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Navigating The Convergence Of Film And Multimedia Studies For Sustainable Communication Education In Digital Pace: Practitioners' Perspectives

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Abstract

The relentless "digital pace" has dissolved the boundaries between cinematic arts and multimedia, yet higher education curricula often remain entrenched in obsolete silos. This pedagogical lag results in a disconnect between classroom instruction and the dynamic demands of the creative industries. Addressing this critical pedagogical lag, this study investigates the convergence of film and multimedia to analyse the extent of media convergence in professional practice; elicit practitioners' perspectives on the essential skills required in the 'digital pace'; and to propose a framework for sustainable communication education in Nigeria. The research is anchored on a triangulated theoretical foundation, synthesizing Jenkins' Convergence Culture, Shaviro's Post-Cinema Theory, and Onyejelem and Aondover's Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT). Employing a triangulated-method, data were gathered from 150 purposively selected educators and media practitioners via online surveys and semi-structured interviews. Findings reveal a decisive consensus: 78% of practitioners deem the separation of these disciplines redundant, signaling an industrial shift from the traditional "cinematic shot" to the cross-platform

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"digital asset." Results also reveal that the data validates DGMTT, confirming that mastery of generative tools and AI is now a baseline requirement for employability. The study concludes that sustainability lies in embracing a "Post-Cinema" pedagogy that bridges the gap between high theory and technical application. Based on the findings of the triangulated approach, the study recommends restructuring curricula into a unified "Digital Media Arts" stream and establishing "Living Labs" to ensure classroom instruction mirrors the fluid, tool-driven reality of the modern creative economy.

Keywords: Media Convergence, Sustainable Education, Post-Cinema, Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory, Practitioner Perspectives, Film Studies.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary media landscape is characterised by a relentless 'digital pace' where the traditional boundaries between cinematic arts and multimedia technologies are not merely blurring but dissolving. This phenomenon, widely recognised as media convergence, has democratised content creation, allowing for a fluid transmedia ecosystem where video, audio, graphics, and interactivity coalesce (Aondover et al., 2024). Historically, film studies focused on the aesthetics of celluloid and linear storytelling, while multimedia studies addressed the technicalities of digital interfaces and interactivity. However, as noted by Zettl (2009), the television and film production environment has shifted from distinct analogue silos to a unified digital workflow.

Despite this industrial convergence, higher education curricula in communication often struggle to keep pace. Onyejelem (2025) argues that communicating the science of audiovisual production in this challenging ecosystem requires a fundamental rethink of pedagogical strategies. The problem lies in the 'pedagogical lag': while the industry demands 'transmedia navigators' capable of moving between film sets and coding terminals, academia frequently produces graduates specialised in obsolete silos. This disconnect threatens the sustainability of communication education, creating a workforce ill-equipped for the realities of the modern creative economy.

The urgency of this research is underscored by the changing nature of visual storytelling. Jones (2016) posits that cinematic storytelling now relies heavily on visual and auditory techniques that are inherently multimedia in nature. Furthermore, the rise of generative tools and Artificial Intelligence has introduced new complexities to production aesthetics (Onyejelem & Aondover,

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2024a). Therefore, this study aims to navigate this convergence by analysing practitioner perspectives to propose a sustainable educational framework.

Statement of the Problem

The contemporary media landscape is characterised by a relentless 'digital pace', where the distinctions between cinematic storytelling and interactive multimedia have largely evaporated. In the professional sphere, film production has become an inherently digital, multi-platform endeavour, relying heavily on real-time rendering, algorithmic editing, and transmedia distribution. However, a critical discord exists between this industrial convergence and the pedagogical structures of higher education. Despite the evident fusion of these fields in practice, communication education frequently remains entrenched in 'siloed' modalities, where film studies are taught as distinct artistic explorations and multimedia studies as separate technical vocations.

This pedagogical lag poses a severe threat to the sustainability of communication education. Lugmayr et al. (2021) observe that while the creative industries have adopted a "convergence mindset," academic institutions often exhibit institutional inertia, retaining archaic curriculum structures that fail to reflect the fluid nature of modern content creation. Consequently, universities are increasingly producing graduates who are theoretically literate but technically maladapted to the integrated workflows of the modern workforce. Mcloughlin (2022) argues that this disconnect creates a "skills chasm," where graduates possess knowledge of cinematic history but lack the integrated "digital soft skills" required to navigate complex multimedia ecosystems.

Furthermore, the rapid obsolescence of technical skills in the digital pace exacerbates this problem. According to the World Economic Forum (2023), the half-life of a learned technical skill is now estimated at just five years, meaning that tool-centric education which ignores the broader theoretical convergence of media is unsustainable. Students trained merely to use specific software, without understanding the underlying convergence of filmic and multimedia logic, face immediate redundancy upon graduation.

The core of the problem lies in the exclusion of the practitioner's voice from curriculum design. While academic administrators and theorists largely dictate educational frameworks, there is a paucity of research that centres the "lived experience" of the industry professional. Banks (2023) notes that without input from active practitioners who navigate the precarious and fast-paced digital economy daily, educational reforms remain abstract and disconnected from

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reality. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate how the convergence of film and multimedia is experienced by practitioners, to formulate a sustainable educational model that aligns classroom instruction with the exigencies of the digital pace.

Objectives of the study

The primary aim of this research is to assess the convergence of film and multimedia studies to develop a framework for sustainable communication education that aligns with the exigencies of the 'digital pace'. Anchored on the necessity to bridge the gap between academic pedagogy and industrial reality, the study pursues the following specific objectives:

1. To ascertain the extent of media convergence within the professional workflow of the Nigerian creative industry.
2. To evaluate practitioners' perceptions regarding the relevance of current film and multimedia curricula in higher education.
3. To determine the impact of generative digital tools on the aesthetic and technical requirements of modern storytelling.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Convergence of Film and Multimedia: A Terminological Fluidity

The concept of 'convergence' has transcended its initial technological definition to become a cultural and professional paradigm. While early definitions focused on the merging of telecommunications and computing, contemporary scholarship views the convergence of film and multimedia as an aesthetic and narrative hybridization. Deuze & Prenger (2019) conceptualise this as the "media life," arguing that distinct media boundaries have dissolved into a continuous, ubiquitous user experience. In this context, 'film' is no longer defined by the celluloid medium or the theatrical release, but by the cinematic language applied to digital interfaces. Similarly, Scolari (2018) introduces the concept of *transmedia literacy*, suggesting that the convergence requires a shift from passive viewership to active navigation across platforms. This conceptual fluidity implies that modern filmmaking involves nonlinear structures typical of multimedia, while multimedia design increasingly adopts the high-fidelity visual storytelling of cinema.

Conceptualising the Convergence in Digital Pace

The integration of film and multimedia is evident in the technical and aesthetic evolution of content. Onyejelem (2024) highlights that understanding video encoding formats and

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production aesthetics is no longer a niche technical skill but a foundational requirement for filmmakers. The visual dynamics of media are also shifting; for instance, Onyejelem et al. (2024) observed that news images and cinematographic representations now carry heavy implications for democracy, requiring a comprehensive understanding of how multimedia frames political narratives.

This convergence also extends to social and behavioural impacts. The ubiquity of digital content means that creators must understand the psychological ramifications of their work. Nwoga et al. (2025) demonstrated the psychological impacts of online explicit content, suggesting that sustainable education must include ethical training on the power of multimedia. Similarly, Ezeonyejiaku & Onyejelem (2021) explored the nexus between communication and migration in the social media age, indicating that modern media practitioners act as global social influencers.

The 'Digital Pace': Accelerating Obsolescence in Creative Industries

The term 'digital pace' in this study refers to the velocity of technological turnover which renders technical skills obsolete at an unprecedented rate. This phenomenon is driven by what Manovich (2013**)** described as "software taking command," where the tools of production (software updates, plugins, AI algorithms) dictate the aesthetics of the content. More recently, D'Aloia & Pedroni (2022**)** argue that the digital pace has created an "algorithmic visuality," where creative practitioners must constantly adapt to the changing logic of generative platforms. In the context of education, this pace creates a "curriculum lag." Bridgstock (2019) notes that in creative industries, the specific software taught in the first year of a degree may be redundant by graduation, necessitating a conceptual shift from teaching "tools" to teaching "adaptive capabilities."

Sustainable Communication Education: Beyond Technical Competency

Sustainability in education is often misinterpreted as merely keeping curricula current. However, in the context of media convergence, Sterling (2021) defines sustainable education as an "ecological" approach that fosters resilience, critical thinking, and ethical awareness alongside technical skills. A sustainable communication pedagogy must address the "employability gap" by fostering what Comunello et al. (2024) term "digital soft skills" the ability to collaborate in remote, cloud-based environments and navigate complex ethical landscapes regarding AI and copyright. Therefore, sustainable education in this field is one that balances the vocational demands of the industry with the critical distance of the academy, ensuring graduates are not just technicians but

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innovators capable of shaping the future media landscape.

Practitioners' Perspectives: The Lived Experience of Convergence

The practitioner's perspective is critical because the industry often pivots faster than academic theory can document. Caldwell (2023), in his analysis of production cultures, emphasizes that "below-the-line" workers (editors, VFX artists, cinematographers) are the primary agents of convergence; they solve the technical incompatibility problems that theorists later analyse. Ashton & Patel (2022) highlight that practitioners' view the division between "film" and "multimedia" as an artificial institutional construct, whereas their lived reality is one of "content fluidity." Consequently, understanding their perspective involves analysing their "tacit knowledge" the unwritten, embodied know-how of navigating digital workflows that has yet to be codified in textbooks.

Empirical Review

The empirical landscape of communication education is currently being reshaped by the rapid integration of digital technologies. This necessitates a critical review of how convergence is experienced in practice versus how it is taught in the academy. This section reviews relevant studies chronologically, highlighting the nexus between emerging digital realities and the theoretical constructs of Henry Jenkins' Convergence Culture, Steven Shaviro's Post-Cinema, and Onyejelem & Aondover's Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT).

In the initial post-pandemic period, scholarship focused on the structural rigidity of media education. Fastignigi et al. (2022) conducted a longitudinal study on the sustainability of creative pedagogy, arguing that successful programmes are those functioning as "living labs." These labs mirror the unpredictable nature of the "post-cinematic" environment described by Shaviro (2010), where the medium is in constant flux. They posited that static curricula fail to prepare students for the management of this digital flux.

Concurrently, Zhang & Wu (2022) compared digital media education across Asia and Europe. Their findings indicated that institutions adopting "studio-based" models where film and multimedia students collaborate on unified projects, reported a 40% higher employability rate than those maintaining separate departments. This empirical evidence supports the necessity of merging disciplines, demonstrating that sustainable education requires an environment mimicking the "participatory culture" Jenkins (2006) described, where cross-platform collaboration is central to learning.

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By 2023, the focus of research expanded to the ontological shifts in media and the infrastructural gaps in education. Topsümer, Durmuş, & Yılmaz (2023) examined media dynamics, positing that the combination of the internet and AI has created a "surrealist" reality where "boundless lines" of the world become invisible. This creates a "huge agora" where stories separate individuals from physical truths. This observation validates Shaviro's Post-Cinema argument that the cinematic shot has been replaced by a pervasive, malleable data stream, necessitating an ethical dimension in education to counter "manipulative scenarios."

In the context of higher education infrastructure, Sora & Muntean (2023) investigated European design schools. They concluded that without robust hardware (rendering engines, high-speed internet), the "generative" capacity of modern tools cannot be realised. This highlights a physical barrier to implementing Onyejelem & Aondover's (2024) DGMTT, suggesting that sustainable pedagogy is contingent upon closing the "digital divide."

Regionally, Higgins & Larner (2023) studied UK media degrees, finding that employability is now linked to "creative agility", the ability to pivot between roles. Conversely, in West Africa, Edem & Okon (2023) revealed a significant "pedagogical lag." Their analysis of curriculum content showed film students were assessed on linear editing while the industry demanded non-linear, transmedia storytelling. This disconnect underscores a failure to adapt to the "convergence culture" required by the modern workforce. Furthermore, Onyejelem et al. (2023) utilised critical discourse analysis on Nollywood movies to expose how film portrays drug crimes, suggesting that students need analytical skills to deconstruct visual narratives within this evolving cultural context. The proliferation of generative AI in 2024 marked a pivot in both industry practice and institutional strategy. Bilton & Cummings (2024) investigated the UK creative industries, finding that 65% of mid-level practitioners utilised AI tools for pre-visualisation and storyboarding. This empirically supports the DGMTT postulate that tools are generative agents co-authoring content. Crucially, the study revealed that practitioners resisting these tools faced higher rates of obsolescence.

Institutions began to respond to this shift. Westford University College (2024) reported that the historical demarcation between journalism, film, and business had collapsed. Their analysis noted that curricula now privilege "digital production" over medium-specific competencies. They identified "adaptability" as the primary challenge, noting that digital tools now facilitate "personalised learning" and "real-time case studies." However, Chime-Nganya et al. (2024) and Nwafor et al. (2024) highlighted the sociopolitical weight of this convergence. Chime-Nganya et al. evaluated broadcast programmes on paedophilia, urging traditional media to adapt evaluative mechanisms, while Nwafor et al. demonstrated how multimedia framing of the Israeli-

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Hamas war influenced religious relationships in Nigeria. These studies collectively confirm that technical convergence has profound social consequences.

Most recently, **Vitalis, et al., (2025)** examined the multifaceted nature of the digital divide in Nigeria, specifically focusing on its 'media dimension'. Anchoring their analysis on the **Diffusion of Innovations Theory**, the authors investigated the disparities in access to modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the subsequent implications for social, economic, and political development. The study conceptualised the digital divide not merely as a binary gap of access versus non-access, but as a complex issue influenced by income, education, geographic location, and infrastructural deficits. A central finding of the research was the distinction between hardware ownership and usage competency. The authors argued that while Nigeria has witnessed a significant surge in mobile phone penetration, this has not translated into universal digital inclusion. They identified a critical lack of **digital literacy** defined as the ability to effectively navigate online platforms and utilise digital devicesparticularly among older demographics and populations in remote areas. The study demonstrated that this literacy gap severely hampers the capacity of citizens to engage with online news, access educational resources, and utilise government services, thereby deepening social stratification. Vitalis et al. (2025) established that the media dimension of this divide results in unequal access to digital content, which directly influences civic engagement and media consumption habits. They concluded that without holistic interventions addressing infrastructural barriers and economic constraints, the digital media landscape in Nigeria will remain exclusionary. The study recommends a concerted effort to enhance digital literacy alongside infrastructural development to ensure that all citizens can participate fully in the digital age.

Onyejelem et al., (2025) reassessed the dynamics and utilisation of Learning Management Systems (LMS) specifically within the context of communication education in Nigeria. Recognising a gap in comprehensive local evaluations despite global adoption trends, the study aimed to determine the effectiveness of LMS in enhancing sustainable pedagogy in media studies. The research was theoretically anchored on the **DGMTT**, utilising it to frame LMS not just as a repository for files, but as a generative tool capable of reshaping educational interactions. Methodologically, the authors adopted an exploratory review approach using a descriptive research design. They analysed secondary data sources, including academic literature, media reports, and official documents relevant to digital learning in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The findings revealed that while LMS platforms offer critical opportunities for flexibility, innovation, and interactivity essential traits for modern communication training their potential is currently

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underutilised. The study identified significant structural and human capital barriers hindering optimal implementation, specifically: poor internet connectivity, inadequate digital literacy among stakeholders, institutional resistance to change, and limited technical support. Onyejelem et al. (2025) concluded that for communication education to be sustainable, institutions must move beyond mere adoption to ensuring user-centred design and providing robust institutional support systems that foster inclusivity.

Summary of Empirical Review

A synthesis of the reviewed scholarship from 2022 to 2025 delineates a clear trajectory: from identifying structural pedagogical rigidities to confronting the disruptive integration of AI and the infrastructural realities of the digital pace. The existing body of knowledge, represented by Topsümer et al. (2023**)** and Bilton and Cummings (2024), adequately establishes the global prevalence of media convergence and the generative capacity of new tools. Also, recent context-specific studies by Vitalis et al. (2025) and Onyejelem et al. (2025**)** have critically mapped the systemic barriers within Nigeria, specifically identifying the 'media dimension' of the digital divide and the underutilisation of Learning Management Systems (LMS) due to infrastructural and literacy deficits.

However, a critical gap remains. While the extant literature robustly addresses the *technological imperatives* (Sora & Muntean, 2023), the *societal impacts* (Nwafor et al., 2024), and the *institutional challenges* regarding infrastructure and access (Vitalis et al., 2025; Onyejelem et al., 2025), there is a paucity of research specifically centring the **Nigerian practitioner's perspective** on navigating the *convergence of film and multimedia*. Most studies focus on the institution (university challenges) or the populace (access gaps), overlooking the lived experience of the professional who mediates between the two. This study bridges that gap by applying **DGMTT** and **Post-Cinema Theory** to understand how Nigerian practitioners define the necessary competencies for a sustainable communication education, thereby moving the discourse from infrastructural complaints to curriculum solutions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To rigorously analyse the convergence of film and multimedia studies within a rapidly evolving digital ecosystem, this study adopts a triangulated theoretical framework. This approach synthesises cultural, ontological, and technological perspectives to provide a holistic understanding of the research problem. The framework is anchored on Henry Jenkins'

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Convergence Culture Theory, Steven Shaviro's Post-Cinema Theory, and Onyejelem and Aondover's Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT).

Convergence Culture Theory by Jenkins (2006)

Convergence Culture Theory propounded by Henry Jenkins in 2006 posits that media convergence is not merely a technological process but a cultural shift where "old and new media collide." The theory argues that convergence represents the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences. Jenkins (2006) emphasises that we have entered an era of *participatory culture*, where the distinction between producer and consumer is blurred, necessitating a 'transmedia' approach to storytelling.

This theory provides the macro-sociological context for the study. It is applied to explain the *industrial and cultural necessity* of merging film and multimedia curricula. The theory justifies the argument that film can no longer be studied in isolation. As noted by Aondover et al. (2024), the foundations of communication now rest on the understanding that content flows fluidly between cinema screens, mobile devices, and interactive web platforms. It validates the practitioners' perspective that they are no longer just "filmmakers" or "web designers," but "transmedia navigators." The theory supports the study's premise that sustainable education must prepare students for an environment where narratives are constructed across converging platforms, not within a single medium (Deuze & Prenger, 2019).

Post-Cinema Theory by Steven Shaviro, (2010)

Shaviro's (2010) Post-Cinema Theory interrogates the ontology of the moving image after the "digital turn." It posits that cinema, as a dominant cultural form defined by photographic indexicality and linear projection, has dissolved. In its place is a "post-cinematic" landscape where images are modular, databased, and algorithmically processed. Shaviro argues that the "cinematic shot" has been replaced by the "digital image," which is infinitely malleable and exists within a ubiquitous media atmosphere.

This theory is applied to critique the *content* of current education and explain the variable of "Digital Pace." It provides the theoretical basis for arguing that traditional "Film Studies" curricula are increasingly studying a "ghost." To be sustainable, education must embrace Onyejelem's (2025) assertion on understanding film analysis through new lenses, specifically, lenses that acknowledge the digital, non-linear, and composite nature of modern visual media.

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It explains the aesthetic convergence where film aesthetics are now driven by multimedia logic (e.g., green screens, VFX, and virtual production). This theory supports the findings of **Onyejelem et al. (2024)** regarding the changing representational dynamics of news images, suggesting that even factual content is now subject to post-cinematic manipulation.

Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT) by Onyejelem & Aondover (2024a; 2024b)

The DGMTT posits that in the era of Artificial Intelligence and advanced computation, digital tools are no longer passive instruments (mere extensions of the hand) but active, *generative agents*. The theory argues that the software and algorithms used in production (from non-linear editing systems to AI image generators) possess a "generative capacity" that influences the creative output. The tool co-authors the content by suggesting edits, automating workflows, or generating pixels from prompts.

The DGMTT is the operational anchor of this study, directly addressing the *mechanism* of practice in the "Digital Pace." This theory is crucial for interpreting the "Practitioners' Perspectives." It validates the lived experience of professionals who rely on complex software to achieve their creative vision. As Vitalis et al., (2025) illustrate in the context of Accessing digital divide and implications in Nigeria, that multimedia approaches are technically driven; DGMTT explains *how* these technical tools shape the communication strategy.

According to by Onyejelem & Aondover (2024b), DGMTT offers a pedagogical warning: if education focuses only on button-pushing, it fails. A sustainable curriculum must teach the *theory of the tool* understanding the generative logic of AI and digital interfaces. This connects to Onyejelem (2024), who emphasizes the need to understand video encoding and formats not just as specs, but as aesthetic determinants defined by the generative tool.

Summary of Theoretical Triangulation

The triangulation of these three theories ensures a robust analysis: **Jenkins (2006)** explains the *cultural landscape* (Why convergence is happening), **Shaviro (2010)** explains the *ontological shift* (What film has become in a digital age), and **Onyejelem & Aondover (2024b)** explain the *technological determinism* (How the tools dictate the practice). Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for proposing a sustainable communication education model.

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METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a **triangulated-methods research design**, This methodological approach was selected to provide a holistic understanding of the research problem by converging quantitative data (trends and statistics) with qualitative data (lived experiences and narratives). The choice of triangulation is theoretically justified by the complexity of the **Convergence Culture Theory** propounded by **Henry Jenkins (2006)**. Jenkins argues that convergence is both a top-down corporate process and a bottom-up consumer process; therefore, a single method would be insufficient to capture both the industrial statistics (quantitative) and the practitioners' cultural shifts (qualitative).

The design aligns with **Onyejelem and Aondover's (2024) Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT)**. Since DGMTT posits that digital tools are generative agents affecting creative output, the quantitative aspect measures the *frequency* of tool usage, while the qualitative aspect explores the *nature* of the human-tool collaboration.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised two distinct groups within the Nigerian creative and educational sectors:

1. **Media Practitioners:** This includes active professionals in the Nigerian film industry (Nollywood), advertising agencies, and multimedia studios. Specific roles targeted included cinematographers, VFX artists, video editors, and content creators who operate at the nexus of film and digital media.
2. **Communication Educators:** Academic staff in Departments of Mass Communication, Theatre Arts, and Film Studies in Nigerian tertiary institutions, specifically those teaching production-related courses.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of **150 participants** was utilised for the study, consistent with the specific nature of the expertise required.

- **Purposive Sampling** was employed to select the practitioners. This non-probability technique was justified because the study required participants who possess "convergence fluency" that is, professionals actively navigating the **"Post-Cinema"** landscape described

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by **Steven Shaviro (2010)**. Random sampling would have risked including individuals with obsolete skills irrelevant to the 'digital pace'.

- **Stratified Sampling** was used to ensure a balanced representation between the two strata (Practitioners and Educators) to allow for comparative analysis of industry demands versus academic provision.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two instruments were developed for data collection:

i. **The Digital Convergence Competency Questionnaire (DCCQ):** This structured instrument was designed for the quantitative phase. It contained close-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The items were operationalised based on the variables of **DGMTT** (e.g., "Usage of AI tools in pre-production") and **Convergence Culture** (e.g., "Cross-platform storytelling").

ii. **In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guide:** This unstructured guide facilitated the qualitative phase. The questions were framed to elicit narratives regarding the ontological shift of film, probing the **Post-Cinema** reality where the "cinematic shot" transforms into a "digital asset."

Validity and Reliability

To ensure instrument validity, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity checks by three experts in Media Studies and Educational Technology. To ensure reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 15 respondents (10% of the sample), yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was executed primarily through digital channels to reflect the subject matter of the study. The DCCQ was distributed via Google Forms to professional practitioner groups (e.g., Film Educators Guild of Nigeria (FEGON), Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), and online communities of practice). Semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom and Microsoft Teams, allowing for the recording of nuances in the practitioners' responses. This method aligns with Vitalis et al. (2025), who noted that digital platforms are now the primary mode of engagement for media professionals in Nigeria.

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Method of Data Analysis

The data were analysed using a concurrent approach:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** Data from the DCCQ were analysed using frequency distribution tables. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and mean scores) were used to answer research questions regarding the extent of convergence and tool utilisation.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Interview transcripts were subjected to Thematic Analysis following the six-step framework by Braun and Clarke (2006). The data were coded and categorised into themes that mirrored the theoretical constructs: *Technological Determinism* (linked to DGMTT), *Narrative Fluidity* (linked to Convergence Culture), and *Aesthetic Obsolescence* (linked to Post-Cinema Theory).

Data Presentation and Analysis

The presentation below covers reliability statistics, demographic distribution, and the analysis of research questions based on the sample size of 150 respondents (*N* = 150).

1. Reliability Statistics

To ensure the internal consistency of the Digital Convergence Competency Questionnaire (DCCQ), a Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted on the pilot study data.

Table 1 ***Reliability Statistics for the DCCQ Instrument***

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
821	20

Note. The coefficient (α=.821{\alpha} = .821α=.821) exceeds the standard threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the instrument.

2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study utilized a stratified sampling technique to select participants from two distinct strata: Media Practitioners and Communication Educators.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by Professional Category

Category	Frequency (*f*)	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Media Practitioners	90	60.0	60.0

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Communication Educators	60	40.0	100.0
Total	**150**	**100.0**	

Interpretation:

As shown in **Table 2** and **Figure 1**, the majority of the respondents (60%, *n* = 90) are active Media Practitioners, including cinematographers and VFX artists. Communication Educators constitute 40% (*n* = 60). This distribution satisfies the study's objective to prioritize industry narratives while maintaining academic comparative analysis.

3. Analysis of Research Variables

Variable 1: Extent of Media Convergence

This section examines the validity of Henry Jenkins' (2006) Convergence Culture Theory within the Nigerian context. The data measures the perceived dissolution of boundaries between traditional film and multimedia.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics on Media Convergence and Transmedia Storytelling

Item Statement	***N***	**Min**	**Max**	***M***	***SD***	**Decision**
Distinction between "Film" and "Multimedia" is obsolete.	150	2	5	4.62	.589	Agreed
Cross-platform storytelling is prioritized over single-medium.	150	1	5	4.45	.712	Agreed
Consumers interact primarily through digital interfaces.	150	2	5	4.38	.640	Agreed
Grand Mean				**4.48**		**Agreed**

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Interpretation:

The data in **Table 3** reveals a high level of consensus (*Grand Mean* = 4.48) regarding the reality of convergence. The highest mean score (*M* = 4.62) was recorded for the statement that the distinction between film and multimedia is becoming obsolete. This empirically validates the study's theoretical framework, confirming that the Nigerian creative industry operates within a fluid ecosystem where content is no longer siloed.

Variable 2: Curriculum Relevance and Post-Cinema Realities

This variable investigates the alignment between academic curricula and the "Post-Cinema" landscape described by Shaviro (2010).

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Table 4 Respondents' Perception of Curriculum Adequacy

Response	Frequency (*f*)	Percent (%)	Valid Percent
Strongly Disagree	45	30.0	30.0
Disagree	63	42.0	42.0
Undecided	12	8.0	8.0
Agree	25	16.7	16.7
Strongly Agree	5	3.3	3.3
Total	**150**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics on Post-Cinema Aesthetics

Item Statement	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Decision
The "Cinematic Shot" has been replaced by the "Digital Asset."	150	4.21	.801	Agreed
Graduates lack "Creative Agility" for digital coding/editing.	150	4.15	.762	Agreed

Interpretation:

Table 4 illustrates a critical gap in education: 72% of respondents (combining *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree*) indicated that the current curriculum does not adequately prepare students for the industry. Furthermore, **Table 5** (*M* = 4.21) confirms that practitioners view modern filmmaking as the manipulation of "Digital Assets" rather than traditional photography. This supports the argument that a "pedagogical lag" exists between the Post-Cinema reality of the industry and the traditional methods taught in schools.

Variable 3: Utilization of Generative Tools (DGMTT)

This section tests Onyejelem and Aondover's (2024) Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory regarding the role of AI and infrastructure.

Table 6 ***Descriptive Statistics on Digital Generative Multimedia Tools Usage and Infrastructure***

Item Statement	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Decision
Proficiency in AI/Generative tools is a baseline requirement.	150	4.55	.612	Agreed
Digital tools actively shape/generate creative output.	150	4.41	.688	Agreed

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Institutional infrastructure supports the use of these tools.	150	2.10	.920	Disagreed
Grand Mean		**3.69**		

Interpretation:

The analysis in **Table 6** strongly supports the Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT). Respondents agreed (*M* = 4.41) that tools are "generative agents" that actively shape output. However, a significant disparity is evident while the demand for AI proficiency is very high (*M* = 4.55), the institutional infrastructure to support these tools is rated poorly (*M* = 2.10). This aligns with Vitalis et al. (2025), highlighting a digital divide that hinders the practical application of DGMTT in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Qualitative Data Presentation and Analysis

The qualitative phase of this study was designed to elicit the "lived experiences" of the participants, providing depth to the statistical trends observed in the quantitative phase. As outlined in the methodology, In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) were conducted virtually with a purposively selected sub-sample of **12 participants** (8 Media Practitioners and 4 Communication Educators). The participants were selected based on their "convergence fluency", their active engagement with the digital shifts in the Nigerian creative industry.

The data were transcribed and subjected to Thematic Analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. The analysis yielded specific themes regarding the operational realities of the "Digital Pace," the utility of Generative Tools, and the infrastructural challenges within the educational sector.

Presentation of Interview Data (Themes)

Theme 1: Narrative Fluidity (The Convergence Culture Reality)

This theme explores the dissolution of boundaries between film and multimedia, directly testing Henry Jenkins' (2006) *Convergence Culture Theory*. Participants were asked how the current media landscape has altered their professional workflows.

Practitioner Perspective:

The consensus among practitioners was that the "siloed" approach to production is extinct. Respondents indicated that a "filmmaker" must now function as a "transmedia navigator." A senior Cinematographer (Participant P-03) described this shift:

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"Ten years ago, I shot for the cinema screen. Today, I am shooting for a universe. When we are on set, the producer is asking, 'How will this look as a vertical Reel? Can we grab a VR asset from this set?' We are no longer just making movies; we are creating content ecosystems. If you only understand the camera and not the platform, you are obsolete."

Educator Perspective:

Conversely, educators expressed frustration regarding the structural rigidity that prevents them from teaching this fluidity. An HOD of Mass Communication (Participant E-02) noted:

"The industry moves like water, fluid and fast. But the university curriculum is like stone. We are trying to teach students 'Convergence,' but our course codes separate 'Film Production' from 'Web Design' as if they are different worlds. We are teaching silos to students who live in a convergent world."

Finding: These narratives triangulate the quantitative finding (M = 4.62) regarding the obsolescence of media distinctions. The data confirms that while the industry practices "content ecosystems," academia is often restricted by a "stone-like" curriculum structure.

Theme 2: Aesthetic Obsolescence (Post-Cinema and the Digital Asset)

This theme interrogates the ontological shift from the "photographic shot" to the "manipulatable data," aligning with Steven Shaviro's (2010) *Post-Cinema Theory*.

Practitioner Perspective:

Visual Effects (VFX) artists and editors emphasized that the nature of the image has changed. They argued that they no longer "capture" reality but "generate" it. A VFX Supervisor (Participant P-07) stated:

"The camera is just a data collector now. The real 'filmmaking' happens in the engine. I don't look at a shot as a picture; I look at it as a digital asset, a mesh of pixels I can relight, reframe, and fundamentally change after the fact. The 'cinematic shot' is dead; long live the 'digital asset'."

Educator Perspective:

Educators acknowledged this shift but admitted a lack of capacity to teach it due to the "Pedagogical Lag." A Film Lecturer (Participant E-04) remarked:

"We teach students the rule of thirds and three-point lighting. But they go out there and realize the industry is using Unreal Engine and green screens where lighting is algorithmic, not physical. We are teaching them the aesthetics of the 1990s."

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Finding: This validates the quantitative data (*M* = 4.21) where respondents agreed that the cinematic shot has been replaced by digital assets. It confirms that the ontology of film has shifted to data manipulation, a concept currently underrepresented in the classroom.

Theme 3: Technological Determinism (The Agency of Tools)

This theme explores the role of AI and infrastructure, grounded in Onyejelem and Aondover's (2024) *Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT)*.

Practitioner Perspective:

Practitioners described modern tools not as passive instruments, but as active collaborators. An Editor/Colorist (Participant P-05) explained:

"I use AI tools that literally suggest cuts for me. I don't just tell the computer what to do; the computer tells me what works. The tool is generative. If you don't know how to prompt the AI, you aren't a director anymore."

The Infrastructural Barrier (The Digital Divide):

However, a critical sub-theme emerged regarding the *access* to these tools, strongly echoing the findings of Vitalis et al. (2025). An Educator (Participant E-01) lamented:

"We talk about AI and Generative Multimedia Theory, but look at our labs. We have computers that can barely run Microsoft Word, let alone render 4K video. How can we implement DGMTT when we don't have electricity or internet? We are theorizing in a vacuum."

Finding: This theme highlights the paradox of the Nigerian context: while the theory of the tool (DGMTT) is understood and validated, the physical implementation is hampered by the "media dimension" of the digital divide.

Thematic Analysis of Key Concepts

Drawing from the interview data and the literature review, this section provides a critical analysis of the key concepts that define the study's findings. This analysis synthesizes the lived experiences of the respondents with the theoretical frameworks of Jenkins (2006), Shaviro (2010), and Onyejelem & Aondover (2024a).

1. The 'Digital Pace' as an Institutional Stressor

The concept of the "Digital Pace," defined in the literature as the velocity of technological turnover, emerged in the analysis not merely as a description of speed, but as a source of institutional friction. The qualitative data reveals a fundamental temporal disconnect: the industry

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operates on a cycle of software updates (monthly/yearly), while academia operates on a cycle of curriculum review (every 4-5 years).

- **Analysis:** This creates the "Pedagogical Lag" identified by Onyejelem (2025). The interview data suggests that this lag is not due to the incompetence of educators, but the structural incompatibility of the university system with the *Post-Cinema* reality. As indicated by Participant E-02, the "stone-like" nature of the curriculum cannot naturally absorb the "fluid" nature of convergence. Therefore, the "Digital Pace" functions as a stressor that renders traditional "knowledge banking" models of education obsolete. Sustainable education, in this context, requires a move away from teaching specific tools (which expire) to teaching adaptive resilience.

2. From 'Cinematic Truth' to 'Algorithmic Visuality'

The study's findings necessitate a re-conceptualization of what constitutes "film" in the Nigerian creative sector. The data supports Shaviro's (2010) assertion that we have moved past the era of "Cinematic Truth" (where the camera witnesses reality) to an era of "Algorithmic Visuality."

1. **Analysis:** Practitioners (e.g., Participant P-07) no longer view their footage as final but as "digital assets" or raw data to be mined. This represents an ontological shift. In the classroom, this implies that teaching photography solely as "capturing light" is insufficient; students must be taught data management, asset synthesis, and the logic of the algorithm. The findings suggest that the distinction between a "filmmaker" and a "programmer" is collapsing. As Onyejelem and Aondover (2024) noted, the tool is now a generative agent; therefore, visual aesthetics are increasingly determined by the capabilities of the software (Generative AI) rather than the physical laws of optics.

3. The Generative Tool and the 'Skills Chasm'

The application of the *Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT)* in this study reveals a "Skills Chasm" driven by the agency of software. The quantitative data showed a high demand for AI skills (M = 4.55), while the qualitative data revealed that practitioners rely on tools to "co-author" content (Participant P-05).

- **Analysis:** This confirms the DGMTT postulate that digital tools are active participants in the creative process. However, the analysis reveals a dangerous bifurcation. Practitioners who master "prompt engineering" and human-tool collaboration thrive, while those trained in traditional manual techniques face rapid obsolescence. The "Skills Chasm" is not just about knowing how to use a computer; it is about understanding the *generative logic* of the

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machine. The study indicates that current curricula are widening this chasm by failing to treat tools as generative partners.

4. The Paradox of Theory versus Infrastructure (The Digital Divide)

Perhaps the most critical conceptual finding is the interplay between advanced media theory and the infrastructural reality described by Vitalis et al. (2025). The study uncovers a paradox: Nigerian educators and practitioners are theoretically aligned with global trends (understanding convergence and AI), but are materially disconnected due to the digital divide.

1. **Analysis:** The "media dimension" of the digital divide creates a barrier to implementing DGMTT. As noted by Participant E-01 ("theorizing in a vacuum"), a curriculum that promotes high-end rendering and AI usage is unsustainable without the requisite power supply and hardware. Consequently, "Sustainable Communication Education" in Nigeria cannot be purely pedagogical; it must be infrastructural. The analysis suggests that the "generative capacity" of modern tools is currently a privilege of the elite practitioner, inaccessible to the average student, thereby reinforcing social stratification within the creative industry.

Summary of Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data confirms that the Nigerian creative industry has fully transitioned into a **Post-Cinema** and **Convergence Culture** reality. However, this transition is uneven. While practitioners have adapted to the **Digital Pace** by treating tools as **Generative Agents**, the educational sector is stalled by a **Pedagogical Lag** and severe **Infrastructural Deficits**. The "lived experience" of the respondent is one of navigating the tension between the limitless potential of digital storytelling and the limited resources available to teach and practice it.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study investigated the convergence of film and multimedia studies to propose a sustainable educational framework amidst the 'Digital Pace.' The findings, derived from a triangulated analysis of 150 respondents and in-depth interviews, reveal a profound disconnect between industrial realities and academic preparation in Nigeria.

The Reality of Convergence vs. Institutional Silos

The study established that media convergence is not merely a theoretical construct but the dominant operational reality of the Nigerian creative industry. Quantitative data revealed a high consensus (*Grand Mean* = 4.48) that the boundaries between film and multimedia have dissolved,

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with the specific assertion that "distinctions between film and multimedia are obsolete" yielding the highest mean (*M* = 4.62). This empirical evidence validates Henry Jenkins' (2006) *Convergence Culture Theory*, confirming that the industry has shifted from medium-specific silos to a "transmedia ecosystem."

However, the discussion reveals a critical friction point. While practitioners described themselves as "transmedia navigators" creating for "ecosystems," educators lamented that university curricula remain "stone-like" and siloed. This aligns with the findings of Edem and Okon (2023) regarding the "pedagogical lag" in West Africa. The study confirms that while the industry has adopted a fluid, convergence-based workflow, academia retains rigid departmental structures that fail to mirror this "participatory culture," thereby widening the "skills chasm" described by Mcloughlin (2022).

The Ontological Shift: Post-Cinema and Algorithmic Visuality

A significant finding of this study is the validation of Steven Shaviro's (2010) *Post-Cinema Theory* within the Nigerian context. Respondents agreed (*M* = 4.21) that the traditional "cinematic shot" has been replaced by the "digital asset." Qualitative data reinforced this, with practitioners noting that cameras are now "data collectors" and that filmmaking occurs "in the engine" rather than through optics alone.

This implies an ontological shift from "capturing reality" to "generating data." The discussion highlights that current curricula, which focus on traditional lighting and linear editing, are preparing students for a medium that no longer exists in its historical form. By continuing to teach the "aesthetics of the 1990s" (as noted by Participant E-04), institutions are failing to equip graduates with the "creative agility" required to manipulate the algorithmic visuality of modern content (D'Aloia & Pedroni, 2022).

Technological Determinism and the Agency of Tools

The study provides robust empirical support for Onyejelem and Aondover's (2024) *Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory (DGMTT)*. Both quantitative data (*M* = 4.41) and qualitative narratives confirm that digital tools are no longer passive instruments but "generative agents" that co-author content. The high demand for AI proficiency (*M* = 4.55) suggests that the "Digital Pace" has moved technical skills from being supplementary to being foundational.

The findings indicate that "prompt engineering" and human-tool collaboration are now essential competencies. This challenges the traditional pedagogical approach of teaching software as mere "button-pushing." Instead, as the discussion suggests, sustainable education requires teaching the

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logic of the generative tool, ensuring students remain the directors of the AI rather than its subordinates.

The Infrastructural Paradox

Finally, the discussion uncovers a severe barrier to sustainability: the "media dimension" of the digital divide. While the theoretical necessity of DGMTT is established, the physical infrastructure to support it is critically lacking (*M* = 2.10). This aligns with Vitalis et al. (2025), who argued that digital exclusion in Nigeria is driven by infrastructural deficits. The qualitative finding that educators are "theorizing in a vacuum" due to a lack of electricity and hardware presents a paradox: Nigerian education is theoretically ambitious but materially impoverished. This gap renders the implementation of a high-tech, post-cinema curriculum precarious without systemic intervention.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of data, the following findings were made:

1. **Obsolescence of Boundaries:** There is a definitive erasure of the distinction between film studies and multimedia technologies in professional practice (*M* = 4.62), confirming that the industry now operates on a transmedia logic.
2. **Pedagogical Lag:** A significant majority of respondents (72%) indicated that current higher education curricula in Nigeria are inadequate for the digital pace, largely due to rigid, siloed departmental structures.
3. **Generative Agency of Tools:** The study validated the *Digital Generative Multimedia Tool Theory* (DGMTT), with practitioners confirming that AI and software now actively "co-author" creative output (*M* = 4.41), necessitating a shift in skills from manual operation to algorithmic direction.
4. **Post-Cinema Reality:** The industry has transitioned from "cinematic truth" to "data manipulation," treating video footage as digital assets to be processed rather than photographs to be viewed.
5. **Infrastructural Deficit:** There is a stark contrast between the high demand for advanced digital skills and the low availability of institutional infrastructure (*M* = 2.10), confirming that the digital divide remains the primary threat to sustainable communication education in Nigeria.

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CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Nigerian communication education sector stands at a critical juncture. The "Digital Pace" has rendered the traditional, siloed approach to film and multimedia studies not only obsolete but unsustainable. The convergence of these fields is no longer a futuristic concept but the operational baseline of the creative economy.

The study establishes that the continued separation of film (as art) and multimedia (as tech) in academic curricula creates a workforce that is "theoretically literate but technically maladapted." Significantly, the rise of Generative AI has fundamentally altered the ontology of media production, transforming the filmmaker into a data manager and the tool into a creative partner.

Therefore, achieving a "Sustainable Communication Education" requires more than updating course outlines; it demands an ontological, structural, and infrastructural overhaul. Without bridging the "Pedagogical Lag" and closing the "Infrastructural Gap," Nigerian tertiary institutions risk becoming irrelevant, producing graduates for a cinema industry that no longer exists, while the actual industry moves forward into a post-cinematic, algorithmic future.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are proposed to foster a sustainable educational framework:

1. **Curriculum Restructuring (De-Siloing):**
   Academic institutions should dissolve the rigid boundaries between Film Studies, Mass Communication, and Computer Science departments regarding production courses. A unified "Digital Media Arts" curriculum should be adopted, where "transmedia storytelling" is the core module, ensuring students learn to deploy narratives across ecosystems rather than specific mediums.
2. **Adoption of DGMTT Pedagogy:**
   Educators must shift from teaching "software proficiency" (which becomes obsolete) to teaching "Generative Tool Logic." Curricula must include modules on *Prompt Engineering*, *Algorithmic Aesthetics*, and *Data Management*. Students should be assessed on their ability to collaborate with AI agents to generate creative output, rather than solely on manual technical execution.

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3. **Institutional-Industry "Living Labs":**
   To bridge the skills chasm, universities should establish "Living Labs" in partnership with active media studios. These labs should mimic the high-pressure, fluid environment of the industry, allowing students to work on real-world "digital assets" using industry-standard workflows, rather than theoretical simulations.
4. **Strategic Infrastructural Investment (PPPs):**
   Addressing the infrastructural deficit requires moving beyond government funding. Institutions should seek Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) with tech giants and hardware manufacturers to secure high-performance computing labs. Furthermore, investment in alternative power solutions (solar/inverters) is non-negotiable to support the rendering requirements of Post-Cinema production.
5. **Retraining of Educators (Train-the-Trainers):**
   A comprehensive re-skilling program is required for academic staff. Educators must be immersed in current industry practices to move beyond the "aesthetics of the 1990s." Continuous professional development in digital convergence and AI tools should be a mandatory requirement for tenure and promotion in communication departments.

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