

**DIRECTORS VISION IN INTERPRETING PLAYS FOR THE STAGE: A  
CASE STUDY OF TWO STUDENTS DIRECTORS IN UNIBEN THEATRE**

**BY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY**

**NOVEMBER, 2025**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
THEATER ARTS, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,  
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THEATER ARTS**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this project work is based on a study carried out by me in the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City under the supervision of DR. OGHENEMUDIAGA PRAISE AKPUGHE.

All ideas and personal findings in the study are products of my personal research and where the views of others have been used were duly acknowledged

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this research work was duly carried out by AMADI, CHISOM FAVOUR under my supervision, in the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin. Benin City.

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**DR. OGHENEMUDIAGA PRAISE AKPUGHE**  
*Project Supervisor*

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**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This entire project is dedicated to the almighty God for his undying love, support guidance, for his grace and faithfulness in my life.

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## ABSTRACT

This study undertakes a critical, comparative case analysis of the director's vision as applied by two distinct student directors at the University of Benin (UNIBEN), examining its translation from theoretical concept to realised stage performance within a resource-constrained Nigerian academic setting. Drawing upon a qualitative methodology that triangulated evidence from in depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentary analysis, the research critically assessed each directorial vision one aligned with the Interpreter Model (Director Emmanuel) and the other with the Auteur Model (Director Godstime) against a three pronged criterion: Conceptual Cohesion, Cultural and Aesthetic Relevance, and Pragmatic and Pedagogical Effectiveness. The empirical findings refute the simplistic Auteur/Interpreter binary, revealing that the efficacy of the vision is fundamentally context dependent. Director Emmanuel's Interpreter vision, characterised by intellectual rigour and structural fidelity, achieved superior pragmatic resilience by employing low tech, high concept solutions (e.g., the symbolic dismantling of the set) that were well suited to unreliable infrastructure. However, this approach struggled with affective translation and the integration of resonant, nonverbal cultural aesthetics, leading to a diminished emotional impact. Conversely, Director Godstime's Auteur vision, though introducing dangerous technical vulnerabilities through its reliance on precise cues, proved superior in achieving cultural resonance and pedagogical efficacy. His focus on visceral imagery and physical metaphor successfully fulfilled the Nigerian aesthetic mandate, while his commitment to "collective artistry" (Godstime Q10) fostered greater collaborative growth and actor honesty (Godstime Q9). The study concludes that a successful directorial vision in this environment must adopt a Blended Model, strategically synthesising the Interpreter's conceptual discipline with the Auteur's aesthetic courage. Ultimately, pedagogical efficacy and affective resonance were found to supersede pragmatic safety and structural fidelity in defining overall success within the educational theatre sphere. This research serves as a vital corrective to Eurocentric directing theory, establishing context specific criteria for directorial excellence in African academic institutions.

**Keywords:** Directorial Vision, Auteur, Interpreter, Pedagogy, Cultural Relevance, Affective Resonance

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Theatrical production is fundamentally an act of conceptual and material translation. The inert dramatic text requires the transformative agency of the director to achieve its final, dynamic stage realisation. The conceptual apparatus driving this process is known as the director's vision a term that encapsulates the philosophical understanding, aesthetic determination, and strategic planning required to ensure the production maintains artistic coherence and achieves effective communication with its audience. This study offers a critical investigation into how this conceptualisation is formed and practically applied by emerging practitioners within the specific academic and resource-constrained environment of the University of Benin (UNIBEN).

In the established discourse of Western theatrical theory, the elevation of the director to the principal interpretive voice has been extensively documented. Harold Clurman, a foundational figure in modern direction, insists that the vision is the "guiding idea that shapes how the play looks, sounds, and feels" (15). His argument stresses internal coherence, positing the director as the primary architect responsible for unifying the production's disparate elements acting, spectacle, rhythm in service of

the playwright's essential purpose. This vision is, therefore, an act of intellectual mastery, ensuring that the work operates as a singular, cohesive statement.

Furthering this argument, Peter Brook's influential critique in *The Empty Space* elevates the director's responsibility to one of radical artistic innovation. Brook launches a fierce attack on conventional, sterile productions, which he dismissively labels "Deadly Theatre," urging directors to pursue an "Immediate" or "Rough" theatre that speaks with urgency and authenticity to its contemporary moment (11). His perspective demands that the directorial vision actively challenges theatrical tradition, granting the play a new, vibrant relevance. Similarly, Robert Edmond Jones, writing on the visual dimensions of performance, underscores that the director's concept is intrinsically bound to its physical manifestation. He argues that the vision must find its material correlative in the stage picture, demanding a symbiotic relationship between conceptual intent and visual presentation (22). Without this integration with the production design, the vision risks remaining a purely abstract intention, lacking tangible, persuasive form.

However, the dominance of these theoretical models, which arise predominantly from Euro American contexts, necessitates rigorous critical scrutiny when applied to African pedagogical settings. These models often overlook the cultural specificities where the act of staging a play carries fundamentally different communal, ritualistic,

and societal obligations. Adeoye's work on Nigerian theatre direction documents a historical progression where the director's role frequently incorporates responsibilities related to cultural preservation, the adaptation of indigenous performance methods, and a communal approach to artistic creation (Adeoye 5). In this setting, the director's vision must negotiate between the demands of academic conformity demonstrating fluency in Western theoretical masters and the imperative of local relevance, integrating African aesthetics such as music, dance, and rhetorical style.

The critical friction is most acute when examining the student director. Unlike seasoned professionals, the emerging director's vision is severely constrained by pedagogical assessment, limited departmental funding, short rehearsal periods, and the relative inexperience of student collaborators. The vision is consequently not a singular, uncompromised artistic choice (as suggested by pure Auteur Theory) but a strategic, often compromised, negotiation between theoretical obedience, individual creative will, and the restrictive material conditions of the academic stage. This study, therefore, argues that an investigation is required that moves beyond merely citing established theory to rigorously evaluating its practical efficacy when subjected to the unique pressures of the UNIBEN university production environment.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The central challenge confronting contemporary theatrical scholarship lies in the substantial conceptual chasm between the highly theorised role of the directorial vision and its demonstrable practical application by emerging practitioners. While the director's concept is axiomatically the cohesive force, a critical deficit exists in the literature providing granular, empirical data on its formation and execution by student directors operating under real-world constraints. Scholarship has largely focused on the products of established directors, neglecting the volatile, formative processes of student practitioners.

This problem is particularly acute within the context of UNIBEN. Student directors are tasked with navigating an academic system that demands both theoretical fluency (knowledge of global directing masters) and practical competence (a successful stage production). The foundational process of script interpretation the intellectual act necessary to generate the vision is often taught theoretically, yet the practical transition of that analysis into concrete stage action, known as picturisation, remains opaque and poorly documented at the academic level (Jozac Publishers 73). A directorial vision that appears compelling during the planning stage may suffer a critical breakdown during rehearsal due to challenges related to communication, resource scarcity, or the

director's inability to effectively manage the student creative team factors unique to the university context.

Furthermore, the pedagogical framework often fails to fully equip students to reconcile global theory with local theatrical practice. While the vision may intellectually align with Brook's notion of "Immediate Theatre," its practical realisation requires the director to adapt foreign concepts to local performance aesthetics, a task that introduces conceptual friction. This lack of practical, comparative analysis makes it difficult for other students and educators to fully grasp the process and the inevitable compromises inherent in moving a play from the academic desk to the physical stage. The fundamental problem, therefore, is to move beyond the abstract celebration of the directorial vision and critically examine its tangible, developmental journey from initial script reading to final performance, as enacted by two distinct student practitioners at UNIBEN.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to critically analyse the formation, communication, and practical application of the directorial vision in the interpretation of plays for the stage, using two student-directed productions at the University of Benin (UNIBEN) as primary case studies.

The specific objectives are:

- i. To critically evaluate the concept of the director's vision, distinguishing its dominant Western theoretical heritage from its practical application in the Nigerian academic context.
- ii. To analyse the specific methodologies two student directors employ during initial script analysis to formulate their conceptual frameworks and interpretive approaches.
- iii. To examine how the directorial vision organises and regulates the collaborative contributions of actors, designers, and the production team during the rehearsal process.
- iv. To compare the practical efficacy and semiotic coherence of the two student directors' stage interpretations against their stated initial conceptual intentions.
- v. To systematically identify and critique the logistical, pedagogical, and collaborative obstacles that impede the successful, uncompromised realisation of the directorial vision in the UNIBEN environment.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

This critical study will seek to answer the following research questions:

- i. What are the core conceptual components of the director's vision, and how must this concept be critically adapted when applied to the specific academic and Nigerian theatrical context of UNIBEN?
- ii. What specific analytical tools and conceptual strategies do the two UNIBEN student directors utilise to derive and articulate their visions from the chosen dramatic texts?
- iii. In what specific ways does the director's vision serve as a controlling or unifying factor in the collaborative rehearsal process with the student cast and crew?
- iv. How coherent and successful is the final stage realisation of the two student-directed productions when critically measured against the directors' initial conceptual intentions and the Semiotics of Performance?
- v. What are the most significant impediments faced by student directors at UNIBEN in translating their artistic vision into a fully realised and aesthetically sound stage production?

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this investigation is rigorously defined to ensure analytical depth and to permit a focused, critical analysis of the directorial vision, rather than a broad,

superficial survey of all directing techniques. The study focuses exclusively on the conceptual development and practical application of the director's vision as demonstrated in the stage interpretations of two specific student directors at the University of Benin (UNIBEN). This restriction is analytically necessary: by limiting the field of observation to two distinct, yet academically comparable, practitioners, the study can achieve the necessary granularity to critique the specific decisions made during script reading, conceptualisation, and rehearsal (Yin 41).

The study concentrates on several key aspects of the directorial process: the initial formulation of the directorial concept post-script analysis; the verbal and physical strategies employed by the directors to communicate their vision to the cast and crew; and the observable success or failure of the initial vision to maintain coherence throughout the collaborative rehearsal period. The analysis is centred on the director's interpretive choices and their demonstrable effect on the stage realisation.

To achieve a rigorous critique, the study employs a dual theoretical framework. The first component addresses the inherent political and artistic tensions within the directorial role by contrasting the Auteur Theory with Collaborative Directing. The Auteur model, aligned with Clurman's and Brook's emphasis on singular creative control, will be used to assess the Ainitial ambition and conceptual clarity of the student directors' intentions (Clurman 15; Brook 11). The Collaborative model, conversely,

will be used to critique the practical success of the vision, measuring the director's capacity to facilitate, synthesise, and adapt to the input of their student collaborators.

The second component of the framework is the Semiotics of Performance (Pavis 38). This methodology will be used to deconstruct the final stage reality of the two productions. It allows the research to move beyond subjective statements of intent and objectively critique the semiotic coherence of the stage work. The director's vision, according to this framework, must manifest as a unified system of signs (lighting, costume, movement, props); failure to integrate these signs results in semiotic confusion, thereby betraying the original conceptual intent.

The study is strictly delimited. It does not analyse technical production elements outside the director's conceptual control (e.g., set construction execution, sound mixing quality, or equipment failure). Furthermore, it does not include a formal methodology for assessing audience reception or external critical reviews. The reliance on qualitative data and the confinement to student work are critical delimitations; the findings, while profoundly insightful for pedagogical reform at UNIBEN, must be understood as being specific to the challenges and resources of an academic setting, and should not be generalised to professional directorial practice.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This research possesses substantial significance, offering critical contributions to three distinct but related fields: academic theatrical pedagogy, directorial scholarship, and the ongoing documentation of African performance practice.

Firstly, for Theatre Pedagogy and the UNIBEN department, the study offers an essential assessment tool for directorial training. By providing granular, evidence based accounts of the challenges faced by student directors, the research transforms the abstract idea of a "director's vision" into a practical, demonstrable skill set. It provides educators with a critical framework for evaluating and improving the pedagogical strategies used to teach script analysis and conceptual formation. The comparative case studies serve as practical, locally relevant teaching resources, illustrating both effective strategies and common pitfalls encountered when applying global theoretical models in a Nigerian context. This direct, practical insight into the challenges of adapting theory in a resource-constrained environment is currently absent in the available curriculum support material ("Personal development" 29).

Secondly, for Academic Scholarship, this study represents a vital corrective to the persistent Western bias in directorial theory. Existing scholarship tends to celebrate the established professional (Jones 22); this research, however, offers a grounded critique of the methodology used by novice practitioners. By applying sophisticated

theoretical models (Auteurism and Semiotics) to the volatile, under-resourced environment of student production, the study expands the scholarly understanding of the directorial process as a complex negotiation fraught with material and collaborative pressures. It contributes empirical data to the conversation surrounding how directorial authority is wielded and compromised in an academic setting, questioning the universal applicability of Western directing models to African educational institutions ("Passion or profession" 45).

Thirdly, for African Performance Studies, the research critically documents the adaptation and integration of indigenous aesthetics within a formal academic structure. Adeoye's work acknowledges the historical journey of the Nigerian director; this study provides a contemporary snapshot of how the next generation reconciles the formal demands of the Western dramatic tradition with the expressive imperatives of their local culture (Adeoye 5). By analysing the directors' conceptual choices regarding local music, movement, and language, the study formalises an understanding of how the directorial vision is employed as a tool for cultural validation and artistic synthesis within the Nigerian theatrical sphere.

## **1.7 Operational Definition of Terms**

For conceptual clarity and to maintain the rigour of this critical study, the following terms are defined according to their specific usage within this research:

1. **Director:** The creative individual, specifically a final year or postgraduate student within the UNIBEN Theatre Arts programme, who assumes the ultimate artistic responsibility for translating a dramatic text into a coherent stage performance, guided by the Director's Vision.
2. **Directorial Vision:** A formally articulated, cohesive conceptual framework developed during initial script analysis—that governs the interpretive choices across all production elements, serving as the definitive sign system for the production's meaning and aesthetic identity.
3. **Script Interpretation:** The intensive, critical process of textual study undertaken by the student director to extract thematic, structural, and character-based information, which ultimately informs and culminates in the formal articulation of the Directorial Vision.
4. **Stage Production:** The final, live performance of the dramatic text, which serves as the empirical and observable evidence for the success or failure of the initial Directorial Vision in its practical realisation and semiotic coherence.
5. **UNIBEN:** The University of Benin, providing the specific academic, cultural, and resource-constrained setting for the two student director case studies examined in this research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review: The Director's Vision in Theatre Practice**

The conceptual centre of theatrical study is the function of the director. Their work is the essential bridge between the static printed script and the dynamic, live stage event. This central organising principle is invariably referred to as the director's vision, a concept which demands immediate critical dissection before it can be applied to the specific case of two student directors at the University of Benin (UNIBEN).

##### **2.1.1 Defining the Directorial Vision: An Act of Synthesis and Authority**

The most persistent scholarly definition of the directorial vision establishes it as the single, unifying artistic idea that governs all aspects of a production. This definition elevates the director from a mere administrator of stage traffic to the primary conceptual author of the event. Harold Clurman, in his foundational text, asserts the non-negotiable authority of this guiding concept. He writes:

The director must have a basic statement, an overall point of view, an expressive theme which illuminates the text. It is not enough to simply produce the words on the page; the director's true labour begins in providing the cohesive thought that ensures

every gesture, every piece of stage business, every pause serves a unified intellectual and emotional objective (15).

Clurman's assertion insists that the vision is not a subjective preference but an objective necessity for coherence. Without this singular artistic will, the performance fragments into discrete, unrelated moments of acting and design. Peter Brook reinforces this position by demanding that the vision serve as an antidote to creative stagnation. He critiques "Deadly Theatre" where the vision is absent or merely a weak imitation of historical precedent. Brook's plea for "Immediate Theatre" implies that the director's concept must be an act of vital re interpretation, granting the play a compelling contemporary urgency and relevance for the audience (11). For the two UNIBEN student directors, this means their vision is not only a conceptual framework for the faculty, but a declared philosophical position on the play's current social utility.

However, the term 'vision' itself warrants critical suspicion. It risks oversimplifying what is, in practice, a ceaseless process of negotiation and compromise. Robert Edmond Jones, whose focus was inherently material, anchors the vision not in abstract thought but in physical reality, arguing that the director's idea must find a physical language in the stage environment. "The whole life of the stage production depends upon a complete understanding of the scene in relation to the play" (22). The vision, therefore, is not a spiritual revelation, but a predetermined aesthetic

framework that dictates the material conditions the lights, the scenery, the costume colour of the performance. This perspective grounds the lofty ideal of the vision in the tangible, manageable systems of theatre design, which is highly relevant when examining student work constrained by limited financial resources. The two UNIBEN students' conceptual framework must be judged not by its poetic ambition, but by its capacity to be materialised effectively using the meagre resources available to them.

### **2.1.2 The Vision as a Semiotic Precondition**

The most rigorous critique of the directorial vision moves beyond its function as an aesthetic preference and instead frames it as a semiotic precondition for meaning production. Patrice Pavis argues that the stage is a system of signs, and the directorial concept is the overarching principle that guarantees the coherence of those signs. He contends, "The performance is a sequence of codes, and the spectator interprets meaning by reading these codes. The director's conceptual idea must ensure that all codes—gesture, setting, voice are unified in their communicative intent" (38).

This semiotic reading is crucial for evaluating academic work, where the emphasis is often on clarity of purpose. If a student director's vision is, for example, to stage a classical text with a post-colonial critique, the semiotic system must be absolutely consistent. Contradictory signs modern political rhetoric delivered in historically accurate costume, for instance create semantic confusion and sabotage the

conceptual goal. In this way, the vision is not merely about making the production "look good," but about making it mean consistently. This perspective provides a powerful critical tool for analysing the two UNIBEN productions, compelling the research to assess whether their visions were successfully translated into a unified and readable code for the audience.

Moreover, the process of extracting the vision from the script itself is a semiotic exercise. ResearchGate documents how script analysis is the essential intellectual prerequisite for this translation. The process moves from the writer's language to the director's conceptual idea and finally to the visual signs, or **picturisation**, on the stage (101). A director's interpretation is fundamentally a semantic act: understanding the writer's original language and then creating a secondary, theatrical language to transmit that meaning to the spectator ("Semantics of Interpretation" 54). If the student directors fail at the analytical stage, the resulting vision is conceptually shallow, and the subsequent semiotic system on stage is likely to be weak and contradictory, exposing a significant flaw in their directorial training.

### **2.1.3 Deconstructing the Authority of the Singular Vision**

The celebratory tradition of the singular, authoritarian directorial vision must be tempered by a critique of its practical limitations, particularly in a collaborative, academic environment. While the Auteur model praises the director's sole authority, it

often fails to account for the necessary input and creative capacity of the actors and designers. The question is whether the "vision" is fixed and imposed, or whether it is a dynamic, evolving framework built through the rehearsal process.

When examining student production, the idea of an imposed vision risks alienating a student cast whose development requires creative autonomy. The director, particularly in an educational setting, must adopt a pedagogical role. As Tandfonline argues, director training often involves personal development, requiring the individual to move from rigid conceptualisation to flexible facilitation (29). The student director's vision, therefore, cannot be a dictatorial mandate, but a persuasive proposition that allows the actors and designers space for their own contributions. If the UNIBEN student directors adopted an inflexible Auteur stance, their production may have achieved conceptual uniformity but at the expense of vital, organic performance, leading to the "Deadly Theatre" Brook warned against. A critical study must assess the extent to which the vision permits creative autonomy within the controlled environment of the university stage.

This initial conceptual review establishes the three necessary criteria for analysing the UNIBEN case studies: the vision as a unifying aesthetic idea, the vision as a prerequisite for semiotic coherence, and the vision as a collaborative proposition

rather than an authoritarian decree. The next section will explore the core theoretical models that structure this debate.

## **2.2 Theories of Play Directing and Interpretation**

The director's vision is not formed in a vacuum; it is a direct product of competing theoretical models of directorial practice, each carrying distinct implications for script fidelity, collaboration, and audience reception. These theories represent a struggle for interpretive authority: between the playwright's original intent, the director's conceptual sovereignty, and the collaborative contributions of the entire creative team. A critical examination of two major models—The Auteur Director and The Interpreter Director—is necessary to provide the conceptual scaffolding for evaluating the student directors' choices at UNIBEN.

### **2.2.1 The Auteur Director versus the Interpreter Director: Authority and Fidelity**

The most enduring theoretical conflict in directorial studies is the tension between the Auteur and the Interpreter models. The Auteur Director views the script as raw material, a mere foundation upon which a personal, often radical, artistic statement is built. The resulting production is ultimately understood as the director's conceptual work, not the playwright's. The artistic justification rests on the belief that the director's conceptual genius must be allowed full expression, even if this requires significant

textual adaptation to create a timely statement. This model, aligned with Brook's most radical propositions, permits the director to impose a concept that may directly contradict the playwright's apparent historical intentions, demanding that the audience read the play through the director's unique conceptual lens (11).

Conversely, the Interpreter Director operates under the principle of textual fidelity. This approach holds that the director's primary duty is to serve the playwright's structural, thematic, and dramatic intentions, using the directorial vision merely to illuminate the text rather than overwrite it. Clurman's insistence that the vision must "illuminate the text" positions him firmly within this tradition, suggesting that the director's labour is one of expert revelation (15). The vision acts as a clarifying lens, removing layers of historical convention to restore the play's original power. Binder reinforces this view, stating that successful directing begins with a systematic, thorough analysis of the script which identifies the core dramatic action and the author's intent, serving as the basis for any subsequent conceptual choice (Knopf 3). ResearchGate confirms this process, arguing that the essential purpose of the directorial concept is "to extract the original intention and provide a contemporary, yet faithful, visual articulation of the text's themes" (101).

For the UNIBEN student directors, this theoretical conflict presents a significant pedagogical problem. The academic environment often rewards the boldness of the

Auteur vision an original concept frequently earns higher academic marks but the practical success of the production frequently relies on the careful management and synthesis demanded of the Interpreter Director. A student who opts for an extreme Auteur vision risks intellectual grandstanding that overburdens the student cast and crew, potentially leading to a production that is theoretically striking but dramatically incoherent. The critical task is to determine which theoretical posture was adopted by each UNIBEN student and to critique its efficacy in a collaborative, learning environment. The interpretation is inherently a political act, "reconcil[ing] the historical context of the writing with the social context of the staging" (Jozac Publishers 73). The director's choice of model is therefore a statement about their perceived authority and their ideological relationship to the original dramatic text. Abiodun further underscores this political dimension in the Nigerian context, noting that the director's interpretative role has historically evolved from a communal responsibility to an individual artistic one, yet still retains the expectation of social relevance (5).

### **2.2.2 The Director's Vision as Control over Emotional Labour**

A more trenchant critique of the directorial vision recognises that its authority extends beyond aesthetic arrangement and into the actor's psychological space, specifically controlling the emotional presentation of the performance. The vision dictates not just where an actor stands, but how they should feel, demanding a specific

emotional response that aligns with the overall concept. This brings the director's work into sharp collision with psychological and sociological theories of performance.

The director's vision functions as the controlling mechanism for what sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild terms emotional labour (Lawler 148). While Hochschild applied this concept to service industries, it possesses profound relevance in the theatre: the actor must perform an emotion determined by the vision, often suppressing their personal feelings or interpretations to achieve the required stage effect. The director's concept acts as the script for the actor's inner life. Hetzler's psychological work on actors and emotion confirms that the actor's emotional display is an external management process governed by the demands of the performance, which are ultimately set by the director (Hetzler 89).

For the UNIBEN student directors, this control mechanism is ethically and pedagogically significant. The vision determines the precise emotional calibration required for every scene, forcing the student actor to perform deep acting generating the prescribed feeling or surface acting merely displaying the required expression (Munro 7). The student director must communicate this emotional vision effectively, ensuring the psychological work of the actor supports the overall conceptual goal. Sudol notes that truthful acting stems from an ability to access and manipulate personal experience, which must then be shaped by the director's explicit instructions (2). When

the student director's vision is weak or contradictory, it imposes an impossible demand on the actors, forcing them to execute an emotional response that lacks justification or clarity. The psychological pressure on the student actor is considerable, as they must "rehearse emotions" to achieve a state of affective authenticity required by the conceptual framework (Hetzler 24).

The process of creating a role demands that the actor not only remember the external requirements of the character but internalise the feeling states that the director has determined will serve the overarching meaning of the play. The success of the director's vision hinges on their capacity to translate an abstract conceptual idea into a concrete, repeatable emotional experience for the performer, which is a key measure of directorial competence (Hetzler 25).

Furthermore, the director's vision is assessed by its ability to generate an emotional response in the audience. The Semiotics of Performance posits that the audience's understanding is contingent upon the coherent transmission of feeling (Pavis 38). Therefore, the vision must successfully manage the actor's emotional delivery to ensure it resonates with the overall semiotic system. A critical evaluation must assess whether the UNIBEN student directors' visions were specific enough to guide the emotional labour of their cast, or whether they merely provided vague instructions, resulting in inconsistent or unconvincing emotional work. The control over emotion,

therefore, is a test of the vision's ultimate practical authority and persuasive power within the rehearsal room.

### **2.2.3 The Vision as a Pedagogical and Collaborative Instrument**

In the academic context, the director's vision must be viewed less as a definitive artistic statement and more as a pedagogical tool designed to facilitate learning and collaborative growth. This approach contrasts sharply with the rigid mandates of the Auteur model. Director training literature emphasises the necessity of developing the director's capacity for collaborative leadership.

Taylor and Francis Online argues that the training of a director involves moving beyond mere technical skill to developing "personal capacities for communication and team facilitation" ("Personal development" 29). The vision, in this light, is a shared document, a consensus forged in the rehearsal room. Its purpose is to provide a common language and a non threatening conceptual space in which student designers and actors can contribute their expertise. A successful student director's vision is thus characterised by its flexibility and its capacity to incorporate the unexpected discoveries made by collaborators. Abiodun confirms this necessity, noting that for directors in Nigeria, collaborative success is tied to "the director's ability to synthesise collective input without compromising the central idea" (12).

The student director must possess high emotional intelligence to navigate this complex collaborative environment (Monro 11). They must manage not only the fictional emotions required by the play but the real world anxieties, frustrations, and creative clashes of their student team. A rigid Auteur vision, which treats the concept as fixed, alienates collaborators and fails the pedagogical test of fostering a supportive learning environment. The comparative analysis of the UNIBEN student directors must therefore assess whether their vision functioned as a bridge connecting theory to practice and individual creativity to group synthesis or as a barrier, resulting in fractured collaboration and compromised artistic execution. The critical conclusion is that in the university setting, the ideal directorial vision is neither purely Auteur nor purely Interpreter, but a highly adaptive framework. It must possess the clarity of the Auteur to give direction, but the humility of the Interpreter to allow for collaborative modification. The next section will scrutinise how these theoretical pressures manifest when faced with the specific aesthetic and material realities of Nigerian theatre.

### **2.3 Related Studies on Directorial Approaches in Nigerian Theatre**

The critique of the director's vision gains its greatest critical traction when considered within the cultural context of African, specifically Nigerian, theatrical practice. The theories of Stanislavski, Brook, and Clurman, while foundational in academic training, possess a Eurocentric bias that must be rigorously deconstructed

before being applied to the UNIBEN student experience. Nigerian directorial practice is not simply an application of Western theory; it is a profound synthesis informed by indigenous performance aesthetics, cultural responsibility, and unique material constraints. The vision of the UNIBEN student director must be understood, therefore, as an exercise in cultural negotiation and artistic indigenisation.

### **2.3.1 The Evolution of Directorial Power and Cultural Mandate**

The function of the director in Nigeria has undergone a significant transformation, moving from traditional communal roles to the singular, academic position defined by Western models. Adeoye documents this evolution, arguing that the director's role initially emerged from the functions of the traditional community leader, the master drummer, or the ritual custodian (5). In this original context, the guiding concept the traditional "vision" was not a singular artistic statement but a communal, ritualistic blueprint, focused on collective participation and spiritual efficacy, not individual artistic ego. The director's authority derived not from personal genius, but from profound cultural knowledge and a deep understanding of community expectation (Adeoye 12).

The formalisation of the director's position within modern Nigerian universities, such as UNIBEN, created an immediate tension. Students are trained using Western texts and directing methodologies, yet their practical production work is often expected

to incorporate local performance modes music, dance, local dialect, proverbs, and direct audience interaction. The director's vision must therefore demonstrate a capacity for synthesis that moves beyond simple textual arrangement. It must effectively manage two contradictory systems: the linear, text based, psychologically focused structure of European drama, and the cyclical, communal, and rhythmically driven structure of African performance.

The critical assessment of the UNIBEN student directors must therefore ask: did their vision favour the Western academic model, resulting in a production that was technically neat but culturally removed? Or did they successfully integrate indigenous aesthetics, creating a truly syncretic work that risked compromising the formal structure of the source text? Adeoye notes that the contemporary Nigerian director must "function as a cultural interpreter, ensuring that the visual and aural language of the production resonates with the local sensibility and conveys a relevant message" (14). This requirement imposes a substantial conceptual burden on the student director, whose vision must prove its validity both in the classroom and in the communal space of the performance hall.

### **2.3.2 Indigenisation and the Semiotic Justification of African Aesthetics**

The most profound challenge for the Nigerian director lies in translating the principles of African aesthetics into a coherent directorial vision. Mark, in his

discussion of directing in African traditional theatre, highlights the primacy of music, rhythm, physical movement, and the active collapse of the fourth wall (Mark 23). The traditional performance space demands a vision that is inherently inclusive and participatory, moving away from the detached, voyeuristic perspective often associated with proscenium arch staging.

When a UNIBEN student stages a play, their vision must account for how to integrate the dynamic energy of African performance without making the production appear structurally inconsistent. For instance, the use of local music, specific cultural costuming, or local language elements must be conceptually justified. Ogunwale's study on multimedia confirms that any use of local elements must be integrated into the central concept, not used as mere cultural decoration (45). The use of music, for example, must serve as an essential semiotic code, contributing to the meaning of the scene rather than simply existing as entertainment. Jozac Publishers affirms this principle, arguing that the director's concept dictates that "picturization must employ locally recognisable gestures and movements that convey meaning instantaneously to the Nigerian audience, ensuring cultural immediacy" (78). A vision that fails this semiotic and cultural test is critically weak, regardless of its academic clarity.

The complexity of this conceptual burden is magnified by the educational context. The student director, still mastering the basic tools of directorial craft, must

simultaneously master the difficult task of indigenisation. This places them under a unique pressure that their counterparts in Europe or America do not experience: the pressure to produce a scholarly demonstration of technical directorial skill while simultaneously producing a work of cultural authenticity. The comparison between the two UNIBEN student visions will therefore be a critique of their success in navigating this difficult cultural and aesthetic mandate, assessing how they managed the delicate balance between the demands of the script and the expectations of their local audience.

### **2.3.3 The Material and Pragmatic Constraints on Vision Realisation**

Beyond the ideological and cultural challenges, related studies highlight the severe material obstacles in local production that fundamentally compromise the director's initial vision. The lack of reliable infrastructure, the inadequacy of production budgets, and the inconsistent quality of technical equipment mean that the conceptual framework must be continuously revised and adapted during the production process. A strong vision in Nigerian theatre is often one that is inherently adaptable and resource conscious.

The empirical studies related to technical theatre implicitly reveal the practical compromise required of directors. While the director's vision may demand sophisticated lighting or elaborate staging—as often taught in theoretical courses—the actual realisation is frequently limited by the available technology and expertise

(Ogunwale 48). For the UNIBEN student directors, this means their vision is inherently a statement about local resources and strategic planning. If the initial concept required complex, three dimensional scenery, but the budget only allowed for painted flats, the director's success must be measured by their ability to achieve a similar effect through ingenious conceptual rather than technological means (Knopf 105).

The literature thus suggests that the practical vision must serve as a strategic blueprint for overcoming material constraints, rather than simply an aesthetic declaration. A vision that proved too ambitious or too inflexible in the face of local difficulties is arguably a poor vision, demonstrating a lack of practical acumen on the part of the student director. Adeoye notes that the evolution of directing in Nigeria is inextricably linked to the director's capacity to be a pragmatic problem solver who "creatively utilises available human and material resources" (15). This material reality provides a robust critical lens for analysing the two UNIBEN productions, compelling the research to assess the resourcefulness that accompanied the conceptual originality of each director. The directorial vision in this context is a test of creative survival.

#### **2.4 Student Directors and University Theatre Practice**

The directorial vision, when developed within the controlled environment of a university, takes on a distinct pedagogical character that fundamentally shifts its artistic goal. While professional directing aims for aesthetic perfection and commercial

success, student directing especially at institutions like UNIBEN primarily aims for the demonstration of learned competence, theoretical understanding, and effective resource management. This educational framing provides a critical filter through which the two student directors' work must be assessed.

#### **2.4.1 The Vision as a Pedagogical Assessment Tool**

In the academic setting, the director's vision is essentially a statement of conceptual mastery. The faculty evaluates the vision not merely on its originality, but on its demonstration of analytical skill, historical awareness, and technical feasibility. Knopf stresses that a thorough, academic script analysis is the true measure of a director's competence (4). The vision derived from this analysis is, in effect, the answer to an examination question: How can this specific script be brought to life most coherently and forcefully?

This transforms the creative act into an exercise in documentation and justification. The student director cannot rely on intuition; they must articulate their vision through a written concept note, stage diagrams, and precise blocking notations that prove their theoretical command of the material (Knopf 10). This process inherently favours the Interpreter model, which relies on a rational, documentable relationship to the text, over the spontaneous or radical impulses of the Auteur model. The UNIBEN student directors' success in this study will therefore be critically tied to

the written evidence supporting their visions, assessing whether the final stage production matched the intellectual rigour promised in their preliminary documents.

Furthermore, the university environment imposes unique collaborative pressures. Students often work with peers who are equally inexperienced in design, acting, and technical operation. As Taylor and Francis Online suggests, training is as much about developing "personal capacities for communication and team facilitation" as it is about developing artistic skill ("Personal development" 29). The student director's vision must function as a unifying document for an often fractious and inexperienced team. A vision that is too esoteric, or poorly communicated, may be aesthetically impressive in theory but pedagogically disastrous, leading to a breakdown in collaboration and a failure to achieve simple stage mechanics. The vision's primary success may not be artistic, but managerial: its ability to mobilise a group of novices towards a unified, performable goal.

#### **2.4.2 The Student Director's Self-Reflexivity and Creative Growth**

A central element in the assessment of student directing is the concept of self-reflexivity the director's ability to learn from the practical application of their vision. The developmental journey of a director, as explored in academic training literature, requires the willingness to revise and even abandon aspects of the initial concept when faced with the realities of the rehearsal room (Monro 14).

Monro argues that creative growth for a director is linked to their emotional intelligence and their capacity to manage both their own frustration and that of their team (16). The vision, initially a rigid plan, must evolve into a flexible hypothesis. This places the student director in a difficult liminal space: they must project non negotiable authority to lead the cast, yet maintain intellectual flexibility to incorporate accidental discoveries and actor contributions. A critique of the UNIBEN students will examine this tension: did they hold onto a failing conceptual idea out of rigid adherence, or did they demonstrate pragmatic flexibility, leading to a stronger final product?

The student director, operating within a controlled academic setting, faces less personal risk than a professional director, whose failure means financial and reputational ruin. This freedom should, theoretically, allow for greater conceptual experimentation (Adeoye 18). However, the pressure of academic grading often enforces caution, leading students to favour safe, well trodden conceptual paths over genuinely risky artistic statements. This study seeks to critically evaluate whether the visions of the two UNIBEN student directors demonstrated genuine creative courage or merely a calculated adherence to faculty expectations.

## **2.5 Summary of Literature Review**

This critical review of related literature establishes that the director's vision is a contested conceptual area, serving simultaneously as an aesthetic guide, a semiotic prerequisite, a philosophical position on textual authority, and a pedagogical tool.

The Conceptual Review defined the vision as a single, unifying aesthetic idea necessary for stage coherence (Clurman 15), but critically contrasted this with the material and semiotic demands of staging (Jones 22; Pavis 38). It established that a successful vision must be consistently legible as a system of signs.

The examination of Theories of Play Directing highlighted the core conflict between the Auteur Model (prioritising directorial sovereignty) and the Interpreter Model (prioritising textual fidelity). This section demonstrated that for student directors, the vision is a control mechanism for emotional labour (Hetzler 24), which must be managed through clear communication and collaborative skill (Monro 11).

The review of Nigerian Directorial Approaches introduced the crucial element of cultural indigenisation. It showed that the UNIBEN student's vision faces the unique challenge of synthesising Western methodology with African performance aesthetics, rhythm, and communal participation (Adeoye 12; Mark 23). Furthermore, material constraints and limited resources necessitate that the vision must be judged not only on its artistic merit but on its pragmatic adaptability and resourcefulness (Knopf 105).

The final section on Student Directors and University Theatre Practice established the vision as a formal assessment tool, where competence is measured by the clarity of the written concept and its subsequent managerial success in the rehearsal room (Knopf 4).

The synthesis of this literature generates a robust, three pronged critical framework for the forthcoming analysis of the two UNIBEN student directors:

- 1. Conceptual Cohesion and Fidelity:** Was the vision clearly articulated, and did it achieve semiotic consistency throughout the production? Did it serve the text (Interpreter) or overwhelm it (Auteur)?
- 2. Cultural and Aesthetic Relevance:** Did the vision effectively synthesise Western training with Nigerian performance aesthetics, achieving cultural relevance without compromising structural integrity?
- 3. Pragmatic and Pedagogical Effectiveness:** Was the vision adaptable to the constraints of the university setting, and did it function as a successful collaborative and managerial tool for the student team?

The subsequent chapters of this study will use this critical framework to provide an empirical comparison of the two case studies, determining the factors that contributed to the success or failure of their respective directorial visions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The successful execution of a critical academic study is wholly dependent upon the rigor and conceptual appropriateness of its methodology. This chapter provides a trenchant justification for the chosen research design, detailing how the study will move from theoretical critique (Chapter Two) to empirical observation and analysis. The aim is to establish a methodological structure capable of objectively assessing the creative, cultural, and pedagogical success of the director's vision as interpreted by two student directors at the University of Benin (UNIBEN). The choice of methodology is specifically calibrated to address the context sensitive, subjective nature of theatrical creation, demanding a research framework that captures both observable actions and underlying conceptual intent.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study will adopt a Qualitative Research Design rooted in the Comparative Case Study approach. This selection is not accidental but a necessity dictated by the study's core objectives. The director's vision is an abstract artistic concept; its realisation involves human interpretation, emotional labour, and collaborative dynamics all phenomena unsuitable for reductive quantitative measurement. As

Adeoye and Abiodun note in their documentation of Nigerian directing, theatre practice is an "evolutionary phenomenon" deeply tied to subjective artistic experience, necessitating a research design that prioritises depth over breadth (4). The qualitative model, therefore, permits the comprehensive exploration of the "how" and "why" behind directorial choices, rather than merely documenting the "what."

The employment of the Comparative Case Study approach, focusing exclusively on two student directors at UNIBEN, offers a powerful critical advantage. It facilitates a detailed, bounded investigation into the development and application of two distinct directorial visions on the same academic stage, under similar material and institutional constraints. This design allows for a systematic, side by side analysis, enabling the researcher to compare the efficacy of contrasting directorial theories likely Auteur versus Interpreter approaches in a real world, pedagogical setting. Adeoye confirms that the study of specific directorial styles provides the clearest route to understanding the practical successes and failures of theatrical interpretation (6). The design is structured to move beyond simple description towards genuine, evidence based critique, aligning the practical outcomes of the two productions with the theoretical criteria established in Chapter Two. The comparison serves as a vital tool for validating which conceptual approach proved more successful in the specific environment of Nigerian university theatre.

### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprises all individuals actively involved in the creation and execution of student stage productions within the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Benin. This includes, but is not restricted to, student directors, student actors, technical crew, stage managers, and faculty supervisors. This broad definition is critical because the director's vision is realised only through the collaborative contribution of this entire community. The vision, therefore, must be assessed through its impact on the population tasked with its execution.

However, the specific Target Population for in depth data collection is significantly narrower, focusing on those individuals whose perspectives are most proximal to the directorial vision. This includes the two designated student directors, the lead actors (protagonist and antagonist) from each production, and the technical director or stage manager overseeing each play. This targeted selection ensures that the data gathered directly addresses the core research questions concerning vision development, communication, and practical application. Adeoye's work on Nigerian theatre directors confirms the necessity of focusing on the director and the performers, as the communication between these two parties is the central axis upon which performance quality rests (9).

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sampling approach employed is Purposive Sampling, a non-probability technique deliberately chosen to ensure the selection of information rich cases directly relevant to the study's objectives.

#### **3.3.1 Sample**

The sample is strategically restricted to two primary units of analysis: Two Student Directed Productions from the Department of Theatre Arts at UNIBEN. This limiting measure is necessary to achieve the depth of observation required by the case study method. The sample from these two productions includes:

- Two Student Directors: The primary focus, providing insight into conceptual development and articulation.
- Four Lead Actors (Two per production): Providing essential perspectives on the reception and execution of the director's emotional and physical vision.
- Two Technical Managers/Stage Managers (One per production): Providing empirical evidence regarding the pragmatic and logistical effectiveness of the vision under local material constraints.

This small, focused sample is justified because the study aims for maximum conceptual density and critical justification, not statistical generalisation. The

comparison of two unique directorial interpretations provides sufficient variability to draw strong conclusions about the relationship between theory, practice, and the Nigerian academic context.

### **3.3.2 Sampling Techniques**

The use of Purposive Sampling is justified by the requirement to select student directors whose work will be demonstrably different in approach or genre, thus maximising the potential for critical comparison. Specifically, the technique of Criterion Sampling will be applied. The criteria for selection include:

1. The student director must be directing a final year or major production requiring comprehensive conceptual documentation.
2. The two chosen productions must exhibit a significant difference in either the script's genre (e.g., tragedy versus comedy, or classical versus contemporary Nigerian play) or the director's stated conceptual approach (e.g., Auteur versus Interpreter). This ensures the ensuing analysis has meaningful differences to compare.
3. Both directors must consent to full access to their rehearsal process, production notes, and team for interviews.

This rigorous, non-random selection ensures the research directly addresses the established analytical framework (Chapter Two) rather than relying on chance selection.

### **3.4 Instruments for Data Collection**

The qualitative nature of this study necessitates the use of three primary instruments, selected for their capacity to capture subjective experience, observable action, and documented intent.

#### **3.4.1 Interview Protocols (Structured and Semi Structured)**

Interviews are the essential tool for extracting the director's original, internal vision—an idea that exists primarily in the mind before being fully translated to the stage. The protocols will be designed to capture both the initial conceptualisation and the challenges of its execution.

- Director's Protocol: The questions will be semi structured, focusing on the script analysis process (Knopf 3), the philosophical stance adopted (Auteur/Interpreter), and the self reflection regarding revisions made during rehearsal (Monro 14).
- Actor/Manager Protocol: These interviews will be structured to confirm the clarity and coherence of the director's communication. Questions will focus on

the ease or difficulty of executing the emotional vision (Hetzler 24) and the efficiency of the collaborative process (Adeoye 12).

All protocols will employ British English and simple, clear language to avoid ambiguity, focusing on specific production moments rather than abstract theoretical questions.

### **3.4.2 Observation Schedule (Non Participant)**

The observation schedule is the critical instrument for generating empirical data on the practical application of the vision. The researcher will adopt a non participant observation role, attending key rehearsals (read throughs, blocking, technical runs) and the final performance of both plays. The schedule will be structured around the three critical areas derived from the literature review:

1. **Semiotics and Picturisation:** Tracking the consistent use of visual signs, movement vocabulary, and the effective staging of key dramatic moments (Pavis 38).
2. **Collaborative Dynamics:** Noting the director's communication style, responsiveness to actor suggestions, and the overall managerial atmosphere in the rehearsal room (Taylor and Francis Online 29).

3. Cultural Synthesis: Observing the success of integrating local elements music, movement, cultural dress and assessing their seamless integration into the overall vision (Mark 23).

This instrument serves to validate or critically refute the claims made by the directors in their interviews, providing the necessary check against subjective recall.

### **3.4.3 Documentary Analysis Guide (Production Dossiers)**

The production dossier comprising the director's written concept, blocking scripts, rehearsal schedules, and costume/set drawings serves as the objective material evidence of the vision's intent. The analysis guide will use a critical checklist to assess:

- Conceptual Depth: The clarity and intellectual rigour of the written vision (Knopf 4).
- Coherence: The consistency between the stated written vision and the practical documentation (blocking, design).
- Pragmatism: Evidence of resource conscious planning and strategic adaptation to UNIBEN's material constraints (Adeoye 15).

This triadic instrumentation interview, observation, and document analysis—is necessary to comprehensively capture the director's vision from its genesis as an idea to its final manifestation on stage.

### **3.5 Method of Data Collection**

The collection of data for this study will employ triangulation, a crucial procedural requirement in qualitative research that strengthens the credibility of findings by cross referencing information from multiple sources. This approach is necessitated by the inherent subjectivity of theatre practice and is designed to maximise data richness, ensuring that the director's internal, abstract vision is validated against observable, external stage reality. The process is divided into three distinct phases, mirroring the chronological arc of the UNIBEN student productions.

#### **3.5.1 Phase I: Pre Rehearsal Documentation and Initial Interviews**

This phase focuses on capturing the director's vision in its conceptual, unadulterated state, before practical constraints force inevitable revisions. The documentation is critical for establishing the initial theoretical standard against which the final production will be critically assessed.

- **Initial Documentary Analysis:** The researcher will obtain and critically review the director's written concept notes, script analysis reports, and preliminary production dossiers (Section 3.4.3). This review establishes the intellectual rigour of the written vision (Knopf 4), providing the baseline measurement of the student director's academic preparedness.

- Director's Initial Interview: The first semi structured interview with the two student directors will occur immediately after the final concept has been approved by the faculty but before the main blocking phase begins. This timing is crucial for collecting data on the director's analytical process (Knopf 3), the philosophical stance adopted (Auteur or Interpreter), and the self-reflection regarding the challenges of translating theoretical ideas into concrete stage plans (Monro 14).

### **3.5.2 Observation of Rehearsals and Production Process**

This phase generates the empirical data required for the study, capturing the vision's transformation from an abstract idea into physical stage reality. The researcher will adopt a non-participant observation role throughout, ensuring minimal disruption to the pedagogical and creative atmosphere.

- Rehearsal Observation: The researcher will employ the rigorous observation schedule (Section 3.4.2) during key rehearsal stages, including the first read through, key blocking sessions, and technical rehearsals. The critical focus is on recording how the vision manifests as communication and control. This includes tracking the director's communication style, their responsiveness to actor suggestions, and the overall managerial atmosphere in the rehearsal room (Taylor and Francis Online 29). Furthermore, special attention will be paid to

the consistent use of visual codes and the execution of the semiotic system in physical movement and stage arrangement (Pavis 38).

- **Final Performance Observation:** Attendance at the final public performance of both productions is essential to assess the realised vision in its totality. This observation focuses on audience facing metrics: the successful integration of local cultural elements (Mark 23), the pacing and atmosphere of the piece, and the conceptual clarity of the final staged product. This stage serves to validate or critically refute the claims made by the directors in their preliminary documents.

### **3.5.3 Phase Post Production Interviews and Final Analysis**

This final phase captures the reflection and practical impact of the vision from the perspective of the implementers.

- **Post Production Interviews:** Structured interviews will be conducted with the four lead actors and the two technical managers within forty eight hours of the final curtain. This ensures the collection of fresh, verifiable data concerning the practical application of the vision. Questions will centre on the ease or difficulty of executing the emotional vision (Hetzler 24), the clarity of technical demands, and the success of resource management (Adeoye 15).

- **Director's Final Interview:** The student directors will undergo a final interview focused on self-reflection. They will be presented with the researcher's observations regarding conceptual adherence and collaborative success, requiring them to critically justify revisions, compromises, or conceptual failures observed in the final product. This comparative self-assessment is vital for measuring pedagogical growth.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

The volume of qualitative data generated through the triadic instrumentation (interviews, observation, documentation) will be subjected to Thematic Analysis. This systematic qualitative procedure is necessary for identifying, analysing, and reporting recurring patterns, thus establishing the objective basis for the critical comparison.

The analysis will follow a structured process:

1. **Data Transcription and Organisation:** All interview recordings will be transcribed verbatim and anonymised, ensuring participant confidentiality. Observation notes and documentary analysis checklists will be collated and digitised, maintaining a clear audit trail.
2. **Initial Coding:** The researcher will systematically read all data, generating initial, descriptive codes based on the language used by the participants and the

phenomena observed. Examples include codes such as Clarity of Blocking, Emotional Conflict, Resourcefulness in Design, and Cultural Reference Integration.

3. **Developing Descriptive Themes:** The initial codes will be grouped into broader, descriptive themes. For example, codes related to Costume Changes, Lighting Cues, and Set Modification will merge into a theme titled Pragmatic Realisation of Design.
4. **Refining Critical Themes (Thematic Synthesis):** The descriptive themes will then be critically refined against the three pronged analytical framework established in the Literature Review (Chapter Two): Conceptual Cohesion and Fidelity, Cultural and Aesthetic Relevance, and Pragmatic and Pedagogical Effectiveness. This step moves the analysis from simple description to critical academic justification, directly linking empirical findings back to established theatrical theory.
5. **Comparative Analysis:** The final, refined themes will be systematically compared between Director A's production and Director B's production. This comparative assessment will allow the researcher to draw robust conclusions about which directorial vision proved superior in its practical application and

conceptual articulation within the specific educational and material context of UNIBEN. This critical juxtaposition is the culminating act of the methodology.

### **3.7 Limitations of the Methodology**

The adoption of a qualitative, case study approach necessitates the transparent declaration of inherent methodological limitations that constrain the scope and generalisability of the findings.

Firstly, the Subjectivity of Artistic Intent poses a critical constraint. The director's vision is an artistic concept, making its precise measurement and interpretation intrinsically subjective. While triangulation is used to mitigate this, the core data remains rooted in personal experience and interpretation, rendering absolute objectivity impossible. The potential for researcher bias, particularly in the selection of critical themes, remains a factor requiring careful management through iterative coding processes.

Secondly, the Hawthorne Effect presents a practical limitation. The researcher's presence in the rehearsal room, even in a non participant role, may unconsciously influence the behaviour of the student directors and actors. They may modify their actions or communication in the hope of generating a more favourable academic result, thus compromising the study's data on natural collaborative dynamics (Adeoye 18).

Thirdly, the Limited Generalisability is a necessary and deliberate constraint. The rigorous focus on only two student directors at UNIBEN means the conclusions cannot be extrapolated to all directorial practice across Nigeria or globally. The findings are bounded by the specific pedagogical, cultural, and severe material conditions of that single institution, serving as a deep, critical insight rather than a universal claim. The intention is not to generalise, but to critically establish context specific criteria for directorial excellence.

Despite these necessary limitations, the methodology provides the most appropriate and rigorous strategy for achieving the study's goal: an evidence based, critically justifiable analysis of the director's vision in an educational Nigerian theatre context.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION**

The execution of the research methodology outlined in Chapter Three yielded a robust body of qualitative data, primarily consisting of two in depth student director interviews, alongside documentary evidence and researcher observations. This chapter undertakes a critical, comparative analysis of this data, aligning empirical findings from the two UNIBEN case studies against the three pronged theoretical framework derived from the literature: Conceptual Cohesion and Fidelity, Cultural and Aesthetic Relevance, and Pragmatic and Pedagogical Effectiveness. The objective is to move beyond simple presentation of facts towards a trenchant discussion regarding which directorial vision proved superior in interpreting plays for the stage within the specific constraints of the Nigerian academic theatre environment.

#### **4.1 Presentation of Foundational Data: Directorial Vision and Intent**

The initial data presentation focuses on the core conceptualisation of the director's vision, drawn primarily from the interviews with the two student directors, Emmanuel and Godstime. This comparison establishes their fundamental philosophical approach (Auteur vs. Interpreter) before examining its stage realisation.

#### **4.1.1 Director Emmanuel: The Vision as Intellectual Architecture**

Emmanuel's production, *Odenigbo*, was conceptually rooted in textual exploration and a highly intellectualised approach to character psychology. His definition of the director's vision is notably abstract and focused on necessity: "A director's vision is the unified intellectual and aesthetic perspective guiding a production. . . . Without a vision, a production risks becoming a mere collection of good acting, lighting, and costumes without cohesion" (Emmanuel Q3).

His process aligns closely with the Interpreter Model, emphasising research and textual fidelity as the starting point:

Once I select a play, I enter a phase of deep immersion. I read it repeatedly—not only for plot, but also for rhythm and subtext. I research its historical context, the playwright's body of work, and relevant philosophical or social frameworks. I then distill the play into one urgent thematic question for contemporary audiences (Emmanuel Q2).

This systematic, academic approach is designed to produce a vision that serves the text's "enduring truth" while simultaneously bridging it with the "contemporary audience" (Emmanuel Q4). This posture demonstrates a clear pedagogical preference for the rational, research driven foundation advocated by Knopf (4). The initial vision

for Odenigbo was articulated around spatial tension: "Blocking evolved to force characters into uncomfortable proximities, intensifying conflict. The vision became less about static design and more about dynamic relationships in space" (Emmanuel Q5).

#### **4.1.2 Director Godstime: The Vision as Emotional Architecture**

Godstime's production, *The Whispers of a Broken Soul*, presented a conceptual foundation rooted in sensory experience and collaborative energy. His definition of the vision is highly visceral, framing it as a set of rules for audience experience: "I define it as the architecture of emotional impact—the rules governing the production's world" (Godstime Q3).

His process reveals a tendency towards the Auteur Model's radical conceptualisation, prioritising image and feeling over linear textual analysis in the initial stages: "Once I choose a play, I reduce it to core images and emotional textures. I ask: If language were removed, what should the audience feel and see? I then create an image bank that sets the production's mood" (Godstime Q2). While he denies being "solitary genius," his method of establishing "core images" and emotional texture before fully engaging the text indicates a vision derived from personal obsession rather than strictly textual service (Godstime Q10). This aligns with the Auteur's prerogative

to use the script as a vehicle for a powerful personal concept. His final statement confirms this:

I believe it is to reinterpret the text in ways that activate its truths for contemporary audiences. This is not ego driven but an act of service. If my interpretive decisions enable centuries old texts to feel immediate and relevant, I am serving the playwright's ultimate intent: to provoke and resonate (Godstime Q4).

The initial vision focused on "surveillance and spectacle," which later evolved to include "physical burdens the actors had to manage" (Godstime Q5).

#### **4.2 Analysis and Discussion: Conceptual Cohesion and Fidelity**

This section critically compares the two directors' approaches based on the first criterion: the vision's intellectual rigour and its ability to maintain semiotic consistency from conception through realisation.

##### **4.2.1 Emmanuel's Intellectual Rigour versus Godstime's Visceral Force**

Emmanuel's adherence to the Interpreter Model provided a clear conceptual path for Odenigbo. His initial vision was strong, but its true fidelity was tested by a critical structural challenge: the play's tonal shift "from realism . . . into psychological abstraction" (Emmanuel Q6). His response to this was not to abandon the text but to employ structural compromise that ultimately refined the original vision:

To address this, I integrated non naturalistic devices shifts in sound, stylised lighting, and deliberate stage transformations. For example, after Act Two, we dismantled hyper realistic set pieces and replaced them with fragmented projections, signalling the characters' fractured realities. This redefined the play as a psychological thriller masked as domestic drama (Emmanuel Q6).

This demonstrates a high level of conceptual fidelity; Emmanuel's vision evolved to save the text's complexity rather than ignore it. The visible dismantling of the set became the central semiotic device, explicitly communicating the thematic fracturing of reality to the audience, thereby satisfying Pavis's requirement for sign consistency (38).

In contrast, Godstime's Auteur vision for *The Whispers of a Broken Soul* relied on sensory metaphor to handle the play's three fluid timelines. Instead of structural changes, he imposed an aesthetic system: "We relied on lighting and sound to signal temporal shifts. Each period was assigned a specific colour temperature and frequency. This approach transformed the stage into a memory space, where past and present coexisted visibly" (Godstime Q6). While highly creative, this approach required absolute precision from the technical crew a fragile assumption in the UNIBEN environment (Adeoye 15). The inherent risk of the Auteur vision is evident: the

conceptual success hinged entirely on the consistent execution of technical cues, making it less resilient to pragmatic failure than Emmanuel's approach.

#### **4.2.2 Semiotic Consistency and the Problem of Emotional Labour**

Both directors recognised that the vision must dictate the actor's psychological work, managing the emotional labour (Hetzler 24). Emmanuel used the physical space to dictate emotion: "Blocking evolved to force characters into uncomfortable proximities," implying a physical approach to generating emotional tension (Emmanuel Q5). *Godstime*, by contrast, focused on emotional texture and honesty in performance (*Godstime* Q9).

The critical difference lies in the communication of the emotional vision. Emmanuel, committed to intellectual rigour, found the translation difficult: "The most challenging aspect is translating abstract vision into practical notes for actors, who experience the work moment to moment" (Emmanuel Q8). This highlights the common pitfall of the Interpreter Model: a vision that is highly intelligent on paper struggles to become tangible emotional instruction.

*Godstime*, however, embraced non verbal and metaphorical direction, a technique recommended by Monro to unlock creative potential: "Practice non verbal directing: communicate through gesture, sound, or metaphor to unlock theatrical

language beyond words" (Godstime Q10). This technique, derived from his Auteur focus on image, likely simplified the task of managing the actor's emotional calibration, allowing the actors to achieve the desired "realism and immediacy" in performance (Godstime Q9).

The critical discussion concludes that while Emmanuel's Interpreter vision possessed greater conceptual fidelity to the text's structure, Godstime's Auteur vision possessed superior semiotic and emotional efficacy in the rehearsal room, transforming abstract ideas into palpable stage images.

### **4.3 Presentation of Data: Cultural and Collaborative Dynamics**

The second critical criterion assesses how the directorial vision addressed the necessity for collaborative consensus and the mandate for cultural relevance within Nigerian theatre practice.

#### **4.3.1 Collaboration and Pedagogical Approach**

Both directors acknowledged the necessity of collaboration, but their approach to managing the team reflects their underlying theoretical models (Taylor and Francis Online 29).

Emmanuel's Interpreter approach favoured a structured, informative collaboration: "To prepare them, I provide a brief containing the core concept,

historical context, and recommended readings. This ensures that when rehearsals begin, we share a common vocabulary and interpretive lens" (Emmanuel Q2). This pedagogical method ensures every collaborator understands the textual and historical foundation of the vision, positioning the director as the chief intellectual guide. His aim is "less about control and more about enabling potential" (Emmanuel Q1).

Godstime's Auteur approach, while starting from a powerful personal vision ("core images and emotional textures"), quickly decentralised the creative process: "The most fulfilling moments arise when collaborators actors, designers, or choreographers introduce ideas more powerful than anything I could envision alone" (Godstime Q1). His collaboration was aesthetic and generative: "Designers bring in sound, fabrics, or textures that resonate with the vision" (Godstime Q2). He positioned himself not as the intellectual guide, but as the curator of talent and energy, a style that aligns with the fluid, responsive collaboration needed in student environments.

The synthesis of these two approaches is critical: Emmanuel's approach mitigates risk by ensuring intellectual alignment, whereas Godstime's approach maximises creative potential by accepting conceptual modification. Godstime's statement, "Vision is realised through collective artistry, not solitary mastery," fundamentally challenges the rigid Auteur idea by folding collaborative success into the definition of the vision itself (Godstime Q10).

#### **4.4 Analysis and Discussion: Cultural and Pragmatic Effectiveness**

This critical section assesses the two directorial visions against the final criteria derived from the literature: the capacity for Cultural and Aesthetic Relevance (the Nigerian mandate for indigenisation) and Pragmatic Effectiveness (the resource constraint test).

##### **4.4.1 Navigating the Cultural Mandate and Aesthetic Relevance**

The literature established that a successful Nigerian directorial vision must synthesise Western training with local aesthetics, creating a performance that achieves communal resonance (Mark 23; Adeoye 12). Since both productions, *Odenigbo* and *The Whispers of a Broken Soul*, dealt with psychological or abstract themes, the challenge of indigenisation lay in the conceptual integration of non realistic, culturally resonant elements rather than mere cultural decoration (Ogunwale 45).

Emmanuel's discussion of his vision reveals a primary focus on internal, psychological realism, describing *Odenigbo* as a "psychological thriller masked as domestic drama." While conceptually rigorous in Western terms, this focus risks detachment from the communal and physically expressive focus of traditional Nigerian theatre. His critique of his own work reflects this tension:

I would allow more silence and stillness. At times, I over directed transitions with action or sound when the weight of grief needed space to breathe (Emmanuel Q9).

The over emphasis on action and the perceived need to fill transitional spaces suggests a commitment to Western narrative pace and dramatic closure, potentially sacrificing the culturally resonant power of communal silence or rhythmic transition (Adeoye 14). His intellectual rigour inadvertently acted as a barrier to the integration of local rhythm.

Godstime, by contrast, focused on emotional impact and visceral staging. Although his process was rooted in personal image creation, his aesthetic choices possessed stronger cultural alignment. His use of physical burdens and the theme of constant performance (Godstime Q5) translated psychological struggle into a visually powerful, physical metaphor readily accessible to local audiences, who often value the theatricality of the body in space (Mark 23). Furthermore, his commitment to non verbal communication and metaphor: "Practice non verbal directing: communicate through gesture, sound, or metaphor to unlock theatrical language beyond words" (Godstime Q10), naturally aligns with the aesthetic requirements of local performance, where meaning is often carried through rhythm and spectacle rather than purely through dialogue (Mark 23). Godstime's Auteur vision, by pursuing raw emotional texture and

strong stage images, inadvertently fulfilled the aesthetic demands of the cultural mandate more effectively than Emmanuel's rational, text serving approach.

#### **4.4.2 Pragmatic Effectiveness and Resilience to Constraint**

The harsh material constraints of the UNIBEN environment—the lack of reliable infrastructure and limited budgets—mandate that the director's vision must be inherently adaptable and resourceful (Adeoye 15). The analysis must assess which vision proved more resilient to the inevitable practical failures of student production.

Godstime's choice of an aesthetic system for *The Whispers of a Broken Soul* relied heavily on the precise technical execution of lighting and sound cues for signalling temporal shifts (Godstime Q6). This reliance represents a high risk, low budget solution. While conceptually brilliant, the success of the semiotic system hinged entirely on the consistent functioning of potentially unreliable equipment. This fragility demonstrates a potential lack of pragmatic foresight, a critical failing in this specific environment.

In stark contrast, Emmanuel's *Interpreter* vision, particularly his solution to the structural shift in *Odenigbo*, was far more resilient. His choice to physically dismantle set pieces and use fragmented projections (Emmanuel Q6) was a low tech, high concept solution. The primary communicative action is the dismantling itself a visible,

symbolic event. Even if the projector failed, the visible removal of the hyper realistic set would still communicate the thematic fracturing of reality. This resource conscious adaptation aligns with the practical problem solving model that Adeoye and Knopf deem essential for directorial competence in resource deprived settings (Knopf 105; Adeoye 15). Emmanuel's vision, though less resonant culturally, demonstrated superior pragmatic resilience.

In terms of pedagogical success, Godstime's vision proved superior in fostering collaboration and personal growth. His philosophy, "Vision is realised through collective artistry, not solitary mastery" (Godstime Q10), directly promotes the educational goal of team development. Emmanuel's proudest achievement was the set transformation (an interpretive choice); Godstime's proudest was his success in pushing "my actors to inhabit their roles with honesty, achieving realism and immediacy" (Godstime Q9). This difference in focus reveals that Godstime's vision, despite its Auteur origins, resulted in a greater pedagogical benefit for the student actors, validating the training literature's focus on the director as a facilitator of personal growth (Monro 16).

#### **4.5 Synthesis and Discussion of Findings**

The critical, comparative analysis of the two UNIBEN student directors reveals that the efficacy of the directorial vision is not derived from adherence to a single

theoretical model, but from the **strategic deployment** of Auteur and Interpreter principles in response to contextual constraints. The definitive model for success in Nigerian educational theatre is a blended approach.

#### **4.5.1 The Blended Model of Success**

The data refutes the simplistic binary of the Auteur/Interpreter debate. Emmanuel's success lay in his application of the Interpreter Model's rigour to provide a resilient, text serving structure, particularly in solving the problem of tonal shift. Godstime's success lay in his application of the Auteur Model's sensory force to achieve superior emotional resonance and pedagogical effectiveness.

The most successful student directorial vision in this environment emerges as a **Blended Model** (Abiodun 12). This model requires:

- 1. Conceptual Discipline:** The ability to begin with the Interpreter's analytical rigor to provide a structural base (Emmanuel's Q2 process).
- 2. Aesthetic Courage:** The willingness to adopt the Auteur's use of powerful, non realistic visual metaphor to achieve cultural and emotional resonance (Godstime's use of physical burdens, Q5).

3. **Pragmatic Resilience:** The capacity to select low tech, high concept solutions that guarantee the communication of meaning even when infrastructure fails (Emmanuel's set dismantling, Q6).

Neither director achieved a perfect synthesis across all three domains, demonstrating the profound difficulty of the directorial task in the UNIBEN environment.

#### 4.5.2 Final Critical Conclusion

The directorial vision, when examined in the pedagogical context of UNIBEN, ceases to be merely an artistic statement. It is a negotiation document a contract between the director's conceptual ambition, the playwright's text, the local culture's aesthetic expectations, and the limitations of the university's resources.

- **Emmanuel's vision**, while intellectually robust and pragmatically resilient, struggled with the emotional and cultural translation required for actor and audience resonance, a critical flaw in the performance domain.
- **Godstime's vision**, while emotionally effective, communally resonant, and collaboratively generous, introduced a dangerous technical vulnerability that threatened to compromise the entire semiotic system.

The study critically concludes that Godstime's vision, by prioritising the affective experience of the actor and the audience, provided a more resonant and pedagogically complete theatrical experience. His vision functioned as a superior catalyst for collective artistry, which, in an educational setting, is the ultimate measure of directorial success, despite its inherent pragmatic risk. The successful student director prioritises collaborative learning and cultural resonance over intellectual safety and structural fidelity.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study embarked upon a critical examination of the director's vision as interpreted and applied by two student directors at the University of Benin (UNIBEN), using a rigorous qualitative, comparative case study methodology. Through the systematic analysis of conceptual documentation, rehearsal observation, and in depth interviews, the research sought to move beyond the subjective appreciation of artistic intent and establish objective, context specific criteria for directorial success within the demanding environment of Nigerian academic theatre. The critical framework built upon Conceptual Cohesion and Fidelity, Cultural and Aesthetic Relevance, and Pragmatic and Pedagogical Effectiveness provided the necessary lens to dissect the contrasting Auteur and Interpreter approaches demonstrated by Directors Godstime and Emmanuel, respectively.

#### **5.1 Summary of Major Findings**

The empirical findings generated in Chapter Four yielded three definitive, interconnected conclusions regarding the efficacy of the director's vision in this specific pedagogical and material context.

### 5.1.1 Theoretical Stance and Conceptual Cohesion

The study established a clear divergence in the directors' conceptual starting points, aligning them with the two major theoretical models. Director Emmanuel's vision for *Odenigbo* was a product of the Interpreter Model, characterised by intellectual rigour, deep textual immersion, and a stated goal of textual fidelity (Emmanuel Q2). This approach resulted in superior structural cohesion, particularly in handling the play's difficult tonal shift, which was resolved through a semiotically consistent low tech, high concept solution (Emmanuel Q6). Conversely, Director Godstime's vision for *The Whispers of a Broken Soul* emerged from the Auteur Model, prioritising visceral image, emotional texture, and the creation of "the architecture of emotional impact" (Godstime Q3). While less textually disciplined, this approach demonstrated superior semiotic efficacy in rehearsal, translating abstract concepts into concrete, non verbal language for the actors (Godstime Q10).

### 5.1.2 Cultural Translation and Affective Resonance

A key finding concerned the critical divergence in meeting the **cultural mandate** of Nigerian theatre. Despite Emmanuel's intellectual discipline, his commitment to psychological realism risked alienating local aesthetics by over emphasising dialogue driven narrative pace and struggling with the incorporation of culturally significant silence and rhythmic transition (Adeoye 14). He confessed to over

directing moments of grief where silence was needed (Emmanuel Q9). Godstime, paradoxically, achieved greater cultural resonance through his Auteur commitment to the **body in performance**. His use of **physical burdens** and metaphor translated psychological trauma into a visually powerful, communal aesthetic that resonated viscerally with the expectations of Nigerian performance practice (Mark 23). The Auteur approach, by focusing on sensory image rather than textual literalism, inadvertently satisfied the aesthetic demands of indigenisation more effectively.

### **5.1.3 Pragmatic Resilience and Pedagogical Superiority**

The findings critically juxtaposed the visions' resilience against the UNIBEN's severe material constraints (Adeoye 15) and their capacity to function as pedagogical tools (Monro 16).

- **Pragmatic Resilience:** Emmanuel's **low tech** solution the physical dismantling of the set was judged superior in pragmatic resilience. It guaranteed the communication of the thematic message even if power or technical resources failed (Adeoye 15). Godstime's reliance on precise, high frequency lighting and sound cues for signalling temporal shifts created a dangerous technical vulnerability, placing the entire semiotic system at the mercy of unreliable infrastructure (Godstime Q6).

- **Pedagogical Benefit:** Godstime's philosophy, "Vision is realised through collective artistry, not solitary mastery" (Godstime Q10), proved pedagogically superior. His collaborative approach resulted in his proudest achievement being the actors' ability to inhabit their roles with honesty (Godstime Q9). This confirmed that his vision was a stronger catalyst for collective growth and affective mastery among the student team (Monro 16).

## 5.2 Conclusion

The director's vision, as a concept in Nigerian academic theatre, is fundamentally a negotiation document operating at the difficult juncture of conflicting aesthetic, pedagogical, and material demands. The study concludes that the traditional theoretical models Auteur and Interpreter are insufficient when applied in isolation to the UNIBEN context; rather, success hinges on a Blended Model defined by strategic adaptation.

The primary finding is that pedagogical efficacy and affective resonance ultimately supersede structural cohesion and pragmatic safety in determining the overall success of the student directorial vision. While Emmanuel's Interpreter vision possessed the required intellectual and structural security demanded by the faculty, Godstime's Auteur vision, by prioritising the affective experience and collaborative artistry of his peers, yielded a result that was more dynamic, culturally resonant, and

pedagogically complete. His vision functioned as a superior developmental tool for the entire student ensemble.

The most successful vision is therefore neither a dictatorial mandate nor a timid textual servant, but a flexible, shared proposition that possesses the following qualities: Conceptual Discipline (from the Interpreter Model) fused with Aesthetic Courage (from the Auteur Model), tempered by Pragmatic Resilience (a requirement of the local material environment). The research asserts that the student director who successfully mediates the relationship between the playwright's text, the actor's emotion, and the cultural expectation of the local audience, as Godstime demonstrated in his collaborative methods, is the one who best embodies the modern, culturally responsible directorial ideal in Nigeria.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Theatre Practice and Training**

Based on the empirical findings and critical conclusions drawn from the comparative case studies, the following recommendations are advanced for the enhancement of theatre practice and training, both at the University of Benin and in similar academic environments across Nigeria.

#### **5.3.1 Training Recommendations: Integrating Affective and Pragmatic Skills**

- 1. Shift Focus from Textual Rigour to Affective Translation:** Directing pedagogy should consciously move beyond pure academic script analysis, which

favours the Emmanuel-style Interpreter, towards modules that explicitly train student directors in non verbal communication and the effective management of emotional **labour** (Hetzler 25). Students must be taught how to translate conceptual ideas into immediate, physical, and sensory instructions for actors (Sudol 2).

- 2. Prioritise Pragmatic Resilience and Low Tech Solutions:** Curriculum must mandate that directorial concepts be developed with explicit consideration of resource scarcity. Students should be trained in **conceptual engineering**, where the dramatic effect is achieved through symbolic staging, lighting design, and resourceful use of available materials rather than reliance on sophisticated, unreliable technology (Knopf 105; Adeoye 15). The successful UNIBEN director must be a master of creative survival.
- 3. Mandate Collaborative Leadership:** Director training should formally incorporate the pedagogical role. The student director should be assessed not only on the final artistic product but on their capacity for collaborative facilitation, measured through peer reviews and adherence to the principles of shared creation demonstrated by Godstime (Monro 11).

### 5.3.2 Practice Recommendations: Cultural Synthesis

1. **Formalise the Cultural Mandate:** All student directorial briefs must formally require a specific, conceptually justified strategy for cultural indigenisation. This moves the inclusion of local music, dance, or rhythm from arbitrary decoration to an essential semiotic component of the overall vision (Mark 23; Ogunwale 45).
2. **Embrace Rhythmic and Communal Aesthetics:** Directors should be encouraged to explore visions rooted in the communal aesthetic, employing rhythm, choral movement, and physical metaphor as core conceptual tools, thus achieving the emotional immediacy that resonated strongly with the local context.

### 5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The critical limitations of this study specifically the small sample size and the necessary focus on a single institution open avenues for continued scholarly investigation.

1. **A Comparative Study of Affective Outcomes:** Further research should employ quantitative measures (such as audience surveys or physiological monitoring) to specifically measure the **affective resonance** of Auteur-style,

image driven productions versus Interpreter-style, text driven productions in a Nigerian context.

- 2. The Long Term Pedagogical Impact of Directorial Style:** A longitudinal study tracking the professional careers of UNIBEN graduates who adopted the Auteur model versus the Interpreter model would provide empirical data on which theoretical approach yields the most successful professional director in the Nigerian theatrical economy.
- 3. Analysis of Technical Vulnerability:** Research is needed to develop a specific risk assessment metric for directorial visions in resource deprived academic theatre, quantifying the conceptual cost of reliance on unreliable technical infrastructure.

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