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Assessing Teaching Facilities for Theatre Arts Education at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

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Abstract
This paper explores the availability, utility, and maintenance of teaching facilities for Theatre Arts education at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), Ghana. Over three academic years (2021-2023), a comprehensive assessment of key facilities, such as the School of Creative Arts (SCA) Theatre, mirror rooms, scenic design workshops, and other auxiliary spaces, was conducted. Data was collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis to evaluate the role of these facilities in enhancing student engagement, creativity, and skill development. The findings indicate significant improvements in educational infrastructure, which have positively impacted the quality of practical theatre education. However, the study also highlights critical challenges in the facility maintenance regime, which threaten the longevity and effectiveness of these spaces. The paper concludes that while progress has been made in providing essential facilities, sustainable management practices, including the appointment of a dedicated studio manager; an international best practice for such facilities, are necessary to preserve the educational value of these resources.
Keywords: Facility management, teaching facilities, theatre arts education, utilities, University of Education, Winneba
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1. Introduction

Theatre education relies on a blend of theory and hands-on practice. While cognitive knowledge sets the foundation, experiential learning in dedicated spaces turns ideas into impactful performances. Physical facilities are vital for this transformation, acting as platforms for refining theatrical potential. As Akomolafe and Adesua (2016) highlight, these facilities are essential for student success. Theatres, studios, laboratories, and workshops foster experimentation, technical skill, and collaboration, all critical for comprehensive theatre training. Well-maintained, well-equipped spaces ensure quality education, offering access to specialised equipment like lighting, sound systems, rigging, and design tools. Workshops and studios provide the tools and resources, such as workbenches and power tools, that support creativity and hands-on practice.

These facilities significantly affect teaching and learning effectiveness, forming the foundation for meaningful education. Availability and proper utilisation of instructional spaces strongly influence both learner and instructor performance (Audu et al., 2013). Students must access these facilities to apply their knowledge and skills. Thus, theatre education requires accessible, well-maintained facilities to integrate theory with practice effectively.

However, literature on theatre education in Ghana lacks comprehensive studies on available facilities, especially in relation to international best practices. While some studies offer valuable insights, they often overlook the

critical role of facilities. This gap calls for detailed research into the availability, utilisation, and maintenance of theatre facilities at the University of Education, Winneba. Given the rapid advancement of educational resources and technology, such a study is urgently needed to influence both pedagogy and curriculum development.

This paper addresses the gap by examining the availability, utility, and maintenance of facilities at the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Recognizing the critical role these facilities play in shaping theatre professionals, UEW has made significant strides in overcoming past limitations. This study highlights the improvements in facility provision and enhancement, analysing their positive impact on the learning environment and student engagement, while exploring the strategies for effective resource management and sustainability.

2. Literature Review

The provision of appropriate physical facilities is essential for quality education and student outcomes. Numerous studies indicate a positive correlation between infrastructure and academic performance (Earthman, 2004; Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). Classrooms, laboratories, studios, and specialised spaces create environments conducive to learning and enhance student engagement and motivation (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016).

Theatre arts education demands specialised facilities tailored to its pedagogical needs. Robinson and Aronica (2015) assert that arts programs thrive when students have access to performance and rehearsal spaces. Such facilities are vital for practical training, and their availability influences the quality of education and students' creative output (Seidel et al., 2009). Investments in infrastructure significantly enhance educational experiences.

Adequate, well-designed spaces affect academic performance and engagement (Cruickshank & Quay, 1970; Stinson & Burton, 2016). In theatre, the physical environment facilitates practice and performance (Fernández, 2021). Effective facilities provide comfort, safety, and the necessary equipment, fostering creativity and skill development (Olayemi, 2020; Guerra, 2012). Insufficient resources hinder engagement, while well-equipped spaces promote dynamic learning (Fernández, 2021).

The interplay between physical spaces and student engagement is crucial. Well-designed facilities act as incubators for creativity and collaboration. Guerra (2012) emphasises that investment in specialised spaces is essential for nurturing future theatre professionals, serving as more than just practice venues.

Theatre facilities also enhance the broader educational experience, fostering teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Their availability is key to successful theatre education. Investing in such facilities creates an environment conducive to creativity and holistic student development.

Effective utilisation of theatre facilities is crucial for delivering quality education. Guerra (2012) notes that theatre education requires spaces that accommodate rehearsals, workshops, and performances. Leitermann (2017) adds that maximising facility use involves strategic scheduling, and shared spaces can promote cross-disciplinary learning (Luckman, 2015).

Interdisciplinary collaboration enriches the educational experience, as students gain diverse skills. Modern facilities integrate technology to enhance learning. Joseph and Brown (2016) argue that incorporating

audiovisual tools and virtual reality expands skill sets and prepares students for industry demands, while also encouraging creativity and innovation in theatre education.

Theatre facilities also support community engagement. Miller (2018) highlights the value of opening performance spaces for local productions and educational events, fostering community appreciation for the arts and enriching student experiences through diverse audience interaction.

Challenges in facility utilisation include scheduling conflicts, maintenance needs, and ensuring equitable access (Harrison & Lee, 2019). Addressing these issues requires proactive management strategies, clear communication, and resource allocation to sustain theatre facilities effectively.

Maximising facility impact involves thoughtful design and utilisation. A strategic approach that integrates modern technology, community engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration will ensure theatre facilities continue to enhance both student learning and cultural enrichment.

While literature highlights the importance of theatre facilities, availability alone is insufficient. Continuous enhancement and strategic use are necessary to sustain their educational value. Balancing traditional needs with technological advancements and community engagement is crucial for keeping theatre facilities relevant and impactful.

Facility management is key to optimising educational impact. Guerra (2012) stresses that ongoing maintenance and resource allocation are essential for sustaining theatre facilities. Leitermann (2017) notes that preventative maintenance and strategic scheduling extend facility life and reduce disruptions. Ensuring equitable access for all students, including those with disabilities, is also vital (Harrison & Lee, 2019).

Effective facility management complements design and utilisation, ensuring theatre spaces foster vibrant learning environments (Guerra, 2012). Ongoing strategies, including maintenance, scheduling, inclusivity, and resource allocation, optimise the educational experience for performing arts students.

The literature underscores the importance of well-designed, utilised, and managed theatre facilities in supporting vibrant education programs (Guerra, 2012). Studies reveal their positive impact on student engagement and development (Robinson & Aronica, 2015). However, understanding the context of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) remains a gap. This study examines the specific effects of UEW's recent facility improvements on student engagement, skill development, and the educational experience (Guerra, 2012), aiming to bridge this gap by assessing both facility design and management practices.

3. Methodology

This study spanned three academic years (2021-2023) to capture participants' experiences with both the old and new SCA Theatre facilities. The timeframe allowed for comparison, as the new facility was inaugurated in 2021. A descriptive survey design was employed, with data collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis. Participants were purposively selected, including ten lecturers (two each from the Departments of Theatre Arts and Music Education), five students, and three National Service personnel. Semi-structured interview guides were designed to gather in-depth information. Data analysis used a descriptive approach, involving data reduction, verification, and discussion, leading to conclusions. Observations assessed the facilities

and infrastructure, focusing on their impact on student learning and educational support. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, ensuring participants' comfort and confidentiality, even for those who did not give explicit permission to disclose their identities. To maintain consistency, all participants were kept anonymous.

4. Findings and Discussions

The study identified several key facilities that support the teaching and facilitation of Theatre Arts at the university. These include the School of Creative Arts (SCA) Theatre, two mirror rooms, a scenic workshop, a costume technology workshop, as well as a seminar room and a conference room. These facilities play a crucial role in providing practical spaces for theatre arts education and skill development.

4.1 SCA Theatre

The SCA Theatre is located within the John Agyekum Kufuor Building, situated at the central campus of the university. This building is named in honour of Ghana's former president, John Agyekum Kufuor (2000-2008), for his significant contributions to the university. The theatre facility was officially commissioned in 2018 by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo during a Special Congregation where several dignitaries were awarded Honorary PhD degrees.

The building's dedication acknowledges the pivotal role Kufuor played in the development of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Originally established in September 1992 as a University College under PNDC Law 322, it was during Kufuor's presidency that the University of Education Act, (2004) Act 672 was enacted, upgrading the institution to full university status.

Figure 1. Front view of the main John Agyekum Kuffour's building (Source: Search Images (bing.com)

Aside the theatre, the John Agyekum Kufuor Building also accommodates lecture halls, faculty offices, and several key administrative offices on campus. These include the Office of the Dean of the School of Creative Arts, the Department of Theatre Arts, and the Department of Music Education, making it a central hub for academic and administrative activities within the creative arts disciplines.

The establishment of the SCA Theatre arose from a pressing need to enhance theatre education and practice at the School of Creative Arts. Prior to its construction, the Theatre Arts Department relied on a makeshift facility known as the Amu Theatre. Many participants in the study highlighted that before the 2018 academic year, both

the Theatre Arts and Music Education Departments faced significant challenges in providing adequate facilities for their productions. They often had to resort to improvised solutions, such as rehearsing in open spaces, unfinished buildings, or other found spaces on campus. These constraints compromised the effectiveness of the programs.

Participants explained that before the new theatre facility was inaugurated, the limited spaces available, including insufficient rehearsal rooms, outdated equipment, and a lack of proper performance venues, posed significant challenges to the quality of instruction. These deficiencies were seen as major obstacles to both student engagement and the overall learning experience, affecting the balance between theoretical education and practical application in theatre studies. The new facility therefore came handy as an advanced Theatre with its complementary theatrical elements standardised for contemporary theatre practice within the scope of modern theatre practice.

The SCA Theatre features a centralised air-conditioning system, high-resonance soundproof acoustics, and a raked ground-floor seating arrangement designed to ensure optimal viewing. The theatre is equipped with a wide array of technical facilities, including 24 Par 64 lighting instruments, 15 LED lamps, 10 profile lighting instruments, a follow spot, 3 electric fly bars, 4 curtain pipes/free pipes, and 2 transverse grand drapes. Additionally, it houses a 12-channel dimmer pack in a dedicated power control room. The theatre offers seating for up to 312 patrons and includes a box office, making it a well-equipped space for both educational and professional performances. These technical features make the SCA Theatre a highly functional space that can support a wide range of productions, from educational theatre to more advanced, professional performances. Its blend of comfort, acoustics, lighting, and staging capabilities creates an environment conducive to high-quality theatrical experiences.

The centralised air-conditioning system creates a consistently comfortable atmosphere for both audiences and performers, helping to alleviate distractions caused by heat or discomfort, thus allowing attendees to remain focused on the performance. In tandem with this, the superior acoustics of the space, characterised by high-resonance, soundproof materials, further enhance the theatre experience by minimising external noise interference and ensuring crystal-clear sound transmission. This combination of comfort and acoustic excellence plays a crucial role in elevating the overall quality of the performance, fostering deeper audience engagement, and ensuring that every nuance of sound is captured and conveyed effectively to the audience, enriching their comprehension and enjoyment of the show.

The raked ground-floor seating arrangement ensures that every audience member has an unobstructed view of the stage. This layout enhances the viewing experience by ensuring better sightlines, especially for performances that rely heavily on visual storytelling. Also, the range of lighting instruments (24 Par 64 lights, 15 LED lamps, 10 profile lights, and a follow spot) provides flexibility in lighting design. This allows for dynamic scene changes, mood setting, and the ability to highlight specific areas of the stage with precision, enhancing the dramatic effect of performances. Then, the presence of 3 electric fly bars and 4 curtain pipes/free pipes provides versatile options for moving set pieces, curtains, and lighting equipment during performances. This facilitates quick scene changes and the ability to introduce complex staging elements, adding depth and dimension to productions. The 12-channel dimmer pack in the power control room enables precise control of lighting intensity

across different areas of the stage. This allows lighting technicians to create nuanced lighting effects and smoothly transition between scenes, adding to the overall atmosphere of the production.

The enhanced technical features of the Theatre provide set designers with exciting opportunities to push the boundaries of their craft. The presence of electric fly bars allows for more intricate set designs by enabling the use of suspended lightweight set pieces, which can be flown in and out during performances. This flexibility opens up new possibilities for dynamic scene transitions and layered visuals, adding depth to the staging.

Designers can now experiment with elements that previously may have been difficult to implement in smaller or less equipped spaces, such as elevated platforms, hanging backdrops, or even kinetic set pieces that can move or rotate. The advanced lighting capabilities further support complex designs by highlighting specific areas of the stage, allowing set pieces to be integrated into the lighting scheme for added effect. In this environment, set designers are empowered to create visually stunning, multifaceted designs that enhance both the storytelling and the audience's immersive experience.

With 312 seats and an on-site box office, the theatre can accommodate a substantial audience, making it suitable for both educational purposes and larger professional performances. The box office adds an operational advantage by managing ticket sales and entry logistics efficiently. The Theatre now play host to many productions and programs such as theatre productions, music concerts, and fashion shows.

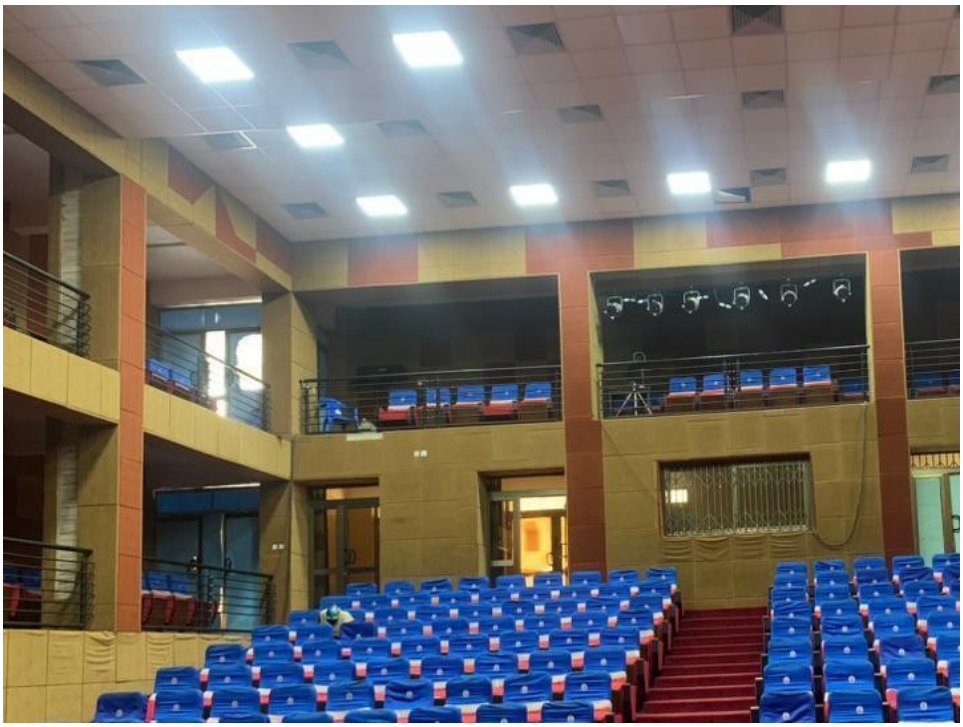

Figure 2. Interior view of the SCA Theatre (Source: Edu, 2021)

Then again, the theatre has separate changing rooms for both male and female performers, each fitted with modern amenities such as toilets, showers, and dedicated spaces for costume changes and makeup preparation. These facilities provide performers with a comfortable and private environment to prepare before and after performances, ensuring they can focus on their roles without distractions. The inclusion of these modern

conveniences enhances the performers' experience and contributes to the overall professionalism of the theatre, making it a more conducive space for both rehearsals and live productions.

There is also a waiting room, akin to a greenroom, located adjacent to the main stage where performers can sit and reflect on their lines while awaiting their cues. This space offers a quiet and focused environment, allowing actors to mentally prepare before stepping onto the stage. In providing a dedicated area for performers to relax and rehearse in proximity to the stage, the theatre enhances the flow of performances and ensures that actors are well-prepared and cantered before each scene.

The SCA Theatre stands as the premier teaching theatrical model facility among performing arts educational institutions in Ghana. Previously, students embarked on educational tours to facilities like the National Theatre of Ghana in Accra to acquaint themselves with some of the basic theatre facilities and technology. However, with the advent of the SCA Theatre, this practice has ceased. Both students and staff now utilise the SCA stage for projects and productions as part of the teaching and learning process, marking a significant advancement.

In the view of one participant, "the new theatre has enhanced our learning experience. We no longer have to travel long distances for exposure to professional theatre facilities. We can now experiment, learn, and create right here on campus. It's a game-changer for performing arts education in Ghana."

Figure 3. Student actors performing on the SCA Theatre stage (Source: Publication Unit, UEW 2024)

Figure 4. Audience comfortably watching stage performance in the SCA Theatre (Source: Publication Unit, UEW 2024)

Figure 5. Bird view of audience comfortably watching stage performance in the SCA Theatre (Source: Publication Unit, UEW 2024)

4.2 Mirror Room

One other major facility that the study uncovered is the mirror room. The mirror room is situated on the ground floor of the SCA building. The mirror room serves several important functions, primarily for rehearsals and

performer preparation. It is typically a room with full-length mirrors lining the walls, allowing performers to observe their movements, posture, and expressions. This is especially useful for actors, dancers, and other performers who rely on precise physical movements to convey character or emotion. Their key functions include dance and movement rehearsals, acting practices, costumes and makeup checks as well as self- corrections.

Movement and dance rehearsal in a mirror room allows performers to carefully analyse and refine their choreography or movement blocking by observing their reflections. This enables them to ensure proper alignment of their bodies, maintaining accurate posture and form throughout each movement. It also allows for better synchronisation, especially when multiple performers are involved, as they can visually match their timing and movements with others in the room. Spatial awareness is significantly enhanced in this environment, as performers can see how they occupy the space, adjust their positioning in relation to the stage, and ensure fluid transitions between movements. The visual feedback provided by the mirrors helps dancers and actors perfect the precision and grace needed for a cohesive and polished performance.

Acting practice in a mirror room allows actors to closely observe their facial expressions and body language, giving them immediate visual feedback that helps them refine their physical portrayal of a character. In watching themselves, actors can assess how well their expressions convey the intended emotions, whether subtle or exaggerated, ensuring that their performance is clear and effective even from a distance. They can also analyse their body language, evaluating posture, gestures, and movement to ensure they align with the character's personality, emotions, and actions. This practice helps actors build greater control over their physical performance, allowing them to adjust and experiment with different interpretations of a character. Ultimately, the mirror room enables actors to perfect their non-verbal communication, making their portrayal more convincing and impactful for the audience.

Costume and makeup checks in a mirror room allow performers to critically assess how their costumes fit and how their makeup appears under rehearsal conditions, ensuring they are fully prepared for the stage. Using the mirrors, performers can evaluate whether their costumes are flattering, functional, and appropriate for the character or scene. They can check for any issues like improper fitting, awkward movements, or potential wardrobe malfunctions that could affect their performance. Similarly, performers can assess their makeup, ensuring that it conveys the intended look and remains visible under stage lighting. This process helps them make necessary adjustments before the actual performance, ensuring that they look and feel confident and that their visual appearance enhances their overall portrayal of the character.

Self-correction in a mirror room allows performers to independently identify and address any issues in their performance by observing themselves during rehearsals. This process empowers them to adjust their posture, movements, facial expressions, or gestures in real time, helping them to fine-tune their performance without relying solely on external feedback from a director or choreographer. Seeing how their actions translate visually, performers can ensure that their intentions are clearly communicated to the audience. This ability to self-correct fosters a deeper understanding of their physical performance, enabling them to make quick and precise adjustments, improve consistency, and ultimately develop greater confidence and control over their craft.

Essentially, a mirror room is an essential tool for developing and refining physical aspects of a performance in a controlled and reflective environment and the mirror room in the SCA building is perfectly illustrated and has significantly enhanced the teaching and learning experience within the dance unit. It features four large fixed panel mirrors on the walls, allowing for easy identification and correction of movements during teaching, learning, and rehearsals. Additionally, the room includes an attached changing space and is equipped with a stage, making it a versatile, multi-purpose facility. The wooden-panelled floor improves sound quality, and the soundproof walls ensure optimal acoustics. The room is also fully air-conditioned, creating a comfortable environment for extended rehearsals.

The technical facilities in the mirror room include 9 ceiling fans, 4 split air-conditioning units, right and left side mirrors measuring 6'-7'' in height and 46'-6'' in length, and a back side mirror measuring 19'-½'' in height and 6'-7'' in length. Additionally, the room offers Wi-Fi access for research purposes. These features together create a well-equipped and comfortable environment that supports both educational and creative activities, enhancing the overall learning experience for performers and students alike.

Figure 6. Interior view of section of the new mirror room (Source: Edu, 2022)

In addition to hosting numerous practical projects, dance, and acting rehearsals, the mirror room has also served as a venue for various international organisations, groups, and individual academics who have collaborated with the departments of Theatre Arts, Music Education, and Fashion and Textiles. These visitors have utilised the space for a range of performance-related activities, recognizing its versatility and quality. Many of these groups and individuals have praised the facility for its high standards, noting its suitability for diverse creative and educational pursuits.

Figure 7. In the mirror room are lecturers from the University College of Northern Denmark who visited the Department of Theatre Arts, UEW to learn about some Ghanaian indigenous dances and practices. (Source: Publications Unit, UEW 2022)

There is also an older mirror room, originally constructed as part of the initial facilities of the National Academy of Music. Located within the old lecture block adjacent to the SCA lecture block, this facility continues to serve students for rehearsals and as a space for teaching and learning in acting and dance projects. The room is equipped with four large landscape panel mirrors, allowing performers to observe and refine their movements, making adjustments where necessary. The wooden-panelled floor enhances sound quality, contributing to a more effective rehearsal environment. The room is also fully air-conditioned, ensuring a comfortable atmosphere for extended practice sessions. The old mirror room now serves as a complementary venue to the new mirror room, alleviating some of the pressure that typically accompanies the use of a new facility. It helps distribute the workload, ensuring that both rooms can be effectively utilised for teaching, learning, and rehearsals without overwhelming the new mirror room. This balance enhances the overall functionality and accessibility of rehearsal spaces for students and faculty alike.

Figure 8. Interior view of the old mirror room, (Source: Edu, 2022)

4.3 Scenic Design and Technology Room

The Scenic Design and Technology Room is a dedicated workspace for both theoretical instruction and hands-on practical projects. Within this space, students engage in stagecraft, utilising stage machinery and tools to bring their designs to life. Given the technical nature of the course and the room's size, only a limited number of students can work on projects at a time, ensuring that safety regulations are strictly followed. According to the safety code, students must maintain a working space of at least one square metre to minimise the risk of injury or accidents. The room features student models and props on display, providing inspiration during practical work and serving as valuable references during the conceptual brainstorming process.

Additionally, a small supply of lumber is kept on-site for easy access during set construction. Known among the technical students as the "Brain Factory House," this room fosters creativity and technical skill. Located on the first floor of the SCA building, it is an essential space for nurturing the craft of scenic design. The space is equipped with workbenches for carpentry projects and is stocked with basic carpentry tools, enabling students to engage in various construction tasks. Additionally, it doubles as a storeroom for flats and other major props used in productions, providing a secure and accessible location for storing essential set pieces. This dual functionality ensures that the room serves both as a hands-on workshop and a storage area, supporting the smooth execution of scenic design and production projects.

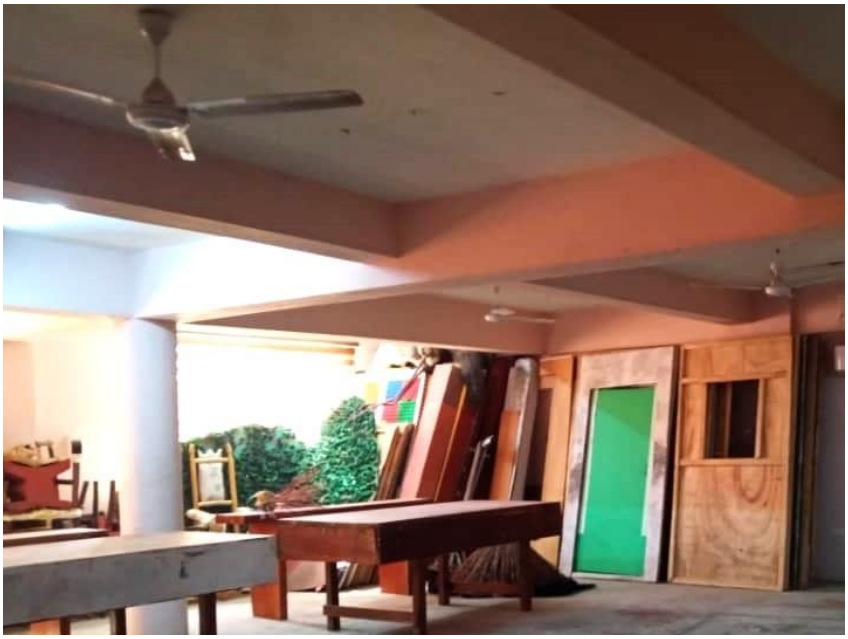

Figure 9. Scenic design and Technology Room. Source: (Koomson, 2023)

4.4 Costume and Makeup Technology Room

The Costume and Makeup Technology Room is a key facility within the department, dedicated to the design and construction of production costumes. The space is equipped with numerous wardrobes for costume storage, as well as industrial and manual sewing machines for practical demonstrations and hands-on learning. Here, students have the opportunity to design, sew, and modify costumes as required by the production or director. The room also serves as a fitting space where performers can try on costumes to ensure proper fit and appropriateness for their roles.

Additionally, students from other departments within the university such as the Home Economics and specialising in food, clothing, fashion, and textiles, collaborate with the Theatre Arts Department's technical wing, providing support with costume design and wardrobe management. This partnership enriches the learning experience, allowing for cross-disciplinary skill development. The unit is located on the first floor of the SCA building.

5. Auxiliary Spaces

In addition to the major facilities, several auxiliary spaces on campus play a vital role in supporting academic and creative activities. These include the Amu Theatre, a film editing room, a seminar room, a conference room, and a restaurant. Though distinct in their functions, these spaces collectively contribute to the overall academic environment, enhancing the experience of both students and faculty by providing versatile venues for learning, collaboration, and leisure.

5.1 Amu Theatre

The Amu Theatre served as the primary venue for practical demonstrations and theatrical productions before the construction and commissioning of the SCA Theatre. Named in honour of the renowned Ghanaian composer and

ethnomusicologist Dr Ephraim Amu, celebrated for his profound contributions to Ghanaian music and cultural identity, the theatre was a central hub for the Department of Theatre Arts. It provided a functional, albeit modest, space for rehearsals, performances, and other practical aspects of theatre education.

Despite its limited resources compared to modern facilities, the Amu Theatre played a critical role in nurturing creativity and performance skills among students. It hosted a range of productions, from dramatic plays to musical performances, and was a vibrant centre of activity within the department. Many students began their journey here, gaining invaluable hands-on experience in staging productions. Though it is no longer the primary theatre facility, the Amu Theatre remains an important part of the university's history, symbolising the evolution of creative arts education at the institution.

The theatre features a levelled seating area, which can sometimes obstruct the sightlines of viewers during performances. Originally designed as an assembly hall, the space was later converted into a performance venue with a stage to accommodate the needs of both the Department of Theatre Arts and the Department of Music Education, as well as various external programs. It remains a busy space, with rehearsals by both staff and students taking place from morning until late evening, depending on the production's requirements.

While the Amu Theatre is fully air-conditioned, it suffers from poor sound quality due to its initial design not being intended for theatrical use. However, several renovations and installations have been made to improve the sound output and functionality of the space, ensuring it continues to support the university's performing arts programs.

The Amu Theatre is equipped with several technical facilities to support its various productions. These include 24 ceiling fans, 6 standing air-conditioning units, and 4 split horsepower air-conditioners for optimal climate control. The lighting setup features 10 Par 64 lights, 6 LED lights, and 4 free pipes. The theatre is also equipped with a control room and a permanent 6-channel dimmer pack, allowing for enhanced lighting management during performances. These technical installations ensure that the space remains functional and adaptable to a variety of production needs.

Figure 10. Front view of the Amu Theatre. (Source: Edu, 2022).

Figure 11. Interior view of the Amu Theatre. (Source: Edu, 2022).

5.2 Film Editing Room

The Film Editing Suite is located on the first floor of the east wing of the School of Creative Arts building. This digital film editing suite serves as a key facility for teaching editing techniques and post-production processes in

both sound and video courses. While the department is working to acquire additional equipment to provide students with the full-scale production experience, currently, students often rely on their smartphones, laptops, and installed software to engage in the editing process. This resourceful approach has fostered a unique exploratory learning experience, where students, under the guidance of their lecturers, have successfully produced short film projects using their personal devices. These projects have impressed the faculty, demonstrating the students' creativity and adaptability despite the limitations of available resources.

5.3 Conference and Seminar Rooms

The Conference Hall is an integral facility within the School of Creative Arts building, designed to accommodate a wide range of activities such as conferences, meetings, and teaching sessions. Fully air-conditioned, it features rows of well-padded seats with foldable writing units attached for convenience. The hall includes an elevated dais to ensure clear visibility during meetings and presentations. With a seating capacity of 100, the space is well-suited for both academic and professional gatherings.

The Seminar Room, often referred to as the "brain hub" of the department, is a key space where artistic brainstorming, theoretical development, and policy discussions take place. It serves as a nurturing ground for the School of Creative Arts, fostering academic excellence. This room is reserved for seminar presentations, academic conferences, mock vivas, and graduate-level teaching and learning activities. The atmosphere is serene, encouraging focused scholarship and intellectual discourse. The room is configured for a range of educational purposes, featuring air-conditioning and executive-style furniture. The seating capacity is flexible, varying based on the nature and format of the academic discussions held there. The Seminar Room stands as a symbol of the department's commitment to fostering a rigorous and dynamic academic environment.

Figure 12. The conference room of SCA (Source: Edu, 2022)

6. Synthesis of the Findings with Literature Review

The findings of this study confirm the crucial role that well-equipped facilities play in enhancing the teaching and learning process in theatre education, as emphasised in existing literature. Akomolafe and Adesua (2016) highlighted that physical facilities such as theatres, studios, and workshops are fundamental to the success of students in theatre arts programs. This aligns with the experiences at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), where the construction of the new SCA Theatre and the various specialised rooms (e.g., the mirror room and scenic workshop) has significantly elevated the quality of practical education, thereby fostering student creativity and engagement. The improved technical facilities available in the SCA Theatre mirror the assertions made by Robinson and Aronica (2015) that performance spaces equipped with modern technology greatly enhance the students' ability to perform and create.

The positive impact of these facilities on student engagement corroborates the findings of Seidel et al. (2009), who argued that access to appropriate rehearsal spaces and technical equipment greatly enhances the educational experience in arts education. In particular, the technical features of the SCA Theatre, such as the lighting instruments, soundproof acoustics, and flexible rigging systems, have allowed students to explore more complex productions and engage in a higher level of artistic experimentation, consistent with the observations of Fernández (2021) on the relationship between space and engagement in theatre education.

Furthermore, the study supports the argument made by Cruickshank and Quay (1970) and Stinson and Burton (2016) that well-designed spaces significantly improve academic performance. The SCA Theatre's modern facilities have allowed for a more immersive learning environment, providing students with the resources needed to develop essential theatrical skills. These findings echo the broader perspective in the literature, such as that of Olayemi (2020) and Guerra (2012), who emphasise the importance of infrastructure in shaping the overall educational experience.

The study also aligns with the views of Harrison and Lee (2019) on the importance of scheduling and equitable access in facility management. The division of rehearsal spaces between the old and new mirror rooms has helped mitigate scheduling conflicts and ensured that students have sufficient opportunities to engage in practical work, a critical aspect of their training. This practice demonstrates effective facility management, which is essential to the sustainable utilisation of these spaces, as emphasised by Leitermann (2017).

However, one of the major findings of this study is the absence of a proper maintenance schedule and regime for the theatre and associated facilities at the University of Education, Winneba. This lack of systematic upkeep is causing these spaces to deteriorate more quickly than anticipated. Currently, the only form of maintenance observed is the occasional cleaning performed by the university's cleaners, who primarily focus on sweeping and occasionally mopping the spaces. Beyond this basic level of care, there are no comprehensive maintenance practices in place to address the long-term preservation and functionality of these vital educational spaces.

This finding is consistent with the concerns raised in the literature regarding the importance of regular maintenance for educational facilities. Leitermann (2017) emphasises that effective facility management goes beyond basic cleaning; it requires a proactive maintenance regime that includes regular inspections, repairs, and

upgrades to prevent deterioration. The absence of such a system at the SCA facilities not only threatens their longevity but also compromises their usability, ultimately undermining the quality of education that these spaces are meant to support.

Guerra (2012) similarly argues that without ongoing maintenance, even well-designed facilities can quickly fall into disrepair, limiting their effectiveness as learning environments. In theatre education, where specialised spaces and equipment are crucial to both practical and theoretical instruction, the deterioration of facilities can severely impact student engagement and skill development. The findings of this study echo these concerns, revealing that the lack of proper maintenance is not just an operational oversight but a critical issue that could lead to the degradation of the very resources that are integral to the department's educational objectives.

Harrison and Lee (2019) further suggest that a key element of facility management is the establishment of a structured maintenance schedule that includes preventative measures to address issues before they escalate. The absence of such a regime at the University of Education, Winneba, has allowed minor issues to persist unchecked, which, over time, can escalate into significant structural or functional problems. If this neglect continues, the once-impressive SCA Theatre and other associated facilities risk becoming a pale shadow of their former selves, as their condition rapidly declines.

While the introduction of new facilities has greatly enhanced the learning environment at the School of Creative Arts, their long-term effectiveness is being jeopardised by the lack of a robust maintenance regime. As Guerra (2012) and Leitermann (2017) assert, ongoing maintenance is not optional but essential for sustaining the value and functionality of educational spaces. Without immediate action to address this issue, the university risks undermining the very improvements that were designed to enhance its theatre education program.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal a clear progression in the availability and quality of teaching facilities for theatre education at the University of Education, Winneba. These improvements, particularly the development of the SCA Theatre and associated spaces, have significantly enhanced the teaching and learning experience within the department, transforming the university into a key player in theatre arts education in Ghana. The provision of modern, well-equipped facilities has fostered an environment where creativity, engagement, and skill development thrive. This aligns with the literature that emphasises the importance of physical infrastructure in supporting both theoretical and practical learning, underscoring the role these spaces play in the holistic development of theatre students.

However, while the progress made is commendable, this study also highlights a critical shortcoming: the absence of a proper maintenance regime for these facilities. Despite the initial successes and increased educational opportunities provided by these spaces, the lack of a structured maintenance system threatens their longevity and effectiveness. Without timely and systematic upkeep, the very resources that have enhanced the department's educational offerings risk falling into disrepair, compromising their functionality and, by extension, the quality of education. This issue reflects the broader challenge identified in the literature: even the most advanced facilities will fail to sustain their educational value without regular maintenance.

Thus, what this study ultimately reveals is a delicate balance between progress and sustainability. While the introduction of new, high-quality facilities has undoubtedly elevated the department's standing and improved educational outcomes, the failure to implement a comprehensive maintenance schedule threatens to undo these advancements. If left unaddressed, this could lead to a regression in the quality of theatre education at the institution.

8. Recommendation

It is our strong view that the establishment of a dedicated studio manager, following international best practices, is crucial for the successful management of the theatre facilities. This individual would be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the facilities, ensuring their proper maintenance, efficient utilisation, and alignment with the department's educational goals. The studio manager would also serve as a liaison between faculty, students, and the university's administration, facilitating effective communication and resource allocation.

To maintain the facilities in optimal condition, a structured and proactive maintenance regime should be implemented under the studio manager's guidance. This includes regular inspections, timely repairs, and necessary upgrades to equipment. Prioritising preventative maintenance, the university can ensure the longevity of the facilities and their ability to meet the demands of theatre education. Additionally, the studio manager should optimise the scheduling and use of the theatre and auxiliary spaces to avoid conflicts and promote equitable access for all students and departments. This efficient utilisation can also foster interdisciplinary collaborations, enriching the educational experience.

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