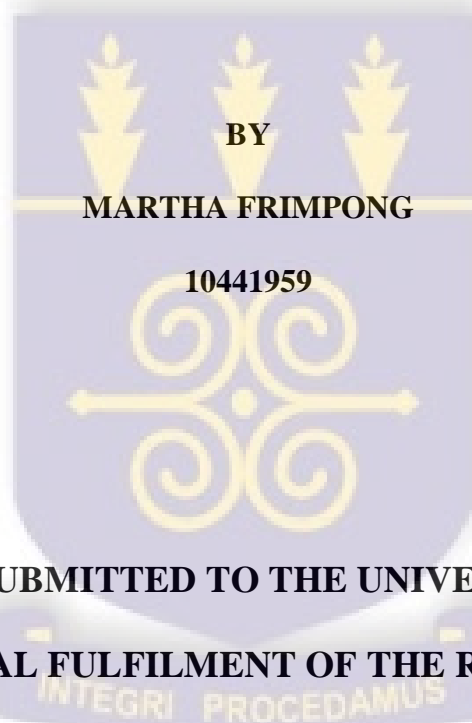


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**TOWARDS AN AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE
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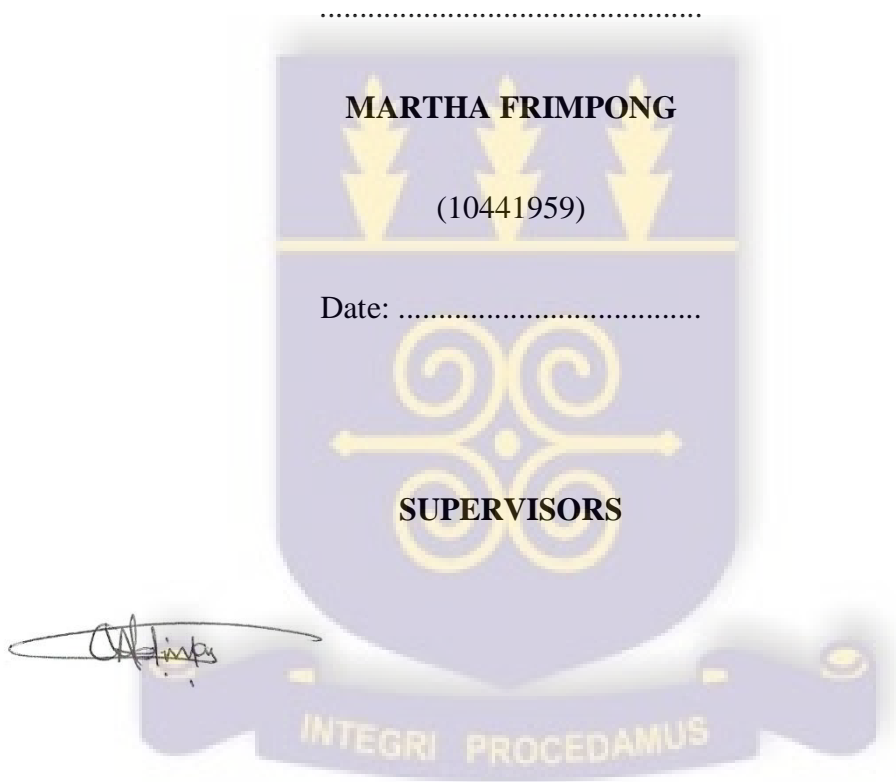


**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF A MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY THEATRE ARTS
DEGREE**

JULY, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own undertaken research and has not been presented by anyone for any academic award in this or any other university. Any scholarly work that has been quoted or cited has also been duly acknowledged by means of referencing. Any errors of commission or omission in the entire work are entirely my own.



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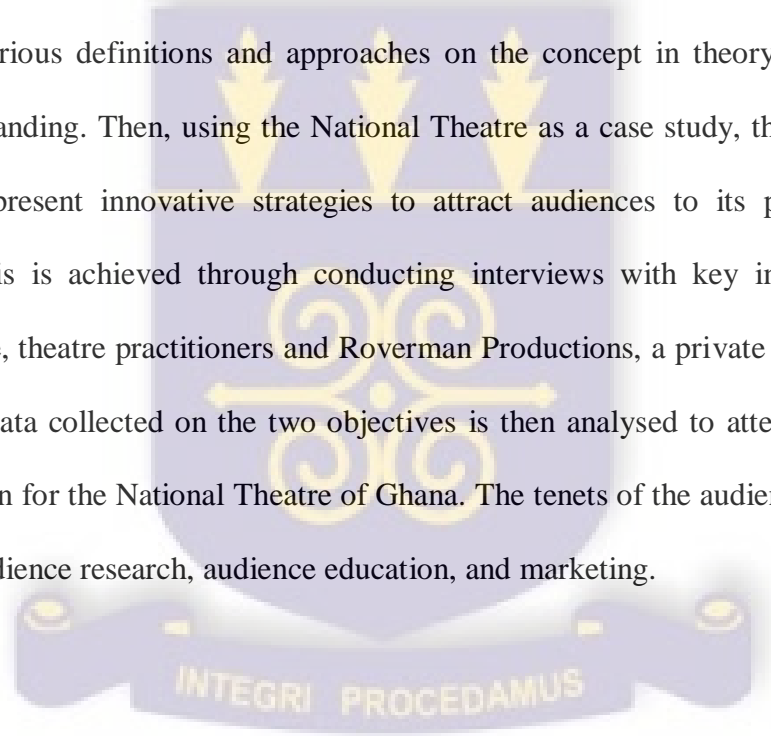
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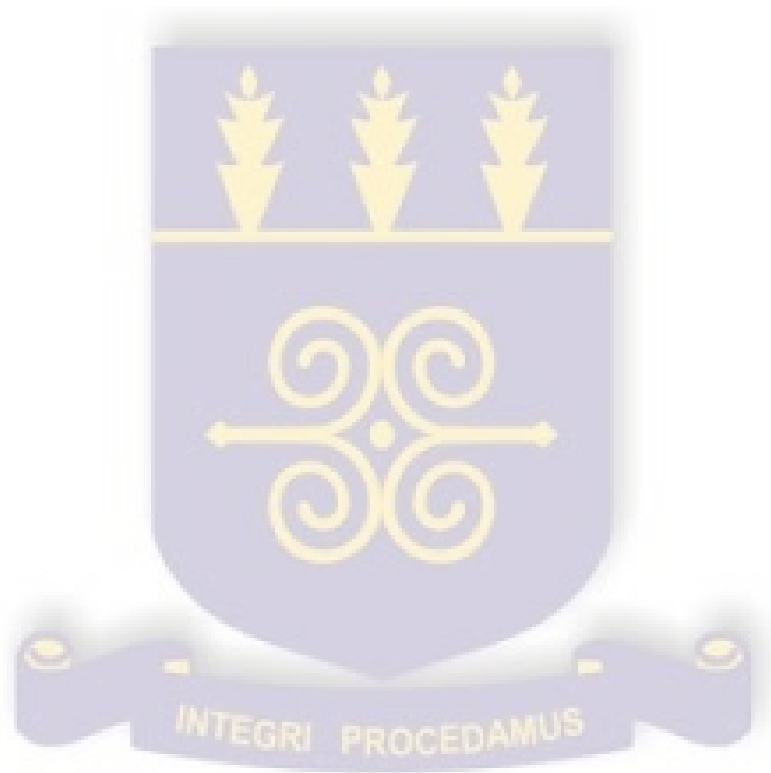
ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of audience development in an attempt to create an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana. For the National Theatre of Ghana, the relationship and attendance of audience to its programmes and resident groups' productions is an issue of concern. The management of the Theatre faces a problem in developing audiences as most performances they present including those of the resident groups are not well patronised as against private theatre companies that hire the space for performances. Through a comprehensive review of literature on the concept of audience development, the study discusses the various definitions and approaches on the concept in theory and practice to enhance understanding. Then, using the National Theatre as a case study, the study analyses both past and present innovative strategies to attract audiences to its programmes and productions. This is achieved through conducting interviews with key informants at the National Theatre, theatre practitioners and Roverman Productions, a private theatre company in Ghana. The data collected on the two objectives is then analysed to attempt an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana. The tenets of the audience development plan calls for audience research, audience education, and marketing.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to the memory of my late sister, Paulina Baffoe. You truly left an impact in my life. Your dedication and love will always be remembered. May your gentle soul rests in perfect peace.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to the Almighty God for his kindness and protection. Thank you Lord for bringing me this far; I couldn't have done it without your divine intervention.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
GADEC	Global Arts and Development Centre
GTV	Ghana Television
IGF	Internal Generated Fund
IMC	Interim Management Committee
MOTOCCA	Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts
NCC	National Commission on Culture
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NIRP	National Institutional Renewal Programme
NTG	National Theatre of Ghana
PNDC	People's National Democratic Congress
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SPA	School of Performing Arts
TFD	Theatre for Development
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter serves as a general introduction to the thesis. It starts with an introduction that projects a clear picture of what to expect in the whole thesis. Background to the study follows the introduction where a review on theatre audience is discussed to give relevance to the study. The motivation for the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, delimitations, significance of the study, definitions of terms, and organisation of the study are also provided.

1.2 Introduction

The purpose of theatre is to educate, inform, entertain, communicate, motivate and inspire and for cultural preservation. All these preceding factors cannot be achieved without the presence of the audience. In theatre parlance, the target group for any intended message is the audience. Theatre is not complete without the audience. Thus audience plays an important role in theatre performances and this makes it “people oriented” (Hume, Mort, and Winzar, 2007, p. 136). This is because, in the theatre, both the performers and the audience need each other to achieve the concept of theatre experience.

A theatre audience may be defined as “a group drawn together by a theatrical event, at a certain time and place that is aware of itself as a group” (Cameron and Gillespie, 2000, p.17). In the theatre, the audience is an essential part of the production concept. They can be referred to as the final consumer of the theatre. This is in the sense that plays are written, and enacted, with the audience in mind. Theatre performance is prepared for them and without whom the performance could as well pass for a mere rehearsal. Further, issues dealt with in play productions are meant for the audience. Consequently, the audience becomes the “topic”,

the “centre”, the “occasion” and the “reasons why” (Handke, 1971) a theatrical performance takes place. Felna and Orenstein (2006) say of a theatrical audience in a theatrical production thus;

As you wait for the event to begin, in all likelihood, it has not entered your head that the actors have also been waiting for you. All of their work has been in anticipation of your response. The performers need you to be there; and if you and everyone in the audience suddenly vanished leaving an empty theatre, there would be no performance. Your presence is vital to the theatre itself... (p. 26)

The above implies that the audience is very essential to the theatre. There is a form of relationship that is created between the performers and the audience. This relationship is there right from the creation of the play script; which the director interprets also with the audience in mind. The performers act out their roles at rehearsals thinking of the audience reactions. Therefore, when the audience do come to witness the final product, they complete the theatre experience. Hence, any attempt to sustain and develop audience for the theatre is essential to the growth of the theatre organisation, theatre studies and practice.

It is for the above reason that this study attempts an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana. As the national face of theatre practice in Ghana, the National Theatre has a duty to develop a relationship with its audience; one that will be interesting enough to propel future patronage. There should be conscious effort to develop audience; to appeal to all potential audiences. This could expose the organisation to a wider audience that,

in the long run, will help ensure targeted niches (new, occasional and regular audiences) are engaged. According to the Arts Council of England:

The term audience development describes activity which is undertaken specifically to meet the needs of existing and potential audiences and to help arts [and cultural] organisations to develop on-going relationships with audiences. It can include aspects of marketing, commissioning, programming, education, customer care and distribution (2004).

The essence of developing theatre audience is to attract both old and new admirers into the theatre to build a deeper relationship with the already existing ones, and to sustain interest that will boost audiences up for future patronage. Thus, in audience development, measures are put in place not only for the existing audiences, but also for the ones that may not have any interest in the theatre whatsoever. This is because a relationship is built with the existing audience with the aim of reaching out to other similar audiences (broadening). In that same relationship there is an achievement of the art of deepening the theatre experience of the audience. This way, the audiences are able to grow with the experience. There is also the relationship that is built with those who are not inclined with the theatre. This group is the potential audience that needs to be wooed to the theatre.

The aim is to provide value to the audience with quality content for relationship building. However, before attaining this height, the National Theatre must know that developing audiences is serious task that demands extra attention and care to achieve successful and effective results.

1.3 Background to the Study

The National Theatre of Ghana is a physical manifestation of the Theatre Movement¹ that was begun in the 1950's. Built in 1991, the National Theatre was opened on 30th December, 1992. It is managed by the Board of Directors². The physical edifice of the Theatre belongs to the government of Ghana under the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts (MOTOCCA)³. This makes the Theatre a civil service organisation resulting in all its workers being on government pay roll. The Board depends on Government Subventions and the Theatre's Internal Generated Funds (IGF) to manage the theatre.

The National Theatre has four different components; the Theatre and its three resident groups: The National Drama Company (Abibigromma), the Ghana Dance Ensemble, and the National Symphony Orchestra; which are autonomous. In addition, the Theatre itself presents and produces its works. It has its own ongoing programmes that fit into the Theatre's mandate; "to present and promote the Performing Arts in Ghana, by encouraging others who are in the field to perform at the Theatre" (A. A. Frimpong, personal communication, March 5, 2015). The mandate of the Theatre does not say theatre or drama, but emphasises on the performing Arts; music, dance, poetry, and drama. It produces a lot of performances and collaborates with other production houses to produce plays and other performing arts related productions. For instance, the Theatre has a long standing collaboration with Roverman Productions; an amateur theatre group that perform every quarter of the year at the Theatre.

¹ The National Theatre Movement was spearheaded by Efua Sutherland in the 1950's. It sought to find an authentic Ghanaian Theatre and on a larger sense a West African Theatre.

² According to the National Theatre Act, Section 4 PNDC Law 1991, the board is responsible for the election of the Executive Director and two other deputies; Artistic, and Administration, Finance and Human Resources. The Governing Board consist of the following; (a) the chairman and five other persons, (b) the Director of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, (c) the Director of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, and (d) the Executive Director of the National Theatre of Ghana. <http://ghanalegal.com/?id=3&law=517&t=ghana-laws>

³ MOTOCCA was instituted by the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Government in 2012. The board manages the theatre through this institution. Thus the Theatre is answerable to MOTOCCA.

Like every National Theatre in the world, the National Theatre of Ghana serves as a community space to the country. So the theatre interacts with the community by renting the space out for some government and social events. Also, the Theatre serves the Ghanaian community through performances at the National Theatre and also touring communities with performances by the resident groups. The Theatre has three main different acting spaces with corresponding audience capacity. There is the main auditorium that has a seating capacity of one thousand five hundred (1500); the exhibition hall with a capacity of four hundred (400) audiences seating and the old folk's place, an open air facility designed with tiered seating for about three hundred (300) people.

If not all, almost all theatre organisations have the vision and mission to have audience that they could call their own; audience that they can impact their lives with their performances. It is interesting to note that some theatre companies in Ghana, such as Roverman Productions, Global Arts and Development Centre (GADEC), Globe Productions, Novelty Initiative, H4P Crew, among others, have been attracting audience to almost all their performances. However, when it comes to the National Theatre, the story is different. Some productions that were witnessed in the latter part of the year 2013 and 2014 attest to the fact that the growing numbers of audiences that attends private productions at the Theatre far outweighs that of the Theatre's resident groups' performances and programmes.

On the 12th and 13th September, 2013, Mohammed Ben Abdallah's *Song of a Pharaoh* was premiered at the National Theatre of Ghana. This production, was supposed to be well patronised for two reasons. To begin with, Ben Abdallah is a renowned playwright and one of the pioneers of the development of theatre in Ghana. Additionally, the production was being produced at the National Theatre, the Nations' pride when it comes to theatre going. The performance was jointly presented by The National Dance Company, the National Drama

Company (Abibigromma), and the National Symphony Orchestra; the resident groups at the Theatre. However, as it turned out, only a handful of audience showed up for the performances on both days. However, Roverman Productions and other private production houses, such as (GADEC), and Globe Productions, produce plays at the Theatre and they are well patronised.

In the month of September, 2014, the National Theatre celebrated a theatre festival dubbed, *Theatre Month*. This programme was adopted to celebrate the performing arts in Ghana. Many theatre companies and educational institutions from the basic levels through to the tertiary level were invited both as active participants of the festival and observers. Thus, various productions were drawn out from the Theatre's programmes including some from the three resident groups and other private theatre companies. Data collected from the Marketing Department of the Theatre shows that performances by private companies were well attended than that of the resident groups and other performances drawn from the Theatre's programmes. The main auditorium of the Theatre, where most of the performances took place has a sitting capacity of 1,500. Data collected from the Marketing Department of the Theatre reveals that most of their own performances were not as well patronised by audience as was the case of the private theatre companies that graced the festival with their performances. For instance, Abibigromma put up Sakey Sowah's *Firestorm*, with an attendance of about 450 audiences. There were performances by the Symphony Orchestra and Ghana Dance Company also with an attendance between 200-220 and 750-800 audience respectively. However, a performance by the Ghana Police Band drew audiences of about 1,200/300. Not to talk about performances by Roverman Productions, and that of Globe Productions that had full houses.

Perhaps, the aforementioned data enlightens that the Theatre has a problem in developing audiences for its resident groups and programmes. The question then arises; what is it that

private theatre companies are doing that the Theatre is not doing? The Theatre's programmes, such as the Key Soap Concert Party in the late 1990's and at the turn of the millennium, used to be well attended by patrons from all over Ghana. What then could have caused this drawback? Is it that organisers of the National Theatre are not doing much publicity, or does it have to do with the way that performance is done or the type of plays the Theatre produces? Is it a matter of not targeting and developing their audience or a matter of not having the audience at all? These and many other questions set the tone for this research, which aims to build an audience development plan for the Theatre.

1.4 Motivation for the Study

The motivation for the study stems from the fact that; despite the National Theatre's inability to attract audience for its productions and programmes, the space seems to be an event centre that has no connection with anybody. What the researcher means is that organisers of private productions and other arts or business related events use the space for what they want and they go with their audience. It appears no management of the Theatre has sat down to think that it has to find a way of making anyone that enters the National Theatre premises remember the National Theatre "experience" and not just the programme or event (such as Ghana Music Awards) that took the person there. This has been the case since its establishment. Management has not been able to do that over the years so thousands of people come there and they walk away with the memory of the event they came to watch and not that of the National Theatre. There was never a system to get a database of every event and the people that patronise it. This is indeed a problem.

Again, being an important edifice in the history of the country when it comes to the performing arts, a lot is expected from members of management concerning the required

patronage of their programmes. Yet, the National Theatre seems to have a problem when it comes to developing audience for its programmes and that of its resident groups.

Further, the library research (discussed in chapter two) done on the concept of audience development revealed that the Wallace Foundation and the Rand Research in the Arts are making the air waves for audience development in the United States of America (USA). These two companies have embarked on a number of research which include; (McCarthy and Jinnett, 2001; and Wiggins, 2004), and *Wallace Studies of Building Arts Audiences*,¹ among others. The Arts Council of England in the United Kingdom has produced a number of reports on audience development. Of such reports is Maitland's step-by-step guidebook to promote better understanding and practice of audience development which would be discussed later in chapter two of this study. Australia also has a couple of studies (Regional Arts Australia, 2002; March and Thompson, 1996) on audience development to her credit.

Nevertheless, the situation is not the same in Ghana. Research in audience development is lacking and this makes it difficult to have access to tangible audience data to aid in that direction. Awo Mana Asiedu (a researcher at the School of Performing Arts, Legon), in 2014 carried out a research on Roverman Productions' audiences to ascertain the reason why the audience keeps patronising Roverman Productions every quarter at the National Theatre. Though an aspect of Asiedu's data was carried out at the National Theatre, it does not mean that the research was geared towards developing audiences for the National Theatre. Again, Asiedu has studied West African audiences in literary theatre with Ghana and Nigeria as the case study. Her work, although it has considerable data on Ghanaian audiences, largely dealt with audience response in the theatre and not how audience can be developed (Aseidu, 2003). Thus, this study is an attempt to provide empirical evidence of issues which need to be

¹ The Wallace Foundation is an art foundation based at the United States of America. Its mandate is to enable institutions to expand learning and enrich opportunities for all people.

addressed to ensure the present and future patronage of the National Theatre's programmes and that of its resident groups.

It should be stressed at this point, that this study is not only interested in audience patronage of NTG programmes but also ways of developing audiences for the Theatre. The study's core mandate is to attempt an audience development plan that could be use to build audience at NTG. In order to develop audience, there is the need to attract them to patronise the Theatre's programmes. Audiences, no matter small the number, could be developed into dedicated audiences who will attract other new audiences into the theatre. All an organisation need is the right strategies to be put in place to develop its audiences for life. This is what, the NTG, is an theatre organisation, needs; hence, the study; "Towards an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana", is a pioneering one in attempting an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Though there have been studies on theatre audience and audience development in countries like United States of America, United Kingdom, and Australia, not much is found in Ghana. No extensive study has been done on audience development. While, Asiedu (2003) dealt extensively on Ghanaian audiences' as part of her study on West African audiences of literary theatre in English, her focus was on their response to literary theatre in English and not audience development. It is thus imperative to extensively explore the existing literatures on audience development to inform the audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana.

It has been realised that, performances that the Theatre puts up, be it its programmes or any of the resident groups' performances, are not fully patronised. In the face of this, it has become necessary to examine and ascertain the reason(s) for such decline in patronage.

Though the Theatre may have put some measures in place to build audience for its programmes and that of its resident groups, there seem to be a problem as the management of NTG efforts appear not to yield the required results. Thus it is prudent to analyse their approach to determine what works and what does not. Therefore, the study seeks to examine innovative strategies (both past and present) that NTG has undertaken and to strengthen them towards an audience development plan that could yield positive results.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1. To conduct a comprehensive literature review on the concept of audience development for the right approach to an audience development plan;
2. To investigate past and existing measures for audience building at the National Theatre towards strengthening innovative ones for effective audience development;
3. To use the data gathered on the above to inform an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana

1.7 Research Questions

The study will try to answer the following questions:

1. What measures can be put in place to present a comprehensive audience development plan?
2. What has been the past and existing innovative strategies concerning audience building at the National Theatre?
3. How can the above data be merged to aid in the creation of an audience development plan?

1.8 Significance of Study

1. The study will help the National Theatre discern effective strategies for attracting and developing audiences they could call their own.
2. It will also be of benefit to theatre practitioners and companies, cultural organisers, and readers who may desire to improve their knowledge in Audience Development in Ghana as well as help reap financial benefits.
3. Research on audience development in Ghana is lacking and this makes academic work on audience development very difficult as data is hard to come by. Thus it is very prudent for this research on developing audiences for the National Theatre to be carried out, to document the findings that might propel further research into such discipline.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study centres on audience development in Ghana. However, it delimits itself to the National Theatre of Ghana. The National Theatre is chosen because it is the nation's seat when it comes to the physical edifice of theatre in the country. It is also where most of the government and the private theatre organisations hold their performances. The study will specifically concentrate on the establishment of the National Theatre; its management, staff members, programmes and the resident groups.

1.10 Limitation

Literature on audience development in Ghana is limited and this greatly affected the study as it had to rely massively on literatures from the Diaspora. Further, the National Theatre has no plausible audience attendance data. Again, written literatures on the National Theatre are very little. This means the study relied on primary sources from the staff and the selected theatre

practitioners interviewed, which were mostly assumptions. The above limitations, notwithstanding, the study was able to successfully achieve its purpose.

1.11 Outcome of the Study

1. The study should be able to attempt an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana
2. The study should be able to serve as a document that may inform the staff of the National Theatre on details that they might not have known about their audiences and their organisation on developing and sustaining the relationship of audiences.
3. The study will attempt to provide practical steps that could be used to develop audiences for other arts related institutions in Ghana.

1.12 Organisation of the Study

The study consists of five Chapters. Chapter one, basically, can be seen as a general introduction to the thesis. It commences with an overview to the chapter and gives a background to the study. This is aimed at providing the inspiration and the rationale for the study. Also, it looks at the motivation for the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations, and the organisation of the study.

Chapter two is a review on literatures related to the study. The review is methodically done to understand the concept of audience development. For clarity and coherence, the discussion is done in sub topics.

Chapter three provides the methodology used for the research. This is where the various techniques, methods, and approaches embarked upon to solicit for data for the study are

amply discussed. The study employed the qualitative research design with purposively sampled population.

Chapter four deals with the presentation and discussion on the data gathered from the various respondents. The findings are subjected to an in-depth analytical review based on the literature review conducted.

Chapter five is a general conclusion to the thesis. Hence, it comprises a summary of the whole thesis, concluding paragraph and recommendations. The concluding part comes with a summary of findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This aspect of the study reviews literatures relevant to the study. Some related literatures on audience development are reviewed to help the researcher in determining the relevance of the study as well as to put the work in perspective. To bring about deeper understanding of the research problem, the chapter is presented in two parts. The first part concentrates on reviewing literatures that have bearing on developing audiences in a general sense. Has already been established, the study reveals that there is limited or no written literatures on the subject of audience development in Ghana. It is, thus, necessary to review works done on the concept in the Western world to equip the researcher with the necessary resources for the audience development plan for the National Theatre. The second part focuses on the limited written literatures on the National Theatre of Ghana with emphasis on its audience, productions and programmes. This framework provides the foundation of the analysis for the empirical data in chapter four of this study.

The first part of the literature review throws light on the concept of audience development by reviewing literature on the concept to provide a lead way to approach the audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana. As the theatre cannot do without its audience, this part of the literature review commences by giving the relevance of audiences to the theatre experience. Also, what researchers have come up with concerning the classifications of audiences are also discussed to situate the study in the different groups of audiences that exist. Further, the term audience development is examined to clarify the terminology by discussing the related areas closely attached to the concept. These are audience education, and arts marketing. The last thing discussed under this section is the different approaches to audience development employed by various authors. Thus the first

part of the literature review is to provide basis for the audience development plan at the end of the study.

2.2 The Concept of Audience Development: Definitions and Approaches to Achieve an Audience Development Plan

2.2.1 The Audience and its Relevance to the Theatre

The productions of theatre performances aim at attracting audiences that help complete the theatre experience. This is because the target group for the intended message of the performance is the audience. Theatre brings together audiences from all walks of life in its endeavour to complete the theatre experience. The theatre needs its audience to make this experience absolute; as without them it becomes a mere rehearsal. This is because the theatre experience is a two way affair; the performers on one side and the audience on the other side. This makes the “[t]heater a people industry” (Reid, 1998, p. i) where audience members and actors or performers of a theatre organisation have an interpersonal relationship. Both parties – audience and staff – should be friends. They should have deeper relationship to build interest and strengthen them. Reid, in this instance, is advocating for a relationship built on friendship. Supposedly, any form of unfriendliness may cause a shortfall in audience patronage.

Audiences are active members of theatrical events and so are not to be taken for granted. Audiences do not just happen to find themselves at events. They come together for a reason and even with that it is not possible for them to assemble just because particular event exists. They are attracted and encouraged (Park, 1986). Commenting on this, Park, in *Analysing Audience*, (1986) advises “to know [and] consider your audience” (p.479). This simply means the art of knowing the nature of one’s audience and taking considerable measures to understand their features. The features being the needs and wants, likes and dislikes, and

generally, what might have attracted them to the theatre event in the first place. When this is achieved, then the theatre organisation can align the audience features with the suitable art form. This way, audiences are identified with particular art forms that suit their characteristics. Inferably, not only should the performance exist but it should attract and at the same time be identified with the audience.

Audiences, in this case, are not seen as mere spectator but a relevant aspect of the theatrical process. They are seen, according to Conner (2008), as a collective body that “looks, listens, and feels at a distance” (p.80). Conner (2008) further asserts that historical facts imply that the very presence of the audience at a theatrical performance “was fundamental to the very definition of the arts [theatre] event itself” (p.81). Here, the audience do not only come to watch actors perform but they engage in the art of selling, eating, making deals, talking, flirting, learning, debating, and engaging with their fellow citizens. This suggests that the attendance of arts or theatre events by audience could be likened to life. The theatre becomes an event or a place where audience go to understand and enjoy life. For instance, in ancient Greece, it was a norm for playwrights and poets to explain facts, ideas, themes, and issues that concern their plays to their audience prior to the performance of the plays. In essence, the audience, were seen not to watch performance for watching sake but to see the performances as “the point of departure for the exchange of ideas, opinions, and passing that are fundamental criteria of useful civic conversation” (p.83). They come to the theatre to think, learn, debate social issues as well as to be entertained. So, before the audience watch a performance, they are preoccupied with the issues and themes of the play and thus make constructive conversation amongst themselves when the play unfolds before them.

2.2.2 Defining the Audience

According to Rogers (1998), it is necessary for arts organisations to define what it means by its audience. One may be involved in, for instance, an educational event, but that does not automatically make that individual a theatrical goer. This person may be hindered from attending a theatrical performance due to economic, social, or personal circumstance. Thus, if an organisation defines audience only in terms of people who attend its performances, then its focus becomes too narrow as the organisation tends to ignore those unable to attend due to the aforementioned factors.

The term audience is defined by Lamos, (in Hill, O'Sullivan, and O'Sullivan, 2003), as “a sounding board for the artistic impulse” (p.25). To him, the audience consists simply of those who experience the art form that is available to them. This definition, in a way, is similar to that of Rogers (1998) in that it excludes any other audience who may have the intention to participate but may fail to do so because of a hindrance. However, he goes further to give a broader definition that includes all those who support the art form in any way or those who may have an interest in a way. This group is mostly those the company may have a form of communication with. In essence, though those that attend the organisation’s performances are those that constitute the core audience, they still give room for the less direct contact as well (Hill et al, 2003).

Also, Schosser, (in Hill et al, 2003), sees audience as customers that are involved in a transaction with the arts institution that they patronise their arts performances. Here, there is a form of exchange between the arts institution and the audience that connects them and keeps the movement going in both directions. For this relationship to grow there is the need for arts organisations to make the arts more accessible in diverse ways. Any art organisation should understand the relationship between its audience and the arts to know the kind of art an

audience could be identified with; or the art form that may motivate their decision to participate (Hill et al, 2003).

Audiences are very important aspect in the theatre and so should be accorded the desired respect and acknowledgement. They are there for the theatre to function effectively; hence, they should be studied and researched for an understanding of their make-up. This way, any theatre organisation will be able to discern ways to build a relationship with their diverse audience that will propel an attraction to the theatre and the understanding of its concepts in their lives.

2.2.3 Classification of Theatre Audience

It is clear that the theatre exists for its audience but does it mean that every target audience member is attracted to or interested in the theatre? The following discussion provides insight into theatre audience classifications and groups.

Research has proven four classes of audiences (Pick, 1980 and Diggle, 1994). Pick (1980) outlines: *the target* - the portion of the audience population who are genuinely interested in theatrical performances. They are familiar with the theatre, aware of attending a production and the role of theatre in general education; *the regular* - those in the habit of attending performances on regular basis and help promote the arts as well; *the occasional* - those who intermittently go to the theatre when a famous person or someone related to them is performing; and *the potential* - the latent audience waiting to be wooed or massaged to the theatre (pp.41-42).

Diggle (1994)'s four classifications of audience includes: *attenders* - those fond of patronising the arts forms they are offered; *intenders* - those whose attitudes towards the art form are favourable yet fail to attend on regular basis; *indifferent* - those who have no

definable either for or against the art form being offered; and *hostile* - those who have a negative attitude towards the art form. The *attenders*, in this case are the regular audience who always grace their presence with arts events while *intenders* are those who naturally should be attracted to arts events but have lackadaisical attitudes that prevents them from attending on regular basis. The *indifferent* and the *hostile* are those, who need special attention and education on the benefits of the arts for them to be enticed towards any art form. For clearer identification, Diggle (1994) further groups the four under two umbrellas; *Available audiences* (“attenders” and “intenders”) and *Unavailable audiences* (“indifferent” and “hostile”). He elaborates that the *available audience* exist. They are present, available, and can easily be reached out to. The *unavailable* ones are the future audiences. They are yet to be recognised or found because they do not exist at the moment. They need to be searched for and as a result measures must be put in place to capture these audiences as well as sustaining their interest in the arts.

However, Hayes and Slater (2002) add one more group to their classification to make it five. They have Existing audiences, Attenders elsewhere, Switchers, Intenders, Indifferent and Hostile. Their groups have different characteristics but are unique in some way. The existing audience are those that the organisation can call their own. Attenders elsewhere are those that are inclined to other art events but are not currently attending that of the organisations’. Switchers have the knack for various art forms and thus have no particular art organisation that can satisfy their needs with one single performance. This group are always fond of searching to broaden their range of experience. Intenders are those who are inclined to the arts but never seem to put their inclination to fruition based on external factors like age or mobility barriers. Indifferent and hostile audience could be likened to that of Diggle (1994).

The classifications of Pick (1980), Diggle (1994), and Hayes and Slater (2002) discussed above, may have different names for the various classification of audience, yet, all virtually talk of the same audiences. However, the researcher sees the classification of Hayes and Slater (2002) to be aligned with the situation the National Theatre of Ghana is facing currently. Currently, there are audiences in Ghana that can be grouped under “Attenders elsewhere”. Some audience members of Roverman Productions do not attend the productions of the National Theatre of Ghana.

It should be noted that there is a development potential in every group of classification and this may require different strategic approaches as well as examinations of people’s motivations and behaviour (Hayes and Slater, 2002). Thus, it is advisable for every theatre organisation to understand the makeup of their audience; the various classifications or the type they belong to. This way, theatres can detect ways of attracting these different audiences to build a relationship that will sustain them in the theatre. This is because, each audience classification has unique problem; each of them may have their reasons for attending or not attending the theatre. For this reason, they demand different solutions.

Every audience pass through the decision making process before attending any art event of a sort. This is because; arts organisations presently in competition with a wide range of sources (Television, cinemas, and sporting events, among others) that equally demand the attention of the same audience. Audience members have the decision to choose from amongst these sources and so they enter into the decision making process. Hill et al (2003) have outlined five distinct stages that constitute the decision making process. The stages are in the following order; problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation. Potential audience members pass through these stages to arrive at a decision to participate in the arts. Hill et al (2003) append, that in making decisions,

individuals are prone to influences from diverse social, personal, and psychological factors which may either attract or estrange their attending a theatre performance. For that reason, theatre organisations need to understand these factors in order to devise ways and means of breaking down the physical and mental barriers that restrict access to the arts or the theatre.

As Diggle (1994) argues:

Arts organisations have to live in the present as well as the future and there can be no doubt that only an organisation hell-bent on self destruction would ignore the group of people who are favourably inclined towards it and its raison d'être and even more foolish to ignore the people who are so favourably inclined that they actually buy tickets for it (p.28).

This assertion, seem to encourage art organisations not only to live in the present but to look to the future as well in terms of understanding the audience that patronise the performances that theatre organisations put up. Audience members should not be taken for granted. When they attend performances, they may have done so with so many reasons. It is up to the organisers of theatre events to tap into what attracted them to the theatre in the first instance; and then devise ways and means of sustaining them to build relationship that will make them stay for life. It is only when theatre organisations understand the makeup of their audience and what bring them to the theatre, that organisation can proceed to build a relationship with them.

2.2.4 Audience Development In Context

Hayes (2003) traces the history of audience development from the United Kingdom (UK) where it started in 1945. According to her, the fundamental goal was to develop the arts by increasing infrastructure and touring productions and events. The expected outcome was to increase awareness by providing value for the arts. In this vain, the Arts Council of England provided funds to professional artists and concentrated on improving infrastructures of the arts. However, as times went by, the concept was embraced and this led to the community arts movement in the 1960's in the UK. Consequently, art audiences were put at the heart of cultural policy. Hayes (2003) adjoins that from the 1980's to the late 1990's, the motive for audience development became economic in the UK. During the period, arts organisations were expected to provide funding on their own and so funding, from the Arts Council, was cut down. This led to the development of marketing orientations and the language of business to appear in policy documents. To achieve success, it became a priority for arts organisations to seek sponsorships to provide funds for production costs. When this happened, arts marketers became aware of the need to develop capacity building and maximise box office returns. Due to this, the ideas presented by Keith Diggle¹ were highly sought after. Also, different kinds of manuals and guides on the approaches to audience development using educational tools, marketing strategies and programming were provided by different arts marketers, organisations and institutions (Hayes 2003). Thus audience development moved to a broader spectrum that included education, marketing and programming. Currently, the concept deals more with building relationship with existing audience to deepen their experience to attract divers audience and broaden them towards achieving greater experience in the arts (Hayes and Slater, 2002).

¹ Keith Diggle is an influential arts marketer based in the UK. He is the author of marketing book; *Arts Marketing* (1994)

2.2.5 Clarifying the Concept

There are a lot of definitions on audience development but there is no commonly agreed definition. The various definitions and the strategies that come with them present their own interpretation on the concept. Logically, these interpretations of the authors of the various definitions are similar in context. The key elements in most of the definitions include; education, marketing, artistic descriptions in programmes and the fundamental mission of building a relationship with the audience and the theatre. Hayes and Slater (2002) have argued that the most widely cited definition of audience development presently, is that of Rick Rogers (1998). Rogers's definition of audience development emphasises the need not only to cultivate existing audience but new audiences as well. To him merging the artistic programming, educational, and marketing elements of the arts organisation is the sure way to achieve the objective of audience development (Rogers, 1998).

In line with Rogers is Maitland's (1997) step by step guidebook in understanding the practice of audience development. The three elements; artistic, education, and marketing, are seen in Maitland's view, as equally valid. She however argues that there is a difference only because artists, educationist, and marketers have a different way of approaching the concept of audience development. To her, the concept of audience development is building a relationship between the audience and the arts organisation. To achieve a good relationship, the organisation must work for it (Maitland, 1997).

Interestingly, both Rogers and Maitland are both authors of Arts Council of England's report (2004) and thus it is not surprising that they both have similar concept in terms of defining audience development. However, upon critical review of both definitions, it is realised that Rogers's definition subtly outweighs that of Maitland's. This is because Rogers sees audience development as a holistic and integrative activity that not only requires the skill of marketing,

education and programming, but also aims at achieving a series of short and long term goals. He believes any organisation that is ready to develop its audience must be ready to cherish its existing audience in order to nurture new ones. Basically, Rogers opines that audience development is the art of “Quantitatively and qualitatively targeting new sectors in innovative ways to broaden the arts audience base, then nurturing new attenders, along with existing audience, to encourage them to grow with the organisation” (Rogers, 1998, p. 7). In line with this definition is that of Kawashima (2002). He also sees audience development as a concept that concerns the broadening of the audience base in both quantitative and qualitative terms to enrich the experience of the audience.

Hayes (2003), on her part defines the concept of audience development as an “amorphous concept that describes a wide range of activities with varied outcomes that are achieved utilising one or a blend set of skill sets” (p.1). To her, the concept concerns itself with achieving audience democracy in the arts through trust and commitment by changing the construction and composition of the audience.

From the ongoing discussion, it could be seen that the concept of audience development is a complex one. In practice, the terminology is often confused with the art of just growing the size of one’s audience. Therefore, arts organisations should know that developing audiences at the theatre should not be seen as “merely increasing of audience size” but the building of participation in “broader sense” (McCarthy & Jinnett, 2001, p.6)

Participation, in this sense, includes but not limited to; the audiences, presenters (actors and designers), policy makers, arts critics, sponsors, advocates, among others. They all in one way or the other participate their quota to complete a theatrical performance and to the effectiveness of the theatre organisation. Participation in the theatre is thus not limited to the performers alone. The art of building audience participation has been extensively dealt with

by McCarthy and Jinnett (2001). They looked at participation in the arts in general and came up with three basic categories - diversifying, deepening, and broadening - of developing audiences or participation. These three approaches, for the purpose of this study, will be referred to as 'the trichotomy of audience development'. It will be discussed later in this very chapter.

Another author, who is against the perception of audience development being just filling seats in the theatre is Fanizza (2012). She opines, that developing audiences "is about building relationship with your patrons and getting to know them personally" (p.9). Fanizza defines audience development as

...the building of relationship with your existing and potential audiences, through the use of specific audience relations programs, in order for them to become more involved with your organisation and/or art form. (p.10)

Relating the above definitions to that of Rogers (1998), it can be inferred that the essence of developing theatre audience is by attracting new and diverse people toward a theatrical event, to build a deeper relationship with the already existing ones, and to sustain interest that will boost audiences up for future patronage. The aim is to provide value to the audience with quality content that engages them in body and soul so that the audience believes that your product or service is the one for them. Thus audience are developed for the purpose of building relationship that will propel them to come to the theatre always. However, the definitions outlined so far also stress on the approach of using the tools of education, marketing and artistic programming in achieving the concept. Thus the terms, audience

education, arts education and arts marketing, often used comparably and sometimes on equal terms with audience development merits clarification.

Arts Education

Paul Owens, (1998) maintains that “[e]ducation in the arts is part of the growing armoury of methods employed to attract and retain audiences, participants and funders” (p.6). The key thing that the researcher finds interesting in this definition is the attracting and retention of audiences. Upon critical assessment, it could be deduced that this definition is quite similar to audience development as the interest lies in devising ways of not only attracting the audience into the theatre and the art form but the objective of retaining them as well. However, does that mean that arts education is audience development?

Kawashima (2002) describes the difference between arts education and audience education thus:

Arts education may be for the virtue of education, or personal development, to which the arts contribute, whereas Audience Education in contrast has a clearer focus on audience, whether existing or potential, and education is an implicit means for making the arts accessible to audiences (p.10).

This definition points to the fact, that audience education is an integral part of audience development. However, arts education seems to be an entity on its own. Therefore, to answer the question of whether arts education is audience development, the researcher sustains that education is key in audience development and so to achieve a height in audience development, audiences must be educated on the art form to create awareness. Further, education for

education sake can work without an attempt to develop the audience but it might not be possible to develop an audience without education (Rogers, 1998). So it could be maintained that arts organisations can put up arts education programmes inside audience development. This issue is very important to this study as the researcher sees education as an effective tool to making the theatre accessible and viable in Ghana, using the National Theatre as a focus point.

Arts Marketing

Diggle (1994) in his book *Arts Marketing*, defines art marketing thus:

The aim of arts marketing is to bring an appropriate number of people, drawn from the widest possible range of social background, economic condition and age, into an appropriate form of contact with the artist and, in so doing to arrive at the best financial outcome that is compatible with the achievement of that aim (p.3).

Diggle's definition reveals that arts marketing differ from business marketing. Hill and O' Sullivan (2003), in agreement with the above conception divulge, that the commitment and the kind of engagement that arts marketing seeks to achieve with its patrons makes the concept different from business marketing. The difference thus lies in the special nature of the arts experience and the centrality of the participants in the creation of the experience. Arts in general are created for the appreciation and patronage of the audience. It is a give and take affair as the artist/performer and the audience complement each other to achieve a holistic experience. This could be seen in relation to relationship marketing. Relationship marketing, according to Hayes and Slater (2002), employs the creation of long term relationship with

attendees by adapting to the changes in needs of the audience when the need arises. Fanizza differentiates between audience development and relationship marketing thus:

Audience development has a specific task to it – developing an audience. The specific task of evolving the audience member from a one-time interest buyer to a happy, loyal and involved patron is what sets audience development apart from the generic relationship marketing (p.29).

In Fanizza's view, though a marketer can also use the technique of audience development (word of mouth) to build relationship, in audience development, there would not be any need to use "typical marketing to be effect[ive]" (27). In effect, she believes that audience development can build relationship to sustain interest in the theatre than marketing. She however, suggests that audience development is a little valuable than marketing; perhaps because, to her, marketing is expensive than audience development.

Arts marketing, therefore, tends to concentrate on existing audiences while audience development is seen to be different in that its targets are not easily available audiences. So it is necessary for a theatre organisation, like the National Theatre to put up audience development programmes to develop audiences even though there is a marketing aspect to the organisation. This is as a result of the fact that in marketing, the product is created and promoted to benefit the organisation. Audience development on the other hand aims at creating with both the organisation and the audience assured of their benefits (Fanizza, 2012). Thus in marketing, the end product is for the organisation to win or benefit at all cost whereas in audience development, both parties are assured of their benefits.

Further, the establishment of sustainability, building of relationship and the long term impact on audience development seem to distinguish the concept as its own brand and not necessarily as a subset of marketing. However, leading from the views of Fanizza (2012) on the difference between arts marketing and audience development, the researcher believes that collaboration between the two concepts in addition to audience education, will work wonders for any art organisation that wishes to develop its audience. This is because, collaborating the two; education and marketing with audience development as suggested by Rogers (1998), will sustain and expand existing and regular audiences, create new audiences and enhance their experience. This process is, basically, what this study is advocating for in an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana.

2.2.6 Approaches to Audience Development

Research has proven that there are different approaches to developing audience (Hayes and Slater, 2002; Kawashima, 2002; McCarthy and Jinnett, 2003; and Fanizza, 2012).

Rogers (1998) advocates for a holistic approach to audience development. He outlines three elements: *programming*, *educational* and *marketing* as the tools that must be harmonised to achieve the effective objective of audience development. The objective, he maintains, has to do with the knack to increase, broaden, and enrich targeted audiences.

This model by Rogers (1998) has been criticised by Hayes and Slater (2002). They argue that the three elements outlined by Rogers hardly ever involve each other in practice. They explain that there seem to be projects between marketing and education, programming and education, and then marketing and programming. Thus to them the collaboration of the three elements to achieve audience development is rare on the basis of organisational structures, budgetary contributions to projects and communication channels. Perhaps, they were right to an extent, as Rogers, himself, indentified time, pressures, issues and attitudes as the obstacles

to the collaboration of the three elements. He, however, singled out time to be the most pressing obstacle of the lot.

Hayes and Slater (2002), on their parts identify two approaches to audience development: *missionary* and *mainstream*. The former concentrates on increasing the size of audience attendance by attracting new ones, while the later endeavours to deepen the experience of existing audiences. They argue that arts organisation most often concentrates on attracting new audiences and ignore the objective to retain the existing audience. They retains, that trying to attract new audiences into the existing fold might be costly in terms of time, money and labour (Hayes and Slater, 2002). This is true as not devising strategies to maintain the existing audience may cause a gradual decline in their attendance and participation of the art form they were so attracted to in the first place. Hayes and Slater (2002), however, advocate for an audience development plan or strategy that include both approaches. The researcher believes that this approach, perhaps, may broaden the definition of the arts to their existing audience and discern ways of attracting new ones through the development of the existing audiences. This will increase participation in the theatre by audiences.

After observing the approaches of both Rogers (1998) and Hayes and Slater (2002), the researcher finds the tenets in the approaches of Hayes and Slater (2002) and Rogers (1998) expanded upon by McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) and Fanizza (2012). For the purpose of this study, the researcher terms the approach of McCarty and Jinnett (2001) as the ‘Trichotomy’ of Audience Development. This basically means the three categories/approaches of audience development.

McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) conceive three approaches to audience development that they believe can increase participation in the arts.

1. *Diversify participation* – attracting new or different kinds of audiences than currently attending
 2. *Broaden participation* – attracting more people who are not regular and yet are expected to patronise the theatre
 3. *Deepen participation* – enriching the experience of regular participants of the theatre.
- (p.32)

Each classification of building participation is aligned with a particular target population. That is the classifications of audiences established in 2.2.3. The specific population determines which efforts are relevant in solving the issues in each case. To understand these classifications, McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) suggest that there is the need for theatre organisations to determine how participation building efforts fit with their overall purpose or mission. Every theatre organisation has a mission and so, the wish to develop an audience should be in compact with the mission of establishment. In this case strategies must be put in place to develop the audience. There should be the availability of resources and the funds to embark on such task. Again, the community environment in which they operate should be a contributing factor to the quest of an audience development (McCarthy and Jinnett, 2001). They believe it is only when these have been sorted out by any organisation determined to develop audiences, that it can fully achieve the overall concept of audience development.

Diversifying participation, as already been noted, has to do with attracting new or different audiences who are currently not attending. This group is not inclined to patronise theatre events. They are likely to be part of the potential audience as classified by Pick (1980), and as Diggle (1994) rightly implies, “the unavailable audience”. To Diggle, they are either “indifferent or hostile” and thus can rightly be linked to the potential audiences. On one hand, they are indifferent because their attitude towards the arts they are being offered is not

defined. One can only guess if they are for or against the art form. On the other hand, they are hostile because they have a negative attitude and believe that the theatre is not for them; hence, not likely to benefit from being involved in it. So they stay away; having nothing to propel them to the theatre. The question here is how then do we advocate the theatre to this group of audience? They need to understand the theatre and its benefits and value to culture and humanity.

The challenge, as suggested by McCarthy and Jinnett (2001), is to change the perception and attitude of this group of audience towards the theatre. This is because for as long they remain with how they perceive the theatre (with nothing to enlighten them); they may never consider participating in the theatre. On this same issue, Diggle (1994) writes; “if we want to expand audiences then we should have to learn how to change people’s attitudes towards the arts” (p.13). To solve this issue, McCarthy and Jinnett, in line with Diggle on changing the minds and perceptions people have of the arts, proposed the need for theatre organisations to make the theatre more accessible, tangible, and more closely related to everyday issues. They further stress that the social aspect (effective way of communication) of the arts should be emphasised to such audiences. This could be done by approaching individuals through their own social groups and emphasising the opportunities the theatre, offer for social interaction.

Perhaps Diggle (1988) puts it better when he writes that there is the need to show “people how rewarding the arts can be, to changing negative attitudes into positive ones, to ‘opening doors’, [and] to opening minds” (p.49). Consequently, educating the audience, as expressed by Roger (1998) and Hayes and Slater (2002) is brought to the fore to make the theatre more accessible and viable to audience.

The next element employed by McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) is broadening participation. This category or method of attracting audiences involves appealing to occasional audiences to

make regular audience out of them. Audiences found here could be the “occasional” as posited by Pick (1980). Diggle (1994) calls this group of audience “intenders”. They are inclined to participate in the theatre but are not attending. If they do, it is occasional. McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) suggest that information is vital to this group of audiences. They further advise that the information should be a give and take affair; the audience should have information about the theatre organisation and in turn, the theatre organisation should be updated with information on their audience. This group must be provided with information on what types of programmes are available, when, and at what price, and on why these programmes might interest them. Similarly, the theatre organisation should know the audience classifications (pick 1980, Diggle 1994, and Hayes and Slater, 2002) and the decision making process (Hill et al, 2003) of their audience as it is of utmost importance. This information provides basis as to why audience behave the way they do. Accordingly, paying particular attention to the information provided from both parties; the audience and the organisation, can aid in the smooth adjustment of understanding each other. This way, the theatre organisation can devise ways of breaking the bounds of what hinders audiences from attending the theatre on regular basis. Getting the needed information to these people may involve first determining the channels they use to get information; the media, personal recommendation, from friends, relatives, or community (McCarthy and Jinnett 2001).

The last approach is termed Deepening participation. This involves connecting consciously with the regular patrons of the theatre. This group of audiences know what the theatre means to them (Pick 1980, and Diggle 1994). However, one cannot be sure of their sustained patronage. According to Diggle, this group of audience are “made up of people who are favourably inclined towards the art form, already know something about it, and those who create and perform it [...] they are familiar with the ideas, language, style, images and so on, of the genre” (p.21) and so do not really need much persuasion to patronise any art form they

so wish. The challenge, nonetheless, is to convince them to become more involved, which means making their participation more rewarding. The key goal, as McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) conjecture, is to “increase these people’s knowledge of the arts form relevant to them and to instil in them a sense of belonging to the theatre community” (p.19). The experience is very important in the sense that it sought to increase their knowledge about the theatre by providing special events, seminars, workshops, and possibly, pre and post performance discussions. The experience also enhances the social dimensions of the theatre experience by offering people a sense of belonging. To deepen audience participation is to deepen their appreciation of theatre experiences and make them ambassadors, who will go out of their way to market the theatre. Perhaps, Diggle summarises the notion best. He writes: “Available audiences are not automatically your audiences just for the taking; even the most devoted followers will have their quirks and their blind spots” (p.29). Hence, it is a crucial effort to deepen the relationship of available audience to make them a family that will always be there as and when needed.

The study also found the approach of Fanizza (2012) to developing audience worthy of evaluation. She terms her approach, the 4C’s. They are *Community*, *Connections*, *Collaborations*, and *Caring* (p.10).

The Connections, as the name implies, are those who will readily offer help in times of need and support. They are mostly family, friends, co-workers, neighbours, among others. They are also, most of the time, the audience that theatre organisations may be assured of attending performances against all odds. They could be looked at in terms of the regular audience who understand the art of the theatre as suggested by Pick (1980), Diggle (1994) and Hayes & Slater (2002). This group, as stressed by the aforementioned authors, have links that may give them the opportunity to help the theatre organisation that they are associated with.

The Collaboration consists of the ability to expand the boundaries of the theatre organisation through partnership and association with other related organisations to build team work (Fanizza, 2012). This is where the theatre collaborates with a social cause, corporate bodies that might sponsor the theatre organisation, community outreach collaborations, business collaborations, political collaborations, among others. The collaborations are meant to put the theatre organisation in the lime light.

The Community aspect of the 4C's has to do with the theatre organisation becoming part of the community in which it is established. This is to create awareness in the community with the sole aim of increasing the consciousness of the theatre in the community and also building the audience in the process. The community, in another instance, can also deal on the ability of the theatre organisation to create its own community within the organisation to become part of the larger community (Fanizza, 2012).

Caring, is the last approach and it simply deals with allowing those around the theatre organisation to be aware of the care and love that the theatre organisation has for them. In this case, the staff and management of the organisation work in harmony, because it is through that they will extend to those outside; the audience (Fanizza, 2012). Fanizza (2012) advocates for all the 4C's to be inculcated into an audience development plan for it to be completed to fruition.

Upon critical evaluation of both approaches; the 'trichotomy' of audience development by McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) and the 4C's of audience development by Fanizza (2012), the researcher realised that the approach of McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) is directed towards achieving audience development through audience research. That is studying the audience to know the various classification they fall under, their decision making process, the information that need to be sent across to them and the resources available to carry out such research.

Further, an organisation with an objective to develop audience should align its mission of establishment to the goal of audience development. Similarly, Fanizza (2012) advocates for an audience development strategy on the premise that, the theatre organisation can relate with its audience through a liaison between the staff and the management. Here, the relationship building stems from the establishment and unto the audience. A contributing factor is the fact that both approaches, when used effectively, can complement each other.

For instance, both approaches recognise the importance of the audience and advocate for a deeper relationship based on understanding the audience make-up and the decision making process. Again, they identify the need for arts organisations that wish to develop their audience to align their audience development goals alongside the vision of the organisation in general. Lastly both see education as an effective tool to promote audience development. Education, not forgetting has been put along side arts marketing and programming, as relevant aspect of audience development process which are emphatically stressed on by Rogers (1998) and later Hayes and Slater (2002) as the strategic tools to effective audience development plan.

Either ways, the approaches outlined by the Wallace Studies in Building Arts Audiences by Parker (2012) suggests that any arts organisation that wishes to develop its audience may pay critical attention to the following:

1. Understanding audiences and figuring out strategies to “meet them where they are”
2. Involving the whole organisation in audience development
3. Creating a culture that embraces experimentation and learning (Parker, 2012, p. 4)

This approach, suggested by Wallace Excellence grantees¹ and put together in a report by the Wallace studies in audience development, has its tenets in line with the discussion on approaches above. However, the researcher sees this approach as straight to the point. It seems to be a combination of all the aspirations found in the various approaches discussed above modelled into one. This audience development approach is what the researcher wishes to base the audience development for the National Theatre of Ghana on.

2.2.7 Why the Need to Develop Audiences

This chapter has established the relevance of the audience to the theatre experience. So, the need to develop the audience that are so vital to the theatre experience should make perfect sense. As Hayes (2003) rightly puts “audience development is the life blood of arts organisations” (p.18). Again, arts organisations have various missions to meet. These missions that are in line with the overall mission statement of the organisations include artistic excellence, financial capabilities and social affiliations with the communities they found themselves. Audience development helps in achieving these missions (Maitland 1997 and Rogers 1998). It may be that theatre organisations have marketing departments that sell the productions they produce to the general public. However, there is the need to put up strategies to develop the audience to strike a lasting relationship for future patronage.

From the literatures reviewed that, it is seen that audience development is a long term initiative. It is about building relationship with the right people. The focus is to build your audience and fill the seats with people who not only will want to come frequently, but are likely to become more involved with your art and/or organisation by subscribing,

¹ Wallace Excellence grantees are arts institutions that receive grants and aids from the Wallace Foundation. Wallace Foundation is grant aid foundation based in the United States. Its mandate includes supporting institutions financially and socially.

volunteering and donating. It may take more time to build, but it is well worth it. In the end, the organisation would not need to work as hard to have dedicated audiences.

2.3 The National Theatre of Ghana in Perspective

This aspect of the literature review deals with the history of the National Theatre with emphasis on how it came into being; its operations, programmes, audience attendance and relations, as well as the different approaches that has been adopted in attracting audiences to its productions and programmes.

In the history of Ghanaian theatre, there is no way; one can talk about the National Theatre of Ghana without making reference to The Ghana Drama Studio. The mentioning of the Ghana Drama Studio also takes us back to the National Theatre Movement which was pioneered by Efua Sutherland and endorsed later by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (first president of Ghana) in the 1950's (Sutherland, 2012). The Movement was a collective of artistes (Including Sutherland) of the various destinations who saw the need to work towards the development of some kind of theatre with the underlining principles of African personality and development as the main philosophical or driving force. The objective was thus to achieve a theatre that would be characteristically unique and Ghanaian or African, so to speak. The idea of the movement; its tenets and mode of achieving success was very paramount to Sutherland. She sought to create a national theatre consciousness that will fulfil the needs of the whole country. She was passionate and certain that the tenets of the movement, when adhered to unconditionally, will naturally paves way for a construction of a National Theatre building that will put in perspective all that has been unearthed by the movement (Sutherland 2000). To achieve this aim, Sutherland had to start somewhere. She first conceived the idea of permanent space to house her dramatic performances. The task was challenging but it became a reality through a combining effort:

In 1991, the Arts Council, through the efforts of Sutherland, established the Ghana Drama Studio. The construction was £G3,000, while Rockefeller Foundation provided £G2,000, the remaining £G2,500 came from the Ministry of Education's votes through an appeal by the Arts Council (Botwe-Asamoah 2005).

It is imperative to mention here that she was not looking for just any space building. She wanted a permanent space for “[...] the emerging National Theatre Movement, [so] she mobilised funds and supervised the building of the Ghana Drama Studio, ensuring that its design was in harmony with performance demands of African theatre practice” (Anyidoho, 2000, p. 78). As a result, the edifice was called the Ghana Drama Studio for a purpose; it was significantly Ghanaian. It was built with Ghanaian attributes, culture and performances in mind to further clarify and focus the objectives of the Movement.

According to Botwe-Asamoah (2005), the Ghana Drama Studio had three main objectives. The foremost was to find means of generating awareness as well as controlling the new theatre movement towards the training of theatre artists by involving them in dramatic forms. The second objective was for the Ghana Drama Studio to be the home for the artists (writers, directors, actors, producers, musicians and dancers etcetera) that it has trained. The last objective was for the Ghana Drama Studio, to channel and supply the National Theatre of Ghana with the aforementioned practitioners as well as materials and ideals for programming, “when that institution is established” (p.167)

Thus, the idea of the National Theatre Movement, which resulted in the construction of the Ghana Drama Studio, was to help shape Ghanaian performance and dramatic forms by placing value and bearing on the works of artists and performers. The idea was to have something tangible, something to be associated to Ghanaians so that “in the plan for the construction of a National Theatre the first item of expenditure should be the cost of developing such as are suggested, which will provide the artistic power to give life to the edifice” (Sutherland, 2000, p. 45).

Form the ongoing discussions; one can assume that the efforts of the National Theatre Movement and subsequently, the Ghana Drama Studio culminated into the building of the National Theatre in 1991. For instance, Amy Appiah Frimpong, the current Acting Executive Director of the National Theatre of Ghana says on the issue:

This National Theatre is a physical manifestation of the theatre Movement that was begun in the 50’s The Movement was to try and define what Ghanaian and, to a larger extent, African theatre is? The concept of *Anansegro*¹ was initiated by the pioneer Sutherland and later the concept of *Abibigoro*² by Mohammed Ben Abdallah over a long period through the movement. So when this place [the National Theatre] was built, it was as a result of the works that have been done previously which resulted in the building itself (A. A. Frimpong, personal Communication, March 5, 2015).

¹ *Anansegro* is a term derived from *Anansesem* which simply means Ananse story. Ananse, is a very peculiar character to the Ghanaian storytelling tradition.

² *Abibigoro* is a style that Ben Abdallah chose to name his dramatic style. It means African drama. It is out of this style of his that the Drama Group, Abibigromma was established.

Perhaps, it is the efforts of those forerunners that aided in the build up of the National Theatre. However, Agyeman Ossei, the Head of the Department of Theatre Arts, School of Performing Arts (SPA), University of Ghana, Legon, and a former Executive Director of the National Theatre had a subtle opinion though might be seen as similar to that of Frimpong's. He sees the building of the National Theatre as a way of saying thank you to the forerunners of the Movement or those who sought to move for the establishment of the space. He explains that the movement had been in existence since the 1950's and so it was about time that they had a space to compliment the Theatre Movement (Ossei, 2015).

On the same issue, Arkhurst, a part time lecturer at SPA, a full time lecturer at the University of Education, Wineba, and student of Sutherland, in an interview with the researcher, argues that Sutherland's vision was to have a facility that would promote the Ghanaian arts form. He explained that Sutherland's conception of a "National Theatre" was seen as an "art" and not as a "facility". Though the idea of the construction of a National Theatre was part of the National Theatre Movement, the timing, according Arkhurst, that the National Theatre of Ghana was built was not right. To him, Ghanaians were not ready to comprehend such a huge edifice with no inclination to Ghanaian dramatic forms. Sutherland's wish was to build theatre in the communities through researching into what the people need. Her intention was to start with the Ghana Drama Studio and later replicate it in different communities, then to a national theatre; when the art of theatre going has taken hold in Ghana. (S. Arkhurst, personal communication, March 10, 2015).

According to Rebecca Fofu, the Public Relations Officer at the National Theatre of Ghana, the idea of Ghana having a National Theatre edifice was taught of first by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana. This taught was fully endorsed by the president in the National Theatre Movement which Sutherland consciously started in Accra with the Ghana

Drama Studio and in some communities such as Atwea in the Central Region of Ghana. However, construction of the National Theatre was realised during the term of Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, president Ghana from 1981 to 2001. He was able to secure this deal in China, at one of his state visits there. He was given an option by the then China government to choose between a stadium and a Theatre building. A theatre building won and in 1990, a contract was signed between the two countries for the construction to begin.

However, as part of the contract, the Ghana Drama Studio was to be pulled down to pave way for the construction of the National Theatre of Ghana in its place. Nevertheless, a replica of the studio was to be built at the premises of School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana in 1992 for students to use as experimentation for a holistic theatrical experience. The new studio was to be named after Efua Sutherland.

2.3.1 History of Practical attempts at Developing Audiences in Ghana

This section provides a brief on some attempts by some prolific theatre practitioners in the industry to develop audiences.

Arkhurst explains how Sutherland started developing audience at the Ghana Drama Studio and later Prof Nketia at the Efua Sutherland Drama Studio. He mentioned the processes they went through starting with Efua Sutherland.

As stated earlier, her travels to the communities paved way for another passion, which is developing audience in Ghanaian communities. Arkhurst perceives that she must have thought of the audience because all she did was to arouse the interest of the theatre in the communities, and this, basically is the genesis of audience development. So indirectly, she developed audiences for her productions. According to July (2007), Sutherland confirmed to her in an interview that, the Ghana Drama Studio developed audiences for its performances

between the years 1961 and 1963 before the Studio was handed over to the School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana.

Arkhurst also explains that by 1965, when Ghana Drama Studio was being used by the School of Performing Arts for experimental purposes, did developed audiences for their academic productions. What was done at the time was to organise free productions in the academic year. Then a theatre season was organised to commemorate all the productions done in the year. Then finally, a whole month (in the long vacation) was chosen to tour the country with same productions.

Arkhurst again recounts of how Sutherland made a mistake with her research with the starting of Kusum Agromba. They thought they were developing a theatre group that would be a better option than Concert Party ever was. Also, a theatre group that would perform what Ghanaians need. During a performance tour to the Ashanti Region with a programme that they had selected and thought was good for the people rather turned sour as the people wanted what they were used to, which is concert party. This nearly turned into mayhem as the people almost beat Sutherland and her cohorts up. The people wanted to sing and dance. They wanted entertainment. What saved them was the stage light because they had gone with some sophisticated stage lighting equipments. It was realised that half way through the performance, they had actually stopped concentrating on the play and were just fascinated with the stage lights. Consequently, the community members came because of the lights. Sutherland and her cohort did their best to entice them with their performances. Six months down the line, the community members realised that they were being offered something effective that is not only entertainment but educational as well.

Arkhurst himself made conscious effort on his part to educate the audience and to develop them for the Efua Sutherland Drama Studio. His task was to produce short plays which

consciously educated the audience. This was a mandate given to him by Prof. Nketia. The process sped up the development of audience for the Studio. With this, performances were held every two weeks. Audiences were allowed to watch performances for free and he confessed, it was a quick development. After the performance, there were post performance discussions that gave the audience the opportunity to discuss and understand what they had witnessed. After some time they were able to fill the Drama Studio to capacity. As soon as there was an advertisement of a production taking place at the Drama Studio, the place was filled up because they have been educated and the organisers didn't have to spend so much money in attracting them to come and watch.

This strategy came to an abrupt end when Arkhurst travelled out of the country for further studies. This brought an end to a beautiful relationship that had started between the organisers and the audience as there was no one to continue with the strategy.

Arkhurst further intimated that, after the National Theatre was inaugurated in December, 1991, it struggled with attracting audiences to its programmes and the productions of the resident groups. This was due to high cost of tickets and the fact that most Ghanaians associated the National Theatre to the educated elite. Thus the common man was not attracted to the theatre. In a bid to attract audiences to be financially stable, the management at the time practically brought in money making events such as business conferences, trade shows, and pop concerts. Another, thing they did was to go back to the Concert party tradition. This, they thought they could remould to suit Ghanaian audience then (Shipley, 2012).

The National Theatre management started the Concert Party¹ programme at the theatre in 1994. Initially, the performance was held at the old folk's place of the Theatre. It was realised

¹ Concert Party is popular West African theatrical genre that employs music, dance, drama, and comedy. It flourished in Ghana in the 1930's. The language use is the Akan dialect.

that “local people who enjoyed concert party were intimidated by the huge edifice of the National Theatre in downtown Accra” (Shiple, 2012).

Shiple (2012) further explains how the management at the time took drastic measures by bringing in sponsorship. Based on the support from the sponsors, the programme was live telecast on National television (GTV). This development made it possible for audience to choose either to come to the National Theatre to experience the live performance or to sit at home and watch on the television. Though the National Theatre, at the time, was able to attract audience to the Concert Party show, management failed to develop the audience to make them reliable patrons to theatre performances.

According to Shiple (2012), the National Theatre of Ghana was built to “foster the development of traditional idioms of contemporary arts forms and preserve the roots, growth and variety of the artistic forms that represent modern Ghana” (p.1395). While, this was taught in good vain, the National Theatre of Ghana has not been able to develop its audiences to be loyal and consistent to its programmes and performances.

Perhaps if Sutherland’s vision (developing smaller studios and building theatre artists around the Country to feed and supply the National Theatre with human resources) as far as promoting Ghanaian theatre was concerned had been fully fulfilled, then, the National Theatre of Ghana would not be having this problem. The researcher is of the view that the intention of Sutherland to foster development through traditional and contemporary arts forms to preserve the growth of theatrical performances in the country was not achieved before the National Theatre was constructed.

To this end, the National Theatre of Ghana can develop its audiences by embarking on an audience development plan; with the aim to develop audiences and advocate strategies, to promote the understanding and planning towards the sustenance of the theatre in Ghana. The

general participants of theatre programme: audience, presenters (artistically involved), policy makers, arts critics, sponsors and advocates all need to understand the benefits of the theatre so as to contribute effectively and positively to developing audiences at the National Theatre and largely to the development of theatre in Ghana. When this is achieved, then, theatre as an institution and theatre as a practice can be fully achieved in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the variety of approaches employed in gathering data for the study: Towards an Audience Development Plan for the National Theatre of Ghana (NTG). The research method employed for the study is the qualitative method. In view of this, the methodologies applied in the study include primary and secondary sources of data collection to warrant that information gathered was well recorded and examined. These processes informed analysis for the various conclusions of established substantive results, relevant recommendations and references. The primary source is highlighted on the data gathered through field studies, interviews, and observations. The secondary sources included data obtained from books, journals, articles, the internet and relevant documents to the study. The chapter underlines the following: research design, library research, research population, sampling size procedure, research instrumentation, and administration of research instruments, research data collection procedure, types of data, data processing and data analysis plan. The study defined, as precisely as it could, the problem that needed to be solved to put relevance on the study and help choose a suitable research design.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher adopted the qualitative method as the research design suitable for the study. The qualitative method of research “employs a naturalistic approach based on phenomenological paradigm, which uses a variety of interpretive research methodologies that seeks to understand phenomenon in context-specific settings” (Koul, 2009, p. 83). In this sense, the qualitative method concerns itself with the opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals. In applying qualitative method, the researcher was able to analyse the

perceptions and opinions of the study's respondents in context-specific settings. The researcher "focused on the specific context in which people live and work to understand the historical and cultural setting of the participants" (Creswell, 2014, p.4). Here, the research is conducted on the field (The National Theatre of Ghana) to allow direct interaction with respondents (interviewees) in their context. This gave the researcher the ability to collect data by interviewing participants, observing and examining documents associated with the the National Theatre and developing audience by focusing on respondents' views and not solely on the researcher's own assumptions. This way, the researcher was able to make meaning out of the respondents' experiences with the National Theatre and its history. It was thus suitable to use this method in order to arrive at a detailed data to supplement the study. This is because after gathering information, analysis was done to suggest steps for organisational improvement and other best practices with regard to audience development plan for the National Theatre.

Further, the qualitative approach was employed due to the pioneering nature of the study. As Creswell (2003) posits, "if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then it merits a qualitative approach" (p. 22). The concept, audience development, is new in Ghana, especially in terms of written literature. Though it has been in existence in practical terms for some time in the country, research on audience development at the National Theatre has not yet been explored. This is consistent with the limited research available on that score as discussed in the Introduction (Chapter one) and the Literature Review (Chapter two) of this study.

Therefore, the qualitative approach to research, explored above, ensured the quality of the information gathered from the study as against quantitative research methods which deal more with statistical data in interpreting issues (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Thus the qualitative

approach helped the researcher to provide relevant illustrations from the interactions with the staff of the National Theatre, selected theatre practitioners and observations from productions to help achieve the objective of the study.

3.3 Library Research

As it has been intimated in this study, research in audience development in Ghana is new. Therefore, to get more understanding on the concept of audience development, the researcher relied massively on library research for books, articles, reports among others. Libraries visited in the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra included; Balme (the university's' central library), Institute of African Studies (the main and the Archaeology section for Prof. J.H. Nketia), Department of English, and the School of Performing Arts (Theatre Arts Department). Other libraries visited included, the library of the National Theatre of Ghana located in Accra and the University of Cape Coast Library in Cape Coast.

Sources consulted on audience development in the western world includes but not limited to Park (1986), Reid (1998), and Conner (2008) to understand the audience and its relevance to the theatre. Delving into the definition of audience, the study consulted Rogers (1998), and Hill, O'Sullivan and O'Sullivan (2003). For classifications under theatre audience, the sources include Pick (1980), Diggle (1994), and Hays and Slater (2002). Maitland (1997) and Rogers (1998), Kawashima (2002) and McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) helped the researcher to put the concept of audience development in context. On the subject of the different approaches to audience development, Diggle (1998), Fanizza (2012) and Parker (2012) were consulted to know which approach will best suit the plan for the National Theatre of Ghana. Upon critical consultation and analysis, the researcher taught it wise to use that of Parker (2012).

3.4 Research Population for the Study

A population, according to O'Leary (2004) “is the total membership of a defined class of people, objects, or events” (p.102). In essence, the population of a study comprises the total number of all units that are available to be investigated. This involves objects, individuals, facilities, and experiences with similar features and purpose. The population of the study comprises some selected staff of the National Theatre and theatre practitioners who have had experience with the National Theatre. Also considered were marketing managers of private theatre companies in Ghana that hires the National Theatre for their productions. In all, issues concerning audience development, management, marketing, and arts education as well as personalities in the performing arts, lecturers, theatre students, and public patrons were also considered to have a holistic view on devising a plan to develop audiences for the National Theatre. The population was classified into three main groups: A, B and C.

Group A – the National Theatre staff respondents which included the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director (Artistic), Marketing Officer, Director of National Drama Company (Abibigromma), Programmes’ Officer/Producer, Public Relations Officer (PRO), and the Front of House Officer.

Group B – Theatre Practitioners; selected lecturers from the School of Performing Arts and Institute of African Studies.

Group C – Marketing manager from some selected theatre companies/production houses.

3.5 Sampling Size Procedure

Sampling involves a careful survey of a chosen proportion of the units concerning a phenomenon, so that knowledge gained from the study by the part will be extended to the whole. Sampling, therefore,

Involve[s] using the most practical procedures possible for gathering a sample that best ‘represents’ a larger population. At other times, however, the nature of the research question may find representatives inappropriate or [inaccessible]. In these cases, researchers will still strategically select their sample, but in ways that best serve their stated research goals (O’Leary, 2004, p. 107).

Thus, the sampling strategy utilised in the study comprised a cautious survey of selecting the population. The researcher, in this case, employed the purposive sampling technique.

As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) opine, Purposive sampling is, most often than not, associated with qualitative research. They further elaborate that in purposive sampling, “researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typically or possession of the particular characteristics being sought [... by] build[ing] up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs” (p.115). As a result, purposive sampling was employed because the researcher needed respondents who were currently working at the National Theatre, have had some experiences with the National Theatre, have knowledge on its history, and have insight in the theatre, theatre audience and audience development. These factors, being the needs of the study, made it necessary to find a sample that aided in arriving at a quality data that may suffice for each need of the research. Hence the population gathered brought together the possible respondents purposively selected for the research. These respondents fall under the group A, B and C of the above stated population. Thence,

Group A, on one hand, had in it the staff of the National Theatre. Now, the study was not looking for just any staff member but those that can actually help the study. These included

the management, artistic, marketing, PRO, and the front of house teams. It was important to create this group because the researcher needed to know how the National Theatre is run, its purposes, objectives, missions, staff strength, bookings, marketing, as well as the relationship it has with audiences that patronise its programmes. Of importance to this Group was the fact that the researcher wanted to establish how the whole organisation could help in developing audiences for the National Theatre of Ghana.

Group B, on the other hand, consisted of theatre practitioners who have had experiences or worked with the National Theatre before. Actually, this Group was created to inform the study of the history of theatre in Ghana, audience relevance to the theatre in Ghana, perceptions on the audiences to the programmes and productions of the National Theatre as against private theatre companies that hire the space for productions. Again, experiences with generating audience for productions that the National Theatre have undertaken, and some conscious efforts taken to generate the interest of theatre in Ghanaians, was of interest to the generation of this group of respondents.

With Group C, the researcher purposively chose only one private theatre company that hire the National Theatre for its productions. Roverman Productions has been consistent with having full houses for its productions in a span of five years. Also, it has a long standing collaboration with the National Theatre. Again, it is, probably, the only private theatre company that produces stage performance every quarter in a year at the National Theatre. Hence, Roverman Productions was purposively chosen to solicit views from their marketing department on how they relate and sell to their audience as well as how they keep them (audiences) always interested in patronising their respective productions every quarter in a year.

Since written documents on the National Theatre and audience development are minimal in Ghana, the purposive sampling became very prudent for the researcher as the study had to rely more on primary sources (word of mouth). This way, the researcher was able to utilise the interview sections with the purposively sampled individuals to a greater benefit in order to reinforce the secondary (library) sources. As a result, the method of sampling used and the sampling size outlined in groups A, B, and C “captures all the various elements/characteristics of the population under study” (O’Leary, 2004, p.105).

The number of people in the various groups was; Group A – 7, Group B – 5, and Group C – 1

3.6 Research Instruments

The data collected for the study was done by the researcher using two main research instruments; semi-structured interviews and observations. The questions were open-ended. However, to supplement and compliment the data gathered from using the aforementioned instruments, the researcher had to consult the website of the National Theatre, marketing materials from the National Theatre, audio recordings, video recordings and other documents collected about the National Theatre of Ghana. These instruments helped the researcher to gather data to understand the offerings of the National Theatre and their efforts in the aspect of developing audiences.

In qualitative research, interview has typically been the main method. The advantage of an interview is that the individuals that are planned to be included in the research are usually reached and involved in the research. Again, if it becomes apparent, they are to be contacted later on for additional or confirmation of information.

Crotty (1998) and Creswell (2003) summarise that qualitative research uses open-ended questions in interviews to give ample room for the interviewees to put across their views.

Besides, the idea of semi-structured interview is that the areas and themes of the interviews are same for everyone but questions are not tied with certain form or order, nor are they tied with any alternative choice. However, the interviewees are allowed to use their own words to describe the matter or opinion (Hirsjarvi and Hume 2000, p.47-48). In this case, the researcher had the liberty of asking follow-up questions which were enhanced by listening, and paying particular attention to details.

3.7 Administration of Instrument

The researcher had the opportunity to communicate verbally with the Executive Manager of the National Theatre of the study's intention to come up with an audience development plan for the organisation. This was done in the month of July 2014 when the researcher had an internship opportunity to work with the NTG to find sponsorship for the 2014 Theatre Month in September. It was during this period that the researcher established acquaintance with the Marketing Officer, Alfred Danso as well. For the duration of the internship (July to October 2014), the researcher had brief face-to-face interactions, telephone conversations, email correspondence and social media chats with the Executive Manager and the marketing officer to solicit their views on the National Theatre and audience development. The Marketing Officer, Danso, provided insights into the organisation through several emails, social media chats and telephone conversations. The Executive Director, Amy Appiah Frimpong, gave insight into the right staff to be interviewed to get effective data for the study.

Data was formally collected for the study by seeking permission from the management of the National Theatre. The aim was for the management to permit the researcher with the necessary data for the study. In view of this, a letter of introduction from the Head of the Department of Theatre Arts, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, where the researcher is a student, was sent to the Director of Administration through the marketing

manager. This letter of introduction really helped the sampled population to co-operate with the researcher and made it easy for the formal meeting with them.

For ethical reasons, the researcher also prepared an interview recruitment letter and consent form to recruit participants for the face-to-face interview. According to Greener (2008) there is a practical way of achieving your respondents' consent. This involves the preparation of a document that basically shows what the research is about, why the study is being conducted, what the researcher wants the respondents to provide the study with, what and how the data collected would be used and disposed off, and how to ensure their confidentiality assuredness. Also, involved in this document is how respondents can pull out from the research if they are not comfortable (p.44). Based on this, the researcher sent the recruitment and consent forms to ask respondents' permission and for them to be willing participants. In accordance with Greener's suggestion, a brief introduction was given in the recruitment letter and consent form about the objectives of the study and expectations of the would-be interviewees. They were given the opportunity of opt out if they so wished. Their consent was sought for the interview to be audio recorded as well as their names to be associated with them based on the information they may provide for the documentation of the study. As participants' confidentiality is very important in research, the researcher thought it wise to sought approval for the disclosure of the interviewee's names in the study (O'Leary, 2004).

The interview recruitment letter and consent form were sent to the respondents for two reasons. The foremost reason was due to research ethics (as discussed above) and the second was to formally introduce the study and the intended interview to the participants. This was done for them to familiarise themselves with what the researcher sought from them as respondents to a quality data in order to inform the study. In view of this, recruitment letters and consent forms were sent to eight (8) National Theatre staff members, nine (9) theatre

practitioners from the School of Performing Arts (SPA) and the Institute of African Studies, and one (1) to the marketing manager of Roverman Productions.

With the National Theatre staff respondents, the marketing manager collected them and delivered them to the right channel on the researcher's behalf. They were given a week to read and then give their consent based on the consent form. Some of them called the researcher right away to schedule a date for the interview while others did not. The researcher waited for a week to elapse then visited them personally in their respective offices to schedule a date for the one-on-one interview at their convenience. On the part of the theatre practitioners and that of Roverman Productions, the researcher hand-delivered interview recruitment letters and consent forms personally to those that were available. They read the letters on the spot and dates were scheduled for the face-to-face interviews. The others respondents that were not available had their letters given to their secretaries. On this issue, the researcher allowed a week to elapse before calling on them to fix a date for the interview.

The 8 respondents considered for the interview at the National Theatre included: The Executive Director, The Deputy Executive Director (Artistic), The Director of the resident drama group (Abibigromma), The Marketing Officer, The Programmes' Officer, The Producer, The Public Relations Officer, and The Front of House Officer. The 9 respondents intended for the theatre practitioners also included Prof. Emeritus, J. H. K Nketia, Prof. John Collins, Prof. Martin Okyere Owusu, Prof. Nii Yartey, Mr. Sandy Arkhurst, Dr. Agyeman Ossei, Dr. Mohammed Ben Abdallah, Mr. John K. Djisenu, and Mr. Africanus Aveh.

At the end of the initiating of the interview recruitment letters and consent forms, the researcher was fortunate to have all the seven (7)¹ National Theatre staff and five (5) out of the 10 theatre practitioners consenting to be part of the study.

It should be noted at this point that initially, the researcher wanted to recruit three (3) private theatre companies to constitute the group C respondent. The Three (3) theatre companies considered were Roverman Productions, Globe Productions, and Global Arts and Development Centre (GADEC). However, the researcher settled on only one; Roverman Productions because of the reasons outlined in this very chapter under sub topic 3.5 (Sampling Size Procedure).

3.8 Research Data Collection Procedures

As amply suggested by Stake (1995) and Creswell (2003), a variety of data collection procedure was used over a period of six months (from December 2014 to May 2015). The researcher used the first three months; December to February to observe and participate in National Theatre productions and anything that involved audience coming to the theatre. The purpose was for the researcher to be acquainted with issues on the ground such as where to go, what to do, and at what times. These have to do with particular references to issues like permissions, interviews, and who to include in the data collection.

The interview sessions started in March and most of the face-to-face interviews took place at the various offices of the respondents. However, some information was received from some of the respondents through emails. Other respondents were called to give clarifications over the telephone. The interviews were reordered to save time and for backup purposes. The language used was English as it is the official language of Ghanaians. The recorded data was

¹ Eight staff members were recruited so eight recruitment letters and consent forms were sent respectively. But the researcher got to know later that the Producer and the Programmers' Officer Positions were held by one individual in the person of William Ashon. Thus there respondents became seven and not eight.

transcribed, keeping it as original as the transcription would allow, into a coherent language for documentation. The originality was important because the researcher felt the need for the readers of the study to hear the interviewees “own voices”. Only some additional, unnecessary words like “sort of”, “you know”, et cetera were sometimes taken out from the quotations used in this study in order to make it a bit more comprehensible. The interviews were recorded because the researcher needed the conversation with the respondents to flow; not to break by asking questions, listening and writing at the same time. This way, the use of the audio recorder made it possible for the researcher to ask appropriate questions to make the interview move faster, smoothly and pleasurable. The interviewees spoke freely on questions asked by the researcher and on the general subject relating to audience development and the National Theatre. Sometimes, the discussions moved further from the theme at hand to some other issues. The researcher, however, allowed this to happen because those “issues” were actually important for the whole discussion. Moreover, the extension of the conversations to other issues aided in the better understanding of the framework in which the interviewees perceived audience development and how it could help in the study at hand.

3.9 Types of Data

There are two basic types of data: primary and secondary. This study’s primary data mostly involved the interview audio recordings, brief conversations from respondents, observations and personal encounters with some appropriate authorities.

The secondary data were collected through sources such as published books, thesis, articles, reports, internet blogs, addresses, and other kinds of documents on theatre, theatre audience and audience development. Published reports on audience development from the Arts Council of England, books on audience development from the RAND and the Wallace Studies in Building Arts Audiences in the United States of America, and articles and thesis on

audience development from the Australian Council for the Arts were analysed and reviewed by the researcher to make headway in the study. On the issue of Ghanaian audiences, the only published secondary source material the researcher came across was the PhD thesis of Aseidu (2003) on West African audience of literary in English. Aseidu's thesis thus provided the researcher with an insight into what the Ghanaian audience think of theatre, why he/she attends theatre sessions, and the type of theatre that interests him/her. It is necessary to point out that the history about the National Theatre and how it aroused interest of the theatre in the Ghanaian community to its productions were not sufficiently provided in Asiedu's thesis, neither could it be found in any of the materials found at the website of the Theatre nor documents written about the organisation. It was based on the interview conducted with the theatre practitioners who were not only witnesses to the building of the National Theatre but had personally worked there at the early stages and were still conversant with its operations. This is what informed the researcher to gather them.

It is prudent at this stage to add that, right from the outset of this study the researcher knew that getting information on audience development in Ghana will not be an easy task and thus was prepared for it. However, what the researcher was not prepared for was stress in getting access to the limited materials on the history of the National Theatre and its audience relations. The website of NTG failed to provide its activities and the state of affairs up to date. Also, no book found projected the history of the National Theatre and its operations entirely. Thus, the researcher had to rely more on the primary source (interviews) to gather data for the history of the National Theatre and how it generated interest in the Ghanaian community for its productions.

3.10 Data Processing and Analysis Plan

A semi-structured interview was prepared based on the research questions for the study. The views expressed by the respondents were processed using the interview guide in Appendix C, D, and E. In all, the researcher had three semi-structured interview guides, and each sought for information that was interrelated in finding answers to the research question.

The interview guide in Appendix C was prepared for the staff of the National Theatre. The guide sought to get information on the job requirements of respondents, the mandate of National Theatre, their knowledge of the affairs of the Theatre in terms of audience relations, their perceptions on theatre in general in Ghana, their views on arts education and audience development, and if the National Theatre is/has ever been involved in the art of building audience for its programmes.

Appendix D was prepared for the purposively selected theatre practitioners. This guide sought to get data on the positions and experiences that the respondents have had with the National Theatre, history of the National Theatre, how it has generated audience for its programmes and productions, their views on theatre in Ghana, theatre audience/development, arts education, ways to develop audience for the theatre, challenges and of some of them might have faced in developing audiences.

Appendix E was made to guide the interview of the marketing manager of Roverman Productions. Here, the researcher wanted to know the relationship Roverman Productions have with their audience, their views on audience development and what Roverman Productions do to keep their audience interested in the productions they stage to have them consistently attending their performances.

The above examined issues raised in all three semi-structured interview guide for the three set of population were raised from the research questions of the study. These questions were

intended to fulfil the research objectives. In achieving these objectives, there was the need to examine the issues that came up in both primary and secondary data. To solve this, the primary data was used to reinforce the secondary data gathered from the library research. Thus, the collected data were analysed in relation to the stated objectives to arrive at the present situation of the National Theatre in terms of audience development. Moreover, it was to equip the researcher with the necessary information to be able to devise a well cut out plan and to settle on the right approach towards developing audiences for the National Theatre of Ghana.

Through the above methodological processes, the data collected informed the strategies that were put in place to build an audience development plan that is hoped to communicate effectively to the audience and the National Theatre management. In the end, the data collected was used to answer the statement of the problem as well as the research questions. This is discussed amply in the next chapter of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview

The findings, analysis and interpretation of the data collected in the study are presented in this chapter. The National Theatre of Ghana (NTG) is a prominent edifice in the history of Ghana. Not only does it help in defining the means of theatre in Ghana, it also aids in the establishment of a firm foundation in the art of the theatre in Ghana for generations yet to come. Thus, with an establishment of this nature, naturally, Ghanaians are supposed to highly patronise its programmes and productions to attract other foreign investors that come to the country. Yet, this is not the issue as programmes that the Theatre puts up and that of its residents group's productions are not well attended as compared to the private companies that hire the space (NTG) for performances. Attached to this problem is the fact that there is little or no written documentation that details the history on the Theatre and how it has generated audiences for its programmes and that of its resident groups over the years. Of immense relevance is the fact that theatre as an art form has lost its vibrancy in the country.

This chapter, in presenting the data gathered on the study, foremost tries to observe the history of the Theatre to ascertain how audiences are generated for its programmes and that of its residents group's; laying emphasis on the trends that have taken place over the years. Additionally, the study reports on how the Theatre is handling the situation of not getting the expected audience patronage for its programmes as against private companies that hire the space for productions. Also, the study tries to establish how the Theatre is involved in the art of audience development.

As evidently pointed out in the research methodology (chapter 3), the interviewees for this study are experienced staff of the National Theatre of Ghana; selected theatre practitioners;

and a manager from Roverman Productions; are involved one way or the other in the art of theatre practice. In the following, the interviewees would be referred to by their surnames.

4.2 The Establishment of the National Theatre

Under this topic, the researcher presents the events surrounding the establishment of the Theatre. How the theatre started its operations is presented with emphasis on how it generated audiences for its productions and programmes. Again, what might have created the low patronage of the Theatre's programmes and the resident group's productions as against private theatre companies that hire the space for performances is also discussed.

The researcher sought the views of Djisenu, a lecturer at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon, and a former member of an Interim Management Committee (IMC)¹ formed in 1993 to manage the National Theatre of Ghana when it was established. According to him, the National Theatre was built jointly by the Governments of the Republic of Ghana and the People's Republic of China. The project was funded by the latter and was completed on 16th December, 1991. Djisenu intimated that the person who was very instrumental in getting the theatre built was Mohammed Ben Abdallah². He however lamented that between the period it was completed and commissioned, December 30th 1992, the Theatre was dormant. To commemorate the commissioning, there was a joint performance by Abibigromma and the Ghana Dance Ensemble, then resident groups at the School of Performing Arts, and some Chinese troops.

After the commissioning in 1992, the government at the time, People's National Democratic Congress (PNDC) made a law that stipulated that Abibigromma and Ghana Dance Ensemble

¹In 1993, an Interim National Executive was constituted. On that Interim Management Committee was Prof Nketia and a few other people. What the committee did at the time was to ensure that there were performances at NTG.

²The then Chairman of the National Commission on Culture (NCC) under the People's National Democratic Congress (PNDC) Government.

were to be transferred from the School of Performing Arts to the Theatre with immediate effect. This move became a legal tussle between the University of Ghana and the National Commission on Culture. As a result of the legal instrument backing the movement, the likes of William Addo¹ and Prof. Nii Yartey² were able to move with some resources³ and some members⁴ with them to the National Theatre.

By 1993, the legal instrument mandating the transfer of the resident groups to the Theatre had been passed. In so doing, the law established the National Drama Company (Abibigromma), the Ghana Dance Ensemble, and the National Symphony Orchestra, then based at the Ghana Arts Centre, as the resident groups of the National Theatre of Ghana. As a result, it was possible now to think of performances not only in drama and dance but in music as well.

4.2.1 The Commencement of Theatre Performances

The resident groups had just been transferred to the Theatre in 1993 and they needed to get the required resources to have effective performances. Djisenu stressed that the theatre had just been built and everything was new, but resources such as stage flats to build sets, costumes, stage properties (props) and other key requirements needed by performers to put up performances were not in place. The mandate thus was bigger than the Interim Management Committee's resources. This is because the Theatre, at the time, had virtually no funds and

¹ The then Artistic Director of Abibigromma. He also worked very close with Ben Abdallah.

² The then Artistic Director of Ghana Dance Ensemble. He is currently one of the Board of Directors of the National Theater and the Head of the Dance Department, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon

³ Costumes, props and flats were moved by the Directors of Abibigromma and Dance Ensemble from the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon to NTG. This became one of the reasons why the university came in strongly to oppose why the resources that the university had provided for the school was being taken to newly built National Theatre that had not only taken the university's personnel but now taken its resources as well (personal interview with John K. Djisenu).

⁴ Some of the members remained at the School of performing Arts to continue being a part of the resident group based at the university. Those who remained still maintained the names; Abibigromma and Ghana Dance Ensemble respectively. Thus both residents when split up maintained their respective names even in both facilities; The Efua Sutherland Drama Studio and the National Theatre of Ghana.

the minimal personnel had just been recruited. One can imagine a National Theatre with little or no resources at all then recruiting staff. Not only had it not recruited all the staff it needed, it had virtually no funds to support its internal affairs. Yet, the theatre must be kept alive. The best way was to put up performance and invite people to come and watch.

Accordingly, the then Acting Executive Director, Allen Tamakleo, decided to stage Yaw Asare's *Leopard's Choice*. Djisenu, however, expressed that it was not an easy task getting the funds for this performance. To him, it is still a mystery how Allen Tamakleo got the groups to perform. Where he got the funds and the other resources to mobilise the groups to put the performance through was a mystery because the Interim Management Committee was amazed at how he did it. So it is right to suppose that on a purely shoe-stringed budget, the Interim Management Committee managed to get performances going on at the Theatre.

For the production to attract audience, the Interim Management Committee (IMC) looked for sponsorships. They looked for free advertisements on television and radio. Then also, they sent hand bills to some of the notable places within the ministries. The Theatre's location is such that it is very close to the ministries, so they sent some hand bills there, to schools, the universities and the hotels within Accra. As *The Leopard's Choice* was the maiden production of the Theatre, complimentary tickets were sent out to those in the ministries and those at NCC. To some of these people it was mandatory for them to watch. At the time there was no publicity board for the Theatre so one was mounted at the junction of the Independence Avenue and the Liberia Road. On this board was mounted the poster for the production for everyone to know about the production. Basically, that was how the awareness was created for Ghanaians to patronise the maiden production of the Theatre. Ultimately, that became the norm to attract audiences to the Theatre to watch the resident group's performances. The year in reference was about 1993; and no budget had been earmarked for the Theatre thus far.

Because of the financial constraint, the Interim Management Committee was still looking for avenues to generate funds. As if by design, the National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP)¹, which mandated institutions to seek alternative sources of revenue, was established. So the Theatre decided, for instance, to privatise some of its products in order to raise the needed funds for its programmes. This is because the government at the time had not been able to fund all that was required.

Not long after came the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)², which had as its package, retrenchment and retraining of staff that made it possible for masses of workers to be laid off with the promise that some of them were going to be retrained and those who remained would be paid better; nothing of the sort happened. So even though the National Theatre had been mandated to raise part of its own running capital, made possible by NIRP, as it were, it was not able to do so due to SAP. The Theatre had to fall back on whatever it could get from the government, which was not enough for its running.

After the maiden performance, there were other collaborated performances with external bodies such as of the French Embassy. Together, the resident groups did some excellent works in the theatre to get the theatre going on. To encourage effective productions, the IMC, with the help of Djisenu and Cecilia Adjei³ trained the technical staff in the areas of scenic design, stage lighting, stage props, and costume designing. All these meant that qualitative productions were done. People trained in the technical areas were manning the areas. This

¹ During that period, Institutions were mandated to strengthen themselves and solicit for a certain percentage of whatever they needed to survive; this was part of the requirement of the National Institutional Renewal Programme.

²The retrenchment and retraining of staff members was a conditionality of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) because the government at the time (PNDC) had borrowed money from them.

³Both Djisenu and Adjei were professionals in the technical aspect of theatre. Djisenu then, was the technical designer at the Theatre. He was in charge of the designing and construction of scenery as well as lighting and props for productions. Adjei was in charge of costumes but went abroad for post graduate studies and came back again to the Theatre to continue from where she left off.

way, the programmes became enriched and when this happened, through the input of such personnel, people with the taste for the arts were attracted.

The IMC managed to get programmes for the Theatre and this went on for about six months before an executive director was appointed in 1994. He was in the person of Prof. Amoako from the discipline of music. He worked closely with a performance activist (a lady), who had lived abroad, Canada. Somehow, the two of them got married and so they complimented each other and made sure that they created other packages other than theatre, dance and music.

They created children's programmes. They made sure that annual programmes instituted and attracted performers from outside the country; performers who came from certain parts of Africa to participate in annual programmes. They also put in place musical and dance groups for the youth and these programmes helped generally in attracting audiences to the Theatre. The fact that there was multiplicity of performances to meet the audience taste meant that the youth was attracted to the Theatre. Virtually a cross section of the society was attracted, not only the middle class.

For instance, Djisenu recalled in particular that they started a variety entertainment programme, called Show Time. This variety entertainment programme, as the name implies, was a variety show: dance, theatre, music, poetry, acrobatic shows, among others. The unique thing about this programme was the sets. The sets (immediate locations of the scenery) were designed to depict specific locals. Sometimes the designs took the audience to the sea shore, the forest, the streets, etc. Due to this, people were attracted because of the set designs. All the resident groups within the theatre bought into it. This was done over the weekends and for the first time; this programme began to at least fill the main auditorium and the other floors as

well. The challenge was getting the sponsorship to sustain the programme. They failed to attract sponsors; so by and large, the programme collapsed because of funds.

Another programme that the management at the time resorted to was the Concert party tradition¹. Based on the experiences they had with the Show Time Show, Amoako sought sponsorship from Unilever Ghana Limited² to support concert party with one of their products, the Key soap brand in 1995. Thus the programme became Key Soap Concert Party. It was a weekend (Sunday) show initially staged at the old Folk's Place of the Theatre. When Unilever came on board, and in conjunction of the management of the Theatre, they had it broadcasted live on National Television (GTV). It was moved to the main auditorium because the audience capacity increased. For the first time, it was the Key Soap Concert Party that attracted more people to the Theatre and filled the main auditorium of the Theatre to its fullest capacity. Though the Show Time programme started this attraction of audiences to the Theatre, the Key Soap Concert Party proved to be a massive audience puller than the Show Time programme. Primarily, tickets were sold out before a performance. This show brought audiences from all over Ghana to the Theatre. It was one show that bridged the gap between the rich and the poor, the elite and the illiterate, the employed and the unemployed, the child and the adult, theatre lovers and non theatre lovers. The programme run for some time until 2002, when Unilever pulled out sponsorship, then down went the popular genre again.

4.2.2 Challenges with Low Patronage of National Theatre's Programmes

When asked about the challenges that might have caused the low attendance of audience to the Theatre's programmes and productions, Djisenu disclosed that the major challenge was the limited finances of the Theatre. As presented earlier, the Theatre had to mostly rely on the

¹ A popular West African theatre genre that became vibrant throughout the 20th century but lost touch in the early 1980's. It incorporates comedy, music, dance, and drama.

² Unilever is a multinational corporation that deals food supplies, personal hygiene and household accessories. The mother company is based in England, United Kingdom.

government for financial support. There was also the issue of sponsors to project and sustain programmes and productions. For this reason, the promotion of programmes and productions to the target audience became difficult.

He added that the Theatre was not very well known and patronised by Ghanaians. For one, the physical location of the Theatre made it a very tricky place for people to patronise performances there. Traffic to and from the location are always heavy. Notwithstanding those who have their own means of transportation, most individuals have to catch public means of transport and if a programme starts at 8pm, it is likely to end at 10pm. By that time most trotros¹ had winded up service. So initially, it was very difficult for most people, especially workers, after productions to find means of transport back home. The location downtown was in the heartland of the ministries. So only a few individuals were attracted and most of them liked to come in by complimentary tickets (Free tickets given for special invites; especially, to family and friends of performers in the production).

The folk's place of the National Theatre was used for some afternoon shows. However, if one considers the one hour lunch break for most workers at the ministries, a lot of them would rather get their lunch than come and sit at the folk's place and watch anything. So initially, it was very difficult for the Theatre to attract the needed audience for its programmes and performances.

Again, attracting audience to the National Theatre is a challenge as the Theatre is competing with other arts institutions for leisure time. Ghanaians have more options when it comes to spending leisure. Presently, most homes in Ghana have home theatres that they entertain themselves with at their leisure. There is also the problem of the present generation losing interest in the theatre as opposed to what used to be the trend in the 1960's when theatre

¹ Local name for public vehicle (not Taxi) of transporting people in and around the city of Accra.

going thrived in Ghana. There used to be performances at the Arts Centre and later, the National Theatre that attracted a lot of Ghanaians and foreigners (S. Arkhurst, personal communication, March 10, 2015). Now, most students have less exposure to the arts in schools than previous generation. Due to these factors, some Ghanaians have lost touch with the theatre. Again, looking at the recent economic situation in Ghana, the working class are more preoccupied with issues of survival and, especially with more responsibilities, would not generally consider going to the theatre a high priority. Most of these people may rather prefer to sit at home and listen to radio, watch one of the many television series which students are obsessed with; or better still, sit at their comfortable homes and enjoy a video film.

4.2.3 Marketing; Attracting Audience by Engaging the Ghanaian Community

On soliciting views on how the theatre markets its productions and programmes, the Marketing Manager, Alfred Danso, was interviewed. Danso has been with the Theatre for about three years. His roles include creating programmes that produce Internally Generated Funds (IGF) for the Theatre; having a social media platform to create vibrant social media website for easy assessment of information on the Theatre; and creating an audience database for the National Theatre. Danso revealed that every year, marketing plans are created and presented to the Executive Director and the Artistic Director who may also have their strategic plan for the Theatre for the year in question. All the strategic plans are put together for the Director of Finance to see the way forward for a holistic, plausible strategic plan for the theatre in a particular year.

Danso informed the researcher that, what the Theatre does is to take some of its programmes into the communities by way of outreach programmes. He explained that the mandate of the Theatre is not only to bring people into the theatre alone, but also to go to the communities to

let the people have a feel of what they are doing. According to him, taking performances to the communities in Accra was done in the past but was stopped because of financial constraints and lack of sponsorship to support the whole process. Possibly, this contributed to the decline of patronage over the years as confirmed by Djisenu in an earlier submission. Danso argued that if the communities in Accra and its environs do not understand and have a feel of what goes on at the Theatre, then, there would not be the need to attract people to the National Theatre when it is doing any production. Further, it is only when a theatre company is willing to give something worthy to prove its worth that audiences will troop in to watch them always. However, he argues that what the Theatre is doing at the moment with the community outreach is not enough. For the time being, the Theatre has started a project to bring back the concert party tradition that lost its vibrancy when Unilever pulled out sponsorship. Now they are trying to take concert party out to the communities for them to see the response that would be generated from the communities. What the marketing department plans on doing is to build on the concept to see how it can be improved. It is aimed at achieving better patronage and audience understanding. He intimated that management plans to do more outreach programmes to support the Theatre.

Now, one will wonder why of all the programmes of NTG, concert party was chosen for the outreach programme. Danso asserted that concert party, in confirmation of what had been presented by Djisenu, and had been a great audience puller in the past. They are therefore trying to re-strategise and redevelop the brand because it has been dormant for years. He admitted that it was not going to be easy because people have forgotten about the Concert Party. It is not that they do not like it. They like it but they do not know when it is happening and if it will be as good and beneficial as it was at first. There is also the problem of funds constraints. Hardly does the management get radio and television advertisements to give a wider coverage of the audience as it were then. Now, the target audience is more of the

commercial type; so the best way is to go to the market places to have a mini show within the market area. This way, they take the performance to them for them to have a feel of it.

They do have a location though; it is not necessarily a flash mob kind of thing, but they find a suitable venue which is central to all to make it easier for the audience to access the performance. So they find a central place in a community that they are trying to attract and then do short bits of performances, not the whole thing, something to entice the available audience for them to know that the Theatre has something better to offer them when they finally decide to come to the National Theatre, where the whole thing would be showcased. Danso also revealed that the Theatre has the Comedy Series, the Live Band, and the High Life Time which they do little bits of them for the audience they encounter from the concert Party shows at the communities. This is done so that people will have a fair idea of some of the programmes the Theatre has to offer.

4.2.4 The Theatre and the Target Audience

The target audience is the general public. In an interview with Danso, he said that “the mandate is to develop and promote the performing arts and the Ghanaian cultural heritage. So doing that, we cannot say we are eliminating anybody from our audience”. He added that it is something that the management needs to sell to the whole public. However, most often than not, the general public are those within the premises of the National Theatre; in this case, the Accra Metropolis. However, the audience for the Theatre is supposed to be nationwide because it is a ‘national’ Theatre.

4.2.5 Overview of the National Theatre Programmes

Mr. Ashon, the Producer and Programmes Manager of the National Theatre, was interviewed on his views on the Theatre’s programmes. He shared with the researcher, the various

programmes, the target audiences and the venues for productions. Below are the programmes in alphabetical order.

1. Comedy Series

This programme employs the use of satire in the form of Stand up comedy to make audiences laugh their hearts out and to distress after a month of hard work or studying. It also seeks to give the working class and the youth the opportunity to come out and enjoy and listen to good music with drinks, and share jokes in an interactive and a very friendly environment. This programme is organized every last Friday of the month at the old Folk's Place.

2. Concert Party

Concert party, as a genre in Ghanaian theatre, has been in existence since 1915 with troupes' performances touring towns and villages till it dipped in the 1970s. As an indigenous theatre performance, it employs music, dialogue, dance and comedy in drama. The construction of the National Theatre in 1992 brought the resurrection of this popular genre. The performances are backed by live band to educate, entertain and inform its audience. Local languages are employed with Akan as the major language used. This programme is organised every second Sunday of the month and on all nationally approved public holidays at the old Folk's Place and the Main auditorium.

3. Dance the Stress Away

This is an everyday dance aerobic exercise class tutored by the Ghana Dance Ensemble at the Dance Hall of the Theatre for all class of people. It is a well-structured dance class with different dance forms being used on a daily basis for the workout. Each Dance form is particularly selected to work on sections of the body. Here, dances such as Kpanlogo, Agbadza, Adowa, among other local forms and movements are used to exercise the body.

Through these aerobic inspired dances, participants are assured of a healthy life, a glimpse into culture and an opportunity to learn different dance forms, whether for leisure or pleasure.

4. *Dramadotcom*

Dramadotcom is an inter secondary schools drama competition that was initiated in 2008 by the programmes department and the then national service personnel of the department at the time. Schools are selected and they perform an African play for thirty minutes. Preliminaries of the competition are done in the Greater Accra Region. There are also the regional competitions, then the semi-finals and the grand finale is held in Accra, at the Main auditorium of the Theatre. The regional competitions are produced in the regional capital and they are gradually being expanded to cover all the ten regions.

5. *Funworld*

Funworld is a theatrical programme with performances by children and for children. It unearths talents in children and nurtures them into maturity. It was initiated in the 1995 to not only entertain but also educate children with the use of drama, music, dance, rap music, poetry recital and quiz, among others. It is a monthly show that deals with selected themes prompted by the United Nations Day's celebration throughout the year. This programme is held at the main auditorium of the Theatre for the Basic and Junior Highs' approved academic calendar.

6. *Gospel Glory (Nine Lessons and Carols)*

It is a Christian Gospel oriented show that involves music, poetry recitals, dance and drama. A pastor is also invited to deliver a short sermon. It had been produced with the collaboration of a radio station on a few occasions. Its second version, The Nine Lessons and Carols, is produced annually towards the celebration of Christmas at the Main auditorium of the

Theatre. It involves the performance of Christmas carols, reading of biblical verses (lessons) and a message from a pastor who reads the last lesson.

7. Highlife Time

This is a programme that seeks to re-introduce the old good melodic Highlife live band music. It was introduced to promote the highlife music genre, which has been one of our cultural identities as a nation. It serves also to encourage the young generation to adapt to this genre of music and do away with the western popular music that has taken over our music local market. The Highlife time is organised on every first Friday of the month throughout the year at the old Folk's Place of the Theatre. While giving the working class and the youth the opportunity to come out and enjoy good, melodic highlife live band music with drinks in an interactive and very friendly environment, the timing also keep workers from the Friday-after-work rush hour traffic.

8. Kiddafest

Kiddafest is the Accra International Children's Festival that is produced annually over a period of three days or more (4 or 5 days maximum). Kiddafest is an elaborate version of Funworld which is produced in a festival style with several performances happening at the same time. Drama, music, dance, quiz, mock parliament and painting are the areas of participation. There are additional performances by the regional teams from across the country, as well as others like beauty and talent show and a fashion show. Kiddafest is usually produced in December and just like its baby, Funworld, it is an interesting show for children. The venue is the Main auditorium of the Theatre.

9. Slam Ghana

This programme is a literary art which was introduced to promote the art of Poetry at the Basic and Senior High levels. It's a poetry competition for all schools in the Basic, Junior High and Senior High schools. The goal of this programme is to nurture our young ones to be good speech writers, public speakers and presenters of information. The venue for this programme is the Main auditorium of the Theatre.

10. Summer School

This is a summer school for kids between the ages of 5 to 18 years; this school is to help the kids discover their creative talents in drama, dance, music and fine arts. The kids involved in this programme will get the opportunity to be nurtured into future stars; invariably, this will help them appreciate the arts and culture industry to smoothen the inheritance of our cultural heritage by embracing diversity.

According to Ashon, the activities of the Theatre are structured by developing programmes for age groups, statuses and class with which the various groups fall. There are categories for Children's programmes from the ages of 5 to 15; and programmes for students of the senior high schools, thus between the ages of 13 and 18. These programmes include Funworld, Kiddafest, Slam Ghana for the Junior and senior high and Dramadotcom for senior high students. So within the ages of 5 to 18 years there are programmes that suit the different categories of students. The adult programmes are from the age of 18 years and beyond. There is the Comedy Series, which specifically target tertiary institutions; the High Life Time for the older folks where anybody that falls within that range is welcomed to participate; then Concert Party for all commercial workers and the old folks as well.

Ashon reiterated that the programmes have their own groups of people that they target. With Funworld, for instance, management has observed an alternative way for all students within the target scope. This is because, it has been realised by the management that most of the

international schools in Accra shy away from being associated with the public schools and thus fail to patronise Funworld. To bridge the gap between the international schools and the public schools, the Theatre has decided to create an alternative platform for the international schools so that they also have something of their own. With this, there can even be a situation where management can decide to have them compete amongst themselves. Having an alternative Funworld platform for international schools means the Theatre will be serving different classes of people at the same time.

Concert Party is for commercial workers and its diversity makes it possible for anybody to watch. Because of the local dialect, some class of people shy away from it. The alternative for concert party is the occasional drama performances by Abibigromma. Sometimes, there are one or two big productions for each resident group in a year to perform to their respective audiences. This is to promote variety for the audience to choose from.

4.2.6 Mechanism in Checking Audience Response to Programmes and Productions

The Theatre, has limited mechanism in place to check or measure its audience response to its programmes and productions; Danso, disclosed. According to him, what they usually do is to use the audience turn out as a yard stick to judge whether they did a good outreach promotion or not. If a good promotional activity is to advertise the production then the results should reflect in the audience turn out. He added that the theatre once started with audience survey but due to financial restraint they had to stop. Now, management mostly ascertain audience response to performances through tickets sale and attendance. He further accentuated that for some time now the Theatre has lost touch with its audience and this has greatly affected the mandate of the theatre. To him, the Theatre has not appropriately marketed itself to the potential audience. The management of NTG gives the space out for other activities such as church services, workshops, banquet, Annual General Meeting (AGM) of institutions, among

others. Yet, the management fails to tap into the aforementioned functions to generate audience that may come to love the theatre. In view of this, the Theatre has put in place certain measures to generate audiences.

4.2.7 Strategies Put in Place to Generate Audience for the Theatre

When asked if the National Theatre was involved in audience development, Danso assured categorically that what the Theatre does presently is trying to get an audience for the theatre. Initially, management wanted to build an audience for the individual programmes. The realisation that was inferred from this was that the theatre was not attracting enough audience no matter the kind of production that it put up. People find it difficult to accept it as a choosing place to watch a performance because the place is not vibrant. He believes that it is how busy the theatre is that will attract people to come watch what it puts up. If every weekend the theatre is empty, save for some few private productions, then it loses its attractiveness to the populace. He was of the view that both internal programmes and external programmes all contribute to the audience finding their way to the theatre.

Danso revealed that management started in the latter part of 2013 with audience development for specific programmes. After examining the previous way of doing things, the management came to the conclusion that if they do not develop, holistically, an audience for the theatre itself, it would be difficult to get people to understand the theatre concept and the art of attending the theatre. Danso opined that it is only when a holistic audience is developed that there would be regular audience to have intimate relationship with, to further attract others to participate in the Theatre's programmes and productions.

To develop audience holistically, the management of NTG has created a new website for the Theatre. The purpose is to make the programmes and productions of NTG visible and viable to the general public. Making it visible means finding ways and means of putting the

programmes out there on the website; where the various targeted audience will have easy access to them. By so doing, members of the audience become aware of the varieties of programmes that the Theatre has and the right to choose the ones to attend. For example, if there are ten programmes within ten weeks, by means of visibility the Theatre must ensure that all the ten programmes are put out there for the general public to see. To this end, management plans on posting all programmes of the Theatre on its website for people to see what are being offered to them. Danso restated that when people come to know about the varieties of programmes, inferably, they would be attracted because they will have so much to choose from. It is not only the programmes that would be exhibited, but also the target audience, the summary of the programmes, what it entails, character spine, and artiste profiles. By this approach, people who may have no idea of what the Theatre does might be coming in to see and partake in the programmes. He argued that the visibility is not taking the physical edifice out there for people to see but trying to make the people understand the use of the Theatre. This is for Ghanaians and anyone who may chance upon the website become abreast with the activities of Theatre as well as the concept of theatre. Danso also considered communication to be one of the best strategies to developing audience. To him, there is the need to find the right channel to communicate to the general public so that management will know the right communicating tool to use. So through their way of communication then you develop the strategy to use.

Another strategy that the Theatre has put in place is to make the Theatre vibrant and visible to target audience through the creation of brochure to raise funds to support productions and programmes. This is meant to provide a wider coverage of telling Ghanaians what the Theatre has to offer in terms of its programmes. The brochure, by design, not only tells the time and place for the various programmes and productions, but also gives detail accounts. Like the website, the brochure provides the synopsis of plays in every production, profiles of

directors, casts and crew. Consequently, the brochure is meant to serve dual purposes; to find funding for productions and programmes and to use the same tool to attract audiences.

Further, the Theatre is trying to study and research on its audiences to build a database for the Theatre. There are so many organisations out there that are arts-related and they have their own databases. There are agencies under the ministries that also collect database of their clients, artists and arts enthusiasts. So the marketing department is trying to bring all these data on board to develop as one database for the Theatre.

4.2.8 Challenges

There are some challenges that the management of the Theatre is facing in the attempt to develop its audiences. The most pressing challenge is that theatre, as an art form, has lost touch in Ghana. Also, political interference in matters of NTG has not helped so much. This is because anytime there was a change in government there was also a change in personnel for NTG and that turned to affect the affairs of the Theatre. An incumbent government may push the Theatre to a certain level and the one that follows it might also redirect the affairs of the Theatre unto something that may be of benefit to the government without actually putting the affairs into test to check their viability.

The second challenge has to do with the Theatre's understanding of strategies and working together as a team. Danso expresses that a strategy could be developed by the management of the Theatre; nevertheless, if the players in that management team or another team do not really understand that strategy, it becomes a problem. Danso lamented that conducting a research to create a common database from external event organisers should not have been a problem because the various department in the Theatre work hand in hand. The objective is to develop a core audience for the Theatre, and all the staff must work together to achieve this aim.

Another challenge is financing the various strategies. When strategies are drawn to cater for anything, there are supposed to be funds available to push the agenda. The case at the National Theatre of Ghana is different as after drawing their strategies, the various departments, or better still, the management need to find ways and means of funding. This process delays the implementation of the strategies. Further, there is the challenge of doing all the promotion on a particular production and yet people fail to attend. When asked if it is not because of lack of education in the arena of theatre, the Marketing Manager, Danso, enlightened that education had always been the key. The Theatre works hand in hand with the Ghana Education Service (GES) to develop theatre audience out of students. He further explained that students from various communities across the country come to the Theatre on daily bases to see what goes on at the place. However, the problem associated with this is that there seem to be a block between GES and the National Theatre when executing the agenda. What is being done now is trying to bridge the gap by getting GES more involved in the affairs of the Theatre. This is where the management allow the children to come on a daily basis to get more interested in the theatre.

4.2.9 Successful Audience Development Initiatives

The Marketing Department did something with *Funworld* in 2013 that is currently bringing more of the targeted audience for that programme into the theatre. What was done was to put arts coordinators in some specific communities within the Accra Metropolis. There are cluster of schools within a community. So these coordinators are put within the communities to help search for talents in the areas of poetry, drama, singing, dancing and acting, etcetera. The coordinators roles are to teach the children they unearth ways of enhancing their skills in performances. Before the period of *Funworld*, the talents are brought together in all the selected communities and mini production is mounted in the communities for the people in

there to patronise. This way, people in the communities get to support the production. Interestingly this does not require so much expenditure, Danso disclosed. Definitely, management is trying to extend it to all communities across the countries because that is the mandate of the Theatre. The challenge, again, is the funding because the coordinators are to be paid. The schools have their own arts teachers and thus are not ready to incur any extra cost of providing for the coordinators. So the mandate falls on the Theatre to look for funds to cater for the coordinators. The way forward is to try and build the IGF to sustain some of these projects that they are doing.

4.2.10 The Resident Groups and the Theatre

To get information on this subject, the researcher interviewed the Artistic Director of National Drama Company (Abibigromma), Mawuli Semevor. He was part of the Abibigromma that was transferred from the School of Performing Arts to the Theatre. When asked about his views on the movement of the resident groups to the Theatre, he argued that when the theatre was completed in 1991, it was only prudent to have people who have the knowhow in theatre be brought to the Theatre to work instead of getting new ones who will now be trained. He acknowledged that it was very exciting because the transfer meant that any graduate student who had an interest in theatre could be posted to the Theatre. This way, the Theatre would be full of theoretically and practically inclined experts who will work in hand with the managers to put up productions that would attract people to the Theatre all the time.

When the residents groups were moved to the Theatre, they became semi-autonomous because although they were to be on their own, their activities were to be in league with the mother Theatre. They were answerable only to the Executive Director of the Theatre. That was the idea at the time. Thus productions were to be produced by the Theatre so that the

resident groups would be responsible for the artistic perfection of the productions. Regrettably, the first administrators of the Theatre did not go by that rule and this meant pushing the resident groups into the background, into a kind of situation that Semevor expressed as “limbo of forgetting things”. He explained that the resident groups had been leaving on their own far too long. Unfortunately for them too around the time that they moved to the Theatre, government stopped subsidising them. They did not have any business manager. They were told that the Theatre will provide them with one. As it turned out, the situation became different when they started operating. When mounting productions at the main hall of the Theatre, they had to pay for the use of the space. It came to a point that they did not have money to pay for the hall space so they fell on one aspect of their mandate; outreach programmes to communities and schools. As it were, they took theatre to the people in their communities and schools. Semevor reflected that, at the time, most Ghanaians (especially the common ones) perceived the Theatre to be so huge that it was so frightening to the common man. He opines “[t]he common man wonders if he/she was welcomed to the Theatre”. So they took their performances to them and told them that the Theatre was their resident place so they are welcomed to visit and watch performances as and when they put them up.

At the moment, the resident groups pay discount for the space when they want to use the main hall. Formally, it was not the case. Semevor is of the view that they are making progress because, the current Executive Director is making the effort to revert to the former system; where the Theatre will take absolute control of affairs. Though it has been a slow process the Executive Director is doing her best to improve things.

The role of Abibigromma and the other two resident groups is to help achieve the mandate of the Theatre as far as using theatre to educate and bring about national development. In so doing, Abibigromma embarks on outreach programmes for basic, junior and senior high

schools. What they do is to put up performances, based on the various set books of the aforementioned classes of students, and take them to the respective schools. Also they produce theatre for community development (outreach programmes) in trying to solve social and developmental problems in communities. This is done by researching into communities to find out their problems, create performances out of them and involve the communities in the performances to see how best they can solve their problems. Further, as the resident drama company based at the Theatre, they are mandated to take charge of the development of any drama or theatre programme that the Theatre may embark on. Similarly, the Ghana Dance Ensemble and the National Symphony Orchestra are mandated to manage the artistic affair in the areas of dance and music respectively.

On his views on the low patronage of their productions as compared to other private companies that hire the space for productions, Semevor commented that before they were pushed into a “limbo”, their productions were great and massively attended. He expounded that most of Abibigromma’s performances had support from the government and the British Council in Accra. But when they entered the Theatre, there was no communication whatsoever to do things together. All the resident groups were left in the “middle of the sea” to fend for themselves. “How then were we supposed to get the people to patronise our performances?” he enquired. As stated earlier, they had no business manager and the Theatre was not prepared to publicise their productions. In the profession of the arts, marketing and publicity are expensive, and not getting any service money from the government for their productions, coupled with the fact that they have to pay for the space they use for their productions, makes it difficult to attract audience to their productions. They lost most of their audience because there was no continuity in the relationship that they had with them. Now it has become very hard to get them back.

He, however, argues that as an organisation with the mandate to promote the performing arts in Ghana, they are doing their best, with the help of the Theatre, to generate audiences for their productions. For instance, their outreach programmes to schools are doing great. They have decided to build a foundation, hence the need to attract the children. He stresses that there is the need to get the interest of the children right from the outset for them to come to terms with the theatre to know the essence of it. By doing this, they will grow with the relationship with theatre instilled in them. Also, with technological advancement, the resident groups are trying to use the social media. Semevor revealed that, as the Director of Abibigromma, he had made it a point that anytime they go for workshop or a conference of any sort, he made sure to get the names and contacts of the participants to add to the database they are building. He believes that even if 10% of them respond to their invitation to their productions, then they will get somewhere. They can build on that. Nevertheless, he disclosed that they face the challenge of some heads of the schools they visit not seeing the relevance of the theatre. They do not see why theatre should be brought to the students. To them, it is a waste of time as they see theatre as entertainment. They have better programmes that should demand for the attention of the students and not theatre. They will not accept the fact that it concerns core English in Literature set book. So they have to convince them of the value of the theatre.

4.3 The Analysis of Findings

This aspect of the chapter presents the analysis of the findings of the empirical data. Here the researcher analysed the findings in terms of the concept of audience development in relation to the findings discussed in Chapter two (literature review) of the study. Based on this approach, the approaches to audience development, the related areas attached to audience development, and the relationship between audience development and marketing are analysed

from both the perspectives of the interviewees and the researcher's views backed by facts from the literature review. This will suffice to fulfil the first objective of the study. Of importance to this chapter is also the review and analysis of the innovative strategies that the Theatre has put forth to generate audiences for its programmes and productions in the 23 years of its establishment. The analysis is done towards strengthening them for future audience development projects, which is the second objective of the study. All these are meant to make clear the approach the researcher wishes to present the audience development plan for the Theatre; the third objective of the study. The results are presented in similar themes to those found in Chapter two.

4.3.1 The Theatre Audience and Attendance

Theatre is meant for the audience. It is a presentation to the people and so must be presented to the people the way they want it and must be based on the culture and the interest of the people. The National Theatre of Ghana, as a theatre organisation, was built to promote the performing arts, cultural roots of the Ghanaian society and to fulfil Kwame Nkrumah's¹ vision of using the Ghanaian arts and culture to promote unity and progress in the country (Shpipey, 2012). To achieve this mandate, the Theatre was to create programmes and productions that will entice the Ghanaian populace into the Theatre to be educated and developed in the art of theatre. However, from the presentation of the data above, the following were realised:

1. There was not much preparation on the part of the government to manage the Theatre and effectively attain its mandate.
2. There were no readily available personnel to man the Theatre.

¹ Kwame Nkrumah was the first President of Ghana. He was the founder of the Convention People's Party (CPP), political party in Ghana.

3. Also, there were no resources in terms of costumes, props, flats for set construction, among others, in order to make the Theatre a vibrant organisation. This is because the Theatre lacked the financial status to that effect.
4. Further, the Theatre failed to attract audience to its programmes and productions.

Shpipey (2012) attributes the aforementioned reactions to the fact that “the practice of going to formal, Western-style theatre was unfamiliar to most Ghanaians” (p.1395). This presupposes that Ghanaians needed to be educated for them to understand the art of going to the theatre. The “common man” associated the National Theatre to certain class of people because the building was imposing and the performances at the initial stages targeted the elite in the society. It was not until the commencement of the Key Soap Concert Party that the Theatre witnessed a cross-section of Ghanaians attending its programme. The show was well patronised that even in the aisles people sat to watch performances. But then, it was to be realised soon that if it was not Concert Party, the audience stayed home. They may go to the Ghana Arts Centre but not the National Theatre. Because the National Theatre was not serving them what they really wanted. What is it that the people would want? Usually, what you have to do is to give the people what they want and slowly add what they need.

Start from the interest of the people; from what the people have and build on it. But because we haven't had theatre from the grassroots and we haven't built on it that is why Ghanaians have a problem with understanding the value of the theatre and its benefits to us as a nation (S. Arkhurst, personal communication, March 10, 2015).

Arkhurst believes the best approach is to start from the grass roots: the communities and schools. He sustains that theatre as a concept has been in existence from the genesis of the colonial days. The schools were doing it, and the communities were doing it. But harnessing the two; developing the personnel, developing the arts and developing the audience which will culminate in the National Theatre as a physical edifice, was not well achieved and that is what constituted the problem. Things were done without the right development of the audience in terms of understanding the value of the theatre and its relevance in their lives and the nation as whole.

4.3.2 Perceptions and Understanding of Audience Development

The researcher felt that it was most appropriate to commence from the content of audience development. Under this theme, the researcher will discuss the perceptions on audience development, the understanding of its content and the understanding of the term. The interviewees had various approaches to the understanding of the concept. But it was realised that most of them understood the concept in terms of audience education, audience relationship, and audience attendance. As clearly opined by Hayes (2003) and arts practitioners most of the time have transactional view of audience development. Frimpong, the Executive Director of the National Theatre understands the concept of audience development thus:

Audience development is not just about the number of audience attendance of a particular production. It is about relationship because in order to get people to continue to come to events, you develop a relationship with them. You make them feel that they are part of the product or programme. There can even be ways that

you can empower them to be part of the creative process. So you have to look at it in the form of more relationship rather than audience numbers or attendance (A. A. Frimpong, personal communication, March 5, 2015).

Another perceives the concept to be “practically putting in strategies to attract audiences to the theatre” (A. Danso, personal communication, March 11, 2015).

Looking at the two definitions, it is clearly seen that the former is directed towards building relationship with the audience through education whereas the later is concerned with audience number and attracting audiences using marketing tools. Again, the first definition is geared towards sustaining existing audiences while the second is interested in the attraction of new audience. From the literature review, it was deduced from the discussion of definitions of audience development that the concept should not be looked at as merely the art of increasing the size of the audience but the building of relationship (McCarthy and Jinnett, 2012; Fanizza, 2012).

The National Theatre is huge and there are varieties of productions and programmes. People might like some and dislike some based on preferences. So, when developing audiences for a place like the Theatre, any programme that the theatre is involved in should be concerned with developing the audience. In that case, the concept should be to provide strategies that will cater for every aspect of the theatre programming. In so doing, the development of the audiences for each programme would be achieved. Accordingly, the Theatre would be to maintain a core group of people as theatre audience to create room for potential ones to join when possible. It is thus possible to maintain that Frimpong and to some extent, Danso, understood the concept of audience development in both “mainstream” and “missionary”

styles as Hayes and Slater (2002) depicted as styles of audience development; nurturing both new and existing audience.

Arkhurst, a part time lecturer at the School of Performing Arts and a lecturer at the University of Education, Winneba, who translates theatre as a viable communication tool for information towards community development gave a wider approach to the concept. He sees the concept as the opportunity to develop audience from the grassroots to the national level.

To achieve audience development, theatre must start from the grassroots; the community and the school level. To achieve success, you build on that to the district level, then to the regional level, and finally, to the national level (S. Arkhurst, personal communication, March 10, 2015).

He believes that if the Theatre is able to start theatre programmes in communities within just the Accra metropolis, in time, they can move to other communities in the other regions. If you want to catch a fish, you have to introduce bait because nothing comes from nothing. People are prepared to pay for huge sums of money to watch functions at the National Theatre, yet they fail to patronise the Theatre's performances. The Theatre is new to the concept of audience development and there is not enough knowledge so there should be an exploration approach. The researcher believes that Arkhurst's perception on audience development will help the Theatre in a way. This is because it gives ample room for the other aspects of audience development; education, information, artistic creativity and marketing. Thus Arkhurst's understanding of the concept can be looked at in the light of the definition of Rogers (1998) who advocates for the collaboration of education and marketing in audience development strategies or plan.

In audience development there should be the understanding of the need of it, the plan to achieve the concept and its implementation (Maitland, 1997; Rogers, 1998; and Hays, 2003). In the case of the Theatre, the interviews expressed that the motive of audience development should be linked to the mandate of the Theatre. As discussed in the chapter two, arts organisations have different kinds of objectives they have to meet. These are: artistic, financial and combination of the two (Kawashima, 2002 and Maitland, 1997). The interview revealed that comparing the Theatre's approach of its performances to that of other private theatre companies in terms of audience development would be a vain attempt. This is due to the fact that each has a different objective. For example, the Executive Director of the Theatre is of the view that:

When it comes to Roverman Productions¹ and the National Theatre's performances there is no comparison because they are two different things, with different objectives and audiences. For instance, Abibigromma productions are heavy [emphasises on the artistic approach] as compared to Roverman Productions that is more social oriented [entertainment and business enterprise] (A. A. Frimpong, personal communication, March 5, 2015).

Arkhurst (2015) also attest to the fact that Roverman productions' is a business enterprise; so the business aspect can never be taken out of it. He explicates that Roverman Productions have studied the needs of the people to know what the people want and they are capitalising on it to extend their business. But the issue is that, this approach cannot be the same for all. It

¹ Roverman Productions is a private theatre company in Ghana. It has a long collaboration with the National Theatre and uses the space for theater performance every quarter in a year.

is an area, that Roverman Productions have taken and they are doing so well in terms of developing audience for their productions. The question is how many Ghanaians can afford to watch Roverman Performances? They are developing elite audiences and they (elite audience) have an interest in what they (Roverman Productions) are presenting them with. But National Theatre's objective is to serve the whole nation with artistic performances. So, the fact that Roverman Productions are capitalising on the business aspect of the Theatre does not prevent the National Theatre from continuing producing the artistic aspect. Ghanaians can be satisfied by blending the two aspects to achieve development.

In achieving both the Theatre and the private companies' objectives, the fact is that the performing arts simply need audience to survive.

As at now, we do not necessarily have theatre audience.

We do not have people who will say I enjoy theatre so much so that any time there is a theatre performance they will run to watch, no. We have people, who are Ebo Whyte¹ lovers. The audience' love for Ebo Whyte has been transferred to become the love for Roverman. That is why they may come for our shows and they may not necessarily go for other shows. It is because of that distinct thing. So though we have our baseline audience, it is not sustaining us, because the cost of production is high and we need to find ways and means of attracting more audience to add to the baseline ones (K. Ocansey, personal communication, April 25, 2015).

¹ Ebo Whyte is the Executive Director and founder of Roverman Productions.

Though the cost of production may be high, emphasising on the financial aspect too much sometimes influences the artistic value of the arts. Arkhurst describes what the theatre needs thus:

What the Theatre needs is to invest in audience development and not only to look for money to run the theatre. If this is done, then the theatre would be run for only musical activities, pageantry, social activities, among others and not theatre. The place is National Theatre and so it should be run as such. The place has become an activity centre that people hire for functions because they haven't taken the time to groom audiences for their productions (S. Arkhurst, personal communication, March 10, 2015).

Another motive for audience development is that the theatre has value in it. Anyone aiming to achieve audience development should believe in this to work towards its fulfilment. There is the need to build interest to build a standard to sell the theatre for people to know the value and relevance of it. For instance, it was revealed by Djisenu that some audience were attracted to come to the Theatre to watch the Show Time programme in 1994 because they were fascinated by the set designs. The problem here is that, the management at the time failed to utilise the situation to their benefit. They seemed to be interested in attracting audiences than sustaining them. They should have capitalised on the sets designs to sustain the interest of the audience they had at the time by educating them on the essentials of the theatre. Post performance discussions and workshops could have been held to educate the audience on how the sets they were so fascinated about came into being; a way to give an

insight and show the value of the theatre. This way, they will learn to appreciate it more. If they had approached the situation in this manner, they would not have had problems with sponsorship. Companies may have rushed in with sponsorships.

4.3.3 Understanding the Mandate of the National Theatre

Ghanaians must be educated on the mandate of the National Theatre as well as all the staff members within the establishment. This is because if they don't understand what they themselves do there, then already it is a lost cause. According to Danso, most of the staff members do not know the mandate of the theatre. He explains that "If I understand the mission of what I do, then I can play my part very well". He further clarified that, "most of them think our mandate is to rent the place and make money so they can be paid". That is not the image of the Theatre but just a small aspect of the mandate. The mandate is to create and promote programmes for the performing arts. That is the core thing to do. Hitherto, this aspect of the mandate has been shunned for some time because the concentration has been on just renting the place to raise money. So if the mandate is not known and understood by the staff then there is a cause to worry. Also, to inform the general public about its mandate, the Theatre is supposed to work hand in hand with the Centres for National Cultural (CNC) across the nation. The issue is, the National theatre is supposed to draw programmes in collaboration with these centres to promote the consciousness of theatre in most Ghanaians. In doing so, there would be some form of mini theatre in the regions. For instance, there could be Concert Parties developed from the regions, then to the National level. Thus, they would be taken from the grassroots, the communities. This way, there would not be major issues when it comes to dealing with developing audiences. This is because, in dealing with the communities, there would be the conscious effort in instilling the art of theatre in them by opening their minds to what the theatre has to offer them. Also, the communities around the

country can come to terms with what the Theatre has to offer Ghanaians so that anytime they find themselves in Accra or any theatre venture for that matter, they will happily patronise it.

4.3.4 Evaluating Innovative Approaches toward Audience Development; strengthening them for Future Use

The interview with the Marketing Manager revealed what the department is doing in terms of marketing the theatre. For the moment, they are trying to use community outreach programmes to communities to market the concert party and other programmes. Concert party started from the grassroots; the communities and the National Theatre brought it back in 1995 and it collapsed again in 2002. When the Theatre took it up, it became Key Soap Concert Party because it was sponsored by Unilever, the manufacturers of Key Soap. What made it popular then was because it was broadcast live on Ghana National Television (GTV). The sponsors pulled out and it collapsed. The show was a major boost in terms of audience attendance. But the management failed to use the opportunity to develop the audience for the theatre as a whole. They concentrated much on the selling of the Key soap than selling the theatre so when the sponsors pulled out, they took with them the audience and thus the popular show went down. The live television coverage was a fantastic idea. This is because they were selling to a wider audience; live theatre audience and televised audience. If they had developed the audience then, they could have cultivated a broader base to reach out to people who will be in their homes and those that will come to the theatre to see the live shows as well. If National Theatre is bringing it up again, then management need to convince Ghanaians that it is concert party, the old thing, but it has been refreshed to meet the taste and standards of the new generation as well. The majority of Ghanaians, at least the older folks, know about the Key Soap Concert Party in the late 1990's. Hence, when advocating for the present generation to come and see Concert party, then there should be something that should

entice them to come and watch. There are things that need to be activated to attract the audience to the production to see for themselves if it is worth their while.

We went to the market and trotro stations to explain to the people and give them free tickets. I was not so bordered about the returns that we are going to make as about letting the people come to terms with the concert party again. You see, the concept has been dead to people for some time and to resurrect it you don't have to go there with the intention of making profit. The people do not understand now, so the best thing is to let them come, have a feel of what you want to put across, when they buy into it, become so interested, then you can move on to ask for money. This is because word of mouth spreads more than anything. If one comes and enjoys it so much all he/she has to do is to tell a friend and that friend will also tell a friend and on it goes (A. Danso, personal communication, March 11, 2015).

Thus, Danso is not interested in the returns and the audience number for now, but the creation of awareness. People may not understand the concept but the ability to portray its worth is the key. People may not understand the concept behind something but may have an interest in what you may have to offer due to the approach. So the whole new branding should be made to attract the audience to like programmes and productions. Management can then capitalise on the liking to draw them closer to the whole concept. If they like it then they will grow to understand the concept behind it.

Another aspect is information. As Danso rightly put it; the concept has been lost to people for some time now so it will call for information to be reached out to people for them to know more about the programmes. To this effect, management of Theatre has created a website and a company brochure to send out information of their programmes and productions to their prospective audiences. Through this channel audience would be connected with them to be provided with information and feedback. Additionally, the feedback will provide information about the audience to the Theatre management. This way relationship would be built to enhance audience development. Again, through the website they could develop a data base of emails to have constant communications with attendees.

The data base could be built in different categories. There could be one for arts enthusiasts, arts critics, would-be audience and the available audience as well. Through this approach, management can conduct audience response to their programmes and productions. Upon the responses from the researches that would be conducted then management would analyse and strategically take a look at the programmes and see the best possible ways to make the programmes more appealing to the audience.

By and large, Management would be able to decipher ways to communicate with the audience. There are so many ways of communicating so there is the need to understand the target group for effective communication. In all, the strategies that are being put in place to attract audiences to programmes and productions include getting different data bases for the various audiences and audience research. This way, categorically, Funworld's database for instance could be looked into to find out how best management can communicate to the unavailable audience. Also, through communication, management can know the right punches to throw to attract audiences. This way, they would be able to update the content of programmes to suit the various audiences.

When educating people on the theatre the fact should not be lost that entertainment cannot be divorced from theatre. Entertainment will always be there. Entertainment draws audience first to the theatre then the theatre could be used to educate them. But it seems that too much emphasis has been placed on the entertainment and doing very little with the information and education. There is a world of difference between information and education. Information deals with telling someone something. That person may take it or may leave it. However, in education, but when educating somebody, it is a process. It is prudent to make sure that the person in question has heard, understood, agreed upon and implemented, to be sustained. It is only then that education can be achieved.

The discussions above have revealed that the concepts of education, information, programming, and marketing can be collaborated upon to achieve a successful audience development plan. This is what should be done as theatre is now serious business venture, an educational institution, and not solely entertainment. If this is not done, Ghanaians will always think less of theatre practitioners, which will affect the general understanding of the theatre experience. So as a nation, the purpose of theatre must be seen. The value of theatre should be known to preserve the culture of the nation. The priorities must be set right for the concept of theatre to be explored in a wider range across the nation. The researcher believes that the right plan to approach developing audiences for the Theatre is for management to first upgrade the Theatre. By upgrading is to make the theatre more viable; a vibrant theatre that it will serve society.

4.4 Audience Development Plan for the National Theatre of Ghana

The researcher believes in building an audience development plan towards the sustenance of theatre in Ghana. The plan aims to advocate effective building of relationship amongst theatre participants in the country. The Participant include: the general observers of theatre

productions (audience), presenters (artistically involved), policy makers, arts critics' sponsors and advocates. The National Theatre needs to build a deeper relationship with these individuals so as to contribute effectively and positively to the development of theatre in the country.

In view of the above, the researcher evaluates the approaches discussed in chapter two as well as the suggestions, opinions and experiences of interviewees presented and analysed in this chapter. The researcher then bases the audience development plan on the approaches given by Parker (2012) in *Wallace Studies in Building Arts Audiences*:

- 1 Understanding audiences and figuring out strategies to “meet them where they are”
- 2 Involving the whole organisation in audience development
- 3 Creating a culture that embraces experimentation and learning (Parker, 2012, p. 4)

4.4.1 Justification

This approach was chosen for the following reasons:

First and foremost, the approach was based on a conference organised by Wallace foundation attended by a number of exemplary arts organisations in the United States of America (USA). The arts organisations were given the mandate to share effective ideas and practices to reach more people. This presupposes that the approach, generated from the conference proceedings, was critically analysed from the perspectives of the different arts organisations with different goals and objectives in the areas of drama, dance, and music, among others. Similarly, the National Theatre is a performing arts organisation that recognises all the above arts forms and more. As a result, an approach, like the one outlined above will go a long way to achieve the objective of the audience development plan for the National Theatre.

Another reason for choosing this approach is because it gives room for exploring and expanding the tenets of the various approaches by Fanizz (2012), McCarthy and Jinnat (2001);

and Rogers (1998) discussed in chapter two. Those are arts education, arts marketing and programming.

The first step to the approach paves way for the audience research and arts marketing advocated for by McCarthy and Jinnat (2001). In the same way, the second stage allows for the discussing in detail, the 4C's of audience development as suggested by Fanizza (2012). The last but not the least step also gives the opportunity to explore the tenets of education as justified by Rogers (1998).

Further, the approach gives backing to the suggestions, opinions and experiences of the interviewees as presented in the data analysis of this study. The approach, consequently, will add on to the already innovative strategies in place at the Theatre. For instance, the market research that the Marketing department of the National Theatre has put in place to build audience database can be expand upon. With the audience development plan in place, the staff of the National Theatre can work collaboratively for the achievement of a holistic audience development for the Theatre. Lastly, the National Theatre can depend on this plan to build deeper relationship with audience; educate them on the benefits and relevance of in.

4.4.2 Objective

To build a deeper relationship amongst performing arts participants: audience, theatre organisation and its practitioners, arts advocates, sponsors, and policy makers through educating Ghanaians on the benefits of the performing arts towards achieving a viable and assessable theatre in Ghana.

Outline of the Plan

4.4.3 Understanding Audience and Figuring out Strategies to “Meet Them Where They Are”

This first part of the plan recognises the various classification of audience as it is important to audience development. The best way to understanding audiences is to conduct market research. This is because, as “market research can sharpen engagement strategy development and execution” (Harlow, Alfieri, Dalton, and Field, 2011). Thus market research aids in knowing the right tactics to approach the various audience classifications.

The National Theatre shall conduct market research on audiences to be able to have the various audience groups and classifications: regular attenders, occasional attenders, switchers, indifferent or hostile (Pick, 1998; Diggle, 1994; and Hayes and Slater, 2002). This will pave way for the Theatre to rely on close knowledge of the audiences’ needs, wants and dislikes in order to implement the appropriate strategy to build relationship with the diverse audience.

Audience Development It requires both “quantitative and qualitative studies to inform strategy, evaluate results, and make course correction on the road to” (Parker, 2012) effective audience development. For this reason, the plan recognises the most common types of audience market research outlined by Kolb (2000). They include: Audience research, Motivation research, Customer research, pricing research, Product research, Competitor research, Policy research and Promotional research (p.159).

The National Theatre management shall initiate a motivation research to enquire about what motivates audiences from attending theatrical productions. Motivation can be seen in line with the decision making process outlined in chapter two as propounded by Hill et al, 2003). These include the audience member’s ability to recognise the problem of being either prone to attending live theatre performance or not inclined at all. If the former is true, the audience

member will then search for information on various theatre or arts related events to participate. The next thing an audience will do is to weigh the alternatives to know the one suitable to him in relation to economic and social status. Upon finding the most suitable event to attend, the audience then buys ticket for the production. The audience then evaluates the decision made to attend the theatre production based on the ticket bought and the experience that the member had in the theatre. It must be noted that in all the decision making process, the individual is likely to be influenced by personal, social, psychological and financial factors.

McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) suggest three questions that must be addressed by theatre organisations in conducting motivation research. These are as follows:

1. Why do people participate in the arts rather than in other leisure activities?
2. Why do they participate in different ways through attendance, through the media, and through hands-on engagement?
3. Why do they choose specific types of art? (p.12).

To narrow the above questions to the confines of the National Theatre, the management shall conduct research and investigate into:

1. Why audience members come to the National Theatre to watch performances rather than the other leisure activities?

Several other leisure activities such as sports exist for people to engage in. So for an audience to walk from the comfort of his home to the National Theatre to attend a theatrical performance merits an attention and an enquiry into such a decision. When this is done effectively, the National Theatre can be able to discern the decision making process as well as

the motivational tendencies that affects the attendance of performances at the Theatre and theatrical performances in general.

2. Why would some audience want to attend a live theatre performance at the National Theatre, while others would prefer to participate in the theatre through the media (television, radio or the internet) or hands-on engagement?

This is important as Asiedu (2003)'s study of audience of the Concert party tradition at the National Theatre reveals that some audience preferred to watch the live telecast on television rather than come to the Theatre. This had to do with the fact that some of the audience did not want to be associated with the 'kind' of audience that attend Concert party because of their high social status. Concert party audiences were considered to be marginal¹ ones. It is, thus, necessary to know how perceptions towards live performances, or to sit at home to enjoy the same performance being televised, streamed or live broadcasted on radio are.

Why do audience choose specific types of art?

The goal of this last question is to enquire into why an audience may choose to engage in a musical show or a dance show but fail to attend a theatrical performance. The National Theatre engages in various programmes and productions. Data collected revealed that majority of audience members of the Key Soap Concert Party in 1995 through to 2000 were not involved in the other programmes of the National Theatre. In the same way, audience members of Roverman Productions attend productions at the National Theatre yet they fail to attend that of the National Theatre's own productions. It is as a result of these outlined reasons among others that researching into why audiences attend private productions as against the productions of the National Theatre is required.

¹ Common people with low status in the society.

The next audience research to be conducted is customer satisfaction. When audience gets satisfied in the theatre, the probability of that audience coming again and inviting others to join him is very high. Thus audience satisfaction is essential. It is therefore unfortunate that data collected disclosed that the National Theatre has no mechanism in place to judge audience responses to their performances and programmes. They use audience attendance to specific productions to detect if audience members were satisfied with a particular production. Audience satisfaction should be researched into for the National Theatre to be abreast with how the audience respond to the various productions and programmes.

Audience development also advocates for research to be done on the prices of tickets. This has to do with the ability to know audiences response to tickets sale of various productions and programmes. National Theatre has specific programmes or productions that demand higher prices than others. There are those that are free. Either way, the National Theatre should be in the know of how the audience perceive prices of tickets in relation to the programmes/productions. For instance, what does the prices of programme or productions speak to its audience? Does audience members see tickets sale as expensive and does that affect the attendance to a particular production? Are the tickets of specific programmes and productions so cheap that they deter a section of the society (the rich) from attending those productions? These and many questions can be addressed through an audience research on pricing of tickets.

Further, *Product Research* should be conducted to ascertain the relevance of the product to the audience. This basically has to do with the programming. Moreover, Morden marketing ideology contents that “arts organisations cannot really understand their products, until they understand how the consumer or the audience perceived it” (March & Tompson, 1996, p. 4). The National Theatre is endowed with various programmes and each has a specific target audience. Moreover, the resident groups’ productions also have targeted audience. As part of

this study, the researcher, from time to time, went to the National Theatre to observe both private productions and those by the resident groups at the National Theatre. The objective was not only to assess the difference between the attendances of private productions as against that of the in house productions. The researcher wanted to find out if audience members know about the programmes of the Theatre. The researcher was surprised to find out that majority of those approached were in the dark when it comes to the programmes of the National Theatre. As a result, the National Theatre should embark on a market research of the various programmes and productions. Approaching this factor will inform audience members what to expect in terms of programming.

Competitor Research is yet another research requirement for the National Theatre. There is a saying that good competition is healthy for business. This is because knowing what an organisation is up against in achieving goals goes a long way to put the organisation on its toes. The study believes that the best way of building a significant theatre audience is by having more theatre companies that are producing quality work. If there is only one Theatre Company that is producing what people would consider quality, it won't build a theatre audience, but an audience for that production. This way, everybody suffers as there would be no thriving theatre companies with all the other elements that make theatre work effectively.

Now, it is a challenge, getting technical personnel and theatrical equipments such as light, sound, costume, sets, etc., for the theatre. So when there are more theatre companies, thriving ones, then when an audience comes to a production of the National Theatre, others may attend that of other theatre companies' that they enjoy. This way audience will begin to talk about the theatre and not any theatre company, but theatre, and then they will troop in their numbers to participate.

This is not to intentionally create competition for the National Theatre; No. As far as the issue of theatre is concern, there is the need for multiple institutions in the area of theatre that does quality work. So that when somebody goes to a production and enjoys it, the next time, he hears a theatre performance going on at another place, he may want to participate and might even invite another person. In this case, audiences will come to the realisation that, it is not just the National Theatre but others are also in the business of producing plays. This way, they will know more about the theatre industry and what goes into it. Consequently, the young ones coming up will also like to be involved in the theatre, and then it becomes part of them. For instance, there are a lot of people who went to the University of Ghana and found themselves at School of Performing Arts' productions; these people find it easier to attend theatre productions at the National Theatre. It is realised that if such person finds his way to a National Theatre production, then it means the management is actually benefiting from a little school drama that somebody did which excited that person and had made theatre attractive to him/her. Subsequently, building competition is a healthy business that will go a long way to build a tangible theatre audience in the country.

The plan is, the National Theatre, in its little way, can support other theatre companies. There are number of individuals who want to venture into the theatre practice, therefore, the National Theatre management can invite such people to the Theatre to experience its operations. Again, since the National Theatre is the embodiment of theatre in the country, management can organise seminars for individuals and companies within the theatre industry as far as the business side of it is concern. Further, the management of National Theatre can select a few staff members who will go and watch other private companies' shows to know what they are up against. It should be noted that not only theatre productions must be participated but other private events that are still artistic inclined. Things are evolving. There

are things that other private theatre companies or arts inclined individuals may do that might prompt other ideas that National Theatre can use on its platform.

In the nut shell, having discussed the various market researches on audiences, it is relevant to point out that conducting the above mentioned audience researchers are meant for the National Theatre to know how current and potential audience think about them. Also, the Theatre would be able to know what audience think about the kind of programmes that they are being provided with. In this case, the National Theatre can devise ways and means to make the Theatre attractive to Ghanaian audiences. The understanding of the make-up and desires of the audience will give the National Theatre a sense of rationale in its quest to develop audience. Whereupon, the ability to make clear the type of quality relationship they want to build with their audience would be sustained. In the end, the Theatre would be in the position to deliver its audiences needs to make up for the various programmes and productions they offer. At a point in time, the National Theatre, on itself, can publish its own list of plays that would be shown every day. By, then the theatre consciousness would have been felt greatly in the country. That way, somebody can leave Nigeria, UK, or America come to Ghana for a conference and just drive to the National Theatre on a weekend because there is a quality theatre performance there.

4.4.4 Involving the Whole Organisation in Audience Development

“You can’t change the quality of the relationship between the audience and the organisation unless you change the quality of the relationship within the organisation” (John Holden).¹

The quotation above makes it clear that any organisation that wishes to change the audience relationship must be willing to make changes on its own. Adapting to change for the sake of

¹ John Holden is an associate at the British think tank Demos and expert in cultural management, in a speech, “Adapting and sustaining Effective Practices”. (in Parker, 2012)

the audience and the organisation is vital in audience development. In this case the change must start from the organisation so that it could be directed towards the audience. The National Theatre is a very big organisation. It has its own programmes as well as the productions from the three resident groups in the areas of; drama, music and dance. There is also the board of directors. The *Wallace Studies in the Arts* report (Parker, 2012) recognises the following as the means to involving the whole organisation in audience development:

Change comes from the top

The decision to develop audience comes from the top management of the Theatre. This requires that the change that must occur for such an adventure to happen must come from the top as well. The management of the National Theatre must ensure that every member of staff know the decision to develop audience. On one hand, each member of staff can in his/her small way contribute to the effectiveness of the plan. On the other hand too, a small breach in the tenets of the plan can seriously put it at risk. So the National Theatre should firmly back the audience development plan to establish effective results. It is important to note that change in itself is expensive and audience development also demands money, time, and the capacity to withstand change. So the management of the National Theatre must have the mechanisms required to acquire change and develop audiences. Hence, the opportunity to do things differently, the skill to carry it out, and the resources to make the task of audience development bearable must be in place.

This is where the National Theatre aligns the objective to audience development with its mission as a theatre organisation. The mission of the National Theatre is to develop the performing Arts in Ghana. Hence, it should be concerned with the development of theatre consciousness through deeper relationship with theatre participants – the objective of the audience development plan. With this is focus, the management of the National Theatre

should in their own small way, start attracting audience to their productions from their relations and connections. This is where the “connections” of Fanizza (2012)’s 4C of audience development can be put into practice. The connections are the relations and associates of the staff of National Theatre. They include: friends, families, neighbours and among others. So when a production or programme is ongoing at the Theatre, the aforementioned individuals could be invited to attend the performance. Most often than not, these people ask demand complimentary tickets before they attend. For starters, the complimentary tickets can be provided for them to attend. However, when they do come the National Theatre shall devise ways to make the experience more enriching. For instance, post performance discussion could be organised for such people. Here, they could be educated on the benefits of the theatre and what the productions that they just witnessed entails. Thus would be enlightened on the make-up of the theatre experience. When this, happens, the next time they are invited to the theatre they will come willingly.

Again, the ability of the National Theatre to expand its boundaries through partnerships and association to include other theatre companies in the country, corporate bodies, sponsors and community groups; in a collaboration would be of great benefit to its management. The National Theatre has a long standing collaboration with Roverman Productions which is good. But the theatre needs to do more collaboration with business entities so that they can support some of their programmes and productions.

All Hands on Deck

This aspect of involving the whole organisation in audience development seeks for harmony and team work in all areas of the Theatre. This is because “[e]ffective audience-building requires all hands on deck” (Parker, 2012).

The National Theatre must be seen as a community where all the workers work together to achieve desirable results. In this, any strategy that may come up must be given the accorded attention and demand. The resident groups are seen as autonomous, yet they answer to the Executive Director. This means that to an extent, the Theatre affects the decisions that they take. So when the residents groups up performances, the Theatre should be in charge of its marketing and publicity. So, the residents groups can also take care of the artistic aspect for the audience.

The plan advocates for staff members of the National Theatre to serve as the Theatre's eyes on the ground. They are to ensure that things that happen and go unnoticed by the management and those in the artistic department are being taken care of. For instance, the Front of House department can take it upon itself to ensure that parking problems are solved all the time. The rest rooms are always neat as well as the auditoriums.

4.4.5 A Culture of Learning and Experimentation

This basically means the ability of the organisation to develop the knack of evaluation. It is important for the National Theatre to evaluate its strategies all the time to know if they are making progress or not. Thus, as management advocates for audience to learn about the theatre to enrich their experience, the Theatre itself must create an ambience that encourage the staff to assess the work they do.

The management of the Theatre can put up workshops and seminars for the staff members on for example, "the need to cultivate an art of listening to the audience". By this, the staff can be grouped together with some of them posing as audiences to listen to what they have to offer. They can be taught on how to approach audience members, and how to keep the theatre lively for the benefit of the audience. When this seminars ends, management each participants must

be able to give a good evaluation of the process each went through. This way, the co-workers can learn from each other.

Additionally, seminars and workshops can be provided on upcoming productions and programmes (apart from habitual production conferences and meetings) for the board of directors' managers of the various departments and all junior staff. The requirement for this is for them to discuss an aspect of the production to have a deeper understanding of the productions so that they can share with audience members to convince their participation.

Again, management can put together senior and junior staff members from different department to work together in a strategic plan to test small ideas. This way, a junior in marketing department could be working with a senior from the programmes section. This way, individual learn the challenges and innovations that come with working in each department. Thus they will grow, not only to appreciate the work each one does but learn to appreciate and respect the works of others.

Furthermore, when the marketing department conduct audience research on the various areas outlined in the plan, they should make the outcome known to the whole organisation even to the cleaners of the theatre. The staff and managers should know what the audience out there think of the National Theatre. They should be abreast with the findings so that each staff will work accordingly to effect change for the deeper relationship building.

Another approach, to this factor, is for management to call all staff members from the various departments together to discuss problems each faces. The idea is for all to learn the problem every staff member faces in the area of work. Whatever goes on in the Theatre affects the audience in the long run so it is very important for all the staff members, including the cleaners to be abreast with the problems each faces.

To conclude, this audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana have outlined that: understanding audience and figuring out strategies to “meet them where they are”; involving the whole organisation in audience development; and creating a culture that embraces experimentation and learning; as suggested by the Wallace studies in arts audience (Parker, 2012), to be an attempt to achieve audience development through deepening the relationship of theatre participants. The plan recognises that the role of the National Theatre can be seen as interpreters, translating themes of the theatre from the world around us. It provides a lens through which audience Ghanaians can view, connect with and understand the deeper feelings, fears and desires that comes with living. The plan, thus, recognises the future of the National Theatre as that, which lies in the acts of recovery in a deeper sense of self, identifying, and providing Ghanaians the sense to cultural values through the theatre.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

This last chapter of the study serves as a summary to the whole thesis. It concentrates in a whole, the issues as they pertain to the objectives of the study. In view of this, the chapter provides a summary, conclusion and offer recommendations based on findings of the study,

5.2 Summary

This study set out to attempt an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana. It conducts a comprehensive literature review on the concept of audience development to inform the right approach to base the audience development plan. Also, the study investigates into the establishment of the National Theatre to find out the innovative strategies put in place by management towards audience building. The idea was to examine and strengthen them for effective audience development. The researcher then attempts an audience development plan from the data gathered on the study. The study is done in five chapters to suitably answer the research questions outlined in chapter one.

Chapter one serves as the general introduction to the whole thesis. It presents a background to study, where the National Theatre is put in context in relation to the research problem. The statement of the problem is stated followed by the research questions and objectives. The scope, significance and organisation of the study are also provided.

Chapter two supplies the literature for the study. It reviews relevant literatures on the concept of audience development. As the study concentrates on building audience relationship, the relevance of the audience to the theatre concept is discussed. This is followed by an attempt to define the term audience and to bring forth the various classification of audience. The

discussion, then concentrates on the concept of audience development in context; examining the term in relation to its definitions provided by different researchers. Again, the different approaches attempted by researchers are also reviewed. Lastly, the need for an audience development plan at the National Theatre of Ghana is discussed to put the research objective into perspective.

Chapter three then considers the research methodology used for the study. The chapter summarises the various research procedures and approaches the researcher utilised in gathering data for the study. The qualitative research approach is used primarily for the study. This merits the use of purposive sampling of the research population for data collection, conducted in semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions.

The Chapter four presents the data gathered on the study from the various respondents interviewed for that purpose. An analysis is then done based on the findings of the data presentation of the respondents and the literature review on audience development conducted in chapter two. The last part of the chapter presents the audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana.

The last chapter (five) provides the summary, conclusion and recommendations to the study.

5.3 Conclusion

The saying goes that “a play is not complete until it has been put before an audience” (Anonymous). In essence, this study sought to attempt an audience development plan that the National Theatre of Ghana can utilise to build effective and deeper audience relationship amongst performing arts participants for the sustenance of theatre in Ghana. The first specific objective, set to achieve the fore stated aim, was to conduct a comprehensive literature review on the concept of audience development for the right approach to base the audience

development plan. This was achieved by discussing the various definitions and approaches propounded by researchers on the concept. The findings include:

1. The literature revealed that there are various definitions on the concept of audience development. Each researcher defines the concept how he/she perceives it to be. It was not surprising, therefore, when the data analysis done on the respondents of the interviews conducted revealed the same results. However, it was realised that the definitions are similar, because the conception of arts marketing, arts education and programming are seen to be embedded in almost all the definitions.
2. Again, the concept does not exist only to attract audience to the theatre but to build deeper relationship with them. This is to make the theatre experience a lasting one that will propel others, who are not inclined to participate in the theatre, to attend as well. Thus, the concept is not solely interested in audience numbers but the relationship the theatre organisation provides with the audience members.
3. Further, the literature disclosed that an organisation that wishes to develop its audience must make sure that its mission is in line with the need to develop audience. In achieving that, the organisation needs to work collaboratively with its staff and management to achieve a holistic audience development within the organisation.
4. Also, the concept of audience development in practice is a long term goal to achieve. It takes time, cost money, and need all the resources that will make it work effectively. This means, that an organisation with the objective to build audiences must have the resources and be willing to have the time to accomplish it.

The second objective aspired to investigate the various strategies that the National Theatre has put in place to build audiences for its programmes and productions over the years. The aim was to analyse and review innovative ones to strengthen them towards audience

development. This is achieved through data from the interview respondents, which is presented and analysed in chapter four of the study. The findings include:

1. The three residents groups at the National Theatre; The National Dance Company, The National Theatre Players (Abibigromma), and the National Symphony Orchestra, are autonomous, only answerable to the Executive Director. This has put a strain, in terms of management, on all of them. They are mandated to finance their productions and this has affected their ability to develop an audience for their productions.
2. In the history of the National Theatre (1992 to Date), in terms of audience attendance to its own productions and programmes (excluding private theatre productions) it is the old popular Concert party tradition that has been the great audience puller. However, the management at the time (1994 – 2001) failed to establish a deeper relationship with these audiences to make them regular theatre audience for the Theatre. The management thus was not into audience development.
3. The current management (2014 – Date) of the National Theatre attests to the fact that the establishment is in the process of audience development and thus have put strategies in place to that effect. However, management is facing the problem of financial resources and the right mechanisms to achieve greater results. Nevertheless, they are trying their best with the little they could do to build an audience for the National Theatre
4. Innovative Measures put in place to build audience include: a website that was not in function in the past; a conscious effort to build an audience database for the Theatre, and a community outreach programmes to the communities around the Accra Municipality. This is where Concert Party is being taken to the communities to entice them to the Theatre.

The third and last objective was to use the data gathered under the first two objectives and base the audience development plan for the National Theatre on it. This is achieved in the last part of chapter four. The Plan is thus based on an approach from the Wallace Studies in Arts audience and the findings of the data analysis. The plan seeks to develop a holistic audience for the National Theatre of Ghana.

5.4 Recommendations

The National Theatre should not take for granted any audience that enter its premises. Even if it is only one person or that audience was not there for a production from the producers of the Theatre; the Theatre can build multiple audiences out of such audience. The effective thing is to engage and relate with audience personally by having them serve on multiple panels. For instance, the Theatre can provide him with free tickets to bring his friend and a member of the family to watch performances when next he comes to the Theatre. The Theatre should then capture their data and extend that also to families and friends. Occasionally, such people could be encouraged to serve as volunteers for different projects. Thus there would be a sense of ownership.

The management of the National Theatre is to take full responsibility of the resident groups. Perhaps, it could be instituted for the resident groups to have regular productions in a year. At least, three productions by each resident group constituting nine productions in a given year won't be a bad idea. Then on monthly basis, the marketing department can publish whatever that may go on at the place a brochure to be given out to Ghanaians. As a result, people would know in advance what to expect when they enter the National Theatre. At the end of a year, all the gate proceeds should be added minus the production cost. Whatever amount is realised after all deductions, each resident group should be given a part and the rest be kept for the maintenance of the space, utilities, and to save some for future productions. In all nine

productions, post performance discussion should be a factor to educate audience members on the theatre experience and its benefit in their lives. Achieving this will mean building a theatre audience for the nation; making the National Theatre a vibrant and assessable theatre venture; and lastly a financially independent.

For the National Theatre to change the quality of the relationship of their audiences, the organisation must be willing to undergo a learning process to enrich the quality of the relationship within the organisation in order to extend them to their audiences. Information and change are very vital to achieving effective audience development in the theatre. So the National Theatre needs to understand that in as much as they want to know about their audiences, (collecting data for audience database) so should it be the case for the audiences. Information on NTG; its programmes and upcoming production of the resident groups, should always be posted on its website. There should be detailed accounts of the NTG's dealings on the website for audience to assess.

The National theatre should have a big database of audience for all kinds of events in Ghana structured and segmented; conference people, music people, dance people, arts people, sports related people, etcetera. It is something that has to be built with conscious planning over a conscious period of time then it becomes a credible document that other arts related organisation can come and buy for their events and productions. This way, the National Theatre can market its programmes and productions in addition to radio and television marketing.

The National Theatre should have an active thriving front of house operation (FOH). An FOH that is receptive, enticing, and welcoming in every sense of the word. The FOH of the National Theatre, though located behind the main auditorium, can still serve effectively if proper measures are put in place. An individual from the department (FOH) should be

stationed at the lobby or the Bar of the main auditorium. This way, anyone that enters would be greeted warmly and given all the necessary information on the Theatre. The National Theatre bar is almost always closed. It is a recreational area; they should have a good chef who can be doing small chops to anyone who may find himself at the place. The bar should be treated like a hotel bar; decorated in nice sofas and paintings; with music playing every now and then; and an attendant who is well dressed in uniform. It is not cast in stone that people will come in a flash. It is expected to be gradual. Steadily, an audience can be built for the Theatre that way. Once someone enters the bar and enjoys himself, he might want to come again. The residents groups can keep the place alive as well. There should not be an event at the main house only to attract people to the theatre. The entire establishment can be used to create and build an audience for the theatre.

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS (INTERVIEWS)

National Theatre of Ghana

- ...Amy Appiah Frimpong Executive Manager. 5th March, 2015
- ...Akosua Abdallah Deputy Executive Manager (Artistic). 27th April, 2015
- ...Alfred Danso Marketing Manager. 11th March, 2015
- ...William Ashon Producer/Programmes Officer. 13th March, 2015
- ...Mawuli Semevor Artistic Director (Abibigromma). 5th March, 2015
- ...Rebecca Adjei Public Relations Officer. 28th April, 2015
- ...Doris Waraku Front of House Officer. 4th May, 2015

Theatre Practitioners

- Africanus Aveh Snr. Lecturer, School of performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon.
5th April, 2015
- Agyemang Ossei Head: Department of Theatre Arts, School of Performing Arts,
University of Ghana, Legon. 9th March, 2015
- John K. Djisenu Snr. Lecturer, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana,
Legon. 19th May, 2015
- J. H. Nketia Prof. Emeritus Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana
Legon. 7th May, 2015
- Sandy Arkhurst Lecturer, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, Legon; and
Department of Theatre Arts, University of Education, Winneba.
10th March, 2015

Private Theatre Companies (Roverman Productions)

- ...Kabutey Ocansey Head: Business Development. 25th April, 2015

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Introductory Letter to the National Theatre of Ghana

Date: 12th January, 2015

Martha Frimpong (Graduate Student)

Theatre Arts Department, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana

Director of Administration,

National Theatre of Ghana,

Accra,

Ghana.

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO USE NATIONAL THEATRE OF GHANA AS A RESEARCH CASE STUDY

This is to formally request for the use of the National Theatre of Ghana as a case study for a research project titled *Towards an Audience Development Plan for the National Theatre of Ghana* to be conducted by Martha Frimpong from the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. The research is geared towards an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana (NTG).

NTG is chosen because it is the nation's cradle when it comes to theatre in Ghana, and the fact that its programmes cut across the performing arts; theatre, dance, music, makes it more plausible for a pioneering research like this. To help inform the research, the researcher will need to administer questionnaire to some selected NTG's programmes audiences as well as interview some key staff members who will be issued with interview consent forms.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher at (0246835000 or makkay86@gmail.com or Dr, Grace Uche Adinku at 0233260260) at the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana.

Thank You.

Yours Faithfully,

Martha Frimpong

Appendix B: Interview Recruitment Letter and Consent Form

Date: 7th February, 2015

Martha Frimpong

Graduate Student

Theatre Arts Department, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana

Dear (Potential Interviewee)

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Towards an Audience Development Plan for the National Theatre of Ghana*, to be conducted by Martha Frimpong from the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. The research is geared towards an audience development plan for the National Theatre of Ghana (NTG).

NTG faces a problem with audience patronage of its programmes. As theatre audience have continued to dwindle, creating an unstable future for NTG, it has become prudent to develop a plan that will, not only, develop audiences for NTG's programmes and that of its resident groups, but cultivate future audiences as well. By interviewing key informants, the researcher hopes to collect data to analyse and inform the study. NTG is chosen because it is the nation's cradle when it comes to theatre in Ghana, and the fact that its programmes cut across the performing arts; theatre, dance, music, makes it more plausible for a pioneering research like this.

You have been selected to participate in this study because of the great achievement you have attained in developing audiences for your productions and your expertise to the performing arts in Ghana. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to participate in an in-person interview, lasting between 10 to 15 minutes, from February to March 2015. Interview venues and time schedules will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking hand written notes, with your permission, the researcher will audio tape conversations for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Your consent to participate in this interview, as indicated below, demonstrates your willingness to have your name used in any resulting documents and publications and to relinquish confidentiality. Your participation is voluntary. I anticipate that the results of the study will be of great benefit to NTG and the arts sector as a whole. However, I cannot guarantee that you, personally, will receive any benefits from this research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher at (0246835000 or makkay86@gmail.com or Dr, Grace Uche Adinku at 0233260260). If not, please read and initial each of the following to indicate your consent

----- I consent to the use of audiotapes and note taking during my interview.

----- I consent to my identification as a participant in this study.

----- I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

----- I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organisation with which I am associated.

----- I wish to have the opportunity to review and possibly revise my comments and the information that I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you not waiving any legal claims, right or remedies. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration.

Sincerely,

Martha Frimpong

Graduate student

School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide – National Theatre of Ghana

1. What is your position and role at the National Theatre?
 - a. How many years have you worked at the National?
 - b. Perhaps a brief on its history?
2. Who are the target audience for the National Theatre of Ghana?
 - a. Perhaps a brief on its organisational structure and programmes?
 - b. How does NTG engage with the Ghanaian Community?
3. In your opinion, do you think educating the public about what NTG does will perhaps help reap high patronage for its programmes?
4. What do you know about audience development?
5. Do you think NTG is involved in Audience Development?
6. If yes, what has the management of NTG done or is doing towards developing audience
7. What is been tried before?
8. What aspect of the previous efforts succeeded and what did not?
9. What approaches had the broadest impact?
10. Were the progress measured, if so how?
 - a. What were the pros and cons?
 - b. Do you think it is important for audience members to understand the mission of NTG? If yes, please explain.
11. In your opinion, what are the major contributing factors that have led to the low audience patronage for NTG's programmes and that of its resident groups as against private companies that hire the space for performances? Please explain.
12. In your opinion, what are the most valuable marketing tools a theatre organisation, like NTG, should have? Please explain.
13. In your opinion, do you think the media helps to boost audience development? Please explain.

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Guide – Theatre Practitioners

1. What do you know about the National Theatre of Ghana (NTG)
 - a. In your opinion, what does NTG stand for in terms of promoting theatre in Ghana?
 - b. Any idea on how theatre performances started at NTG?
 - c. How were the performances received, in terms of audience attendance?
2. Do you have any experiences with the National Theatre
 - a. What kind of experience?
3. Have you witnessed any of NTG's programmes or that of its residents groups' productions before?
 - a. How will you compare NTG's production to that of private theatre companies that hire the space for performances?
 - b. How was the attendance? Was it encouraging?
 - c. How did you see the audience reaction, both at the gate and in the auditorium, as the play unfolds?
4. In your view, will you say NTG impact Ghanaians with their productions?
 - a. Negatively or positively?

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

5. What comes to mind when you hear the concept of audience development?
 - a. Are we in anyway, as Ghanaians, developing our audience?
6. Perhaps, do you have any experiences in developing audiences?
 - a. If yes, how did you achieve it?
 - b. What were the pros and cons?
7. What is your take on Attendance at NTG's productions and that of Private theatre companies that hire the space for performances?
 - a. What do you think the private companies are doing that NTG is not
In terms of arts education, artistic, sponsorship, target audience, marketing and management?
 - b. Will you say NTG develops its audiences?
 - c. Why?
 - d. In your opinion what do think NTG can do to develop its audiences?
8. In terms of proximity, will you say NTG is well situated?
 - a. Do you think the location affects audience patronage of performances?
9. In your opinion, do you think educating the public about what NTG does will perhaps help reap high patronage for its programmes?
10. How does NTG engage with the Ghanaian community?
11. In your opinion, what are the most valuable marketing tools a theatre organisation, like NTG, should have? Please explain.
12. In your opinion, do you think the media helps to boost audience development? Please explain.

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for (Roverman Productions)

1. How do you understand by the concept of audience development?
2. Are we in anyway, as Ghanaians, developing our audiences?
3. Perhaps do you have any experience in audience development?
4. Is your company involved in the practice of audience development?
5. Your company has been known to have consistent audience patronage for a span of five years, how have you been able to achieve that?
6. How you been observing productions of NTG's?
7. What is your take on the attendance of NTG's productions and that of your company's?
8. Any suggestions on how NTG can attract and develop audiences for its programmes and productions?