

Career Opportunities for Theatre and Film Arts Graduates in Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian creative industry, encompassing theatre, film, music, fashion, and other cultural expressions, has emerged as a vital contributor to the country's economy and global image. Within this broad sector, theatre and film occupy a unique position as both artistic and economic enterprises, generating employment, fostering cultural exchange, and shaping national narratives. As Otuonyeu and Oshionebo observe:

The movie industry has contributed significantly to the cultural and economic development of Nigeria...it has promoted Nigerian culture and traditions, sharing the country's rich cultural heritage with a global audience, preserved history and storytelling by documenting and retelling critical historical events, folklore, and cultural legends, keeping Nigeria's cultural memory alive (197).

This cultural and economic significance is further reflected in the international recognition of Nollywood as one of the world's most prolific film industries, alongside the resurgence of stage productions and festivals, which demonstrate the growing demand for creative content and skilled professionals. Supporting this, Frederick, Success, and Egbi note that "Nollywood films have become so popular because of their indigenous content and the fact that they address issues relevant to the mass audience" (41).

Despite this vibrancy, graduates of Theatre and Film Arts sometimes encounter challenges in translating academic training into sustainable career opportunities. While Nigerian universities offering Theatre and Film Arts programmes continue to produce talented and technically skilled graduates, the rapidly evolving demands of the creative industry call for complementary training in business, technical, and entrepreneurial competencies. Aligning these evolving industry expectations with academic preparation presents an opportunity to strengthen graduate readiness for the labour market. Without such alignment, some graduates experience periods of underemployment, career instability, or even a shift away from their field of study.

Addressing this evolving skills gap requires systematic research that not only identifies viable career pathways but also interrogates the competencies, networks, and institutional supports that sustain professional success. To this end, this chapter explores and critically analyses the professional opportunities available to Theatre and Film Arts graduates in Nigeria. It examines how personal attributes align with specific professional roles. Simultaneously, by applying the Creative Economy framework, the study situates these roles within the broader cultural and economic systems that shape the creative industries.

The research identifies some key personalities and practitioners, whose work spans acting, directing, production design, cinematography, academia, arts management, and other allied professions, and presents them as case studies, providing in-depth perspectives on the lived realities of building and sustaining a career after graduating from theatre and film schools. By documenting these professional trajectories, the study generates evidence-based recommendations for curriculum enhancement, structured internship and mentorship programmes, targeted career guidance, and stronger industry–academia collaboration. Ultimately, this chapter contributes to scholarly discourse on creative labour markets in Africa while offering practical strategies for educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders committed to unlocking the full potential of Nigeria’s Theatre and Film Arts graduates.

Nigerian Creative Industry Context

Over the last decade, Nigeria’s creative sector, particularly theatre and film, has emerged as a significant driver of both economic growth and cultural expression. In 2016, the film industry alone accounted for 2.3% of Nigeria’s GDP, contributing approximately ₦239 billion (Osinubi 1). The same report projected export revenue to exceed USD 1 billion by 2020. Such statistics underscore the increasing economic relevance of the Nigerian film industry within both national and international markets.

Despite these successes, the creative industries face persistent challenges that affect both production and professional sustainability. Nwankwo acknowledges the sector’s cultural and economic significance but highlights ongoing challenges: “Nigeria is yet to maximise the full potential of its creative industries sectors” (1). He attributes this shortfall to “structural constraints, including fragmented policy frameworks, rampant piracy, and chronic underfunding” (5), all of which limit industry expansion and, by extension, the absorption of new talent.

Within this ecosystem, Theatre has also demonstrated remarkable adaptability and resilience. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigerian theatre practitioners experimented with drive-in theatre as a means of sustaining audience engagement under public health restrictions. As Amonyeze et al. note, this format “presents unique possibilities for artistic innovation and experimentation. It allows theatre directors and performers to explore new ways of engaging with their audiences, utilising the distinctive features of this performance space to stage immersive performances, integrate technology, and push the boundaries of traditional artistic practices” (5). Such adaptive strategies illustrate the resilience of Nigerian theatre and the profession’s capacity to evolve in challenging circumstances, qualities equally essential for emerging graduates entering the field.

While existing studies provided valuable insights into economic contributions, creative innovations, and systemic challenges of the Nigerian creative sector, there remains a clear gap in scholarship: few works systematically investigate the career trajectories of Theatre and Film Arts graduates through robust theoretical lenses. In particular, there is limited research that combines first-hand practitioner narratives with conceptual models such as Holland's Theory of Career Choice and the Creative Economy framework to interrogate how theatre and film art graduates align their skills, interests, and professional competencies with industry structures.

Drawing on Holland's Theory of Career Choice, many of these roles correspond to the personality types. Holland argues that people choose careers based on their dominant traits and the kind of work environments that best support those traits. According to Holland, there are six personality environment types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (21). Within the creative industries, particularly theatre and the performing arts, Holland's framework is useful for explaining graduates' choices of sub-specialisations as it provides a conceptual lens for analysing how theatre graduates navigate opportunities in the Nigerian creative economy, why they gravitate toward certain professional niches, and how their training equips them to flourish in specialised roles. It also helps explain the diversity of career outcomes among graduates of a single academic discipline, demonstrating that even within the arts, personality alignment significantly shapes professional identity and long-term career trajectories. As Holland affirms, "the choice of a vocation is an expression of personality" (12), reinforcing the relevance of this theory to understanding individual differences in theatre practice, management, and production.

Relatively, the Creative Economy framework popularised by John Howkins (2001) recognises sectors such as theatre, film, music, fashion, digital media, and performing arts, not only as forms of cultural expression but also as drivers of economic value. The categories outlined highlight key career trajectories, including their sub-specialisations, and situate them within the realities of the Nigerian creative sector. According to Cunningham, the creative economy operates through a complex ecosystem involving creators, producers, distributors, and audiences, highlighting a fluid interplay between artistic expression and entrepreneurial activity (Cunningham and Flew 23). The theory provides insight into the diversification of career pathways. Technical practitioners such as lighting designers, scenographers, sound engineers, and stage technologists, generate economic value through their technical expertise and creative problem-solving abilities. Similarly, directors, actors, and arts managers function as drivers of cultural production whose work supports broader value chains, including tourism, digital media, merchandising, and community engagement.

By anchoring this study on Creative Economy Theory and Holland's Theory of Career Choice, through a qualitative case-study approach the research is able to situate theatre and film careers within a broader economic, psychological, and educational context. These theories collectively strengthen the analysis and documentation of how Nigerian Theatre and Film Arts graduates navigate, sustain, and evolve their careers across diverse roles in the creative industries

Career Paths for Theatre and Film Arts Graduates

The landscape of career development for Theatre and Film Arts graduates in Nigeria cannot be fully understood without first situating their journeys within the broader dynamics of the country's creative sector. As higher institutions continue to expand their programmes in the field of theatre

and film arts, increasing numbers of graduates are entering a labour market defined by both opportunity and uncertainty. Graduates of Theatre and Film Arts in Nigeria step into a professional environment that is already diverse yet continually evolving, shaped by the nation's cultural heritage, the forces of globalisation, and rapid technological change. These career paths build on long-standing traditions while embracing new opportunities, reflecting the unique convergence of creativity, skill, and industry demand, offering opportunities that span artistic performance, technical production, management, and research.

Performance and Acting Career (Stage and Screen)

Acting remains one of the most visible and aspirational career paths for Theatre and Film Arts graduates, encompassing live theatre, film, television, and increasingly, digital streaming platforms. Empirical studies of the Nigerian film sector emphasise that acting is embedded within a large and growing labour market that creates roles not only in front of the camera but across the production chain. Nigerian actors are central to Nollywood's global reach and the preservation and reinvention of traditional stage performance. The acting role requires mastery of interpretive skills, emotional range, and adaptability to various performance modes.

Acting careers in Nigeria now encompass several sub-specialisations that reflect the diversification of the country's creative landscape, which includes stage and screen acting, voice acting, and performance poetry. More recently, the rise of gaming, virtual reality, and 3D animation has opened opportunities in motion-capture acting, a growing niche globally that is gradually entering Nigeria's digital production ecosystem (Ogunleye). As the Nigerian animation sector grows and international streaming platforms seek African localisation, skilled voice actors with multilingual capabilities have become increasingly marketable. Collectively, these sub-specialisations demonstrate the multidimensional nature of acting careers in contemporary Nigeria.

Several notable Theatre and Film Arts graduates have made significant contributions to the Nigerian creative industry, both on and off stage.

1. Fred Amata, a veteran actor and industry player, is a graduate of the University of Jos and has maintained a prolific career spanning film, television, and production.
2. Genevieve Nnaji, a graduate of the University of Lagos' Theatre Arts programme, transitioned from acting in television and stage productions to becoming one of Nollywood's most celebrated film producers and directors, with her film *Lionheart* achieving international recognition on Netflix (Asigbo and Ugbor).
3. Sola Fosudo exemplifies the combination of academia and professional performance; an alumnus of the University of Ife and the University of Ibadan, he has built an outstanding career across stage, film, and television.
4. Richard Mofe-Damijo, a University of Benin graduate, extends his acting prowess beyond theatre, film, and television into commercials and public-facing roles that leverage his credibility and presence.
5. Funke Akindele, known for her iconic role in *Jenifa*, combines acting with production and entrepreneurship, illustrating the portfolio nature of many Nigerian creative careers.
6. Sam Dede, an award-winning actor and academic from the University of Port Harcourt, has played a major role in developing theatre and acting education in Nigeria; he has been

described by *The Guardian* as “one of the exponents of acting in Nigeria. An actor who knows his onions, he is known to act out the script brilliantly to the admiration of many lovers of the art form”.

7. Patrick Diabuah, a graduate of the University of Lagos Theatre Arts programme, represents the new generation of actors blending formal training with professional practice.

Collectively, these individuals demonstrate how Theatre and Film Arts graduates can navigate diverse career pathways, combining performance, production, and entrepreneurial skills to achieve national and international recognition.

Directing, Scriptwriting, and Creative Development

Directing, scriptwriting, and creative development represent career paths where graduates shape narratives and overall production vision. Directing in theatre and film is both an artistic and managerial responsibility, requiring the ability to transform a script or concept into a compelling audience experience. It is the role of the Directors to interpret the story, guide actors' performances, and coordinate the work of designers, cinematographers, and technical crews to achieve a unified vision.

In the Nigerian creative industry, directing often demands adaptability to different production environments, from live stage performances to film sets, each with its own technical, financial, and audience considerations. This role calls for creativity, problem-solving, and resourcefulness, particularly when navigating varying budgets, technical limitations, and audience expectations. Beyond storytelling, directors play a critical role in preserving cultural authenticity while engaging with global trends, ensuring that their work resonates locally while remaining competitive on international platforms. Sub-specialisations include theatre and film directing, playwriting, screenwriting, and content development for digital platforms. Studies on the Nigerian creative industry indicate that graduates in these roles must combine artistic vision with managerial and communication skills, often acquiring experience through freelance projects, internships, or mentorship under established directors

Successful practitioners frequently transition from directing and writing to producing or entrepreneurial roles, reflecting the flexible and multifaceted nature of creative careers in Nigeria (Ogunleye). Successful practitioners frequently transition from directing and writing to producing or entrepreneurial roles, reflecting the flexible and multifaceted nature of creative careers in Nigeria (Ogunleye). Several Nigerian directors who are graduates of Theatre and Film Arts programmes have significantly shaped the country's creative landscape, particularly in theatre, film, and television.

1. Israel Eboh, a prominent director and producer, has contributed to both stage and screen, demonstrating versatility in storytelling and production management (Asigbo and Ugbor).
2. Tunji Azeez has made notable contributions to stage direction and film production, combining practical theatre experience with formal training to mentor emerging actors and filmmakers (Imiti).
3. Tope Oshin, a graduate of the University of Jos, is widely recognised for her film and television direction, including projects that foreground socially relevant narratives and amplify female voices in Nollywood (Yerima, Uwadinma-Idemudia, and Yerima).

4. Tunji Sotimirin is known for directing innovative theatre productions and experimental stage works, blending traditional Nigerian performance aesthetics with contemporary dramaturgy (Adeyemi and Olamide).
5. Segun Adefila, founder of the renowned theatre company “Crownt Troupe of Africa,” merges directing, choreography, and production in his work, exemplifying the integration of leadership and creative practice in Nigeria’s performing arts (Ogunleye).

Collectively, these directors illustrate the breadth of career trajectories available to Theatre and Film Arts graduates, highlighting how formal education, practical experience, and entrepreneurial initiative converge to create influential creative careers.

Technical Direction and Production Roles

Technical and production roles form the backbone of the theatre and film industries, translating creative vision into tangible performance and screen experiences. These careers in the Nigerian Creative space encompass vital behind-the-scenes roles that sustain performance and screen productions. It encompasses the creation, coordination, and realisation of the visual, auditory, and spatial dimensions that bring stage and screen productions to life. This aspect of theatre and film arts integrates artistry with technical expertise, ensuring that every element supports the story’s mood, style, and meaning.

Key sub-specialisations include lighting and sound design, set and costume design, props management, cinematography, and post-production editing. Research on Nollywood’s labour market emphasises the critical demand for skilled technical personnel, highlighting that technical competence often determines the production quality and commercial success of film projects (Asigbo and Ugbor). Many Theatre and Film Arts graduates supplement formal training with workshops, short courses, and apprenticeships to gain practical expertise (Imiti). This blend of academic knowledge and hands-on experience is essential in Nigeria, where informal networks and on-the-job training continue to shape professional pathways.

- **Set Design and Scenic Construction:** Set designers create the physical environments in which stories unfold, including stage scenery, props, and backdrops. Graduates often work as freelance designers for theatre companies or film production houses. Femi Alabi, a University of Lagos alumnus, has contributed to numerous stage productions and commercial films in Lagos, integrating traditional Nigerian aesthetics with contemporary design principles.
- **Costume Designer (Stage and Screen):** Develops attire that communicates character identity, aligns with historical or cultural contexts, and reflects thematic concepts. Costume and makeup designers craft the visual identity of characters, reflecting personality, status, and period context. These roles are increasingly professionalised within theatre companies and film studios. **Ngozi Chukwuma**, a Theatre Arts graduate from the University of Port Harcourt, is renowned for her work in stage productions and Nollywood films, particularly in period dramas requiring intricate costume design and prosthetic makeup.
- **Lighting Designer/Manager (Stage and Screen):** Crafts atmosphere, directs audience focus, and shapes the emotional tone of a performance through the controlled use of

- light. Lighting designers control the visual mood, focus, and atmosphere of stage and screen productions. Graduates in this area are often responsible for designing lighting plots, programming intelligent lights, and operating lighting consoles during rehearsals and live performances. An example is **Akinwale “Wale” Adeyemi**, a graduate of the University of Lagos, who has worked extensively on stage productions in Lagos, including festival performances and commercial theatre shows.
- **Sound Design and Engineering:** This career path edits and integrates sound elements to enhance narrative impact, from subtle ambience to dynamic audio effects, ensuring clarity and emotional resonance. Sound designers and engineers manage audio elements, including dialogue clarity, background music, sound effects, and live audio mixing. This role is crucial for creating immersive experiences in theatre and ensuring professional-quality sound in film. **Chijioke Okafor**, a University of Ibadan Theatre Arts graduate, has built a career in both theatre and Nollywood, specialising in sound design and audio post-production for independent films.
 - **Props Manager (Stage and Screen):** Sources, organises, and maintains physical objects used on stage or set, ensuring they enhance authenticity and serve the needs of the performance or film. Props managers are responsible for sourcing, maintaining, and organising all objects used on stage or screen. They work closely with directors, actors, and designers to ensure props are historically and contextually appropriate. **Emeka Nwosu**, a University of Ife graduate, has specialised in props management for both theatre festivals and commercial film productions in Lagos, contributing to large-scale stage events and independent films.
 - **Cinematography and Camera Operation:** Cinematographers and camera operators handle visual storytelling on screen, including framing, camera movement, lighting integration, and image composition. Graduates in this area are key to translating a director’s vision into compelling visual narratives. **Kunle Adeyanju**, a University of Lagos Theatre Arts graduate, has worked as a cinematographer on Nollywood films and short digital productions, gaining recognition for innovative camera techniques and collaboration with emerging directors.
 - **Film Editing and Post-Production:** Editors assemble filmed material, create narrative flow, integrate visual effects, and finalise sound and colour grading. This sub-specialisation is critical for both commercial and experimental film work. **Tunde Balogun**, a graduate of the University of Ibadan, has built a career as a film editor for Nollywood productions and digital media projects, bridging technical proficiency with creative storytelling.
 - **Content Creation for Digital Platforms:** With the proliferation of YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and subscription-based streaming services, graduates are increasingly producing, distributing, and monetising their content. This path requires a hybrid skill set that combines performance, editing, marketing, and audience analytics, aligning closely with the Creative Economy’s emphasis on self-driven innovation and digital entrepreneurship.

Professionals in this category combine artistic sensibility with problem-solving skills, adapting to different production scales and resource constraints while maintaining the integrity of the creative vision.

1. **Duro Oni** is a veteran theatre scholar and practitioner whose contributions have shaped technical theatre education and practice in Nigeria. A graduate of the University of Ibadan with further studies at the California Institute of the Arts, Oni specialises in lighting, stage design, and theatre aesthetics. He has served in key leadership roles at the University of Lagos, including Head of the Creative Arts Department and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, while also mentoring the next generation of theatre practitioners. His scholarly work integrates practical technical theatre with research, establishing him as a pioneer in lighting and stage design within the Nigerian theatre landscape (Oni).
2. **Abiodun (Kester) Abe** is a renowned set designer and technical director who has significantly influenced stage production in Nigeria. Educated at the University of Ilorin and the University of Ibadan, Abe has worked extensively with the National Theatre and on classic Nigerian plays such as Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and Ola Rotimi's *Kurunmi*. He emphasises the centrality of set design in audience perception, famously asserting that "it is the set that announces everything," reflecting his philosophy that scenography is integral to storytelling in theatre (Abe).
3. **Hilary Elemi** is a distinguished theatre practitioner and technical director known for his expertise in stage design and visual storytelling. As Technical Director of the National Troupe of Nigeria, Elemi has designed numerous productions, emphasising the aesthetic and functional roles of scenery in theatre. His work demonstrates the importance of technical theatre in creating immersive and visually compelling performances, bridging creative vision with practical stage execution (Elemi).
4. **Rasak Ojo Bakare** is a theatre scholar and choreographer whose work integrates technical theatre with dance and performance aesthetics. Holding advanced degrees in Theatre Arts and Choreography, Bakare combines academic research with practical application in stage productions, ensuring that technical design, movement, and visual storytelling are harmoniously aligned. His approach highlights the interdisciplinary nature of technical theatre in Nigeria, merging design, performance, and choreography into cohesive productions (Bakare).
5. **Ituen Bassey (Ituen Basi)** is a leading costume designer and theatre practitioner who blends fashion design with theatrical aesthetics. A graduate of Obafemi Awolowo University's Theatre Arts programme, Bassey has designed costumes for musicals, stage plays, and theatre productions, integrating cultural motifs with contemporary design. Her work exemplifies the critical role of costume and wardrobe design in shaping character identity, visual storytelling, and audience engagement in Nigerian theatre (Bassey).

Arts Administration and Creative Management

Arts and creative management careers involve overseeing productions, organisations, and projects within the creative and cultural sector. Research demonstrates that as theatre companies, film studios, and creative hubs expand, there is growing demand for graduates who combine organisational, financial, and marketing skills with cultural literacy (Adeyemi and Olamide). Graduates in these roles often work in NGOs, donor-funded creative hubs, and cultural institutions, bridging artistic practice with management and policy implementation. This domain covers leadership, operational management, and strategic development within theatre and film organisations. Graduates may pursue sub-specialisations in production management, stage management, talent management, festival coordination, and cultural administration. Effective arts

management requires not only administrative skill but also cultural diplomacy, as managers often mediate between creative teams, funding bodies, and audiences. Sub-roles include:

1. **Business Manager:** Business managers in the creative industries handle financial planning, project budgeting, fundraising, revenue generation, grant writing, and stakeholder relations. Their work ensures the financial viability of theatre organisations, film projects, and cultural enterprises. A notable examples include;
 - **Bolanle Austen-Peters**, founder of BAP Productions and Terra Kulture. Although she has interdisciplinary training, much of her work exemplifies the business management competencies that Theatre and Film Arts graduates adopt strategic financial planning, budgeting for large-scale productions (*Saro, Fela! The Musical*), and building sustainable creative institutions.
 - **Ifeoma Fafunwa**, founder of iOpenEye Africa, manages artistic and financial resources to support socially driven theatre projects, illustrating how business management intersects with advocacy and creative enterprise.
2. **Theatre Manager:** Theatre managers oversee theatre spaces, coordinate venue operations, supervise front-of-house teams, schedule programmes, implement audience development strategies, and manage facility logistics. In Nigeria, this role is quite vital, where theatre venues such as Terra Kulture, MUSON Centre, and University-based theatres are central to performance culture.
 - **Josephine Igoche**, a trained theatre manager from the University of Jos, has worked with the National Theatre, Lagos, coordinating programming, audience relations, and venue operations.
 - **Ayo Jaiyesimi**, co-founder of the Thespian Family Theatre & Productions, whose role involves managing performance venues, coordinating artistic programming, and building community engagement initiatives that support Nigerian theatre infrastructure.
 - **Mitchel Bare Adegbola**, an academic researcher and production manager who has managed productions like *Kurunmi, The Gods Have Spoken*
3. **Stage Manager:** Stage managers serve as the centre of communication and organisation during rehearsals and performances. They coordinate between directors, actors, designers, and technical teams; manage rehearsal schedules; and ensure smooth execution of live performances. This role is essential in both theatre and live events across Nigeria.
 - **Najite Dede**, a trained theatre practitioner known for stage management and directing in major theatre productions such as *Hear Word!* and *Make We Waka*.
 - **Joshua Alabi**, Creative Director of Kininso Concepts, who began his career in stage management before expanding into directing and producing, illustrating how stage management builds a foundation for leadership in the performing arts.
 - **Ibukun Fasunhan**, graduate of University of Lagos and trained stage manager with over 15years experience.
4. **Location Manager:** Location managers work primarily in Nollywood and television, identifying, securing, and managing real-world settings for shoots. They negotiate permits,

coordinate logistics, ensure safety, and manage relationships with community stakeholders. With the expansion of Nollywood into international co-productions and streaming platforms, the role has grown more prominent.

- **Adekunle “Dr. Klein” Adejumo**, who has served as a location manager for several Nollywood productions and Netflix-backed projects, overseeing location logistics in Lagos, Oyo, and Ogun states.
 - **Ladi Johnson**, a Theatre Arts graduate who has managed locations for films produced by the Africa Magic Original Films (AMOF) stable, demonstrating the increasing professionalisation of this field.
5. **Festival Directors and Art Curators:** Festival direction and arts curation are emerging and increasingly influential career pathways in Nigeria’s creative landscape. This career path focuses on designing, organising, and managing cultural festivals, film screenings, theatre showcases, and other live events that celebrate and promote the arts. Graduates in this field curate performances, select films or stage productions, and coordinate logistics, sponsorship, and audience engagement. Notable examples in Nigeria;
- **Bikiya Graham-Douglas – Beeta Arts Festival:** Her training and career reflect how Theatre and Film Arts graduates transition into festival leadership with strong artistic and managerial skills.
 - **Kenneth Uphopho – Lagos Fringe Festival:** A renowned director and alumnus of the University of Ibadan, Uphopho co-founded the Lagos Fringe Festival and curates performances that cut across theatre, dance, comedy, spoken word, and visual art.

Academia, Research, and Community Arts

Education, research, and community arts careers involve leveraging theatre and film for social development, civic engagement, and cultural preservation. Graduates may specialise in Theatre-in-Education (TiE), media literacy training, community theatre facilitation, academic research, or youth arts development. Studies indicate that these roles are often employed within NGOs, community initiatives, and government programmes to deliver educational or advocacy-driven performances (Yerima, Uwadinma-Idemudia, and Yerima). These pathways emphasise the societal impact of theatre and film, extending career opportunities beyond commercial production. Graduates who enter academia contribute to the intellectual development of the discipline, advancing scholarship in theatre and film theory, performance analysis, cultural policy, and production techniques.

In the Nigerian context, theatre graduates play a crucial role as educators at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. They teach subjects such as drama, creative writing, dance, film studies, and media literacy, thereby nurturing the next generation of creative practitioners. Many work as lecturers and researchers in universities developing curricula, supervising students, producing scholarship, and participating in national and international conference.

Many theatre graduates have distinguished themselves as academics, shaping the intellectual and creative foundations of the discipline across Nigerian universities.

1. **Professor Duro Oni**, an accomplished scenographer, designer, and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, exemplifies this path through his contributions to theatre technology research, curriculum development, and creative scholarship.
2. **Dr. Tunji Azeez**, a respected playwright, director, and scholar at Lagos State University, has expanded the field through his work in media studies, performance analysis, and development communication.
3. **Professor Ahmed Yerima**, a leading playwright and former Director-General of the National Theatre and National Troupe, reflects the synergy between academic scholarship and national cultural administration, using research and playwriting to document Nigerian histories, identities, and philosophies.
4. **Dr. Cornelius Onyekaba**, known for his work in film studies, creative economy and applied theatre, demonstrates the increasing importance of research-led practice, particularly in areas that engage community narratives, social issues, and educational development. He also curates the Unilag Africaribbean Carnival which spans over 2 decades.

This pathway aligns with the demands of the Creative Economy, which recognises skills training and knowledge dissemination as essential drivers of creative sector growth.

Conclusion

The professional pathways available to Theatre and Film Arts graduates in Nigeria reveal a dynamic, multifaceted landscape shaped by cultural traditions, technological advancement, industry growth, and national development needs. Across performance, directing, technical production, arts management, education, research, and community arts, graduates continue to demonstrate the versatility and relevance of their training. The sector's expansion, driven by Nollywood's global influence, digital innovation, and the growing creative economy, has created new opportunities while deepening existing specialisations. The application of frameworks such as Holland's Theory of Career Choice and Creative Economy Theory further illuminates how theatre graduates navigate these diverse roles, aligning personal strengths with industry demands and contributing to value creation within the wider cultural ecosystem.

Examples of notable practitioners including acclaimed actors, visionary directors, leading technical experts, and influential scholars underscore the impact theatre graduates have made across Nigeria's creative and academic spheres. Their achievements affirm the discipline's capacity to produce professionals who are not only artists but also educators, researchers, managers, cultural advocates, and community facilitators. Ultimately, the varied career trajectories explored in this study demonstrate that Theatre and Film Arts remains a vital field with sustained relevance in contemporary Nigeria. As the creative industries continue to evolve, the contributions of theatre graduates will remain indispensable to national identity formation, economic development, and the ongoing transformation of Nigeria's cultural landscape.

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