during interviews/discussions as well as the questionnaires distribution period. There were inconsistencies in some of the data gathered in relation to expected answers required for particular questions. For instance, in the narration of
the history of theatre, some dates and events were not tallying. Incredibly, there were issues emphasized which were unfamiliar to the researcher and perpetually affected the progress and refining of the research questions.

It was very difficult getting James Ebo Whyte, due to his busy schedules. The researcher had to be forth coming in her pursuance to get hold of him for an interview. Besides that, any document the researcher asked from Whyte’s workers, had to be approved by him. Sometimes, it could take a while because he does not use a mobile phone and all communication must be channeled through an email or personal encounter with him.

During the distribution of questionnaires among the audience at the National Theatre, the researcher encountered the problem whereby some respondents were unwilling to take the questionnaires and even answer them. This is because, some audience felt they were being destructed since they were there to be entertained and not be interviewed.
CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results and discussion from the analysis of the data collected from the field for the study. The sub-headings to be discussed include: The Commercial Aspect of Roverman Productions, Aesthetic Concerns and Foundational Concept that help in theatre promotion. In addition, it looks at the new things that Roverman Productions uses different from what has been the norm. Thus, the Paradigm Shift in Ghanaian theatre activities. Under the major sub-headings are elaborations on Budgeting, Sponsorship, and Financing Sources used by Roverman Productions. It further addresses Management of the National Theatre (Stage, Auditorium and Front of House), the use of Anecdotes/ Gimmicks and Western Influence on Roverman Productions. Finally, it covers the Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Findings from the Questionnaire.

4.2 The Commercial Aspects of Roverman Productions

The promotion of theatre with regards to Roverman Productions (a commercial theatre) is demonstrated through its principles of management; comprising its promotional concept as discussed earlier in the relevant literature. However, critiques and/or published articles on the growth of theatre activities, especially on Roverman Productions are few in number. This lapse of few documentation, coupled with less support from both government and private agencies towards the theatre presently, pose the danger of collapsing theatre. Thus, the dangers Roverman Productions and other theatre groups in the nation face are funding and recognition.

If these problems are not addressed, the groups might lose grip on sustaining theatrical activities in the country. Therefore, the activities of Roverman Productions must be examined and documented on the basis of how they have survived in the past and are being successful
till date. This can only be possible if the managerial activities and financial support within which are vital features of theatre administration are explored.

In order to achieve the aims of this thesis, the researcher needed to interview and pick the ideas of authentic and experienced theatre practitioners in the field, so that understanding regarding theatre management may be clearer. It was also appropriate for the researcher to be aware of how theatre has been promoted over the years, relative to Roverman Productions paradigm shift. This information guided the researcher in answering the two main research questions.

What is the managerial style and system of Roverman Productions? And how are sources of finance generated for the sustenance of the group since inception?

To access the history of Roverman Productions, the researcher had to contact members and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the group. The researcher also interviewed some past members of the group. These proved useful at the end of the day as they made it possible for the researcher to discuss the concept of the group. Thus, enabling her to secure some members for the study. These members were randomly selected within the group. Mr. Kesse, (a classmate of Whyte and a pioneer of the group) still a member of the group was the first person to contact. This was due to the fact that, he started theatre activities with Whyte right from school through to the present. So the researcher believed starting with him was an eye-opener for getting what the researcher wanted. Moreover, he recommended some experienced people who fed the researcher with further information.

He explained the various supports in developing the group. The researcher became aware of how Whyte had ran at a loss for his first play that took him two years to pay. In the second play, he sold his car to fuel the production. Afterwards, it became difficult to stage a production and one day, Mr. Charles Wireko (an associate member) offered the seed money to produce

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93 Enoch Kesse. A Pioneer and a member of Roverman Productions.
his next play, *Unhappy Wives; Confused Husbands*, and that turned his life around. Additionally, Mr. Wireko’s printing press helped the printing of Roverman Productions’ documents with some percentage discount. Wireko is described by Whyte as one who gave birth to Roverman Productions, because of his monetary assistance.

It was discovered, in some respect that, the financial and human resources available sped up the growth of its activities. However, upon taking leadership as the artistic director of the Jesus Theatre or J-Theatre- (formerly, Youth for Christ Drama Troupe), Whyte was faced with challenges of providing script, encouraging the members and raising funds in relation to the practice of effective management to build up a unified group. This became more difficult because he had no background for formal training in theatre studies. It is believed that his love for the theatre started at school where he became a member of the drama club at Osu Presbyterian Secondary School (SSS) in Accra. Whyte surmounted these by making available plays of which he produced his first play, *Man Must Live* in 1975, performed by the J-Theatre who were members of an interdenominational body.

This was synonymous to the Greek era when performances were done in churches for biblical enactment to transfer church doctrines to the people in the society. At this period, the performance was a non-profit entity. They sought after souls to build the Kingdom of God, rather than making money. Among the plays performed at the period were *Widows Confession*, *Mama Julie, Tough Guy: Oh my Son*, *Revolution* and *The Devil’s wife*. Their plays were performed at the Flag Staff House and frequently at the Arts Centre in Accra at that time. Whyte asserted that:

> Mostly, I was performing for Christians in those days. My stories then were the type that I had emotional attachment to which I would enjoy watching. Often I put myself in the audience’s mind and expected them to enjoy my plays. Messages in my plays initially were ‘Do Ministry’, propagating the gospel through theatre. My plays
served as witnessing Christ intended to educate audience on how to serve and think about God. They were also set in our current era relating to real social issues.  

It was a conscious effort to instil church doctrines relating to social issues to instruct people. Through these, members were committed and they had great delight in performing for churches free of charge. It ended up popularising both members and the leader.  

For this purpose, at a point, the group was well received by the society, and with the persistent nature of the leader, it was discovered that the group needed some capital to maintain the audience interest. Later, Elementary and Secondary schools as well as churches were the targets, but today it goes beyond these groups and embraces the society. It also became ‘Friends and Relatives’ with the same focus, so his friends and families were acting. It was discovered that even his daughter and wife were once on stage, in the play *Tough guy: Oh my Son.* This went on for a while and in 2008, Whyte decided to take his activities to a different level, running it full time and as a business unit, hence Roverman Productions. Whyte, in no doubt, has paid a price to get to this point. Rising up to his feet was significantly influenced by his family and friends’ support. This indicates how people around him bought into his vision with all forms of aid.  

As stated earlier in the previous chapter, his accounting and management background contributed to the solid managerial abilities that Roverman Productions is noted for. He is a product of the University of Ghana, Legon, where he read Statistics. He also taught himself to write the exams of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and Marketing. He comes to the arts with vast and varied background in management having held senior management positions in companies in several sectors of the economy. He worked as, management and communications consultant for clients in manufacturing, printing, non-banking financial services and educational sectors. He presently sells ideas and inspirations.

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The name Roverman was achieved when Ebo Whyte’s work transcended to communicate to smaller groups, making it a nationwide forum through collaboration with Joy 99.7 FM to more or less report on social issues. It was disclosed that, the aim of Whyte’s radio programme was to provide food for thought by a rover person, who would go round the country in search of information. In short, Whyte was a ‘rover man’ giving rover reports and through that ‘Roverman’ came to stay.

Another discovery was the manner in which members were inspired and committed to the group. In Rover Reports Magazine, Whyte shares his method of mobilising and maintaining the members to promote his theatre. Initially, “the group’s interpersonal relationships were characterised by backbiting, and antagonism which endangered the survival and success of the group.”95 Just as every competent leader will do, Whyte had and still has records of all his members and he started contacting and frequently checking up on them. Developing theatre which relates to members and their welfare provides a strong response to duty. This is because, theatre is a collaborative art and as many of his members were young, Whyte always wrote letters and encouraged them in their endeavours.

The members felt appreciated with their little contributions to the group. This was due to the fact that members were scattered and he found ways to draw them closer even when they were away. Till date, most of the members are workers and also have little knowledge in the arts yet, Whyte’s strategic approach towards his members has been one of the tools Roverman Productions uses to instil some commitment in his members. Whyte reiterated that the group has gone under enormous changes, looking back, he can boast of the transformation stages and the diverse support from them. Likewise, members expressed how it is a privilege to be part of

Roverman Productions and Uncle Ebo is “who we look up to.”96 It is a great feeling and with the group, each is assured of their confidence level and how to work as a team wherever they find themselves.

Roverman Productions explores its image in the ultimate vision, which is “to be a world class theatre production group and to encourage Ghanaians especially, to be hungry for value-based knowledge to shift us from a third world mentality to that of a first world reality.”97 This motive elucidates what Whyte considers to be the indissoluble relationship between the theatre group and its audience. In other words, a friendly relationship is the forerunner to the group’s total achievement by making Ghanaian community involved with theatrical activities. This has made the group to have caused a positive reform towards realisation of misconceptions of the theatre. Consequently, its fashion of securing sponsorship and advertisement for its product fascinates and pulls audience which significantly enhances theatre promotion. Preceding to the establishment of Roverman Productions, the theatre activities under James Ebo Whyte, formerly could be classified as an amateur theatre but all in all, his knowledge in the running of theatre has grown tremendously, though it is not ‘perfect’. Not perfect in the sense that, basically, the group is still advancing in theatre activities.

The choice for looking at the changes from old and new trend is informed by the fact that it has grown out of an existing genre of the Concert Party Traditions. Thus, its past attached with its growing phases points to either a state of advancement or that of retrogression. Perhaps, the discoveries along the line were reworked and imputed into shaping it to be socially friendly. The above indicates the genesis of the theatre activity of James Ebo Whyte and how some assistance made his productions survive. The long term relationship with Charles Wireko, Mr.

96 A declaration made by some members of Roverman Productions during the researcher’s interaction with them in 2014.
Kesse, Brew Riverson Junior, Jojo Tetteh-Quantson and others, depicts the uncommon services rendered to Roverman Productions to promote its theatre and these pioneers are worth mentioning.

4.2.1 Budgeting, Sponsorship and Financing Sources

According to Arkhurst, theatre groups are entitled to “solicit for funds or resources from both the government and private agencies to secure capital for the smooth running of their activities.”98 Thus, the key issues for consideration in this research was to investigate the sources of finance for sustenance of Roverman Productions. This is important because it reflected the level of productivity of performance in theatre running. This eventually leads to budgeting, as R.L. Smathers required, that as a “business owner, the primary problem you face is a limited supply of resources (land, labour and capital) available to accomplish your goals.”99

In effect, it is incumbent on the owner or owners to attain the available resources before undertaking a project. Therefore, taking into consideration Roverman Productions, Ebo Whyte’s background in accounting and management certainly have impacted on him and at large on the group towards accumulation of adequate resources for the theatre. It was not so surprising to hear some individuals referring to him as the “business man” looking at his approach. At this juncture, it is important to examine if Roverman Productions is using theatre to promote its business ideas or vice versa. This is addressed in the course of the discussion.

It is factual that, there are important degrees of skills from direct commercial theatre practices and non-profit theatre groups that situate their activities in a distinct form. With the latter category, the researcher refers to theatre groups who just use theatre as a tool for propagating messages rather than for profit. Examples are, Students from Performing Arts embarking on

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98 Sandy Arkhurst, Graduate Lecture notes, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon. 2014.
Theatre for Development project, Drama in Education, Directing Projects, theatre in churches to instil moral, as well as other organisations using theatre to project their cause, like the H4P Crew (a Non-Governmental Organisation) based in Accra. However, these two categories still require a suitable consideration in making a budget towards their productions at any given period. Smathers further states that:

If you develop an enterprise budget from scratch, it is important to sit down and ‘pencil out’ a schedule of what happens from the beginning of the production process to the end. It is very important to note the timing and number of operations, quantities of inputs applied, and estimates of machinery use devoted to the enterprise.¹⁰⁰

These management principles applied to the theatre promotion and marketing. Theatre groups must anticipate the processes and challenges likely to be faced during the drawing of budget so as to make provision for those encounters. Roverman Productions aspires to be a premium production group. Therefore, it strives to put in place the necessary marketing and promotional strategies that will enable it achieve such standard in order to survive open competition from both potential and existing competitors.

Consequently, interviews with both theatre practitioners and others, as well as the researcher’s own observation exposed that sponsorship plays a very important role in theatre promotion. Most of the people interviewed pointed out MTN (previous sponsor) and Airtel (current sponsor) communication networks as the major sponsors of Roverman Productions shows and this is best described as a privilege. These renowned international communication networks basically provide some unique characteristics of security to the company. It is discovered from Whyte that securing sponsorship for the group is not easy when several organisations are contesting for the same opportunity from a company like MTN. Sometimes, business propositions are turned down, yet the group will continue to pursue them. Emphatically, Whyte

posits that “we go knocking and begging and it is the only way.” There is the bargaining power, where the sponsor is given the platform to reach out to a number of audience, if the company could come on board. This is followed by some negotiations and contract signing after agreement between the group and the sponsoring company is established. This shows the opportunity given to the sponsor to reach out to its target customers and in exchange for that, Roverman Productions asks for certain amount. Thus, it suggests the saying that ‘there is no free lunch’ and therefore, both parties must benefit from each other. None can be taken for granted and encounter any losses. Since the goals and aspirations, budgeting and terms of agreement for both parties may change. The researcher discovered that there was no permanent sponsor for Roverman Productions.

Currently, Airtel is the communication network sponsoring Roverman Productions with a more favourable agreement. According to Ronnie Amarteifio, Senior Business Development Executive, “MTN could not meet the sponsorship fee.” Meaning they were not able to succumb to the charges specified by Roverman Productions. This is one of the problems faced by theatre groups. The ability to secure sponsorships and if they do, to what extent do the conditions attached become favourable to both parties. The researcher believes Roverman Productions weighed both sponsors and opted for Airtel. This goes a long way to conclude that they do not compromise with anything, for many groups would stand up for MTN knowing its prestige.

Other sponsors such as beverage companies, banks, phones and automobile companies offer some form of sponsorship to Roverman Productions. These companies may vary from one production to another. In effect, Roverman Productions offers sponsoring companies an

opportunity to have direct interaction with their existing and potential consumers. This is a prospect these companies would not get if they were to advertise their products on radio and television.

Some obvious benefits that sponsors get from Roverman Productions differ depending on the commission it has towards the company. The spaces they get are defined under main, major to minor sponsors. Most of the sponsors showcase their products colourfully, share fliers and interact with the audience directly at the premise. Their adverts are intermittently shown through projections in the course of the productions in 30 minutes intervals. This also gives the chance for the cast to recess and the audience to enjoy some music and visit places of convenience. This guaranteed the company to do their homework well so as to satisfy the wants of their customers.

The above discussion brings us to what B. Mullin, Hardy and Sutton gave about the promotion of activity encompassing direct and indirect ways. The direct way has to do with Roverman Productions making sponsors to come on board and to be educated on using the theatre for marketing their products to their target customers. While the indirect refers to Roverman Productions marketing its theatre activities to both sponsors and the public.

Within the framework of promoting theatre, advertisement: media and non-media structures are indisputably essential. One of the myriad of issues confronting theatre groups is effective medium of advertisement. According to Kweku O. K. Asiedu, “Whyte has served the society in different aspect of life through his ‘food for thought’ which had made him popular and most media houses reward him by advertising his productions.” By implication, many people listen to Whyte’s messages and it has inevitably presented some credit to the group. Besides

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the strong collaborations with media partners for instance, the contract with Joy FM and Y FM are without exception.

The researcher then investigates how the members also contribute to publicising the production besides the regular expectancy from the group. It is believed that advertisement is done three weeks ahead of a production through posters, billboards, jingles on radio and TV, magazines, newspapers, fliers, T-shirts, followed with successive interviews organised on media platforms. Although, this helps in a long way, members as well contribute their quota by using the social media like the Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Wechats, Telegram, Tango among others to propagate the news.

In an interview with members of Roverman Productions, they attested that they even inform their work colleagues, relatives and friends as soon as Uncle Ebo announces the upcoming play. Through the various means of obtaining sponsorship, and advertising its product both electronically and in the print media, members voluntarily go out to distribute fliers on selected days. This is especially done at six o’clock in the morning, where there are massive traffic. Therefore, word of mouth advertisement by members of the group can obviously bring in more audience to occupy some section in the auditorium. One interesting thing observed was that information/notices are made through the same platform as well as ordinary phone text. This makes information dissemination simple and more effective.

4.2.2 Management of the National Theatre (Stage, Auditorium and Front of House)

Further idealistic point has to do with the attraction of the place which is a major concern of Roverman Productions. That is, the comfort of the audience should be the priority of theatre groups to give them satisfaction. The in-house (the stage and the auditorium) and the front-of-house must be appealing to audience. For Roverman Productions kind of theatre, there are only two places appropriate for utilisation. These are the Accra Conference Centre (ACC) and the
National Theatre. The ACC is difficult to acquire and the National Theatre is highly competitive. Competitions range from theatre groups, product launching, School graduations, musical show with beauty pageant organisation, as well as television and radio programme recordings (Malta Guinness Street Dance and Vodafone Icon) on regular bases. Inquiring how Roverman Productions is able to use the facility on regular basis, it was clear that Roverman Productions books the venue one year ahead of its competitors.

Another most important thing is security for its patrons. The location of the National Theatre at the Centre of Accra demands tight security against theft, since some audience park on the street due to inadequate parking space. Recently, Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) made parking spaces available just beside the National Theatre. However, Roverman Productions makes available three levels of security personnel; security men at the car park, Ghana Police on the street and security in the auditorium, all to “ensure audience safety while on the premise.”

Cleaners are also employed to intermittently put the place in order for audience comfort. Though, there are civil servant workers at the theatre responsible for that, Roverman Productions makes sure more hands are available for success of managing the washrooms. They make provisions for enough toiletries as well. Besides, the auditorium, together with the front of house are well cleaned after every show to keep the place neat. Often, valuable items lost are retrieved and given to the rightful owners.

It should, however, be noted that, Roverman Productions puts in place the necessary measures to whet the audience appetite during its shows. This is because, Whyte believes that the patrons

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must be satisfied and Roverman Productions at that time is responsible for both the facility and all activities including the audience safety.

This is the approach Roverman Productions uses to distinguish itself from other theatre groups. In achieving this, it normally organises Customer Service training for its members, both new and old. As an observer, the researcher took part in the last Customer Service training that took place at the National Theatre on 26th March, 2014. This training was tutored by one professional, Mrs. Margaret Tekyi Micah. Topic under discussions included, Basic needs of Customers, Caring Responsibilities, Behaviours that turn customers off and Seven Key things customers want. At the end of the session, the researcher was overwhelmed and could now understand the professionalism level. Within two hours, a lot had been learnt, people shared their experiences from previous productions whilst the best way to tackle such incidents in the near future were stressed on.

Members of the front of house (comprising box office personnel, ushers, cleaners, and van-drivers in their respective uniforms) confidently at their corresponding positions from the entrance to the auditorium put what they have learnt into practice. Further to the auditorium are ushers to walk the patrons to their seats. It is in the quest for patrons’ respect that demand for quality of the productions.

4.3 Aesthetic Concerns of Roverman Productions’ Plays

In an interview with theatre practitioners, they portrayed Roverman Productions as picking ideas from both traditional and modern genre of theatre practices to improve its performance. It has studied the terrain to bring about an aesthetic in a proscenium stage that attracts more audience compared to other theatre groups. The researcher strongly states that the elaborate scenery is synonymous with realistic scenery, which has been adopted from Henrik Ibsen, ‘the
father of modern Drama and realism’ in theatre discourse. This implies that Roverman Productions’ plays portray the home of middle class members in the society.

This study also reveals the key issue about realism. This emerged during the interview and viewers expressed the want of holistic performance that will not give any sign of unbelief.

One respondent explained that the choice and use of the lapel microphones take away the realistic nature of the performance and that in real theatre, that should not happen since characters are supposed to use their natural voices. It can be argued that the use of the lapel headset is to amplify the actors’ voice, however, it takes away the realistic nature of the show. It should be invisible and possibly phantom microphone can be used so actors can reach out to the audience. By implication, the use of the lapel headset immediately creates an artificial atmosphere in the sense that, the actors are using electronic gadgets to project their voice. But in theatre, there is ‘voice projection’ which requires the actors to project their voices to accomplish the naturalistic acting occurrence on stage. Roverman Productions, though, wants its audience to hear actors on stage during performance, there is a disadvantage in using the lapel headset.

To every playwright, the setting which is the backdrop of action is crucial to both the script and performance. The plays of Roverman Productions demand a huge setting of a modern environment regardless of the space available. Appropriate setting during performances enhances the quality and meaning of the story line. Whether the setting is a home, an office or an airport, it must suit the true reflection of the scene. Martin Owusu and Benjamin O. Asante defined setting in the *Analysis and Interpretation of Kobina Sekyi’s The Blinkards* as “the physical and spiritual background against which the action of a narrative takes place. It is the

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107 Martin Owusu and Daniel Appiah Adjei shared the same opinion during an interview with them.
time and place in which an event of a narrative occurs.”  

Setting explains the geographical location and cultural atmosphere which has great influence on the behaviour, attitude, social beliefs and religious practices of the character. In achieving that, Jojo Tetteh-Quantson, a professional scenic designer is employed for building the sets on stage. It is prudent to reiterate that since Jojo has been working at the National Theatre for some years now, he is able to demarcate the stage, project and interpret the Playwright’s ideas well. Roverman Productions plays irrespective of its setting, mostly showcases the well-to-do class of the society which is due to the language, style and location of performance. Thus, the projections of elaborate set, very colourful and sophisticated to present a modern home or an office.

4.3.1 The Use of Anecdotes/Gimmicks

Roverman Production is also known to use gimmicks in its performance to attract audience. The term in this context refers to the use of certain jargons or statements made by a political figure or a celebrity in the society which are found in the performance believed to entice audience. They are retrieved from already existing stories of all lives (from politics, social, economic and religion) to draw attention. Gimmicks, in real situation, can be serious. However, it is presented in a light hearted manner in the play for the audience to acquaint themselves with the story. These gimmicks seem so much new and stimulate discussions from audience and practitioners, compared to plays of old writers. Examples of such plays are Anowa, Edufa and The Legend of Aku Sika.

Among Chris Nwamu’s (Professor of Theatre Studies) proposals for audience attraction was “entertainment gimmicks to communicate relevant messages to its various audience.” These gimmicks are as a result of the highly recommended use of improvisation. They are only

interpolated on stage but not in the script. Thus, there are changes or incorporation of ideas as the rehearsal unfolds to achieve audience reception. It has been observed that after the script is written, there are remoulding as rehearsal progresses, but the central idea is not altered in any way.

It is farce, comedy, and melodrama that gimmicks can be used extensively. Comparatively, tragedy and serious drama bring out serious issues that mostly need psychological analysis to decode what is presented. In as much as the research does not condemn the seriousness in other genre, the researcher is only attributing laughter to Roverman Productions plays and Whyte made it clear that “now, I write mainly on social issues whilst entertaining. My focus is to get you laugh whilst reflecting on serious social issues. If I do that, then I can sell you anything.”

In addition to this, it is captured in one of the newspaper reviews as, “Uncle Ebo Whyte is known to churn out thought provoking productions and he did just that last weekend with his latest work, *The Last Flight* which was hosted at the National Theatre.”

From these statement, it can be deduced that Whyte limits himself to writing comedy and he is identified as such. One of his early plays, *The Devil’s Wife*, though has been acclaimed as tragedy, Whyte insist that it is not and that he cannot stand tragedy in his world. He testified of appreciating Greek Tragedies, however he cannot write tragedy, “it is not me. For my life is full of laughter.” Observing the group, it can be deduced that, it is the experience and philosophy that have shaped the way he sees tragedy, and the risk associated with different social issues as they develop. Roverman Productions is producing and promoting one form of drama as a vehicle to express Whyte’s creativity.

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The researcher sees the above as a method and possibility to educate people. One can learn through laughing or crying and he has chosen the laughter side of it. Considering Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides who intend to educate their audience through tragedy, Aristophanes educates using comedy. According to Aristotle, “comedy is not a simple amusement, however, nor is comedy simply entertaining; comedy is always about a serious human conflict. The passionate pursuit of love, ambition, social status, and money are age-old comic themes.” Comedy treats serious issues with laughter and comic plays deals with key events in lives of rich people. Whether comedy, farce or tragedy, they all seek one destination which is to communicate something to their audiences. These are all varieties which are the spark of life.

Another consideration worth noting includes live band that plays the various types of music, both local and foreign. Examples are, gospel, highlife, hip-pop, R&B, Reggae, Ragger and Blues music. The band goes by the name, Jasper Band, coordinated by Joseph Appiah, one of the finest music directors in Ghana. The instrumentalists and singers are on point and they mostly entertain the audience before, during and after the performance. In fact they are part of the performance, and they also back the actors in singing. The music relates to the events in the play. Frequently, the performance always ends with contemporary and well-choreographed dance piece.

It has been indicated that Roverman Productions activities are a build-up of Popular Theatre genre, asserted by Awo Mana Asiedu. She provided features of Ebo Whyte’s Roverman Productions as, comedies, relationship oriented, use of guitar band and popular music, written text, but fluid, highly commercialised and highly popular. All the components considered in the production propels the amount charged per person. Majority of audience explained that

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Roverman Productions charges moderately, compared to other events like the Music Awards Night, Miss Ghana, Ghana Meets Niger and Dinner Nights in and across the country.

4.4 Foundational Concept of Roverman Productions

As part of Roverman Productions promoting theatre, its plays discuss issues that are contemporary in order to captivate the society, especially, the middle income earners. These have huge impact on its audience and in addressing the impact, Two plays are analysed to highlight the fundamental thematic concerns in most of the plays. The selection of these is to bring out the concepts that are captured in most of the plays of Roverman Productions to thrill audience. It was revealed that Whyte has been able to attract the audience because “he brings to his plays all his depth of insights on social and political issues and insights from his extensive relationship counselling experience.”¹¹⁵ As a counsellor, he assists couples and individuals to deal with challenges they face, and it is those things that motivate him to write.

4.4.1 Synopsis of the Plays

Make Me a Woman Tonight, Adult Only

Scented sheets and candles, rose petals, some whipped cream, strawberries and champagne. Mimi, has it all planned out. This is the night of her dreams. Getting married to Maestro, the most successful footballer in Africa is just what she has been praying for and her expectations are high. As a woman she has kept her virginity for her husband on such a faithful day. She is flabbergasted that all she had planned on the contrary was becoming just an imagination. Her world is about to be shattered as she faces the hard reality that everything she has dreamt of has been sacrificed for money and fame. Maestro refuses to consummate on their wedding night since he supposedly bartered his manhood for fame.

The Day Dad Came

Ama is in an abusive relationship and is hiding this secret from her father and the world. Things come to light on her birthday when her sister Jane visits with a gift to wish her a happy birthday. Ama’s husband Kofi, unaware that they have a visitor, attacks Ama, accusing her of hiding his lost phone. As his attack becomes physical, Jane runs into the hall to rescue her sister. After the “lost” phone was picked up by a girl named Candy, Kofi leaves and Ama goes into damage control mode, pleading with her sister to keep it from their father. Jane refuses; so when Kofi returns home late, as is normal, to continue abusing his wife, he finds his father-in-law waiting for him. The Day Dad Came explores the issue of domestic violence – why love relationships become abusive; why people stay in them; and how to turn an abusive relationship around.

4.4.2 Biblical Concept

The biblical concept is revealed in Whyte’s strong belief in Christian religion. He is a staunch Christian and exhibits this in his plays. Most of his plays bear quotations from the Bible which he has been noted for, since the beginning of his activities. He stands to project Christianity in his plays to make his statement authentic and believable. This makes especially, Christians relate to the issues in the play, so as to decipher good from evil. Another review was the use of poetic justice by Aristotle where the good is rewarded and the evil punished. In other words, he relates the Bible to social issues. However, it can be realised that he presents his ideas and what he thinks can solve problems for the society.

Mimi is a Christian and goes by the biblical saying that, sex before marriage is a sin. As she reiterates this to her friend Ivy and discloses that she only played along when their friends were sharing their experiences with sex. Not knowing that Mimi never conformed to that slogan but rather kept herself for her husband. We learn from Mimi the reference from the Bible that it is rather appropriate to have sex after marriage. Sex in a relationship before marriage weakens
the foundation of the relationship and it also makes the woman more committed as against the man. Lately, many partners explore with each other’s body before they marry officially and that is one of the issues discussed. It impacts on the audience to obey God’s teachings against sex before marriage so that partners can respect each other.

Mimi: You know, we may not always succeed in obeying what God says but his way is always the best for us.

From the above Mimi advices Ivy on sex before marriage and its relation to scripture knowing how Ivy’s relationship was. But, if Ivy had done that with Josh already, it is still worth it for Mimi to keep Ivy grounded and corrected.

In fact, Maestro does not consummate their wedding and this makes Mimi furious because, she has been praying for such a moment in her life. Mimi knowing the doctrine about divorce, tries to stay in the marriage irrespective of her husband’s past of substituting his manhood for fame. This is demonstrated when Maestro breaks the news to her and demands that Mimi promises not to leave her in the following lines:

Maestro: Honey sit down I have something to tell you. I cannot have sex with you.

Mimi: Why?

Maestro: I…I… Before I tell you, promise me that you will not leave me no matter what. Promise me that even if I lost everything, I will still have you.

Mimi: I made that promise in the church before many witnesses yesterday. It was called wedding vows, remember?

Also, Josh tries to convince Maestro to go into occultism to be selected by their coach to feature in international matches. Maestro initially refuses by replying,

Maestro: I don’t want juju, I’m a Christian.

Josh: Nonsense, are you a better Christian than I am? See, I have something of my own.
The above conversation denounces a Christian involved in sorcery for his own comfort and fame, which seems common in the society. It is obvious that some Christians do not practice what they preach as Josh portrays and that is one of the things Whyte highlights. The play reveals some hidden acts about footballers using juju to back their profession so they can be recognised. This is not different from ‘Sakawa’ (money ritual) of which some youth of today indulge for riches.

It has been reported that, as a counsellor, Whyte has impacted on many lives and contributed to the socioeconomic life of the Ghanaian community.

4.4.3 Concept of Romantic Relationships

As the sensation of globalization hastens, romantic relationship is more recognised as a powerful response from the current society through marketing circumstances and theatre is not an exception. The saying that sex sells, indeed, reflects in Roverman Productions’ messages since women and romance exposes the conviction. There is no single play without one witnessing a man and woman committed to each other and expressing their feelings, though they may face some uncompromised situation. At the end of the day they overcome those obstacles.

In the play, The Day Dad Came, Ama is unhappily married to Kofi, yet they put up nice behaviour in public as if they are the wonderful couple ever. However, Kofi has an affair with a lady named Candy, whom Kofi could just lie down for Candy to walk over. Meanwhile, he abuses his wife Ama, and no matter how hard Ama tries, she is ignored or beaten. The following lines in Act 1, echoes the situation.

Ama: Kofi dear, did you leave something?
Kofi: You made me leave my Laptop.
**Ama:** Kofi, we need to talk. We cannot go on this way. You are killing me with the way you are treating me. Listen, if I have offended you in any way, please forgive me. Look, I am on my knees. Just don’t ignore me.

**Kofi:** Woman, you make me sick.

It was Ama’s birthday on this day, instead of a husband showing concern and love to a wife by honouring her with a gift, he rather abuses her and destroys the day for her. Yet, Ama does not show any sign of retaliation because she loves her husband.

It is therefore, totally objectionable for such literate like Kofi, to have laid his hands on his wife, knowing how humble and loving Ama is. This is very dehumanizing. The playwright treated this message to caution men who abuse their women instead of showing them affection. However, to achieve the concept of Romantic Relationship, he placed Ama to be affectionate towards the husband, whiles Kofi and Candy share romance. Eventually, the play ends on a peaceful note and Kofi realising his mistakes vows never to offend Ama for the rest of his life.

In Act three, He feels remorseful and ashamed of his actions, Kofi confesses and shows respect to Ama and her family.

**Kofi:** Ama darling, I have hurt and betrayed you and I am sorry and ask for your forgiveness. From now on, I promise to love and cherish you and forsake all others for you and only you. I will give you cause to laugh every day and smile every minute. I will grow old with you and keep our relationship fresh every day. I love you and I am happy to welcome you back home where you belong.

Kofi’s reactions to Ama and to her family indicates the love he has for them. Many homes are breaking up because sincere love, sacrifice, respect, and good communication skills among couples is lacking. Roverman Productions uses these issues to capture his audience since the youth are attracted by topics on relationships. In this case, Roverman Productions’ plays uncover certain tricks in relationships.
4.4.4 Concept of Fellow Feelings and Good Neighbourliness

This analysis focuses on the attitude of appreciating and wishing a fellow human being well just as you will wish for yourself. For the researcher, this is what defines Ghanaians. It is believed that Ghanaians are hospitable, however, they distinguish themselves tribally and situate their neighbours in the origin they come from. Conversely, Roverman Productions’ plays reflect the idea that ‘what you think of me is a reflection of you’. By implication if you wish me well I will as well wish you well. This evidence from the play is seen between two sisters, Jane and Ama, elder and younger respectively. It happens that their dad, Mr. Forson loves the younger one more than the elder sister, yet, Jane is alright and does not show any resentment towards Ama. The following extract in Act 1, helps to explain the situation:

Jane: Happy Birthday sis.
Ama: Oh thank you, dear.
Jane: Here, I baked you a cake. And this is from Dad. He says to tell you that you’re his favourite daughter. Dad shouldn’t have said that.
Ama: Dad shouldn’t have said that.
Jane: Don’t worry about it. You know dad. He says it like it is. And it’s the truth, you’re his favourite. You’ve always been and you’ll always be.
Ama: But that is not fair to you.
Jane: You know what dad’ll say to that. He’ll say,
Ama and Jane: “life is not fair.”

Obviously, Jane is supposed to be angry as this happens in many homes, among friends and colleagues, but, her character projects that neighbourliness to her sister and wishes Ama well, regardless of their father’s favouritism.

Another strong evidence is between Ama and the disguised Angel Woman with her grandchild, who uses to come to Ama’s home in need of food and presents herself as a hawker of beads. Apparently, in the midst of all the maltreatments Ama receives from her husband, this Angel indirectly comes to comfort her and tests Ama’s faith. Act 2, Scene 2 indicated below shows the scenario.

Woman: Amen and amen! Ama Forson Osei, the Lord has heard your cries and seen your tears.
**Ama:** You know my name? I don’t remember mentioning my name to you.

**Woman:** Of course, I know your name. I gave you that name before you were born. You are blessed and highly favoured. I came to test you and I have found you worthy. I came to you at the worst possible time but you were able to put your pain aside and reach out to help. That is as it should be and I am very pleased.

Ama shows kindness to her and does not allow her predicament to prevent her from being nice to her neighbour. Eventually, Ama is vindicated as the Angel reveals herself and exposes the mystery behind her situation. The play also highlights the need for women to be subservient to their husbands in all ways, however, they should not allow their husbands to walk over them and treat them like garbage, for they are created in God’s image.

### 4.4.5 Concept of “Can Do” Attitude.

This concept was confirmed after the review meeting of the 2014 first quarter play, *Make Me a Woman Tonight, Adult Only*. These discussion were geared towards the impact of the message that wowed the audience. The play draws on the need to be objective in life and entreats one to be optimistic in all that he/she does. Besides, he/she must be determined, hardworking, and dedicated to his/her work. There is nothing under the sun that one cannot achieve if he sets his mind to do so. It also inspires one to have the habit of scrutiny, so as to have the ability to understand things that are vital to him and deal with them. Whyte always brings out this theme which is very much instrumental in his plays, decolonising the Ghanaian mind that they can achieve something great or positive for themselves. Individuals should enjoy life and have fun. But while having fun just think of the fact that you can do better than you are doing and deserve better than you have got.

While the initial perception of Roverman Productions’ play was met by a controversy as to whether the play was really about the ‘sex in the bedroom’, there was absolutely no doubt whatsoever about the image in the posters or performance. Well, it was about a woman who
reconnoitres herself of what she has been imagining, her wedding night with her husband to be an extraordinary moment. Nonetheless, it turned out to be the worst night for her when she realised her husband’s success was as a result of sacrificing his manhood for money ritual. Perhaps the concept of the advert on posters was a ploy to basically attract audience to the show.

Handling this issue in the play, Mimi’s husband Maestro as a young, energetic, intelligent and a Christian is faced with the terms to consult a diviner to become an international Black Star footballer. Forgetting that he can become a successful one like his brother, Amisti with all his hard work, determination, and prayer, he has become popular. Maestro thinks his success is due to forces behind him. Unknowingly he has acquired them all by himself and is not impotent.

In Act Three, Amisti comes in to reveal the hidden truth and this is what ensued:

**Amisti:** Kid, talk to me. What is your wife talking about? Are you impotent?

**Maestro:** The juju, bro, the juju.

**Maestro:** The juju you got for me. The one that took me to the top.

**Amisti:** Kid, from your childhood you were a very gifted footballer. You were genius. I know you could become bigger than me but you were just too lazy. Like the typical Ghanaian, you were too complacent with the little you did, not realising that you could do far more. You dreamt of big things but you did not have the discipline or work ethic to make them manifest. I had tried to get you to wake up but it was no use. Then you came to me for spiritual powers. I saw that as my chance for getting you to be more disciplined. And so, I contrived that elaborate hoax to make you believe that you had come under the spell of a powerful juju. But there was nothing like that.

The play rather demonstrates the power of the mind and that was the trick Amisti used to get Maestro rise to the top. Whatever you put in your mind will have impact on you whether good or bad. The attitude of ‘can do spirit’ propels you to do more than you can imagine if you believe in yourself positively. As Whyte whispered ‘Make Me a Woman Tonight – Adults Only’ demonstrates in practical terms the power of the mind and how to adopt a positive mind-set and achieve great things. It makes his audience react positively, to know that all hope is not
lost and that Ghanaians must be optimistic and diligent in their services. The target audience of Roverman Productions are driven by the above thematic concerns and it can be argued that these are content of new discussion that is palatable to people.

4.5 Western Influence on Roverman Productions

We are reminded of Africans imitating the West in every way and Uncle Ebo is not an exception. Notwithstanding, there is no doubt that as a Ghanaian, he has had encounter with works of Ghanaian theatre practitioners through their writings and stage performances. During the researcher’s interactions with Whyte and through personal observations, the researcher realised that he has been inspired by most of them, such as Joris Wartemberg, Joe de Graft, Ama Ata Aidoo, Efua Sutherland, Dr. Abdullah, Efo Kojo Mawugbe and Kwaku Sintim Missa. However, it could be difficult to say how they have influenced him. It can rather be noted that, such works opened his eyes to see the possibilities through writing.

It is observed, that some theatre practitioners beyond Ghana have had a massive impact on Whyte and his theatre, including Athol Fugard, Bernard Shaw, Eugene O’Neil and lately, “Tyler Perry, who is a huge influence.” It was discovered that Whyte follows the work of this African-American’s writings and theatre approach. Tyler Perry is a writer, director, film maker and an actor, and he started his theatre activities from the church and gradually proceeded to the society. He has won the heart of many in America and across the world. His plays capture contemporary sensitive family issues and are comic in nature. Among the plays written for both stage and film include, Diary of a Mad Black Woman and Madea’s Family Reunion respectively. His theatre has a strong commercial success and has always satisfied its audience just like Ebo Whyte. Although, Ebo Whyte shares similar style in terms

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117 http://www.tylerperry.com/biography/ searched on 7th May 2014. At 2. PM.

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of promotional concept, message and sponsorships procedures which help them. However, the only difference is the geographical location, theatre space and level of privileges acquired.

Now, Roverman Productions bears qualities from all these great practitioners’ works, meaning, its interest and influence is broad. Additionally, Whyte does not have a favourite but pursues anything good from these various practitioners to carve philosophies that help to improve its activities. The system of ideas concerning running of the theatre between style, message, sponsorships, advertisements and target audience, which are embodied in its theatre promotion are ideas that prompt Whyte to think outside the box. This is to acquire knowledge and to be prepared for any likely challenges yet to be encountered. Thus, Roverman Productions “thrive on creativity, setting standards and shifting paradigm”\textsuperscript{118} in the arts industry. By the researcher’s own observations, Roverman Productions has a strategy to maintain its audience per the added innovative ideas attached to the performance. It rather focuses on comedy and circumvents the classical style by Shakespeare, Sophocles and Euripides. Greek tragedy has influenced African writers such as Ola Rotimi’s \textit{The Gods are not to Blame} and Sutherland’s \textit{Edufa}.

4.6 Roverman Productions’ Paradigm Shift

What seems to account for audience increase is the fact that all media are used to reach out to the audience. Though Whyte has created the niche for its audience, as proclaimed by many respondents, he makes sure regular and new audience who come to the theatre are retained by also checking on them as possible. It is also noticed that majority of his audience listen to those reliable media Roverman Productions partners with. Two of the most mentioned media houses for the promotion of Roverman Productions’ performances are Joy FM and Y FM, whose fundamental communication language is English and mostly meant for the elite. Many

\textsuperscript{118} \url{www.rovermanproduction.com/global/index.php} Searched on 29th October, 2013 at 6:00 PM
Ghanaians listen to Whyte’s “Food for Thought”, motivation and inspirational messages that have impacted on their lives. What fascinates the researcher is the creativity of providing its audience with a Patrons Data Form in the brochures distributed for them to fill for the upkeep of their records.

Sample of questions on the form, two major ones;

How did you hear of this show? Please specify each item.

How would you like to be informed on upcoming shows?

This is a way to inquire and analyse ways and means to assess the minds of its viewers to find out which marketing medium is the best. As much as possible, Roverman Productions exchanges emails with its audience, encourages them after every production to comment on their activities and also updates them with information.

Audience respondents explained that Roverman productions though has a huge audience, yet some of its audience do not come regularly for all the shows, because the prize for the tickets deter some of them. Most testified of watching about five to fifteen plays out of the twenty-one plays staged. Of course, its type of theatre is expensive to put up, however, it must be moderate for the audience to always come to the theatre. When this happens, productions can be reproduced more. In any case, theatre is for the community and it will be more apt for Roverman Productions to involve the majority of the community.

On the contrary, findings from the study reveals that, Roverman Productions does not practice the real essence of theatre as practitioners describe, but rather looks at some aspect of it. It is using the theatre to sell Whyte’s philosophies of life. It finds comedy as the form to attract people and to propagate its messages. Though it is contributing to theatre promotion, it has taken more into the business part of theatre organisation but not for the nation. Unlike Roverman Productions that operates as a business entity, Sutherland’s Kusum Agoromma or
Abibigoromma of School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, experiment with classical theatre rather than looking at the monetary outcome. A note on classical plays, which are long term seeking, very didactic and experiment with all aspect of lives within the theatre conventions include, performance of The Marriage of Anansewa, Edufa, The Legend of Aku Sika, Song of a Pharaoh, In the Chest of a Woman, Hamlet, Macbeth and Tartuffe. These plays are institutional based that instil the spirit of theatre in the schools. Due to the kind of society that has emerged, these plays need to be packaged well for the greater audience beyond educational institutions. The plays mostly require deep intellectual analysis in the issues discussed which may be serious or comic. However, considering theatre conventions, the research disclosed that the demand of the theatre is not for the quality of the productions only, but the actions of the play. After all, it is because of the play that the audience come to the theatre.
4.7 Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data from Questionnaire

This section presents findings from the data gathered on the field using a questionnaire. It examines the objectives and the research questions outlined in the study.

4.7.1 Demographic Characteristics of Audience for Roverman Productions Show

The study sought to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents interviewed for the study. Findings from this analysis are shown in the Table 4.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Background of Respondent</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 35</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 45</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 – 55</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥56 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status of Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level of Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior High School</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma/HND</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation of Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Worker</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Salary Worker</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

From the results above, it was observed that most (56.8%) of the audience who frequently watch Roverman Productions’ shows are females whilst 43.2% of these audience are males. This implies that females patronize Roverman Productions’ shows more than their male counterparts. This is because females tend to find stories of relationships and marriage more attractive.
With regards to age distribution, the study revealed that most (50.4%) of the audience fall within the ages of 26 – 35 years whilst the least (8%) of the audience fall within the ages of 46 – 55 years. This implies that as far as Roverman Productions’ shows are concerned, audience in the youth bracket patronize the shows more, compared to their older counterparts. Furthermore, it implies that since the youth have high utility or demand for entertainment activities, they tend to patronize Roverman Productions’ shows more than their old counterparts.

The study also attempted to analyse the distribution of marital status of the audience. Findings from this study revealed that more of the audience (51.2%) are singles whilst the remaining 48.8% of them are married. This result is evident because most of the audience asserted that the timing for Roverman Productions’ shows does not favour the married couples as a result of the starting and ending time of the shows. Besides, the singles get to relate to the story more and learn about what and what not to expect before or after marriage.

Following the results in Table 4.1, it was found that 41.6% which is the majority of the audience have attained university education whilst 6.4% of the audience (the least) had attained Junior High School education. This confirms the general assertion by the audience interviewed for the study that Roverman Productions’ shows is only written or organised to suite the elite in the society, thus depriving the illiterate masses to benefit from the show. By implication the bulk of the masses are illiterate, so Roverman Productions only affect the few in the society.

Considering the occupation of the audience for Roverman Productions’ shows, the study revealed that majority (65.6%) of them are private salaried workers; 17.6% of them were civil workers whilst 11.2% are self-employed people and the least (8%) are students. This result is evident and confirms the observation of the researcher that most of the private workers who
patronize Roverman Productions’ shows are in the ages of youth bracket who always seek to use the shows as a major source of entertainment after a hard day’s of work.

4.7.2 Audience Pattern of Patronage of Roverman Productions’ Show

The study also sought to describe the pattern of Roverman Productions patronage by the audience interviewed for the study. Findings from this analysis are shown in the Table 4.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch the Show Alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whom You Watch With</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend/Colleague</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Time Watching Roverman Show</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Times Watched the Show</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 5 times</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 times</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 10 times</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch Any Other Show</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you Suggest Other Groups Learn from Roverman Productions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Findings from Table 4.2 revealed that most of the audience (86.4%) usually do not watch RP shows alone whilst only 13.6% of them usually watch the shows alone. This confirms the observation of the researcher that most of the audience of the Roverman Productions’ shows who were interviewed for the study asserted that they usually watch the shows in companies of their friends, spouses, parents or children.
The study also indicated that, out of the audience who usually patronize Roverman Productions’ shows, majority (39.2%) of them watch the shows with friends and colleagues, 31.2% of them usually watch the shows with their spouses, and 21.6% of them usually watch the shows with their parents whilst 8% of them usually watch the shows with their children. This implies most audience of the Roverman Productions show, watch with their friends and colleagues.

The study also sought to find out from the audience whether they were watching the Roverman Productions’ shows for the first time or not. Findings from the study revealed that 90.4% which is the majority were not watching the show for the first time whilst 9.6% of them were watching Roverman Productions’ shows for the first time. This implies that majority of the audience interviewed had been loyal audience for Roverman Productions’ shows for a long time.

With regards to whether audience of Roverman Productions’ shows watch other theatre shows or not, it was observed that majority (75.2%) of them watch only Roverman Productions’ shows whilst 24.8% of them usually watch other theatre shows. This result was evident because most of the audience interviewed for the study confirmed to the researcher that they were not aware of any other theatre shows except Roverman Productions’ shows that are shown quarterly. Also, out of the audience interviewed, 24.8% of them indicated watching other performances at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, when they were on campus.

Assessing the number of times audience have watched Roverman Productions’ shows, majority (75.2%) of them had only watched Roverman Productions’ shows for about 1 – 5 times whilst 12% and 12.8% of them had watched Roverman Productions’ shows for about 6 – 10 times and more than 10 times respectively. This evidence implies that most of the audience for
Roverman Productions’ shows are new audience who have developed interest due to its current attractiveness.

Finally, the researcher sampled the opinions of the audience on whether they have the view that other smaller theatre groups should learn from Roverman Productions. Findings from the analysis indicated that majority (84%) of the audience were of the view that it is good smaller theatre groups learn from Roverman Productions whilst 16% of them were of the opinion that smaller groups can develop themselves without learning from Roverman Productions. This result was obvious because majority of the audience assert that if smaller theatre groups learn certain things from Roverman Productions, they will develop and gain grounds to compete with Roverman Productions. This will enhance competition leading to quality of plays, low cost of tickets, high patronage and ultimately leading to the development of theatre as a whole in the country.

4.7.3 Audience Rating of Roverman Productions’ Shows

The researcher also allowed the audience to rate Roverman Productions’ shows in order to ascertain how audience value Roverman Productions’ shows. Results from this analysis are shown in the figure 1.1 below.

**Figure 1.1: Audience Rating of Roverman Productions’ Shows**

![Pie chart showing audience ratings](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)
Figure 1.1 above illustrates the results obtained from rating Roverman Productions’ shows by the audience interviewed for the study. The results indicated that majority (62.4%) of the audience rated Roverman Productions’ shows as very good, 33.6% of them rated the shows as excellent whilst the least (4%) rated it as good. This finding was also evident because the audience interviewed asserted that even though Roverman Productions’ shows has high audience patronage, it still lacks some professional touch and therefore needs to do more to improve upon the professional quality of the shows it presents to its audience.

4.7.4 Audience Reasons for Watching Roverman Productions’ Shows

The researcher sought to identify the primary reasons why audience patronize Roverman Productions’ shows. The results of this analysis is shown on the figure 1.2 below.

**Figure 1.2: Audience Reasons for watching Roverman Production’ Shows**

![Graph showing audience reasons for watching Roverman Productions' shows]

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Findings from the figure 1.2 above shows that majority (66.4%) of the audience usually watch Roverman Productions’ shows for entertainment reasons. These audience say entertaining themselves with Roverman Productions’ shows enable them release some stress from their jobs and life issues. It was also observed that 24% of the audience watch Roverman Productions’ shows for educational purposes. These audience also explained that watching Roverman Productions’ shows help them learn and understand spiritual, moral and social lessons of life.
The least group (9.6%) of them watch Roverman Productions’ shows for both educational and entertainment purposes.

4.7.5 Problems Facing Theatre Groups

Finally, the study sought to identify the major problems facing theatre groups in Ghana.

Findings from this analysis is also shown in figure 1.3 below.

Figure 1.3: Problem Facing Theatre Groups in Ghana

![Bar chart showing problems facing theatre groups in Ghana]

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Results from figure 1.3 above indicates that, sponsorship (43.2%) is the major most pressing problem affecting theatre development in the country. The next most pressing constraint hindering the development of theatre in the country are branding (21.6%) and proper marketing strategies (21.6%) respectively whilst the least most pressing constraint hindering the development of theatre is the inability of theatre groups (13.6%) to satisfy their target audience.

These findings imply that theatre groups in the country must put themselves in a position that will enable them attract good sponsorship for their shows. Some of the actions they need to take to attract sponsorship include branding, adopting effective marketing strategies and strive to present shows that will also satisfy their target audience.
The discussion in this chapter greatly compliments the various structures by which Roverman uses to promote its theatre. In the context of promotions currently, the quality of the show, personality behind the show, quality of the actors and the professionalism attached to it helps in making it popular and cherished. Though audience respondents complain that price is relatively high, the quality of the productions is what attracts them, compared to other productions. Though transportation is challenging, only few commented on that because most of them drive to the National theatre or use taxi.

Roverman Productions effort to make society a better place for all through its plays would come to nothing if the foundation of the society is weakened. Thus, performances by Roverman Productions address issues of religion because of misuse of Christian doctrines and fake pastors in the system. It highlights on the need to be strong in faith and fear of God by following the teachings in the Bible.

Being in the business industry as a profession and experienced one, performers advocate for the ‘Can Do’ attitude, the ability to believe in oneself and think positive always. Whyte argues that what you fill your mind with is what affects your life, therefore, you must believe that no situation is permanent and you can achieve more than you can imagine with determination.

As a marriage counsellor, Whyte is inspired to write plays out of the experiences he has, in terms of helping solve people’s relationship problems. He resolved to use materials from his experience and project them on stage to reach the larger community. Roverman Productions uses theatre as a medium to make the people (both males and females) appreciate themselves on how they are created so that conflict can easily be resolved among couples (married and unmarried).

The above highlights on all the major factors that contribute to high productivity of theatre activities used by Roverman Productions to sustain its theatre. Improved methods of
sponsorship and management serve as a resistance to collapsing the group. The study reveals that available funding, good medium of advertisement, quality of product and professionalism attached propel theatre activities in the country.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the summary of the whole thesis. It provides all the findings of the research discussed in the previous chapters. It also identifies major findings in relation to the promotion of theatre in Ghana. This project was relevant as it exposed the trend Roverman Productions has adopted to popularise its theatre productions. Roverman Productions was chosen as a result of its unique structure and current application of management skills towards its theatre activities.

5.2 Summary of the Study
Considering the objective of assessing the contribution of Roverman Productions to the promotion of theatre in Ghana, the researcher had the opportunity to interview theatre experts under various sub-disciplines. They provided their sensitive views on the development of theatre in Ghana and the appearance of Roverman Productions in Ghanaian theatre history. The researcher is saying this based on the fact that under the theatre discourse are specialisations by respective persons. For instance, as part of theatre history, Sandy Arkhurst is known for Theatre for Development, Martin Owusu is a Playwright, and Ernest Abequaye is for Film. In achieving this, interviews were conducted to investigate the early development of theatre by individuals and their theatre groups till the days of Roverman Productions.

Although, there were some discrepancies regarding the information solicited, they made contributions that supported literature found in the antiquity of theatre growth. There were visitations at libraries to access written works such as articles, journals, and books for the promotion of theatre and its impact on people. Furthermore, the interactions with both the audience and members helped a lot in discovering the new love generated in them as a result
of Roverman Productions’ approach. Their participation was great and influential as they provided their individual opinions and what they have heard. A total sample of one hundred and twenty five (125) respondents from over six thousand audience were selected using random sampling technique. The response was an indication that Ghanaians’ love for the theatre is not lost totally but needs to be rekindled. Furthermore, the combination of the interview, questionnaire and observations proved effective, based on the manner it was conducted. However, the questionnaire distributions for the audience had some challenges since the researcher did not have enough time to solicit for deeper explanation from most respondents.

As stated earlier, this study touched on the situation of theatre development in Ghana as a preamble and focused on Roverman Productions as a theatre group that is taking theatre activities into another dimension. Findings from this study showed that Roverman Productions is developing a paradigm shift from the ordinary. The activities of the group is a build-up of Concert Party genre. However, the approach is more appealing to the elites and its messages are relationship oriented. It is an aspect known to attract Ghanaian workers to ease boredom. In discussing Roverman Productions, theatre was traced from the traditional art form of storytelling by Ghanaian indigenes, performed and officiated at night by the narrator.

This style of the storytelling was an everyday activity which served as a source of entertainment for community development. Storytelling messages are very didactic in content. Secondly, the effect of colonialism on Ghanaian theatre gave birth to a fusion (the combination of two cultures) as a result of implementing ideas from the West and adapting it into the Ghanaian situation. This fashioned a hybrid which became original in its sense. For instance, Efua Sutherland’s experimental theatre had strong intense dramatic activity of this nature. Furthermore, the concert party genre by the Two Bobs also developed out of the cultural imperialism. It was initially meant for the “elite but was later popularised and translated into
local languages by one Bob Johnson.\footnote{http://www.ghananewsagency.org/social/protect-ghana-s-concert-party-prof-collins-58213. A speech delivered by Prof. Collins during the Celebration of the World Theatre Day in Accra. March 27th, 2014. Searched on 9th June, 2014. At 2 P.M.} The concert party was in vogue during the 1950s due to the many theatre groups that emerged as a result of Nkrumah’s vision to support (both financially and materially) the theatre to propagate his ideologies of African identity. However, it began to die in 1970s via the continuous coup d’états in the country and lack of government support. Chapter two does justice to the Ghanaian theatre heritage and how it is still classified as diminished until Roverman Productions, which is the focus of this thesis came into the scene in 2008. In this regard, the style of Roverman Productions shows the influence by some prominent theatre practitioners whose works cannot be overlooked. Likewise, contribution of Roverman Productions was revealed to achieve the following objectives of the study.

**The Role of Roverman Productions in the Development of Theatre in Ghana**

This objective has been fulfilled in chapters two and four. It was addressed by discussing the history, and notable activities performed by Roverman Productions since its establishment. The study revealed that though the functions of theatre as communicating, educating, informing, and entertaining audience are evident in Roverman Productions, nevertheless, its entertaining element is prominent. Its performances are held in various institutions such as schools, churches as well as corporate organisations. Moreover, the National Theatre in recent years has become a permanent and regular venue for its performances and making the place active. As the group’s activities progressed, the success was associated with the partnership with Joy FM and The National Theatre Managers, as well as supports from external bodies.

Having situated Roverman Productions in the history of Ghanaian theatre, the study captured the activities of the group headed by James Ebo Whyte and how he started from 1975. The group’s commercial aspect; managerial abilities; financial supports and professionalism by its
associate members have made Roverman Productions survive till date. The study uncovered that, as a primer whose intended audience, no doubt, are the elite or middle income people, the language, gate fee, venue and messages are done “with professional finesse”\textsuperscript{120} to dispel some stereotypes. Also, the problem with the single venue, of which the researcher does not blame the director, is that, it is the only suitable place for its kind of show, and therefore, only those who can afford patronize. Accra is the hub of the Nation and Roverman Productions is very much frequent at this locale. Nonetheless, it is gradually extending its territory to other regions.

**Ways Roverman Production is managed to achieve its level of professionalism**

Looking at professionalism, to the researcher, it can be stated that branding forms part of it. This encompasses factors considered before, during and after productions to create a good atmosphere for audience satisfaction. These considerations can further be grouped under artistic and management of both the activity and facility to reach its maximum output towards theatre promotion. Based on Aristotle’s assertion, the artistic side of drama can be seen in six elements of dramatic event.

- **Plot** – what happens in a play; the order of events, the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means.
- **Character** – what happens in a play; the order of events, the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means.
- **Thought** – Goethe’s Big Three – What were they trying to say? Did they say it? Was it worth saying?
- **Diction** – the pronunciation and accentuation, rhythm, and melody of the words, primarily, then the acting, gesticulation, and other carriers of vocal information.
- **Music** – by music Aristotle meant music - not necessarily the sounds, rhythm, and melody of the speeches – there is no written evidence to prove that he meant anything else but music.
- **Spectacle** – the visual elements of the production of a play; the scenery, costumes, and special effects in a production\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{120} In Gibbs’s Ghanaian Theatre: A Bibliography, George Awoonor – William’s reviewed a performance directed by G.A Wilson which he quoted as having a professional finesse. The play was *The Day of the Lion*, an adaptation of Dan Jacobson’s *A Dance in the Sun* performed on Oct.-Nov 1964.

The above mentioned elements converge on stage to make up the artistic unity that attract audience. This implies that the items projected instead, make one glued to and appreciate the aesthetics presented on stage. Besides the stage, is the building itself. It was revealed that effective management also contributes to theatre promotion. In the first place, the advertisement, venue, security, warm reception by ushers, decorations with logos of various sponsors as well as refreshment for audience sets the cue for appreciation. As a consequence of the explanation here, whether aesthetic or management, none can be exempted.

The researcher found it absurd, when some respondents, based on hearsay, argued that Roverman Productions is not promoting the theatre since its play text is unavailable. In what capacity are they saying this since they have not watched any of Roverman Productions’ show or seen the content of the script? Although, their argument could be true to some extent, the researcher based her concentration on the quality of message in the play, the productions and the effect on the community. Thus, the play as a text is always different from the play as an experience.

**The Sources of Roverman Productions’ financial support**

Finally, the study investigated the sources of the group’s financial support to the promotion of theatre. Looking at this perspective, it was revealed that, the group is owned by a single individual, implying that it is a sole proprietorship which is overseen by Ebo Whyte. It also became apparent that Roverman Productions employs all kinds of sponsorships for its activities due to its long-term relationship with partners. It has a wide range of sponsors that play a major role in its theatre promotion compared to its competitors. Many theatre groups in Ghana have collapsed perhaps as a result of financial constraints. However, Roverman Productions has survived based on the sacrifices it has made over the years by organising free shows in churches, schools and other public events across the country. Currently, when the play is ready
for performance, effective advertisement is made on print and electronic media, bill boards and newspapers to ensure that the show is effectively promoted. Funds are also generated through sponsorship to ensure successful organization of the show.

It turns out that, Whyte is competing for international brand and that vision is portrayed in Roverman Productions’ trademark. What accounts for the high relationship with sponsors can be explained by the essence of theatre portrayed to these sponsors and the benefits attached to the services rendered by the group.

5.3 Conclusion of the Study

Considering the above findings, the study concludes that Roverman Productions is mostly and not essentially artistic or crafted in the sense of art. Dr. Awo Asiedu classified it as popular theatre and that confirms its popularity, yet it appeals to a section of the society (that is, middle income and the elite). From 2008 to date, it has produced around two hundred and seventy one (271) stage performances on various platforms and still counting. Though, it is contributing to theatre, it dwells more on business aspect but little about creativity of arts compared to drama in education, thus, using theatre as a yardstick to accelerate its business ideas. Ideally, the group’s activities suggest that, there is light that we can make money from theatre through consideration of effective management (sponsorship, advertisement and discipline).

For about five years now, Ghana has improved in terms of its theatre activities. Before then, it was not booming and the revival has been engineered by Ebo Whyte and that his approach to the theatre also inspires other theatre groups and organisations that use theatre to propagate their cause. Example; Globe Theatre, Novelty Initiative, Global Arts Development Centre (GADEC), Benarrackor Consult, H4P Crew, and others. Roverman Productions has led the pace for others to get involved.
Findings from the study established that, theatre seems to be reviving gradually in recent times with the contribution of Roverman Productions. Nonetheless, there is more room for improvement and the need to develop audience for the theatre. In an attempt to achieve this, the study concludes that effective managerial qualities assist in sustaining the theatre for national development.

It was also revealed from the study that Roverman Productions has factored and placed value on the rejected things (effective management, sponsorship, advertisement, and audience development) that deem a premium in booming theatre activities. Its approach has brought out the distinction of live stage performances as against Radio and TV programmes. Now, some sections of the Ghanaian society understand stage performance from video experiences. Thus, Roverman Productions’ show has gradually been embraced by the Ghanaian Community, especially in the Greater Accra region.

The commercial angle added to its theatre activities in terms of partnering with both media houses and companies, place Roverman Productions as the most privileged and one at par with its counterparts in promoting stage performances. The study further concludes that sponsorship and strategic planning help in promoting theatre. This implies that sponsorship and effective strategic planning are foundations to a vibrant theatre management rather than just establishing a theatre group.

The promotional mix within the context of theatre has been conceptualised by this study as relating to information asymmetry by sponsors and theatre groups due to concrete principles. It is argued that to achieve an active theatre promotion, however, first there is the need to observe the terrain- what has transpired before, what is the state now and how different can it be active. Secondly, promotion takes into account, audience development- providing the target audience with their needs.
From the findings, the study affirms that, though individual groups are doing their part in theatre activity yet their future is threatened. Most groups that are operated and managed by the founders only, experience hindrances which threaten the survival of the group. This act has equally collapsed many groups since the founders of the groups take total control and after their demise, the group collapses because none can really handle it the way they do. This study strongly establishes that Roverman Productions is likely to face this issue since, Whyte is the sole decision-maker for the group and he is not grooming any particular person to succeed him in future.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that there should be scholarly works since few information found were basically scanty. It also recommends that there should be a comprehensive and integrated efforts toward the management of the theatre to attract audience in a quest for reviving theatre activities.

Indeed there has been lots of information on the theatre history especially between the periods of the 1950s to 1970s, it is therefore proposed that dramatists and anthropologists must shift their attention now to the current trend of Roverman Productions promotional concepts. Emphasis should be on the advancement of writing style, aesthetic concerns, messages, promotional style and venue showing similarities and differences from colonial period to the present day theatre.

For theatre in Ghana to thrive, efforts are required by Policy Makers, Government, Arts Centres and National Commission on Culture to fashionably make available ways for publishing written plays. Comparing Ghana to Nigeria, the latter has more written and published plays than the former. As Collins states that, “the opportunities for production and publication of new plays in Ghana today is lower than at any point since independence and no Ghanaian play
written this century has been published.”\textsuperscript{122} Also information indicated that for some years now there has not been any new published plays. Yet there are playwrights everywhere, though renowned playwrights such as Martin Owusu, Ben Abdallah, and Yaw Asare for some time now seem not to have published any play. Furthermore, Ebo Whyte has not published any of his plays since he started. Again, none of the number of Playwrights produced from the School of Performing Arts who are all over the country has been publishing except Daniel Appiah Adjei and Faustina Brew.

It must be noted that Roverman Productions has been identified as a pace setter in this dispensation. Many theatre groups are beginning to follow suit. However, they also tend to personalize their groups in this regard. Theatre institutions that aimed at long term theatre practice without necessarily looking at monetary gain are still in existence though with inadequate support compared to many groups that were established years ago by individuals trading theatre for income. Such theatre groups through investigations show that, they do not last long, they tend to make great impact and disappear in the system. This is because as they become autonomous with the same subject matter and time elapses the society gets fed up with them. Besides, when the founders of the group, one who strictly controls all affairs regarding the group is unavailable, then the group collapses. Therefore, to enhance and maintain the activeness of the theatre, the study recommends that there must be varieties of performing groups with distinct characteristics in performance. Arts institutions should help the emerging of prospective theatre groups with huge publicity and sponsorship generation so as to be known. Members in the group must be given the opportunity to take charge of the group, that is, to understudy the founder or the leader of the group. This can guarantee a successor when the need arises. Thus, enabling audience to have varieties of shows under varied directors and

playwrights. Until the audience needs, such as publicity, attractiveness of the venue and thematic concerns are guaranteed, their ability to love theatre will be limited.

It is highly recommended that Roverman Productions by Ebo Whyte, must be encouraged and supported by the various arts organisations like the Art Centres or The National Commission on Culture (NCC) and the Actors Guild. They should appreciate and motivate the group to improve theatre in the country. There should be some negotiations to support the group by fulfilling Sutherland’s vision of establishing regional theatre centres and to take the show on circuit. In a form of appreciating the group’s work by travelling around with its shows, the venue provided for the group must be free or charged on a minimal level. This will make the group more enthusiastic and also achieve Ebo’s dream of multiple productions across Ghana. Currently it is Roverman Productions, nonetheless all cannot be done by this group in terms of promotion. Obviously other groups, whether amateur or professional must also be protected and supported to run the theatre on regular grounds. Thus, a culture of bringing back the theatre spirit in the 1950s.

At the heart of all marketing activities is always the audience. For Roverman Productions to be successful in the world of theatre, its marketing managers must know a lot of parameters and characteristics related to the audience. The quantity and quality of this information is a prerequisite for maximum address to audience’s concerns. The marketing manager for Roverman Productions must build the demographic picture of potential audience. It has been established from this study that Ghana’s theatre promotion is not strictly the script, but rather drama in action requiring also the management of the total performance/show. It is also to be emphasized that too much attention on sponsorship/ money as against artistic presentation equally kills the theatre. Therefore, it is necessary that the qualities surrounding the script and the performance must be apt to thrill its audience.
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Theatre in Ghana and its relevance; Theatre in Arts, how can it be Revolutionaries” CD- ROM. Entertainment on Rhythm A-Z: Joy FM. June, 2013.


*Electronic/ Internet Sources*


**Personal Interview**


Amarteifio, Ronnie. Personal interview. 31 march, 2014.


Asiedu, O. K. Kwaku. Personal Interview. 20th February, 2014


Kesse, Enoch. Personal Interview. 16th March, 2014.


APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire for Roverman Productions’ Audience

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA - LEGON
SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ART
THEATRE ART DEPARTMENT

TOPIC:
A Study of Roverman Productions in the Promotion of Theatre in Ghana

Dear Respondent,

I wish to seek your candid opinion about the role of Roverman Productions in the promotion of theatre in Ghana. The rationale for the study is to contribute to stock of research conducted on the theatre promotion in Ghana. The findings are to help inform policy makers to initiate measures to ensure effective and efficient working collaborations between Roverman Production and the general public. Your response will be kept confidential.

Thank you.

Section A: Personal Information

1. Where do you live? ..............................................................................................................................................

2. Gender: a. Male [ ] b. Female [ ]

3. Age: a. 15-25 [ ] b. 26-35 [ ] c. 36-45 [ ] d. 46-55 [ ]
   c. 56 and above [ ]


5. Occupation: a. Student [ ] b. Civil Worker [ ] c. Self Employed [ ]

6. What is your means of transportation to the National Theatre? a. Self-driven [ ]
   a. Public transport (taxi or Trotro) [ ] c. Company car [ ]

Section B: Information on Roverman Productions Activities and Shows

7. Did you come to watch the show alone? a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]

8. If No, whom did you come with? a. Friend/Colleague [ ] b. Spouse [ ]
   c. Parents [ ] d. Children [ ]

9. Did you purchase the ticket yourself? a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]
10. If No, who bought it for you? a. friend [ ] b. Company [ ] c. Spouse [ ]
   d. Others (Specify)......................................................................................

11. Is it your first time watching Ebo Whyte’s play? a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]

12. If No how many times have you watched his plays? ........................................

13. How do you see the show, on a scale of …? a. Excellent [ ] b. Very Good [ ]
   c. Good [ ] d. Average [ ] e. Poor [ ]

14. What is your reason for watching the show? a. Entertainment [ ] b. Information [ ]
   c. Education [ ] d. others (Specify)....................................................................

15. Do you watch any other show besides Ebo Whyte’s show? a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]

16. If Yes, please specify the following.  a. venue: ......................... b. Gate fee
   .................................. GH₵.

17. Do you suggest that other smaller theatre groups learn from Roverman Productions?
   a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]

18. If No why? ....................................................................................................

19. What do you think are the problem that incapacitate the other theatre groups to be active?
   their audience.

20. In your opinion is Roverman Productions helping promote theatre in Ghana?
   a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]

21. If Yes, what could be the reason? .................................................................

22. Will you suggest that Roverman Productions be a model for other theatre organizations:
   a. Yes [ ] b. No [ ]

23. If Yes, give reason..........................................................................................

24. If No, give reason..........................................................................................

25. Suggest ways you think will help improve Roverman Productions shows:
   ........................................................................................................................
Appendix II: Interview Guide for Ebo Whyte

On the history and activities of Roverman Productions in Ghana.

1. Who is Ebo Whyte?
2. a. What is your Philosophy in Life?
   b. Are you a counsellor? Are you influenced by some of the issues you deal with?
3. How did you start your theatre activities?
4. What were your major challenges from the beginning of your theatre productions?
   b. Your audience response then?
5. What were some of the plays you were performing and the issues discussed in it?
   b. Who were your target audience?
6. What informs your writing?
   a. What is the main message you want to put across in general for the Ghanaian community?
7. Are you inspired by any of Ghanaian playwrights, and how does their work contribute to your kind of theatre?
8. Is there any playwright or theatre practitioner beyond Ghana you look up to?
9. Does your past experiences contribute to your writing? And how?
   b. why do Roverman Productions only produces Ebo Whyte’s plays?
   c. Must we expect plays from other playwrights produced by Roverman Productions?
10. What are the challenges you face currently with Roverman Productions?
11. What is your notion about the state of theatre in Ghana?
12. With about 38 years of theatre experience, is there any point in time that you shifted your target audience?
14. How do you explain the nature and response from your audience then and now?
15. Is Roverman Productions plays meant for certain class of people in Ghanaian society?
   why? Looking at it from the point below
   a. the Gate fee
   b. Message
   c. English Language
   d. Venue
16. Did the military regime affect your company in any way?
17. Who is Mr. Charles Wireko?
18. In what way does he support Roverman Productions?

19. How many permanent sponsors does Roverman Productions have?

20. What are the medium of publicity for Roverman Productions and which one is more feasible in reaching the majority of your audience?

19. Kindly explain the philosophy and the vision of Roverman productions? And why the philosophy?

20. How many members has Roverman Productions?

21. What is required of one to become a member?

22. How do you manage your members on such a large scale and knowing well that they have other commitment?

23. What is required for one to play a particular role?

24. How are roles also assigned like stage manager, assistant stage manager, makeup artist and stage hands?

25. What are the reasons for involving the youth in your work? And is it open to all ages?

26. What are the challenges you face with your members?

27. Your members combine both theatre arts products and non-theatre arts products. Is there any difference between their attitude and what are some of these?

28. What kind of theatre do you operate?

29. What has contributed to the growth of audience?

30. Why do you choose to perform at the National theatre?
   a. How do you solve security issue and transportation considering your venue?
   b. How does The Front-Of-House, In-House and Box-Office operate during productions?

31. What has contributed to the growth of Roverman Productions’ audience?

32. What are the medium of publicity for Roverman Productions and which one is more instrumental in reaching the majority of your audience?

33. If we talk about promotion of theatre in Ghana, we are referring to the various groups of theatre companies and their contributions to the theatre. What will you are the main challenges faced by theatre groups in Ghana.

34. How often do you write your plays?

35. Why your plays are not published so that those who do not have the chance to watch the performance could access the script to read it?
Appendix III: Questionnaire for Theatre Practitioners

Section A: The History and Current State of Theatre in Ghana

1. How do you describe the condition of live stage theatre performance at the moment in Ghana?
2. How has the theatre history being before the advent of Europeans?
3. How did Nkrumah, the president of Ghana contributed to the promotion of theatre and its feasibility in terms of audience response?
4. What was the idea behind the establishment of the Arts Council and why was it abolished?
5. Which era saw the boost in theatre practices and who were the pioneers?
6. How was Efua Sutherland’s ideas and theatre group contributed to the development of theatre in Ghana? Considering a. Experimental Theatre b. Drama studio c. School of Performing Arts d. Kusum Agoromma
7. How were theatre groups of those period managed and financed especially with individually owned groups?
8. What were some of the challenges faced by group and how were they curbed?

Section B: The Activities of Roverman Productions and its Contribution to the Theatre in Ghana.

9. How do you describe Ebo Whyte and his theatre group, Roverman Productions activity?
10. Is he contributing to theatre and how?
11. What do you suggest are the backbone of Roverman Productions that is assisting it to be sustained?
12. Will you agree that Whyte’s accounting and management background has contributed to the groups success and how?
13. Is Roverman Productions artistically or commercially inclined and how?
14. What is the role of Roverman Productions in the promotion of theatre in Ghana?
15. How does Roverman Productions position itself to attract audiences?
16. What is your opinion on the following operations of Roverman Productions
   a. Venue    d. message
   b. Ticket    e. cast and crew
   c. Security
17. What must be improved with Roverman Productions so as to satisfy a larger audience?
18. Must it be a model for smaller theatre groups in the country and why?

Section C: Ways to Help Improve Theatre in Ghana and the Way Forward.

19. How can the commercial theatre and the Schools theatre team up for to share and improve themselves?
20. How do you perceive the future of theatre in Ghana, is it retrogressing or progressing?
### Appendix IV: Copy of Plays Tally from 2008- Early 2014

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