EDUCATING THE FILMMAKER, EMPOWERING THE STORY: FILM SCHOOLS AND THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN CINEMA

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Abstract
The number of films being produced in Africa, their visibility, and technological capabilities are growing, but the institutions trained to produce those people have not. It explores the function of the film school within the production of the new generation of African cinema, focusing primarily on Nigeria, where Nollywood is based and where the popular and literary theatre has a long history. This article, from a practitioner-scholar perspective and from a critical analysis of film studies literature, contends that film education in Africa must shift from the transmission of technical skills to the creation of artistically accomplished, culturally literate, economically resourceful, and ethically alert filmmakers. It offers the heuristic of the Four-C Framework of film education (Craft, Culture, Commerce and Code) as a proposal for designing the curriculum, partnering with institutions and running festivals. It then examines the responses of each pillar, including the transition from stage to screen in performance training, politics of African identity and language, economics of funding, distribution and intellectual property, and pedagogical implications of generative AI. It ends with a set of recommendations for universities, industry practitioners, policy makers and festival organisers and with an agenda for empirical research. The article participates in discussions on creative-industries education in the Global South, proposing that the film school should be seen not only as a training provider but as being an integral part of the infrastructure of the creative economy.

Keywords: African cinema; film education; Nollywood; Nigerian theatre; creative economy; screen performance; artificial intelligence; film festivals; higher education.

Introduction

Who will tell Africa's stories, how well will they tell them and who will gain from the stories they tell? It is a question of aesthetics, education, politics, and economy, and is more urgent now as African screen industries are expanding. The Nollywood home video industry was born in the early 1990s, and by volume of output is one of the biggest film cultures in the world, attracting audiences on the continent and in the diasporas (Haynes, 2000; Barrot, 2008). Since then, the channels through which African audiovisual content is produced and consumed have grown in number, due to the advent of streaming platforms, mobile devices and social media (Lobato, 2019). But increasing volume does not equate to increasing capability, sustainability, or cultural influence. The non-uniformity in production, the limited access to finance, inadequate distribution networks, piracy and the lack of professionalism in many craft sectors have been noted by practitioners and scholars (Ekwuazi, 1991; Haynes, 2016).

The case of African cinema is based on a simple premise: the future of African cinema will not only rely on the stories that Africa has to tell (and they are many) but on the educational and industrial systems that will prepare individuals to tell the stories with excellence. Those systems are based on film schools. They are spaces in which craft is learned, taste and critical judgement developed, professional networks initiated, and the ethical issues of representation first encountered. Meanwhile, film schools in many African settings face challenges related to inadequate equipment, weak connections with the film industry, and fast changing technologies.

The discussion starts from a keynote address prepared for a film festival organised by Pan-Atlantic University, Nigeria, on the theme Film School and the Future of African Cinema. The address was aimed at scholars, filmmakers, students, producers, investors and policymakers and was a blend of thought and action. The arguments of the present article are developed in scholarly form: they are placed in a context; the structure of the concepts is made explicit; a framework is provided for the discussion which can be examined, contested and tested by others. The article addresses three questions.

1. What distinctive educational challenges arise when training filmmakers for African, and specifically Nigerian, screen industries?
2. What should a film school teach, and how should it be organised, if it is to serve artistic excellence, cultural self-representation and economic sustainability together?
3. What roles can universities and university-linked film festivals play in building a stronger ecosystem for African cinema?

Literature and Context

African cinema, self-representation and cultural agency

African cinema has always been viewed as a medium of representation that has been hotly debated. The early African filmmakers were aware of the long history of colonial and Western images of that continent, and the cinema that they made was clearly an attempt at reclaiming the right to tell the story of African experience (Diawara, 1992; Ukadike, 1994; Thackway, 2003). The Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO), established in 1969, provided enduring platforms for exchange and recognition of African film, while Ousmane Sembène, dubbed the father of African cinema, utilised film as a medium of social critique and cultural self-representation. The general postcolonial argument, of which writers like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) are a part, is that political and intellectual self-determination cannot be divorced from control over the means to cultural expression.

Cinema from this angle is more than entertainment. It is a tool of cultural agency: communities determine through film what they want to remember and what social realities they want to examine, and what their aspirations are for the next generation. Here, Stuart Hall's (1990) description of cultural identity as "becoming" as opposed to "being" is helpful, as it warns against the possibility of a prescribed African identity being reproduced on screen. Identity is made through the representation, and representation is made through trained and untrained people in terms of working in particular institutions. Who is educated to make images is thus at the heart of the politics of African self-representation.

From popular theatre to Nollywood

The history of cinema in Nigeria cannot be divorced from the history of performance. Itinerant and popular theatre, in particular the itinerant Yoruba theatre of Hubert Ogunde in the 1940s, showed that performance could defy elite cultural venues and directly address ordinary people by using music, humour, spectacle and social commentary (Ogunbiyi, 1981; Barber, 2000). The use of indigenous history, myth and music to create a theatre with a broad cultural appeal was demonstrated in the works of Duro Ladipo (Ogunbiyi, 1981). Celluloid filmmakers like Ola Balogun, Eddie Ugbomah and Tunde Kelani in various eras and styles brought the theatrical, literary and political concerns to the screen (Ekwuazi, 1991; Adesokan, 2011).

The economic crisis of the 1980s caused a deconstruction of the celluloid infrastructure of production and cinema exhibition, and the advent of cheap video technology provided another way. Living in Bondage (1992) is often referred to as a forerunner to the big boom in home video that followed, proving that home-produced, locally resonant stories could have very large audiences, at least if they are cheaply produced and distributed through informal channels (Haynes and Okome, 1998; Haynes, 2000). The emergence of Nollywood was fuelled by the entrepreneurial spirit, improvisation, sensitivity to audience taste and – as a comparison of survey data suggested at the end of the 2000s – by the production of a large number of feature films, at least in terms of volume, compared to the rest of the world (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009). Since then, new genres, new distribution channels and, now more than ever, high-budget films for cinemas and streaming platforms have emerged in the industry (Haynes, 2016; Krings and Okome, 2013).

There are two implications for film education. First, there is already a rich popular tradition in Nigeria, and a film school that did not pay attention to it was training students for a context that does not exist. Secondly, the industry developed more rapidly than the institutions that were created to serve it. Improvisation, resourcefulness and learning on the job were the methods by which the industry was developed, but these can too easily turn into a permanent substitute for investment in training, equipment, research and professional standards. Being resourceful under the necessity of the situation and being under-resourced because the systems necessary for development haven't been built is different.

Film education and the creative economy

The ratio of craft training to critical study and preparation for the industry has been a subject of debate in international scholarship in film and media education for a long time. One general theory of education suggests that professional competence can be achieved not just by mastering a set of procedures, but by continual cycles of doing and thinking (Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984). In terms of film, this means that students should have ongoing opportunities to create films, to be critiqued and to consider their options, rather than simply having lectures on theory and history.

The second strand is one that places creative education in the context of the economics of the cultural industries. Hesmondhalgh (2013) stresses that cultural production is risky, has unpredictable demand and is dominated by IP and distribution. UNESCO's global report on cultural policy (2022) also considers the sector of creativity as one

that needs conscious policy support, fair compensation for creators and attention to the situation of artists' work. In the African context, this translates to craft training without financing, contract and rights management, and audience development, leaving the trainees vulnerable in markets where informal transactions are the norm. As revealed by Lobato's (2012) research on informal distribution networks, the informal circulation of films is not just an aberration from the formal industry, but a structure of many film cultures, of which educators need to be aware and not simply condemn.

The third strand is about technology. While some barriers to entry have been reduced with digital production and distribution, others have been created by the need for platforms and tools outside of the scope of the project (Lobato, 2019). Algorithmic bias and the cultural politics of AI research suggest that AI systems can perpetuate stereotypes and exclude the cultures, languages and accents of the Global South (Noble, 2018; Benjamin, 2019; Crawford, 2021). These are issues that are very pertinent to a continent where languages and visual cultures are under-represented in the data used to train many generative systems.

The gap this article addresses

There is a wealth of literature on the history, aesthetics and economics of Nollywood, but few studies explore the intersection of these fields and question what an African film school should look like, and even fewer studies address the performer's training, the ethics of AI and the role of the university festival in a single discourse. This article aims to fill this gap with a conceptual contribution that is grounded in the experiences of practitioners.

Approach and Limitations

This article is not empirical but conceptual and interpretive in nature. The arguments are grounded in three things: the author's position as a theatre practitioner and academic who is engaged in the teaching of performance; a critical study of the academic literature surveyed above; and an examination of a keynote speech given at a university film festival, which is here considered a record of professional and institutional discourse. This is similar to models of reflective practice in the performing and screen arts, where reflective practice is acknowledged as a source of insight when it is made explicit and validated by research into the literature.

There are drawbacks to the approach. The article contains no primary data from students, graduates, employers and institutions, and the recommendations made should accordingly be read as propositions for testing rather than as findings. The Nigerian case is not considered representative, but rather illustrative: African film cultures vary widely, both in terms of language, funding systems, state policy and colonial history, as well as in the framework outlined below, which will require adaptation in each context. The empirical work needed to test and refine the argument is identified in Section 8.

The Four-C Framework of Film Education

The framework proposed here holds that a film school serving African cinema should develop four interdependent capacities in its students and, by extension, in the institution itself.

Pillar	Core question	Educational focus
Craft	Can the student make deliberate, skilled choices?	Screenwriting, directing, performance, cinematography, editing, sound, production design, production management
Culture	Does the student understand what and whom they represent?	Film history, theory and criticism; African and global cinemas; language; ethics of representation; research methods
Commerce	Can the work, and the worker, survive?	Financing, budgeting, pitching, contracts, intellectual property, distribution, entrepreneurship
Code	Can the student use, question, and help shape technology?	Digital workflows, AI literacy and ethics, data and algorithmic bias, platforms, archiving, innovation

The pillars will not be separate modules, but rather aspects that should be in a programme, albeit in different amounts of occurrence. For example, a script exercise could be used to work on craft (structure and dialogue), culture (the representation of a community), commerce (the use, disclosure and critique of AI-assisted research tools) and code (how the script is structured and the dialogue).

The following are the three theoretical commitments the framework is based on. One is that the film is an art of conscious choices; whether it's framing, lighting, sound, editing, or performance, all of these choices have a bearing on meaning, and education should be based on choices that are not just instinctive. Professional competence is a result of systematic education; instinct and talent are what they are. The second is that representation is responsible: it can broaden knowledge, defy assumptions, and remember history, but it can also perpetuate stereotypes or ignore

the intricacies of a complex society in order to cast it as a familiar image. The third is that sustainability is an educational issue – if you have a successful film industry, and you don't have a sustainable film people, then you are not sustainable, and if you have a school that ignores that, then you are sending the students into precarity.

Applying the Framework

Craft: from instinct to deliberate choice

The craft pillar focuses on the technical and artistic skills that are fundamental to all productions. Cinema is a collaborative art; each of the writers, directors, cinematographers, editors, sound designers, production designers, and producers brings their specialised knowledge to the table. The student who can use a camera has learned a skill; the student who knows light, composition, movement, symbolism, and visual narrative has started to learn the intellectual aspects of a cinematographer. Similarly, a student who can write dialogues can replicate conversation, but one who understands character, conflict, subtext, dramatic action and cinematic structure can produce stories which will stick in the audience's mind.

Pedagogically, there are two consequences. The first is that theory and practice should be linked. Students should not leave school with a lot of theory and little experience of a production, or a lot of practical skills and little understanding of the history of films, Film aesthetics, or film critical analysis. Programmes need to provide opportunities in a regular fashion to move through script development, production and post-production, to festival presentation and public engagement within the cycles of practice and reflection outlined by Schön (1983) and Kolb (1984). Secondly, mentoring should be more structured and less ad hoc. Guest lectures are good, but longer relationships with trained professionals, which give feedback on the script, supervised production, internships, and career advice, transmit tacit knowledge that curricula cannot capture. The exchange should be two-way, as young filmmakers can learn new tricks and tips from established practitioners and vice versa.

The actor's education and the process of him making the leap from the stage to the screen.The actor's education and the making of the leap from the stage to the screen.
Performance is a factor that deserves special attention, since the actor is usually the most prominent part of a screen production, and in many films schools the least systematically trained. Technically perfect shot of a poor performance. The smallest detail is crucial to screen acting: a pause, a glance, an expression for a fraction of a second, a change in breathing, etc. (Naremore, 1988; Baron and Carnicke, 2008).

Nigeria, where many screen actors and directors come from a theatrical background, has a first-order pedagogical problem in transitioning from the media to theatre. Stage acting requires projection, space, and a body/auditorium relationship. Consider framing, continuity, stillness, vocal subtlety, eyelines, and the connection between acting and the lens in screen acting. The emotion can be transmitted to the actor by a stage director through movement over a vast area or by a screen director through a close-up, a held pause, a shift of focus, or another character's reaction. The principles used will continue to be related: observation of human behavior, motivation, active listening, truthful response, but the techniques need to be modified and adapted to the medium.

The artistic legacy, on the one hand, is a benefit and, on the other, a pedagogical challenge for the country. It provides the university stage with a source of performance traditions, be it the music, dance, and satire of the travelling theatre or the literary and historical drama of academia. It also provides habits like expansive projection that must be worked on, but require conscious training for use in the camera. A film school should, therefore, make acting for the camera a serious study of human behavior, not just memorizing and reciting lines, and have actors participate in the rest of the group, so that directors, cinematographers and actors learn to work within the limitations of one another.

Culture: identity without imprisonment

The culture pillar deals with the knowledge that students have on the societies they represent and the traditions of cinema that they inherit. One of the questions that has been posed in the study of African film is what makes film African? A reductive answer is one that sees African cinema, as a whole, as being defined by certain visual elements, such as villages, traditional rulers, masquerades and rituals, or as having a consistent opposition between tradition and modernity. They are serious and relevant topics, but not ones that can form the basis of a cinema. Identity is not an essence that can be stored in a museum, but is continually created throughout history and in representation, as Hall (1990) claims of identity in general. Africa is a living continent where communities struggle to balance and blend tradition and modernity, local identity and global connection, inherited values with emerging possibilities.

Film education should thus promote students to be confident, complex, and curious about African identity. African stories need to be free to talk about ancient kingdoms and modern cities, family and artificial intelligence, migration and belonging, climate change and political responsibility, love and passion, spirituality and entrepreneurship and unemployment. Students should be able to create historical movies, political drama, romantic comedy, science fiction, animation, thriller, documentary, and experimental, or fall outside of any of the above. To do this, they should be taught to know, not romanticise, their communities, to oppose social problems without diminishing African societies to their problems; and to be aware of global cinema without surrendering their own creative voice. This task is all about language. Cinema development is not hampered by the lack of English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Swahili, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, isiZulu, and other African languages but by creative resources. Films in African languages can be subtitled, dubbed, and/or localised to enable them to communicate with broader audiences, while still maintaining their linguistic identity. This should not be an aim to make African films that are similar to the world's cinemas, or to meet the narrow definition of what an African film should be, as defined by outsiders. To produce films that add something different to world cinema. A film can be very local and yet have universal appeal, and the more honest it is in dealing with its characters and circumstances, the more it will have universal appeal.

Archival obligation is also associated with the culture pillar. Films, scripts, production records, posters, photographs, interviews, and other materials are cultural resources that are used by future filmmakers and researchers to gain insight into the evolution of a film tradition. The institutions of universities can record practitioners' experiences, archive audiovisual materials, and facilitate research into Nigerian and African film history to prevent important aspects of this history from being lost due to non-institutionalization.

Commerce: making sure that creativity lives on

The commerce pillar tackles the taboo subject of money that is sometimes less comfortable in art and academia. Making a film is expensive, as is producing it, promoting it, distributing it, and archiving it. The people involved in movie-making need to make a living, equipment needs to be kept in good working order, rights need to be safeguarded, and investors need to know how their money could be repaid to them. Passion is essential, but it doesn't cover all production costs! It's not morally right to send the youngsters out there to make films without teaching them the economics of filmmaking.

A film school should therefore educate students to make project proposals and budgets, pitch to investors, negotiate contracts, understand licensing and build audiences, and plan distribution. It should also make them aware that the life of a film can be much longer than the original release, given that there is a possibility to exploit the intellectual property of the film through broadcasting, streaming, international sales, educational licensing, remakes, merchandising, and other means (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Graduates should also be familiar with the formal and informal circuits of film distribution, and the pros and cons of the two, such as how unauthorised exploitation and piracy impact creators' revenues (Lobato, 2012).

It is not to make all artists into businessmen with a sacrifice of art. It's to provide the conditions for artists to keep on creating. A film industry can't be considered sustainable if it can make films that are successful but cannot be sustained by the filmmakers. A more sustainable ecosystem can be achieved if film schools provide research on audiences, financing, and distribution, as well as internships and access to equipment, collaborative work, and job creation for their graduates by production companies, broadcasters, streaming platforms, tech companies, financial institutions, and public agencies, not only through occasional sponsorship. In this context, the graduates are not just potential employees, but employers, innovators, IP owners, and the school is part of the infrastructure of the creative economy (UNESCO, 2022).

This is followed by a longer-term aspiration. African Film industry should not rely solely on external investment or foreign distribution deals or opportunities outside its control. It should gradually build up local financing structures, regional distribution networks, and African-owned production companies, allowing filmmakers to have significant control over their work and success, to create more opportunities for the next generation.

Code: technology, streaming and artificial intelligence

The code pillar relates to the technological circumstances of today's filmmaking. The digital cameraman, inexpensive editing solutions, pocket-sized devices, cloud-based workflow, virtual shooting, streaming and AI are changing the ways in which films are conceived, produced, distributed and consumed. These developments have real possibilities that could be realised for a continent that has a large youth population coupled with diverse creative communities. A young, creative talent can now go through the steps of creating a short film, uploading it to the web, building a fan base, and getting noticed by professionals without having to go through the steps of a

traditional film system and a successful filmmaking career, and social media sites have also established places for short comedy, documentary, animation, and web series, which are all new mediums.

But having access to technology doesn't necessarily mean that people are masters of cinema. An overly complicated camera shoot won't save a story, fancy special effects can't make a story emotional, and no platform can attract an audience. Access can be facilitated through streaming services, but this does not necessarily lead to just compensation, ownership, or sustainable careers (Lobato, 2019). Thus, the film school has to train its students with the capacity to adjust to the changing dynamics between the creators, platforms, audience, and rights owners.

These are answered by generative AI. AI tools could help with research, storyboarding, translation, subtitling, visual development, pre-production planning, animation, and parts of post-production, and could even reduce the resources needed by creators who don't have access to costly ones. However, along with the technical issues that arise with their adoption come educational issues as well.

- **Ownership and rights.** Who owns AI-generated material, and how can filmmakers protect original ideas, scripts, and performances?
- **Consent.** How should students and professionals obtain consent before using a person's likeness or voice, and how should performers' rights be protected?
- **Transparency.** How should the use of AI be disclosed in coursework, festival submissions and credits?
- **Bias and representation.** What happens when training data reproduce stereotypes or misrepresent African cultures, accents and visual traditions (Noble, 2018; Benjamin, 2019; Crawford, 2021)?

The common educational idea is that technology is not to be revered; it is to be used wisely. A tool can produce an image of an African masquerade, but the tool doesn't know anything about the social context and history of that masquerade; a system can mimic a Nigerian accent but have no idea about the social relationships, humour and emotional history that undergirds the character's authenticity. The context, judgement and artistic purpose must be provided by the filmmaker. In consideration of this, film schools must create policies and programs that encourage responsible experimentation, acknowledge the rights of copyright holders and performers, enhance the human capacities that are required for filmmaking (observation, empathy, imagination, cultural understanding, judgement and collaboration), and safeguard against algorithmic bias (see also UNESCO, 2021).

There is also an aspiration to go beyond the act of adoption in the pillar. Africa should NOT be the audience of technological change but a player. When African filmmakers are only allowed to buy equipment, subscribe to platforms, and use software without which they have no say over the design, these structural constraints of the past will be brought to life through digital means. African universities, on the other hand, can provide input in the research field of animation, virtual production, digital preservation, language technologies, and accessible filmmaking. This involves collaboration across disciplines: the collaboration of computer scientists with filmmakers, linguists with sound and language experts, historians with documentary producers, and theatre practitioners with digital artists, experimenting with new ways of performing.

Inclusion and access across the four pillars

Inclusion is not a fifth pillar but a condition which determines the possibility of the other four pillars to be realised. There is a distribution of talent but not of opportunity. The diversity of stories, points of view, ability and skills in African cinema will be limited and restricted if only those who already have equipment, money, connections and institutions have the right to pursue a career in it. Film education must provide spaces for women filmmakers, new entrants, persons with disabilities, indigenous language and indigenous communities that are under-represented in films.

In practice, it involves consideration of how to ensure that children from low-income communities are admitted through the college gates, that the facilities and teaching materials are accessible, that women and people from minority groups are represented on the faculty and guest mentors, and that a low-income student's screenplay or a story in an indigenous language can be developed and read. Inclusion is more than just a fair thing to do. It offers wider creative and economic opportunities for this industry. There is no way to predict where the next big film talent will come from, and it's up to educational institutions to ensure that these talents will not stay undiscovered due to lack of opportunity.

The University and the Festival as Institutional Actors

What universities can contribute

Time and resources are often limiting in the industry, but are not an issue in the university. A university can offer the opportunity for systematic research, experimentation, critical reflection, mentorship, and long-term

development of talent. It can allow scholars, practitioners, students, investors, policymakers, and technology specialists to engage in dialogue, and it can provide test beds for ideas which commercial schedules do not allow. Blaming universities for not providing manpower with skills that the production companies require, or blaming production companies for failing to provide universities with the equipment and industry linkage needed for intensive training, is not a solution to the persistent mismatch in academic training and industry demands. It needs reciprocity: Universities engaging in the review of curricula and the enhancement of practical learning; practitioners offering internships and other learning opportunities, mentorship, and collaboration; public institutions understanding the infrastructure and the policy needs of the creative economy; and investors being better informed about opportunities and risks of film production.

What new opportunities will our graduates create? is thus a guiding question that a film school can ask itself to produce a productive class. The second question is essentially about how the school is a part of the formation of the industry, and not a source of labour for the industry.

The festival as a pedagogical space

This is a unique opportunity provided by film festivals which are attached to the universities. Films can be shown, people can be met, criticized, a career can be built, and new film traditions can be experienced and embraced at festivals. If used in relation to education, they can serve as research sites, training and industry development sites, and exhibition sites. Film should not be screened and left alone; it should be the starting point for a discussion of the reasons why the story was told like this, choices the director had to make, how the actor developed his character, the role of cinematography, ethical questions raised by the film, how it was financed, and what the emerging filmmaker can learn from its production. This type of question makes a screening into a learning experience.

In terms of practice, a festival designed to be a learning environment would feature academics, students, and professionals engaging in structured dialogues with each other, workshops, pitching forums, masterclasses, and script-development sessions as well as screenings. It would also create a connection between the university and the film world at large and inspire links that would survive the conference.

Recommendations

The analysis above yields recommendations for four groups of actors. They are presented as propositions for institutional experimentation and empirical evaluation.

Actor	Recommendation	Pillar(s)
Universities and film schools	Develop industry-linked curricula that combine rigorous scholarship with supervised production; establish regular student film laboratories in which interdisciplinary teams develop, produce and screen short work; require training in rights, contracts and budgeting; adopt transparent AI policies covering disclosure, consent and copyright.	Craft, Culture, Commerce, Code
Industry practitioners and producers	Offer structured mentorship and paid or credited internships; open productions to supervised student participation; contribute to curriculum review; support archival preservation of production materials.	Craft, Commerce, Culture
Policymakers and funders	Treat film education and creative-economy infrastructure as development priorities; support shared production and post-production facilities; strengthen rights enforcement and fair-contract standards; fund research on audiences, financing and distribution.	Commerce, Code
Festival organisers	Integrate masterclasses, pitching forums, script labs and academic panels into festival programmes; create pathways from student screenings to professional networks and distribution; monitor outcomes for participants.	Craft, Culture, Commerce

There are two cross-cutting principles qualifying these recommendations. First, not one of them has a message of giving up on entrepreneurial sagacity which created Nollywood. The intent is to provide that ingenuity with a more solid institutional base, rather than to supplant it, through education, research, innovation, and professional development. Second, recommendations are interdependent, meaning that labs with industry partners will have a source of graduates without industry partnerships and curricular reform, and industry partnerships without curricular reform will become sponsorship without learning.

Limitations and Research Agenda

Because this article is conceptual, its principal limitation is the absence of primary evidence. Several lines of empirical inquiry would test and refine the framework.

- **Graduate trajectories.** Longitudinal tracer studies of film-school graduates in Nigeria and other African countries could show where graduates work, what they earn, and which competencies they find most and least adequate.
- **Employer and producer perspectives.** Interviews and surveys with producers, broadcasters and streaming executives could establish which skills are most scarce and how industry actors judge the value of formal training.
- **Performance training.** Comparative studies of theatre-trained and screen-trained performers could examine how the stage-to-screen transition is taught and learned in African contexts.
- **AI in pedagogy.** Classroom-based and design-based research could evaluate the effects of AI policies and AI-assisted exercises on creativity, skill development, and ethical awareness.
- **Festival outcomes.** Evaluation of university-linked festivals could assess whether pedagogical programming produces durable professional relationships, new projects, or improved distribution.
- **Comparative African contexts.** Comparative work across Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Arabophone film cultures would test the transferability of the Four-C Framework and reveal the effects of different funding and policy regimes.

The analysis also privileges one national context, and further research should avoid assuming that Nigeria's institutional history or market structure is representative.

Conclusion

Film school and African cinema are a relationship of preparation and possibility, all the way. There's no such thing as making a great filmmaker.No film school can guarantee that any of their students will be a great filmmaker. They can, however, develop talent, enhance knowledge, build discipline and foster experimentation, while setting up the environment for greater potential to be realized. There are stories, audiences, entrepreneurial energy, cultural diversity and an emerging technological variety in African cinema. What it increasingly needs are more links between talent and training, creativity and capital, industry and education, and artistic aspirations and professional viability.

There is a way of organising such connections, as represented by the Four-C Framework. Through Craft, filmmakers make intentional and informed decisions; culture is informed and told in a complex and responsible way; commerce is supported by their work and livelihood; and code is something they engage with, not just consume, of the technologies transforming the industry. These capacities can become institutional practice through the collaboration of the university and the festival with practitioners, policymakers, and investors.

The main point of the article is succinct. There are no stories or talented people lacking in Africa; it is only that there is no education and industry that can help them realize their potential. It will be about what people are ready to make, about how people are encouraged to make it, and about what stories they will make. It will be about what people are ready to make, how they're encouraged to make it, and what stories they're willing to make. The challenge is to inform the filmmaker, invigorate the narrative, and thus influence the future of world cinema.

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