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DISABILITY AND THEATRICAL NON-INCLUSIVITY: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY OF CAPE COAST SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

JOSEPH EBO MEFFUL

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DISABILITY AND THEATRICAL NON-INCLUSIVITY: AN EXPLORATORY
STUDY OF CAPE COAST SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Centre for African and International Studies of the Faculty of Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in African Studies

FEBRUARY 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name:

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name:

Co-Supervisor's Signature Date

Name:

ABSTRACT

The relationship between theatre and disability goes as far back as ancient Greece where dramatic writings of Greek dramatists included characters with disabilities.

Africa has a complex and developing relationship between disability and theatre.

The relationship between disability and theatre in Ghana is an emerging area of research. There are, however, a few studies that have looked into theatre and disability in Ghana. Whilst literature and other intellectual discourses on theatre for visually impaired persons and their integration into theatrical performances are growing in other jurisdictions it is nearly difficult to locate such literature and performances in Ghana and this study sought to address that intellectual and practice gap. Thematic analytical technique was employed in analysing data which was collected using the qualitative approach and two instruments (Semi-structured interviews and complete participant observation). Anchored on the social inclusion theory and critical disability theory the findings revealed how collaborations, training, funding, awareness creation, accessible technology and time management could break the barriers (absence of trained drama instructor, financial constraints, technical limitations, attitudinal barriers and time constraints) to inclusive theatre workshop for visually impaired students. Ultimately, the study contributes to the scholarship on inclusive theatre for visually impaired students. Based on the findings and the conclusions, I suggest that further research be carried out on the use of emerging technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and haptic feedback systems, to enhance the theatre experience for visually impaired students.

KEY WORDS

Inclusive Theatre

Visual Impairment

Intervention Model

Theatre workshop



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DEDICATION

To my family: Elikem, Nana-Buaben, Nana-Egyir, and Nana- Segu.



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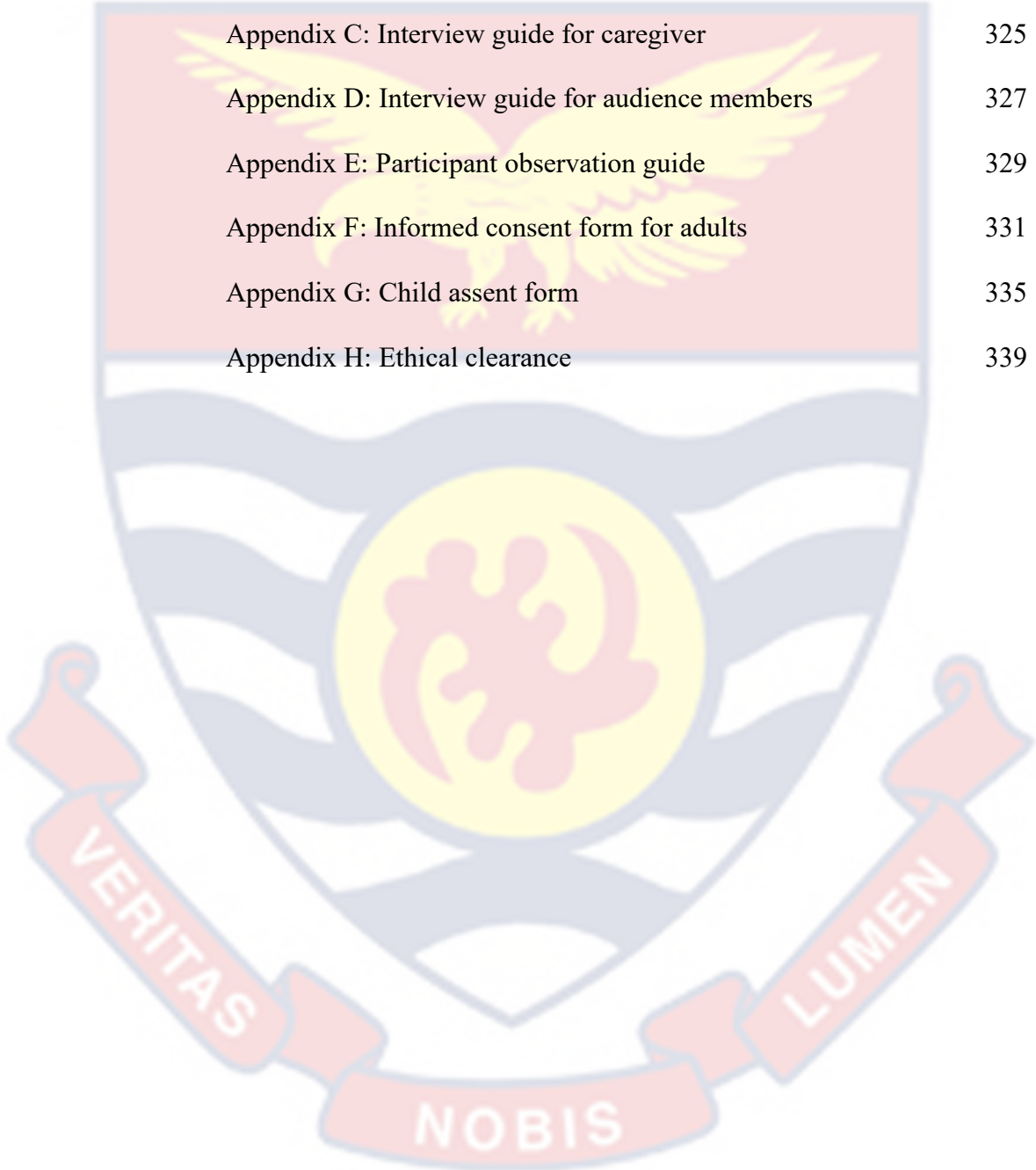
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPEDEAF/BLIND: Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind

CDT: Critical Disability Theory

ICD: International Classification of Diseases

SIT: Social Inclusion Theory

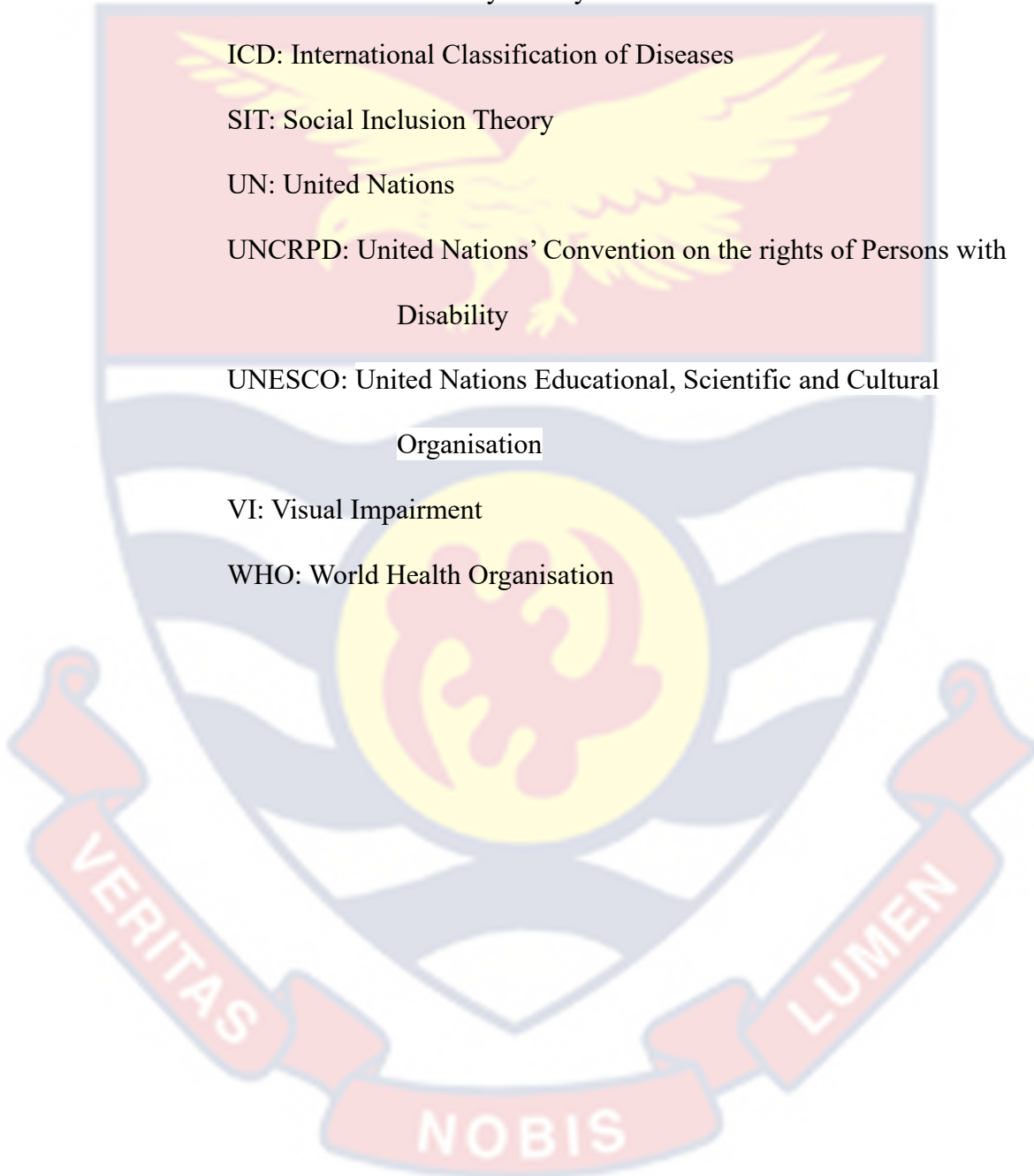
UN: United Nations

UNCRPD: United Nations' Convention on the rights of Persons with
Disability

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organisation

VI: Visual Impairment

WHO: World Health Organisation



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Theatre in all of its forms has frequently been recognised as one of the most effective, efficient, and well-recognised interventionist techniques and tools used to promote social inclusion and cohesiveness (Woodland, 2017). This research seeks to study visually impaired persons and their relationship with theatre in Ghana. The goal is to address a seeming exclusion of visually impaired persons from the numerous theatrical activities and articulate considerations that may be necessary to integrate them into such theatre experiences. The study is, also an attempt to unravel the apparent absence of sufficient literature on inclusive theatre for vulnerable groups such as visually impaired persons in Ghana. The study ultimately intends to explore diverse mechanisms that will drive and maximise the accessibility, inclusion, and participation of visually impaired persons in theatrical activities in Ghana.

This chapter captures the personal interest and motivation in the study. Also, with a particular focus on Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa, this chapter gives background information on the notions of disability, visual impairment, and the relationship between theatre and disability globally. Additionally, the problem that informs the quest for the study is teased out. It captures the overall objective and the specific objectives that drive the study and draws forth related and justified research questions aligned with the objectives. Further, the chapter deals with the significance and the delimitation of the study, and its limitations. More so, this

chapter seeks to operationally define concepts or terms, and finally, a summary of how the chapters in the thesis are organised concludes the chapter.

Personal interest and motivation in the study

The motivation and impetus for starting an initiative to incorporate visually impaired students into dramatic theatre productions comes from a strong belief in inclusivity and an understanding of the transformational potential of the arts. Theatrical expression possesses the capacity to surpass corporeal boundaries and establish profound emotional and intellectual connections between people. However, the conventional theatre scene frequently presents difficulties for those who are visually impaired, keeping them out of the diverse range of dramatic experiences. The goal of this project is to break down these barriers and promote the idea that everyone should have the chance to participate in and make a positive contribution to the dynamic world of theatre, regardless of their abilities.

The need for a practical project arises from the understanding that theoretical discussions alone may not suffice in driving tangible change. Practical projects ground theoretical concepts in real-world applications, offering a platform to test, refine, and demonstrate the viability of inclusive theatre practices. This project acts as a living laboratory where the theoretical constructs of social inclusion, accessibility, and empowerment are translated into concrete actions. By engaging in the practical integration of visually impaired students into dramatic performances, the project aims to generate empirical evidence of the transformative potential of inclusive arts initiatives. Moreover, it serves as a model that can be replicated and adapted in various educational and artistic settings, contributing to a

broader movement for inclusivity in the arts. In essence, the practical nature of the project aligns with the conviction that true change occurs when theories are translated into actions that impact the lived experiences of individuals.

Background to the study

Undoubtedly, the use of theatre as an interventionist tool to effect social inclusion and cohesion cannot be over-emphasised, hence the concept of using theatre for social inclusion has garnered significant attention in recent discussions. Social inclusion has become one of the fastest-growing phenomena within the global space (Hayes, Gray, & Edwards, 2008). Consequently, contemporary societies are responsible for promoting social inclusion in every facet of life. Generally, social inclusion implies a process by which conscious efforts are made with the intention of creating an environment that provides and promotes equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, status, race, religion, and gender in order to encourage full engagement in all aspects of life (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek, & Leahy, 2015).

Social inclusion is considered an attempt to counter a situation where society is constructed along binary lines. Social inclusion acts as a remedy because it combats the projection of a binary society in which some groups are viewed with prejudice, devalued, and defined by their perceived flaws. In Staszak's (2009) opinion, society cast the people it could subjugate or eradicate as "Others," relegating them to the periphery of humanity. One major area which seems to have suffered immensely from this otherness, thus, being relegated to the fringes, is the area of disability.

Academic research on disability is not new. It has a lengthy past. Even though these studies are important, several modern researchers have also contributed to shaping and bringing attention to the general studies of disability.

Generally, the term disability does not lend itself to a single definition. The concept of disability is, therefore, multi-disciplinary in nature. A variety of practical theoretical frameworks or models (medical, social, moral/religious, charity, functional) from the social sciences can be used to understand and explain disability. Some scholars (Dunlap, 2015; Hosking, 2008; Morris, 2017) seek to explain the concept of disability as a medical condition. These scholars perceive disability as an issue that primarily affects the individual and that needs to be resolved. Disability implies a state of physical or mental limitations that prevent an individual from performing some tasks. It may also allude to the negative effects of such restrictions on society and the economy. As the degree of impairment and the effect on a person's life can differ dramatically depending on the social and physical context in which they live, the concept of disability is sometimes seen as a social construct. The severity of a disability ranges from mild to profound, and it can also be characterised as temporary or permanent (Goodley, 2017; Shakespeare, 2018; Watson, Roulstone, & Thomas, 2012).

The global population of people with all kinds of disabilities is pegged at over 1.3 billion according to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2022) representing 16% of the global population. People with disabilities in the areas of physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental health are included. The prevalence of disability is higher among older persons and those who are poor. For instance,

WHO establishes that the prevalence of impairment is thought to be 30% or more in persons over the age of 60, compared to 2-4% in children under the age of five.

The medical, moral or religious, and social conceptions of disability, among others, have an impact on how people in sub-Saharan Africa perceive disability as intimated by Anthony (2011). People's perceptions of persons with disabilities in sub-Saharan African society have been influenced largely by these models in various ways. People with varying forms of disabilities, including the visually impaired, deaf, dumb, and handicapped, have recently become a topic of discussion in a variety of academic fields. These talks have focused on their potential for relevance within and to society. Without a doubt, what has precipitated this discussion recently is due to the perception that individuals with disabilities are not relevant to society, and as a result of their limitations, such individuals are unable to contribute to the advancement of society. Theatre, therefore, becomes one of the obvious interventions that can be used to dispel such perception.

This understanding of disability is not distantly different from the Ghanaian experience. The medical or person model of disability is a common way to describe and comprehend disability in Ghana. A person with a disability is described by Ghana's Disability Act of 2006 (Act 715) as someone who suffers from a sensory, mental, or physical disability, comprising impairment of the visual, speech, or auditory which creates a societal, cultural, or physical inhibition that seriously curtails their main activities of daily living. (Republic of Ghana, 2006). Generally, in Ghana, a person is considered to have a disability if they are unable to execute

an activity due to difficulty with some aspect of their physical or mental composition (Avoke, 2002).

The Ghana Statistical Service (2014) corroborates the Disability Act of 2006 (Act 715) by further expanding the scope of disability. The Ghana Statistical Service (2014) presents disability as a disorder that affects a person's capacity to conduct certain jobs or activities because some body parts are lost or do not function as a result of an impairment or abnormality. This implies that a person is considered disabled if an impairment prevents them from doing certain duties or restricts them from engaging in certain activities. The emphasis is placed more on the impairment as the cause of the failure to fulfill a particular role than it is on society's failure to help people with disabilities operate effectively. Disability generally appears to carry a negative connotation in Ghana, where it is widely believed that people with disabilities are unproductive and unable to contribute to the socioeconomic development of society. This phenomenon has been viewed as a recipe for marginalisation, stigmatisation, oppression, and discrimination (Baffoe, 2013; Morris, 2017). Dramatic theatre, therefore, becomes one of the productive interventionist tools in exposing this marginalisation, stigmatisation, oppression, and discrimination against persons with disability through performances and also integrating these people into mainstream theatre performances.

Additionally, restrictive conceptualisations of disability are created and reinforced by traditional and religious beliefs, harmful stereotypes, and interpretations of disability that frequently reflect these views (Kassah, 2008). It becomes challenging, if not impossible, for people with and without disabilities to

develop an open-minded awareness, knowledge, and understanding of disabilities in such a setting. As a result, prejudice, marginalisation, and social stigma continue to affect people with disabilities (Ocran, 2019). Interestingly, Ocran, succinctly intimates that discrimination against and social marginalisation of disabled people is still prevalent in Ghana. These discriminations and social marginalisation still exist despite several anti-discrimination laws intended to uphold the rights of those who are with disabilities and make it simpler for them to engage in society's accepted social, political, and economic activities. Currently, the laws do not appear to have eliminated all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities, and in some cases, they even seem to be institutionalising it (Ocran, 2019). The state must pay more attention to revising and implementing these laws' various provisions.

Like everywhere else in the globe, a sizable segment of the population in Ghana is made up of people with disabilities. The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), estimates that the nation has roughly 30.8 million residents, 8% of whom are disabled in a variety of ways (GSS, 2021). When compared to earlier data, this percentage reflects a significant increase. For instance, GSS (2010), estimated Ghana's population to be around 26 million, and 3% of the population, was reported to have a disability. Advocacy for increased recognition of the rights of people with disabilities and concerns about disability and the status of people with disabilities has gained significant traction in Ghana. One major type of impairment or disability which has attracted a lot of attention in recent times globally is visual impairment.

Visual impairment, generally, encompasses a wide range of individuals, from those who are only marginally impaired to the extremely those who are completely blind and unable to discern between light and dark. A person with a visual impairment has a diminished capacity for seeing or perceiving visual stimuli (Cimarolli et al., 2016). Many circumstances, including congenital anomalies, illness, accident, or aging, might contribute to this syndrome (Li et al., 2017). Reading, identifying faces, and navigating their environment are just a few of the skills that people with vision impairment may find challenging (Gresset & Gagné, 2019). A person's disability may be slight, severe, or even render them legally blind in some cases. People with visual impairment have been reported to endure functional vision loss or blindness that cannot be resolved by refractive surgery, drugs, or other treatments (Adetoro, 2009; Taylor et al., 2018; WHO, 2021). The import of this is that they struggle with visual system flaws that limit their capacity to carry out daily tasks on an individual basis. These ailments include low vision, absolute blindness, and partial sightedness. For their reading needs, the blind rely on alternate forms like Braille, large print, talking books, or audio recordings (Liu, Tang, Sun, & Zhu, 2021).

Interestingly, visual impairments come in a variety of forms and levels. It is critical to realise that a person's level of issues or impairments may not be well predicted by their visual acuity (the sharpness and accuracy of the eye) on its own. The International Classification of Diseases 11 (WHO, 2018) puts the present-day concept of visual impairment into two major categories. These are Distant and Near. Distant visual or vision impairment is subsumed into four categories namely:

mildly impaired (This has no effect on a person's ability to perform any visual activity. They often do not have any limitations on their field of vision); moderately impaired (their disability is not extremely severe. Their visual acuity ranges from 6/24-6/60. If the right assistance is given, they are capable of doing anything); severely impaired (refers to those who, after receiving the most amount of correction, have a visual acuity of less than 6/60); and profoundly impaired or blindness (referring to those who are completely blind with less than 6/60 to 3/60 visual acuity). Generally speaking, the difficulty in performing close-up work at an appreciable reading distance, and 20/40 or worse visual acuity falls under the category of near visual impairment (WHO, 2018).

Globally, it is believed there are not less than 2.2 billion persons who have near or distant vision impairment (WHO, 2022). Moreover, it is believed that the prevalence of distant visual impairment is four times as much higher in developing countries than in developed ones. More importantly, studies have shown or revealed that about 80% or more persons in most African countries are believed to have cases of near vision impairment which has not been attended to, compared to rates of fewer than 10% in developed countries (Burton et al., 2021; Global Burden of Disease, 2021; WHO, 2022).

There are several causal factors that contribute to vision loss globally. These include cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, cortical visual impairment, infection, age-related macular degeneration, trauma, glaucoma, and uncorrected refractive errors (Liu, Tang, Sun & Zhu, 2021; Naipal & Rampersad, 2018; Taylor et al., 2018). It must be emphasised here that these are only a few of the many disorders that affect

vision, and each one has distinct clinical traits and characteristics. The projected yearly global productivity loss due to vision impairment is around US\$ 411 billion (Burton et al., 2021). The implication of this projection is that it puts a heavy economic and financial strain on global finances.

In Ghana, the concept of visual impairment is saddled with varying meanings and definitions. According to the Ghana Statistical Service, (2014) “Visual impairment refers to a functional limitation of the eye(s) or visual system due to a disorder or disease that can result in a visual disability or a visual handicap” (p. 35). This definition is consistent with the broad scope of the medical paradigm of disability. With regard to this study's objectives visual impairment would be understood to mean people who have been reported to endure functional vision loss or blindness that cannot be resolved by refractive surgery, drugs, or other treatments and therefore, by extension, with worse than or less than 6/60 to 3/60 visual acuity (Blindness).

The number of persons who are blind or have low vision is prevalent in Ghana. It is estimated that 331,700 (representing 1.07% of the national population) suffered various degrees of visual impairment in Ghana as of 2021, according to the Ghana Health Service (Duho, 2022). Out of this number about 229,400 (0.74%) people were totally blind in the country. The Ghana health service's data reveals that more than half (54.8%) of the population of visually impaired people had cataracts and were hence blind (Severn, 2022). Moreover, Severn succinctly postulates that blindness was significantly more common in Ghana's rural communities than it was among urban dwellers. This is because there have been

few developments in those fields. It can be difficult to get to locations like hospitals because many rural communities are located far from urbanised areas. It appears that only a small percentage of these people have formal education and are able to read or write Braille. The majority relies on the street begging as a source of income (Duho, 2022). It is, therefore, clear that a sizable portion of the Ghanaian population suffers from visual impairment, and it is inconceivable that the majority of these people are frequently excluded from the many theatrical performances that take place throughout the nation, particularly in the various schools.

The relationship between theatre and disability goes as far back as ancient Greece where dramatic writings of Greek dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes included characters with disabilities. For instance, in *Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles King Oedipus is presented as blind. Again, one can also make mention of Tiresias (the blind seer or prophet of Thebes) in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* who is also depicted as a blind person. The place of persons with disability, however, has shared a common stage with theatre in recent centuries. Hence, it is believed by scholars of classical history that the Greek poet Homer was a blind man. Similarly, as a blind man in the 17th century, John Milton rose to prominence as an English epic poet (Gupta, Malhotra & Jain, 2018; Kahn, 2013). People with disabilities have been portrayed in the earliest theatrical literature as villains or antagonists (like Richard III), as characters or characters with low self-esteem (such as jokers or jesters).

Africa has a complex and developing relationship between disability and theatre. Disability-related marginalisation, stigmatisation, and discrimination have

been widespread in many African civilisations (Osofisan & Ogidan, 2014). Theatre may be a potent weapon for fighting discrimination against individuals with disabilities, advancing their rights and inclusion, and giving them a stage on which to express their creativity and selves (Akyeampong, 2011; Duru, 2018). There has been an increase in interest in African theatre that is accessible to people with disabilities in recent years. Some theatre companies and organisations have sprouted out with the goal of promoting disability inclusion and giving disabled persons the chance to engage in the arts. These organisations frequently employ theatre to dispel myths, encourage social reform, and increase public understanding of the rights and concerns of people with disabilities (Ojulari, 2014; Osofisan & Ogidan, 2014).

Moreover, a few African plays have examined issues related to disability and contested prejudicial views of those with impairments (Ajasa, 2016; Bamuh, 2019). A character with a physical impairment is depicted as powerful and independent in the Nigerian dramatist Soyinka's (1963) *The Lion and the Jewel* as an example. It is important to note that some African plays address disability and seek to change preconceived notions about those with impairments. In this instance, the use of disability as a story element or plot device gives the characters with disabilities agency such as Baba Fakunle in Rotimi's (1979) *The Gods are not to Blame*. The goal of creating disability-inclusive theatre in Africa still faces formidable obstacles, despite these encouraging developments. For instance, access to training and performance opportunities is frequently restricted for those with disabilities, and stigma and discrimination toward those with disabilities can limit

the acceptance of inclusive theatre in some areas (Bamuh, 2019; Kerr, 2018; Njuguna, 2017). In general, there are many different aspects and complex interactions between disability and theatre in Africa. A lot more work is necessary to guarantee that all Africans with disabilities have equal access to the arts and may participate fully in cultural life, even though theatre can serve as a platform for disability inclusion and combat stereotypes about persons with disabilities (Kerr, 2018).

In Ghana, like many African countries, the relationship between theatre and disability is not new. Several Ghanaian plays have used the concept of disability as a plot device and thereby given agency to these characters with disabilities. For instance, in Sutherland's (1967) *Edufa*, a character named Sam was represented as someone with mental condition or limitation. Also, in Owusu's (1999) *the legend of Aku sika*, a character called Aku was represented as handicapped. Nasir and Aikomo (2020) intimate that these disabled characters' roles don't accurately reflect how people with impairments actually thought, felt, or acted, or to put it another way, the majority of playwrights have employed the metaphor of infirmity which sometimes reflects and reinforces society's stereotypical attitudes toward people with disabilities. This has largely informed the term disability theatre.

Disability theatre is fast becoming a global phenomenon. It should be highlighted that while there are comparable characteristics across nations and contexts, the circumstances causing this increased interest in the connection between disability and theatre vary (Hadley, 2017). Since 2006, it appears that discussions on people with disabilities have occurred in a variety of academic areas

and in other contexts in terms of frequency and urgency (Ajobiewe, 2014; Nasir & Aikomo, 2020; Sowers, 2010). The direction of these discourses focus on how efficient, effective, and productive persons with disability could be in the society (Ajobiewe, 2014; Durojaiye, 1996; Giwa, 2008.). This comes off the back of the assumption that persons with disability are unproductive in society (Picton, 2011). The political action surrounding disability rights lies at the heart of the history of disability theatre. Despite the fact that communities have lived with and witnessed disabilities for ages, mainstream society and the law did not previously value accessibility or equality (Marti, 2018).

Generally, theatre has a bearing on changing society, and those who advocate for societal change, personal growth, and public thought have not looked past the theatre's prowess in supporting their courses. Thus, the theatre transforms into a catalyst that can advance and strengthen particular conceptions and ideological slants in every community. In order to do this, there must be careful thought given to inclusivity, fair representation, and patronage. A cursory study of historical theatrical practices demonstrates a lot of biases against visually impaired persons and that antecedent seems to influence contemporary theatre practices (Swetz, 2012). The United Nations (2006) envisions eliminating barriers caused by impairments that prevent vulnerable people from fully and effectively participating in society as equally as possible with others in its declaration of the rights of those with impairments or disabilities. This research, therefore, is one of the responses to that clarion call and will, therefore, focus on the visually impaired.

To prevent prejudice and exclusion, everyone in society, especially those with minority backgrounds, orientations, and physiologies, must be provided an equal opportunity. However, a substantial portion of theatre appreciation and patronage traditionally have been visual and sight-capable. Perhaps the etymology of the word theatre, which is derived from the Greek word 'theatron', which denotes "a place of seeing" or "a place for viewing" (Merriam-Webster, 2023) reinforces the idea that those with any kind of visual impairment are automatically incapacitated and prohibited from the theatre. The ability of citizens to participate in cultural activities and theatre productions, for example, improves their capacity for social inclusion. However, it is not always possible for everyone to enjoy these activities in a fair and equal manner even though inclusion and accessibility in society for individuals with impairments or disabilities is a fundamental human right and principle which is championed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Interestingly, people's perception has always been that individuals suffering from any form of impairment or disability are not contributing members of society and that due to their limitations, these individuals are unable to contribute to the advancement of society. Notably, visually challenged or impaired people are the most affected by this stereotypical perception and attitudes in society. The belief system affects how most people in Ghana categorise and comprehend visual impairment, demonstrating the significant influence that sociocultural values and conventions have on people's attitudes toward visually impaired people. Furthermore, it appears these visually impaired people are marginalised,

dehumanised, and excluded from institutional, social, and communal life in Ghanaian society, which includes social activities and schooling (Mantey, 2014; Nketsia, Soloviita, & Gyimah, 2016).

The planning and execution of theatrical productions and related events in Ghana appear to be done with little to no consideration for persons who are visually challenged or impaired. As a result, when it comes to the accessibility of theatrical things, those who are visually impaired face a significant challenge. As a result, the social advancement of visually challenged persons in theatres seems to be proceeding slowly. The theatre is not only unwelcoming to visually impaired patrons, but it also discourages the development of other creative abilities and theatre artistry in visually impaired people, including acting, directing, and other technical aspects of the theatre.

Statement of the Problem

As a theatre facilitator and educator, having stints with most theatre institutions here in Ghana, I have noticed that, despite the numerous theatrical events and experiences that take place there, even at various institutions that are educating theatre professionals, certain vulnerable groups, like the visually impaired persons, are often overlooked and excluded from these events. Due to their social exclusion from these activities, these people are not only denied entrance to and patronage at theatres but their creative potential is stifled. The setting has not been developed for these visually impaired people to explore their abilities, despite the fact that some of them may have a passion for theatrical activities like acting, directing, and creating on an individual level.

Scholarly works abound in the area of inclusive theatre mostly focusing on ways in which theatre might be made more welcome and accessible to a variety of audiences and performers with disabilities including those with visual impairment.

Moreover, these studies emphasised the inclusion of diverse performers with disabilities (including but not limited to only those with visual impairment) on stage as well as the use of captioning, audio description, and sign language interpretation in theatre performances (Johnson & Matson, 2018; Nasir & Aikomo, 2020; Naraine, Whitfield, & Fels 2018; Phillips, 2016; Sanderson, 2015; Smith, 2017).

Additionally, some of these works also address the creative processes involved in producing inclusive theatre with a focus on using inclusive theatre methods, including digital technology, for children who are visually impaired. They also shed light on the potential of inclusive theatre for kids with visual impairments and how to make a welcoming environment for visually impaired kids in theatre (Applegate, 2018; Cochrane, 2015; Fogo & Sutton, 2018; Sanderson, 2015).

Additionally, copious research has been done on the obstacles and difficulties associated with developing and producing inclusive theatre, as well as the best solutions for overcoming these difficulties (Applegate, 2018; Fogo & Sutton, 2018; Johnson, 2010; Johnson & Matson, 2018; Smith, 2014).

The relationship between disability and theatre in Ghana is an emerging area of research. There are, however, a few studies that have looked into theatre and disability in Ghana. For instance, Ofori (2019) studies how disabled actors are portrayed in Ghanaian theatre and how their performances subvert ableist assumptions and advance the rights of the disabled. More specifically, Semevo and

Flynn (2020) investigate the transformative potential of such projects for advancing disability rights by describing a collaborative theatrical project in Ghana that included impaired players. In addition, Bofo-Arthur (2020) investigates the function of theatre in Ghana in advancing disability rights and social change. Additionally, in their investigation of how people with disabilities are portrayed in well-known Ghanaian drama, Attivor and Gockel (2020) make the case that ethical considerations should receive more focus. The writers emphasise the potential for drama to fight stigma and advance people with disabilities rights, while simultaneously emphasising the danger of damaging stereotypes and depictions.

Adu (2019) examines three recent plays from Ghana that have characters with impairments. The author looks at how disabilities are portrayed in these plays as well as how they are utilised to address larger social and political issues in Ghana. Anokye (2018) focuses on Ama Ata Aidoo, a well-known Ghanaian playwright, and how people with disabilities are portrayed in her plays. The author makes the case that Aidoo's plays dispel preconceptions and shed light on the social and political obstacles that Ghana's disabled population must overcome. Akyeampong (2011) investigates how disabilities are portrayed in Ghanaian theatre and makes the case that more varied and complex portrayals are required. The author also emphasises how theatre has the power to dispel stereotypes and foster fresh viewpoints on disabilities.

However, it appears literature is silent on inclusive theatre for visually impaired children in Ghana. Whereas visually impaired people are easily integrated into dance and music performances (to some extent) rather than theatrical

performances in Ghana such cannot be said of dramatic theatre. For instance, a musical band like the Blind Messiahs (made up of blind musicians in Ghana) is a typical example. African footprint which is a dance group resident in Cape Coast has some visually impaired members. More so, whilst literature and other intellectual discourses on theatre for visually impaired persons (including children) and their integration into mainstream theatrical performances are growing in other jurisdictions such as the UK, USA, Australia, Canada, and Germany, among others, it is nearly difficult to locate such literature and performances in the Ghanaian context and this study seeks to address that intellectual and practice gap.

Purpose of the study

This study explores inclusive theatre for visually impaired students in Ghana by integrating them into live performances

Research Objectives

In order to ensure that this study is focused and pertinent to the research problem being explored, the following research objectives are a crucial component of this research project. They served as a road map for the investigation.

1. To study the impediments that hinder instructors of performing art in Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre.
2. To design an intervention model to facilitate theatre making process for visually impaired performers.

3. To facilitate theatre workshops for the visually impaired students in Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind by implementing the designed intervention model.
4. To examine the feedback from the inclusive theatre performance and the implementation of the intervention model.

Research Questions

Maxwell (2005) notes that the researcher's goals for the study are reflected in the research questions. It serves as a link between other design elements. The study as a whole is affected by it as well. It establishes the parameters of the phenomenon the researcher will investigate, directs methodological choices, and affects the conceptual framework, early findings, and possible applicability. The following questions were developed in order to accomplish the goals of this study:

1. What impediments hinder instructors of performing art in Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre?
2. What intervention model could be designed to facilitate theatre making process for visually impaired performers?
3. How does the intervention model catalyse the implementation of a workshop for the visually impaired in Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind?
4. What feedback do participants present in relation to the intervention model designed and the theatre workshop implemented?

Contribution to Knowledge

The study makes a distinctively substantial contribution to the area of inclusive theatre by offering a thorough framework for developing theatre productions that genuinely involve students with visual impairments. This framework covers a variety of topics, including script modification, training, funding, and awareness campaigns, and it provides institutions, theatre professionals, and educators who want to promote inclusivity in the performing arts with a useful road map. The study helps shift cultural views on disability by showing the difficulties and mental barriers that visually impaired people confront in the context of theatre. It emphasises the value of awareness-raising and educational efforts in advancing inclusivity and combating ableist mindsets.

The study furthermore, makes a distinctive contribution by demonstrating how collaboration and skill development can empower students who are visually impaired. The study contributes to how theatre can be a vehicle for skill enhancement, confidence building, and establishing a feeling of community among visually impaired students by stressing training efforts and collaborative collaborations. The study again makes a significant contribution by providing useful guidance on how to properly modify theatrical performances to accommodate visually impaired students through its examination of script changes, the use of accessible technology, and inventive solutions to technological limits. These adaptations can be a source of inspiration for upcoming inclusive theatre initiatives.

Moreover, the study offers many perspectives on valuing and promoting inclusiveness in theatre, opening up opportunities for performance and interaction with the general audience to spark and pique interest in inclusive theatre. Significantly, it broadens our corpus knowledge and practice of inclusive theatre workshops and dramaturgy as a major pillar in theatrical productions for the visually impaired. The study provides different ways of appreciating and promoting inclusions in the theatre that present chances for performance, and connection with the public, to stimulate and sustain interest in inclusive theatre. Additionally, it also expands the frontiers of discourses in critical disability theory and social inclusion theory and practice. Ultimately, this study adds to the scholarship in the discourse of inclusive theatre for the visually impaired in Ghana and the global stage in general.

Delimitation

The demographics of visually impaired persons in Ghana, per the Ghana Statistical Service, cut across every region and sector in Ghana, and ideally, for an interventionist study as this, targeting the greater majority of the settled group (visually impaired persons) for the study must be favoured. However, it is also acknowledged that it will be daunting and may perhaps outstrip the boundaries of a terminal study as this. This is based on the fact that the theatre production process includes auditions and casting, followed by a series of rehearsals, leading to the final or actual performance. It will be challenging in terms of time commitment and expensive to make the production accessible to all visually impaired people in

Ghana. As a result, mobilising the cast and crew for the rehearsal won't be too difficult if they are all in one location.

For that reason, the study's focus was on visually challenged or impaired basic school pupils in Ghana. The study, therefore, selected one school with the required characteristics as a lab site. This, actually, resonates with the Ghana Statistical Service's (2014) observation that:

Visual impairment is high among those with education beyond the elementary level, particularly those with Middle school level of education. This may be explained by the fact that there are a number of specialised educational institutions in Ghana that aim at providing the educational needs of the visually impaired. Ghana's educational system has over the decades provided opportunities for the inclusion of the visually impaired in the regular school system all the way to the university level. Many visually impaired persons have taken advantage of such opportunities (p. 43).

In Ghana, numerous schools promote the education of those who are visually impaired. However, the study focused on the Cape Coast School for the deaf and blind (CAPEDEAF/BLIND) as a lab site, where the necessary data were gathered, and workshops organised which invariably culminated into a performance. There are a number of factors that informed the choice of CAPEDEAF/BLIND for the study. The first is that the school actively involves the visually impaired students in musical and dancing activities where they play the drums and the hearing-impaired pupils perform. They have given performances at several events in and around Cape Coast. Consequently, including them in dramatic performances will guarantee a full theatre experience (which is a total theatre that

characterises African performances). It will be less challenging in terms of time commitment and less expensive to make the production accessible to the visually impaired student in Cape Coast in terms of mobilising the cast and crew for rehearsals.

Limitations

The mentioned restrictions relating to the researcher's first reception in the study area offer insightful information regarding the difficulties encountered throughout the study. First off, the presence of reservations and apathy upon arriving suggests that the school may have grown accustomed to a particular style of engagement with outside parties, one that is predominantly centered on altruistic actions like donations. The researcher's goal may have diverged from the conventional wisdom, leading to early doubt and reluctance, as it necessitated completing a thorough terminal study as opposed to providing immediate material aid. It took me some time and effort to establish a relationship and comprehend the local environment in order to get over these initial objections. I was able to win the trust and cooperation of the institution by progressively demonstrating the value and significance of the study beyond immediate material help, ultimately making it easier for the study to be carried out successfully.

The participants' sporadic and frequently tardy attendance at rehearsals, which had noticeable effects on blocking, movement, and the overall rehearsal schedule, was the second important obstacle identified during the research. This problem resulted from a number of causes, including the students' academic obligations, health issues, and practical limitations imposed by the daily schedule

at the school. The failure of participants to regularly show up for practices on time posed a variety of difficulties. First of all, it interfered with the well-planned blocking and movement patterns that were essential to the success of the performance. The inability to synchronise actions, character interactions, and scene transitions during crucial rehearsals resulted in potential negative effects on the performance as a whole. In addition, the inconsistent attendance forced longer rehearsal times than the originally planned programme. This created scheduling and logistical difficulties for the research team as well as the participants because it interfered with their academic obligations and changed the regular school schedule.

I had to use persuasive and diplomatic communication techniques to overcome this limitation and guarantee that rehearsals went smoothly. The researcher pleaded with the participants, highlighting the importance of their dedication to the theatre workshop, as I was aware that the school would soon be on break. A common understanding was formed through open communication and discussion, and participants were urged to schedule rehearsal time despite their academic obligations. The necessity of flexibility and adaptability when doing research in educational contexts is highlighted by this adaptive method, especially when dealing with logistical limitations that might have an impact on participant involvement and project time frames.

Definition of Terms

Blind/Blindness- the situation of not being able to see due to an illness, injury, or a congenital defect.

Braille- it is a written language used by blind people in which letters are made up of raised patterns that can be felt with the fingertips.

Cataract- it causes the lens of the eye to become opaque or cloudy. which can occasionally be present from birth.

Cortical Visual Impairment- Cortical visual impairment results from injury to the brain's visual cortex or to the nerve connections.

Diabetic Retinopathy- A condition or disease that affects the retina and causes abnormal scar tissue formation and retinal blood vessel development.

Disability- A condition where one finds it difficult to carry out specific tasks because of impediments put in place by the body part.

Glaucoma- It is a disease or condition that damages the optic nerve (a nerve found in the back of the eye), and can lead to loss of vision and blindness.

Macular Degeneration- A condition or a disease that causes a progressive loss of central vision.

Theatre/ Dramatic Theatre / Dramatic Theatre production- it is a collaborative kind of performing arts that represents or imitates real-life experiences or actions conceived or created in the mind on stage in front of a live audience.

Visual Acuity- The tiniest/smallest details the eye can see or discern at both close and long distances and also relate to the ability of the eye to comprehend the shapes and details of objects (your vision's clarity or sharpness).

Visual Impairment- Having severe vision loss or poor vision that cannot be improved with drugs, surgery, or refractive surgery (glasses or contact lenses).

Organisation of the study

There were eight primary chapters in the study. The introductory chapter, chapter one, provided the motivation and background information to the study. The problem that motivates the search for the study was identified. It captured the general objective or purpose and specific objectives that guided the study and led to pertinent and justifiable research questions that were in line with the objectives. The study's significance, delimitation, and limitations were all topics covered in this segment. A review of related literature was the subject of Chapter two. The review was done both conceptually and empirically. It also contained a review of the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study in the third segment.

The methods used to conduct the study are presented in chapter three. The chapter comprised the study area, research design, population, sampling procedure, sources of data, data collection instruments, fieldwork, data processing and analysis, data management, trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations. In order to address the specific study questions, the presentation and discussion of findings was the goal of chapters four, five, six, and seven. In these chapters, the data were presented and discussed leading to the identification of the key findings. All of the analyses and discussions were conducted within the broad parameters of the study's guiding theories. A summary of the research and conclusions drawn from its main findings were included in chapter eight, which was the last chapter. Recommendations were given based on the conclusions drawn from the study. This section also made suggestions for further research in the area.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The current study sets out to study the seeming challenges inhibiting performing arts instructors' non-integration of visually impaired students in dramatic theatrical performances and thereby design an intervention model that will facilitate a theatre workshop that will culminate into a major performance. A review of related literature is presented in this chapter as it relates and aligns with the objectives of the current study. The review examines disability and inclusive theatre for the visually impaired. However, it is crucial to recognise the dearth of literature on the subject under study and the necessity of drawing conclusions from broader viewpoints in order to put the issue into perspective. In this review, the topical approach is used, and subjects were examined to determine how they relate to the issue under consideration. I focused and engaged the review under the following themes, the concept of disability; disability models; the concept of visual impairment; inclusive theatre; intervention model, and theatre workshop. This chapter also discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

The Concept of Disability

In research, a concept is understood to be a broad understanding of anything, frequently complicated or abstract phenomena, that is defined and explained in terms of its characteristics, and relationships with other concepts (Daher et al., 2017). Moreover, it serves as a foundation for creating models, formulating hypotheses, and conducting data analyses across a range of academic

disciplines (Burge, 1993). This arguably implies that for scholars to communicate and exchange ideas, the concept offers a common understanding and language.

The scholarly studies of disability have a long history. Although these studies are significant there are in modern terms some scholars who have also helped to shape and draw critical attention to the general studies of disability. Reiser (2012), believes that the way people think about impairments has undergone a considerable change in particular. Reiser's conviction brings to the fore disability as a universal issue. This is because the concept of disability seems not to lend itself to a single definition or description. WHO (2020), estimates that over one billion individuals worldwide experience some sort of impairment or disability. It must be noted here that understanding disability is possible using a range of practical theoretical frameworks or models from the social sciences. Hermans (2016) claims that disability is linked to illness, sorrow, and loss. Hermans' claim can be construed to imply that disability is associated with medical or health conditions.

Interestingly, the concept of disability is not value-free, and for this reason alone it requires further consideration and analysis. The tremendous growth in studies and publications on sociological aspects of disability, should not be seen as a sign of many viewpoints on how we conceptualise disability (Thomas, 2004). On their part, WHO (2011) perceives disability as a complex experience encompassing impairment, activity constraints, and participation limitations, referring to a negative element of the relationship between a person (with health issues) and that person's contextual variables (environmental and personal factors). By WHO's conceptualisation, disability is an issue with how the body functions (which is

explained by the medical model of disability), and the difficulties a person has doing a task are termed activity constraints (social and environmental restrictions) which in effect corroborates the claims made by Hermans. More so the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([UNCRPD] UN, 2006), perceives disability in Article one (1) in the following manner: “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis with others” (p.4).

Invariably, this enlightenment provided by the UNCRPD seeks to go beyond the medical descriptions of disability provided by Hermans and the WHO to encapsulate the sociological and psychological understanding of the concept of disability. It is, therefore, imperative to note that, disabilities are caused by barriers produced by external causes rather than being a result of personal traits. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly clear that disability is not just a medical problem; it is a complex phenomenon that demonstrates the connection between an individual's personal traits and those of his or her social and physical environment. Disability for this reason is viewed as a result of an individual's relationship with his or her physical surroundings, health status, and other external elements that reflect the conditions of the individual's life (World Health Organisation, 2001). Consequently, with the focus on physical well-being, the external environment, and other factors, it is assumed that every person has or is capable of having a disability. This perspective of disability is acknowledged as a common human experience that

can impact everyone, regardless of age, race, sex, ethnicity, or social and economic status (Baffoe, 2013; Hadley, 2020).

In the Ghanaian context, a person is generally understood to be disabled if they cannot execute an activity due to difficulty with their physiological constitution or mental faculties as unequivocally intimated by Avoke (2002). A person with a disability is defined by the Ghana Disability Act of 2006 (Act 715) as “an individual with a physical, mental, or sensory impairment including a visual, hearing, or speech functional disability which gives rise to physical, cultural or social barriers that substantially limit one or more of the major life activities of that individual” (Republic of Ghana, 2006, p. 17). Generally, what this definition seems to suggest is that disability happens when a person interacts negatively with their social environment.

The national disability policy and the Disability Act of 2006 (Act, 715) place a strong emphasis on the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities have access to their physical, social, economic, and cultural environments as well as to jobs, employment opportunities, transportation, and information and communication. Furthermore, the Ghana Statistical Service (2014) contributes to the understanding of disability by correspondingly describing disability as a condition that restricts a person's capacity to perform particular jobs or activities because somebody components have been lost or do not function as a result of impairment or malformation. By inference, a person is considered disabled if an impairment prevents or restricts them from doing a certain task or activity. The Ghana Statistical Service’s description places more emphasis on the impairment as

the cause of the failure to fulfill a particular role than it does on society's failure to help people with disabilities operate effectively. It must therefore, be highlighted here that from the foregoing discussion, disability in the current study is regarded or defined as both a product of societal barriers and attitudes that exclude and discriminate against persons with impairment and as an intrinsic quality of an individual. I must emphasise unequivocally that a number of models of disability put out by scholars in the fields of medicine, sociology, psychology, and anthropology, among others, have all been instrumental in defining and explaining the concept of disability. I proceed to describe two of these models of disability relevant to the current study in the next segment.

Disability Models

As indicated earlier, the conceptualisation of disability is not a recent phenomenon. Based on their areas of expertise, various scholars have designed models for comprehending disability. In particular, researchers from the fields of medicine, psychology, and sociology have worked on this project (Degener, 2016; Hodkinson, 2015). There are several fundamental paradigms or models for conceptualising disability. Diverse disciplines have given these models various names. These include Medical Model, Social Model, Moral Model, Charity Model, and Functional Model (Degener, 2016; Hodkinson, 2015; Reid-Cunningham & Fleming, 2009; Riddell & Watson, 2014; Smart, 2016). The current study reviews two of these basic disability models. They are Medical Model and Social Model. These models are crucial to the understanding of disability as pertaining to the

current study. The next segment discusses these models starting with the medical model.

Medical Model

Georing (2015), notes that the medical model of disability is a conventional viewpoint, which sees it as a health issue or ailment that exists inside the person. What this suggests is that a person's physical or mental impairment or deficiency—which can be identified, treated for, and even cured by medical professionals—is what constitutes their primary disability. Certainly, the medical paradigm assumes that disability is a personal tragedy requiring medical intervention and that the focus should be on rehabilitation and cure (Georing, 2015; Hogan, 2019).

With regard to attitudes, laws, and services for those with impairments, this model has significantly influenced conventional responses to disability. Dirth and Branscombe (2017), conclude that this model has also come under fire for supporting unfavorable stereotypes and ignoring broader social and environmental issues that affect the lives of persons with disabilities and contribute to impairment. Their conclusion reveals that under this concept, doctors and other medical experts affirm that the diagnosis process excludes moral evaluation, assigning blame, and evaluating the value of a person who has a diagnosis or a handicap. Instead, the medical model employs standardised measurements to make diagnoses and focuses on the anatomy and physiology of the individual. Instead of focusing on the sociopolitical and environmental causes and perpetuating elements of disability, disability has generally been described as a medical problem linked to physical impairment (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017).

In like manner, Hosking (2008), succinctly postulates that the medical model of disability views people with disabilities to be "abnormal" and attributes their source of disadvantage to a medical ailment. Hosking's postulation clearly provides an understanding of disability as perceived generally by most scholars. Most often than not, those with disability are considered to be "abnormal" in society. His postulation also exposes the projection of a binary society where certain group(s) are seen differently from *the other(s)* often with prejudice as Staszak (2009) rightly intimates:

The *Other*, is to choose a criterion that allows humanity to be divided into groups: one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued and another that is defined by its faults, devalued, and susceptible to discrimination. By stigmatising them as *Others*, they relegate the peoples that they could dominate or exterminate to the margin of humanity (p. 1).

Although it appears that the *Other* is sometimes appreciated, it is done in a conventional, cheering manner that serves to comfort and project one group as superior and the other as incapable. Also, through the prism of the medical model, Dunlap (2015) contributes to the discourse on the medical model of disability and sees disability as a problem that has to be repaired or cured. However, the fundamental problem with this concept is that it treats disabilities as internal to people who must be treated in order to get them back to normal or acceptable functioning. Instead of emphasising the person's wants and talents, this paradigm emphasises the person's impairment. In order to fit into the dominant paradigm, the

medical model places the individual in a position where they can adapt to their surroundings. In essence, the medical model does not challenge the idea that impairment results from a lack of societal support for those with special needs. This model has a bearing on the current study because most of the understanding and definitions provided by organisations or institutions and scholars on the concept of disability fall within the milieu or purview of the medical model.

There are a number of flaws in the medical model of disability. It can be argued that this model disregards the larger social and environmental variables that cause impairment and have an impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities and instead sees disability as a personal tragedy that exists only within the individual (Mercieca & Mercieca, 2010). Once more, the medical approach pathologises disability and feeds the myth that those who have disabilities are faulty or need to be fixed. Hodkinson (2015), and Rothman, (2010) claim that the medical paradigm places more emphasis on healing and rehabilitation than on enabling people with impairments to participate fully and equally in society. It must be emphasised here that the concentration on medical and therapeutic interventions rather than broader social and environmental impediments might result in a narrow and constrained approach to services and assistance for people with disabilities under the medical model (Degener, 2016; Hodkinson, 2015; Mercieca & Mercieca, 2010; Rothman, 2010).

Moreover, the medical paradigm frequently contributes to an erroneous social portrayal of disability and strengthens negative preconceptions and prejudices. Therefore, with regard to the current study, this model may not

adequately and accurately reflect the experiences and viewpoints of visually impaired students because of its limitations in addressing the complex and multidimensional nature of disability as far as this current study's objectives are concerned (Anthony, 2011; Hodkinson, 2015). By extension, the model's defect would imply that regardless of a person's personal attributes or characteristics and resources, their disability or impairment renders them defective. Consequently, this might cause issues with how people with impairments interpret the world and are perceived by those around them. All impairments can be thought of as being on a spectrum, and while diagnoses may be the same, a person's disability may differ significantly from person to person. These medical classifications do not value the individual because they are preoccupied with healing, fixing, or otherwise altering the patient. This rearticulates the normality hegemony and structural oppression that help to categorise, stigmatise, and marginalise people with disabilities (Jaskolski, 2021). Therefore, due to these restrictions, there is a growing awareness of the need for a social model of disability that is more inclusive and empowering and that acknowledges the crucial role that social and environmental factors play in determining how persons with disabilities experience the world.

The medical model appears to be not widely used in Ghana, where disability is frequently viewed as a social issue resulting from the interaction of an individual's impairments and societal barriers. The Ghanaian government has adopted a social model of disability and taken steps to remove barriers and promote inclusion for people with disabilities, such as enacting the Persons with Disabilities Act and establishing the National Council on People with Disabilities (Akoto,

2021). The inherent weaknesses in this model now lead me to discuss the next model which is the social model which appears to be the widely used model in recent years.

Social Model

Recently, the paradigm for understanding disability has shifted from the medical model and its allied models to the social model. The social model is opposed to the medical model of disability. It shifts the focus from sympathy and pity to empathy, which is more conducive to reciprocity and long-lasting societal change (Smart, 2016). This model is predicated on the assumption that society is to blame for the disability's occurrence and that society should bear the burden of addressing it. Rothman (2010) succinctly avers that this model of disability sees disability as a complex interplay between a person's disabilities and the constraints and restrictions in society, which is a more open-minded and empowering viewpoint. This seems to suggest that, a person's disability is not something that is internal to them; rather, it is the outcome of their interactions with the physical, social, and mental barriers that prevent them from fully and equally participating in society. Reid-Cunningham and Fleming (2009) assert that the social model acknowledges disability as a societal problem and emphasises the significance of addressing the larger social and environmental variables that contribute to disability and have an impact on the lives of those with disabilities. The import of Reid-Cunningham and Fleming's assertion is that this model focuses on the necessity of removing these obstacles and encouraging the full and equal involvement of those with disabilities in society.

Brown and Boardman, (2011), corroborate this view with the thought of Reid-Cunningham and Fleming by unequivocally explaining that the social model invariably highlights the situation where a person's handicap is not something that is inherent to them and prevents them from fully participating in society, but rather a barrier brought about by the physical environment and society's discriminating attitudes. These scholars' position is predicated on the assumption that once these obstacles are eliminated, people with disabilities will have less of a hard time going about their daily lives. It is, therefore, crucial, to understand that the underlying assumption of this model is that people with impairments do not feel inferior because of no fault of theirs, but because of societal attitudes and perception to them.

Weatherford, (2019), claims that people with disabilities frequently assert that any challenges they may experience due to their real ailment are subjugated by the prejudice and discrimination they frequently encounter. In light of this, the social model has been viewed as a form of a liberal strategy capable of reforming oppressive cultures and educational systems through the promotion of human rights and values that value diversity. This model offers a strong platform through which many activists and international policy advocates highlight disability-related concerns. As they look for ways to improve accessibility, remove barriers, and accommodate people of all abilities, inclusive practices in the arts, theatre, or other settings build on the social model of disability (Baffoe, 2013; Jaskolski, 2021).

Interestingly, disability rights movements have largely embraced the social model, which has had a big impact on how persons with disabilities are viewed and

treated in terms of policy and services. A more powerful and inclusive approach to disability that acknowledges the rights, needs, and views of persons with disabilities has resulted from this model's challenge to the conventional medical paradigm of disability (Barnes, 2019). It must be highlighted here again that the social model of disability is the more open-minded and liberating viewpoint that acknowledges that being disabled is not a personal tragedy or moral failing, but rather the outcome of a complex interaction between a person's impairments and the constraints placed on them by society.

In recent years, the social model of disability has gained popularity as a more inclusive and powerful viewpoint on disability in most African nations, including Ghana. It has faced difficulties in a cultural and societal setting where traditional beliefs and attitudes around disability can be deeply rooted and resistant to change, and its acceptance has been sluggish and unequal (Tugli, Klu, & Morwe, 2014). Traditional ideas and attitudes regarding disability in several African societies have their roots in the moral model, which sees disability as the result of sin, moral failings, or supernatural causes. As a result, those with impairments may experience social stigma, discrimination, and exclusion because they are perceived as unnatural, filthy, or untouchable (Rajohane-Matshedisho, 2007; Tugli, Klu, & Morwe, 2014).

To create a more inclusive and empowering social model of disability, it is now increasingly understood that it is necessary to question these long-held assumptions and attitudes. This is being done by raising awareness, advocating for change, educating the public, and creating more inclusive laws and policies that

support the rights and welfare of individuals with disabilities (Boafo-Arthur, 2020). In the African context in general and Ghana in particular, the social model emphasises the significance of addressing the broader social and environmental obstacles that impede people with disabilities from participating in society on an equal and full basis. These obstacles or barriers include a lack of accessible infrastructure, constrained opportunities for education and employment, and social attitudes and prejudices that support discrimination and negative stereotypes (Boafo-Arthur, 2020; Masoga & Maoto, 2021). Overall, the social model of disability presents a more inclusive and powerful viewpoint on disability in the context of Africa, and its adoption and implementation have the potential to result in considerable improvement for persons with disabilities in Africa. However, even though it has been demonstrated that the social model is particularly efficient at paving the way for socio-political changes that give persons with disabilities more rights or prominence in society, It must be pointed out that the social model may have some inherent limitations for oversimplifying disability in favor of just looking at social issues.

It needs to be established that the medical and social models, in general, have an impact on how people in sub-Saharan Africa perceive disabilities. Anthony, (2011) and Reid-Cunningham and Fleming (2009) believe that people's perceptions of people with disabilities in society have been affected differently by these approaches. To effectively support people with impairments in society, Kaufman (2011), and WHO (2011), all argue that a balance between medical and social models of disability must be struck. The idea of disability has, in large part, moved

from the medical paradigm to the social model. Therefore, rather than believing that disabilities are caused by individual limitations, more emphasis is placed on the idea that they are caused when social institutions that enable people to operate are absent.

The medical and socio-cultural conceptualisations of disability as Akoto (2021) divulges have an impact on Ghanaians' perception of the condition. In Ghana, a variety of disability policies have been devised, however, their implementation is still difficult (Akoto, 2021). Undoubtedly, these basic models of disability have had a big impact on how people perceive themselves, how people and society define disabilities, and how people and society act. However, in this study, as already indicated disability is understood to mean a condition where one finds it difficult to carry out specific tasks because of impediments put in place largely by his or her environment (social, political, and cultural barriers) and as an inherent characteristic of an individual. Thus, this study largely adopts the social model of disability in its appreciation of the concept of disability even though it acknowledges the interconnectedness of both medical and social factors. One major form of disability that has attracted a lot of concern and attention from researchers and scholars as far as disability studies are concerned is visual impairment. In the next segment, I discuss the concept of visual impairment.

The concept of Visual Impairment (VI)

This study's primary focus is on visually impaired school children and how to integrate them into a dramatic theatrical performance. The concept of visual impairment like the concept of disability presents itself with varying definitions.

Often times it gets substituted with blindness. The issue of visual impairment (VI), which affects people all around the world, is projected to become more serious as Naipal and Rampersad (2018) note.

DeCarlo, Woo, and Woo (2006) succinctly aver that VIs are conditions characterised by exceptionally and unusually low eyesight and persist despite the use of contact lenses, eyeglasses, medicine, surgery, or other corrective procedures. Their description of VI is solidly grounded on the medical model of disability. Interestingly, several scholars (Corn & Lusk, 2010; Kavitha, Manumali, Praveen, & Heralgi, 2015) corroborates DeCarlo et al's descriptions. Generally, people, from those who are only slightly impaired to those who are fully blind and unable to distinguish between light and dark, are often included in the term visually impaired.

Contributing to the discourse on the concept of VI, WHO expands the definition and description of VI and subsumes it under the medical model. WHO (1992) defines visual impairment to mean:

a person with low vision is one who has impairment of visual functioning even after treatment and/or standard refractive correction, and has VA of less than 6/18 to light perception, or a visual field of less than 10 degrees from the point of fixation, but who uses, or is potentially able to use, vision for the planning and/or execution of a task (p. 18).

WHO's illumination brings to the fore the understanding of the fact that visual impairments can be broken down into various categories or levels. Expanding on this definition provided by WHO (1992), the International

Classification of Diseases revision 10 ([ICD-10] WHO, 2016) subsumes visual impairment into four main categories or levels. These categories are:

- a. **Blindness/Profoundly Impaired:** this implies a condition of total blindness and having visual acuity worse than 3/60.
- b. **Severely Impaired:** this refers to a condition of partial blindness and having visual acuity with best correction, is less than 6/60.
- c. **Moderately Impaired:** refers to a condition that is not extremely severe. Their visual acuity ranges from 6/24-6/60. If the right assistance is given, they are capable of doing anything.
- d. **Mildly Impaired:** This has no effect on a person's ability to perform any visual activity. They often do not have any limitations on their field of vision.

However, updated codes for visual impairments are included in the ICD's 11th version and reflect improvements in clinical knowledge and understanding of these diseases. The introduction of the phrase "vision impairment" in place of the term "visual impairment" used in ICD-10 is one of the key modifications in ICD-11. The phrase "vision impairment" is more inclusive and acknowledges that there are different types and degrees of visual difficulties (WHO, 2018). New codes for particular kinds of vision impairments, such as "poor vision" and "blindness," are also included in the ICD-11 (ICD-11, 2018). Moreover, the ICD-11 adds a new system of categorisation for visual function, which is divided into three categories: visual acuity, visual field, and visual perception (WHO, 2018). With the use of this new system, clinicians are better able to comprehend and identify various visual

impairments and offer patients a more accurate description of visual function. The addition of a new code for "developmental visual impairment" is another major change in the ICD-11 (ICD-11, 2018). This category covers a variety of ailments, such as albinism, optic nerve hypoplasia, and cerebral visual impairment, which have an impact on newborns and young children's visual development.

Contributing to the discourse on visual impairment, Burton et al. (2021), explain that there are two primary types of visual impairment: low vision and blindness. In their observation, blindness can range from complete blindness to eyesight that is erratic and heavily dependent on other senses. Braille is typically used by blind people as a reading and writing medium. Additionally, Naipal and Rampersad, (2018), are of the view that categories of visual impairment that explain the cause of the visual impairment are congenital visual impairments and adventitious visual impairments. Per Naipal and Rampersad's enlightenment, VIs that are present at birth that is brought on by genetics, birth abnormalities, or other events that happen just before, during, or soon after birth are known as congenital visual impairments. Eye alignment issues such as strabismus, cataracts, and nystagmus are examples of congenital visual impairments (involuntary eye movements) as divulged by Naipal and Rampersad. On the other hand, adventitious visual impairments are those that develop later in life as a result of an illness or injury. Glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration are a few examples of adventitious visual impairments (Gold, Shaw, & Wolffe, 2010).

Understanding the cause or etiology of the visual impairment and providing direction for management and treatment depends on the distinction between

congenital and adventitious visual impairments. Adaptive equipment or rehabilitation services, for instance, may be used to manage some congenital visual impairments whereas surgery or other medical procedures may be used to treat other congenital visual abnormalities (Congdon, Friedman, & Lietman, 2003; Lieberman, 2005). It is therefore believed that medical procedures or a change in lifestyle may be necessary to delay the course of adventitious visual impairments (Naipal & Rampersad, 2018; WHO, 2018).

Millions of individuals in sub-Saharan Africa are affected by visual impairment, which is a serious public health issue in the region. In sub-Saharan Africa, there are many different conditions that can impair vision, including cataracts, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, corneal opacities, trachoma, and diabetic retinopathy (Glover et al., 2012; Kwarteng et al., 2022). The high percentage of vision impairment in the area is mostly a result of poverty, poor access to healthcare, and a lack of eye care specialists. In their review of visual impairment Naipal and Rampersad (2018) aver that in sub-Saharan Africa, poverty is a major cause of vision impairment. The expense of eye care services or the cost of treating eye problems is frequently out of reach for those who live in poverty. Reflecting on this revelation by Naipal and Rampersad it only goes to indicate the debilitating conditions of people living in rural communities in Africa.

One of Ghana's biggest health problems, visual impairment, affects a large number of people and communities across as noted by Ansah (2017). Cataracts, glaucoma, corneal scars, refractive errors, as well as other eye conditions like trachoma, age-related macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy, are the main

causes of VI in Ghana (Ansah, 2017; Kumah et al., 2013). Boadi-Kusi et al. (2017), clearly submit that the high percentage of vision impairment in Ghana, like many other sub-Saharan African nations, is largely caused by poverty, restricted access to eye care services, and a lack of educated eye care specialists. The implication of their submission is that people may have to travel a great distance to acquire even the most basic eye care treatments in rural locations where access to eye care is particularly limited.

The effects of VI on people, families, and communities can be extensive and severe. Because it restricts a person's capacity to see and engage in daily activities, VI can have a significant negative influence on a person's quality of life (Khadka et al., 2012). The implication of this is that it may result in low self-esteem and isolated feelings. Inability to work or carry out daily activities due to visual impairment might result in lost production and revenue. This may have a profound effect on the person and their family. It may be challenging for children with vision impairment to realise their full potential due to their limited access to educational opportunities. Due to their restricted vision and inability to navigate their surroundings, people with VI are more likely to be involved in accidents and suffer injuries. The need for continued medical care and treatment due to VI drives up healthcare expenses for both people and societies.

VI can significantly lower one's self-esteem and cause feelings of anxiety, depression, and other negative emotions (Raj, 2007). VI can, in general, have a wide range of effects that go beyond only the person's vision. Based on the foregoing discussion the current study defines visual impairment as both a

disability brought on by barriers and restrictions in the social environment as well as a physical or biological condition resulting from abnormalities or dysfunction in the visual system, including the eyes, optic nerves, or brain pathways. For a comprehensive understanding of visual impairment that respects the medical components of the disorder while addressing the impact of societal barriers and attitudes, the study thus incorporates both medical and social factors. This will emphasise the need for all-encompassing assistance, such as medical interventions, assistive technologies, accessibility improvements, inclusive legislation, and social inclusion programmes. Since people with VIs have distinct abilities, experiences, and contributions to make, this study's perspective of visual impairment supports a person-centered approach that works toward equality of opportunity, inclusivity, and empowerment in all facets of life such as integrating them in a dramatic theatrical performance. I will, therefore, turn my attention to inclusive theatre in the next section.

Inclusive Theatre

Inclusion is essential for society. However, inclusivity is a relatively new concept. No one should be left out of any society's agenda. Interestingly, the recognition of universal human rights inspired the concept of inclusivity. Inclusivity in the postulation of Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek, and Leahy, (2015), refers to the practice of making a welcoming and accepting environment for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, age, or other personal characteristics. Their postulation entails the notion that everyone should have equal access to opportunities, resources, and respect and that diversity

should be valued and celebrated. Moreover, Okoro (2022) further explains that inclusivity is about building a society that works for everyone and values each individual's unique experiences, perspectives, and contributions. Okoro's opinion on inclusivity entails actively opposing discrimination and bias while also encouraging understanding, empathy, and acceptance of all which is also a necessary condition for people to have a high-quality life, and it is closely tied to their chances to engage in society, citizenship, and social networks. Theatrical performance has been and continues to be one of the most effective tools for promoting inclusivity. This has resulted in what is now known as inclusive theatre.

A study by Kirk (2016) is worth examining in further detail on inclusive theatre because of the importance its findings provide for the current study. Kirk's methodology which involved a thorough approach to theatrical production that prioritises diversity and inclusivity revealed strategies for casting a diverse range of actors, incorporating various perspectives into the script and production, and ensuring accessibility for audiences with different abilities, highlighted the transformative impact of inclusive theatre in fostering a richer, more representative portrayal of society, promoting understanding and empathy among diverse audience members, and ultimately enhancing the overall artistic and societal value of theatrical performances. The reasoning is that inclusive theatre frequently entails a commitment to diversity and representation in casting, writing, directing, and production, as well as the creation of a welcoming and accessible environment for all audience members. In contributing to this discussion, Nijkamp, Burgers, and Kuiper, (2018) highlight the goal of inclusive theatre in their study. According to

them the overarching goal of inclusive theatre is to challenge and disrupt dominant cultural narratives, as well as to give marginalised communities a voice, thereby promoting greater understanding, empathy, and social change.

Additionally, Okoro (2022), and Warren and Rosser (2018) corroborate Nijkamp, Burgers, and Kuiper's highlight and aver that, the goal of inclusive theatre is to question and disrupt dominant cultural narratives, as well as to give marginalised communities a voice. What this means is that it seeks to create a more diverse but encompassing representation of society in theatrical works, with the goal of promoting greater understanding, empathy, and social change. Generally, inclusive theatre strives to create a welcoming and accessible environment for all audience members, as well as to encourage and support the participation of people from diverse backgrounds in all aspects of theatrical production (Callahan & Watson, 2019). It can, therefore, be argued that the ultimate goal of inclusive theatre is to promote greater equity, diversity, and justice in the theatre and beyond.

For the purpose of this study, the term inclusive theatre describes a theatrical form that actively embraces and promotes diversity, accessibility, and equal participation for all people, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or identities. It also entails putting both able and disable performers on the same dramatic stage. This goes beyond conventional ideas of theatre by fostering an inclusive setting where anybody can participate in and contribute to the theatrical experience, regardless of their physical, cognitive, sensory, or emotional traits. Inclusive theatre involves certain processes which are discussed in the next section.

Creative Processes in Inclusive Theatre Practice

Sanderson (2015) divulges that the process of creating theatre performances that are accessible and inclusive to all individuals, including those with disabilities, is referred to as inclusive performance practice. Sanderson's (2015) work, "Inclusive Theatre for Visually Impaired Children: A Study of Creative Processes," explores the creative processes involved in creating and implementing inclusive theatre practices for children who are visually impaired. By emphasising the value of collaboration, accessibility, and community involvement in creating memorable and transformative experiences for all participants, Sanderson's work provides insightful information into the creative processes involved in developing and implementing inclusive theatre practices for visually impaired children. A major issue that arises from Sanderson's enlightenment is that collaboration, accessibility, and community involvement are some of the techniques and approaches used in inclusive theatre practice. Sanderson provides insightful information about the best practices for inclusive theatre through her emphasis on accessibility and collaboration. Comprehending the successful implementation of these principles in a comparable setting can aid the current study in implementing efficacious strategies. The current project's objectives are aligned with the recognition of community involvement, accessibility, and collaboration as essential techniques. By putting these strategies into practice, visually impaired students can benefit from an improved theatrical environment that is more inclusive and stimulating overall.

The objective of the current project, which is to incorporate visually impaired students into dramatic performances, is relevant to Sanderson's

investigation of creative processes. The planning and implementation of the project can be influenced by knowledge about how creative processes can be modified to accommodate visually impaired participants. Essentially, Sanderson's observations offer a conceptual framework and real-world examples that can be tailored to the particular context of inclusive theatre for visually impaired students, thereby serving as a theoretical and practical foundation for the current project. Planning, execution, and the overarching goal of producing a transformative and inclusive theatrical experience are all affected.

Similar to this, a study by Johnson and Matson (2018) titled "Inclusive Theatre Practices for Children with Visual Impairments" is valuable to engage because of the numerous issues raised regarding the creative processes in inclusive theatre practice which has some implications for the current study. Johnson and Matson share in Sanderson's postulations and also emphasise the potential of inclusive theatre techniques to foster accessibility, creativity, and social connection for kids who are visually impaired. They expand the three techniques and approaches espoused by Sanderson to include, audio description, tactile and sensory elements, braille and large print materials, accessible storytelling methods, and inclusive casting and production practices. Their work provides helpful tips and motivating case studies for theatre professionals and educators who want to create an inclusive theatre experience. An empirical study by Phillips (2016), looks at the potential of digital technologies to help visually impaired children have inclusive theatre experiences. Succinctly, the findings of Phillips' work show that theatre performances can be made into multisensory experiences that engage and

include vision-challenged children. She corroborates the observations and postulations made by Sanderson, Johnson and Matson on the creative processes in inclusive theatre and gives instances of how digital tools like audio description, immersive soundscapes, and haptic technology might be employed in inclusive theatre practices. In order to create and implement inclusive theatrical practices, Phillips also highlights the significance of collaboration between theatre practitioners, educators, and technologists. According to her, effective inclusive theatre practices necessitate a comprehensive strategy that considers the requirements and viewpoints of all participants, including actors, spectators, and community partners. Ultimately, Phillips emphasises how digital technologies can be used to develop inclusive theatre practices for young people with visual impairments.

It is imperative at this moment to turn attention to providing a detailed understanding of the techniques and approaches provided by these scholars. For the purpose of the current study, seven of these approaches and techniques are worth engaging. These are collaboration with individuals with disabilities; accessibility assessment; audio description; tactile and sensory elements; accessible storytelling methods; braille and large print materials; inclusive casting and production practices (Johnson & Matson, 2018; Philips, 2016; Sanderson, 2015). The current study relies on (but is not limited to) these components to develop a theatre-making process that is inclusive of and open to everyone, regardless of their skills.

An essential component of inclusive theatre-making is collaboration with people with disabilities. This collaboration entails working closely with people with

disabilities to understand their perspectives and incorporate their needs and experiences into the performance. Wright (2014) introduces the idea of the dialogic principle in inclusive theatre, emphasising the value of a collaborative method for theatrical development that includes both disabled and non-disabled actors. This may entail talking with people who have impairments to get their perspectives on the theatre and to get feedback on how to make the production more inclusive and accessible (Cameron, 2017). Also, integrating perspectives means including the experiences and viewpoints of people with disabilities in the narrative, set design, and other production elements.

Johnson and Matson (2018), Philips (2016), and Sanderson (2015) clearly share the same opinion that in employing this technique (Collaboration), one should make sure that the rehearsal process is accessible and accommodating for people with disabilities as part of working with people with disabilities, and make any required adjustments to ensure that everyone can participate completely. It is feasible to create a theatrical piece that is really inclusive and accessible to everyone, regardless of their ability, by working with people with disabilities. As well as giving people with disabilities a joyful and creative outlet, this can assist to advance understanding and inclusivity.

Another step in the creative process of inclusive theatre worth engaging is accessibility assessment. Zajko (2016) explains that in order to create inclusive theatre performances, accessibility assessment is a crucial stage. What this means is that the performance is completely accessible and accommodating for people with disabilities, by reviewing the physical setting, including the stage, seating, and

other amenities. Consequently, it is accomplished by evaluating the theatre's physical accessibility, including the stage, seats, restrooms, and other facilities, to make sure they are completely accessible and accommodating for people with disabilities.

Cooper (2019), who examines the effects of relaxed performances on audiences with disabilities, contends that by challenging ableist presumptions and fostering new cultural norms, relaxed performances, which offer a more inclusive and accessible theatre experience for people with disabilities, can contribute to broader societal changes. As a result, to make the theatrical experience more accessible to those with disabilities, one needs to think about using adaptive technology like assistive listening devices, braille displays, and audio descriptions. Likewise, one must make sure there is accessible seating that is readily accessible, properly designated, and available. It is feasible to find any accessibility obstacles and make the required adjustments to establish an inclusive and accommodating environment for people with disabilities by conducting a full accessibility assessment. This can support understanding and inclusivity while giving those with disabilities a pleasant and creative outlet.

The third component of the creative process in inclusive theatre that needs to be observed is audio description. In order to create inclusive theatre, audio description is a crucial component (Bagnall, 2007). It is used to give visually impaired people extra information so they can better understand what is happening on stage (Johnson, 2010). This can involve vocal descriptions, in which the narrator talks on the visual components of the performance—such as the clothing, setting,

and body language—during dialogue gaps. For people with visual impairments, audio aids like earpieces are also available so they may hear the audio description. The performance should include audio explanation naturally, without interfering with other audience members' enjoyment of the show (Smith, 2017). To ensure that people with visual impairments may enjoy the performance on an equal footing, audio description should be included in any documents made available to the audience, such as programmes or scripts as noted by Smith. Making the theatre experience more accessible for those with visual impairments is possible. This enables them to comprehend and interact with the performance on a deeper level. In addition to giving people with disabilities a fun and creative outlet, this can assist to foster acceptance and inclusivity.

Important features of inclusive theatre-making include tactile and sensory elements, which can be used to give those with visual impairments a more engaging and immersive experience. Söderman and Lindström (2018), succinctly assert that this can involve using tactile set design, which incorporates textures and other tactile components into the set design so that people who are blind or visually impaired can experience the performance through touch. Another one is sensory props, which refers to the use of props to enhance performance for people with visual impairments by providing sensory sensations such as scents, sounds, and vibration (Neale, 2016). Tschirner (2018) examines the use of sensory theatre as a strategy for engaging audiences with profound and multiple learning impairments in his article, "Exploring sensory theatre with audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities." He contends that conventional theatrical techniques

frequently fall short of meeting the requirements of these audiences, who could have trouble comprehending language-based information.

Tschirner suggests using sensory theatre, which he defines as "a style of theatre that engages and excites the senses of the audience in a way that goes beyond the strictly cognitive" (p. 26), to address this problem. Tschirner claims that audiences with severe and multiple learning difficulties may find sensory theatre to be more interesting and accessible. He, therefore, concludes that there should be an integration of interactive components in the performance, including touch tours that let those with vision impairments to explore and touch costumes or set pieces. Additionally, A more inclusive and accessible experience for people with visual impairments can be created by making sure that the performance stimulates all senses, not just sight (Neale, 2016; Söderman & Lindström, 2018; Tschirner, 2018). It is feasible to offer a more immersive and inclusive experience for people with visual impairments by including tactile and sensory aspects into the performance.

In order to create an inclusive theatre experience for people with visual impairments, accessible storytelling techniques are essential. Denison (2016), offers a useful manual for producing inclusive theatre that appeals to and incorporates individuals with disabilities. Denison provides a variety of easily accessible storytelling exercises and approaches, including storytelling circles, sensory investigations, and group writing projects. These techniques can also include clear dialogue, which entails making sure that the dialogue is understandable and that crucial information is not only communicated through visual cues, the use of simple language, and the use of audio description, as

previously mentioned, to give visually impaired people more details and aid in their comprehension of the performance.

To convey important information and emotions, Hughes (2016) highlights the use of physical performance techniques like mime or sign language. Additionally, Biebuyck (2015) encourages the development of inclusive, accessible scripts for people with visual impairments, and emphasises adjustments necessary to make sure that current scripts are accessible. He also proposes the provision of visual aids to help people with vision problems follow the performance, such as braille or documents in large print. A theatre performance that is inclusive and accessible to those with visual impairments can be produced by using accessible storytelling techniques.

Another component of the creative process in inclusive theatre practice is the use of Braille and large prints. When designing an inclusive and accessible theatre environment for those with visual impairments, braille, and large print materials are crucial (Kuppers, 2018). The findings of Bernstein and Gardner (2018) study is worth examining. They identify a number of issues related to the use of haptic technology, such as touch screens and vibration, to create accessible theatre experiences for people with visual impairments. Among these resources may be braille programmes, which offer braille versions of the programme or script, enabling those with visual impairments to obtain crucial information regarding the performance. Moreover, they offer the suggestion that in order to make inclusive theatre for visually impaired people there is the need to provide large print materials, such as scripts or programmes, to help people with vision difficulties

follow the performance. Additionally, Kupperts (2018) and Palmer (2016) posit that inclusive theatre should employ accessible signs, such as braille or large text, to direct people who are visually impaired to their seats and other crucial locations inside the theatre. Moreover, auditory aids should be given to people with visual impairments so they can follow the performance.

Finally, for people with disabilities especially those with visual impairments to have a positive theatre experience, inclusive casting and production techniques are crucial. A number of issues are raised in Barron's (2015) book which offers helpful advice for developing inclusive productions with a focus on casting actors with disabilities and making environments accessible for audience members with disabilities. Firstly, diverse casting, which includes people with disabilities, can be one of these techniques to encourage inclusivity and representation on stage. Once more, it is important to make sure that rehearsals are accessible and that any required modifications are made so that people with disabilities may take part completely in the play. To guarantee that people with disabilities may fully participate in the production process, accessible technology like closed captioning or audio description must be used (Plunkett, 2018). Drakich and Wolf (2019) propose the use of inclusive design principles such as accessible seating and ramped stages, to guarantee that those with disabilities may take part in the performance in full. More so, the choice of performance areas must be accessible and should meet the requirements of those with impairments. A theatre performance that is inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities can be produced by using inclusive casting and production techniques. It must be noted here that inclusive theatre is not

sacrosanct and as a result has some limitations and challenges, which are discussed in the next section.

Barriers to Inclusive Theatre

The goal of inclusive theatre is to establish a setting where individuals of various abilities, races, genders, and social backgrounds are welcomed and appropriately represented. There are still substantial obstacles to inclusive theatre, notwithstanding recent improvements. The challenges facing inclusive theatre are complex and call for an all-encompassing strategy to overcome them. In order to establish a more inclusive and varied theatre sector, it is critical to understand and solve the social, economic, and physical hurdles that may restrict the participation of people from diverse backgrounds and in this case visually impaired students.

The absence of accessibility is one of the main obstacles to inclusive theatre. Pinder (2016) divulges that creating a setting that allows those with disabilities to actively engage in theatre is known as accessibility. This covers both sensory and physical accessibility, such as audio description and sign language interpretation. Physical accessibility includes things like wheelchair access and accessible seating. Individuals with disabilities may be unable to attend performances due to accessibility issues, which may limit their access to the arts. People with disabilities, such as those who use wheelchairs or have hearing difficulties, are sometimes not accommodated at theatre venues. People may not be able to completely engage in performances or appreciate the theatrical experience as a result. People with disabilities may encounter physical hurdles when attempting to attend performances in many traditional theatre venues since they were not built

with accessibility in mind. This may involve obstacles like stairs, small doors, and uncomfortable sitting configurations (McEwan & May, 2017). Jones (2019) claims that despite being required by law, many ancient and new theatres still only provide minimal access for individuals with disabilities. Palmer (2018), and Koppers (2018) contribute to the discussion on lack of accessibility by intimating that older structures that were not accessible when they were built accommodate several theatres. Consequently, this can make it challenging for persons who are physically challenged to enter the theatre, especially if there are stairs or small openings. In addition, even if there is physical accessibility, a great theatre experience may not be possible for those with disabilities due to the theatre's design. Those with sensory sensitivities, for instance, might not be accommodated by the lighting and acoustic design.

The lack of diverse group representation on stage is another obstacle to inclusive theatre. People from marginalised groups may be excluded from many performances that mostly use white, physically fit, and heterosexual actors (Actors' Equity Association, 2021). Individuals from various backgrounds may find it challenging to relate to the characters and themes of a performance due to this lack of representation. A study by the Actors' Equity Association found that actors from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and those with disabilities are underrepresented in the theatre profession (Actors' Equity Association, 2021). As noted by Cox (2018), traditionally, white, physically fit actors and producers have dominated the theatre, which has resulted in a dearth of representation for underrepresented groups. Systemic hindrances like homophobia, ableism, and

racism are to blame for this lack of variety as concluded by Cox. As stated by Sheppard (2019), the business community must stop talking about diversity and start acting on it. Equity, fairness, and justice must be given top priority. Casting actors from a variety of backgrounds and selecting production teams that reflect the diversity of the neighborhood are requirements for inclusive theatre.

Financial limitations are another obstacle to inclusive theatre as noted by McEwan and May (2017). They note that it is quite expensive to produce inclusive theatre. More so, for people from low-income backgrounds, many theatrical shows can be prohibitively expensive to stage, which can be a barrier to their participation (McMahon, 2021). For many people, the price of admission, clothes, and practice space may be exorbitant. Financial difficulties are a substantial obstacle to artistic participation for low-income families, who are less likely to go to or take part in cultural activities, claim Wang and Goldsmith (2016). This partly explains why inclusive theatre has not become popular yet in sub-Saharan Africa, and Ghana to be more specific. Economic hurdles were a key obstacle to the inclusion of underrepresented groups in theatre, according to the findings of a study by Galanter et al. (2020). Financial obstacles may prevent individuals from making use of the advantages of theatre, such as enhanced social and communication abilities, boosted self-confidence, and a sense of community.

Discrimination and prejudice can also be obstacles to inclusive theatre. Several members of marginalised groups experience prejudice and discrimination in the theatre world, which can make it difficult for them to pursue jobs in the field or feel at ease attending performances. In leadership positions in the theatre

industry, women and people of color are underrepresented, according to a report by the League of Professional Theatre Women (League of Professional Theatre Women, 2019). It is crucial to make an environment that is more friendly and inclusive for people of various backgrounds in order to foster inclusive theatre. Social barriers like stigma, prejudice, and discrimination can make it difficult for people from different backgrounds to feel at home in theatre environments. These obstacles may be brought on by unfavorable stereotypes or a lack of diversity in theatrical shows. Social obstacles were a major obstacle to the inclusion of persons from minority backgrounds in theatre, according to a study by Khan, Hussain, and Jabeen (2017). Griffiths (2021) contributes to the discussion by asserting that individuals may not feel welcomed and included in the theatre due to attitude barriers. Prejudice, preconceptions, and discrimination are some of these obstacles, and they might be communicated either directly or subtly by other theatrical participants. These views can be difficult to change, and they may discourage people from underrepresented populations from engaging in the arts.

Another obstacle to inclusive theatre can be a lack of education and knowledge among theatre professionals (Kuppers, 2018). It is possible that many theatre professionals lack expertise in working with persons with disabilities or are unaware of the unique requirements of certain groups. Missed opportunities to make theatre more inclusive as well as unintended exclusion or discrimination may result from this (Kuppers, 2018; McEwan & May, 2017; Palmer, 2018).

Even though there are still numerous obstacles to inclusive theatre, there are also numerous approaches that can be used to overcome them. Theatre may become

a more inviting and inclusive environment for people of all abilities, colors, genders, and backgrounds by placing a higher priority on accessibility, representation, and education. These challenges provide the raw material for the design or development of an intervention model. In the next segment, I discuss the processes involved in designing an intervention model.

Intervention Model

An intervention model basically, is a program or plan created to address a particular issue or problem. It entails a methodical procedure of problem identification, target population selection, solution development and implementation, and intervention efficacy assessment (Barratt, 2016). As noted by Barratt an intervention model offers a framework for comprehending the elements that contribute to the issue or problem as well as for creating efficient solutions. Depending on the nature of the issue or problem, the intervention model may include a variety of elements, including educational and awareness campaigns, behavior change interventions, legislative reforms, and therapeutic interventions.

The goal of an intervention model is to bring about positive change among the population or community that is being targeted. Depending on the intervention's objective, this transformation might have anything to do with health outcomes, behavior modification, or policy alterations. Evidence-based, culturally sensitive, and adapted to the needs of the target community are all characteristics of an effective intervention model (Brownson, Colditz, & Proctor, 2018). An intervention model as indicated is a framework that is employed in a variety of industries, such as healthcare, education, and social services, to direct the design and execution of

interventions meant to solve a particular issue or problem. Any action or plan intended to bring about a favorable change may be referred to as an intervention, including initiatives, policies, and programs. The intervention model often entails a number of significant steps or stages, such as: identification of the problem or issue to be addressed (needs assessment); selection of target population; development of interventions; implementation; and evaluation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

An essential first step in creating a successful intervention model is recognising the issue or problem (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). A complete investigation of the issue should look at the social, cultural, economic, and political variables that contribute to it, as claimed by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011). Data from surveys, interviews, and public documents may need to be gathered and analysed for this. Identification of the issue also involves expert and stakeholder consultation in addition to data analysis. While stakeholders can offer insightful perspectives on how the issue affects their lives and communities, experts may be able to shed light on the issue's underlying causes (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). In general, the first step in creating a successful intervention model is recognising the problem or issue. The development of intervention models that address the underlying causes of social and health problems and provide favorable results for individuals and communities can be accomplished by conducting in-depth research and engaging with experts and stakeholders.

Finding the population or group that the intervention is meant to serve is the next stage. Identifying particular demographic groupings, geographical areas, or

medical conditions may be required. Another essential step in creating a successful intervention model is choosing the target demographic (Green & Ottoson, 1999). The target population should be determined depending on the issue or problem found in the first stage as intimated by Green and Ottoson (1999). In order to do this, it may be necessary to pinpoint the particular demographic groups, geographical areas, or medical problems that are most impacted. The target demographic may occasionally be identified by particular traits like age, gender, race, or socioeconomic level. For instance, a model of intervention to address inequities in access to healthcare can concentrate on people with low incomes or no insurance (Khan et al., 2015). As an alternative, the target demographic or population could be outlined by a specific city or neighborhood. For instance, a healthy eating promotion intervention approach may focus on communities with poor access to fresh food or nutritious meal options (Johnston, 2015). In general, the choice of the target audience or population should be made after a careful examination of the problem or issue and taking into account the traits of the group that is most impacted by it. Intervention models can be modified to address the particular requirements of individuals and communities by concentrating on certain target populations.

A crucial element in the intervention paradigm is the creation of interventions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The intervention model should include particular treatments or methods that are intended to accomplish the desired outcomes based on the problem to be addressed and the target population. These interventions could take the form of educational initiatives, behavior modification

campaigns, medical procedures, or legislative adjustments. Evidence-based interventions should be developed with the requirements of the target group in mind. Interventions can take many different forms, including behavioral, educational, regulatory, and environmental ones, (WHO, 2018). Behavioral interventions aim to alter the behaviors that are causing the issue or problem. For instance, As noted by Stead et al. (2013), a behavioral intervention strategy for quitting smoking may involve counseling, social support, and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

Educational interventions aim to raise the target population's knowledge and awareness of the issue or problem. An educational intervention paradigm for HIV prevention might, for instance, involve educating people about HIV transmission and prevention through school-based initiatives, neighborhood outreach programs, and media campaigns (UNESCO, 2011). Changes in laws, rules, or policies that target the root causes of the issue or problem are referred to as policy interventions. For instance, placing taxes on sugary drinks, encouraging healthy food options in schools, and controlling food marketing to children are all examples of policy measures that can be used to reduce obesity (World Obesity Federation, 2018). Environmental interventions involve making physical or societal modifications that can help people access resources or change their behavior. For instance, creating bike lanes and walkways, creating secure parks and recreational spaces, and encouraging active transportation are all examples of environmental interventions that might increase physical activity (Sallis et al., 2016). Interventions should generally be developed using evidence, taking into account cultural

differences and the needs of the target community. The intervention model can be more successful in producing the desired results by adopting a combination of interventions.

Following the development, the intervention must be put into practice in accordance with the intervention model. To guarantee a successful implementation, this may entail staff training, participant recruitment, and the provision of resources and support (Wight, Wimbush, Jepson, & Doi, 2016). A key component of the intervention model is the actual implementation of the intervention. Making sure that the interventions are carried out in a way that is compatible with the intervention model needs careful preparation and implementation. Fraser and Galinsky, (2010) acknowledge four crucial processes involved in implementation: (1) planning for implementation, (2) carrying out the intervention, (3) observing implementation, and (4) making mid-course adjustments.

Planning for implementation include figuring out the resources required to carry out the interventions, creating an implementation schedule, and making sure that staff personnel are properly trained and equipped to do so (Proctor, Powell, & McMillen, 2011). Delivering the interventions to the target population in accordance with the intervention model is implementing the intervention. Monitoring implementation entails keeping track of its progress and locating any places where it could need to be strengthened (Atkins & Michie, 2015). In order to verify that the intervention model is being followed and that the expected outcomes are being attained, making mid-course corrections entails adjusting the interventions or implementation tactics as necessary (Wight, Wimbush, Jepson, &

Doi, 2016). The organisational context, employee qualifications and training, and community involvement are a few variables that may affect how interventions are implemented (Proctor, Powell, & McMillen, 2011). In order to ensure successful implementation, it is crucial to monitor the implementation of interventions and make adjustments as necessary.

An evaluation component is included in a successful intervention model as a last step to determine whether the targeted results have been attained (Wight, Wimbush, Jepson, & Doi, 2016). This could entail monitoring changes in health outcomes, behavior, or policy and modifying the intervention model as needed. The intervention model's evaluation is a crucial element that determines whether the interventions have produced the anticipated results. WHO (2014), states that evaluation include determining the intervention's success, highlighting its advantages and disadvantages, and offering suggestions for future development. The feasibility, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness of the intervention may also be evaluated as part of the evaluation process (Abarghouei & Nasab, 2012).

A variety of strategies, including qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, can be used to conduct evaluations (Fraser and Galinsky, 2010). Focus groups, interviews, and case studies are examples of qualitative methods, whereas surveys, gathering data on health outcomes, and utilising standardised tools to gauge behavior change are examples of quantitative methods (Abarghouei & Nasab, 2012). Using relevant indicators to gauge the intervention's efficacy is a crucial factor to take into account during the evaluation process. These metrics should be measurable, pertinent, and trustworthy as well as be in line with the

intervention model's goals and objectives (Fraser and Galinsky, 2010). The current study explores an inclusive intervention model that encourages inclusive methods and strategies in the provision of assistance or support to students with visual impairment. These intervention models inform the nature and direction of the inclusive theatre workshops implemented in the study.

Theatre Workshop

Kottler and Engels (2009), define a theatre workshop as "a dynamic and interactive learning experience that emphasises experimentation, self-expression, and the development of skills in theatre performance and production" (p. 5). Reflecting on Kottler and Engels' definition, Stinson and Young (2014) intimate that participants often engage in a number of exercises, including improvisation, scene building, and character development, and receive criticism and guidance from instructors and peers. Workshops in theatre can be designed for a range of age groups and ability levels, from novice to expert (O'Neill & Cooper, 2016). These can be held in a variety of places, including schools, community centers, and theatres with a professional reputation.

In their contribution, Wiles and Dymkowska (2016) explain that a theatre workshop is a type of training programme created to assist performers, directors, authors, and other theatre industry professionals in honing their skills. The potential of theatre workshops to promote community building and collaboration is one of their advantages. As noted by Cohen-Cruz and Schutzman (2014), "theatre workshops provide a space where participants can explore new ideas and approaches to theatre-making, share their experiences and perspectives, and

develop a sense of connection and mutual support" (p. 3). Additionally, Workshops in theatre can also be utilised as a tool for activism and social change as observed by Oshionebo and Asen, (2017), that theatre workshops can be a means of empowering individuals and communities by encouraging them to engage with issues of social justice and transform their lived experiences into powerful artistic expressions. The devising method, which entails creating original performances together through a process of improvisation, experimentation, and refinement, is one method of theatre workshops that has grown in popularity in recent years (Ferguson, 2016). In community-based theatre initiatives aimed at fostering social change and addressing problems like racism, inequality, and poverty, this strategy has been employed to great success (Oshionebo & Asen, 2017).

Theatre Workshops can cover a wide range of themes, including acting, directing, scriptwriting, stage design, and movement, and can be held for a few hours, a whole day, or over several days or weeks. A theatre workshop's objective is to give participants practical experience, feedback, and chances for artistic development (McNair & DeFrantz, 2019). This implies that through a range of exercises, scene work, and other practical tasks, a theatre workshop aims to provide participants the chance to grow their craft, acquire new techniques, and sharpen their talents. Participants in a theatrical workshop are usually guided by an experienced instructor who offers direction, criticism, and encouragement as they complete various exercises and tasks (Ozaki & Sakurai, 2018). The workshop setting is frequently informal and encouraging, giving participants a secure place in which to experiment and develop their artistic skills. As far as this study is

concerned the production process and directing are two key themes that will be covered in depth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the activities involved in a theatre workshop. The next segment sheds light on the process of bringing a theatrical performance to life and the critical function of a director in influencing the outcome.

The Production Process

The term production process in theatre production, as noted by Conner and Ross (2013), refers to the various steps and tasks necessary to bring a theatrical performance to reality. Selecting a play, choosing performers, creating sets and costumes, practicing or rehearsing, and finally presenting the performance to an audience are just a few of the responsibilities that fall under this category. This implies that several professionals, including directors, designers, technicians, and performers, collaborate during the production process in order to produce a seamless and interesting theatrical experience (Cohen, 2016; Reid, 2013). The choice of a play or performance piece usually kicks off the production process (Brockett and Ball, 2010; Zuber-Skerritt, 2021). This could entail studying scripts, and taking into account a variety of elements like artistic vision, audience appeal, and resource accessibility. The casting process is typically the following stage once a play has been selected. Casting directors and directors organise auditions to choose actors who are most appropriate for the roles, taking into account aspects including talent, experience, and physical characteristics (Brockett and Ball, 2010, Cohen, 2017; Zuber-Skerritt, 2021).

Osterman and Ritter (2005), and Reid (2013) intimate that the production enters the design phase after assembling the cast. Developing sets, costumes, lighting, and sound designs that support the director's vision and improve the narrative is part of this process. They maintain that to create concepts and communicate their ideas through sketches, models, or digital renderings, designers work closely with the director. The production team then sets to work constructing sets, making costumes, and setting up lighting and sound systems, among other required acquisitions. Rehearsals get started concurrently with the design process. In collaboration with the director, actors create their stage movement and blocking while also rehearsing their dialogue and scenes. Multiple iterations and modifications are made during rehearsals, allowing the actors to improve their performances and the director to mold the performance as a whole (Conner & Ross, 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2021).

Festle (2013), concludes that following the initial actor practices, the technical components—such as lighting, sound, and set changes—are integrated into the performance during technical rehearsals. These practice sessions enable the technical team and the actors to plan their movements together, hone cues, and guarantee seamless transitions. The final chance to perfect the production before the formal premiere is during dress rehearsals, which feature complete makeup and costumes. The final phase is the performance phase, which starts with the opening night and continues with a series of public performances (Brockett and Ball, 2010, Cohen, 2017). The production team works to preserve the performance's quality throughout this stage, taking care of any necessary technological fixes or tweaks.

The production process is complete following the final performance, at which point it may continue in its current location or shift to new one (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021).

It is significant to note that the production procedure can change depending on the volume and type of production. As compared to smaller theatre productions, large-scale productions may necessitate more pre-production and technical work. Moreover, depending on how the theatre company or production team is organised, the precise roles and duties that must be performed during the production process may vary. As indicated the first step in the production process as far as the current study is concerned is the selection of play or script development as discussed below.

Script development

Price (2017) intimate that the play's script is created, improved upon, and revised as part of the script development stage of a theatrical performance. In order to create a captivating and potent theatrical piece, the playwright, director, and occasionally the actors work together. Before the play is performed on stage, the script development process enables investigation, criticism, and improvements. The writer usually starts with an initial draft of the script before continuing with script development. The collaborative process begins with this draft, which lays the groundwork for additional investigation and improvement (Shannon, 2012).

The process of readings and workshops is a significant part of script creation. A cast of actors will read the play aloud at readings so that the author, director, and other team members can hear the dialogue and picture the performance in real time. The process is advanced via workshops, which include more thorough rehearsing and script exploration as explained by Ball (2003). The playwright can

use these phases as crucial times to gather input, evaluate the play's impact, and make any required changes. Additionally, the collaborative discussion between the director and playwright is a crucial part of script creation. As the screenplay is being written, the director's job is to provide comments, offer insights, and help create the play's overall vision (Price, 2017). Together with the director, the playwright strives to preserve the playwright's original intent while ensuring that the script complements the director's creative vision. A stronger and more polished script is produced as a result of the collaborative approach, which encourages a beneficial interchange of ideas and viewpoints (Johnson, 2011).

Moreover, script development may incorporate actor readings and workshops. The playwright and director can learn a lot from the performers' feedback and interpretation of the characters and dialogue (Sweet, 2009). Sweet further divulge that the performers' criticism can be used to spot plot holes, define character motives, and improve the play's overall dramatic structure. It is imperative to note that the playwright keeps revising and improving the screenplay as it is being developed based on audience reaction, knowledge gained from workshops and readings, and the collaborative participation of the director and performers. Through this iterative process, new options can be explored, the dramatic structure can be strengthened, and the themes and messages of the play can be improved. The next step in the process is auditions and casting.

Auditions and Casting

The theatre production process heavily relies on auditions and casting. They entail choosing actors who are most compatible with the play's characters and

creative intent (Johnson, 2011). In the audition and casting process, the director, casting director, and occasionally the playwright or producers work together frequently. Auditions are held to evaluate an actor's abilities, suitability for particular parts, and potential synergy with other cast members (Bly, 2012). Casting calls, whether for open auditions or by invitation, are often issued by the casting director to start the audition process. Actors who are interested in the production prepare audition pieces, which could be monologues, songs, or scenarios that the production company has offered (Sterling, 2017). Bly (2012), further explains that actors present prepared pieces during auditions to the casting team. Observing the auditions and rating the performers' performances are the director, casting director, and occasionally other members of the production crew. Acting prowess, voice range, physique, and character interpretation are all things they take into account. Additionally, the director may have callbacks, in which chosen performers are invited to re-audition for a character that is still being explored and given further thought. On the basis of auditions and callbacks, performers are chosen for the various roles in the play during the casting process. In order to make the casting decisions that are most in line with the aesthetic intent of the production, the director and casting team confer and deliberate. This decision-making process takes into account actor chemistry and dynamics as well as individual performances as observed by Sterling (2017).

It is significant to observe that casting decisions take into account a variety of aspects outside an actor's quality, such as availability, scheduling issues, diversity, and the precise requirements of the parts. These choices are made with

the intention of assembling a solid and evenly distributed cast that will successfully bring the play's characters to life on stage. Depending on the particular demands and objectives of the production, auditions and casting for theatrical productions can take many various forms. One form or type of auditions is the open audition. As noted by Sterling (2017), several types of actors, including both seasoned professionals and amateurs, can participate in open auditions. Typically, they are made known to the general public, making it possible for anybody who satisfies the requirements to sign up and attend. When the casting crew wishes to cast a wide net to find new talent or for large-scale productions, open auditions are frequently used.

There are also invitation-only (close-ended) auditions (Harris, 2015). Harris observes that only a small number of actors are permitted to participate in invitation-only auditions; these performers are chosen by the casting staff based on their reputation, body of work, or personal recommendations. For high-profile productions or when the casting staff is primarily looking for seasoned actors with particular abilities or traits, this type of audition is frequently used. Auditions can take the form of callbacks where a limited number of performers who have demonstrated potential for particular roles are asked to further showcase their skills. Actors may be invited to perform more scenes or songs or to participate in additional evaluation or workshopping, during callbacks. Callbacks provide the casting crew the chance to evaluate the performers more thoroughly before making the ultimate casting choice (Sternfeld & Hoyle, 2017).

Also, workshop auditions as a type of audition combine the auditioning procedure with a group project environment (Harris, 2015). Alongside the director, playwright, or other creative team members, actors take part in a variety of exercises, improvisations, and scene work. This kind of audition enables a more thorough examination of the players' talents, originality, and teamwork capabilities within a particular theatrical setting. Sometimes video auditions as explained by Harris may be used because of practical restrictions or unique situations. Actors are required to submit taped auditions, which the casting panel then evaluates. In addition to allowing a wider range of actors to be considered for the parts, video auditions can provide flexibility for actors who are unable to attend in-person auditions.

Furthermore, casting can take the form of Pre-casting. As intimated by Flom (2013), pre-casting is the technique of choosing performers for particular roles without holding a formal audition. Flom explains that this might happen if a production team already has a particular actor in mind for a role based on past working relationships, talent that is well known, or existing connections. Pre-casting is more prevalent in smaller projects or when casting for roles that call for a particular actor's special skills. Another type of casting is ensemble casting as noted by Gillett (2014). Gillett is of the opinion that instead of concentrating on individual roles, ensemble casting includes selecting a group of actors who will function as a unified ensemble. In created or ensemble-based theatre works, where teamwork and interpersonal dynamics are crucial to the creative process, this strategy is frequently employed. The chemistry and relationship between the actors

as a whole are given priority while casting an ensemble (Gillett, 2014). After auditions and casting, the next step in the production process worth engaging is the production conference.

Production conference

A crucial step in the production of a play or musical is the production conference, which is a collaborative gathering of the creative team, which includes the director, designers, stage manager, and other key members of the production staff, to discuss and plan various elements of the impending performance (Sterling, 2017). It gives the crew a chance to collaborate, coordinate their vision, and make crucial decisions about the artistic direction and practical aspects of the production. The team usually discusses the overall idea and interpretation of the play, as well as the desired tone, style, and aesthetic, during the production conference. The production conference, in Dorn and Shanda's (2016) view enables the creative team to build a shared vision and guarantee that everyone engaged is working toward the same aesthetic objectives. The succeeding steps of the production process are laid out in part by the collaborative dialogue that takes place now.

The consideration of design components is a significant component of the production conference (Dorn and Shanda, 2016). The creative team talks about and investigates concepts for stage design, costume design, lighting design, sound design, and any other pertinent production components. The visual and aural components of the production can be shaped through the exchange of ideas, feedback, and the incorporation of many viewpoints during this cooperative brainstorming session. The production conference also serves as an avenue for

organising logistics. The group talks about logistical issues such practice times, technical specifications, production timelines, and financial limitations. It is an opportunity to discuss any difficulties or possible problems that might develop throughout the production process and come up with joint solutions.

The production conference also makes it easier for the artistic team and the production staff, which includes the stage manager, technical director, production manager, and other important individuals, to communicate and work together. It guarantees that everyone engaged is aware of the demands, obligations, and expectations of the production (Leiter, 2014). Notes and minutes are frequently taken at the production conference to record the decisions made and the action items assigned to particular people. The team members can use these notes as a guide to follow the production's progress and make sure that tasks are being completed in accordance with the planned timeframe. Several other subjects in the opinion of Cohen (2016) could be included on the conference agenda, such as design concepts, production schedule, casting and roles, rehearsal process, technical requirements, among others. The next step in the production process is the rehearsal process.

Rehearsal process

In a theatre production, rehearsals are a crucial step that provide the director, actors, and production team the chance to bring the script to life, polish performances, and get ready for the main performance. The artistic and technical aspects of the production are brought together during rehearsals to produce a seamless and polished performance. Cassidy (2018), highlights the role of a director in rehearsals and indicates that the director closely collaborates with the performers

throughout rehearsals to mold their performances and bring forth the ideal interpretations of the characters. The director offers direction on character creation, blocking (stage movement), and the overall production plan. To effortlessly incorporate the technical components into the performances, the director works alongside the designers and technicians (Cassidy, 2018).

The order and focus of the work are usually outlined in an organised timetable for rehearsals. Activities including read-throughs, blocking rehearsals, scene work, character development exercises, and technical rehearsals may be included in this plan. Depending on the intricacy of the production, the length and intensity of the rehearsal period might range from a few weeks to several months. In Cohen's (2016) book "Theatre," rehearsals serve multiple purposes, including "building a sense of ensemble, developing characterisations, working out stage movement, and refining the delivery of dialogue" (p. 157). Actors can try new things, learn new things, and develop a deeper grasp of their characters and the play throughout rehearsals. They support a dynamic and creative environment by offering a collaborative setting where actors can get feedback from the director and their fellow cast members.

Thomas (2009), observes that actors go through several levels of discovery and development throughout rehearsal. They explore the innermost feelings of their characters, hone their vocal and physical skills, and seek to make their performances consistent and believable. In order to help actors, develop their characters, modify their performances, and maintain group cohesion, the director offers comments and direction. Technical components like lighting, sound, and set

changes are gradually integrated as the rehearsals go on. The production team then conducts technical rehearsals where they concentrate on integrating the technological elements with the actors' performances. In order to prepare for the final presentation, these rehearsals enable the seamless execution of cues, transitions, and other technical features. The dress rehearsals, which mimic the entire show down to the costumes, makeup, props, and all technical aspects, are the culmination of the rehearsal process. Before the performances in front of an audience, dress rehearsals offer one last chance to polish the performance and address any lingering problems (Cassidy, 2018).

The main performance

The main performance of a theatrical production is the pinnacle of the entire creative and production process, where the artistic vision, technical aspects, and results of rehearsals are brought together in a live presentation for an audience as explained by Oddey (2013). It is the time when the cast members and the production crew present their combined talents and bring the play to life. In the main performance, the actors follow the direction and suggestions given to them during dress rehearsals. They interact with one another and the audience while portraying their characters and delivering their lines. The main performance gives the players a chance to fully inhabit the play's universe and portray the emotions, conflicts, and ideas that the playwright and director had in mind (Oddey, 2013).

Cohen (2017), adds that the main performance is when the artists go on stage in front of a crowd to show off the results of all of the prior rehearsing and preparing. The production team's creative decisions and the players' collaborative

efforts come together in this pivotal moment to create a shared theatrical experience, which is when the performers, audience, and crew at large feel most connected. The main performance is a singular and fleeting occasion because every performance might differ slightly depending on the mood of the audience, the decisions of the actors, and the live nature of theatre (Leach, 2013). The goal of the production is to produce a memorable and impactful experience for the audience, and this is the conclusion of all of the team members' joint efforts.

Zuber-Skerritt (2021), observes that during the main performance, technical aspects like lighting, sound effects, set changes, and props are used to improve the storyline and create the appropriate ambiance. To ensure seamless transitions and faultless implementation of technical cues, the technical crew, who have been working behind the scenes during rehearsals and technical rehearsals, coordinates their activities. As the audience witnesses the performers' on-stage engagement with the plot as it develops in real time, the main performance serves as the experience's high point. It is the point at which the audience actively participates, responding to the performances, participating in the emotions represented, and relating to the themes and messages the play is trying to get through. The next phase after the main performance is feedback.

Feedback in Theatre Workshop

In a theatrical workshop, feedback describes the process of obtaining helpful critique and remarks about one's performance or creative endeavor (Jacob, Larter, Blair, & Boyter, 2019). Glover and Phillips (2015) emphasise that feedback is an essential tool for growth and development in a theatrical workshop context,

assisting participants in identifying areas for improvement and capitalising on their strengths. Ludus (2015) posits that feedback may be given by a range of people, including teachers, classmates, and members of the audience. Feedback at a theatre workshop is meant to provide participants with a dispassionate view of their work, point out areas for improvement, and promote personal growth. Jacob, Larter, Blair, and Boyter, (2019) opine that feedback should be given in a way that is encouraging and helpful, and it should be utilised as a tool for learning rather than as an outlet for negativity or criticism. Participants in theatre workshops receive feedback that helps them advance their theatrical talents and abilities by giving them a clear picture of their strengths and areas for improvement. Additionally, it offers a nurturing and instructive setting where participants can develop as theatre artists (Glover & Phillips, 2015; Ludus, 2015). In a theatre workshop, the following are some typical types of feedback: Technical feedback; Artistic feedback, and Audience feedback.

Technical feedback in theatre workshops is the assessment of a performer's technical talents and abilities, encompassing elements like lighting, sound, costuming, and stage design (Cohen, 2004). Technical criticism, constructive criticism, and ideas on how to improve a performer's technical abilities are frequently offered by technical directors, stage managers, and other experts in theatre production. Regarding the use of light to create mood and atmosphere as well as the creation and implementation of lighting cues, some specific areas where technical criticism could be given in a theatre workshop are lighting design and cue

execution. Feedback is also welcome regarding the design and implementation of music and sound effects, as well as the usage of sound to enhance performances.

One of the key components of technical feedback is comments on the selection of costumes, their fit and appearance, and the ways in which clothes are used to improve performances. Input is also required on the stage and set's design and layout, as well as on how to use the available space and props to create an immersive theatrical experience. Ultimately, technical feedback is crucial in theatre workshops because it aids actors in honing their craft, producing high-quality work, and growing as theatre artists. Technical feedback is also crucial to producing a successful theatrical production since it helps to guarantee that the technical aspects of the performance are carried out to the highest standards.

In theatre workshops, artistic feedback refers to the assessment of a performer's creative skills and abilities, encompassing areas like acting, directing, writing, and performance (Esper & DiMarco, 2008). A performer may receive artistic feedback from seasoned theatre professionals, teachers, and peers, which can include ideas for improvement, harsh criticism, and guidance on how to develop a performer's creative abilities (Preece, 2017). Furthermore, Preece notes that feedback on a performer's portrayal, emotional investment in the role, and physicality in performance are some specific areas where creative criticism could be given in a theatre workshop.) A director's artistic vision for the play, their capacity to convey it to the cast and crew, and their ability to oversee the rehearsal process are also critical aspects of artistic feedback. Additionally, artistic feedback includes feedback on a playwright's script, such as the plot, dialogue, and character

development, as well as comments on the general caliber of the performance, such as pacing, energy, and audience involvement (Esper & DiMarco, 2008). In theatre workshops, aesthetic criticism is crucial since it aids actors in honing their artistic abilities, producing top-notch performances, and growing as theatre artists. A helpful and instructive setting that encourages performers to develop, take chances and fully realise their potential as artists are also facilitated by artistic feedback.

The judgment and responses of the audience to a performance are referred to as audience feedback in theatrical workshops. The impact and effectiveness of a performance can be evaluated using audience feedback, and changes or enhancements can be made based on the audience's responses (White, 2013). Verbal feedback is one of the many ways that the audience can give feedback after a performance. This can be done in person or online through reviews or comments. Moreover, there is written feedback, where participants may offer written comments via surveys, questionnaires, or online reviews. Additionally, there is another type of audience feedback known as nonverbal feedback, in which spectators may express their opinions through nonverbal cues such as applause, laughter, or even silence during a performance. This type of feedback can reveal the audience's reactions to a performance. Audience feedback is crucial in theatre workshops because it offers a practical assessment of a performance's effectiveness and aids in identifying potential improvement areas (White, 2013). The impact and resonance of a performance with a specific audience can also be evaluated using audience feedback, and it can also be used to determine the most effective ways to engage and connect with audiences moving forward. The next section highlights

the director's responsibilities as the production's coordinator, partner, and script interpreter. It also deals with the various methods a director can adopt in directing.

Directing in Theatre Workshop

Theatre workshops must include directing since it is the responsibility of the director to interpret and communicate the script in a unique way to the actors, designers, and other members of the production team in order to make a theatrical production come to life. It is important to keep in mind that directing in theatre workshops is a continually changing craft that calls for continuous improvement. Mitchell (2014) states that "directing is a lifelong learning process...you never stop learning, and every project is a new challenge" (p. 4).

Lumley and Donnelly (2018) assert that directing is "managing the performance space, working with actors to develop their characters and blocking, interpreting the script, and creating a cohesive production" (p. 8). Lumley and Donnelly's definition of directing gives an enlightenment that clearly suggests that defining the production's goals and objectives is a crucial component of directing in theatrical workshops. As noted by Wolf (2012), "the director must begin with a clear idea of what he or she wants to achieve in the production, in terms of both the artistic vision and the audience's response" (p. 27). This means that the director's decisions regarding casting, design, staging, and other production-related decisions are influenced by his or her idea of what the play is about and the kind of environment it takes place in. In order to do this, the director must have a thorough comprehension of the play's plot, characters, and overarching theme and message.

As observed by Brockett and Ball (2010), the director's role first came into being in the late 19th century with the growth of naturalistic and realistic theatre. Before this, actors frequently played many roles during the staging of plays, which were frequently directed without a designated director. The requirement for a director to manage the production and guarantee artistic cohesion, however, became more critical as theatre grew more sophisticated and complex (Brockett & Ball, 2010). In a theatrical workshop, directing entails working closely with performers to assist them in comprehending their characters and their motives as well as leading them in their physical movements and vocal delivery. For this, it is important to have a thorough comprehension of both the play and the production's direction. As claimed by Dukore (2018), "directors must be able to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively to actors and designers, and to create a collaborative environment that fosters creativity and innovation" (p. 3). Dukore's claim implies that effective communication with actors is a crucial characteristic for directors in theatre workshops. In addition to helping actors comprehend and embody their characters, directors must be able to communicate their ideas to actors in a clear and persuasive manner. Building confidence and cooperation between directors and actors is crucial for producing a show that is both coherent and appealing. The current study obtains a basis for creating strategies that address the particular requirements of visually impaired students by knowing how directors might establish inclusive environments.

The movement of performers on stage is referred to as blocking, which is one of the most important components of directing. Blocking can give visual

interest to the production as well as aid to define the relationships between characters, as intimated by Krasner (2014). In order to effectively block a scene, directors might employ a number of strategies, such as leveling the stage, using diagonals, and creatively utilising the available space. Collaboration with the design team to establish the production's overall aesthetic is another crucial component of directing. Set design, lighting design, and costume design are all examples of this. In order to complement the director's interpretation of the script, Heisler (2019) posits that the design team collaborates with the director to develop a coherent vision for the production. Moreover, managing the rehearsal process is another aspect of directing that ensures the actors are ready for the performance. This entails giving the performers feedback, rehearsing challenging scenes, and fostering a positive work atmosphere for them. Johnston (2015), explains that the director needs to be a powerful figurehead who can motivate the cast and crew to produce their finest work. The above raises an issue for this study because it shows how inclusive theatre for visually impaired students can develop a production that reflects a diverse range of identities, experiences, and viewpoints by taking cues from these procedures.

Many methods and approaches have been created over time to complement the director's work as the director's position in theatre workshops has changed. The Stanislavski Method, created by Russian director Konstantin Stanislavski, for instance, emphasises the value of psychological realism and emotional honesty in acting and offers methods for performers to delve into the motivations and inner lives of their characters (Lumley & Donnelly, 2018). Some methods, like the

Meisner Technique, put more of an emphasis on producing sincere, spontaneous performances by having actors interact with their scene mates and honestly react to the play's conditions (Dukore, 2018). The Brechtian method of directing as observed by Kleist (2005) places a strong emphasis on the necessity of communication between the director, the actors, and other members of the production crew. In order to help the performers, comprehend the ideological and political messages of the play and to create a performance style that highlights the alienation effect, the director must work closely with the actors. In order to achieve a production that accentuates the social and political concerns of the play, the director must also collaborate with designers and technicians.

The physical theatre method of directing places a strong emphasis on movement, gesture, and physical expression and frequently combines dance and mime into performances (Leabhart, 2016). This emphasises using the body and movement to convey meaning and tell a story. In order to create a physically active production, the director may employ strategies including inventing, improvisation, and movement exercises as expressed by Leabhart. Devised theatre is a kind of theatre directing that comprises a cooperative process in which the actors and director team up to produce a brand-new piece from the start. This method frequently uses a non-linear or non-narrative form and places an emphasis on experimentation, improvisation, and group creation (Oddey, 2013). The use of physical and visual components to express a story is a crucial component of devised theatre. To produce a theatre production that supports and improves the ideas of the performers, the director must collaborate with designers and technicians,

frequently combining aspects of movement, music, and multimedia. Sallis, (2015) intimates that the use of improvisation and experimentation to create and improve the performance is a crucial component of devising theatre. The director needs to be adept at fostering the creative process and assisting the performers in shaping their concepts into a unified performance.

Another approach to theatre directing, collaborative theatre, places a strong emphasis on the value of group innovation and shared authorship in the creative process (Brown, 2018). With this strategy, the director, performers, and other production team members work together to produce a piece that captures the group's vision (Murray, 2016). The significance of communication and trust between the members of the production team is one of the fundamental concepts of collaborative theatre. For experimentation and exploration to take place in a safe and encouraging setting, the director must collaborate closely with the actors as expressed by Murray. The director must also have the ability to manage potential conflicts and tensions that may occur during the collaborative process as well as to facilitate the creative process. In order to allow for more input from the performers and other collaborators, the director must be adept at fostering honest and open dialogue and be willing to give up control of some production elements. The use of improvisation and experimentation to create and improve performance is a key component of collaborative theatre (Reck, 2017). The director must be receptive to the thoughts and viewpoints of the actors and eager to include their contributions in the finished product. (Murray, 2016). These diverse directing techniques provide the current study, which is an inclusive theatre project, with a toolkit of approaches

to choose from. It becomes essential to modify directing techniques to meet the requirements and skill levels of visually impaired students. To communicate the performance's visual features, for example, the usage of tactile elements or other types of communication might be investigated. The next section discusses the theories that underpin this study.

Theoretical framework

Social inclusion theory and critical disability theory are seen to be particularly useful for a study on inclusive theatre for visually impaired students. In this study, the Critical Disability Theory was used to complement the Social Inclusion Theory to capture the barriers preventing the integration of visually impaired students in dramatic theatrical performances as well as the processes involved in their integration, with the Social Inclusion Theory serving as the overarching and grounding theory.

Social Inclusion Theory (SIT)

Social Inclusion Theory (SIT) aims to explain the processes by which people and groups are either included in or excluded from social, political, and economic spheres. The notion is based on the understanding that social inclusion is a complex process involving access to a variety of resources, such as political engagement, work, healthcare, and education. The SIT emphasises the value of removing institutional and structural obstacles to inclusion as well as the part that people and communities play in fostering social cohesiveness and integration. (Garcia-Ramrez, 2020). This idea places a strong emphasis on the necessity of

eliminating structural injustices, prejudice, and marginalisation in order to achieve social inclusion (Chen & Chen, 2019; Henderson, 2017).

According to Diamond (2004), social inclusion has four basic aspects: economic, social, cultural, and political. The social dimension relates to access to social networks, support networks, and neighborhood services whereas the economic dimension refers to access to labor, income, and material goods. The political dimension has to do with taking part in political processes and having access to power, while the cultural dimension has to do with accepting variety and recognising it. The needs and experiences of disadvantaged groups, such as those who encounter discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, gender, handicap, or socioeconomic position, must be addressed, as claimed by Allan (2008). Allan unequivocally notes that, achieving social inclusion calls for a commitment to fairness and social justice, which can be attained through practices and policies that support universal access and opportunity. Putnam (2000) succinctly postulates that the acknowledgment of social networks' and social capital's importance in fostering inclusiveness is one of the main tenets of social inclusion theory. The social connections, customs, and principles that give people access to opportunities and resources in society are referred to as social networks and social capital (Putnam, 2000). According to the theory of social inclusion, those who are socially isolated or who are a member of marginalised groups are less likely to have opportunities to engage in society.

The emergence of SIT did not result from any particular seminar work. Instead, the theory came about as a result of scholarly and political discussions

surrounding the terms "social exclusion" and "social cohesiveness," which were well-known in the 1990s and early 2000s (Chen & Chen, 2019). Chen and Chen (2019) reveal that Amartya Sen's work, which claimed that progress should be judged in terms of people's talents and opportunities rather than merely economic growth, is where the SIT first emerged. Inequalities must be addressed in order for marginalised groups to fully engage in society, according to this viewpoint.

The social inclusion agenda of the European Union, which aspired to advance equality of opportunity and combat poverty and social exclusion, had a significant impact on social inclusion theory as well (Garca-Ramrez, 2020). SIT has evolved and been improved through time through empirical study and real-world applications in a variety of settings (Chen & Chen, 2019). To create treatments that encourage social inclusion and lessen social exclusion among vulnerable communities, for instance, social work experts have used the social inclusion theory (Chen & Chen, 2019). Furthermore, the social model of disability, which contends that in addition to being an individual attribute, disability is also a product of social attitudes and barriers, has had a significant impact on SIT (Oliver, 1996). This approach highlights the necessity of removing these obstacles and building an inclusive society that meets the requirements and capabilities of every person.

Critical Disability Theory (CDT)

Critical Disability Theory (CDT) is an interdisciplinary field of study that aims to comprehend and confront the ways in which society oppresses and marginalises people with disabilities (Goodley, Liddiard, & Runswick, 2018

Hosking, 2008). Goodley, Liddiard, and Runswick, aver that the CDT criticises conventional views of disability, which place an emphasis on medical theories and personal shortcomings, and places an emphasis on the social and cultural elements that contribute to and reinforce disability as a kind of oppression. The idea looks at how discrimination based on race, gender, class, and sexual orientation intersects with oppression based on disability (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009; Shakespeare, 1998). Furthermore, it opposes the prevalent ableist society and advances the social model of disability, which places a strong emphasis on the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all facets of society (Campbell, 2009).

The CDT was born out of the 1970s and 1980s disability rights movement, which aimed to disprove the medical model of disability and advance social inclusion and equality for those with disabilities (Shapiro, 1993). Oliver's (1983) book "*The Politics of Disablement*," was one of the major seminar works that contributed to the growth of critical disability theory. According to Oliver, disability is a societal and political issue rather than just a personal medical issue. He criticises the medical paradigm of disability, which sees it as a disease that can be treated or healed, and contends that society's restrictions and restraints are what produce impairment. The social model of disability, which emphasises that impairment is a result of social and environmental conditions rather than an innate quality of impaired people themselves, is another idea Oliver introduces. Oliver's work has had a significant impact on the development of the discipline of disability studies and the advancement of handicapped people's rights.

According to CDT, promoting the inclusion of blind people in theatrical productions necessitates changing the environment to make it possible for visually impaired people (in this case, students) who are marginalised, stigmatised, and subjected to discrimination to take part in dramatic theatrical productions (Hosking, 2008). In light of Koppers' (2014) observations, CDT consequently supports systemic improvements in the social structure. Meekosha and Shuttleworth (2009), Dolmage (2017), and Goodley, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, (2018) argue in favor of the use of CDT to guide discourses on disability issues by outlining the main objectives of CDT as being to highlight the flaws in the social reality as it exists today, to pinpoint potential change agents, to lay out clear standards for critique, and to set attainable objectives for social change. Corresponding to this, Hosking (2008) asserts that the goal of CDT is to create a society that is based on the equality and democracy of all of its members rather than to account for society and behavior. In order to emancipate the oppressed such as visually impaired people, eliminate inequity, and promote accessibility, participation, and achievement of all people in society, CDT aims to do more than just comprehend circumstances and occurrences (Dolmage, 2017; Goodley, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, 2018).

Combating discrimination against individuals with disabilities is one of the main goals of CDT. As a result, CDT offers a chance to recognise and question the historically stereotyped and marginalising ways in which people with disabilities have been portrayed in theatre (Koppers & Heit, 2017). It criticises the lack of autonomy given to disabled characters when disability is used as a plot device or an inspiration source (Johnston, 2017). It also criticises the practice known in the

theatre world as "cripping up" or "ableism," which involves using performers without impairments to play characters who have limitations.

It is crucial to note here that, by offering a more complex and critical understanding of disability, power, and oppression, CDT and SIT can be complementary to each other in the context of inclusive theatre for visually impaired persons. CDT underlines how disability is produced and experienced within social and cultural contexts, in contrast to social inclusion theory, which emphasizes the significance of establishing equal opportunities and opposing social exclusion (Shakespeare, 2017). Additionally, promoting the inclusion and empowerment of underprivileged groups, such as those with disabilities, in society is a common objective of both CDT and SIT (Gallagher & Newman, 2019). By exposing the social and cultural hurdles that hinder full participation and encouraging a more critical and transformational approach to inclusion, critical disability theory can supplement SIT in the context of inclusive theatre for visually impaired persons (Gallagher & Newman, 2019).

Chapter Summary

There has been an attempt in this chapter, to evaluate and review conceptual and empirical literature relevant to the subject at hand and lay out the study's theoretical underpinnings. The concept of disability; disability models; the concept of visual impairment; inclusive theatre; intervention model, and theatre workshop were highlighted throughout the review. From the discussions, it has been established that inclusive theatre for visually impaired students provides a number of important advantages for those who are visually impaired, including

better socialisation, stronger self-esteem, skills or creative talent development, a greater appreciation for the arts, and advocacy. The next chapter by discusses the methods used for the current study.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

The entire methodological approach and techniques employed in the study are described in this chapter. This chapter starts off with a profile of the study area and a summary of the philosophy that underpinned the study. For the sake of the study's framework, the interpretivist philosophical foundation and qualitative research approach are identified. Exploratory case study and art-based research are the research designs for this study, which are analysed using qualitative techniques. It also deals with the study population and sampling technique and procedure. The instruments for gathering data include observation (complete participant observation) and interview guide (semi-structured interviews). Each data collection technique utilised in the study are also justified and covered in detail. Furthermore, the chapter deals with the technique and process used in processing data. In addition, the chapter describes the procedures followed to guarantee the reflexivity, and trustworthiness of the research findings. The chapter also, engages how the study's ethical standards were upheld and how the data collected were managed. A summary of the chapter concludes this chapter.

Profile of the study area

Marshall and Rossman (2014) observe that the choice of the research or study location is crucial because it gives the researcher the chance to provide data that is relevant to the context and illuminates the issue at hand. When choosing the study area or location for the current study, I took into account participant

availability and accessibility. Therefore, the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind (CAPEDEAF), in Cape Coast, Ghana, served as the research's study location. It is essential to review the nature of the study area in order to act as a reference point for a better understanding of the population and sample for the study.

However, it is imperative and prudent to first have a thorough understanding of the external environment in which the school is located before I discuss the school's profile. This is so because the immediate environment of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind can be significantly impacted by the external environment of Cape Coast, which includes elements like accessibility, community support, local resources, cultural and social influences, employment opportunities, and safety. The accessibility of the school may be impacted by Cape Coast's geography and infrastructure, while opportunities for social integration may be provided by a warm and accepting neighborhood. Resources like instructional materials and specialised services that are accessible to pupils can improve their learning. The external environment's cultural values and social conventions can influence students' experiences, and the availability of job opportunities might affect how they enter the workforce. Additionally, a conducive learning atmosphere inside the school is influenced by an external environment that is safe and secure. It is crucial to understand that while the outside environment (Cape Coast Metropolis) has an impact, the school itself is critical and essential in determining the immediate environment for the pupils. The quality of education given and the opportunities accessible to children with visual impairments are also influenced by the school's policies, curriculum, teaching techniques, and staff members.

Cape Coast Metropolis

Ghana's Central Region contains the city of Cape Coast. A historic city, it was formerly the epicenter of the transatlantic slave trade and is home to a number of castles and forts from the colonial era. Today, Cape Coast, noted for its beaches, culture, and history is a developing metropolis and a well-liked vacation spot. In Ghana, one of the oldest districts is the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area. Both LI 1373 from 1987 and LI 1927 from 2007 upgraded to the metropolitan level. Municipality status was granted in 1987 (GSS, 2010).

Since the fifteenth century, Cape Coast has had a rich and complicated history. It was formerly populated by the Fante people and served as a major hub for the transatlantic slave trade, which resulted in the capture, sale, and transportation of millions of Africans as slaves to the Americas as averred by Amoah (1972). The historic Cape Coast Castle, which served as a holding facility for enslaved Africans before they were transported outside, was built in Cape Coast by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British (Amoah, 1972). Cape Coast developed into a hub for Christian missions and higher learning in the 19th century and eventually proved crucial to Ghana's struggle for independence. Cape Coast continued to develop and modernise after securing its independence from Britain in 1957, emerging as a significant regional commercial and cultural hub. Due to its rich history and cultural heritage, Cape Coast is currently a vibrant metropolis and a well-liked tourist attraction (Agyei-Mensah, 2006).

Economic Activities

As observed by Gbadeyan, Oppong, & Oduro, 2017), a key economic hub in Ghana, Cape Coast is home to a wide variety of enterprises and industries. Ghana's tourism industry is centered at Cape Coast. It serves as the focal point of the Pan African Festival, or PANAFEST. The Metropolis has exceptional potential, which makes it more likely that tourism will flourish there. Physical, historical, and cultural variations that could be created for traditional tourism are part of the Metropolis' potential. The location attracts people who are interested in exploration and adventure because to its beautiful landscape. The yearly festival of the people, the Fetu Afahye, has always drawn visitors from within and outside the borders of the nation (Frempong, 2018). Over the years, it has grown into a lavish cultural event that has boosted tourism in the Metropolis.

The fishing sector contributes significantly to the local economy in Cape Coast, which is a coastal city close to the Atlantic Ocean. Cassava, plantains, and palm oil are just a few of the numerous crops that are grown in the area's rural areas. The city is home to a number of small and medium-sized businesses that manufacture furniture, textiles, and food (Agyei-Mensah & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2007). With several stores, marketplaces, and malls offering goods and services to locals and tourists alike, Cape Coast has a thriving retail industry. The Metropolis is home to several privately owned construction businesses. Construction of roads and the growth of real estate have been considerably aided by the formation of brick and tile companies, chippings, sand, and stone mines, as well as other associated businesses. The huge amounts of kaolin in Ekon also offer the possibility of big-scale production.

Education

Primary and secondary schools, as well as a number of higher education institutions, may be found in Cape Coast. One of Ghana's biggest universities, the University of Cape Coast, is located in Cape Coast. It is renowned for its programs in education, the social sciences, and the humanities. Additionally, Cape Coast can boast of a technical university (Cape Coast Technical University). In Cape Coast, there are a number of colleges that provide junior college courses in addition to technical and vocational training. The primary and secondary education system in Cape Coast is well-established, and both public and private institutions accept students from all across the city.

In Cape Coast, there are a number of special education schools that offer instruction and support to students with special needs. Additionally, Cape Coast is home to a small number of international schools that provide instruction to pupils from other countries and do so in languages than English. Cape Coast places a high priority on education and places a lot of focus on both academic success and personal development. The education system in Cape Coast is considered to be a major force behind the economic and social growth of the area. Many students go on to attend universities and colleges both in Ghana and abroad. One of the special education schools that offer instruction and support to students with special needs is the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind.

Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind

As a school for students with special needs which is located in Cape Coast, Ghana, the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind provides education and

training for children who are both deaf and blind. On November 9th, 1970, Cape Coast School for the Deaf (CAPE DEAF) was founded with the purpose of giving formal education to children who are of school age and have hearing impairments (School for the Deaf, Cape Coast, 1995). The students at this government school do not pay tuition; instead, they rely on grants from the government, charitable groups, and non-governmental organisations to survive. The school offers fundamental and career-focused programs. There is a Kindergarten, Lower Primary, Upper Primary, Junior High, Vocational School, and a Unit for the Blind there. Carpentry, Hairdressing, Dressmaking, Kente Weaving, and Tailoring are among the vocational courses that offer the students specialised occupational skills (Participant A). Students who pass the Basic Education Certificate Exams have the choice of continuing their education in a senior high school, vocational school, or technical institution.

In order to carry out the educational policy of inclusive education, the Unit for the Blind was founded in 2001 at Cape Coast School for the Deaf (Cape Deaf). The school instructs blind pupils in the fundamentals of Braille reading and writing, orientation, and movement before integrating them into the regular classroom (Participant B). The school's student body presently numbers 458 (280 males and 178 females), including 400 pupils who are hearing-impaired and 58 who are visually impaired (Participant A). The school initially had only 15 students—10 boys and 5 girls (School for the Deaf, Cape Coast, 1995)—but that number has since increased to 458 (Participant A).

The school has a number of structures, but generally speaking, it has an administrative office that oversees all aspects of school administration, including staffing, account section, and student services. Additionally, it offers classrooms - two (2) classroom blocks for hearing impaired students and a storey unit block for the visually impaired students - that are furnished with specific tools and equipment, like braille readers and dictionaries of sign language, to aid in the instruction of pupils who are deaf or blind (Participant A). There is also a vocational complex for vocational students. For students who live on campus or need prolonged support services, the school also includes residential facilities (a storey dormitory for the girls and two (2) dormitory blocks for the boys) and a dining hall for the students. Additionally, the school has a Regional Hearing Aid Assessment Center which assess the hearing levels (testing) of students for educational placement, advices and rehabilitates clients. The school has Infirmary which provides basic health care services for the students. Furthermore, there is Living Water of the World Project which purifies water for the school for drinking. It has a ten-seater water closet toilet with changing rooms which was donated by Memphis Depay (participants A, B, C, D, E, F).

Vision and Mission

The school's vision and mission are focused on educating and supporting kids who have hearing and vision impairments. The goal is to make a world where kids with vision and hearing impairments may access a top-notch education and have the chance to realize their full potential (School for the Deaf, Cape Coast, 1995). The mission is to give students with hearing and vision impairments a secure

and encouraging learning environment where they can receive a thorough education and acquire the knowledge and skills, they need to live happy, independent lives. Also, to work in partnership with families, communities, and other organisations to promote the success and well-being of its students. Additionally, to advocate for, advance, and provide assistance for children with hearing and vision impairments in order to increase their rights and opportunities. The school's vision and mission speak to the institution's dedication to fostering the academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being of disabilities by offering them exceptional education and assistance (School for the Deaf, Cape Coast, 1995).

Activities of the School

For its students, the school offers a wide range of activities. The school sets up academic courses that cover topics like mathematics, science, language, and social studies and are taught utilising specific tools and technologies (Participant B). Additionally, there are hands-on courses where students may pick up practical skills like woodworking, sewing, and cooking (Participant A). To further encourage fitness and health, the school engages in team sports, physical education lessons, and other physical activities. The promotion of social and emotional development also includes cultural and recreational activities including music and dance programmes, excursions, and outings. To satisfy the requirements of students with disabilities, there are support services available, such as medical attention, counseling, and other resources (Participant C). The school's extracurricular programmes all work toward supporting students' holistic growth by fostering their academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being.

The Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind continues to experience difficulties with finance, resources, and poor road network within the school making it difficult for the visually impaired students to access. More so, the school continues to experience inadequate water in-flow and inadequate classrooms despite its lengthy history and numerous accomplishments (Participant A). It is still a crucial resource for children with disabilities in Ghana and the surrounding area, though.

Philosophical Foundation

A study's methodology can be decided upon using a research philosophy, which can also affect how the study's findings are interpreted. Positivism, interpretivism, realism, pragmatism, constructivism, and realism are popular research philosophies (Leavy, 2017; Ryan, 2018). Ontology, epistemology, and methodology are the three main facets of the research process (TerreBlanche & Durrheim, 1999; Willig, 2003). The nature of reality and knowledge are the topics of the philosophical subfields of ontology and epistemology, respectively. The current study draws on the constructivist worldview. Therefore, the philosophical foundation upon which the current study is based is the interpretivist tradition (interpretive research paradigm).

The rationale for my decision to use the interpretive research paradigm is anchored on the argument that the interpretivist philosophical paradigm holds that knowledge and understanding are social constructs and that each person's perspective and interpretations determine the significance of events and experiences (Flick, 2014). This is because the interpretivist paradigm places an

emphasis on people's subjective experiences, meanings, and viewpoints as well as how their actions, behaviors, and beliefs are perceived in the context of study (Leavy, 2017). By looking at the world through the perspective of the people being researched, interpretivist research seeks to comprehend and make sense of it as observed by Bryman and Bell (2007).

In the current study, understanding the participants' social lives and connecting them to their creative and artistic prowess was important. Therefore, the choice of interpretivism is important because it draws attention to the socio-cultural factors that shape people's attitudes and behaviors, which in turn affect how students with visual impairment experience their daily lives. Additionally, interpretivism may help us comprehend the exclusionary behaviors or obstacles that hinder students with visual impairment from developing their creative and artistic talents. Therefore, interpretivism would aid in comprehending these socio-cultural factors that have an impact on visually impaired people's integration into theatrical productions. Also, I can better analyse participant information through the interpretivist philosophical perspective.

Research Approach

In this study, a qualitative research methodology was employed. The qualitative research approach was chosen because it is likewise driven and influenced by the interpretive perspective. It focuses on learning how people interpret their living experiences in a particular setting. The examination and comprehension of human experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are the main goals of the qualitative research approach, often involving the gathering and

analysis of non-numerical data, such as text, photographs, and audio, this method is used to obtain understanding of complicated social processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The goal of qualitative research is to produce a comprehensive, detailed understanding of a topic by taking into account the context and perspectives of the participants. It frequently uses techniques like open-ended interviews, observation, and content analysis (Domegan and Fleming, 2007).

In qualitative research, the researcher concentrates on documenting what individuals say and do, as well as how they understand the outside world and feel about specific life experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Expanding on this illumination by Bryman & Bell (2007) and Creswell (2013), Stake (2010), and Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2016) postulate that the goal of qualitative researchers is to gain a thorough grasp of the interpretations that participants make of their immediate socio-cultural environment. This is relevant to the study, which investigates how students with visual impairments can be integrated into a dramatic theatre performance. On her part, Merriam (2002), unequivocally intimates that the fundamental assumption behind qualitative research is that people socially generate meaning as they interact with their environment. Positive, quantitative research tends to presume that reality or the world is a fixed, singular, accepted, or measurable phenomenon. Rather, there is a variety of constantly evolving and evolving reality constructions and interpretations. Through a variety of methods, such as focus groups, interviews, observations, documents, artifacts, case studies, and ethnography, qualitative research gathers data. A source of data can also be a

written description of a person, an event, an opinion, an attitude, an environment, or maybe a hybridisation of these (Bryman 2012; Patton, 2014).

The integration of visually impaired students into a theatrical performance is the focus of this study. The key steps in this study were to carefully observe, look into and document the creative and artistic experiences of these visually impaired students as they occurred inside the complexity of a theatrical performance. The researcher participated in the study as a participant and carried out the processes that shaped these experiences. It should be highlighted, nevertheless, that the results do not support broad generalisations; rather, they give contextual discoveries that advance knowledge and comprehension.

Research design

The entire research process, from establishing the study problem and gathering data to presenting findings and drawing conclusions, is structured by the research design (Leavy, 2017). Additionally, it assists in ensuring the validity and dependability of the research findings. In other words, it is the method used to plan and carry out research. What this suggests to is that research design includes conceptualising concepts for the research and determining how the research will be carried out. This is significant since it aids in determining the study's research strategy.

There are a variety of research designs, and the choice of one depends on the research topic being explored as well as the design's merits. The current study adopted and applied an exploratory case study and art-based research designs. An in-depth examination of a person, organisation, or event is the focus of a case study

research design. The case study approach is used to examine the circumstances and viewpoints of participants while gaining a thorough grasp of complicated social processes (Cohen & Manion, 1989). Research using case studies can be done over time to obtain rich, in-depth information and may utilise a variety of data sources, including observations, interviews, and documents. To gain a deeper understanding of the case being examined, the data collected is analysed and evaluated to find trends, themes, and insights. Yin (2003), suggests that Case study research is frequently employed when there is little access to other sorts of data or when the research issue necessitates a thorough analysis of a particular circumstance. What this implies is that the findings might not be transferable to other groups or circumstances, but it has the advantage of offering rich, detailed information.

There are various different case study designs, such as the exploratory case study, which is a kind of case study used to gather background data and formulate hypotheses for more research. This study adheres to an exploratory case study framework that shares an objective with the interpretivist philosophical paradigm in developing a thorough understanding of phenomena. The rationale for this choice is that it made it possible to examine the integration of visually challenged pupils in theatrical works in great detail and depth, giving rise to a deep and sophisticated knowledge of this intricate social phenomenon. It additionally enabled me to consider the context and viewpoints of the participants, resulting in a more thorough knowledge of the issue under investigation. Additionally, this methodology allowed me to gather information from several sources, including interviews and observations, which helped to paint a more complete picture of the issue under

study. Once more, the adaptability of the case study technique allowed me to address a variety of research issues and circumstances.

The study also explored arts- based methodology as part of the research design. Art-based research often referred to as creative arts research employs creative arts methodologies such as visual arts, music, dance, theatre, and poetry in order to examine and comprehend complex social and cultural phenomena (Finley, Messinger, & Mazur, 2020). Artistic expression and conventional academic research techniques are combined in art-based research to produce fresh kinds of knowledge and comprehension (Barone & Eisner, 2011). It can take many different forms, such as producing original works of art, analysing already created works of art, and incorporating performance and other art-based techniques into the research process (Cowan, 2021). A distinctive and nuanced understanding of the research topic that is not feasible through more conventional research methodologies is what art-based research aims to deliver. It has the advantage of offering comprehensive, multifaceted, and empathic insights into challenging societal situations, which is why it is frequently employed in disciplines including education, psychology, sociology, and cultural studies (McNiff, 2008). The potential for subjective interpretation and the challenge of establishing generalisability and reliability are two drawbacks of art-based research, though. Despite these drawbacks, art-based research is a useful and significant approach for examining and comprehending intricate social and cultural phenomena in fresh and original ways (Leavy, 2017).

As a result, the study relied on the various creative processes in mounting a theatrical production right from the process of identifying my targeted participants

and audience, script selection, conceptualising the production, auditioning, casting as well as rehearsing for the production, and keeping a journal. This was underpinned by various play production philosophies and aesthetics (Gwenda van der Vaar, 2018).

Population of the study

The research population is often explained to mean the entire group of people or things from which data is gathered (Blankenship, 2010). The population for the study comprised visually impaired students and both teaching and non-teaching staff at CAPEDEAF/BLIND, and the audience for the main performance.

Sampling Technique and Procedure

Sampling, which entails choosing a portion of people or units from a larger population in order to draw conclusions about the population as a whole, is an important component of study design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The objectives of sampling, as noted by Creswell and Creswell (2017), include ensuring that the sample is representative of the population, reducing sampling bias, increasing the generalisability of the results, and maximising the effectiveness of the study. The study made use of one non-probability sampling technique. The choice of participants was made through purposive sampling. This is due to the fact that the purposive sampling strategy is employed in the selection of specific individuals who would give the most relevant and enough data in regard to the study since they possess the traits that will allow for a more in-depth analysis of the issues under consideration (Bryman, 2016).

Ultimately, the selection of people who contributed to a thorough grasp of the study problem as far as the current study was concerned was made possible by the purposive sampling technique (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2014). Additionally, the choice of this technique was dependent on the chance it gave the researcher to choose cases with a wealth of information that was crucial to the study's goal (Patton, 2014). The participants were carefully selected in accordance with the design of the exploratory case study to guarantee that they had all encountered the phenomenon under research. Because of the complexities inherent in disabilities and performing arts, participants in the study were required to have a thorough understanding of these issues in order to contribute to the study's objectives as Leavy (2017), explains that responses that are elicited from participants who have been specifically chosen based on their expertise, interest, or engagement with the topic under inquiry eventually augment the data that has been gathered.

I must go into detail about the steps I took to select the sample for the study. I began by getting approval and clearance from the University of Cape Coast's Institution Review Board, and an introductory letter from the Center for African and International Studies in the University of Cape Coast. I proceeded to the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind with the letter I had obtained from the Center which was addressed to the head of the school. I explained to the head of the school the goals of my study and asked permission to engage the school's visually impaired students. After that, the head of the school pointed me in the direction of the blind unit head who was in charge of the visually impaired children. I contacted the head of the Blind Unit and introduced myself. He also set up a meeting for me with some

of the teaching and non-teaching personnel so I could explain myself and the reason for my research. Their interest in my research agenda led them to arrange a meeting for me and the students who are visually impaired where I once more introduced myself and the goal of my mission.

Participants were chosen from among the teaching and non-teaching staff using purposive sampling technique. I sent an official invitation to participate in the study to the staff members who had been identified as having the desired traits. They were informed of the purpose and significance of the study. The invitation notes also included my contact information including my phone number and email address. In order to find visually impaired students, I worked with the school's Blind Unit to invite them to volunteer for the auditioning process, which resulted in the choice of participants (visually impaired students) for the performance. The time, date, and location of the auditions were all mentioned in the announcement. The following criteria were also used to help me choose student participants, which included the following criteria: the participant (student) must be visually impaired; enrolled in the school; and willing to volunteer for auditions; and subsequent involvement in the performance. Regarding the selection of the audience who participated (watched the performance) in the study, three categories of the audience were identified. They comprised the visually impaired audience, the deaf audience, and the abled (sighted) audience.

Justifiably, in inclusive theatre, it is appropriate to choose students who are blind, deaf, and sighted for the post-performance feedback interview in order to get thorough views from a variety of viewpoints. While including an audience who are

deaf students offers insightful feedback on accessibility and sign language interpretation, including an audience who are visually impaired students guarantees that the performance's effectiveness in satisfying their special requirements is understood. A comprehensive evaluation of the performance's inclusiveness and efficacy can be made with the help of the participation of sighted audience members since it enables an outside perspective on the artistic quality, technical elements, and overall audience experience. This comprehensive approach ensured a well-rounded evaluation of the performance's inclusivity, engagement, and areas for improvement, ultimately informing future adaptations and enhancing the theatre experience for all participants.

Sample size

The number of people or units chosen from a population to take part in a study is referred to as the sample size in research. It has an impact on the precision, accuracy, and generalisability of the findings, making it a crucial component of research design (Lowe, Norris, Farris, & Babbage, 2018). The sample size should be sufficient to guarantee sufficient statistical power and to detect important differences, but not so large as to make the study expensive or logistically challenging to conduct. Through statistical power analysis and sample size calculation procedures, the optimal sample size can be established (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970; Lakens, 2022). The aim of obtaining theoretical saturation, or when collecting more data no longer provides fresh perspectives or insights, determines the sample size in qualitative research, which is frequently less than in quantitative research (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). This means that in qualitative

research, the sample size is set by the researcher's desire to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study rather than by statistical concerns (Sandelowski, 1995). The sample size may be determined via maximum variation sampling, purposive sampling, or other methods, and the researcher should clearly explain why the sample size was chosen. Sample sizes for qualitative research often range from a few to several dozen subjects (Blaikie, 2018; Boddy, 2016).

At the initial stage of the current study, the sample size was not predetermined. The theory of theoretical saturation was used to determine it. At this time, further information does not further the understandings discovered through the examination of the data collected and data analysis, two processes that were carried out simultaneously. More so, the research questions and the type of replies received from the participants themselves were taken into account when determining the sample size as succinctly intimated by Bryman (2016). The sample size for the current study was made up of thirty-one (31) participants. They comprised eighteen (18) visually impaired students, three (3) deaf students, and ten (10) sighted participants. Out of the eighteen (18) visually impaired students fifteen (15) were members of the cast and crew whilst three (3) were members of the audience, six (6) members of staff (four [4] teaching staff and two [2] non-teaching staff comprising the headmaster and a care-giver), three (3) deaf students (members of the audience), and four (4) sighted audience as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the study participants

Participant	Visually impaired	Deaf	Sighted	Total
Cast (performers)	13	-	-	13
Crew	2	-	-	2
Teaching staff	-	-	4	4
Non-teaching staff	-	-	2	2
Audience	3	3	4	10
Total				31

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2: Distribution of the study participants by sex

Sex	Teaching Staff	Non-Teaching Staff	Cast	Crew	Audience	Total
Male	4	1	6	-	5	16
Female	-	1	7	2	5	15
Total	4	2	13	2	10	31

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

The distribution of the study participants by sex revealed that there were marginally more male participants in the study than females. Table 2 presents the distribution of the study participants (sample size) by sex.

Instruments

Specifically, primary data was used in the study. Data were gathered using tools like interviews and observations. In order to acquire thorough data from the study participants, I used two different instruments for collecting data. My reason for this approach was grounded in the understanding that the other method would fill up any gaps left by the other. Additionally, it improves validity and dependability, and it gives the researcher a larger perspective on the topic under inquiry (Leedy and Ormrod, 2019). Furthermore, in an exploratory case study research design, using various data collection techniques enables the researcher to have a thorough grasp of participant experiences.

As indicated two instruments were used in the study in collecting data. These were interviews and observation. Interview guide was selected as one of the instruments for the study since it is in line with the tenets of the interpretivist philosophical paradigm, the qualitative research approach, and the research designs. By using a predetermined set of basic questions, interviews are a strategy for acquiring information. Interviews can be quite advantageous since the researcher can concentrate on certain points that may be of great interest that may result in focused and beneficial comments (Willis, 2007). Moreover, with the treasure trove of scholarly works, there are several types of interview guides. The different types of interviews are divided into four categories by Alshenqeeti (2014).

It must be stated here that these various kinds of interviews have their inherent strengths and limitations. Focus groups, structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviewing are among them. The current study made use of a semi-structured interview guide. The staff participants and audience participants in this study were interviewed using a semi-structured interviewing technique to get information about the barriers that inhibit them from integrating visually impaired students into dramatic theatrical performance and evaluative feedback from the main performance respectively.

The individuals' social lives might be examined through semi-structured interviews. When a researcher can not learn enough about an interesting phenomenon through other techniques, it is claimed that this type of interview is required (Newby, 2010). When a researcher wants to comprehend participant experiences in a lived domain, semi-structured interviews will do. Semi-structured interviews have been recognised by other studies as being beneficial for doing research that examines people's perspectives, experiences, feelings, or individual viewpoints (Alshenqeti, 2014; Allen, 2018; Newby, 2010; Seidman; 2013). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher a chance to examine nonverbal behaviors that typically add context to the study questions (Allen, 2018). In order for the participants to comprehend the questions, I used appropriate and straightforward language. I made sure that they responded to the questions with their own opinions and experiences. The participants were free to speak in whichever language they pleased throughout the interview sessions, and I thus utilised everyday language. Notably, throughout the interview and workshop

phases, Fanti, Twi, and Ghanaian English were used as the primary means of communication since that was what the participants were comfortable with. This was essential because it allowed participants to speak freely (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This interview method was flexible because it gave participants a chance to express concerns that affected them in the current study. Questions raised or asked in this instrument bordered on issues of the nature and categories of visual impairment at the school. It also included issues on the performing arts needs of the visually impaired students and the factors inhibiting their integration into theatrical performances.

The second data collection instrument that I employed in the study was observation. One of the crucial techniques in qualitative research for gathering thorough data is observation. Given (2008), posits that in order to learn about an interesting phenomenon, observation as a data collection tool entails the systematic and intentional gathering of perceptions of the world utilising all of one's senses, primarily looking and listening. More so, contributing to the discourse Kumar (2005) opined that an observation is a methodical, planned strategy to pay attention to and observe a phenomenon as it develops in its natural context. As noted by Given (2008), during observations, we employ our sensory organs, such as the eyes and ears, to document activity. They necessitate human judgments regarding the behavior's occurrence, frequency, length, or delay. These measurements serve as the foundational information for describing naturally occurring behavior or evaluating the impact of our independent variable. They must therefore, be collected carefully. These kinds of observations (decisions about whether a certain

activity has occurred or not) are by their very nature more subjective than other methods of gathering data. Because judgments are dependent on perceptions, different persons will have different perceptions of the same environmental occurrence.

Observations play a key role in qualitative research, like the one being conducted in this study, in terms of providing information to assist other methodologies. The two main methods of behavior observation are participant observation and nonparticipant observation (Leavy, 2017). The type of observation adopted for this study was participant observation, which aims to establish a deep and intimate knowledge of a certain group of people and their behaviors by intensive interaction with people in their cultural setting, typically over a long period of time (Given, 2008; Leavy, 2017). There are five forms of participant observation: Non-Participatory, Passive, Moderate, Active, and Complete Participation (Nasir & Aikomo, 2020). To enable close interaction between the researcher and other participants in the experiment, I adopted complete participant observation. The complete participant observation was used during workshops that included script development sessions, auditions, rehearsals, the main performance and the post-performance period with the researcher playing a crucial role as a facilitator and artistic director.

Data collection procedure

The researcher must have access to the location of data collection and the people from whom information should be obtained as part of the study process. Therefore, he or she would need to establish the required connections to ensure

admission into the site is unhindered or at most minimally interfered with. Considering that the University of Cape Coast has systems in place for such operations as an institution, before approaching the research location, I had to get permission from the Institutional Review Board (RIB), which is in charge of ethical clearance.

Many times, researchers depend on "gatekeepers" from a community or website to provide them with identifiable data. In this context, the term "gatekeeper" refers to a person or group of people in a community who have clout and who might offer advice to researchers or help them locate people who might be able to make it easier for study locations to be opened up. In other situations, self-seeking gatekeepers may be able to act as roadblocks for researchers if they are marginalised and must be included in the first admittance into the community or study site. If one does not make the appropriate decisions about whom to contact and who not to contact, powers may be at play. This resonates well with Creswell's (2012) postulation that in order to conduct qualitative research, you frequently need permission from a variety of people and places. It might be useful for you to identify and use a gatekeeper due to the in-depth nature of lengthy and many interviews with participants. A gatekeeper is a person who works at a location either in an official capacity or in an unofficial one. They offer access to the site, aid in locating subjects for studies, and help researchers find people.

In my case, however, after obtaining a letter from the University of Cape Coast, where I study. I addressed the letter to the head of CAPEDEAF/BLIND. I explained to him the goals of my research and asked if I may utilise his students

who are visually impaired and staff (both teaching and non-teaching) for the project. The head then pointed me in the direction of the instructor who was in charge of the visually impaired students, where I introduced myself and told them about my study's goals. The participants were informed of the goal of the study and how important it was for them to contribute their fair share by taking part in a theatre production and agreeing to participate in interviews for data collection. Concerning privacy, I promised participants that I would only utilise the information they shared with me for the study.

Four field research assistants whom I trained in three days were also hired by me to assist with data collection and the theatre workshops. I talked to them about the study's goals and the various tools we would use to collect data. Field research assistants had a lengthy conversation on the interview guide. The research assistants were imbued with the ethical principles and considerations in the research. These research assistants were final-year theatre studies students at the Department of Theatre and Film Studies, University of Cape Coast. They were made up of two males and two females. Their area of specialisation includes directing, playwriting, acting, and technical theatre. They assisted the researcher in the theatre workshop and interviews. A video camera and voice recorder (two in number) were used for the current study. After this preparation, the fieldwork commenced.

Fieldwork

Accessing the study area gave me the opportunity to observe all required procedures and to ask participants for their consent to record the interview once

more. One of the key methods used to gather data was in-depth interviews since they allowed the researcher to examine participants' accounts of their own lived experiences regarding the factors posing as barriers or obstacles to their integration into mainstream theatre productions. When researchers wish to delve into the personal histories, viewpoints, and experiences of participants, especially when delicate subjects are involved, they frequently utilise in-depth interviews to encourage individuals to participate and give a vivid depiction of their experiences. The participants were given the opportunity, time, and ease to rebuild their experiences in their social spaces through the use of in-depth interviews, and they were also given the possibility to express their reality in their own words. I used a semi-structured interview guide to carry out the in-depth interviews. This kind of interview outline was employed since it gave me the freedom, to begin with, a general set of questions or topics to be discussed and allowed me to veer off-topic and explore connected topics as needed. As noted by Cramer (2018), one of the constraints of semi-structured interviews is how difficult it is for the researcher to maintain control over the discourse because participants may hijack it. As a result, when I noticed that the participants were veering off-topic, I pulled them back on topic.

With regard to the theatre workshop, I immersed myself in the theatre environment throughout the whole production process, from script development to the post-performance period. In the course of the rehearsals, I observed how the visually impaired students behaved and interacted. I Examine how visually challenged students interacted with the theatre setting, their interactions with

others, their feelings toward inclusivity, and other difficulties they experienced. Both during and after each observation session, I collected thorough field notes. I kept track of my encounters, talks, nonverbal signs, and any notable occurrences. I made notes of my ideas, observations, and new subjects. I used reflexive methods to identify and deal with my own prejudices, presumptions, and biases.

Data processing and analysis

This study engaged the thematic analysis technique in processing data. Thematic analysis is a technique for assessing qualitative data in the social and behavioral sciences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It entails spotting trends, themes, or subjects in data, whether written text, observational data, or interview transcripts, and classifying them into informative categories (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Gaining a thorough grasp of the experiences, viewpoints, and meanings that the data communicates is the aim of thematic analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Braun and Clarke (2013) reveal that the thematic analysis approach was initially created to analyse data in psychology, but over the past ten years, it has been adopted by a number of scholars to analyse data in other fields as well, becoming one of the more rigorous approaches to analyse qualitative data. Thematic analysis was used in the study because it is a versatile method that can be used with a variety of research questions and data kinds, making it an effective tool for examining intricate and subjective experiences

The thematic analysis was used in analysing data in the current study. In doing this I immersed myself in the data and familiarise myself with it as the initial step in the thematic analysis process. In order to fully immerse oneself in the

material and become familiar with its patterns and significance, it is necessary to read and reread transcripts often (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2013). I now started to collect notes and observed concepts for coding. This starts the correct coding process. I went over the information I had obtained from participants any time I interviewed them and checked it against the information from previous interviews to make sure it was accurate. I then started to type the information verbatim. As observed by Braun and Clarke (2006), transcription while being tedious, time-consuming, and occasionally monotonous, is considered a pleasant way to get acquainted with the data.

Instead of recording articulated sound, the transcription process is seen to be an interpretive one that creates meaning (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault., 2016). All of the interruptions that were captured during the interview and observation process, including coughs, laughter, sighs, pauses, and other noises, were noted during the transcription procedure of the current study. I also looked for equivocal responses and noted the ones that were clearly stated. I typically spent three to four hours transcribing each interview session. The way the interviewees responded to the interview questions and the probing inquiries that were raised during the interview process led to the time variation.

After the transcription, in order to verify the accuracy of the information, I took a lot of time getting acquainted with it and evaluating the audio and video recordings, including details of the activities, interactions, behaviors, and any other relevant information observed during the workshop and the transcript. The material gathered was condensed in accordance with the goals of the current study in order

to produce substantial, intriguing, and high-quality results that support those goals. I abandoned my preconceived notions throughout all of these steps and approached the data with an open mind, searching for the transcripts' most important themes. It was simple to determine what was relevant in the transcripts because I highlighted key parts using different colors. I started to analyse, interpret, and extrapolate meaning from the transcripts while also underlining the key points. After reading the data, becoming comfortable with it, and identifying its key concepts, I started the coding step. Making the initial list of concepts and noteworthy topics covered by the data was a part of this phase. The coding was carried out to find problems and crucial ideas that were recorded in the data. I then created the coding procedure that helped create the initial codes.

For each participant, I created a profile and put them in groups based on their demographics. Data extracts that showed the codes were compared to the identified codes. Coding was seen in the current study as an ongoing procedure that continued throughout the whole data analysis process. In the data, I started looking for trends. This process involved assembling all of the significant data extracts with codes into the determined themes. After sorting the various codes into probable themes. I thought about how to combine codes to create broad themes in this way. After that, I started investigating the relationships between codes and categories to create many tiers of themes.

I improved the produced themes and sub-themes after reviewing the themes. Similar topics were integrated, and occasionally, bigger ideas were condensed into separate themes. Then, I made an effort to understand the key concepts and their

implications on the data. Going forward, I ensured that the information inside the controlling ideas was consistent and understandable, and drew clear distinctions across the suggested themes. I produced the topics for final improvement. To make the themes aligned with the data and the research questions, I went back over the data that had been compiled for each theme and organised the themes logically. Each topic had a title that gave the reader a clear idea of what the theme was about. For instance, five key topics came to light in the current study as a result of the data for research question one. I started writing the research report in the final stage, after developing completely developed concepts. Most of the data were organised and presented in a narrative format and as a pictorial presentation (figures) in the current study, with some interpretations that were connected to the text.

Data management

The processes and procedures used to organise, store, preserve, and share research data in a way that maintains its correctness, accessibility, and security are referred to as data management in research (Crosas, 2018). Good data management is essential to the accomplishment of research initiatives because it ensures that the information gathered is of high quality, can be applied to additional studies, and complies with ethical and regulatory guidelines. Regarding data management, I kept all field notebooks, cameras, and recording equipment secured to prevent unauthorised access to the data. This was done by Storing the items in a locked safe when not in use. Also, unique usernames and passwords for digital recording equipment and restricted access to authorised users were assigned. Encryption on digital devices, such as the voice recorders, to protect the stored data was enabled.

Strong passwords for digital equipment were set and would be changed regularly. Secured password management practices, such as storing passwords in encrypted form was used. Back up of the data from field notebooks, cameras, and recording equipment to cloud platform would be backed up regularly. There was a data recovery plan put in place in case of accidental data loss or equipment failure. All softcopy data were encrypted using strong encryption algorithms. This ensures that even if unauthorised access occurs, the data will remain protected and unusable.

Softcopy data was stored on cloud storage platforms that employed robust security measures. There would be a regular backup system for softcopy data to prevent loss due to hardware failures, data corruption, or accidental deletion. Backups were stored in a secured location separate from the primary storage to mitigate the risk of data loss. Hardcopy data were stored in a locked cabinet with limited access and restricted entry. A detailed inventory of all hardcopy data, including information about the contents, location, and storage duration was maintained. Hardcopy data were stored in appropriate conditions to protect them from environmental factors like humidity, temperature fluctuations, and direct sunlight.

Again, I made sure that all ethical and legal standards are followed, including getting study participants' informed consent, maintaining confidentiality and privacy, and abiding by data protection laws. Choosing appropriate data formats and metadata standards, employing secure and trustworthy storage and backup solutions, and adopting data security measures to avoid unauthorised access, data breaches, or data loss were other crucial factors I took into account.

Additionally, I took steps to protect the security and privacy of the data I collect by employing secure cloud-based storage options, password-protecting files, and encrypting data to prevent unauthorised access.

Reflexivity

A crucial aspect of qualitative research is reflexivity. It is understood to be the consciousness of the impact the researcher has on the population or subject under study (Dodgson, 2019). This implies that in order to safeguard the validity and dependability of the research findings, the researcher must address his or her prejudices. I was careful and deliberate not to let my prior knowledge, experiences, and orientations in theatre studies influence the data collection process of the study since I am a theatre facilitator, and educator who has worked with most theatre institutions in Ghana and directed over 60 plays both within and outside the University of Cape Coast and have acted in over 70 plays. I set aside my opinions, convictions, and knowledge that might have impacted the current study in order to hear the participants' perceptive and thought-provoking suggestions.

Trustworthiness of the study

The credibility and dependability of a study's findings are referred to as its trustworthiness in research. It describes how much the general public and the scientific community may trust a study's conclusions to be accurate, trustworthy, and dependable. It is difficult to evaluate the correctness of qualitative findings. To increase the credibility of qualitative research findings, there are a number of possible procedures and standards that can be applied. Validity, which refers to the precision and sincerity of the findings and the degree to which they accurately

reflect the reality being investigated, is one of several elements that contribute to the credibility of the research. Reliability is another term for consistency, stability, and the degree to which the outcomes would remain the same if the study were repeated (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The degree to which the outcomes are devoid of individual prejudices or previous assumptions is referred to as objectivity. Transparency refers to the degree to which the methodology and findings of a study are clearly and accurately described, allowing others to examine and confirm the findings. Replicability refers to the capacity of others to repeat the study and receive similar results (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Guba, 1981).

Daniel (2019) and Koch (2006) are of the opinion that when a researcher maintains an audit trail, the validity of their research is strengthened. In order to create a credible account of the investigation for the current study, I kept both an audit trail and a journal. The journal helped me to recognise and report on how various areas of the research might have been impacted by subjectivity and to recognise my own prejudices prior to, throughout, and after the study. Due to the audit trail, it was feasible to review the study's methods and confirm the study's legitimacy using a thorough record of the whole research process. The audit trail can be one of the most crucial techniques for ensuring trustworthiness since it organises the data on purpose so that someone outside the study may analyse the data and procedures and form an unbiased judgment on the veracity and consistency of the findings.

Credibility

In terms of research, validity and plausibility of a study's findings are referred to as credibility. It refers to the degree to which both the scientific community and the general public can regard a study's conclusions as reliable and accurate. Validity, dependability, objectivity, and transparency are a few key qualities of high-quality research that are frequently closely tied to credibility. Researchers should follow strict standards and regulations, openly and publicly report their techniques, and increase the credibility of their work. Peers should also examine and validate research, and numerous studies should be carried out to create a strong body of evidence. Credible research findings are crucial because they support the development of public confidence in the scientific endeavor and serve as the foundation for decision-making based on evidence in a variety of contexts. A study with high credibility is more likely to be regarded seriously by specialists in the field and to have a bigger influence on knowledge expansion (Rolfe, 2006). The implication from Rolfe's illumination is that a researcher has strong internal validity when they are able to explain the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in addition to having accurate measures of those variables.

The researcher's skill and diligence determine how credible a study is to be considered in a qualitative study as submitted by Patton (2014). Patton's submission reinforces the assumption that because there could be several realities, therefore, the validity of qualitative research may not extend beyond the researcher. In the current study, credibility was attained in a number of ways. To begin with, I used proven qualitative techniques, such as interviews and observation, which are at the

heart of most qualitative research to conduct the study. More so, I was successful in developing a rapport based on trust with the participants. I gave everyone I approached for the study the chance to decline to participate. I told the interviewees that there would be complete secrecy maintained and that they were free to express themselves freely because there were no right or wrong responses even before the interviews started. Before the interviews started, I also made it plain to the participants that they might stop participating in the study at any time and did not have to give me a reason why.

My supervisors and I frequently met for debriefings. I told them what I had discovered. I first provided the first interview transcript to my supervisors for their feedback. They examined my analysis and posed inquiries that compelled me to go even further into my coding and interpretations. I asked my peers to review my research as well. I kept a notebook (journal) where I wrote down my ideas, observations, and thoughts about the study's subjects, including the interviewees. The current study's trustworthiness, in my opinion, is enhanced by the provision of detailed descriptions. Last but not least, I contrasted my findings with earlier research to determine how closely my study's findings match those of other, related studies.

Transferability

Only when new circumstances outside of the original study environment can research findings be applied or generalised. When it comes to how broadly conclusions may be applied, transferability is comparable to external validity (Guba, 1981). Contributing to the discourse Maxwell (2021) affirms that

generalisability refers to how broadly the findings of a study can be used or generalised to groups, environments, or situations other than the particular sample or population under research. To put it another way, it is the capacity to draw conclusions about a broader population from the results of a smaller sample.

Guba (1981), and Guba and Lincoln (1989), explain that the ability of the findings to be generalised or applied to different situations or contexts is referred to as transferability in qualitative research. Rich fieldwork descriptions, a comprehensive report, and a wealth of data are all necessary for transferability. This serves two purposes: first, it validates the researcher's account and shows its credibility; second, it provides the one perusing the work with the chance to determine or evaluate if the findings are applicable in various contexts (Konradsen, Kirkevoid, & Olson, 2013; Slevin, & Sines, 1999).

As far as this study is concerned, I went into great detail about the setting in which my study was done. As an illustration, I have given details regarding the study's scope, the sample's composition, the number of participants, the data collection techniques employed, the quantity and length of participant interviews, the time span of the interviews and workshops, information on the study area and other pertinent information. To determine the degree to which the same outcomes can be attained, another researcher can employ the same techniques I employed in a different environment.

Dependability

Dependability is often considered of being the stability and consistency of a study's findings. It indicates to how similar a study's results would be if it were

conducted again under similar circumstances. In other words, it serves as a gauge for the accuracy of the findings. It emphasises how crucial it is for the researcher to take into consideration or adequately describe the shifting contexts and situations that are essential to the consistency of the research result ((Bryman & Bell, 2007)

According to Guba (1981), and Guba and Lincoln (1989), a study's dependability is affected by a number of variables, including the research design and the methods and procedures employed. Additionally, the data collection techniques, such as experimentation, observation, or self-report, might affect how reliable the findings are. More so, the dependability of the results might be impacted by the precision and dependability of the tools employed to measure the variables. Additionally, the techniques employed to examine the data, such as statistical tests or qualitative techniques, can affect how reliable the findings are (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Seale, 1999). With regard to the current study, recordings (audio and video) of the interviews and workshops I conducted on tape, the transcripts of those interviews, any communications with participants, were all retained. These are kept in a safe location in accordance with ethical standards.

I took steps to keep all field notebooks, camera, and recording equipment secured to prevent unauthorised access to the data. Again, I made sure that all ethical and legal standards are followed, including getting study participants' informed consent, maintaining confidentiality and privacy, and abiding by data protection laws. Choosing appropriate data formats and metadata standards, employing secure and trustworthy storage and backup solutions, and adopting data security measures to avoid unauthorised access, data breaches, or data loss were

other crucial factors I took into account. Additionally, I took steps to protect the security and privacy of the data I collected by employing secure cloud-based storage options, password-protecting files, and encrypting data to prevent unauthorised access.

Confirmability

Generally, confirmability measures how easily the results of the study may be verified or corroborated by other sources. It is comparable to objectivity, that is, the degree to which a researcher is conscious of or takes into account individual subjectivity or bias, in other words, the level to which the findings accurately represent the participant experiences (Shenton, 2004). Confirmability can be improved through a number of methods. In carrying out this study, I made an effort to maintain my objectivity. To lessen my own prejudice or bias, I used two data collection techniques, as was previously indicated. This chapter also explains why I chose interpretivism and a qualitative approach for the current study as opposed to alternative approaches. I have given a thorough explanation of the methods I used in the current chapter. In the current chapter, I have also discussed the methods used to gather and analyse the data for the study.

Ethical considerations

It is crucial to adequately handle ethical considerations in research, especially when doing a qualitative study. This is due to the fact that qualitative research frequently looks into the personal and professional viewpoints and difficulties of participants (Bryman, 2016; Mills & Morton, 2016). I had to conduct the research in a way that strictly followed ethical guidelines as a result. This was

done to reduce the process's possible ethical risks. Due to the fact that a researcher basically pries into the participants' private life and makes them public, ethical considerations in social research are significant. Therefore, I had to take the required steps as the researcher to make sure that the participants' integrity would not be compromised by their involvement in this study. Generally, it is essential that a researcher learn how to foresee potential outcomes of their work and come up with strategies for handling them (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Webster, Lewis, & Brown, 2014). Since I considered all of them to be crucial, I submitted my research as well as myself for institutional review. The Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Cape Coast granted me ethical approval for my study.

Before starting the study, I explained the aim, focus, methods used to gather data, and scope of the study to the participants (the visually impaired students, teaching and non-teaching staff). They were also given an explanation of their roles in the process. Prior to their involvement in the study, their consent was requested. Once more, I asked the participants for their consent to record the interview sessions and the workshop sessions, and they gave it. I also let them know that all participants would maintain their identities and that the results would be maintained in strict confidentiality. Every task I carried out during the fieldwork had the interests, requirements, and worries of the participants at its core. I had to be careful not to take advantage of the participants' incapacity or manipulate their responses, as much as I needed them. I made an effort to treat my participants with the same level of respect that was expected of me. Making sure that participants' identities were kept private was another crucial rule.

I informed the participants that none of the information they submitted could be used to identify them because I employed pseudonyms to protect their identity and confidentiality. However, I explained to the participants that the pictures that will be captured during rehearsals and the main performance hold great value in illustrating and supporting the research findings. They were assured that the pictures will be used exclusively for academic and research purposes. They were assured that their confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly upheld. I explained to them that any pictures used in the research will be anonymised and carefully selected to ensure that no identifying information is disclosed. Again, they were made to understand that their name or any other personal details will not be associated with the images, and they will be used solely to provide visual representation and support for the research outcomes. Participants were informed that the pictures may be used in research publications, presentations, or reports. However, they were assured that any materials published or shared will be done so in a way that upholds confidentiality and protects the privacy of all participants. Assurance was given to them that the research team will adhere to all applicable data protection regulations and guidelines to safeguard their personal information and ensure compliance with ethical standards. Therefore, before proceeding they were made aware that by participating in the inclusive theatre performance, they had already provided their consent for the use of pictures for research purposes.

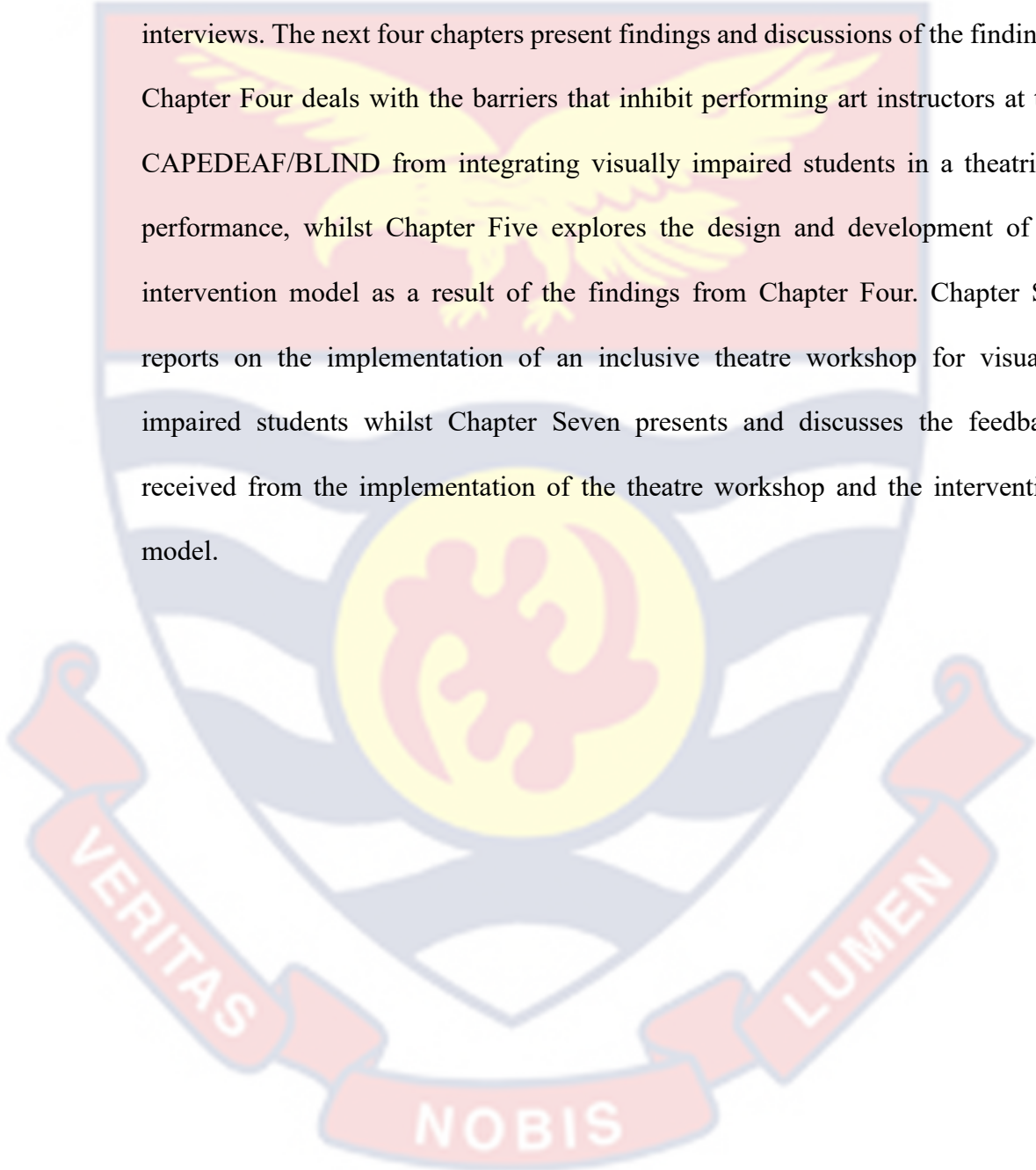
The interviews and workshops were handled in a light-hearted manner in an effort to make the participants feel at ease and unafraid, even though it can be challenging to tell whether someone has gotten emotionally or psychologically

damaged. I respected their sovereignty by allowing them to completely express themselves and refraining from adding my own thoughts. The language used with people with visual impairments must be carefully chosen to prevent participants from suffering emotional injury or damage. This is due to the fact that some people with impairments occasionally find it challenging to understand specific concerns. As a result, I made sure that participants understood what they were getting into by outlining the consequences of their involvement during the interviews and the workshop sessions. I made sure that no study participants were placed in a situation where their participation could put them in danger of harm to their physical or mental health as a result. In fact, despite the fact that the interviews and workshops were held months ago, I have remained in contact with every participant. I basically need to stay in touch with them because of the nature of the interactions we had during the interviews and workshop sessions and the relationship we have built since then. My exploration of theatre and disability does not end with this study.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the measures I took to start this study project. This chapter covered the research techniques used to complete this study. The adoption of a qualitative research approach to the study was influenced by the interpretive philosophical paradigm that supported the investigation. The staff of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind, both teaching and non-teaching, visually impaired pupils and the audience for the main performance made up the study's population. The sampling technique was purposive. To calculate a sample size, the idea of data saturation was used. The total number of participants in the study was

thirty-one (31) in number. The instruments utilised to gather data included thorough semi-structured interviews and complete participant observations. Thematic analysis technique was used to transcribe, code, and analyse the data from the interviews. The next four chapters present findings and discussions of the findings. Chapter Four deals with the barriers that inhibit performing art instructors at the CAPEDEAF/BLIND from integrating visually impaired students in a theatrical performance, whilst Chapter Five explores the design and development of an intervention model as a result of the findings from Chapter Four. Chapter Six reports on the implementation of an inclusive theatre workshop for visually impaired students whilst Chapter Seven presents and discusses the feedback received from the implementation of the theatre workshop and the intervention model.



CHAPTER FOUR

BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE THEATRE

Introduction

The data collected on the impediments that hinder instructors of performing arts in CAPEDEAF/BLIND from integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre are presented and discussed in this chapter. Additionally, this chapter looks into the different categories of visual impairment present in the school and their causes. It also explores the nature of the school's performing arts initiatives. The chapter concludes with an overview of the key themes that arose from the discussion.

General Background and Preliminary findings

Six (6) participants were interviewed for their opinions on the impediments that hinder instructors of performing art in CAPEDEAF/BLIND from integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre. These participants were the headmaster, the head of the blind unit at the school, the performing arts instructor and his assistants, and a caregiver. The study sought to find out the years of experience of participants as far as teaching and handling of visually impaired students are concerned. This is crucial because years of experience can improve a performing arts instructor's teaching skills and a caregiver's ability to care for them. In the current study, participant A revealed that he has been teaching performing arts since 1984, whereas Participant B intimated that he has been a teacher for 33 years, and out of the 33 years it was only from 2005 that he started teaching children with visual impairment. Additionally, Participant C admitted that he has been interacting with visually impaired students as a teacher for over 18 years. Another

Participant (D) intimated that he has been teaching performing arts for over 20 years. The two other participants E and F had 15 years and two years of experience in dealing with visually impaired students respectively. This shows that the years of experience of participants (for this segment) range from 2 years to 39 years.

Consequently, one can posit that educators and instructors who specialise in performing arts and have a lot of teaching experience are frequently better equipped to modify their teaching strategies to meet the demands of blind students. To meet the particular needs of these pupils, it is believed that instructors with more years of experience may develop a larger range of instructional tactics and methods. What this means is that seasoned teachers could be more familiar with the accessibility devices and technology that can be utilised to support visually impaired students' involvement of the performing arts. This can apply to assistive technology such as braille displays, screen readers, and other similar gadgets. The argument can also be made that experienced performing arts instructors may have a deeper comprehension of blind culture and the difficulties visually impaired pupils could encounter when learning performing arts. This may entail a better knowledge of the significance of non-visual cues as well as the significance of inclusive practices. When working with visually impaired students, instructors with years of experience may have improved their tolerance and understanding. They could be better equipped to comprehend the difficulties these children experience and give them the support and inspiration they require to succeed.

However, it is worth mentioning that even though having more experience can improve a performing arts instructor's abilities and skills in handling visually

impaired students. It is crucial to remember, though, that not all experienced instructors are equally productive. The instructor's level of training, area of expertise, and capacity for inspiring and connecting with students all have a role in the instruction's quality. It is, therefore, off the back of this, that the educational background of the participants becomes significant in this current study. The educational qualification of the participants ranges from the secondary school level to the postgraduate level. Some of them had pursued degree courses in special education and are teachers for children with visual impairment (TVI). It follows that instructors who have received specific training in instructing performing arts to visually impaired pupils may be better prepared to address the particular needs of this group. This instruction might cover braille, tactile methods, and other resources and approaches for working with visually impaired students.

Additionally, instructors who have backgrounds in special education might have a deeper knowledge of the difficulties and opportunities that come with instructing blind students. They may be able to deliver more effective instruction that is adaptable to the needs of blind pupils as a result of their greater expertise. Interestingly, the ability to work with other experts who assist visually impaired pupils, such as orientation and mobility specialists or vision rehabilitation therapists, may be enhanced by an instructor's educational background in an area like special education. Moreover, with specific education and training, performing arts instructors may become more inventive in their methods of instruction, coming up with fresh approaches to excite and motivate their visually impaired students. However, it must be noted here that even though a performing arts instructor's

educational background can have a significant impact on how well they are able to train visually impaired students in the performing arts, it is crucial to observe that additional elements like experience, a love for teaching, continued professional development and a dedication to student-centered learning are all crucial.

The study, again, sought to find out the types or categories of visual impairment at CAPEDEAF/BLIND. This is essential because it aids in tailoring casting strategies to meet the specific needs of students with different visual impairments. Additionally, this information is vital for the provision of appropriate assistive technologies as far as the inclusive theatre for visually impaired students are concerned. It is important to note that all six participants interviewed stated that there are two main categories of visual impairment at the school. These two categories as revealed by the participants were total blindness and low vision. This revelation is consistent with the contributions made to the discourse on visual impairment by Burton et al. (2021), who explain that there are two primary types of visual impairment: low vision and blindness. However, it should be pointed out that some of the participants acknowledged that there are four basic categories of visual impairment in general which reinforce the position of the International Classification of Diseases Revision 10 ([ICD-10] WHO, 2016) which subsumes visual impairment into four main categories. A participant shared his thought:

Unfortunately, if you go to advanced countries. Before they admit then they are able to do a thorough assessment to categorise them as total, moderate, severe and all that and mild so that teaching can be done appropriately, and then the placement options, but in Ghana for that matter in our

school, we don't have those, assessment so when they come, we only admit them, all of them into the same classroom. So, in that same classroom, we have all the categories there. We have the low vision, we have the total and then the other categories, so we couldn't do any assessment to separate them, yes (Participant C).

Contributing to the discussion on the categories of visually impaired students in the school another participant added:

We have two categories of blind students here. The total blind and the low vision. The total number of blind students are more than the low vision students. Interestingly, the low-vision students always try to help their total blind colleagues. So, sometimes they try to help the totally blind students by holding them and guiding them when walking. So, when you come here the blind students use white cane. This helps them to navigate their way without any hindrance. The white cane is a special cane designed to assist the blind students in their movement (Participant A).

The category of visual impairment at the school means that visual features such as facial expressions, body language, and stage sets which are key components of performing arts, may not be entirely accessible to students with low vision or total blindness. As a result, students who are totally blind or have impaired vision may rely more on their other senses, such as hearing, touch, and smell, to comprehend and interpret performing arts. To ensure that visually impaired students can understand the performance, it might be necessary to use specialised techniques and methods that include the use of auditory descriptions, tactile elements, and other sensory aids. Additionally, students with low vision or total blindness might

need specialised instruction to fully participate in the performing arts. This can entail giving them braille training, audio description, or other assistive technologies that can help them comprehend and perform the art form. There may be other opportunities for students with low vision or total blindness to work with other students or performers, particularly in inclusive performances. Students with low vision and total blindness may require additional support during performances, such as accessible seating and lighting, as well as measures to ensure their safety on stage.

The study furthermore, sought to find out the causes of visual impairment as far as the visually impaired students are concerned. It was revealed that majority of the visually impaired students at the school suffered from congenital visual impairment.

We have a clinic here so when the blind students come, we take them to the clinic and the doctor will examine them and let us know whether they are totally blind or low vision. Sometime they give them medication to help them better their condition. It is through such examination that we get to know that most of them were born with it. Only few got blind as a result of playing or accident (Participant E).

This revelation is in tandem with the intimation made by Naipal and Rampersad, (2018) that the cause of visual impairment are congenital visual impairments and adventitious visual impairments. Contributing to the discussion another participant opined:

Even though I have not been here for long, what I gather from my colleagues is that some of these blind students are born with the blindness. I once saw a beautiful girl and I

asked her what happened to her eye and she told me she was born with it and that when her mother was given birth to her birth fluid spilled into her eyes. I was so sad that day because she was so beautiful (Participant F).

The study additionally, sought to find out the nature of performing arts activities at the school. The study revealed that music and dance were the only performing arts activities in the school:

Firstly, we started with the deaf students because the blind unit was established later. Since we are in Ghana and Ghanaians, we mostly do Ghanaian dances. At least we can do a dance each from every region. Our biggest challenge was the Central region because most of the dances in central region are accompanied by songs. And since they are deaf how can they sing the song. We also do dances from French-speaking countries because they like the 'jembe' dance. We can do at least four 'jembe' dances. We can dance 'dambatakai', we can dance 'Bambaya'. The blind students usually do the drumming and singing whilst the deaf students do the dancing (Participant A).

Another participant mentioned that the majority of the pupils participate in music and dance at their school:

Mostly, we are involved in music and dance and almost everybody is part of it then the. Students also sometimes try to register to go outside to do other performances. For example, we have Morgan who went for talented kids in Season 8. He became third which was something that we all celebrated. And then our students also take part in drumming with the cultural troupe for the deaf to dance (Participant B)

One may argue that this could have both beneficial and bad effects if a special school for the deaf and blind provided solely music and dance as performing arts activities. On the plus side, a person with sensory disorders may benefit greatly from the stimulation and development of their other senses through music and dance. For instance, music can transmit vibrations that the deaf can feel and this can be used as a means to interact with them (deaf). Contrarily, dancing can enhance spatial awareness, coordination, and balance. Additionally, dancing and listening to music can be pleasurable and emotionally gratifying pursuits that foster individuality, creativity, and social interaction. Offering simply dance and music as performing arts activities, nevertheless, can have certain drawbacks. Exposure to a variety of performing arts, such as theatre, poetry, storytelling, or mime, may be beneficial for students with visual impairment because they may have a wide range of interests, talents, and abilities. A performing arts education that is solely focused on music and dance could fall short of meeting the different learning needs and preferences of the pupils.

The misconceptions about the limitations of visually impaired persons may be reinforced if only music and dance are emphasised, which can be detrimental to their prospects for growth and self-esteem. Regardless of students' sensory impairments, it is critical for special schools to embrace variety and offer them chances to explore and develop their unique skills and interests. Therefore, even though performing arts activities like music and dance can be beneficial and successful for visually impaired students, it is crucial to provide a wide variety of performing arts options to meet their specific requirements and interests. Their

academic performance, personal growth, and general quality of life can all be improved by receiving a comprehensive performing arts education.

It must be noted here that the students' exposure to various kinds of expression and self-actualisation may be limited in the absence of theatrical (drama) activities. Drama is a sort of art that can aid people in improving their ability to communicate, use their imagination, and show empathy. Students may use it as a platform to experiment with and convey a range of personas, emotions, and circumstances. As students collaborate to design and execute a play, drama activities can also be used to encourage inclusion and socialising. This leads me to discuss the barriers or impediments that inhibit performing art instructors to integrate visually impaired students in a dramatic theatrical performance at CAPEDEAF/BLIND in the next section.

Barriers to Inclusive Theatre

In this section, I present findings on the challenges performing arts instructors face at Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind in incorporating students with visual impairments in a dramatic theatre performance. Five sub-themes were developed after taking into account the apparent similarity in some of the participants' responses, despite their differing intentions. The related themes are: Absence of trained drama instructors; financial constraints; technical limitations; attitudinal barriers; and time constraints.

Absence of Trained Drama Instructors

The aforementioned sub-theme was developed as a result of some participants' feedback that the absence of a drama instructor with professional

training makes it difficult to include visually impaired students in a dramatic theatrical production:

First, they will need an instructor, that is the first thing because we had someone who was partially blind, he completed school for the blind, and then he was teaching them to perform so we used to go to churches to perform and then, unfortunately, we lost him, he died some years back and since then we've not had any instructor. It's only the school cultural instructor who sometimes teaches them how to perform. so, the first thing is to get the instructor. Yes, if we get the instructor and he will now direct them that we need to get this, we need to get that. And then they will be able to perform (Participant B).

From another perspective a participant revealed that the lack of drama experts inhibits the school's attempt at integrating visually impaired students into a dramatic theatrical performance:

So, first, I would talk about lack of experts. We do not have the experts who would tell us what to do because what they are doing, they can even take us far.... They have the talents to showcase the hidden potential that they have but we need the experts that can tap into those talents to develop it for them. They don't have, we don't have it (Participant C).

In the opinion of another participant the school (performing art instructors) is able to integrate the deaf students in a dance-drama performances but not drama:

We don't have any trained instructor to direct drama for us. our major problem is that when we had only deaf students we tried once or twice about personal hygiene but it takes most of our time because we only meet once week so they

have to get the story. We realised that dance-drama was rather convenient than drama alone. This is because for drama you have to get interpreters to interpret to the audience. So, we saw that drama was very difficult. Also, when the blind unit was established, we have done drama once. The challenges we encountered was their coming unto stage. Somebody would have to guide them to where they will sit and also help them to sit. Those with white canes use the cane to navigate their way to where their seat is on stage. So, this is what I find a major challenge. It will slow the pace and flow of the action on stage in drama (Participant A).

Another participant also suggested that the primary issue facing the school has been the lack of a professionally educated theatrical teacher. He said that although the pupils would like to participate in drama, no one will be available to teach or write plays for them:

I think the absence of a professionally trained teacher to take care of drama has been our main challenge. It appears the students will enjoy drama but there is nobody to teach or write plays for us. It is only Mr. Whooper who trains the deaf students how to dance and the blind students how to drum. Doing drama will be difficult. That is why we have not attempted to do it (Participant D).

Moreover, a participant revealed that he has no training in drama, and therefore, will not even try to put the deaf students on stage let alone the visually impaired students:

It is very difficult to get somebody to help in training the children to do drama. I myself I have no knowledge in drama so I will not even try let alone use the blind students. I am sure that if we get somebody who can direct the student will

enjoy drama. Ever since I joined this school, I have not seen the student doing drama. This is why GES has to post people from drama schools to our place to help us train our students in drama. The students are very good, especially the deaf ones. They can do many dances in Ghana and I am sure they can do drama too if we get somebody to help us (Participant E).

From the data presented above, it is clear that the absence of a professionally trained drama instructor contributes to the school's inability to put visually impaired students on stage in a dramatic performance. The next barrier is financial constraints.

Financial Constraints

Financial constraints were considered by all the participants for the study as another major impediment inhibiting the integration of visually impaired students into dramatic theatrical performance. A participant averred:

Financial challenge is a major challenge in this case. I am not into drama though but I have seen a lot of people especially uncle Ebo who has taught and directed a lot of plays. You see drama deals with costume. Every character needs a costume but how to get the costume is money. So, with this if you can get sponsors who can help you get what you want. For instance, if you have someone playing a role of a king, you will need the full regalia. If it is a durbar, you will need all the full complement of a durbar in terms of costumes. And this is very difficult for us to purchase. What we did cannot even be classified as drama. It was just two people reading the news. So, for drama, we have not tried it before because of these problems. I even tried teaching the

blind students how to dance and sing 'Apatampa' some time back. What happened was that we had a teacher from the University of Education, Winneba who came to teach the blind students to dance and drum for his project work. And I was happy. So that motivated me to start teaching the blind students dance and drumming. Sometimes you have to hold them, especially when doing 'Apatampa' and these are some of the challenges. I always have to be part of them on stage but for drumming, they did it themselves (Participant A)

In contributing to the discussion on the issue of financial constraints, a participant is of the conviction that integrating the visually impaired students in a dramatic performance is quite expensive:

The financial, you know, everything now is money. I think putting the blind students on stage is very expensive. Currently the school does not have enough money. We do not have the expertise so we have to hire the services of professional people to come and teach our students drama and the school does not have the money. Even the dance and music that we do at times we have to fall on philanthropists to help us by this for the cultural group. Therefore because of lack of money, I think nobody is prepared to take up those risks. Sometimes the cultural instructor uses his personal stuff for the group. So that is why it is difficult for us to do drama for blind students (Participant C).

Moreover, in a related development, another participant commenting on the issue of financial constraints shared that the school currently does not have funds to engage the visually impaired students in a dramatic theatre:

Currently, our inability to put blind students on stage is as a result of money. Drama involves a lot of stuff like costumes

and other things. The school does not have money to fund these activities. I will say drama for blind people will be extremely difficult (Participant B).

Furthermore, a participant divulged that:

We need money to do this. Even the drums that we use for the cultural troupe sometimes we have to struggle to get money to repair them. We don't get money from government for such activities. We fund everything ourselves. So, adding drama to it will be difficult for us (Participant E)

From the data one realises that funding dramatic performances of visually impaired students is challenging, especially in the face of the school's limited resources, hence it being a barrier to inclusive theatre for the visually impaired in the school. The next barrier identified in the study is technical limitations.

Technical Limitations

Technical limitations such as recorders, braille, lights, props, costumes among others were considered by some of the participants as another obstacle to inclusive dramatic theatre for the visually impaired students at the school. A participant shared his thought on the matter as follows:

It is very difficult when it comes to equipment. Even in their academic life sometimes they have to record some of the lessons and use it later. So, they will need recorders even to learn their lines with regard to drama. Getting access to Braille too is challenging. However, when they record, they are able to learn faster than using braille (Participant A).

The major venue for performances and durbars, according to another participant, is the school's dining hall:

Yeah, actually, we do not have a place for performance so it is the dining hall that we are using and that place is serving as a dining hall and the same time, a chapel at the same time a program, a durbar ground. So, any time there is a program they have to remove all the tables and chairs before staging whatever they want to do. It is also one of the challenges that we are having as a group because the children are eating and you have visitors to perform you have to wait for them to finish eating before and sometimes it eats into their time (Participant C).

From another perspective a participant averred that equipment and even rehearsal venues for the school's cultural group has been one of the major challenges affecting the schools' performing arts activities:

We don't have equipment for the cultural group. Where to rehearse sometimes becomes a problem. So, we have to rehearse in the dining hall all the time. If we have to add drama to it then we have to get a better place for rehearsals because dealing with the blind students is very delicate. We will need a place that they can have their rehearsals. Drama also involves a lot of things like costumes, make-up, lights, and the background must look like a real house but we cannot get those things (Participant B).

It was also revealed by another participant that:

Equipment for drama is expensive and we cannot get them. And drama too if you don't add those things, it will not be beautiful. That is why nobody wants to it for the school (Participant D)

According to participant F, the school lacks the necessary resources to support its dramatic theatrical activities for the visually impaired students:

I think we don't have the things that will help them to do drama for the blind. Mr. Whooper has been struggling to get things for the cultural troupe. Sometimes they use his private things for the group. So I am sure if he gets these things, he can do drama for the blind.

The data shows how inadequate equipment plays a major role as one of the impediments to inclusive theatre for visually impaired students at CAPEDEAF/BLIND.

Attitudinal Barriers

To some participants, attitudinal barriers are one of the impediments inhibiting the inclusion of blind students in a dramatic theatrical performance. One participant intimated that the school has been marginalised severely with regard to their participation in external activities as far as performing art is concerned:

The manner in which the school is treated when it comes to invitations to perform at functions is very bad. Even with dance and music see how we are being treated then drama. I think they will laugh at us. This is why we don't bother to do drama. We have been performing at several functions for so many years. Sometimes we are treated with disdain, looked down upon, and marginalised because of our disability. Sometimes there will invite you to perform at a programme and two or three days to the date they will call to inform us not to come yet they will replace us with able people for the performance. We have suffered such marginalisation and discrimination for such a long time. So, we have resolved this time that we will not honour most of the invitations that will come our way. People should not treat us as disabled people since we all sit and write the same

BECE. I have travelled with some of my deaf students to France and Amsterdam for performances. There we were appreciated and recognised well unlike here in Ghana (Participant A).

One participant shared his realisation that there are still those who mistake disability for inability:

We realise that people still think disability is inability. Because they cannot see or they cannot hear properly they cannot perform but that is not the issue. This has been a challenge for us. So, it is up to the school to now to project them to the outside world. This thing that what they are doing they will be able to go far. So we took it upon ourselves that is why we form the cultural troupe to let them go out and sell the school. So anytime we had the opportunity to perform we give education to the people that oh, this are drummers with visually impaired people who are playing so if you have children that you are still hiding in your various houses, please bring them to the school. For all you know people in Cape Coast they don't even know that the school is even here. So, we go to churches especially when the form three students are about to write their BECE. We take them out to churches and then we also give them sensitisation about this kind of services that we have here to be able to project them (Participant C).

Moreover, another participant intimated that sometimes even teachers at the school fall foul of this issue:

People usually sympathise with the blind, even you have teachers who sympathise with them instead of empathising with them. So, it is constant education, then to advocate for people who, the staff on campus, the students on campus;

here we have both the deaf and the blind; you see, sometimes the blind will be walking and you will see the deaf student will try to assist. so, if there should be constant education to the school community parents during the PTA's too, we educate parents I think we will go a long way to eradicate; if not we bring it to the barest minimum about stereotyping. But it is usually not the best because what you think they may not be able to do they may even do it better. So, we have to try to bring that one to the barest minimum (Participant B).

Contributing to the conversation on attitudinal barriers a participant indicated that:

I think if they do the drama and it does not go well people will laugh at them and that will discourage them from doing other things (Participant E).

Time Constraint

In seeking to find out some of the barriers inhibiting the inclusion of blind students in dramatic theatrical performances, it was revealed by participants that the exercise is time-consuming:

Putting the blind students on stage is time consuming. The blind students normally walk slowly because of their vision loss. What I know too is that in drama we have to move fast and the thing flow. The blind student will delay the action and it may make the drama to coming out nice and may be boring (Participant D).

In the opinion of another participant rehearsals really take a lot of time and per the current school's rehearsal schedule, meeting once a week for rehearsal is inadequate:

Drama involves a lot of rehearsals which needs time to perfect. However, per the schools schedule the cultural group meets only once a week. This will make it difficult for us to do drama since they will be competing with the little time with the dancers (Participant C)

Disability will never be equated to inability if resources and effective time management are available and observed respectively, according to a participant in the discussion on time restrictions:

Resources and time, if they are able to get that resource and time and then somebody who can devote his or her time to teach them, to guide them, you will see that they will go far. And when those things are out in place, they are able to get all those resources, there is nothing like disability (Participant B).

A participant added that it takes time to work with blind students. For this reason, they are designed to play just the drums rather than dance:

Dealing with the blind students takes time because they can't see. So, if you want to do drama it will take time. That is why they don't dance but we make them play the drums. It is only the low vision students who sometimes join the dance group (Participant E).

Furthermore, Participant A disclosed that there is little time allotted for dancing rehearsals. It will therefore be challenging to provide drama for the students who are visually impaired:

The time we rehearse for the dance is only Tuesdays and it is for only two hours. If we have a programme then we add some days to it. But doing drama for the blind will take a lot of our time. They are a bit slow when it comes to their

movement and in drama where you want them to sit, they will find it difficult locating the place. All these take time but we don't have that time that is why we don't go there.

So, from the data, it is apparent that time constraint plays a significant role in making it difficult for the visually impaired students at CAPEDEAF/BLIND to be integrated into a dramatic theatrical performance.

Discussion of findings

The aim of inclusive theatre is to create an environment where people with different abilities, races, genders, and social backgrounds are accepted and fairly represented. Although there have been recent breakthroughs, there are still significant barriers to inclusive theatre as indicated in chapter two of this study. As a result, scholars such as Pinder (2016), Jones (2019), Palmer (2018), McEwan and May (2017), and Koppers (2018) among others have identified some of the barriers to inclusive theatre. Similarly, participants in this study have identified some of the barriers that inhibit them from integrating visually impaired students in an inclusive dramatic theatrical performance. In all, five barriers were identified. These included absence of trained drama instructors; financial constraints; technical limitations; attitudinal barriers; and time constraints.

From the data, it is obvious that the absence of a professionally trained drama instructor was one of the major roadblocks to the school's ability to produce drama for visually impaired students. I must postulate that drama is an effective activity that can boost students' confidence, creativity, empathy, and communication abilities. To engage visually impaired pupils in dramatic theatre performance, however, calls for a different strategy than engaging sighted ones. A

theatre (drama) instructor who has received professional training and has worked with visually impaired pupils can provide specialised knowledge and abilities to successfully engage visually impaired pupils in theatre performance.

My argument is grounded on the assumption that without a professionally trained performing arts instructor, special schools may struggle to give visually impaired students a quality dramatic theatrical experience. Because of this, it is possible that these pupils would not profit from theatrical experiences in the same ways as their sighted counterparts do. Moreso, a qualified drama instructor can also contribute to creating a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for visually impaired pupils.

Absence of professionally trained drama instructor as a barrier to inclusive theatre identified in the current study is affirmed by Kupperts (2018), McEwan and May (2017), Palmer (2018), and Radosavljevic (2015). These scholars observed that the absence of training and expertise among theatre practitioners may be a barrier to inclusive theatre. They observed that it is probable that a large number of theatre professionals lack experience working with people with disabilities or are unaware of the particular needs of some groups. This may lead to unintentional exclusion or prejudice, missed opportunity to make theatre more inclusive, or both. Ultimately, the school's ability to offer theatre (drama) activities to visually impaired pupils is seriously hindered by the absence of a professionally trained drama instructor. It is crucial for the school (CAPEDEAF/BLIND) to place a high priority on finding, training and educating theatre (drama) instructors who have the expertise and abilities to instruct visually impaired children in drama.

The current study shows that the absence of a qualified drama instructor at the school is deeply rooted in the social model of disability. Consequently, the Ghana Disability Act (Act 715) of 2006 and the Ghana statistical Service's (2014) notions and iterations of disabilities result from a person's impairment rather than societal responses. However, the lack of a qualified drama instructor demonstrates that this understanding falls short. As a result, the definition of disability in Ghana's Disability Act (Act 715) and the Ghana statistical Service's (2014) is based on a medical understanding, which places less focus on societal actors (the school) to provide the necessary intervention and support for students with visual impairments (Hosking, 2008) in the context of dramatic theatre performance.

Again, this barrier from the standpoint of both critical disability theory (CDT) and social inclusion theory, is a structural problem that reflects broader social attitudes and practices rather than just being a problem of individual skill or expertise. The need to confront the presumptions and preconceptions that frequently support the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from the arts would be highlighted by critical disability theory. Generally, CDT would contend that a general cultural devaluing of disability in this case visually impaired students and a failure to acknowledge the potential of persons with disabilities to contribute to the arts and culture are reflected in the absence of professionally qualified theatre instructors. According to social inclusion theory, it is important to establish environments where persons with visual impairment can participate fully and feel belong. It would imply that the absence of professionally qualified theatre instructors presents a challenge to achieving social inclusion since it restricts the

chances for individuals with disabilities and in this case visually impaired students, to fully engage in the arts and culture in general and dramatic theatrical performance in particular.

From the data, it was clear that financial constraints were one of the major impediments to inclusive theatre for visually impaired students. As indicated by some of the participants, the necessity for specialised equipment is one of the major expenses connected to inclusive theatre for visually impaired pupils. This includes braille scripts, tactile items and costumes, audio description technology (including recorders), and accessible stage design. Although providing these accommodations can be costly for the school as observed by some of the participants, they are necessary for visually impaired pupils to fully engage in the theatrical presentation. Additionally, to give expertise on inclusive theatre for visually impaired children, the school might need to recruit specialised instructors or artistic directors as intimated by all the participants. However, they can be pricey and highly expensive to hire. These instructors can offer direction and advice on how to make the theatrical play accessible and interesting for visually impaired pupils.

Financial constraints as a barrier to inclusive theatre as indicated by participants are confirmed by studies conducted by McEwan and May (2017), McMahan (2021), and Wang and Goldsmith (2016), among others. McEwan and May (2017) observe that individuals with vision impairments may find it difficult to participate completely in theatre or attend theatrical events due to financial constraints. Individuals with visual impairments may find it challenging to

participate completely in theatrical productions due to the excessively high costs of accommodations including audio description, accessible materials, and assistive technology. On their part, Wang and Goldsmith (2016) admit that the use of audio descriptions in theatres for those who are visually impaired is one of the main expenses involved. Audio description gives a spoken explanation of the visual components of a play or performance, like the stage, costumes, and actor movements. For visually impaired students, this service is necessary to fully comprehend and enjoy the performance. But offering this service can be expensive, especially having to pay for equipment and educate audio describers. These developments as indicated by participants really make it difficult for anybody in the school to attempt putting the visually impaired students on stage.

Financial constraints are rooted in the social model of disability. Financial limitations are viewed in this context as the result of societal systems and institutions that support inequality and obstruct the full participation of people with disabilities including visually impaired students. For example, the current study reveals that the inability of the school to finance and invest in accessible equipment such as audio description devices or tactile props was due to the high cost. Furthermore, specialist training in inclusive practices for theatre instructors may call for financial resources that are not always available. Accessible materials, such as scripts in different forms, may not always be readily available due to a lack of funding.

Financial limitations as a barrier to inclusive theatre for visually impaired students are in tandem with both the perspectives of critical disability theory and

social inclusion theory. Financial limitations can be explained from the standpoint of critical disability theory as a manifestation of systemic injustices that affect handicapped persons more widely. Disability is not merely a personal experience, it is also influenced by the political, social, and economic systems in which people live. Therefore, financial limitations can be understood as a result of larger economic disparities that disproportionately affect individuals with disabilities. This includes obstacles to employment, workplace discrimination, and restricted access to chances for education and training, all of which can reduce the financial resources available to people with disabilities (Dolmage, 2017).

Financial limitations can be perceived as a roadblock to full involvement and inclusion in society from the perspective of the social inclusion theory. Through the lens of social inclusion theory, it is critical to create diverse, welcoming environments that give everyone the chance to fully engage in society. This includes making certain that individuals with disabilities have access to the financial resources required for them to engage in activities such as theatre. People with disabilities may not be able to fully participate in the theatre community if they are unable to participate in theatre-related activities such as training, performances, and other related activities due to financial constraints.

Technical limitations as a barrier or impediments that inhibit performing arts instructors from engaging blind students in a dramatic theatre were key to the participants. The participants maintained that visually impaired students may not be able to easily participate in dramatic theatrical events without access to alternative formats, such as Braille scripts, audio scripts, audio descriptions, or

tactile objects, and their overall theatre experience may be constrained. It is imperative to understand that the expense of developing accessible content is one of the biggest obstacles to be overcome. For instance, producing braille scripts can be costly because it calls for specific software, equipment, and skills. Similarly, it takes more materials and resources to make tactile items. And as indicated by the participants, they do not have the necessary knowledge and expertise to create accessible materials, and as a result, they may not prioritise their creation.

Furthermore, as opined by some of the participants, getting access to a proper performance stage has bedevilled visually impaired students' participation in dramatic theatre. The majority of the action happens on stage, thus without the proper modifications, people with visual impairments might not be able to fully engage in or enjoy the performance. As asserted by a participant, the dining hall of the school currently serves as a performance stage. The performance stage's (dining hall) absence of visual signals is one of its biggest problems. It might be challenging or impossible for people with visual impairments to understand visual signals like facial expressions, body language, and sets, which are used extensively in many theatrical performances. The performance might not be as interesting or relevant for people with visual impairments without these clues.

Technical limitations as revealed by the current study confirm the observation made by Pinder (2016). Pinder divulges that due to accessibility problems, people with impairments might not be able to attend performances, which would restrict their access to the arts. Sometimes theatre venues may not provide accommodations for those with disabilities, such as those who use

wheelchairs or have hearing issues. Also, studies by Zihnioglu and Cilingir (2015) and Jones (2019) affirm that people with disabilities may not be able to participate in the theatre community as actors or audience members due to technical challenges such as audio descriptions, and tactile elements accessible stage among others. For people with vision impairments, the performance stage can be a substantial obstacle to inclusive theatre. However, there are a number of approaches that can be used to get over these difficulties, such as adding audio descriptions, developing tactile aspects, and teaching actors to give verbal descriptions.

As noted in chapter two of the study, the social model of disability supports the idea that blind people may encounter difficulties in inclusive theatre due to technical limitations. Moreover, technical restrictions are not seen by the social model of disability, social inclusion theory and critical disability theory as intrinsic limitations of people with visual impairments but rather as hurdles brought about by society's failure to offer the required resources and accommodations. As a result, it highlights how crucial it is for society to address these technical issues by putting financial resources into accessible technologies, creating inclusive design principles, and making sure that blind people have access to the resources and tools they need to have a positive theatre experience.

Attitudinal barriers were recognised by the participants as critical barriers to inclusive theatre for the visually impaired. As evident in the study, attitudes can be a big barrier to inclusive theatre. These obstacles are characterised as unfavorable attitudes or convictions that can result in discrimination toward people with disabilities as asserted by some of the participants. Individuals with visual

impairments may have much fewer opportunities to participate in theatre and get cast in dramatic performances because of attitudinal barriers like prejudice and discrimination. Lack of awareness, unfavorable assumptions, and biases might be the root of these hurdles, which can then breed discrimination and exclusion. The belief that persons with visual impairments cannot perform in theatre or contribute to production is one of the major attitudinal obstacles that these people encounter. This idea frequently rests on the presumption that a visual impairment restricts one's capacity for perception of the outside world and social interaction. Such beliefs may cause people with visual impairments to have lower expectations of themselves and have less opportunity to participate in theatre. This viewpoint is strongly supported by the social model of disability.

As observed by some participants, performing arts instructors who adopt these viewpoints may unintentionally exclude or marginalise visually impaired pupils, making it challenging for them to take a full role in theatrical productions. The idea that people with disabilities are unable to participate in theatre productions or make contributions is one of the main attitudinal barriers that instructors of performing arts encounter. This viewpoint may cause instructors to have lower standards for pupils with visual impairments, which may reduce their chances for personal growth. These students may not receive the same support or encouragement from their instructors who share this viewpoint, which might result in lower involvement and engagement rates.

Another attitudinal barrier identified is the idea that providing additional care or accommodations for visually impaired students in dramatic performance

would be stressful or expensive. This viewpoint arguably could make people reluctant to offer the support or modifications that visually impaired students require in order to participate fully in theatrical productions. As a result, chances for professional development may be lost by instructors who do not completely comprehend the impact modifications can have on the success and inclusion of students with disabilities. It is crucial to educate people about the potential and contributions of people with visual impairments in order to break down these mental barriers. For instance, people who have vision problems can thrive in other areas like music, speech, and memory, which can be valuable capabilities in theatre shows. Additionally, it is critical to make the required modifications so that those with visual impairments can engage in theatre on an equal footing.

Attitudinal barriers as observed by participants reaffirm the position of Khan, Hussain, and Jabeen (2017) when they intimated that social barriers like stigma, prejudice, and discrimination can make it difficult for people from different backgrounds to feel at home in theatre environments. These obstacles may be brought on by unfavorable stereotypes or a lack of diversity in theatrical shows. Again, this finding is in tandem with Griffiths' (2021) contribution that individuals may not feel welcomed and included in the theatre due to attitudinal barriers. In his opinion prejudice, preconceptions, and discrimination are some of these obstacles, and they might be communicated either directly or subtly by other theatrical participants.

Attitudinal barriers are embedded in societal attitudes and perceptions and that changing these attitudes and beliefs is necessary to remove these barriers as

espoused by both social inclusion theory and critical disability theory. As a result, it is crucial to develop welcoming environments that celebrate accessibility and diversity. By encouraging stigmatising or derogatory attitudes toward people with disabilities, which can limit these people's opportunity to fully engage in society, attitudes can act as an obstacle to achieving this aim. This can take the form of encouraging favorable attitudes toward performers who are blind and developing inclusive theatre environments that appreciate and welcome their participation in the performing arts. Both theories acknowledge that hurdles in terms of attitudes can prevent people with disabilities from taking part in theatrical activities.

Time constraints were recognised as another crucial impediment inhibiting performing arts instructors from including visually impaired students in dramatic theatrical performances. As indicated by some of the participants, these limitations allude to the short amount of time available to organise and carry out theatre productions, workshops, and rehearsals, which might make it challenging to offer essential modifications and assistance to people with visual impairment. The amount of time available for training and preparation is one way that time restrictions can have an impact on inclusive theatre. The study found that the students meet only once a week for dance rehearsals. Even so, the time provided for rehearsal which is two hours is woefully inadequate. Giving students with visual impairments the support and instruction they need to fully engage in theatrical performances can be difficult since it appears performing arts instructors in the school frequently have little time to work with them. For instance, instructors might

not have enough time to show visually impaired people how to move around on stage or learn choreography in a way that is comfortable for them.

Time restrictions can also make it more difficult to produce accessible materials and accommodations, which is another way they hinder the development of inclusive theatre as alluded to by some participants. For instance, some participants indicated that scripts in other forms, auditory or tactile signals, or accessible seating arrangements might not be possible for instructors to make in time. Although they necessitate more time and resources to accomplish, these modifications are essential to ensure that people with visual impairments can take part completely in theatrical performances. Additionally, instructors' capacity to effectively interact with students who have visual impairments and develop connections with them may be impacted by time restraints as revealed in the study. Participants asserted that in order to complete rehearsals or performances on schedule, they sometimes have to rush, which might prevent them from taking the time to comprehend the particular requirements and abilities of people with visual impairments.

Time restrictions can be viewed from the perspective of critical disability theory and social inclusion theory as a result of structural obstacles that keep people with disabilities from fully participating in society. For those who are visually impaired, extra time may be required to become accustomed to new environments, learn new performance or production techniques, or make sure that the necessary accommodations are in place to satisfy their needs.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented and discussed data on the barriers that prevent instructors of performing arts from incorporating visually impaired pupils in dramatic theatrical performances at Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind. The findings of this chapter revealed that there were two categories of visual impairment at the school. These were total blindness and low vision. Also, the cause of the visual impairment among the students was predominantly congenital. On the question of the impediments inhibiting performing arts instructors from integrating visually impaired students into a dramatic theatrical performance, five issues were raised by participants. These were a lack of trained drama instructors; financial constraints; technical limitations; attitudinal barriers; and time constraints. This chapter discussed these issues and provided some insights on how to address these barriers or constraints. The social model of disability shaped the focus of the discussion. The discussion was generally done within the general ambit of the two theories underpinning the study.

It is important to note that these constraints or impediments discussed in this chapter provided the empirical meat and raw material for the design of an intervention model that would facilitate theatre making process for visually impaired students. The next chapter, therefore, designs and develops an intervention model to facilitate theatre making process for visually impaired students at the Coast School for the Deaf and Blind.

CHAPTER FIVE

INCLUSIVE THEATRE INTERVENTION MODEL

Introduction

The design and implementation of an efficient intervention model are a key component of this thesis, since it aims to create an inclusive theatrical experience for visually impaired students. This chapter presents an innovative narrative that tackles the difficult problems that arise when the domains of disability and theatre are combined by designing and developing an intervention model that facilitates theatre making process for visually impaired students at the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind. It summarises the methodological path adopted to close the gap between traditional theatrical techniques and the special requirements of participants who are visually impaired. The intervention model represents a comprehensive strategy that integrates innovation, adaptability, and inclusivity. In the paragraphs that follow, the reasoning, techniques, and essential elements that support this creative intervention will be discussed, with a focus on how it could revolutionise not only the field of inclusive theatre but also the larger conversation about accessibility and empowerment for people with visual impairments.

Intervention Model

As observed in chapter two the development of interventions is a key component of the intervention model. As noted by WHO (2018), interventions can take many different forms, including behavioral, educational, regulatory, and environmental ones. Designing an intervention model for inclusive theatre for visually impaired students in the current study involved socially addressing the

identified barriers of lack of trained performing arts instructors, financial limitations, technical challenges, attitudinal challenges, and time constraints. A multifaceted intervention model was developed to address the difficulties of producing inclusive theatre for students with vision impairments as shown in Figure 1.

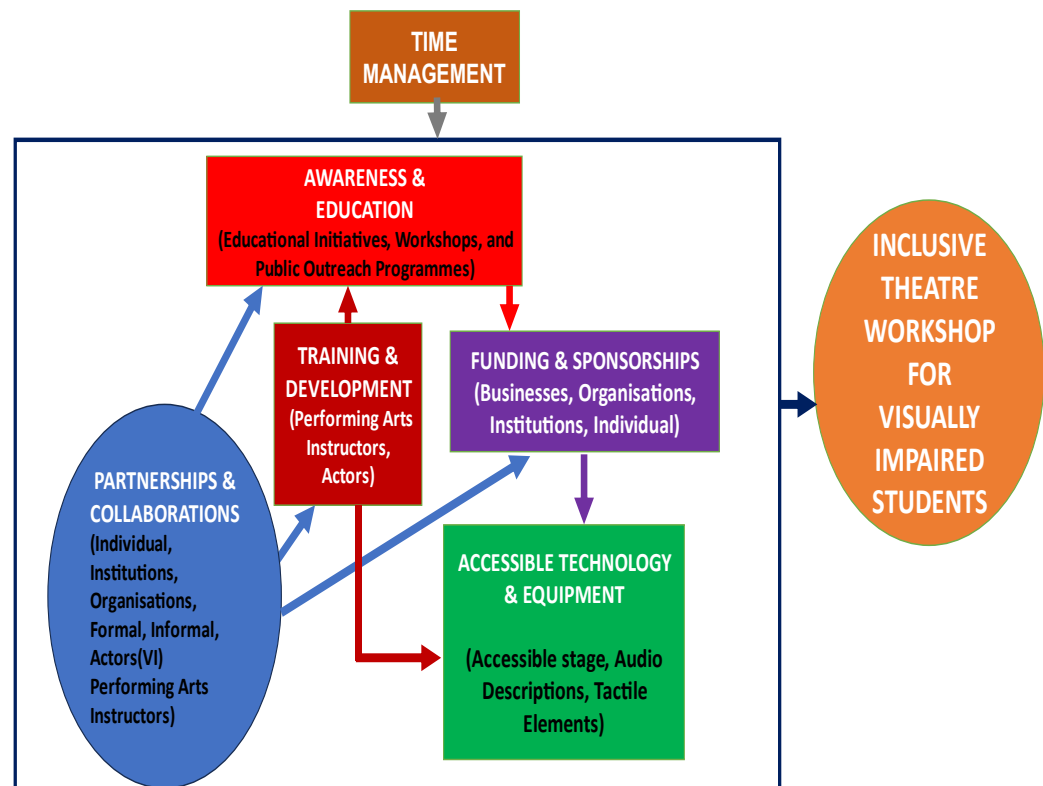


Figure 1: Intervention Model for Inclusive Theatre for Visually Impaired Students

Source: Author's construct, 2023.

This inclusive theatre project uses an intervention model that is similar to a masterfully choreographed symphony, with each element blending to create a cohesive and powerful effort. The interdependence of the strategies, each of which contributes its special strengths to strengthen the project's overall success and sustainability, is what gives it its dynamism. The fundamental pillars are

partnerships and collaborations, which offer a variety of resources, know-how, and assistance. This foundation of collaboration flows naturally into training and development, where the common knowledge and abilities gained through collaborations enhance the participants' learning experiences for those with visual impairments. Furthermore, since cooperative efforts frequently result in creative solutions and instruments that improve the inclusivity of the theatrical experience, this connection also applies to accessible technology and equipment.

In this model, funding and sponsorships emerge as a key strategy that provide the financial resonance required to purchase state-of-the-art equipment and maintain extensive training initiatives. The relationship between funding and sponsorships and accessible technology and equipment guarantees that the instruments acquired are cutting edge and specially designed to meet the requirements of participants who are visually impaired. The melodic overlay is made up of awareness and education, which spread knowledge about the project's accomplishments and objectives in order to win over the community's support. This educational outreach serves as a catalyst to draw in funding in addition to creating a supportive atmosphere. The fundamental component of time management conducts the orchestration of these strategies, making sure that every note in this symphony is played at the appropriate tempo and maximising the impact and sustainability of the inclusive theatre. The intervention model's core is the interconnectedness of these strategies, which together form a strong and compelling framework that fosters inclusivity in the arts. The connections between the

intervention model's primary strategies are examined in detail in the following sections, beginning with partnerships and collaborations.

Partnerships and Collaborations

The backbone of the intervention model is partnerships and collaborations. Building deep connections with other organisations, institutions, and individuals is essential to expanding the inclusive theatre's reach and gaining access to a variety of resources, support, and experience. By means of these partnerships, the project acquires access to a multitude of expertise from collaborators who may possess substantial background in both theatre and disability inclusion. This collective experience turns into a priceless resource that promotes a cooperative learning atmosphere where both visually impaired students and performing arts instructors gain from a variety of perspectives and best practices. In this context, the connection to training and development is critical since cooperative efforts frequently involve group seminars, mentorship programs, and skill-building projects where knowledge is actively shared and developed among all parties involved as shown in Figure 1.

Furthermore, collaborations are essential to the inclusive theatre initiative's ability to maintain a stable funding base. Organisations, institutions, and individuals, motivated by the same goal of promoting diversity in the arts, could frequently provide vital funding and sponsorships as shown in Figure 1. This could take many different forms, such as grants, contributions, or sponsorship deals. These partnerships' financial support is essential to the smooth operation of training and development initiatives. It guarantees that the project can spend money on

skilled teachers, unique teaching resources, and cutting-edge techniques that are especially tailored to the requirements of participants who are visually impaired. Furthermore, the cooperative character of these collaborations goes beyond monetary assistance to include joint acquisition of equipment and technology that is accessible as shown in Figure 1. By combining resources and knowledge, the intervention model gets a multifaceted advantage that strengthens the entire inclusivity of the theatrical experience and enriches the process of training and development.

In order to provide visually impaired students with an inclusive theatre experience, partnerships and collaborations can be extremely important. To identify and address barriers to participation and access, it can be helpful to collaborate with theatre institutions and organisations, educators, theatre professionals, and people with visual impairments. One key area where partnership and collaboration are needed is collaboration with disability institutions and organisations. In order to provide students with visual impairments with an inclusive theatre experience, collaboration with disability institutions and organisations is a key strategy. Disability institutions and organisations can offer insightful information about the requirements and experiences of people with disabilities, especially those who are visually impaired.

Another strategy that can be employed within the milieu of partnerships and collaborations is collaborating with performers with a disability, in this case visually impaired students. The participation of people with visual impairments in the planning and creation of inclusive theatre experiences is a crucial component of

partnerships and collaborations. Collaborate with visually impaired students throughout the production process. This can help to ensure that the theatrical experience is really inclusive and that the needs and preferences of this demographic are taken into consideration. The experiences of people with disabilities (visually impaired students) can be authentically reflected on stage by working with performers with disabilities, who can add a special viewpoint to theatre plays. Stereotypes can be dismantled and a stronger sense of inclusion and understanding can be fostered as a result. Additionally, working with visually impaired performers can offer opportunities for mentorship and professional growth for those who want to pursue careers in theatre.

Partnerships and collaborations as a strategy in the intervention model for inclusive theatre for visually impaired students affirm the position iterated by Phillips (2016). The importance of cooperation among theatre professionals, educators, and technology is emphasised by Phillips. She claims that in order to implement effective inclusive theatrical practices, a thorough plan must be developed that takes into account the needs and opinions of all participants, including actors, audience members, and community partners. Partnership and collaboration again, is a crucial strategy since it reinforces Sanderson's (2015) emphasis on the value of collaboration, accessibility, and community involvement in creating memorable and transformative experiences for all people with disability in inclusive theatre. The inclusive theatre for visually impaired students can become more efficient and long-lasting by forming partnerships and working together.

The social model of disability, which emphasises that disability is not only a personal limitation but is also influenced by social and environmental variables, is in line with partnerships and cooperations as an intervention strategy for inclusive theatre for visually impaired pupils. The social model of disability acknowledges that social constraints and restrictions, rather than actual impairments, are what actually render people disabled. Partnership and collaboration encourage the eradication of these barriers and the development of an inclusive environment in the context of inclusive theatre for visually impaired pupils. Together, partners can address the unique requirements and difficulties that visually impaired students encounter, such as the absence of drama instructors, the lack of funding, the difficulty of overcoming technical obstacles, the difficulty of changing one's attitude, and the pressures of time. They can work together to create plans, communicate information, and lobby for the resources and modifications required to guarantee that visually impaired students can participate equally in theatre events. Collaborations and partnerships can encourage a change of perspective from individual deficits to more general cultural norms and practices that might limit the participation of visually impaired students in theatre.

Partnerships and collaborations fall within the purview of critical disability theory and social inclusion theory. These two theoretical frameworks acknowledge the value of alliances and teamwork in fostering a more inclusive society. According to critical disability theory, it is critical to look at the social and cultural norms that impose limitations on people with disabilities. It acknowledges the part power dynamics play in the marginalisation of individuals with disabilities and

seeks to change and challenge these systems. Partnerships and collaborations that oppose the mainstream narrative and advance the rights of persons with disabilities are encouraged by critical disability theory.

The theory of social inclusion as it has been observed earlier, on the other hand, places a strong emphasis on the necessity of developing diverse, inclusive communities that support equitable opportunity for all of its constituents. It fosters the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, including disabled persons themselves, and acknowledges that partnerships and collaborations are crucial to achieving this aim. Within these theoretical frameworks, partnerships and collaborations can take many different forms. Partnerships and collaborations that fall under the purview of social inclusion theory and critical disability theory are crucial to advancing the social, economic, and political inclusion of those with disabilities. These collaborations can take many different shapes and involve a variety of parties, including the visually impaired individuals themselves. The objective is to alter social and cultural institutions, question prevailing ideas, and build inclusive communities that embrace diversity and advance equal opportunities for all. The next section presents and discusses training and development as an intervention technique that may be utilised to deal with the challenges of creating inclusive theatre for students with vision impairments.

Training and development

To create an inclusive theatre experience for students with disabilities, especially for those who have visual impairments, training and development are essential. The goal of the training and development component is to equip

individuals with the abilities and information required for actively participating in theatre. This covers a wide range of topics, including voice modulation, acting styles, and spatial awareness. In addition to developing creative skills, training helps visually impaired students become more self-assured and independent so they feel competent and powerful in a theatrical environment. Training and development strategy is linked to awareness and education strategy as shown in Figure 1. Efforts to raise awareness and educate the public are closely related to training and development programmes. Participants in training programmes not only learn specialised theatre skills but also develop a deeper comprehension of the larger context of inclusivity and disabilities. Concurrently, the awareness and education element guarantee that all parties involved, such as participants, teachers, and the wider community (audience), are knowledgeable about the objectives, importance, and possible consequences of the inclusive theatre initiative.

Training and development strategy is also linked to accessible technology and equipment as shown in Figure 1. The intervention model acknowledges that equipment and technologies that are easily accessible are essential to improving the overall experience of participants as they go through training. In order to give participants real-time feedback and cues during rehearsals and performances, this could involve integrating assistive technology. For example, audio descriptions provided by specialised equipment might provide important details about a scene's visual components. Participants will have equitable access to knowledge and be able to actively engage in the creative process as a result of the training procedure's smooth integration of various technologies.

Accessible equipment and technologies are more than just devices that help people with vision impairments; they are instruments for improving one's skills. Scripts that are tactile or have Braille annotations, for example, can help participants with line delivery and memorisation. Additionally, technology may help performing arts instructors and visually impaired students communicate with one another, creating a collaborative environment where everyone is inspired by the same ideas. Customisation is what defines the relationship between accessible technology and training. Since different people may have different needs and preferences, the intervention model makes sure that the technologies used meet the wide range of needs of the participants. This could entail providing a variety of assistive technology or modifying current technologies to accommodate each participant's preferences and comfort level in order to create a customised and welcoming learning environment.

Incorporating accessible technology into training and development results in a feedback loop. Using adaptive tools, participants receive real-time feedback that helps them improve their performances. Through this iterative improvement process, the technology guarantees that visually impaired students are not only accommodated but also actively assisted in developing their skills, creating a dynamic and ever-changing training environment. Having a trained and developed instructor in the area of drama as a strategy will address the lack or absence of professionally trained drama instructor (a barrier to inclusive theatre) identified by the study's participants and also affirmed by Kuppens (2018), McEwan and May (2017), Palmer (2018), and Radosavljevic (2015).

Training and development as an intervention strategy for visually impaired students' access to inclusive theatre addresses the social and environmental constraints that keep people with disabilities especially visually impaired students from fully engaging in theatre activities, and this aligns with the social model of disability. Performing arts instructors can better appreciate the unique requirements and difficulties faced by those who are visually impaired by offering training on disability awareness and inclusion. This information aids in dispelling preconceived notions and unfavorable attitudes toward disability, promoting a more accepting and encouraging environment. Technical difficulties with inclusive theatre for visually impaired students can also be addressed during training, for example, by instructing participants on accessible technology, audio description methods, or touch tour facilitation. The social model of disability, which emphasises that barriers associated with a disability can be addressed by education and awareness, is welcomed by improving the skills and knowledge of performing arts instructors and visually impaired performers. Furthermore, training and development open doors for lifelong learning and development. This fits in with the social model's focus on constant societal development and advancement to make places more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. Theatre institutions and organisations may change the conversation from individual constraints to the obligation of society to create inclusive environments by putting training and professional development programs into place. This strategy supports equitable opportunity, inclusion, and access for people with disabilities and is consistent with the fundamental ideas of the social model.

In addition to being crucial from a purely practical aspect, training and development are also crucial in the framework of social inclusion theory and critical disability theory in order to provide an inclusive theatrical experience for visually impaired students. According to social inclusion theory, everyone should be able to fully engage in society and have access to the same opportunities and rights as their peers, regardless of their abilities. This refers to making a space that is friendly and inclusive for everyone, including pupils who are visually impaired, in the context of theatre. Performing arts instructors can acquire the information and abilities required to design an inclusive theatrical experience that satisfies the special requirements of visually impaired students by offering training and professional development opportunities. This can involve providing audio descriptions, tactile graphics, and other accessibility features for performances so that visually impaired students can participate completely and take pleasure in dramatic performances with their peers.

By acknowledging that disability is a social construct formed by society's attitudes and structures rather than an individual attribute, critical disability theory goes one step further in addressing this issue. In the context of theatre, this entails acknowledging that the obstacles preventing visually impaired students from fully engaging in theatre are not caused by their disability but rather the product of society's attitudes and structures that restrict their access to theatrical performances. By offering performing arts instructors training and development opportunities, it will be possible for them to become aware of these obstacles and learn how to build a setting that actively encourages social inclusion, removes obstacles that prevent

visually impaired students from fully participating in theatre, and is both accommodating and accessible.

Finally, from a practical aspect as well as in the context of social inclusion theory and critical disability theory, training, and professional development are essential elements in establishing an inclusive theatrical experience for visually impaired students. It is possible to build a more just and equitable society that appreciates diversity and encourages social inclusion by arming staff members with the knowledge and abilities required to establish an inclusive environment that caters for the special needs of visually impaired pupils within the theatre space. In the next segment, I present and discuss funding and sponsorship as another intervention strategy that can be used to address the difficulties of producing inclusive theatre for students with visual impairments and also their relationship (linkage) with other strategies.

Funding and Sponsorship

A symbiotic relationship between financial support through financing and sponsorships and the procurement of accessible technology and equipment is essential to realising an inclusive and supportive theatre setting for visually impaired students as evident in Figure 1. The acquired financing ensures that participants have access to the tools and technologies that close the accessibility gap in a direct and facilitating manner. Funding allows for the acquisition of state-of-the-art assistive technologies that are tailored to the particular needs of visually impaired students participating in theatre. Funding enables the establishment of a technologically enhanced infrastructure that enables participants to fully and

meaningfully participate in every aspect of the theatrical experience, whether through the acquisition of equipment such as tactile feedback mechanisms, audio description systems, or custom software applications.

Furthermore, by enabling the customisation and tailoring of accessible technology to the various needs of participants, funding and sponsorships promote an inclusive environment. This could entail customising solutions that improve understanding and participation during rehearsals and performances or modifying current technologies to accommodate personal preferences. Modern technology could be a given for the inclusive theatre project as a result funding, which also gives it the flexibility to change and adapt its tools to suit the changing needs and preferences of its visually impaired participants. Essentially, the correlation between funding and sponsorship and accessible technology and equipment highlights the dedication to establishing a welcoming environment in which technology functions as a potent leveler, dismantling obstacles and enabling visually impaired students to completely express themselves within the theatre.

Obtaining financing and sponsorships indicates a shared need to advance inclusivity and remove financial barriers which were identified by participants and also confirm the observation made by McEwan and May (2017) that it is quite expensive to produce inclusive theatre. To advocate for and obtain the required financial assistance, cooperation with a variety of stakeholders, including governmental bodies, private individuals, and non-governmental organisations is essential. Tackling the financial barriers through funding and sponsorship aim to

remove financial obstacles and promote equal access to artistic involvement thus seeking to build a more fair and inclusive society.

Funding and sponsorship address the systemic obstacles that people with disabilities must overcome in order to access resources and opportunities and this is in alignment with the social model of disability. The financial barriers inhibiting the integration of visually impaired students in dramatic theatrical performance can be lessened by securing financing through grants, sponsorships, and fundraising activities. This strategy recognises the critical role that societal institutions and resource allocation play in fostering inclusive settings. Theatre companies, schools, institutions can use funding and sponsorship to allocate resources expressly for the requirements of visually impaired students. For example, they can hire qualified performing arts instructors with experience in inclusive theatre or buy assistive technology like audio description systems.

Equal participation and resource access for people with disabilities are important, according to both social inclusion theory and critical disability theory. By providing the resources required to assure accessibility and assistance for people with vision impairments, funding and sponsorship can be useful intervention approach in the creation of inclusive theatre. In line with the principle of social inclusion, funding and sponsorship can assist remove financial obstacles that keep people with impairments from enjoying the theatre. Organisations, institutions, and individuals can guarantee that students with visual impairments have equal access to the theatre experience by financing the purchase of accessible tools and technologies. Additionally, financial assistance can be used to fund the training and

professional advancement of theatre instructors and personnel, which can enhance the standard of instruction and eventually result in a more welcoming theatre atmosphere. The necessity for systemic change to remove the social, economic, and political obstacles that people with disabilities must overcome is emphasised by critical disability theory. By assisting groups that place a high priority on inclusive theatre for students with visual impairments, funding, and sponsorship can be used as tools to encourage systemic change. Sponsors can contribute to the development of a culture in the theatrical business that prioritises accessibility and inclusiveness by supporting these groups and projects.

Accessible Technology and Equipment

The connection to equipment and technology that is accessible is essentially a collaborative tapestry that is woven together by funding and sponsorships, training and development, and partnerships and collaborations as shown in Figure 1. The interaction of these components guarantees that the inclusive theatre project is both technologically advanced and sensitive to the particular needs of its participants, creating an environment that is both inclusive and empowering and in which technology acts as a catalyst for equitable participation in the theatre industry. Collaborations bring resources and shared expertise to the table, which is where partnerships and accessible technology work best together. Cutting-edge technologies can be integrated into an inclusive theatre setting through collaborative efforts, which frequently involve sharing resources and pooling knowledge. Associated organisations, comprising of tech firms, disability advocacy groups, and educational establishments could offer their technological expertise

and frequently grant entry to cutting-edge apparatus. The inclusive theatre project will have access to a wide range of adaptive tools that are specifically designed to meet the needs of participants who are visually impaired as a result of partnerships and collaborations.

Accessible technology is closely related to the training and development component. During training, participants are exposed to the tools and technologies that will enable them to participate in the theatrical process. Training programs involve acquainting participants with assistive devices, making sure they are proficient in using technologies such as Braille scripts, haptic feedback devices, or audio description systems. Training and accessible technology are linked in such a way that participants not only acquire theatrical skills but also become skilled in using the technological resources that augment their overall experience.

The implementation of technology that is accessible is dependent on the amount of money raised through funding and sponsorships. These resources offer the funding required to purchase, create, or modify technologies that genuinely enable accessibility to inclusive theatre experiences. Having funding guarantees that the project can make investments in state-of-the-art tools and equipment, such as the development of custom software applications or the acquisition of specialised devices. Sponsorships from socially conscious organisations make technology more accessible by giving funds to create or purchase tools that are tailored to the needs of participants who are visually impaired.

By addressing the structural and societal barriers that prevent participation and access for visually impaired students in theatre, accessible technology and

equipment as a strategy in the intervention model for inclusive theatre for visually impaired students strongly align with the social model of disability. Theatre productions can help students who are visually impaired communicate by adopting accessible technology like audio description systems, captioning devices, or braille scripts. Students with visual impairments can understand and take pleasure in the performance on an equal footing with their sighted counterparts as a result of these technologies' alternate methods of obtaining visual information. Additionally, theatre productions actively combat the social obstacles that prevent people with vision impairments from taking part in theatre events by putting in place accessible technology and equipment. This model acknowledges that insufficient accessibility and accommodations lead to impairment, not an individual's intrinsic weakness. Adopting accessible tools and technology also promotes the social model's emphasis on shared accountability and group effort. To ensure the availability and effective application of inclusive tools and resources, collaboration between theatre crew, production teams, and technological experts is required.

The necessity of fostering inclusive environments that give people with disabilities access to the same opportunities and experiences as their peers without disabilities is emphasised by both social inclusion theory and critical disability theory. Accessible technology and tools can be crucial in fostering social inclusion and removing obstacles to participation when it comes to creating an inclusive theatre experience for students with visual impairments. Theatre productions may make sure that students with visual impairments can fully participate in the theatre experience and enjoy the same degree of involvement as their non-disabled peers

by offering audio description, touch tours, and other types of accessible technology and equipment.

From the standpoint of critical disability theory, providing an inclusive theatre experience for people with visual impairments also entails challenging prevailing beliefs and prejudices about disability and advocating for a more complex and varied understanding of it. Theatre productions may contribute to the promotion of a more positive and inclusive image of disability by showcasing the distinctive perspectives and abilities of people with visual impairments and by offering accessible technology and equipment that enables them to fully engage in the theatre experience. The next intervention strategy worth engaging is awareness and education.

Awareness and Education

An informed community is more likely to support and participate in a project of social significance, as evidenced by the connections made between the awareness and education component and funding and sponsorships. The inclusive theatre initiative's awareness and education campaigns act as its communication engine, spreading important details about its objectives, successes, and wider societal impact. This educational outreach is intended for members of the community at large, including individuals, organisations, and sponsors, in addition to prospective participants and audience. The initiative establishes itself as a transformative force in fostering inclusivity in the arts by effectively communicating the goals and significance of the inclusive theatre project. When members of the public are informed about the goals and achievements of the

inclusive theatre project, the possibility of obtaining funding from different sources increases. People who are sympathetic to the cause are more likely to donate because they understand the concrete effect that their contributions will have on advancing diversity and inclusivity in the arts. Likewise, socially conscious organisations and sponsors are drawn to projects that share their values. The awareness and education component serves as a link between the project's vision and the knowledge and support of a community that recognises the significance of advancing inclusivity in the arts.

As observed in a study by Khan, Hussain, and Jabeen (2017), it can be challenging for individuals from diverse backgrounds to feel comfortable in theatre situations due to societal hurdles like stigma, prejudice, and discrimination. Unfavorable stereotypes or a lack of diversity in theatrical productions may be the cause of these barriers. The inclusion of visually impaired students in theatre was significantly hampered by social barriers. This observation has been affirmed by the findings revealed by the study. As a result of this, a behavioral intervention is necessary to curb such stereotypes.

One of the major issues to consider in awareness creation is a public awareness campaign. Public awareness campaigns can be a useful tool for informing the public about the value of accessibility and inclusivity in the theatre. Such campaigns can be developed to advance a better comprehension of the difficulties that performers and theatergoers with disabilities (especially the visually impaired) encounter in gaining access to performances as well as the advantages of fostering an inclusive theatre environment. These campaigns can be

promoted through a variety of media, including social media, print media, radio, and television. The objective is to communicate with as many individuals as possible, including those who might not have had prior direct exposure to disability or accessibility related concerns.

Public awareness initiatives that highlight the various ways in which theatre may be made accessible to everybody can help motivate people with disabilities to take part in theatrical experiences. The availability of assistive technologies, such as captioning or audio description, as well as the provision of accessible seating and facilities, might be highlighted in this way. The demands and interests of the target audience should be taken into account when designing an effective public awareness campaign. It should leverage a range of communication methods, and use clear, simple language. The advertisement should also highlight the accomplishments and contributions of people with disabilities to the theatre community.

Another issue to tackle as far as awareness and education is concerned is disability awareness training. To create an inclusive theatre experience for students with visual impairments, disability awareness training is a necessity. Such instruction can aid in better understanding the requirements and preferences of those with disabilities and how to make accommodations that can improve their theatre experience. A variety of subjects can be covered in disability awareness training, such as recognising the various sorts of disabilities, how they may affect a person's experience at the theatre, and the best ways to offer adjustments and

assistance. It may also contain details on how to treat people with visual impairments with respect and consideration.

The provision of disability awareness training enables theatre professionals, instructors and artists to acquire the abilities and knowledge required to provide a welcome and inclusive workplace for people with disabilities. They can gain knowledge about various accommodations, including how to use efficient captioning, audio description, and accessible seating. They can learn how to interact with people who have disabilities and comprehend their needs and preferences. Additionally, by educating performing arts instructors and performers about the difficulties and hurdles that people with disabilities can encounter while trying to access theatre productions, disability awareness training can assist to foster better empathy and understanding. As a result, the theatrical community may become more welcoming and accepting and preconceptions and misconceptions regarding impairments may be dispelled.

Moreover, for those with visual impairment to have an inclusive theatre experience, accessible information must be provided. Such information can give people with disabilities the required knowledge to plan for any accommodations they might need and can assist them in making an informed decision about going to a theatre event. Details about the theatre's physical accessibility, such as wheelchair accessibility and accessible seating options, can be included in accessibility information. Additionally, it can include details on the accessibility of assistive technology like captioning, audio description, and hearing loops.

Furthermore, knowledge of sensory components, such as flashing lights or loud noises, can aid people with sensory difficulties in making plans for their experience.

The social model of disability is welcomed by fostering awareness and education because it emphasises the necessity of societal change and poses a challenge to the prejudices and conventions that are currently in place. It highlights that society's beliefs, practices, and structures have an impact on disability, which is not just a result of an individual's deficiencies. Additionally, knowledge and education promote understanding, respect, and empathy among theatre professionals and the general public. People with visual impairments are given a supportive and inviting atmosphere where they can express their creativity and abilities by encouraging an inclusive and accepting society.

The idea that awareness and education are essential elements of providing an inclusive theatrical experience for visually impaired students is strongly aligned with the principles of social inclusion theory and critical disability theory. According to social inclusion theory, it is crucial to have a society in which everyone can actively engage in all facets of communal life, including cultural and artistic pursuits. This entails making sure that people with disabilities have access to the same possibilities as their peers who are not disabled and that they may fully engage in cultural and artistic activities without encountering obstacles or discrimination. The structural and systemic challenges that people with disabilities must overcome in society are highlighted by critical disability theory, which approaches the experiences of people with disabilities from a critical perspective. These theories both place emphasis on the value of awareness and education in

fostering a diverse society. This entails educating the larger theatre community about the difficulties experienced by people with disabilities and the value of producing accessible and inclusive theatre experiences in the context of creating an inclusive theatre experience for people with disabilities. In order to ensure that performing arts instructors, theatre artists and personnel have the knowledge and abilities to foster an inclusive atmosphere, it also involves offering them education and training. Theatre productions can contribute to the removal of obstacles that impede people with disabilities from fully engaging in cultural and artistic activities by raising awareness and educating the public. They can also foster a more accepting and inclusive environment where people with disabilities are respected and welcomed as full members of society. The next intervention strategy to consider is time management.

Time Management

Effective time management is a critical component of the intervention model's efficacy, influencing a wide range of activities that are part of the inclusive theatre initiative. Time management is a critical component of the project's overall development. When it comes to training and development, meticulously planned schedules guarantee that participants receive thorough and leisurely instruction. This makes it possible to thoroughly examine voice modulation, acting methods, and the incorporation of accessible technology. Additionally, it fosters a collaborative learning environment in which relationships are fostered and partnerships and collaborations can be developed over time, all of which have a significant positive impact on the inclusive theatre's overall success.

Time management becomes essential in the search for funding and sponsorships in order to submit applications and proposals on time. Making sure that these procedures are carried out on time increases the likelihood of receiving funding, which offers the resources to purchase the equipment and technology that are required. Furthermore, effective time management is essential for carrying out awareness and education campaigns. Through meticulous planning and scheduling of these events, the project can maximise its impact and reach, guaranteeing that the community is aware of the objectives and successes of the inclusive theatre initiative. Effective time management becomes crucial in the particular field of accessible technology and equipment, where quick advancements are the norm. It is critical to acquire, test, and apply technology in a timely manner to guarantee that participants can easily incorporate these resources into their training and performance experiences. Thus, effective time management serves as the glue that binds the various components of the intervention model together and guarantees the coherence and accomplishment of the inclusive theatre project.

The social model of disability is embraced by placing a high priority on time management and making sure enough time is set aside to meet the demands of visually impaired students. It acknowledges that having a limited amount of time might lead to discriminatory behaviors and actively seeks to remove these obstacles to promote inclusion and equal participation. Critical disability theory and social inclusion theory both emphasise how crucial it is to meet the needs of people with disabilities. This refers to taking into account their particular requirements and circumstances when creating a flexible program schedule for visually impaired

students in theatre and creating a program that is accessible and inclusive. The barriers preventing visually impaired pupils from fully participating in artistic events can be overcome with the help of a customised program schedule that meets their needs. In a theatre production one can contribute to the creation of an inclusive atmosphere that encourages learning, skill development, and social inclusion by taking into account the needs of visually impaired students in the program schedule. This could encourage more people, regardless of disability status, to have access to the arts.

Chapter Summary

The chapter explored and designed the various intervention strategies that could be used to address the identified barriers of lack of trained performing arts instructors, financial limitations, technical challenges, attitudinal challenges, and time constraints as discussed in chapter four. Training and development; partnerships and collaborations; funding and sponsorship; accessible technology and equipment; awareness and education; and time management; were identified as the intervention strategies (model) that could be used. These intervention strategies were discussed within the general ambit of social inclusion theory and critical disability theory. By putting this model into practice, performing arts instructors can provide an enabling environment for visually impaired students to take part in inclusive theatrical performances, hone their performing arts abilities, and gain confidence while removing obstacles that restrict their chances. This intervention model catalysed the implementation of a theatre workshop for visually impaired students at the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind. The next chapter provides

a detailed account of the nature of the inclusive theatre workshop implemented and executed in the current study.



CHAPTER SIX

INCLUSIVE THEATRE WORKSHOP

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the production processes that were followed in creating an inclusive theatrical workshop for students who are visually impaired. It involves script development, auditions, inclusive casting, production conference, rehearsals, and the main performance. It further sheds light on the directorial approach employed in developing inclusive theatre for students who are visually impaired. The participants for the workshop were fifteen (15) in number. They were made up eleven (11) actors and actresses, two (2) drummers and two (2) crew members. All the participant for the workshop were visually impaired students. However, the study made use of both low vision and totally blind students. The totally blind students were ten (10) whilst low vision students were five (5). The next segment provides insight into how the script was developed.

Script Development

As indicated in chapter two accessible storytelling methods are crucial for creating a theatre experience that is inclusive for those who are visually impaired. I will proceed to provide the step-by-step process that was followed in developing the script for the performance. The first step was to decide what the theatre workshop's goals were. In deciding the purpose of the workshop five variables were considered by the researcher which included education, empowerment, inclusion and awareness, entertainment, and emotional connection. The reasons for choosing these variables to represent the objectives of the theatre workshop were that theatre

has the ability to improve educational opportunities. Students who are visually handicapped can learn new information, skills, and perspectives by including educational components into the workshop. Through interesting storytelling, they can learn about many cultures, historical occurrences, societal issues, or particular themes pertinent to their curriculum. The workshop gives them a venue to broaden their horizons intellectually and cultivate a passion for lifelong learning.

Moreover, a key component of inclusive theatre is empowerment. The workshop gives visually impaired students a sense of action, ownership, and self-confidence. They are given the chance to be creatively expressive, make choices, and offer suggestions. They get an appreciation for their special talents and an understanding of their capacity to have a good influence on both themselves and others through the collaborative process. The goal of this inclusive theatre is to dismantle obstacles and advance diversity and inclusion. I encouraged a sense of belonging and made sure their voices were heard and respected by allowing visually impaired students to participate in the workshop. Participants developed a deeper awareness of various viewpoints, difficulties, and strengths via the sharing of experiences. The workshop tends to provide a forum for dispelling myths and promoting awareness of vision impairment.

Additionally, audiences can be enthralled and be entertained by theatre. The delight and excitement of being on stage, performing for an audience, and receiving applause can be experienced by visually impaired students by designing an engaging and enjoyable workshop. The workshop is made more enjoyable, joyful, and fulfilling by the entertainment, which produces experiences that the audience

and participants will remember. A variety of emotions can be elicited and explored through theatre. The workshop's emotional components help visually impaired students relate to the stories, characters, and themes on a deeper level. They are able to identify and articulate their own feelings, grow in empathy for others, and establish an emotional bond with the audience. The workshop gains depth and purpose when people are emotionally engaged. Taking these five factors into account in deciding on the objectives of the workshop guarantee that the workshop will provide visually impaired students with a comprehensive and well-rounded experience. The workshop turns into a venue for education, empowerment, inclusion and awareness, entertainment, and emotional connection, giving each participant a profound and life-changing experience.

The next step I followed in developing the script for the inclusive theatre was choosing a story. The story chosen piqued the participants' curiosity and interest. It contained components that arouse feelings, pique curiosity, or inspire awe. Throughout the workshop, visually challenged students were kept engaged and contributed. I chose a story that could be modified to accommodate multi-sensory experiences and was compelling and rich in visual imagery and descriptive language. The story had compelling protagonists, logical progressions, and room for creative interpretation and expression. This enabled participants who are visually impaired to actively participate in the narrative process and offered their own thoughts and viewpoints. The story was imbued with a well-defined and logical plot. It had a clear beginning, middle, and end. This is because a clear storyline enables visually challenged students to comprehend the narrative flow and

foresee crucial plot points. The story had a clear-cut, recognizable characters. Visually impaired participants could relate to the characters' feelings, motives, and journeys.

Another stage in script development involved modifying it to be accessible to students who were visually challenged. I included in-depth explanations of the environment, visual components, and character appearances. I made sure that the script concentrated on tactile aspects, auditory effects, and sensory experiences that the participants can feel. I made sure that the dialogue accurately depicts the plot, the characters' feelings, and their interactions. The script provided cues about the visual components and actions occurring on stage using speech and verbal cues. This made it easier for participants who were blind to follow the performance's development. In order to improve the script development experience, I looked into non-visual strategies including music, and the casting of actors in various voices. Participants who were blind were able to participate more actively which added context and mood to the performance. I also included the participants who were blind in the adaptation process. To make sure that the script adequately satisfies their wants and preferences, I asked for their thoughts and feedback. To get the participants' ideas, thoughts, and suggestions, I held brainstorming sessions with them. I urged them to express their opinions about the plot, protagonists, and underlying themes. I established a secure and welcoming space where everyone's opinions were appreciated. I invited participants, including those who are visually impaired, to talk about their personal encounters with the story's themes as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Researcher facilitating discussion on script development

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

This gave the performance more nuance and honesty. The characters, dialogue, and overall narrative were influenced by their experiences. The whole development of the script was driven and motivated by the partnership and collaboration intervention strategy designed in chapter five of the current study. It also confirms Phillips' (2016) and Sanderson's (2015) emphasis on collaboration in inclusive theatre. Therefore, cocreation was considered in the development of the script. The entire exercise confirmed the position of Shannon (2012) in the development of script in an inclusive theatre workshop.

This process of script development aligns with the perspectives of critical disability theory and social inclusion theory. Realistic representation is important, according to critical disability theory and in the current study the script correctly depicted the experiences and viewpoints of visually impaired students and avoided tokenistic or stereotyped portrayals. Visually impaired students were given a platform to tell their stories and add to the plot. Giving people with disabilities a voice and respecting their stories is one of the tenets of critical disability theory. By

including the ideas and opinions of the visually impaired pupils in the scriptwriting process, this study not only honors them but also challenges the stereotypes that have condemned persons with visual impairments to a life of permanent dependency.

The notion of social inclusion, on the other hand, advocates for the full inclusion of every person in society, irrespective of their talents. Social inclusion theory guides script development in the theatre workshop for visually challenged pupils by focusing on the emancipation and amplification of underrepresented voices. The current study supported the creation of opportunities for visually impaired pupils to have agency and contribute their viewpoints, thoughts, and creativity to the story when developing the script. According to social inclusion theory, visually impaired pupils need scripts that break down boundaries and give them a sense of community. Self-advocacy, dismantling cultural preconceptions, and removing institutional hurdles that prevent inclusion and accessibility were all included in the development of the plot.

Ultimately, the script development process included input from visually challenged students, ensuring realistic depiction and preventing the spread of myths or stereotypes. This provided the script legitimacy, authenticity, and representation. The script included descriptions and phrases that were easily understood and interpreted by participants who are visually challenged. This includes dialogue that is succinct and precise, descriptions of visual components that are vivid, and the skillful use of sensory language to portray non-visual experiences. It must be established here that, careful planning, attention to detail, and a dedication to

accessibility were considered while developing the script for the theatrical workshop for visually impaired students in the inclusive theatre.

Synopsis of the Play

The Talent Show revolves around the nuclear family of Patrick and Rafya, who seek to support their children's career choices. When their eldest son, Gideon, expresses his desire to pursue engineering, and Felicia and Gladys choose law and medicine respectively, Patrick is delighted. However, when Grace reveals her passion for dance, Patrick's biased perception of the art industry leads him to reject her choice and ultimately kick her out of the house. Despite her expulsion, Grace's determination remains unwavering, and with the help of elders and her headmaster, she is eventually allowed back home and granted permission to pursue her dream.

As time passes, a talent show presents an opportunity for Grace and her dance group to showcase their talent, and they emerge victorious. The outstanding performance catches the attention of a scholarship committee, which awards Grace a scholarship to study dance in the UK. It is through witnessing her daughter's incredible success and the value of her artistic passion that Patrick comes to realize the significance of art in society. With newfound appreciation, he fully accepts Grace's career choice, understanding that each child's aspirations are unique and valuable.

In the end, the play highlights the importance of supporting and respecting the individual career choices of children, regardless of preconceived notions or biases. It portrays the journey of a family learning to appreciate the importance of art in society and embracing the talents and dreams of their children

wholeheartedly. Through the trials and triumphs of Grace's pursuit of her passion, the story ultimately delivers a powerful message about acceptance, understanding, and the value of art in shaping a fulfilled and well-rounded society. After ultimately creating and developing a script for the workshop, the next section explores the audition process.

Auditions

The choice of participants and the casting of roles in a theatre workshop both heavily rely on auditions. Auditions give people a chance to demonstrate their aptitude for particular tasks in the workshop as well as their skills and talents as noted by Bly (2012). It takes careful preparation and thinking to conduct auditions in an inclusive theatre workshop for students who are visually impaired. As part of the production process, the study set out to conduct auditions to assess participants' skills and capabilities and place them in roles that will best display them. The processes involved in the auditions are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

To ensure that everyone who participated, including students who are visually impaired, fully understood the audition process, clear communication was essential to this process. This was accomplished by giving an announcement that made it crystal clear what the audition was for, what parts were available, and what was expected. This included information regarding the inclusiveness of the workshop and its dedication to helping students who were visually impaired. For students who were visually impaired, I offered written materials in accessible formats. This included large print and braille versions of audition materials like scripts and character descriptions for low-vision participants and totally blind

students respectively. I also provided audio scripts for those who were unable to use the braille. I made sure that the paper quality, formatting, and font size were appropriate for straightforward reading and handling. A verbal description of the audition procedure during the audition orientation session was given, highlighting crucial elements and answering any concerns or worries. I explained the deadline, the conditions for the auditions, and what my team would be looking for in participants. Throughout the audition process, I urged participants, especially visually impaired students, to clarify anything that was not clear. This encouraged a culture where everyone felt comfortable raising issues and looking for further information.

The dining hall of the school (CAPEDEAF/BLIND) was selected as the location for the audition exercise. This was due to the fact that the location (auditioning venue) was accessible to anyone with mobility issues, especially visually impaired students. Participants performed their audition pieces in a dedicated area I set aside in the audition space. In order to aid visually impaired students in navigating the area and feeling confident in their movements, clear boundaries and markings were created. I made audition formats flexible to account for a range of skills and learning preferences. This was accomplished by giving participants the option of reading from the large print script (in the case of the low-vision students), giving a prepared monologue, and showcasing their talents in other ways, including singing or dancing.

During the audition process, I took the sensory requirements of students with visual impairments into consideration. I made sure the environment was serene

and quiet, devoid of pointless diversion or overpowering stimuli that would interfere with their ability to concentrate or participate. I provided extra explanations, examples, and coaching to visually challenged students during the audition preparation process so they could better understand the character, context, and emotional nuance of the audition material. Students with visual impairments were urged to delve further into the history, motivations, and emotional journey of their characters. Analysis of the character's relationships, goals, and challenges was made easier for them. They were better able to grasp and play the role during the audition as a result of their exploration. A collective warm-up exercise kicked off the audition session. This featured vocal warm-up exercises, improvisation games, and physical warm-up activities as shown in Figure 3. As a result, the warm-up assisted participants in unwinding, connecting with one another, and fostering a happy and encouraging environment. The training and professional development strategy designed as an intervention model in chapter five played a major role in the auditioning process.

There were fifteen (15) visually impaired students in total that took part in the audition exercise. Despite the fact that more visually impaired pupils were interested in taking part, most of them were unable to do so due to administrative challenges and the academic timetable of the school. Out of the fifteen (15) visually impaired students who participated in the auditions, nine (9) were female and six (6) were male. The type of audition engaged was an open audition. This type was adopted because the researcher observed that it appeared none of the participants have had any experience in dramatic theatre before, therefore, open audition

became the obvious choice. This confirms Sterling's (2017) observation that open audition mostly attract aspiring actors mostly even though professionals also participate in open audition.



Figure 3: Participants relaxing after warm-up exercise during the audition

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

This selection process for an inclusive theatre for visually impaired pupils conforms to the tenets of both critical disability theory and social inclusion theory. Critical disability theory highlights the necessity of combating prejudice and advancing equality. Thus, the process of audition, ensured that visually impaired pupils are given equal opportunity to audition for roles and not turned away due to

their impairment. Regardless of their vision handicap, all pupils were given the opportunity to demonstrate their talents and were given consideration for whatever roles they were interested in. Within the remit of social inclusion theory, it is critical to create inclusive and accessible surroundings. This included making modifications and adjustments during auditions so that visually impaired students could participate fully. The next step in the production process (inclusive theatre process) engaged in the current study was inclusive casting.

Inclusive Casting

An essential component of a theatrical workshop that attempts to develop an inclusive and diverse representation on stage is inclusive casting. Without regard to traditional standards or assumptions, it entails examining performers with a range of backgrounds, skills, and identities for roles (Gillett, 2014). The current study adopted the idea that diversity enhances storytelling and strengthens the creative process which is in tandem with the social model of disability, social inclusion theory and critical disability theory. It acknowledged the importance of incorporating people with a variety of abilities, such as students who are visually impaired, in the casting process. It highlighted the value of authenticity and representation in presenting a diverse range of people and experiences. Additionally, rather than emphasising each participant's vision impairment, the study concentrated on their talent and potential. It took into account the participants' acting prowess, vocal range, mobility, and emotional expressiveness. It sought out those who could give the characters they depict depth, nuance, and authenticity.

To take into account the abilities and talents of visually impaired students, the casting process was flexible in how characters were interpreted. To enable participants to depict characters accurately, I modified their bodies, movements, and interactions. Additionally, I included students who were totally blind and low vision in the casting process. I asked for their opinions and preferences and gave them the freedom to decide whatever roles they wanted to try out. It is important to note that this cooperative strategy promoted a sense of ownership and promoted participation in the workshop which aligns with the theory of social inclusion. In the study, actors were given consideration for parts that were not generally suited to their age or appearance. For students who are visually handicapped, this created new opportunities and dispelled myths which is exactly what critical disability theory seeks to represent and highlight.

The current study evaluated the importance of each character in the story's context for the visually impaired student. It made sure those visually challenged students had the chance to play roles that contributed significantly to the story. It tried to represent people authentically and effectively while avoiding tokenism. Each participant's individual skills and assets were acknowledged, and responsibilities that emphasised their aptitudes were assigned to them. The casting process was modified to take into account the unique requirements and difficulties faced by visually impaired students, enabling them to excel in roles that complemented their skills and interests. The study took a sensitive, respectful, and inclusive approach to the casting process. It gave participants a secured environment in which to voice their hopes and worries which is in line with the

tenets of critical disability theory. It answered all questions and concerns regarding the casting procedure in an open and transparent manner. Those who were totally blind were paired with either sighted performers (research assistants) or low-vision performers to facilitate easy movement to and from the stage.

Eleven (11) visually challenged pupils were given acting roles in the inclusive theatre performance, with five (5) of them playing lead and major roles whilst six (6) played supporting roles. Three (3) female students and two (2) male students shared the lead roles. The success of the presentation was greatly influenced by the remarkable acting skills and dedication to character displayed by these visually impaired students. Four (4) visually impaired students participated in the production as crew members as well, with two (2) male students playing the drums to show off their musical abilities and two (2) female students actively helping behind the scenes. To ensure transparency and inclusivity, I took proactive measures to inform all participants of the final cast and crew list. Following the auditions, I openly announced the performers who had been selected for each role, applauding the efforts and skills of every student who had participated in the auditions. This approach aimed to foster a positive and encouraging environment, highlighting that each student's contribution was valuable, regardless of the role they were assigned. By openly acknowledging the diverse talents and abilities of the visually impaired students, it fostered a sense of unity and camaraderie among the entire cast and crew which is in line with the principles of social inclusion and critical disability theories. I remained committed to making sure visually impaired students had equal opportunities throughout the production process and encouraged

inclusivity in all facets of the production. The students were cast completely on the basis of their unique merits and skills. I aimed to provide a varied range of possibilities that allowed each student to shine in their particular style by offering a combination of main and minor parts. Additionally, the participation of visually impaired students in crew positions, such as music and backstage support, showed off their varied skill set and further highlighted their strengths outside of performing.

It must be highlighted here that by giving visually challenged pupils a wide range of roles, the inclusive theatre questions social norms and offers chances for a more genuine portrayal which agrees with the perspectives of critical disability theory. The casting was done inclusively as the study made sure that visually impaired students were portrayed on stage in a way that captures their distinctive experiences and viewpoints. Instead of portraying visually handicapped characters as one-dimensional or tokenistic portrayals, the inclusive theatre aimed to give them depth, complexity, and agency which the theory of critical disability seeks to portray. It must be highlighted here that the partnerships and collaborations strategy of the intervention model played a significant role in this inclusive casting process. The next stage in the production process after the inclusive casting was the production conference. The next segment discusses the production conference carried out in the current study.

Production Conference

Theatre is a dynamic medium with the capacity to uplift, inform, and promote inclusivity. It is crucial to provide visually impaired students with equal

opportunity and meaningful engagement in the field of inclusive theatre. A crucial step in the creative process, the production conference provides a setting for group decision-making, problem-solving, and planning as noted by Dorn and Shanda (2016). Preparatory work was the initial activity in the production conference in the current study. The production crew, visually impaired students, and other pertinent parties were all assembled by the researcher in advance of the production conference. I saw to it that all required documents, such as timetables, design concepts, and scripts (including audio scripts), were created and circulated beforehand. After accomplishing this, the researcher went on to the next phase, which involved creating the agenda. The production conference's agenda, which covered discussions on casting, design aspects (such as sets, costumes, and lighting), music and sound, the rehearsal schedule, accessibility issues, and other pertinent subjects, was established. Prior to the conference, I gave out the schedule to all attendees so they could prepare and offer suggestions.

I gave introductory remarks at the start of the production conference, highlighting the value of inclusive theatre and the contributions of all attendees, which invariably set the tone for courteous and open communication and highlighted the workshop's collaborative nature. I led conversations on each item on the agenda, allowing everyone to contribute their thoughts, worries, and recommendations. In order to ensure that visually impaired students' voices are heard and respected, I actively promoted their engagement. I used a variety of communication techniques to meet the participants' unique requirements and to guarantee a welcoming and inclusive discussion environment. I tried to give

thorough information and context during the discussions by using vocal descriptions and in-depth explanations. By using these techniques, visually impaired students were able participate completely in the conversation while getting the information and cues they needed to understand the issues being covered. During the discussions, participants with a variety of backgrounds and skills enthusiastically voiced their opinions. In addition to empowering those who are visually impaired, this inclusive approach also produced a welcoming environment where everyone felt appreciated and heard. By providing platforms for everyone to voice their ideas, a culture of candor and respect was created. Furthermore, the verbal descriptions and thorough explanations were crucial in bridging communication gaps and guaranteeing that all participants could follow the discussion's flow. In order to ensure that people who are visually impaired don't miss any important details of the dialogue, visual components were adequately described. The use of these techniques improved the conversations' overall quality and made sure that everyone had an opportunity to share their thoughts as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4: A participant sharing his view during the production conference

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

A collaborative decision-making method that took into account the opinions of all participants was used. I promoted group consensus-building and came up with original ideas that helped shape the requirements and skills of the visually impaired students. In all decision-making processes, the highest priority to accessibility and inclusivity was given. In addition, I assigned tasks to the right people based on their qualifications, interests, and availabilities. I made sure visually impaired students had the chance to assume roles and responsibilities that matched their skills and

interests. One of the field assistants was tasked with recording the production conference's minutes and taking notes. The meeting's major conclusions, action items, and other issues were all recorded. Throughout the entire production process, these notes were a source of reference. I also set deadlines and schedules for certain production jobs. This involved setting up technical rehearsals, design meetings, and performances. I made sure that visually impaired students could access the timetable in an accessible manner and were aware of the responsibilities and expectations involved. This was done in an audio format form and was put onto their recorders and phones in the case of the totally blind students. The low-vision students were given a large print rehearsal schedule.

I summed up the important choices and directives as I put the production conference to a close. I made the next stages clear and gave each person a follow-up duty. All of the participants received commendations for their participation in and dedication to the inclusive theatrical workshop. Once again, the partnerships and collaborations intervention model were at play in this process too.

Rehearsals

As already indicated in chapter two of the current study, rehearsals are an essential part of a theatrical production process because they give the director, actors, and production team the time to bring the script to life, polish performances, and prepare for the main performance. The rehearsals for this inclusive theatre took place in three different venues: the school's dining hall, the blind unit conference room, and the forecourt of the boys' dormitory. In this section rehearsals will be discussed under the following topics: introduction and warm-up; script exploration

and analysis; sensory exploration and character development; multimodal direction and communication; blocking and movement; rehearsing scenes and transitions; technical rehearsals; and performance preparation. I will therefore begin, with the introduction and warm-up.

Introduction and Warm-Up

I started the introduction and warm-up phase by extending a cordial welcome to all participants, including the actors who were visually impaired, and introducing them to one another. The participants consequently felt more a part of the group and belonged. I prompted everyone to introduce themselves by name, role, and any other pertinent details. I established a secure and welcoming rehearsal atmosphere where everyone felt appreciated, valued, and safe. I highlighted the significance of honest communication, empathy, and understanding between the cast and crew. I pushed for cooperation and opposed any sort of exclusion or prejudice and this aligns with the theories of social inclusion and critical disability.

To encourage bodily awareness, voice warm-ups, sensory engagement, and warm-up exercises were used. This was accomplished by guiding the group through exercises that encouraged members to become more conscious of their bodies. In order to boost focus and improve bodily coordination, they were led through exercises like breathing exercises, concentration exercises, mindful movements, and stretching as shown in Figure 5. Moreover, vocal warm-up exercises were carried out to get the performers' voices ready for performance. Exercises for the vocal range, articulation, vocal projection, and breathing were included. Visually

impaired participants were urged to pay attention to their vocal resonance and experiment with their voice's various tones and textures.



Figure 5: Participants engaging in warm-up exercise during a rehearsal

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

Activities that piqued the senses were included, especially those that depend less on vision and more on other sensory modalities. For instance, I engaged them in group improvisation exercises that strongly focused on listening and responding, as well as clapping and drumming exercises to explore rhythm and sound. In addition to getting the performers physically and verbally ready, these warm-up exercises also promoted group cohesion, concentration, and sensory awareness. They laid the groundwork for the remaining rehearsals and created an environment that was welcoming and encouraging for the work to come. It must be highlighted here that these warm-up exercises preceded every rehearsal during the rehearsal process.

Script Exploration and Analysis

In the current study which sought to integrate visually impaired students in a dramatic theatrical performance, knowing the script and its components, as well as coming up with inventive ways to express the visual parts without using visuals, were the main goals during the script exploration and analysis phase of rehearsals. To ensure understanding and promote participation, the plot, characters, and themes were explored. Discussions about the plot, character motives, interpersonal relationships, and overarching themes were held among the participants. Participants were encouraged to discuss their views, ideas, and interpretations of the script. Through collaboration, the script was better understood, and people who were visually impaired were able to share their thoughts. This is consistent with the views of both critical disability theory and social inclusion theory. I identified important visual components in the script and came up with inventive ways to explain them without using visuals. The script was examined to find passages that strongly rely on gestures and visual cues. I focused on using non-visual techniques. I had to appeal to the other senses as I cooperatively came up with various ways to communicate these visual features. To supplement or replace visual cues, components including music, tactile props, spatial location, and movement were used.

In an effort to find the most effective and original ways to communicate the required visual features to the blind participants, I experimented with a variety of methods. I experimented with different verbal inflections, tones, and other sensory components like touch or props in situations that, for instance, relied on a

character's facial expression to convey the emotional content. As shown in Figure 6. The aim of this script analysis was to guarantee that the visually impaired participants had a thorough comprehension of the script and to come up with creative ways to communicate visual components that were essential to the plot, characters, and ideas. The language (English) of the script was successfully modified and adapted to the local dialect (mostly Fanti and Twi, with sporadic English used) to make it understandable and interesting for all participants through collaborative conversations and creative problem-solving.



Figure 6: Some of the participants being engaged in the process of script analysis.

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

Sensory Exploration and Character Development

In this inclusive theatre for the blind, sensory exploration and character development were essential components of rehearsals. Exercises that involved

touch, sound, and movement stimulated the participants' senses. According to Phillips (2016), inclusive theatre for the blind places a major emphasis on sensory involvement other than vision. Activities that engaged the senses of touch, hearing, and movement were part of the rehearsals. For instance, visually challenged performers were able to develop a physical connection to their surroundings by exploring props, costumes, and set elements with their hands. By including movement exercises and choreography visually impaired performers were able to express themselves physically and increased their spatial awareness.

During the rehearsals, the body and emotions of the characters were once more examined through sensory-based activities. Visually impaired actors were encouraged to explore the body and emotions of their characters through sensory inquiry. They were urged to investigate the ways in which various postures, gestures, and movements could represent emotions or intentions as shown in Figure 7. I led them in activities that elicited particular emotional states and gave them the chance to physically embody and express those emotions. Visually challenged performers were able to depict their characters in a sophisticated and real way by focusing on sensory experiences.



Figure 7: The researcher encouraging a participant to explore the body and emotions of his character

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

Additionally, I urged the actors—especially the actors who were visually impaired—to share their opinions and experiences in order to help them develop their characters. As Sanderson (2015) suggests, it is critical to establish a setting that honors the viewpoints and experiences of visually impaired performers. It was encouraged for actors to talk about the characters or situations they were portraying and their own personal experiences. The character-building process was supplemented by this feedback, which also offered some interesting viewpoints that improved the performance's authenticity. It is important to note that by actively involving the visually impaired performers in creating their characters, ensuring

that their opinions are heard and respected aligns with the standpoint and perspectives of both social inclusion theory and the critical disability theory which consider inclusive theatre for the blind as a means of encouraging visually impaired actors to express their creativity, embody their roles, and successfully convey emotions through sensory exploration and character development activities. Thus, in the current study, the rehearsal process transforms into a collaborative adventure as actors who are visually impaired were valued for their thoughts and experiences. This enhanced invariably the overall caliber and authenticity of the performance.

Multimodal Direction and Communication

Moreover, I recognised the need for multimodal direction and communication to promote efficient teamwork and comprehension among the cast and crew. I communicated verbally in a clear and descriptive manner. Kuppers (2018), observes that verbal communication is crucial to inclusive theatre rehearsals. More so, Sallis (2015), intimates that directors and instructors should provide instructions, criticism, and suggestions in plain and descriptive language. I essentially provided precise instructions, detailed descriptions of movements and blocking, and explanations of ideas and goals. The goal of all communications during rehearsals was to make information understandable and accessible to visually impaired performers. In addition to verbal communication, physical gestures and tactile cues for nonverbal communication were included. The use of touch and other physical contact to denote movement, placement, and interactions with other characters or objects were some of the tactile signals and cues used in the current study. An indication of a character's presence, for instance, was achieved

by employing a little touch on the shoulder. This substantiates the education on the creative process in inclusive theatre offered by Johnson and Matson (2018). The principles of both social inclusion theory and critical disability theory are supported by the use of tactile clues and physical gestures to aid visually challenged actors in understanding spatial relationships, timing, and blocking.

I worked with performers who were visually impaired during rehearsals to develop efficient communication techniques. As noted by Sanderson (2015), working with visually impaired actors is essential to developing successful communication techniques that meet their unique demands. I had frank and continuing conversations with them to learn about their preferred communication styles and to find out if there were any special adjustments or methods that made it easier to comprehend them. The visually impaired actors offered advice and recommendations for the use of spoken explanations, tactile signals, and other forms of communication. The entire cast and crew essentially established a shared understanding of efficient communication techniques as a result of including them in this collaborative approach. This is also consistent with the principles of both critical disability theory and social inclusion theory.

Blocking and Movement

Blocking and movement were given particular attention in the current study, which aimed to include visually challenged students in a dramatic theatrical performance to ensure safe and efficient stage navigation. The performers were first taken through the various demarcations of the stage. They were made to acquaint themselves with these demarcations. More time was devoted to this to enable the

participants to perfect the act as proposed by the time management intervention model discussed in the previous chapter. Visually impaired actors were given the chance to rehearse movement patterns and improve spatial awareness in the performance environment during rehearsals as shown in Figure 8. I held thorough orientations to make sure that everyone, including the kids with visual impairments, was familiar with the set's props, set pieces, and stage layout. With the help of these orientations, they were familiar with the performance space's physical features, which let them move around and engage with their surroundings with confidence. Additionally, interactive activities were used to highlight the spatial interconnections of the performers, objects, and the overall stage layout. Participants improved their performances and interactions on stage as a result of these activities because they gained a stronger awareness of the spatial dynamics.



Figure 8: The researcher leading a participant through movement patterns

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

Additionally, casting decisions were made with inclusion and teamwork in mind in addition to stage orientation. I thoughtfully matched totally blind students with either low-vision performers or sighted research assistants in order to support them. Through the use of this technique, visually impaired pupils were able to effortlessly incorporate their movements into the action taking place on stage, ensuring that they were completely absorbed by the performance. All participants engaged in significant exploration of methods including voice modulation, body language, and touch to assist them in properly expressing the traits and feelings of their characters. By using their special skills to portray their roles in a realistic way, visually impaired pupils were able to demonstrate their talents and contributions to the performance. Participants were invited to experiment with different vocal qualities and tones during rehearsals to find the expression that best suited their personalities. Through this method, they were able to identify the distinctive voices of their characters, which deepened and increased the authenticity of their depictions. Participants were also instructed to depict the emotions and intents of their characters through their body language, gestures, and facial expressions. Through this emphasis on nonverbal communication, visually impaired pupils were given the tools they needed to convey their complicated emotions in a compelling and emotionally resonant manner.

To ensure that participants who are visually challenged can navigate the stage safely, it was thought to be essential to create distinct pathways. This involved getting rid of any potential movement-impairing physical barriers or dangers. Actors who are visually handicapped could move around the stage without

encountering any extra obstacles because the blocking and staging took their needs into account as shown in Figure 9. I worked together with the cast and crew to establish a precise grasp of the movement paths and handled other challenges. In order to improve movement and stage presence for visually impaired actors, orientation and mobility strategies were added during rehearsals. These methods involved navigating and establishing presence on stage by exploiting sensory clues, landmarks, and spatial awareness. For instance, visually impaired performers were encouraged to retain body awareness and control while using auditory cues and physical markers to orient themselves.



Figure 9: The researcher giving direction on movements on stage

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

It must be highlighted here that by actively incorporating visually challenged students in every element of the theatre production demonstrates a dedication to social inclusion. In order to establish a setting where all students feel at ease and confident, exercises were used to help participants become familiar with the stage's layout, accessories, and set pieces. By offering introductions and engaging activities, the theatre production made sure that visually impaired pupils were not shut out of the performance area and thereby took active part in their surroundings. Additionally, the casting choices, which connected visually impaired students with low-vision performers or sighted research assistants, were an excellent example of the social inclusion principle since they encourage cooperation and mutual support among all participants, regardless of their visual skills. This strategy fosters a sense of community and camaraderie among the cast and crew by highlighting the importance of each person's specific contributions to the success of the production.

Furthermore, it supports critical disability theory by refuting prevalent views on disability and practices. It disproves the idea that vision impairment prevents people from participating in theater and emphasises the skills and talents of visually impaired students as actors and performers. Through the use of methods like voice modulation, body language, and touch, performers are able to interact with their characters in a variety of ways that go beyond the limitations of traditional concepts of performance that rely exclusively on visual clues. The theater performance questions ableist narratives and advances a more inclusive and equitable representation of disability in the performing arts by encouraging visually

impaired students to embrace their own skills and perspectives. The strategy of exploring and experimenting with different vocal characteristics and tones also emphasizes the notion that a disability should not be viewed as a restriction but rather as a chance to reinvent and expand the parameters of artistic expression.

Rehearsing Scenes and Transitions

The emphasis during the rehearsal phase for these inclusive theatre scenes and transitions was on perfecting each scene, emphasising line delivery, character interactions, emotional depth, and making sure that scenes flow well into one another. In order to achieve the goals of the current study, collaborative scene work becomes a crucial component of inclusive theatre for the visually impaired as emphasized by Phillips (2016) and Sanderson (2015). It encourages collaboration, creativity, and shared ownership of the production. The importance of collaborative work, in which the entire cast functions as one coherent unit, was emphasised by this inclusive theatre. I fostered a collaborative and team-oriented atmosphere during scene rehearsals. I encouraged a sense of community by creating common objectives. I continued by stressing the value of helping one another and responding to one another in order to foster possibilities for group exploration and improvisation. With the strategy I used, performers who were visually impaired could actively contribute their special skills and views to the scene work.

More so, I rehearsed certain scenes, concentrating on the delivery of words, character relationships, and emotional nuance. Each scene was meticulously rehearsed during the rehearsal period, with special attention paid to the words, timing, and delivery of dialogue. Both sighted and visually impaired actors were

given guidance in bringing out the emotional depth needed for the sequence and expressing their roles in an honest manner. In order to depict the personalities of their roles, actors were encouraged to experiment with vocal diversity by exploring various tones, pitches, and accents. I stressed the use of pauses to elicit strong feelings, communicate dramatic effect, and provide opportunities for deep introspection. Actors were guided on how to convey emotions, reactions, and interactions through non-verbal indicators like body language, gestures, and facial expressions as show in Figure 10.

Furthermore, the performers' movements were guided by tactile and auditory cues that were provided to ensure smooth scene transitions. Actors were assisted in anticipating and seamlessly transitioning into the next scene by the use of sound effects and music that match the mood and theme of the scene that will follow.



Figure 10: Participants rehearsing one of the scenes

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

During scene transitions, dialogue cues were also employed to let actors know when to start moving or alter their positions. Tactile markers were used to designate distinct locations and sections on the stage. To help actors find their spots and direct their motions during transitions, props and set elements with distinctive textures were used. To make sure they would support actors who were visually impaired in an effective way without getting in the way of the performance as a whole, I collaboratively explored and tried various tactile aspects with the production team.

The main purpose was to ensure that actors who are totally blind or have low vision may transition between scenes without disrupting the performance's flow. According to the current study, it is crucial for performers, stagehands, and directors to communicate clearly and effectively in order for everyone to be aware of their cues and motions throughout transitions. Scenes were performed several times during the rehearsal period of this inclusive theatre workshop, resolving any problems that came up and perfecting the timing and coordination of actions. The fact that actors were encouraged to offer criticism and ideas for enhancing the scenes and transitions always cultivated a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.

Technical Rehearsal

In production, the use of audio cues, music, and other auditory elements is crucial for establishing the mood, creating the atmosphere and environment, and conveying crucial information as explained by Johnson and Matson (2018), Philips (2016), and Sanderson (2015). It was crucial to successfully incorporate these

components during the rehearsals. This required perfecting the timing and execution of sound cues, working with musicians, the sound designer, and making sure visually impaired performers are familiar with the auditory signals they need to respond to or engage with. I coordinated with the technical team to make sure that all non-visual effects, including props, and costumes, were planned and executed in a way that supported the performance's accessibility and diversity.

Set changes and sound cues, for example, needed to be harmoniously incorporated with the performances. To achieve a seamless and synchronised execution, I rehearsed and planned these transitions. This was accomplished by establishing clear lines of communication between the technical team, cast, and crew so that everyone was aware of timing and cues. Actors who are visually impaired received particular guidance and support during these transitions to ensure their safety and smooth integration into the performance. Run-throughs of the technical components were done to make sure they improved the experience for the visually impaired participants. Technical aspects of the performance, such as sound, props, costume and make-up, and other non-visual effects, were integrated during a dedicated rehearsal time scheduled for this exercise. I carefully watched the interactions between the technical components, the actors, and the general plot during these run-throughs. To make sure they improve the experience of the visually impaired participants and add to the overall narrative, I continually assessed and improved the technical components.

It must be emphasised here that the performance did not make use of lights due to the nature of the performance being an outdoor matinee. Given the daytime

setting, natural lighting from the sun provided ample visibility for both sighted, visually impaired, and deaf audience members. Outdoor performances take advantage of the natural environment, allowing participants to engage with the sensory aspects of the surroundings. By embracing the outdoor setting and the available natural light, the study created a unique experience that focused on other sensory elements, such as sound, touch, and the performers' voices, to convey the story and engage all participants. This decision enabled the visually impaired students to fully immerse themselves in the performance without the need for artificial lighting, emphasising inclusivity and accessibility in a creative and outdoor theatrical setting.

Performance Preparation

In inclusive theatre for the visually impaired, performance preparation is a crucial step since it is at this point that all the elements of the production come together to produce a seamless and powerful performance. In this phase, a variety of tasks and factors were taken into account to make sure that every component of the production aims to interest and enthrall audiences regardless of their visual ability and adheres to the inclusive vision. I held dress rehearsals where I integrated the costumes, makeup, and sound, simulating the actual circumstances of the performance. This made it possible for the actors who were visually impaired to move around and engage with the entire set. The performance's set was purposefully kept basic, with a single white curtain serving as the backdrop, as shown in Figure 11. This straightforward strategy, nevertheless, was not what the study had in mind when it first started; a more complex set was supposed to be

constructed. Unfortunately, there were administrative and technical issues with the venue for the performance that the school was unable to resolve in the allotted time. As a result, the study had to make adjustments and give up building the set as initially intended.

Although the lack of an elaborate set was a problem, it also gave room for creativity, adaptability, and flexibility. The choice to utilise a plain white curtain as the backdrop allowed the audience's attention to turn away from the backdrop and onto the performers and their performances, showcasing the skills and efforts of the visually impaired students. The production highlighted the strength and the depth of emotions shown by the actors by embracing the simplicity of the set, highlighting their talents without the need for elaborate stage props.



Figure 11: The technical team working on the backdrop

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

The performance's inclusiveness was not hampered by the unanticipated change in stage design. The study's inclusion of a set showed its initial dedication to providing an immersive and visually appealing experience for both the actors and the audience. The difficulties the performance venue encountered served as a reminder of the value of adaptability and flexibility while working in inclusive theatre environments. Despite the limitations, the performance was able to effectively communicate its message and engage the audience, showcasing the tenacity and inventiveness of everyone engaged in the production.

Running dress rehearsals with all of the technical components enabled me to test and adjust the sensory cues and cues associated with costumes, makeup and the surrounding set design as shown in Figure 12. It gave me the chance to check that the technical features, such as balanced sound levels and efficient set transitions, were working properly. During these rehearsals, I focused on identifying and making the required alterations and improvements to improve the inclusion and accessibility of the performance.



Figure 12: A scene during dress rehearsals

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission

To make sure that the visually challenged actors could move across the stage successfully, the blocking was fine-tuned and finalised during the performance preparation period. Actors were given precise directions about how to move around the stage, make entrances, and leave the stage while taking into account their visual constraints. In order to provide cues that visually impaired actors could easily understand and react to, a unified system had to be established. For a seamless and compelling experience, the timing was precisely adjusted. As part of this, movements, entrances, and exits had to be timed in accordance with sound effects and other cues. To improve production, several run-throughs were conducted. The visually impaired actors were able to establish a feeling of flow, rhythm, and continuity in their performances since full run-throughs were conducted without

any interruptions and breaks. Additionally, the run-throughs offered a chance to identify potential difficulties with the performance, and the appropriate adjustments were then made. By finalising blocking, cues, timing, and all the production elements, the final technical and dress rehearsal which is sometimes referred to as mock performance concluded the rehearsal process. The next phase in the production process was the main performance. The next section presents and discusses the main performance.

The main performance

The main performance of a theatrical production is the culmination of the entire creative and production process because it is when the artistic vision, technical requirements, and outcomes of rehearsals are all combined in a live presentation for an audience as Oddey (2013) notes. In the forecourt of the school's boys' dormitories, a fascinating outdoor matinee of "*The Talent Show*," an inclusive dramatic theatre performance, took place. This outstanding presentation promoted inclusivity, creativity, and a feeling of community by showcasing the skills and abilities of students who are visually impaired. "*The Talent Show*" transcended apparent barriers and provided a transforming experience for both the actors and the audience through careful planning, the inclusion of non-visual components, and a commitment to accessibility.

The decision to hold the performance as an outdoor matinee in the forecourt of the school's boys' dormitory enabled the stage to be illuminated by natural sunshine, resulting in an enchanting ambiance for all guests. The open-air setting as shown in Figure 13, embraced by the warm sunshine and soft breeze, offered a

distinctive backdrop for the story as it developed. It provided as a figurative canvas for the visually impaired students to create a rich tapestry of feeling and imagination. The script for the performance was carefully modified and adapted to enhance accessibility and participation for visually impaired students. Visual elements were given life in ways beyond conventional sight by using tactile elements. Every participant was able to actively contribute to the story by empathizing with their characters and embracing their parts thanks to the modified and adapted script. A lively and engrossing delivery of the script was made possible by rehearsals. Both sighted and visually impaired actors committed themselves to honing their line delivery, creating genuine character relationships, and delving deeply into their emotions. The actors who were visually impaired were able to portray the goals, motivations, and relationships of their characters with realism and depth by using methods including voice modulation, body language, and touch.

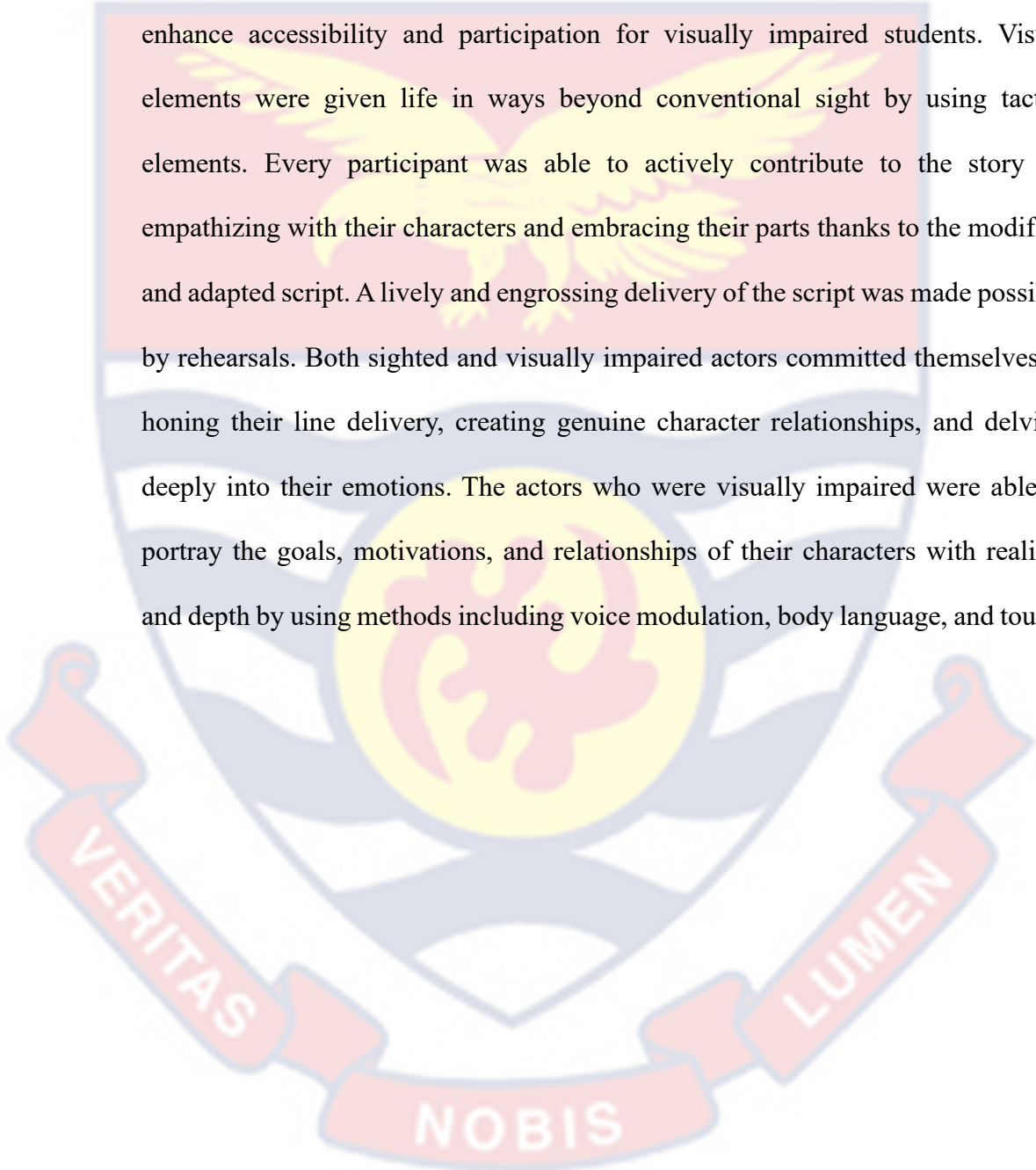




Figure 13: The open-air setting of the performance venue

Source: Photo taken by the author, 2023, and used with permission.

Invitations were extended to a wide range of guests, ensuring a diverse and inclusive audience for "*The Talent Show*" performance. These included my supervisors and colleagues from the University of Cape Coast, who brought their support and encouragement for the visually impaired students' artistic endeavors. The staff of CAPEDEAF/BLIND, including the esteemed headmaster, were also invited to witness the talents of their students. The students (both deaf and visually impaired) within the school itself eagerly attended, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie among the student body. Additionally, neighboring schools were invited, promoting community engagement and showcasing the inclusive nature of the event to a broader audience. By extending invitations to a diverse range of

guests, the performance fostered a sense of inclusivity and appreciation for the artistic abilities of visually impaired students.

The atmosphere on the performance day was filled with excitement and anticipation. The forecourt of the school's boys' dormitory was transformed into a vibrant and welcoming outdoor theatre space. As attendees arrived, there was a sense of camaraderie and unity, with students, teachers, friends and community members coming together to support the visually impaired actors. The natural daylight provided a warm and comforting atmosphere, enhancing the sensory experience for all. Laughter, conversations, and an air of anticipation filled the air, creating a joyful and inclusive environment that set the stage for an unforgettable performance.

The performance embraced a multitude of non-visual elements, captivating the audience's senses and immersing them in the performance. The power of voice acting, sound effects, music, and physical movements resonated through the forecourt, engaging the visually impaired students, and deaf, and sighted audience members in a shared experience of wonder and appreciation. Through carefully crafted auditory and tactile cues, the visually impaired actors gracefully moved across the stage, confidently finding their positions and seamlessly integrating their performances with the technical aspects of the production. The inclusive nature of the performance extended beyond the stage. Visually impaired students, deaf and sighted audience members sat side by side, fostering a sense of unity and understanding. The performance became a catalyst for dialogue and collaboration, breaking down barriers and misconceptions surrounding visual impairment. It

served as a powerful testament to the collective strength of the human spirit and the limitless potential of individuals regardless of their physical abilities which is projected by both social inclusion and critical disability theories.

The evaluation of the actors that performed in "*The Talent Show*" recognised their extraordinary talent, development, and commitment. Together with their sighted colleagues, the actors who are blind or partially sighted showed great dedication to their roles and the plot throughout the rehearsal period. Their performances demonstrated a spectrum of emotions, deft line delivery, and a clear connection to the relationships and motives of their characters. The actors' growth and improvement were obvious as they developed their confidence, enhanced their stage presence, and meaningfully interacted with each other and the audience. The impact and authenticity of the performance were influenced by how well they were able to express their feelings and show off their individual talents.

There were a few technical issues during the main performance despite meticulous planning. Due to the production's outside matinee setting, the school's boys' dormitory's forecourt presented special voice projection issues. There were times when it was challenging to make sure that everyone could hear what was being said by the performers due to the outdoor venue's natural acoustics. All minor technical issues were somewhat offset by the integration of music which improved the audience's immersive experience. Despite the difficulties, the production team's flexibility and speedy problem-solving made sure the performance remained gripping and significant.

The audience's reaction to "*The Talent Show*" was extremely favorable, and there was a great sense of support and admiration in the air. The audience, which included my supervisor, colleagues, students, and staff of the school and students from nearby schools, became actively involved as the performers who were visually handicapped took the stage. The audience's true connection with the characters and the plot was evident in the atmosphere as it was filled with laughter, clapping, and sincere reactions. The audience members were captivated by the talents, skills, and passion of the visually challenged actors, and this was evident in how inclusive the performance was. The reception from the audience was evidence of the effectiveness of inclusive theatre in forging a feeling of unity, promoting empathy, and highlighting the transforming potential of the arts. More so to cater for the need of deaf students as audience members the main performance integrated a sign linguist who signed the dialogue for the deaf audience. For visually impaired audiences detailed verbal descriptions of the lines in the dialogue invariably replaced the absence of audio descriptions.

The main performance highlighted the wide range of skills and abilities of visually impaired pupils while showcasing their abilities as performers and artists. As visually impaired actors collaborated with their sighted colleagues, the production's inclusive aspect promoted a sense of collaboration and unity while demonstrating the value of inclusion. It was a celebration of creativity, courage, and the unyielding spirit of the visually impaired students. This performance served as a shining example of the potential for inclusive theatre to foster empathy, break down barriers, and create a more inclusive society. As the final notes of the

performance echoed in the forecourt, it left an indelible mark on everyone's hearts, reminding us of the profound impact that can be achieved when barriers are shattered and diverse voices are given the platform to shine. It was a resounding testament to the power of inclusive dramatic theatre to illuminate minds, touch souls, and inspire transformation.

Directorial Approach

It takes a careful and team-based approach to produce an inclusive theatre performance like "*The Talent Show*" that respects and makes the most of the actors' (visually impaired students) varied skills and abilities. The setting must promote inclusion, inspire creative experimentation, and guarantee excellent communication and teamwork. The style of directing adopted in the study was a hybridization of collaborative and actor-centered, collaborating closely with the cast and creative team whilst at the same time appreciating the unique skills and talents of each performer and a fusion of devised theatre method of directing and the physical theatre method of directing. I call it the Multisystem Directing. It must be noted here that the combination of collaborative and actor-centered directing, infused with elements of devised theatre and physical theatre methods, can create a dynamic and engaging approach to directing an inclusive dramatic theatre production for visually impaired actors.

The collaborative component of the directing approach highlighted the value of cooperation and open communication. I accepted the collective ideas and suggestions by working closely with the cast and creative team. This method promoted a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the artistic outcome

by acknowledging the unique abilities and views that each person brings to the production as divulged by Brown (2018). The performers and their contributions were given a lot of attention in the actor-centered approach. I made sure that each actor's distinctive abilities were highlighted and acknowledged inside the production by acknowledging their respective skills and capabilities. The actors were able to completely immerse themselves in their roles as a result of this method, which fosters the development of characters, motivations, and emotional connections. This was accomplished by having an open discourse with the actors, paying attention to their opinions, and taking into account their various points of view. By including tactile elements and other non-visual signals to help visually challenged actors better comprehend and depict the characters and the plot, I was able to take into account their unique demands and requirements.

Collaborative creativity and exploration are involved when incorporating aspects of the devised theatre approach of directing. I invited performers to actively participate in the story, character, and stage development. With the actors having a sense of ownership and creative flexibility, this technique enabled a more natural and inclusive approach to script development and its performance of it as muted by Oddey (2013). The expressive capabilities of the body and movement were highlighted by the physical theatre directorial approach as expressed by Leabhart (2016). I improved the visual aspects and produced a dynamic and visually captivating performance by combining physicality, gestures, and spatial awareness. As it allowed them to explore non-verbal communication and make use of their bodies to portray emotions and interactions, this technique was especially effective

for visually impaired actors. In order to engage visually impaired actors, I made use of the entire spectrum of sensory experiences. To improve their comprehension and connection to the story features including tactile elements, soundscapes, music, and props were used. I explored how to convey emotions, relationships, and character development using vocal modulation, expressive body language, and touch. I collaborated closely with the production crew to modify the script so that performers with visual impairments could perform it. To convey visual aspects, I included more verbal signals. I made sure the dialogue is succinct, emotive, and straightforward so that performers would devote themselves fully to their roles and the story.

I created movement strategies and blocking in collaboration with performers who were visually impaired, taking their specific needs into account. I created a performance environment that was both secure and usable by including directional signals, tactile indicators, and clear paths. I pushed and encouraged performers to experiment with their movements, gestures, and facial expressions to effectively convey meaning. By ensuring that there were clear and obvious paths, and tactile cues to help with navigation, my directing technique enabled the establishment of a secure and easily accessible performance space. I encouraged actors to experiment with their movements, gestures, and facial expressions to effectively convey meaning. I also incorporated regular breaks to manage fatigue and allowed participants to recharge. I asked the actors to physically walk through the blocking, experimenting with different paths, speeds, and levels of energy. For instance, I made them try walking in a straight line, in a curve, and varying the

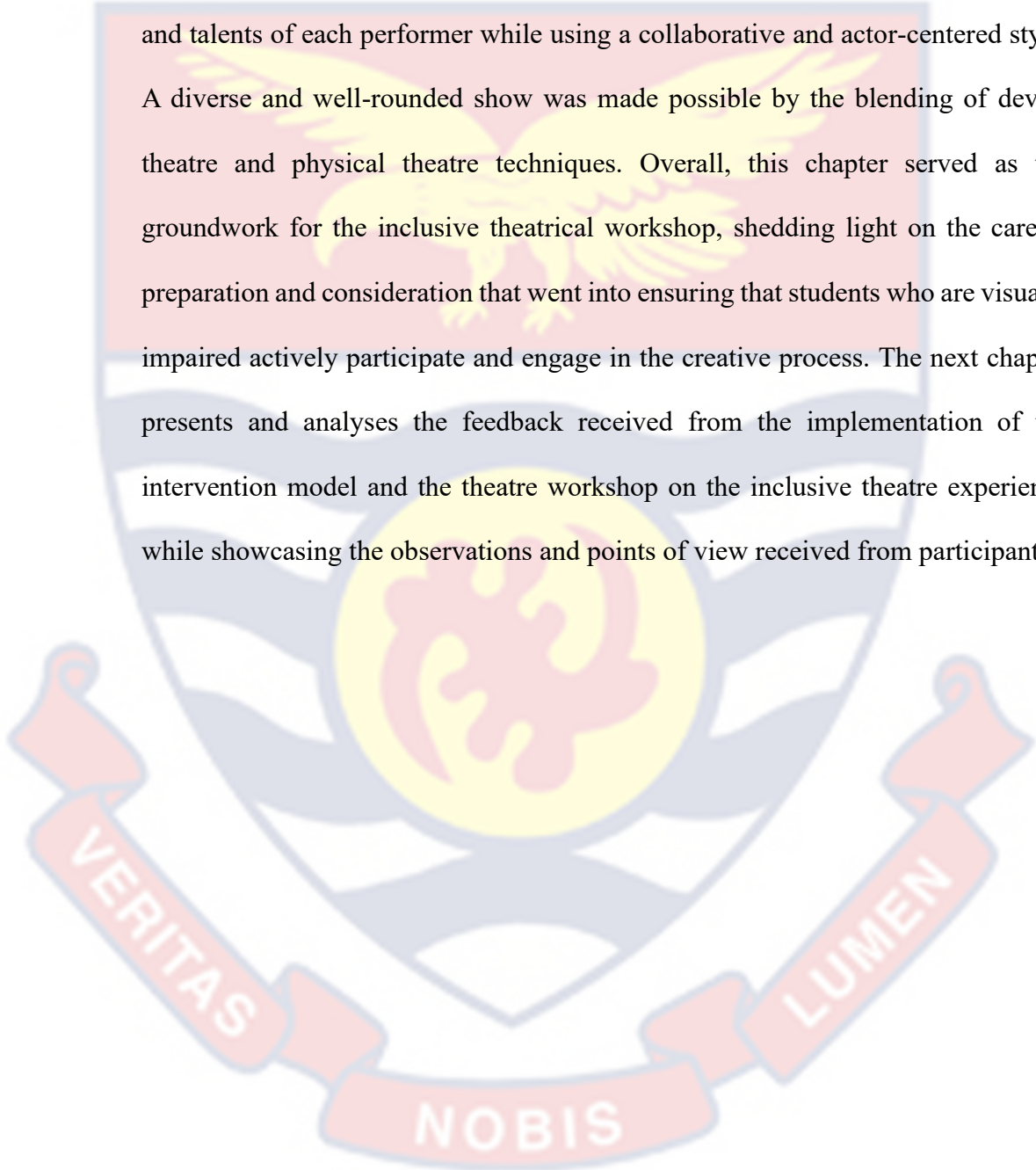
intensity of their movements to convey different emotions. Moreover, I encouraged the actors to explore and contribute their own ideas for movement within the scene.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the emphasis was on discussing the tasks and procedures involved in creating an inclusive theatrical workshop designed especially for students who are visually impaired. Script development was the first important topic covered in the extensive discussion. During this stage, special care was paid to modifying the script to make it understandable for participants who were visually impaired, adding components like detailed verbal descriptions and tactile elements to properly convey visual characteristics. The next subject covered was auditioning, where the procedure was painstakingly and thoughtfully developed to provide each student an equal opportunity to succeed, ensuring that their unique talents and potential were respected.

The chapter went into detail on the crucial task of casting after the audition procedure. The casting selections were thoughtfully done with diversity and teamwork in mind, creating a nurturing and encouraging environment for visually impaired pupils to flourish. An avenue for open conversation and preparation, the production conference that followed helped to ensure that everyone on the creative team and participants shared the same goals and objectives for inclusive theatre. With a focus on character development, emotional resonance, and approachable dance patterns, rehearsals were carefully planned and carried out to offer participants a caring environment in which to completely inhabit their characters.

The chapter also looked at the crucial role of the directorial approach in defining and shaping an inclusive theatrical experience. The director carefully collaborated with the actors and the creative team, showcasing the individual skills and talents of each performer while using a collaborative and actor-centered style. A diverse and well-rounded show was made possible by the blending of devised theatre and physical theatre techniques. Overall, this chapter served as the groundwork for the inclusive theatrical workshop, shedding light on the careful preparation and consideration that went into ensuring that students who are visually impaired actively participate and engage in the creative process. The next chapter presents and analyses the feedback received from the implementation of the intervention model and the theatre workshop on the inclusive theatre experience while showcasing the observations and points of view received from participants.



CHAPTER SEVEN

FEEDBACK IN INCLUSIVE THEATRE WORKSHOP

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of feedback from visually impaired students, instructors, and other members of the audience who attended the inclusive dramatic theatre performance. It attempts to develop a thorough knowledge of the effect and efficacy of the performance by capturing the varied viewpoints and experiences of participants. This chapter is subsumed under two main parts. The first part deals with the presentation of feedback from participants on the inclusive theatre workshop whilst the second part discusses the findings and also reviews the intervention model implemented. It explores the insights and observations offered by participants through qualitative analysis and thematic coding, focusing on the themes of artistic feedback, emotional resonance, accessibility, and the overall effect.

Artistic feedback

The feedback gathered from visually impaired students, performing arts instructors, and the audience provides insightful information about the level of involvement felt throughout the inclusive dramatic theatre performance. Participants thought about how much they related to the acting, direction, and plot. Some of the participants shared that they found the story to be interesting and realistic. Its exploration of the themes of self-acceptance, persistence, and respect for all professions struck a chord with participants who were both sighted and visually challenged.

The storyline was engaging and relatable. It explored themes of respect for all professions, perseverance, and self-acceptance, which resonated with both visually impaired and sighted participants. The narrative was well-developed, and the twists and turns kept us on the edge of our seats. It was an emotional rollercoaster that left us reflecting on our own experiences (Participant SAA).

From another perspective it was intimated by another participant that the plot was compelling and addressed significant societal issues:

The storyline was powerful and touched upon important social issues. It shed light on the barriers and misconceptions faced by performing arts people in our society, encouraging us to rethink our perspectives and break down stereotypes. The narrative challenged us to become more inclusive and empathetic, leaving us with a renewed sense of awareness and a desire for positive change (Participant SAD).

Feedback on the inclusive theatre project revealed that the plot had been expertly written, balancing poignant parts with humorous moments:

The storyline was beautifully crafted, striking a balance between humor and moments of deep emotion. It took us on a journey filled with laughter, tears, and heartfelt moments. The characters were well-developed, and their individual stories intertwined seamlessly. The storyline reminded us of the universal human experiences and the strength of the human spirit (Participant SAC).

Regarding acting, one participant said that the inclusive theatre production's acting was excellent:

The acting in the inclusive theatre performance was outstanding. The visually impaired actors brought their characters to life with such conviction and passion. Their performances were compelling and filled with genuine emotion. I was amazed by their ability to convey subtle nuances through their voice modulation and body language. It was evident that they had developed a deep understanding of their characters and the story. The acting was truly immersive and made the performance incredibly powerful (Participant A).

Furthermore, sharing his perspective on the subject matter another participant observed that the visually impaired actors depicted their characters with sincerity and depth, exhibiting an impressive spectrum of emotions:

The acting in the inclusive theatre performance was exceptional. The visually impaired actors displayed a remarkable range of emotions and portrayed their characters with authenticity and depth. Their performances were captivating, and I was truly impressed by their ability to convey emotions through their voices and physicality. It was evident that a lot of effort and dedication went into honing their acting skills, and it paid off. The performances were engaging and left a lasting impact on me (Participant DAA).

The visually impaired actors demonstrated their extraordinary talent and commitment on stage, as noted by one of the participants. They put up believable performances that were quite professional as observed by a participant:

The acting in the inclusive theatre performance was top-notch. The visually impaired actors showcased their immense talent and dedication on stage. Their performances

were convincing and showed a remarkable level of professionalism. It was inspiring to witness their commitment and the way they seamlessly interacted with the other actors. They had a strong presence on stage and their performances were a testament to their skills as actors. The acting in the performance was truly exceptional (Participant C).

Another participant informed that the characters were made to seem realistic and relatable by the visually impaired pupils' skillful communication of their motivations and inner feelings:

The acting in the inclusive theatre performance was remarkable. The visually impaired actors displayed a tremendous amount of skill and creativity in their performances. They effectively conveyed the emotions and motivations of their characters, making them relatable and believable. The performances were filled with energy and enthusiasm, and it was evident that the actors were fully invested in their roles. The acting added depth and richness to the overall production and made it a memorable experience (Participant DAC).

Certain participants expressed their belief that the directing of the inclusive theater performance was outstanding. Every facet of the production demonstrated the director's vision and direction:

The directing in the inclusive theatre performance was exceptional. The director's vision and guidance were evident in every aspect of the production. The seamless integration of visually impaired and sighted actors was a testament to the director's inclusive approach. The pacing and flow of the performance were well-executed, allowing the story to

unfold in a cohesive and engaging manner. The director's ability to bring out the best in each actor, regardless of their visual abilities, was truly commendable. It was a well-directed production that left a lasting impact (Participant SAB).

Regarding directing in the inclusive theatre project for visually impaired students, one participant intimated that the director's cooperative style encouraged a feeling of cohesion and cooperation among the performers:

The directing in the inclusive theatre performance was outstanding. The director's collaborative approach fostered a sense of unity and teamwork among the cast. The director created a safe and supportive environment where visually impaired actors felt empowered to fully express themselves. The staging and blocking of the performance were thoughtfully planned, considering the unique needs of the visually impaired actors. The director's attention to detail and clear communication ensured that each scene flowed seamlessly. It was evident that the director had a deep understanding of the capabilities of the visually impaired actors and utilised their strengths to create a compelling and inclusive production (Participant C).

Additionally, a participant mentioned that the inclusive theatre performance's directing was excellent. It was observed that the director skillfully balanced the many components of the performance, and made sure that the performers with vision impairments took center stage in the narrative:

The directing in the inclusive theatre performance was remarkable. The director's artistic vision and creativity were evident throughout the entire production. The director effectively balanced the different elements of the

performance, ensuring that the visually impaired actors were at the forefront of the storytelling. The director's guidance and encouragement allowed the actors to explore their characters and deliver impactful performances. The inclusivity of the production was a testament to the director's commitment to creating an environment where all actors could thrive. It was a well-directed performance that showcased the director's skill and dedication (Participant SAA).

According to a participant, the director's meticulous attention to movement and blocking made sure the actors moved around the stage with ease:

The directing in the inclusive theatre performance was excellent. The director's approach was sensitive, respectful, and inclusive. The director's clear communication and guidance helped the visually impaired actors understand their characters and the overall vision of the production. The director's attention to detail in blocking and movement ensured that the actors navigated the stage seamlessly. It was evident that the director valued the input and creativity of the cast, allowing them to contribute their ideas and perspectives. The inclusive nature of the production was a testament to the director's expertise and commitment to showcasing the talents of visually impaired actors (Participant A).

Emotional Resonance

The emotional resonance of the performance was one of the important facets that the feedback focused on. Insights regarding how the performance sparked feelings, sparked empathy and prompted introspection could be gained from the participants' comments. Some of the participants averred that:

The inclusive theatre performance had a deep emotional impact. The actors, both visually impaired and sighted, brought such authenticity and vulnerability to their performances. I found myself fully invested in the characters and their journeys, and the performances evoked a range of emotions from laughter to empathy. The inclusive nature of the production allowed me to connect with the actors on a deeper level, fostering empathy and understanding (Participant SAC).

Another participant said that the performers with visual impairments were able to surpass any visual constraints by effectively conveying emotions through their voices and bodies:

The visually impaired actors conveyed emotions so effectively through their voices and physicality that it transcended any visual limitations. Their performances were moving and evoked a strong emotional response from the audience. The story was compelling, and I felt deeply connected to the characters and their struggles. The inclusive approach of the production created an intimate and immersive experience, allowing the emotions to resonate even more profoundly (Participant D).

Furthermore, one participant also said that the performances were sincere and emotional. The production's inclusiveness brought another level of emotional impact:

The performances were heartfelt and genuine, and I found myself deeply moved by the experiences portrayed on stage. The inclusive nature of the production added an extra layer of emotional resonance, as it showcased the talents and

abilities of visually impaired actors in a powerful way (Participant SAD).

According to some participants, they had a great capacity to connect emotionally with the audience through their voices and body language:

The visually impaired actors delivered such heartfelt performances that it was impossible not to be deeply affected. Their ability to convey emotions through their voices and physicality was remarkable, and it created a powerful connection with the audience. The story had moments of joy, sadness, and triumph, and the actors brought these emotions to life with incredible depth and authenticity (Participant DAC).

Accessibility

Participants' comments offered information on how well the production catered for the needs of those with visual impairments and deaf, and the theme of accessibility played a crucial role in evaluating the inclusiveness and success of the performance. Commenting on accessibility some of the participants divulged that:

As a deaf audience member, I was delighted by the accessibility measures taken in the inclusive theatre performance. The incorporation of sign language throughout the performance allowed me to follow the dialogue and fully understand the story. The use of a vibrant sign language interpreter on stage was incredibly helpful in conveying the emotions and nuances of the dialogue. The inclusive nature of the production made it accessible and enjoyable for both visually impaired and deaf individuals, and I truly appreciated the efforts made to ensure a fully inclusive experience (Participant DAA).

Another participant observed that the sign language interpreter and the performers' distinct body language and facial expressions created a vibrant visual experience:

The accessibility of the inclusive theatre performance for the blind was exceptional for someone who is deaf like me. The actors' clear facial expressions and physical movements, along with the interpreter, provided a rich visual experience. These accessibility measures made the performance truly inclusive and allowed me to enjoy and appreciate the artistic expressions of both the visually impaired and hearing individuals involved (Participant DAB).

Moreover, it was revealed by another participant that the complete comprehension of the dialogue and the ability to feel the performers' emotions were made possible by the sign language interpretation:

As a deaf audience member, I felt included and engaged throughout the entire production. The sign language interpretation allowed me to fully understand the dialogue and experience the emotions conveyed by the performers. I am grateful for the inclusive nature of the production (Participant DAC).

Some participants who shared their thoughts on accessibility intimated that using thorough verbal descriptions instead of audio descriptions worked exceptionally well:

I found the use of detailed vocal descriptions in place of audio description to be incredibly effective. The actors' expressive and vivid descriptions brought the scenes to life in my mind. Their detailed vocal cues painted a picture of the visual elements, enabling me to fully understand and visualise the play. The use of descriptive language,

intonation, and pacing made the experience engaging and immersive. I appreciated this alternative approach as it allowed me to rely solely on the power of words and the actors' skills to create a rich visual experience (Participant BAA).

The decision to use detailed vocal descriptions instead of audio description was a stroke of genius. The actors' ability to verbally depict the visual elements of the play was exceptional. Their vivid descriptions, combined with their expressive voices, transported me into the world of the performance. I could imagine the gestures of the actors purely through their vocal cues. This alternative approach not only made the performance accessible to blind individuals like myself but also showcased the talent and creativity of the performers. It was a unique and captivating experience (Participant BAB).

The use of detailed vocal descriptions as an alternative to traditional audio description in the inclusive theatre performance for the blind was a revelation. The actors' skill in verbally illustrating the visual elements of the play was remarkable. Their use of descriptive language, tone, and emotion created a vivid and immersive experience (Participant B).

The inclusive theatre performance for the blind introduced me to the fascinating concept of detailed vocal descriptions, and I was blown away by its effectiveness. The actors' ability to articulate the visual aspects of the play through their voices was awe-inspiring (Participant SAC).

Overall Effect

Feedback was gathered from audience members, performing arts instructors, and visually challenged pupils in an effort to assess the overall effect of the performance. The production's importance in generating a sense of creativity, community, and empowerment was touched upon in the replies from the participants. Some participants observed that:

The overall effect of the inclusive theatre performance for the blind was truly transformative. As a blind audience member, I felt fully included and immersed in the story. The use of detailed vocal descriptions, and the exceptional performances by the visually impaired actors created a unique and captivating experience. It was empowering to witness the talent and capabilities of individuals with visual impairments showcased on stage. The performance not only entertained but also challenged societal perceptions and highlighted the importance of accessibility and inclusivity in the arts. It was a memorable and impactful experience that left a lasting impression on me (Participant BAA).

In a contribution to the conversation on the overall effect of the inclusive theatre for visually impaired students some participants also shared their opinion that:

Even as a deaf audience member, I found the performance to be incredibly powerful. While I couldn't fully experience the audio elements, the visual actions, expressive movements, and the energy of the performers were captivating. The incorporation of sign language interpreter enhanced my understanding and allowed me to follow the story. The inclusive nature of the production made me feel included and valued as an audience member. It was an amazing example

of how the arts can transcend barriers and bring people together (Participant DAA).

Adding to the conversation, a different participant hinted that the production helped the diverse audience members connect with one another and overcome their disparate skill levels:

I was profoundly moved by the inclusive theatre performance for the blind. The attention to detail and accessibility features made it a unique and inclusive experience for everyone. Witnessing the visually impaired actors' talents and their ability to convey emotions without relying on visual cues was inspiring. The production created a sense of unity among the diverse audience members, bridging the gap between different abilities. It was a powerful reminder of the transformative power of art and the importance of creating inclusive spaces (Participant SAA).

In describing the general effect of the performance, a participant divulged that:

The visually impaired actors brought such authenticity and depth to their characters, and I was emotionally invested throughout the performance. The inclusive nature of the production made me feel seen and included, and it was an empowering experience to witness the talents of individuals with visual impairments showcased on stage (Participant BAB).

Another participant disclosed that the welcoming environment and the efforts to make accommodations for a wide range of audience members fostered a feeling of community:

I was able to appreciate the performance through the visual actions and sign language interpretation. The expressive movements and facial expressions of the performers

conveyed the emotions and narrative effectively. The inclusive atmosphere and the efforts made to accommodate diverse audience members created a sense of belonging (Participant DAB).

Finally, the study revealed that a very strong and immersive experience was produced by the combination of the visually challenged actors' outstanding performances and the in-depth verbal descriptions:

The inclusive theatre performance for the blind had a profound impact on me as a sighted audience member. The combination of detailed vocal descriptions and the exceptional performances by the visually impaired actors created a truly immersive and powerful experience. It was inspiring to see individuals with visual impairments showcase their talent and skills. It was a testament to the transformative power of inclusive theatre (Participant SAD).

Discussion of results

The audience's level of involvement throughout the inclusive dramatic theatre experience was revealed through artistic feedback, which gave insight into how the play affected the audience. The artistic feedback as explained by Esper and DiMarco (2008) and Preece (2017) refers to the assessment of a performer's creative skills and abilities, encompassing areas like acting, directing, writing, and performance. The performance was of a high caliber, as evidenced by the actors' body language, expressions, and line delivery, according to participants' evaluation. The audience is more engaged when storytelling techniques are used effectively, such as captivating narratives and well-developed characters. The audience's ability to connect with the performers and develop a rapport and

emotional investment was also praised in the remarks. When asked about acting in the inclusive theatrical production for visually challenged students, the participants emphasised a strong sense of participation and captivation. They expressed appreciation for the actors who were blind for their ability to portray emotions and develop real characters. Participants expressed a strong connection to the individuals and their stories, describing the performances as engaging and engrossing. In order to convey the heart of the story and elicit a strong emotional response from the audience, the visually impaired actors had to be dedicated and skilled in how they delivered their lines and portrayed the subtleties of their characters. These comments show that the acting in the inclusive theatre production successfully drew the audience members into the story and gave them the opportunity to enjoy the performance to its fullest.

The participants' (audience) reactions to particular moments or scenes provided insightful information about the effectiveness of the inclusive theatrical strategy. The strong emotional impact, the depiction of relevant events, and the incorporation of interactive aspects that actively engaged the audience were highlighted in the feedback. These instances not only illustrated the value of the inclusive theatrical method, but also showed how the performers and creative team had been successful in grabbing and holding the audience's interest. The importance that the directing played in fostering involvement was highlighted in the remarks regarding the directing in the inclusive theatrical performance. The collaborative and actor-centered methods used by the director were praised by the participants. They emphasised the director's capacity to foster an environment that was

encouraging and welcoming and that allowed every performer—regardless of visual impairment—to stand out and offer their special abilities and skills. The actors were able to emotionally connect with their characters and the story thanks to the director's direction, as indicated by the participants which led to a performance that was sincere and had a profound impact on the audience. They understood the director's dedication to fostering an inclusive environment and bringing out the best in each performer, which sparked a strong sense of participation among the participants.

There was a high degree of participation among the participants, as evidenced by the feedback on the story or script component of the inclusive theatre performance. They commended the story's plot, character development, and capacity to stir up powerful feelings and forge an emotional bond with the audience. Participants who were visually challenged, in particular, acknowledged their gratitude for the inclusion of specific verbal descriptions and other sensory elements that made it possible for them to comprehend the plot completely. Participants said that the storyline was gripping and immersive, holding their interest throughout. The response emphasised how the performance's inclusive story strategy made sure that all participants—regardless of visual ability—were interested, able to follow the story, and able to emotionally connect with it.

Feedback from the audience of the inclusive theatrical performance brought to light the astonishing capacity of visually impaired pupils to express real, intense emotions on stage. Participants acknowledged their enthusiasm for the accurate portrayal of emotions, praising the actors who were visually impaired for their

candor and sincerity in expressing a wide variety of emotions. The performance received accolades for its capacity to arouse empathy in the audience and produce a potent emotional resonance. The feedback from the audience members showed that the visually impaired pupils had a remarkable ability to draw from their own experiences and emotions and translate them into moving performances that moved the audience.

The emotional resonance feedback also highlighted how strongly the visually challenged pupils' performance emoted. Participants noted on how well the performers were able to convey complex emotions, such as joy, despair, rage, and love, through their facial expressions, vocal timbres, and body language. The visually impaired actors received praise for their subtle performance, in which they expertly captured the depths of feeling demanded by their characters. As a result of the visually challenged students' ability to portray the complexity of their characters' feelings, the audience was able to emotionally relate to and empathise with their situations, according to participants' responses. The performances were praised as being poignant and potent, making an impression on the audience.

The opinions of the participants offer insight into the accessibility measures put in place and their effect on the general experience of people who are visually impaired. The vocal explanations that were used throughout the performance to help the visually impaired fully comprehend the visual elements of the play were commended for their utility and clarity in the comments. The accuracy, depth of detail, and ability of verbal descriptions to accurately represent significant visual features such as facial expressions, gestures, and stage sets were noted by

participants. The use of sign language interpretation for people who are deaf or hard of hearing was also commended by participants. They acknowledged the presence of an interpreter who used sign language to translate the conversation and significant vocal clues. The ability of the interpreter to convey the performance's spirit and guarantee that sign language was seamlessly included in the entire production was praised by participants.

It must be highlighted here that the feedback on accessibility, especially in regard to the vocal description and sign language interpretation, demonstrates inclusive theatre's dedication to meeting the many requirements of individuals who are deaf and visually impaired. In order to guarantee a truly inclusive experience where both the visual and auditory parts of the performance are successfully communicated, it illustrates the importance of offering numerous access points.

Feedback from the inclusive theatre for students who are visually impaired overall showed how profoundly important the event was to the participants. Participants described how the performance had a transforming impact on the visually challenged students, giving them a stage to demonstrate their talents, boost their confidence, and uncover new opportunities. The feedback emphasised how visually impaired students are empowered by the inclusive theatre experience, giving them a sense of action and fostering their personal and artistic development. Moreover, the feedback also placed a strong emphasis on the performance's instructional value. Participants recognised the educational advantages of inclusive theatre, pointing out how it improves communication skills, encourages creativity, and broadens the kids' appreciation of the arts. Not only for the visually impaired

pupils but also for their peers and the broader school community, the performance serves as a teaching opportunity. Their responses indicated that inclusive theatre fosters empathy, compassion, and respect for diversity while also helping all students receive a more inclusive and well-rounded education.

The feedback also suggests that the inclusive theatre production has a significant influence on developing a sense of community and inclusivity within the educational setting. Participants frequently mentioned how the performance pulled the school community together, fostering a shared experience that bridges divides and encourages harmony. The responses highlight the effectiveness of inclusive theatre in removing obstacles, dispelling myths, and encouraging a sense of belonging for all participants which is in tandem with the standpoint of both social inclusion theory and critical disability theory. It emphasises the significance of fostering an environment that welcomes all people, regardless of their ability, and encourages them to participate in and contribute to the school's cultural life. In conclusion, the total effect of feedback in the inclusive theatre for visually impaired students demonstrates the experience's transforming power. It draws attention to the performance's importance for the visually impaired pupils, the educational benefits it offers, and its part in establishing a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the school setting. The responses highlight the powerful and long-lasting impacts of inclusive theatre and highlight its capacity to inspire, inform, and unite people from all backgrounds.

The inclusive communication techniques used during the "*The Talent Show*" performance workshop proved to be successful in ensuring that visually

impaired students actively participated and were engaged. The workshop enabled all participants, regardless of their visual ability, to learn and contribute successfully by using methods like oral descriptions and in-depth explanations. In addition to offering important background and information, these tactics promoted fruitful interactions between the participants. An atmosphere of inclusivity, where everyone felt valued and included in the creative process, resulted from the emphasis on verbal descriptions and clear communication.

The training and development intervention strategies were crucial in giving visually impaired pupils the abilities they needed to be successful in their positions. Each participant was able to fully inhabit their character and accurately portray complicated emotions because of the individually crafted character development, emotional resonance, and movement patterns workshops. The participants in this focused training developed a sense of confidence that allowed them to provide powerful performances on stage. Additionally, incorporating tactile and aural clues during training improved the learning process and helped students connect more deeply to their characters and the plot.

Collaborations and partnerships were essential to improving the inclusive theatre experience. The program encouraged teamwork and mutual support by carefully partnering visually impaired students with low-vision performers or sighted research assistants. This cooperative method demonstrated the strength of multiple talents coming together on stage while also facilitating the smooth integration of motions. The participation of the university community (University of Cape Coast), the staff and students of the school (CAPEDEAF/BLIND), and

outside groups helped to strengthen the support system and foster a feeling of cohesion and common purpose. Despite obstacles, funding and sponsorship support showed how crucial they were to make the inclusive theatre workshop a reality.

Even though there were difficulties with funding, the workshop was made possible by the support that was on hand. Despite obstacles, the determination to secure financing and support demonstrated a commitment to making inclusive theatre accessible to students who are visually impaired.

The promotion of understanding within the larger community and the creation of an inclusive atmosphere was made possible by awareness and education efforts. The session helped to dismantle attitudes by bringing attention to the difficulties faced by visually impaired students and recognising their special talents. A change in viewpoint was facilitated by the workshops and discussions' emphasis on education, which encouraged inclusivity and empathy among participants, audience members, and the general public. Time-management strategies were essential to the successful completion of the inclusive theatrical workshop. A systematic and effective process was made possible by the meticulous planning and timing of the rehearsals, discussions, and other activities. Time management skills allowed participants to fully participate in character creation, rehearsals, and other crucial components of the production despite the difficulties caused by time limitations. The emphasis on effective time management increased the learning opportunity and supported "*The Talent Show's*" overall success.

The combination of various intervention techniques in the "*The Talent Show*" performance workshop demonstrated a comprehensive and committed

strategy for inclusive theatre for students who are visually impaired. The strategies jointly addressed a variety of issues, such as accessibility, skill development, collaborations, and awareness-building; as a consequence, all participants were able to enjoy an empowering and enriching theatre experience. The success of these strategies highlights the importance of them in developing a performance that is really inclusive, has an impact, and celebrates diversity and equality in the performing arts.

The execution of the intervention model during the workshop of "*The Talent Show*" was not without difficulties. In order to make the inclusive theatre experience successful, each one required careful consideration and adjustment. The issue of money and sponsorship assistance was one of the biggest problems. Although obtaining sufficient funding was necessary to provide accessible technology and equipment, it was not always possible. Some intended accessibility measures, such as cutting-edge tactile materials and cutting-edge audio description technology, were unable to be fully implemented as a result. Although effective, the workshop's use of more basic materials may have constrained the accessibility options available to audiences who are visually impaired. The performance space's technical restrictions presented another difficulty. Due to administrative restrictions at the school, the proposal to build a more intricate set design had to be scrapped, leaving the backdrop as a straightforward plain white curtain. This restricted the visual elements that may have been used to illustrate specific sections of the performance, which might have diminished the immersive experience for both sighted and visually impaired viewers. The crew had to come up with inventive

ways to make up for the lack of visual signals, putting more emphasis on other aspects of the performance, such as vocal descriptions and emotive acting, to keep the audience interested and ensure that the performance had an emotional impact.

Throughout the workshop, time management also proved to be a constant struggle. It took careful planning and flexibility to juggle rehearsals, character development, technical setups, and other practicalities. The overall production schedule and constrained rehearsal time occasionally had an impact on the level of exploration and polishing of performances. This time limit might have made it more difficult for the participants to properly flesh out their personas and really inhabit their roles. A few attitudinal hurdles needed to be removed despite awareness and education programs being carried out. Some participants, both within the creative team and the larger community, may not have initially completely embraced the inclusive approach since changing preconceived assumptions about disability and inclusive theater took repeated efforts. To create a setting that was truly inclusive and accommodating for all participants, ongoing education and sensitivity was required.

Despite these obstacles, the "*The Talent Show*" workshop's application of the intervention model showed tenacity and a commitment to provide an inclusive and influential theatrical experience. The team's capacity for flexibility, inventive problem-solving, and commitment to building a supportive and collaborative environment was important in overcoming these obstacles and producing a performance that was inspiring and unforgettable for all participants.

Chapter Summary

I have presented and discussed data in this chapter regarding participants' reactions to the inclusive dramatic theatrical performance in light of the study's unique requirements. Insightful information was shared during the discussion of the feedback in the inclusive theatre for visually impaired pupils. The presentation and discussions were done under four main thematic areas; artistic feedback, emotional resonance, accessibility, and overall effect. Artistic feedback emphasised the performance's engaging qualities, praising the actors' skill at acting, narrative, and audience connection. This feedback confirms how successful the inclusive theatrical method is at giving all participants a fully realised and captivating experience. Again, the feedback emphasised the genuineness and intensity of the feelings that the visually challenged pupils in their performances conveyed. Emotional resonance emerged as a key theme. The audience members discussed how the performances helped them empathise with the characters and their situations. This response highlights the effectiveness of inclusive theatre in building an audience's sense of understanding and empathy as well as a strong emotional connection.

The evaluation of the inclusivity and accommodations of the performance of visually impaired students benefited greatly from accessibility input. The feedback centered on a variety of accessibility issues, such as the effectiveness of vocal or verbal descriptions, and the usage of sign language interpretation. Participants emphasised the significance of these accessibility measures in ensuring that every audience has an inclusive and beneficial experience. The general effect

emphasised the transforming potential of inclusive theatre, which fosters a sense of community, empowers the participants, and fosters intellectual and personal development.

However, the inclusive theatrical workshop's application of the intervention model shows strengths in encouraging skill development, genuine performances, and collaborative cohesion among visually impaired and sighted participants. Impactful performances were produced as a result of training programs that improved character depiction and emotional resonance. Although technological and financial limits presented difficulties, inclusive environments were built by collaborative collaborations and accessible technology. While time restrictions had an impact on performance depth, diversity was fostered by awareness initiatives. The intervention model's accomplishments in collaboration and skill development were offset by issues with resource accessibility and societal views, leading to a transforming and empowering theatre experience for all participants. The next and final chapter provides a summary, conclusions, and recommendation based on the findings in the current study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The main findings of the study are presented in this chapter. It also highlights the conclusions drawn from these findings. Recommendations for inclusive theatre practice and further research considerations are also provided in this chapter.

Overview

This thesis aims to delve into the intricacies of creating an inclusive dramatic theatre experience for visually impaired pupils at the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind. As a result, the study was animated by four research objectives. These were: to study the impediments that hinder instructors of performing art in Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre; to design an intervention model to facilitate theatre making process for visually impaired performers; to facilitate theatre workshops for the visually impaired students in Cape Coast School for the deaf and blind by implementing the designed intervention model; and finally, to examine the feedback from the inclusive theatre performance and the implementation of the intervention model.

The study was predicated on the interpretive philosophical standpoint which invariably led to the adoption of a qualitative research approach to the study. The study focused on the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind (CAPEDEAF/BLIND) as a lab site, where the necessary data were gathered, and workshops organised which invariably culminated into a main performance. The

population for the study comprised visually impaired students and both teaching and non-teaching staff at CAPEDEAF/BLIND, and the audience for the main performance. The study made use of the purposive sampling technique of the non-probability sampling technique. The sample size was 31 which was arrived at through auditions and the principle of theoretical and data saturation. It consisted of eighteen (18) visually impaired students of which fifteen (15) were members of the cast and crew whilst three (3) were members of the audience, six (6) members of staff (four teaching staff and two non-teaching staff comprising the headmaster and a caregiver), three (3) deaf students (members of the audience), and four (4) sighted and hearing audience members. Semi-structured interviews and complete participant observations were the main data collection instruments for the study. The qualitative thematic analysis tool was employed in the analysis of data.

Summary of the Results

The study has shown that there were two categories of visual impairment at the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind. These were low vision and total blindness. Also, it was revealed that most of the visual impairment at the school was caused by congenital visual impairment. Moreover, the study revealed that music and dance form the only performing arts activities that the school engages in.

The first research question was: what impediments hinder instructors of performing art in Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre? Participants' responses shed light on the main challenges and obstacles encountered when adopting inclusive theatre for visually

impaired pupils. The responses revealed five main barriers. The absence of qualified drama instructors was first noted as a major barrier. Professionals knowledgeable in inclusive theatrical methods were lacking, which made it difficult to provide the proper instruction and direction needed to encourage participation by visually impaired students. Financial limitations were also mentioned as a significant roadblock. The organisation of appropriate performance spaces, the creation of accessible materials, and the acquisition of necessary equipment were all complicated by the lack of financing and resources. The integration of visually impaired students in an inclusive theatre was curtailed by budgetary constraints, which also limited its influence and reach.

Another significant obstacle was technical difficulties. The accessibility and immersive experience for participants who are visually impaired were hampered by the lack of assistive equipment like audio description systems or tactile materials. These technical restrictions made it difficult to communicate visual aspects clearly and to create a welcoming theatrical environment. The implementation of inclusive theatre was found to be significantly hampered by attitudinal barriers. Obstacles to fully embracing and encouraging the participation of visually impaired students in theatre activities were caused by negative attitudes, misunderstandings, and a lack of awareness among members within the school community and society at large. The last issue mentioned was time limitations. Achieving the intended level of quality and inclusivity in the theatre performances was challenging due to the limited time available for rehearsals, production preparation, and general coordination.

The second research question was: What intervention model can facilitate theatre making process for visually impaired performers? The intervention approach included a number of crucial strategies that were intended to address the barriers inhibiting performing art instructors from integrating visually impaired students into a dramatic theatrical performance. The importance of partnerships and collaborations was underlined as a way to combine the resources, knowledge, and assistance of diverse stakeholders, such as educational institutions, theatre companies, and government and non-governmental organisations. These collaborations promote teamwork and make it easier to share information and resources, which eventually will increase accessibility and effectiveness. A significant intervention technique was identified as training and development. The concept seeks to improve the awareness of inclusive theatre techniques and approaches among drama educators and theatre professionals by offering specialised training in this area. This would enable them to have the knowledge and abilities to support and actively engage students who are visually impaired, promoting a more welcoming and empowering theatre atmosphere.

The key to overcoming financial limitations was recognised as funding and sponsorship. The intervention model looks for collaborations with businesses and sponsors who appreciate and support inclusive arts projects in order to gain financial resources. These funds could be used to improve the accessibility and caliber of the inclusive theatre experience by purchasing accessible technology and equipment, producing tactile materials, and planning performances in appropriate settings. In order to overcome attitudinal barriers, the intervention model also

stressed the significance of awareness and education. This approach seeks to increase public awareness of the ability and potential of visually impaired students in the performing arts through focused workshops, and educational activities. It was acknowledged that efficient time management was a crucial component of the intervention paradigm. This strategy ensures the maximise use of the limited time available for rehearsals, production preparation, and other theatre-related tasks by employing tactics for effective planning, scheduling, and coordination.

The third research question was: How does the intervention model catalyse the implementation of a workshop for the visually impaired in Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind? The inclusive theatre workshop's implementation produced encouraging results at various phases of the creative process. Through adjustments, modifications and adaptations, the chosen play was made entertaining and accessible for participants who are visually impaired during the script development phase. Due to the collaborative nature of the workshop, all participants were able to understand and contribute to the discussions about the plot, characters, and themes. The commitment to diversity was made clear during the audition and casting process by giving visually challenged actors an equal chance to showcase their talents. The cast and creative team worked closely together to develop the artistic vision of the performance at the production conference, which served as a forum for open dialogue and creative exchange. The friendly and welcoming environment during rehearsals helped the visually challenged actors better understand the motives, feelings, and connections of their roles. Visually impaired actors were able to walk about the stage with ease because of the use of tactile

markers and vocal cues for blocking and movement. The combined efforts and rigorous planning culminated in the major performance. Each performer's individual skills and talents were given the chance to stand out as a result of the directorial style, which combined actor-centered and collaborative techniques.

The fourth research question was: How does the feedback from the inclusive theatre performance and the intervention model foster the integration of visually impaired students in dramatic theatrical performances? The audience's feedback demonstrated the effectiveness of the inclusive theatrical method, with participants complimenting the gripping play text, the genuine and emotionally impactful performance, and the accessibility measures put in place. Positive outcomes were found in several areas according to the feedback obtained from the inclusive theatre production's main performance. Participants acknowledged a high degree of engagement with the performance, emphasising the engrossing narrative, the caliber of acting, and the performers' capacity to establish rapport with the audience. Highlighting moments and situations that struck a chord with the participants showed how effective the inclusive theatre technique was at generating a compelling and immersive experience.

Another important result of the performance was emotional resonance, as audience members focused on the sincere and intense emotions the actors who are visually impaired portrayed. Both visually impaired, sighted, and deaf audience members experienced emotional reactions as a result of the play's ability to generate empathy and connection. The feedback regarding accessibility demonstrated that the adopted steps were successful in ensuring that those with

visual impairments could attend the performance. Participants appreciated how much the play's interpretation in sign language and oral descriptions improved their comprehension and enjoyment of it. The accessibility techniques used made sure visually impaired participants could access essential visual aspects including stage sets and actors' expressions, which further enhanced their experience.

Participants appreciated the performance's importance and educational value, which had a very positive overall impact. The inclusive theatre performance promoted a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the educational setting, giving visually impaired children a platform to share their abilities and gain confidence through their involvement in the arts. The responses emphasised the performance's long-term effects, such as improved communication skills, greater self-assurance, and a lasting awareness for the transforming potential of inclusive theatre.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions were reached in light of the study's findings. The results of the feedback regarding the barriers to inclusive theatre for visually impaired students have provided valuable insights into the challenges that need to be addressed. The lack of trained drama instructors, financial constraints, technical limitations, attitudinal barriers, and time constraints have been identified as major obstacles to achieving a truly inclusive theatre environment. These barriers highlight the need for concerted efforts to overcome them and create a more inclusive space for visually impaired students to participate and thrive in the performing arts.

The intervention model designed to address the barriers to inclusive theatre offers a comprehensive and strategic approach. The identified strategies, including partnerships and collaborations, training and development, funding and sponsorship, accessible technology and equipment, awareness and education, and time management, aim to tackle the barriers from multiple angles. The implementation of these interventions creates a more inclusive and empowering theatre environment that accommodates the needs and talents of visually impaired students.

The theatre workshop implemented for visually impaired students demonstrated the transformative power of inclusive theatre. Through script development, auditions, casting, production conference, rehearsals, and the main performance, visually impaired students have been given the opportunity to explore their artistic abilities, develop their acting skills, and showcase their talents to a wider audience. The workshop has fostered a sense of community, belonging, and empowerment among the participants, providing them with a platform to express themselves creatively and make a meaningful impact.

The feedback generated from the main performance of the inclusive theatre for visually impaired students highlighted the engagement (acting, directing and plot) of the audience, the emotional resonance of the performances, the accessibility measures in place, and the overall impact of the inclusive theatre experience. The feedback demonstrates the success of the inclusive approach, where visually impaired students have been able to communicate complex emotions, connect with the audience, and create a truly inclusive and immersive theatre experience. The

feedback also serves as a valuable tool for continuous improvement, as it identifies areas of strength and areas that can be further enhanced to ensure a more impactful and inclusive theatre experience for visually impaired students in the future.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations that are covered in this segment have been shaped by the study's results and conclusions. Several recommendations can be made to overcome the obstacles to inclusive theatre for visually impaired pupils. First and foremost, it is crucial to provide training and professional development programmes for drama instructors, giving them the know-how and abilities to collaborate successfully with visually impaired students. This can include meetings and sessions that concentrate on inclusive performance strategies, such as workshops and seminars. Second, by looking for outside financing and sponsorship from organisations that support inclusive arts programmes, financial constraints might be lessened. Working together with businesses, arts foundations, and governmental organisations can assist secure the funding for inclusive theatre activities. Additionally, the school and community must make an ongoing effort to spread awareness and encourage diversity in order to eliminate attitudinal hurdles. This can be accomplished through educational campaigns, seminars, and activities that promote acceptance of people with visual impairments and empathy for them. Finally, time restrictions can be controlled through effective planning and scheduling, enabling devoted rehearsal time and constant participation in the theatre activities.

Several suggestions can help to strengthen the intervention model created to address the obstacles to inclusive theatre. Creating alliances and working together with other institutions and groups that support inclusive arts can be a great way to build a network of resources and support. This may entail collaborating with theatre organisations, disability advocacy organisations, and educational institutions in order to share knowledge, access funding sources, and have a bigger effect. Second, to guarantee a thorough understanding of inclusive theatre practices and approaches, continual training and professional development are essential for all parties involved, including drama instructors, production personnel, and theatre practitioners. Regular workshops, seminars, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities can help with this. Furthermore, gaining long-term funding and support is essential to the accomplishment of inclusive theatre programmes. In order to sustain ongoing activities and guarantee accessibility for all participants, it may be required to look for grants, corporate sponsorships, and private donations. Last but not least, including accessible tools and technology can improve the accessibility of the theatre experience for visually impaired students. Examples include audio description devices, captioning systems, and tactile materials.

Several suggestions for improving inclusive theatre workshop for visually impaired students can be made based on outcome of the theatre workshop for visually impaired students. First and foremost, including more visually impaired children from other schools and communities helps broaden the workshop's influence and impact while giving them a larger platform for creative expression. Through community participation efforts, relationships with other schools, and

outreach activities, this can be accomplished. Second, creating a welcoming and cooperative atmosphere within the workshop is crucial. Further reducing obstacles and fostering understanding between sighted and visually impaired students can be accomplished by providing them with the chance to collaborate in an inclusive theatre. Exercises that promote collaboration, group projects, and open rehearsals can help with this.

The importance of continual monitoring and assessment of the workshop's effects on participants' artistic development, self-confidence, and personal growth cannot be overstated. This can be accomplished by holding many feedback sessions, conducting surveys, and conducting follow-up interviews with participants to gain information and make the required changes to the workshop's format and subject matter. Finally, including mentorship and peer support components can give visually impaired students more direction and inspiration as they pursue their artistic interests. This may entail matching visually impaired students with classmates who have more expertise so they can provide assistance and support throughout the session or appointing mentors from the theatre community.

There are a number of recommendations that can be made to improve the accessibility and overall effect of future performances, building on the feedback from the inclusive theatre for visually impaired students' major performance. Audience involvement should be prioritised by honing acting skills, script development strategies, and stagecraft in order to grab their attention. This can be accomplished through regular instruction and workshops emphasising vocal

expression, physicality, and acting approaches. By allowing participants to explore character development and emotional exploration, the second goal is to further explore the depth of emotional resonance in performances. Specialised seminars and exercises that enable participants to develop a stronger bond with their characters and successfully express nuanced emotions can help to achieve this. Additionally, accessibility measures improvement is necessary to guarantee an inclusive experience for audience members who are blind or visually impaired. This can be achieved by improving audio descriptions, investigating new technologies for improved access, and getting input from people who are visually impaired to guide future accessibility improvements.

Further Research Consideration

This study sought to integrate visually impaired students in a dramatic theatrical performance. Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn I suggest that further research be carried out on the use of emerging technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and haptic feedback systems, to enhance the theatre experience for visually impaired students.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PERFORMING ARTS INSTRUCTORS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF ARTS

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS (PERFORMING ARTS
INSTRUCTORS)**Topic: Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of
Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind**

Dear Participants, thank you for availing yourself to participate in this study. You will be contributing immensely towards the success of this research work which is designed ultimately for

academic purpose. You are, therefore, kindly requested to provide responses to all questions to the best of your ability. You are assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Please, kindly speak up and clearly in your responses for easy comprehension. I need your permission to audio record the interview.

A. Bio-data: Performing Art Instructors (Teachers)

1. Could you please tell me about yourself?

(Probe for years of experience and nature of training – formal, semi-formal, and informal and the school's profile).

B. What impediments hinder instructors of performing art in cape coast school for the deaf and blind in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre?

1. Could you please describe the categories or nature of visual impairment among your students? (Probe for mild, moderate, severe, and profound/blind)
2. What kind of performing arts activities do your visually impaired students engage in? (Probe into the nature of these activities, the processes used)
3. What are the performing arts needs of your visually impaired students? (Probe for audio aids, tactile aids, theatre workshops)
4. Why are you not integrating them in dramatic theatre performance? (Probe for technical limitations, financial limitations, training and professional development, and lack of resources)
5. What kind of interventions do you think would be helpful in overcoming some of the challenges that you have faced? (Probe for resources needed - financial, equipment, training, accessibility, technology)
6. In your experience, what are some of the benefits of including visually impaired students in dramatic theatre?
7. Are there any best practices or resources you would recommend for instructors who are new to teaching visually impaired students in performing arts?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADMASTER AND BLIND UNIT HEAD

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF ARTS

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADMASTER AND BLIND UNIT HEAD

Topic: Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind

Dear Participants, thank you for availing yourself to participate in this study. You will be contributing immensely towards the success of this research work which is designed ultimately for academic purpose. You are, therefore, kindly requested to provide responses to all questions to the best of your ability. You are assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Please, kindly speak up and clearly in your responses for easy comprehension. I need your permission to audio record the interview.

A. Bio-data: Non-Teaching Staff (Headmaster)

Could you please tell me about yourself?

(Probe for years of experience and nature of training – formal, semi-formal, and informal and the school's profile)

B. What impediments hinder instructors of performing art in cape coast school for the deaf and blind in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre?

1. Could you please describe the categories or nature of visual impairment among your students? (Probe for mild, moderate, severe, and profound/blind)

2. What kind of performing arts activities do your visually impaired students engage in? (Probe into the nature of these activities, the processes used)
3. What are the performing arts needs of your visually impaired students? (Probe for audio aids, tactile aids, theatre workshops)
4. What steps does the school take to accommodate individual needs and preferences of visually impaired students in the performing arts program?
5. What do you think are the challenges making it difficult for performing art instructors to integrate visually impaired students in dramatic theatre in your school? (Probe for technical limitations, financial limitations, training and professional development, and lack of resources)
6. What kind of interventions do you think would be helpful in overcoming some of the challenges that they face? (Probe for resources needed - financial, equipment, training, accessibility, technology)
7. How does the school ensure that visually impaired students feel included and valued in the performing arts program?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CAREGIVER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF ARTS

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CAREGIVER

Topic: Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind

Dear Participants, thank you for availing yourself to participate in this study. You will be contributing immensely towards the success of this research work which is designed ultimately for academic purpose. You are, therefore, kindly requested to provide responses to all questions to the best of your ability. You are assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Please, kindly speak up and clearly in your responses for easy comprehension. I need your permission to audio record the interview.

A. Bio-data: Non-Teaching Staff (Caregiver)

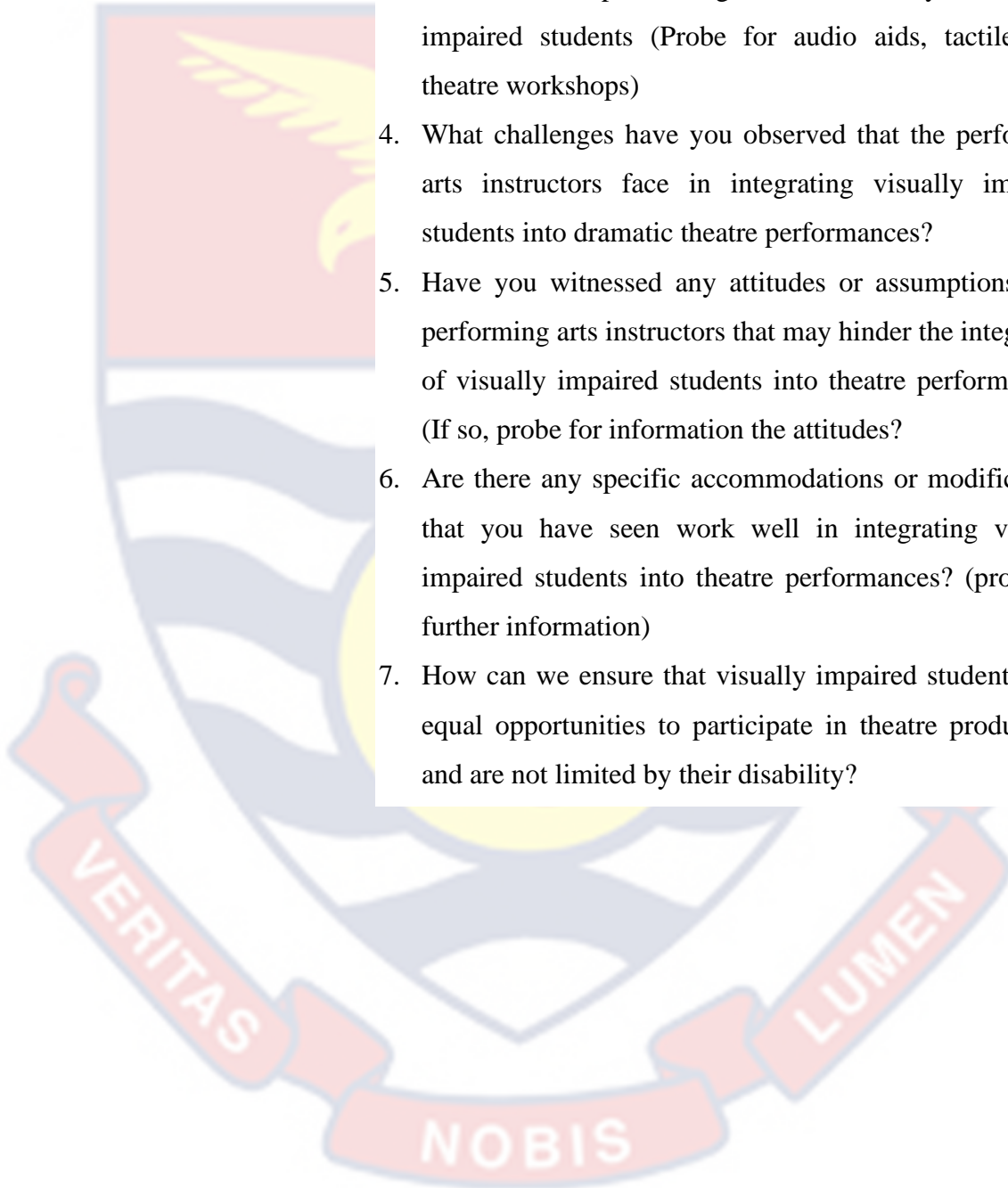
Could you please tell me about yourself?

(Probe for years of experience and nature of training – formal, semi-formal, and informal and the school's profile)

B. What impediments hinder instructors of performing art in cape coast school for the deaf and blind in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic theatre?

1. Could you please describe the categories or nature of visual impairment among your students? (Probe for mild, moderate, severe, and profound/blind)

2. What kind of performing arts activities do your visually impaired students engage in? (Probe into the nature of these activities, the processes used)
3. What are the performing arts needs of your visually impaired students (Probe for audio aids, tactile aids, theatre workshops)
4. What challenges have you observed that the performing arts instructors face in integrating visually impaired students into dramatic theatre performances?
5. Have you witnessed any attitudes or assumptions from performing arts instructors that may hinder the integration of visually impaired students into theatre performances? (If so, probe for information the attitudes?)
6. Are there any specific accommodations or modifications that you have seen work well in integrating visually impaired students into theatre performances? (probe for further information)
7. How can we ensure that visually impaired students have equal opportunities to participate in theatre productions and are not limited by their disability?



APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR AUDIENCE MEMBERS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF ARTS

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Topic: Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind

Dear Participants, thank you for availing yourself to participate in this study. You will be contributing immensely towards the success of this research work which is designed ultimately for academic purpose. You are, therefore, kindly requested to provide responses to all questions to the best of your ability. You are assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity. Please, kindly speak up and clearly in your responses for easy comprehension. I need your permission to audio record the interview.

A. Bio-data:

Could you please tell me about yourself?

B. In your opinion, how engaged were you during the performance? (Probe into specific moments or aspects of the performance that captured their attention).

C. How would you rate the quality of acting, directing and the story in the performance? (Probe - did the performers effectively connect with you and the rest of the audience? Please provide examples to support your response).

D. Did the performance resonate with you on an emotional level? (Probe - If so, which scenes or performances evoked strong emotions or elicited a particular response from you? Please share your thoughts and experiences).

- E. How would you describe the authenticity and depth of emotions conveyed by the visually impaired students in their performances? (Probe - Did you feel a genuine connection to their characters and experiences? Why or why not?).
- F. Did the performance effectively communicate complex emotions? (Probe - Were you able to empathize with the characters and their journeys? Please share any specific moments or performances that stood out to you in this regard).
- G. How would you rate the accessibility of the performance for visually impaired individuals? (Probe - Did the verbal descriptions or sign language interpretation effectively enhance your understanding of the visual elements of the performance? Please elaborate on your experience).
- H. Were there any particular accessibility measures that stood out to you as being successful or innovative? (Probe - Are there any suggestions you have for further improving the accessibility of inclusive theatre performances for visually impaired individuals?).
- I. Reflecting on your overall experience, how would you describe the impact of inclusive performance on you? (Probe - Did it challenge any preconceived notions or expand your understanding of inclusion and accessibility in the arts?).
- J. How do you think the inclusive performance contributed to fostering a sense of community and inclusivity within the school environment? (Probe- Did it have any educational value or broader implications for promoting equity and empowerment?).
- K. Is there anything else you would like to share or any additional feedback you would like to provide regarding your experience with the inclusive theatre performance for visually impaired students

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION GUIDE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACULTY OF ARTS

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Date: _____

Observation Details:

1. Participant Information:

- Name of Participant: _____
- Gender: _____
- Visual Impairment Details: _____

2. Observation Context:

- Location: _____
- Date and Time: _____
- Description of the Theatre Activity: _____

3. Observation Notes:

a) Physical Environment:

- Describe the layout and accessibility of the performance space.
- Note any adaptations or modifications made to enhance inclusivity for visually impaired students.
- Comment on the availability of tactile elements, auditory cues, or other sensory enhancements.

b) Interaction and Engagement:

- Observe the interactions between visually impaired students and their peers or facilitators.
- Note the level of engagement and participation of visually impaired students in the theatre activity.

- Record any collaborative or independent actions undertaken by visually impaired students.

c) Communication and Accessibility:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of communication methods used in the inclusive theatre setting.
- Note any strategies employed to facilitate communication with visually impaired students (e.g., verbal descriptions, tactile communication, use of assistive technology).
- Record any challenges or successes in ensuring accessibility and understanding for visually impaired students.

d) Emotional and Social Inclusion:

- Assess the emotional well-being and social integration of visually impaired students.
- Observe their level of comfort, confidence, and interaction with peers.
- Note any instances of support, encouragement, or adjustments made to foster inclusion.

e) Impact and Learning:

- Reflect on the overall impact of the inclusive theatre experience on visually impaired students.
- Note any observable learning outcomes or skills developed during the activity.
- Record any significant observations or moments that highlight the benefits of inclusive theatre for visually impaired students.

4. Additional Comments:

- Provide any additional comments or insights regarding the observation or the inclusive theatre experience for visually impaired students.

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT

PART I: INFORMATION SHEET**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Title: 'Disability and Theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind'

Principal Investigator: Joseph Ebo Mefful

Address: Centre for African and international Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast. 0244988651, ebo.mefful@ucc.edu.gh/joseph.mefful@stu.ucc.edu.gh

General Information about Research

My name is Joseph Ebo Mefful, a PhD candidate at the Centre for African and International Studies, University of Cape Coast. This research seeks to study visually impaired persons and their relationship with dramatic theatre in Ghana. The goal is to address a seeming exclusion of visually impaired persons from the numerous theatrical activities and articulate considerations that may be necessary to integrate them into such theatre experiences. This research is being done solely for academic purposes in an effort to earn a doctorate degree.

If consent is provided, you are required take part in the performance workshops and in-depth interviews as a participant. It is politely requested that you respond to the researcher's questions honestly and voluntarily. Your participation in the interview will last for 30 to 40 minutes. On the other hand, the performance workshop will last for five to six weeks.

Procedures

To find answers to some of these questions, we invite you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be required to participate in an interview with any of my research assistants or myself.

You are being invited to take part in this because I feel that your experience as an instructor and or care giver over the years and can contribute much to this discussion.

As a participant, you will be asked to share your views on the impediments that hinder you from integrating visually impaired students into a dramatic theatrical performance.

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions posed during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. The interview will take place at the Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind on face-to-face with the researcher and his research assistants. The information recorded is considered confidential, and no one else except the principal investigator (Joseph Ebo Mefful) will have access to the information documented during your interview.

The expected duration of the interview is about 30 – 40 minutes.

Possible Risks and Discomforts

There is no risk involved.

Possible Benefits

Even while you might experience some satisfaction for sharing your opinions, you might also directly or indirectly benefit from taking part in this interview. Your participation will help me to learn more about the processes involved in integrating visually impaired students into dramatic theatrical performances which invariably will help you in integrating visually impaired students in dramatic performances.

Confidentiality

Any information that is elicited through the observation, interview and documents will remain confidential. Your identity shall remain private and confidential and as such shall not appear in any reports. The lead researcher will be the only one with access to your responses. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a pseudonym and or letter/numeral labelling. I will not use your name in any of the information I get from this study, or in any of the research reports.

Compensation

There are no reward packages either in cash or kind available with regard to the interview. However, refreshment will be given during the performance workshops. The refreshment package will be in the form of drinks and pastries.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Leave the Research

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences.

Contacts for Additional Information

In case you have question about this research, please you may kindly contact the Principal Investigator and/or supervisors; Joseph Ebo Mefful (0244988651), Victor K. Yankah (0244291378), Dr. Emmanuel Saboro (0542027650).

Your rights as a Participant

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of University of Cape Coast (UCCIRB). If you have any questions about your

rights as a research participant you can contact the Administrator at the IRB Office between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 p.m. through the phone lines 0558093143/0508878309 or email address: irb@ucc.edu.gh.

PART II: VOLUNTEER'S AGREEMENT

The above document describing the benefits, risks and procedures for the research title 'Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind' has been read and explained to me. I have been given an opportunity to have any questions about the research answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate as a volunteer.

OR

I have read the above document describing the benefits, risks and procedures for the research title 'Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind'. I have been given an opportunity to ask any question about the research and this has been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate as a volunteer.

Volunteer's Name:

Volunteer's Mark/Thumbprint:

Date:

If volunteer cannot read the form themselves, a witness must sign here:

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

Witness's Name:

Witness's Mark/Thumbprint:

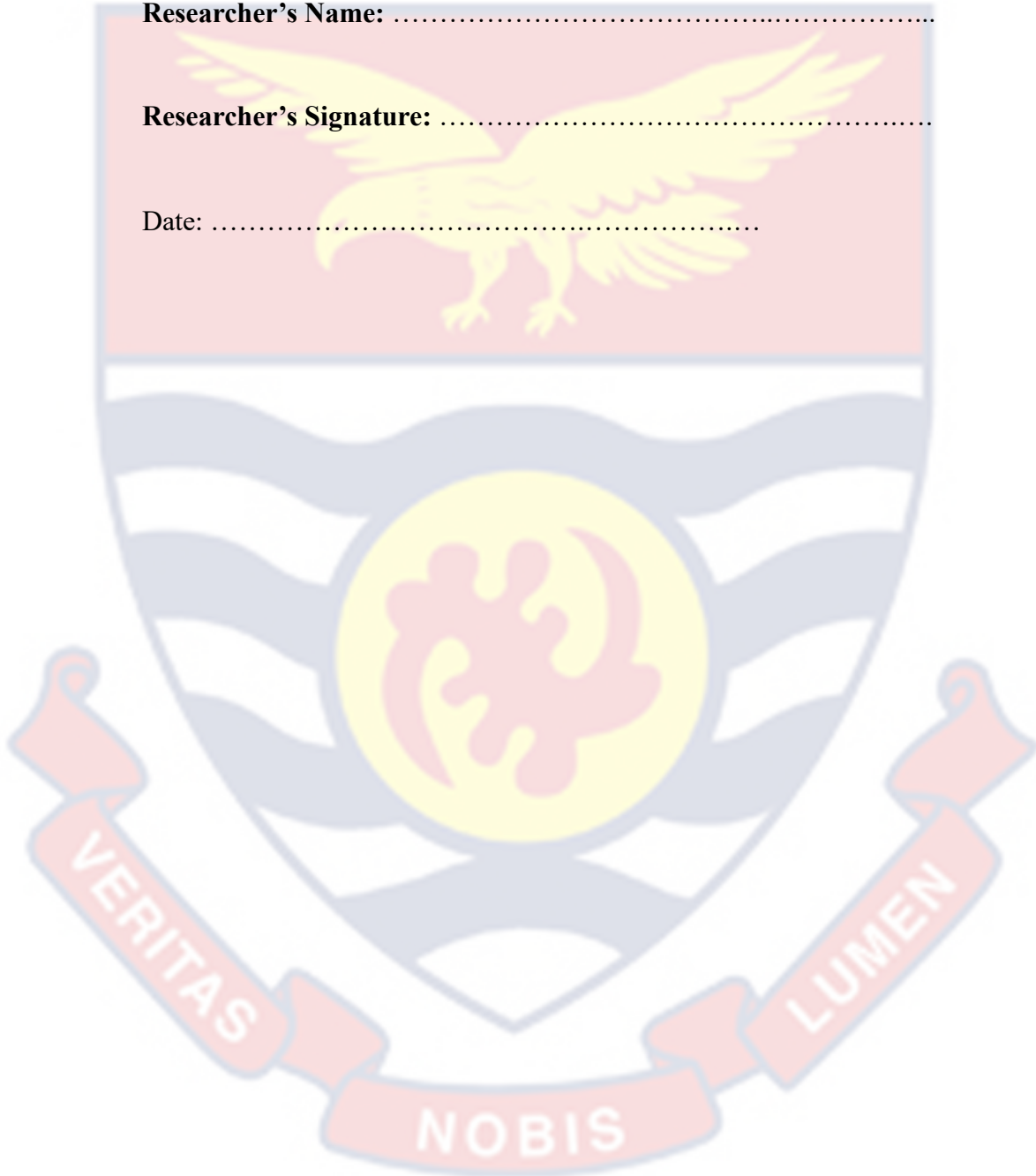
Date:

I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

Researcher's Name:

Researcher's Signature:

Date:



APPENDIX G

CHILD ASSENT FORM

PART I: INFORMATION SHEET**Introduction**

My name is *Joseph Ebo Mefful* and I am a *PhD candidate at the Centre for Africa and International Studies, University of Cape Coast*. I am conducting research entitled 'Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind'. I am asking you to take part in this study because I am trying to learn more about *the processes involved in inclusive theatre for visually impaired students*.

Procedure

If you accept to be in this study, you will be asked to *participate in theatre performance workshops*. This will take *a maximum of six (6) weeks*. The following are the time duration of each week's activity and the type of activity.

Week 1: Development of script, audition and production conference – maximum of 2hours for each meeting

Week 2: Script reading and blocking- maximum of 2hours for each meeting

Week 3: Review of blocking and script down- maximum of 2hours for each meeting

Week 4: Introduction of props, characterization - maximum of 2hours for each meeting

Week 5: Technical and dress rehearsals, work on week scenes - maximum of 2hours for each meeting

Week 6: Final technical and dress rehearsal, performance, and post-performance feedback - maximum of 2hours for each meeting

Possible Benefits

Your participation in this study will result *in developing your creative talent and also provide blueprint for inclusive theatre for visually impaired basic school students in Ghana*.

Possible Risks and Discomforts

There are no risks associated with this exercise

Voluntary Participation and Right to Leave the Research

You are free to join this study and you can stop participating at any time if you feel uncomfortable. No one will be angry with you or punish you if you do not want to participate or stop participating. Please talk about this study with your parents

before you decide whether or not to participate. I will also ask permission from your parents before you are enrolled into the study. Even if your parents/guardian say “yes” you can still decide not to participate.

Confidentiality

Any information that is elicited through the observation and interview will remain confidential. Your identity shall remain private and confidential and as such shall not appear in any reports. The lead researcher will be the only one with access to your responses. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a pseudonym and or letter/numeral labelling. I will not use your name in any of the information I get from this study, or in any of the research reports. However, the pictures captured during rehearsals and the main performance hold great value in illustrating and supporting our research findings. They will be used exclusively for academic and research purposes. I want to assure you that your confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly upheld. Any pictures used in the research will be anonymized and carefully selected to ensure that no identifying information is disclosed. Your name or any other personal details will not be associated with the images, and they will be used solely to provide visual representation and support for the research outcomes. The pictures may be used in research publications, presentations, or reports. However, any materials published or shared will be done so in a way that upholds confidentiality and protects the privacy of all participants. My research team and I will adhere to all applicable data protection regulations and guidelines to safeguard your personal information and ensure compliance with ethical standards. By participating in the inclusive theatre performance, you have already provided your consent for the use of pictures for research purposes.

It is important to note that your participation in the research project is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. If you have any concerns or reservations about the use of pictures from the inclusive theatre performance, please do not hesitate to communicate them to me. Your comfort and trust are of utmost importance, and I am committed to addressing any questions or concerns you may have.

Contacts for Additional Information

You may ask me any questions about this study. You can call me at any time [0244988651] or talk to me the next time you see me. You may also contact Prof. Victor K. Yankah (0244291378), Dr. Emmanuel Saboro (0542027650).

Your rights as a Participant

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of University of Cape Coast (UCCIRB). If you have any questions about your

rights as a research participant you can contact the Administrator at the IRB Office between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:30 p.m. through the phone lines 0558093143/0508878309 or email address: irb@ucc.edu.gh.

PART II: VOLUNTEER'S AGREEMENT

By making a mark or thumb printing below, it means that you understand and know the issues concerning this research study. If you do not want to participate in this study, please do not sign this assent form. You and your parents will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

The information which describes the benefits, risks and procedures for the research titled 'Disability and theatrical non-inclusivity: An exploratory study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind' has been read and or explained to me. I have been given an opportunity to ask any questions about the research answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate.

Child's Name.....

Child's Mark/Thumbprint.....

Date.....

Witness for volunteer must sign here:

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read and explained to the volunteer. All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

Witness's Name.....

Witness's Mark/Thumbprint.....

Date:

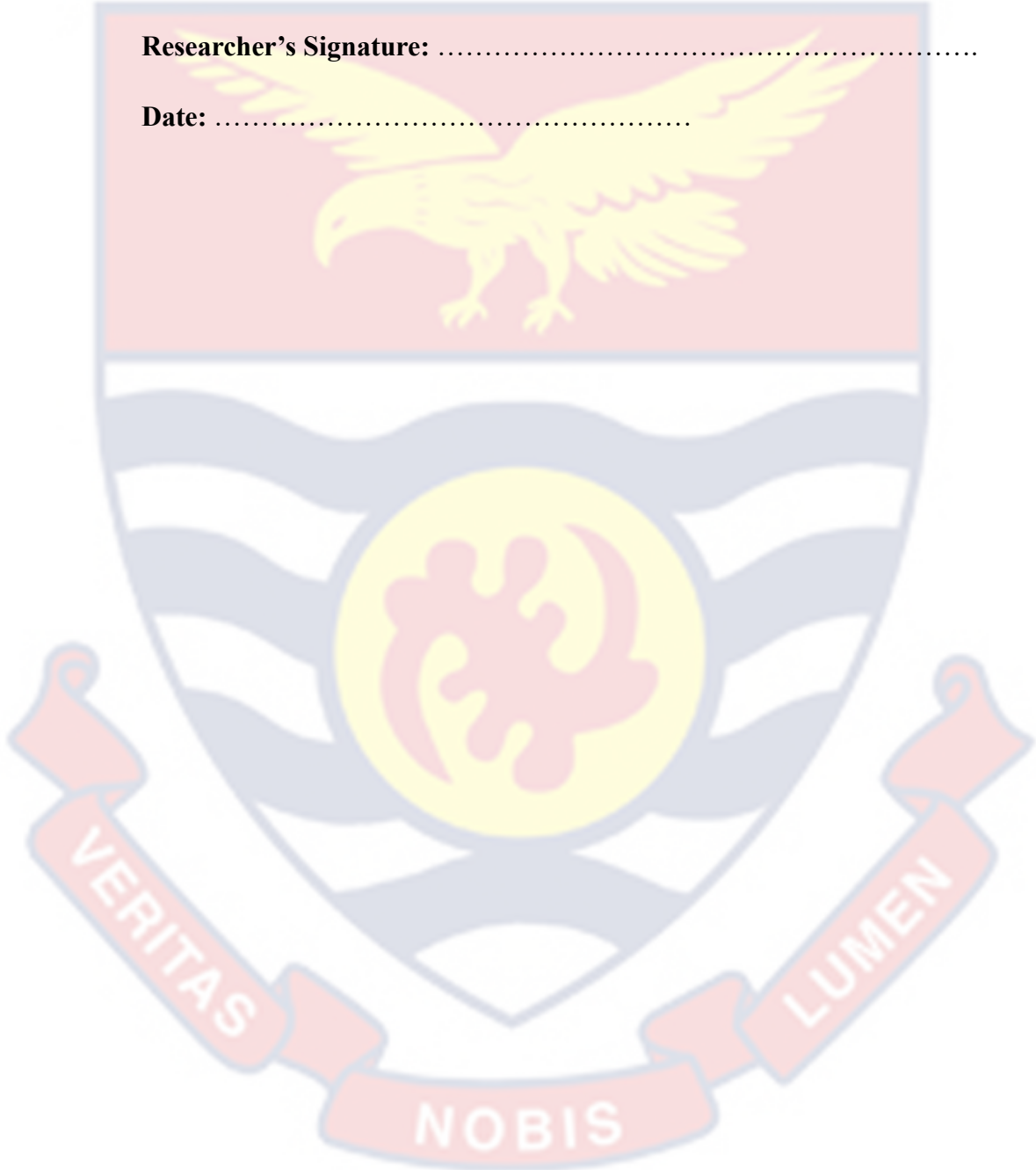
I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above volunteer in the presence of the

witness

Researcher's Name:

Researcher's Signature:

Date:



Appendix H
ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309
E-MAIL: irb@ucc.edu.gh
OUR REF: IRB/C3/Vol.1/0195
YOUR REF:
OMB NO: 0990-0279
IORG #: IORG0011497



20TH JUNE 2023

Mr Joseph Ebo Mefful
Department of Theatre and Film Studies
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr Mefful,
ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CHLS/2023/36)

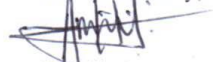
The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research on **Disability and Theatrical Non-Inclusivity: An Exploratory Study of Cape Coast School for the Deaf and Blind**. This approval is valid from **20th June 2023** to **19th June 2024**. You may apply for an extension of ethical approval if the study lasts for more than 12 months.

Please note that any modification to the project must first receive renewal clearance from the UCCIRB before its implementation. You are required to submit a periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,


Kofi F. Amuquandoh
Ag. Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST