An Analytical Study on the Use of Stage Lighting to Stimulate Emotions in Child Audiences: A Case Study of the Children's Play "Boon Moon"

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Abstract

In local children's theatre, lighting is predominantly utilized for simple illumination or general symbolic purposes. Although lighting designs based on the director's and designer's experience and imagination create aesthetic splendor, they risk overlooking a crucial element, which is the color perception of children who comprise the primary audience. Accordingly, the research problem focuses on whether color perception can be effectively brought out through lighting to stimulate child audiences' emotions, while the objective is to create an enabling space for them to experience theatrical emotions more intensely. This study employed a thematic analysis of qualitative data compiled through primary and secondary sources. Adopting a practice-based research approach, it investigates how the lighting design for the play *Boon Moon* was developed, while using an observational methodology to examine the behavioral changes of a child audience from Atkandura Seevali Vidyalaya who watched the performance with and without this specific lighting. Boyatzis and Varghese's color-emotion associations serve as the secondary theoretical framework to establish the child-psychological basis for color perception in the design. Consequently, pink and Cyan (green+blue) lighting were symbolically used to depict the dream-world sequences. Data analysis reveals that while the attention of children who watched the play without lighting drifted after just 10 minutes, those who viewed it with lighting maintained unwavering attention toward the stage until the end of the 30-minute performance. Furthermore, whenever the lighting colors shifted, the children's facial moods and expressions changed instantaneously in response. Accordingly, the study concludes that appropriate color combinations and variations in light intensity tailored to the child's mind directly contribute to emotional stimulation. Moreover, swift transitions in colors help children comprehend theatrical moods while breaking visual monotony, proving that Western color-emotion theories can be successfully implemented in the local context. These findings offer valuable theoretical and practical insights for future children's theatre productions and local lighting design pedagogy.

***Keywords**: Lighting Design, Children's Theatre, Color Perception, Emotional Stimulation, Boon Moon.*