

ADOPTING A THEATRE PRODUCTION INTO A FILMED-DRAMA FOR AN INTERVENTION ON ALCOHOL-RELATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL MESSAGES (ARHSM) IN SRI LANKA

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Research highlights the prevalence of high alcohol consumption rates, particularly among young males aged 25-39, in both urban and rural Sri Lanka. To address this issue from 2018 to 2023, the South Asian Clinical Toxicology Research Collaboration (SACTRC) organised a theatre-based community intervention aiming to raise awareness of alcohol-related health and social problems in the Anuradhapura district. A live theatre production (TP) was developed to deliver alcohol-related health and social messages (ARHSM), focusing on the life journey of a young driver who struggles with alcohol addiction and eventually recovers. Although this was initially planned as a live performance, the project adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by creating a filmed drama based on the live theatre production. As a practice-led study, this paper examines the process of adopting live theatre production into a filmed-drama for ARHSM. The primary objective of this study was to identify the most effective visual recording approach to adapt TP to the film medium while keeping the quality of a live TP. We had to choose between two methods, namely, the single-camera method (SCM) and the multicamera method (MCM). Given the nature of this practice-led study, a qualitative research design was adopted, utilising various methods in two distinct phases. 1. Blocking Phase: The eight scenes of the TP were re-constructed into individual shots, and a storyboard was drafted to outline the sequence. 2. Presenting Phase: The storyboard was analysed using the form of the film, including narrative, direction, cinematography, mise-en-scène, and editing. Film theories of formalism, realism, and approaches such as Eisenstein and Jean-Luc Godard were used in the creative process. This was vital in the filmed-drama since the TP's narrative follows a linear path, and the human characters' acting is naturalist, while the mise-en-scène and the acting style of the non-human character (demon) adopts a more stylised approach. Analysing the shot list breakdown underscores the importance of effectively employing various shots to convey the ARHSM. Additionally, continuity editing plays a crucial role in maintaining a linear narrative and continuous flow. Furthermore, recording an entire scene in one go ensures the natural flow of actors' performances and contributes to efficient time and budget management. Considering all these factors, when theatre productions are adapted to the film medium with an emphasis on ARHSM, the MCM emerges as the most productive approach for a filmed-drama intervention.

Keywords: ARHSM, Filmed-drama, Multicamera, Single-camera, Theatre intervention