

RESEARCH ARTICLE:

Innovative Entrepreneurship through Creative Outputs for Emerging Filmmakers in South Africa: A Conceptual Framework

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Received: 15 February 2023 | Revised: 09 August 2023 | Published: 23 August 2023

Reviewing Editor: Dr Ndivhuho Tshikovhi, Durban University of Technology

Abstract

Creativity and innovation are fundamental traits of a creative leader in the film industry. This article explores the South African film landscape and the innovative opportunities for creative film entrepreneurs. It further explores and describes emerging film creative leadership in terms of an Entrepreneurial Conceptual Framework (creative output 2) that includes a functional relationship equation (creative output 1). The conceptual framework explores the relationship between the four key dimensions (soft skills, innovation, film project management, and iterative content generation) and the four key competencies (high-quality content, influence, education, and entertainment) and their ultimate effect on entrepreneurial creative leadership in the local filmmaking landscape. The functional relationship equation identifies four key characteristics (vision, collaboration, adaptability, and emotional intelligence) that distinguish a creative leader in the local film industry from other forms of leadership. Both the conceptual framework and the functional relationship equation set innovative and structural foundations and form creative outputs for emerging filmmakers, local independent film productions, and future academic studies.

Keywords: films; production; film commission; innovation; creativity

Introduction

The film industry is a creative sector that can transform a country into a tourist destination, attract foreign investments, and provide cultural, social, and economic value to the country in which the films are created. The growth of emerging small production companies and independent producers in South Africa further promotes local cultural identities and facilitates on-the-job training for students and low-skilled technical film crews. Fourie (1997: 3) credits the development of film technology into a mass medium to Thomas Edison, who invented the electric light and the kinoscope. The kinoscope was a box structure that ran a loop of celluloid film roll past an electric light source, controlled by a motor and shutter mechanism. Only one person could view a moving image at a time. The first projected film was shown in France on 28 December 1895 by the Lumière brothers. The film was entitled "Workers leaving the factory". The Lumière brothers invented a mechanical device called the *Cinématographe* that projected large-sized images onto a film screen. Fourie (1997: 40) further credits the development of the South African film industry to I.W Schlesinger whose company, African Film Productions, made forty-three high-quality local films between 1916 and 1922. South Africa's very first cinema theatre was built in Durban in 1909 by Electric Theatres Limited. KwaZulu-Natal is historically credited as the birthplace of the South African cinema theatre. Ster-Kinekor and Nu Metro are currently the two most prominent national film exhibitors.

The film industry in South Africa is promoted, supported, and developed by the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), an agency of the Department of Arts and Culture, and is governed by the National Film and Video Foundation Act 73 of 1997. The Gauteng Film Commission, Cape Town Film Office, Durban Film Office, and the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission provide regional support services to emerging South African film entrepreneurs. The National Film and Video Foundation (2016) has found that the local film industry is largely comprised of small production companies and individual film entrepreneurs. The foundation has identified human capital development as a national film strategy within the industry's provincial sectors. The film industry's growth through emerging

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filmmakers is adding to the sustainable source of economic development and cultural identity for the country. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission (2020:5) reported that the province of KwaZulu-Natal's film industry contributed R340 million to the South African Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019. The report also states that the province's film industry created 4558 local jobs in 2019.

The KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission (2020: 18) reports that technological advancements are dramatically changing the nature of the local film industry. This lowers the barriers to entry for emerging production companies and creative film entrepreneurs to enter the highly competitive local film market. The COVID-19 pandemic has created innovative opportunities for South African entertainment in the online space due to the increased usage of the internet. There is a current demand for over-the-top (OTT) video streaming content and services. The online video-on-demand (VOD) sector is anticipated to play a significant future role in South African and global filmed entertainment. Over-the-top digital platforms include subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD), such as Netflix and Showmax, transactional-based video-on-demand (TVOD), such as Google Play and Amazon, and advert-based video-on-demand (AVOD), such as YouTube.

The thematic flow of this discussion focuses on innovation and creativity, the formulation of the functional equation, and the structure of an entrepreneurial framework within the concept of an entrepreneurial creative leader in the local film industry. Each theme is preceded by literature.

Innovation and Creativity in the Film Industry

Mainemelis *et al.* (2015) offer three distinct collaborative contexts of creative leadership. The authors point out that creative leadership differs from other forms of leadership in three ways: it induces structure, it is immune to power influence, and it manages conflict between creativity and organisation. They propose that creative leadership refers to leading others towards the achievement of creative outcomes and it comprises three "alternative manifestations: facilitating employee creativity; directing the materialisation of the leader's creative vision and integrating heterogeneous creative contributions".

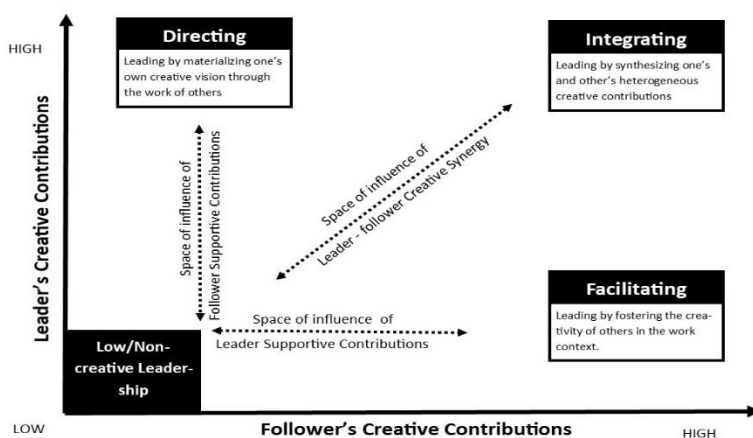


Figure 1: A multi-context framework of creative leadership (Mainemelis *et al.* 2015: 113)

Figure 1 is a multi-context framework that theoretically conceptualises creative leadership. Facilitation focuses on the leader's role in fostering the creativity of others in an organisational context. The authors explain that facilitation focuses on the creative contribution of followers, who are the main generators of ideas that lead to innovation and creativity. Leaders simply offer contributions that could be creative. Direction regards the creative leader as the primary source of creative thinking and behaviour. Direction focuses mainly on the leader's creative vision, with the follower simply executing the leader's vision. Integration focuses on the leader's role in synthesising their creative ideas with the diverse heterogeneous creative ideas and contributions of other professionals in the work context. Integration, therefore, focuses on the blending between the contributions of the leader and follower.

The concept of innovation emerged from ancient Greece, as revealed by Godin (2015: 47). The concept initially had the political connotation as being subversive and revolutionary in introducing change to the established order. Over the centuries, the concept shifted from the individual to the social when concerns started focusing on economic benefits. The writer further describes innovation as a beneficial change concept that adds value to the

science and arts. Both disciplines guide innovation and technology in the film industry. Mihret-Dessie and Shumetie-Ademe (2017) point out that the concepts of innovation and creativity are different but closely related. They view innovation as the progression of creative ideas into use. In contrast, their simple definition of creativity is that it is the generation of a novel idea. They further define innovation as the “implementation of the idea for commercialisation”. Innovation passes through the product of creative thinking.

Acar *et al.* (2017: 133) consider creativity to have two core factors. The first factor is a “constellation of characteristics such as novelty, originality, infrequency, or unusualness”. The second factor is “related to usefulness, value, utility, effectiveness, adaptability or appropriateness”. These authors also view creativity as the generation of ideas and innovation as the implementation of the ideas. Their study further found that the characteristic originality or uniqueness was the strongest correlate between innovation and creativity. Eisele (2017: 473) indicates that innovation is enhanced by creating a stimulating idea-sharing climate. This, the author believes, should lead to the creation of an innovative culture. Stojcic *et al.* (2018: 566) consider creativity as a “seedbed” of innovation. These authors also contend that creativity influences the commercialisation of innovation. They mention that creativity is the “principal driving wheel” supporting the “birth of new economic structures”. Their study further outlines a distinction between creativity and innovation. They consider innovation as a “sequential process”, within which creativity “enters as the initial stage of intra-individual cognitive and inter-individual social efforts” that results in the generation of novel and useful ideas. McCarthy *et al.* (2018) describe novelty to include originality and uniqueness. Ideas are considered novel if they are unique to other currently available ideas. The authors assert that the idea must be useful in that it must be appropriate to the problem, practically implemented, and socially accepted. They further point out that creativity is an iterative process where ideas are constantly being refined and elaborated.

Xie and Paik (2019: 124) also treat innovation and creativity as two conceptually distinct constructs. They also support the approach that creativity is a production of ideas that are novel and useful. They further add that innovation comprises two processes. The first process is the generation of ideas and the second process is the selection and implementation of a useful idea. Innovation, according to these writers, is the “final performance outcome” of the creative process. Carnabuci and DiÓszegi (2015: 884) discovered that innovators cognitively focus on finding new ways to conceptualise and frame problems. Innovators are more inclined to approach problems from original and unique perspectives. They argue that creative thinkers repeated “cognitive re-framings” allow them to generate unique creative ideas and initiatives that facilitate the idea generation process within the innovation process. Creativity is, therefore, a cognitive practice.

In the film context, creativity is the generation and mediation of original film ideas, imagination, concepts, and stories. Bolton's (1972) foundational viewpoint of creativity describes the concept as “an original thought that breaks away from traditional modes of thought, sometimes to an extent of revising most fundamental ideas”. In film, this may include a style of artistic expression and filmic narration, a theory or application in film technology, or an original way of solving a filmmaking problem. Bondebjerg (2017: 2) notes that film and media studies are now directly inspired by cognitive psychology and science. There is a recent focus on the psychology of film perception and cognition. Carnabuci and DiÓszegi (2015: 882) demonstrate that individual cognitive style is a key factor that enhances creative performance. Film involves the production by the director and other creative people and the viewing from the audience. The system supporting film narration and the viewer's perception is based on cognitive dimensions that include thoughts, perceptions, memories, and emotions. Aertsen (2017: 108) applies cognitive film theory to show that sympathy is the main bond between a film viewer and the fictional screen character. Sympathy is the strongest emotional bond that explains the audience's emotional involvement in the film narrative. Watching a film is, therefore, a cognitive and emotional process and experience. Film scripts and shots are cognitive schemata used to structure mediated and real-life experiences. Creative thinking inherently involves risk-taking and thinking outside the box. An original creative thought or idea is the product of the creative thinker. A creative idea (such as a film concept) is converted into a creative product (such as a film shot). Juxtaposing shots creates a film scene. A combination of scenes creates a film. Schroeter *et al.* (2019: 1) define creative thinking as “an imaginative process that incorporates content-based knowledge to generate novel ideas” These authors emphasise that the creative person thinks both convergently and divergently. The convergent thinking process leads to conventional solutions in idea generation to a problem. It results in the best idea from a selective number of concepts. An accepted idea can be identified using logical inference from the available information. The divergent thinking process, on the other hand, generates multiple unique ideas for a problem, as explained by Schroeter *et al.* (2019: 1). This thinking process best occurs where there are numerous possible ideas.

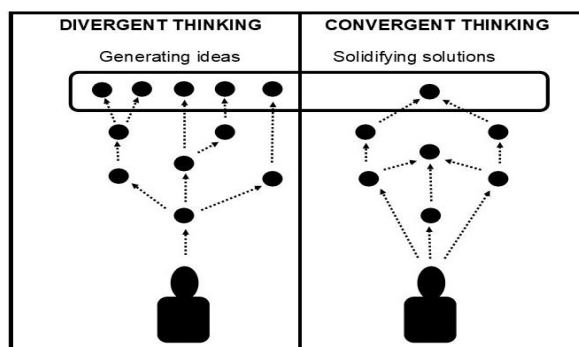


Figure 2: Divergent and convergent thinking processes (Schroeter et al. (2019: 2)

Figure 2 depicts divergent (left) and convergent (right) thinking processes. Many new ideas (black circles) are generated through divergent thinking, resulting in multiple creative solutions. Alternatively, a single best idea is generated after considering many perspectives through convergent thinking. Divergent thinking connects disparate concepts in unique ways and is considered fundamental in creative film idea generation. This is regarded as an essential component of creativity. Brainstorming, for example, is a creative process wherein divergent thinking is mostly exercised.

Innovation can be summarised as transforming unique ideas and concepts from creativity into actionable useful practices. Creativity is, therefore, a principal driver of film story innovation; a process that starts from a creative idea, which, in film is called the screen idea. In filmmaking, the screen idea is the creative building block of film concept development. Macdonald (2003: 27) pioneered the view that a screen idea could be any film thought, from a one-line film concept to a full-length screenplay. The author suggests that the screen idea only exists as an imaginary concept. Bloore (2014: 33) considers the screen idea to be the core creative idea that includes concepts, key themes, and the mood of the film. This author argues that a screen idea exists in the mind of all the creative collaborators, not just the writer. As such, it could be interpreted differently by the different collaborators in a film project. Different individuals, the author adds, may have different conceptions and interpretations of the same screen idea. The author suggests that this could be the reason for many script drafts and the replacement of writers in certain film projects.

Examples of screen ideas:

- An abandoned alien befriends an emotionally hurting boy and, with his help, tries to phone home. (*E.T.*, 1982).
- A teenager accidentally travels back in time where he must save his parent's relationship so that he can continue to exist. (*Back to the future*, 1985).
- A daring experiment goes wrong when a miniaturised test pilot is accidentally injected into the body of a nerdy clerk. (*Innerspace*, 1987).

The above films address the common idea concept of family issues while transcending time and space. They reinforce the belief that family relationships and emotions are beyond the limited dimensions of time and space that are subject to the laws of physics and science. Macdonald (2013: 81) notes that the poetics of screen ideas and screenwriting are socially grounded within a particular context and are influenced by the personal experience of people, culture, and society.

Formulating a Film Creative Leadership Equation (Creative Output 1)

In a case study on the film *The Godfather*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, Mainemelis and Epitropaki (2013: 198), attribute three leadership theories to the filmmaking context: Charisma, complexity, and creative deviance.

Murphy and Ensher (2008: 336) found the charismatic style of leadership to be the most effective in leading creative teams in television production. This leadership style links the leader's influence on creative team members to positive organisational outcomes, such as self-motivation, team performance, individual satisfaction, and personal effort. Most importantly, the authors point out that charismatic leaders have a clear radical artistic vision and tend to make more calculated, risky decisions, which is deeply needed in the dynamic creative film industry. The formulation of a vision is based on the cognitive structures needed for sense-making that analyses performance

through one's self-reflection of past experiences. Articulating a vision is the most important function of a charismatic creative leader. Vision helps creative teams to make sense of complex situations.

The complexity leadership theory focuses on strategies and behaviours that foster adaptability in a complex adaptive system (such as a film set) where different creative members (film crew, writers, directors, producers, actors) dynamically interact to produce creative content (film) within emergent change activities during film production. The authors also call this adaptive leadership, where complex leadership occurs in adaptive challenges that require new creative learning, innovation, and changed patterns of behaviours. Mendes *et al.* (2016: 303) agree that ideas are produced by the adaptive function mentioned in the theory. The adaptive function emerges from the interaction between the creative members and the complex adaptive system. Chase (2016: 33) adds that complexity leadership depends on collaboration and problem solving to achieve adaptive outcomes. Adaptive responses capitalise on the creative contributions of groups and networks. Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018: 98) further added that new knowledge, innovation, information, and learning create transformation that leads to the adaptive process. The current challenge facing entrepreneurial creative leaders is the positioning of people and organisations for adaptability in dynamic environments. Entrepreneurial creative leadership for adaptability enables people and organisations to effectively cope with unexpected changes. It focuses on the leader's ability to adapt to complex challenges and shifting environmental needs. Complex leadership in the film industry is leadership for adaptability.

Similar to the complexity theory, the creative deviance theory also acknowledges internal organisational tension as a parameter for creativity and learning, as proposed by Mainemelis (2010: 559). The creative deviance theory emphasises that non-conformist behaviours, such as violating superiors' (film executive) instructions and organisational (production company) policies, results in innovation and a creative outcome (blockbuster film). New film ideas and concepts are often initially rejected because of the high risks attached to film projects. The same rejected ideas and concepts may ultimately result in breakthrough creative outcomes. Creative members may at times violate superiors' orders to continue working on new ideas or concepts that they strongly believe in. Film executives and production companies tend to tolerate such creative deviant behaviours (especially from a celebrity director) in exchange for high creative film values. Lin *et al.* (2016: 537) found that creative deviance stimulates the higher creative performance of the follower when the creative behaviour is rewarded and supported by the leader. Their study on this leadership theory explains the connection between creativity and deviance in filmmaking. Sarpong *et al.* (2018: 582) observe that creative deviance is built on early sociological work on the direct breach of managerial edicts and violation of accepted social norms and individual creativity. The authors add that a creative employee responds to an idea or concept rejection by stopping work on the idea completely, delivering fewer ideas in the future, leaving the organisation completely, or refusing to obey the order in deviance, thus, challenging the established routines of the creative organisation. Collaboration plays a pivotal role in the filmmaking landscape where creative tensions and organisational conflicts are the norms.

Mainemelis *et al.* (2015: 7) describe the creative leader as "a leader who synthesises his or her creative work with the heterogeneous creative contributions of other professionals". It is simply leading others towards a common creative outcome within a collaborative context. Lawrence (2017: 91) lists the characteristics of collaborative leadership as shared vision and values, interdependence and shared responsibilities, mutual respect, empathy and vulnerability, ambiguity, communication through dialogue, and synergy. Müller and Van Esch (2020: 18) reveal a direct relationship between shared beliefs and collaboration. People tend to be more creative and innovative within an environment of shared beliefs and contexts. Mainemelis and Epitropaki (2013: 198) collectively refer to charismatic, complexity, and creative deviance theories within the filmmaking context as extreme leadership. Expanding on the theory of extreme leadership, a fourth characteristic, emotional intelligence, can be factored into the existing filmmaking paradigm of Mainemelis and Epitropaki (2013: 198).

Bello (2018: 1) describes emotional intelligence as an understanding of intra-personal and inter-personal emotions. Emotions are expressions of core feelings that include happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and shame. The ability to perceive and interpret these feelings is a vital behavioural trait that applies to the soft skills of an entrepreneurial creative leader. The leader's soft skills focus on the emotional interaction and social dynamics within the film industry. Effective creative leaders have shown to possess more controlled emotional intelligence and are more able to handle leadership behavioural traits in a high-energy filmmaking context. Jogdand and Sharma (2019: 88) view the "entrepreneurial ship of emotions" to be critical for future leadership practice. The authors present "emotional contagion [and] unintentional tendency" as concepts where one mirrors other people's emotions.

Mainemelis *et al.*(2015: 17) acknowledge that the leader’s emotional intelligence enables the awakening of the team’s creativity in “five complementary routes: identification, information gathering, idea generation, idea evaluation and modification and idea implementation”. According to Carroll (2017: 32), emotional intelligence is a key measure of a creative leader’s ability to perform exceptionally.

From the discussion, it is deduced that a creative leader in the film industry pursues a creative vision (V) that, although personal, cannot be achieved without the collaboration (C) of the creative team. Extreme collaborative tensions in the filmmaking context stimulate adaptability (A) which leads to positive organisational outcomes. Emotions are used to facilitate cognitive processes. The ability to integrate emotions through emotional intelligence (EI) is a vital attribute contribution to effective entrepreneurial creative leadership in film.

The above statements can be formulated into a functional relationship equation for Entrepreneurial Creative Leadership characteristics (ECL) in the film industry context.

$$ECL = f(V, C, A, EI)$$

Where,

- ECL* = Entrepreneurial Creative Leadership
- V* = Vision
- C* = Collaboration
- A* = Adaptability
- EI* = Emotional Intelligence

Equation 1: Entrepreneurial Creative Leader functional relationship equation (Gengan 2022a)
The equation is aligned to the Entrepreneurial Conceptual Framework in Figure 3.

Structuring an Entrepreneurial Conceptual Framework (Creative output 2)

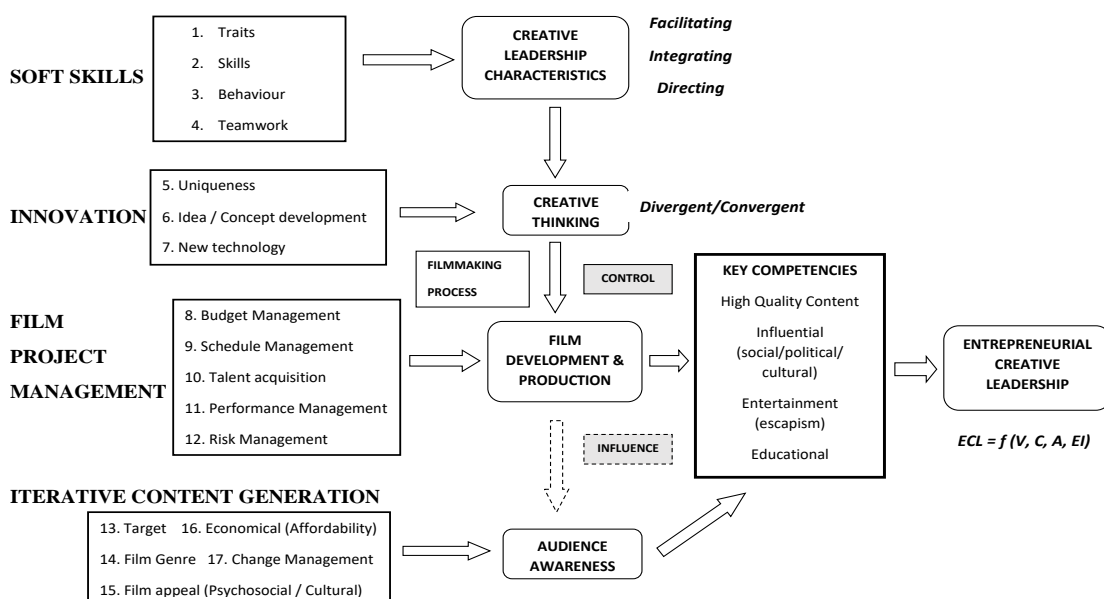


Figure 3: Entrepreneurial Conceptual Framework (Gengan 2022b)

Figure 3 explores entrepreneurial creative leadership in the KwaZulu-Natal film industry in terms of the four core dimensions and their functional relationship with the four key competencies, as per the Entrepreneurial Conceptual Framework. The four core dimensions include soft skills, innovation, film project management, and iterative content generation. Traits, skills, behaviour, and teamwork are identified as soft skills that project entrepreneurial creative leadership characteristics. Originality (uniqueness), concept development, and new technology is identified as the innovation dimension that impact the film industry. Budget management, schedule management, talent acquisition, performance management, and risk management are identified as the film project management dimensions and involve the filmmaking process. The iterative content generation variables include target audience, film genre, film

appeal (psycho-social and cultural), economics (affordability), and change adaptability. This dimension is crucial for audience influence and awareness. Film project management involves the filmmaking process in which the entrepreneurial creative leader's authoritative control is mainly applied through the leader's position in the film organisation. The four key competencies are the deliverables or outputs of the core dimensions. High-quality content, influence, entertainment, and education are identified as the four most important competencies in the South African film industry. The elements of the framework are further discussed.

Creative leaders influence their teams through their behavioural traits, as noted by Khalili (2017: 1118). The author explains that creative individuals often experience feelings of fear and anxiety when generating and implementing new ideas. Support and leadership behaviours in this context can play a positive role in nurturing individual innovative behaviour. Cook *et al.* (2020: 7) found that observable verbal and nonverbal leadership behaviours impact a team's performance. The film industry depends heavily on teamwork and expert collaboration to meet the demands of a dynamic creative environment. DiPaola *et al.* (2018) observe that humans derive pleasure from the act of creating. They suggest that creativity originates with a gap or a sense of incompleteness. They add that creative activities can have an intrinsically rewarding therapeutic effect on the creator and team members. In film, creative individuals generate creative outcomes from interaction and collaboration with other creative individuals and teams. Collaborative art therapy, therefore, enhances self-understanding and teamwork in film projects. Li *et al.* (2018: 187) advise leaders to nurture the intrinsic motivation of individual team members to promote creativity. They suggest that leaders provide development feedback, issue complex tasks to nurture creative challenges, and empower subordinates for creativity. Their research found that intrinsic motivation boosts creativity by elevating cognitive flexibility. In film, creative individuals generate creative outcomes from interaction and collaboration with other creative individuals and teams. Marques (2013: 163) considers soft skills to be an intrinsic component of successful creative leadership. The author includes qualities such as motivation, social skills, self-awareness, empathy, and self-regulation. These skills are a combination of interpersonal and social skills. Soft skills include influencing people, people's relationships, and creativity.

While screenwriters are innovators of screen ideas, film directors are innovators of film shots (composition of image and sound on screen) that require film technology. Film technology has contributed significantly to the film knowledge economy. The technology used in filmmaking includes computer software for special graphic effects and camera and sound equipment for audio and visual effects. Allen and Potts (2016: 1048) argue that enthusiastic people, rather than organisations, are the "precursors to new technology since they pool together contextual information and ideas to overcome uncertainty in innovation". Skippington (2016: 68) further points out that technological changes have driven innovation in the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy, the author states, is distinguished by ideas, interactions, and creativity. Developing the entrepreneurial creative leader as an agent of technological innovation leads to competent creative leadership in filmmaking and the film knowledge economy.

Montes-Guerra *et al.* (2015: 64) found that project management highly impacts project performance. Successful project management is measured in terms of time, cost, and quality. In film project management, the cost is categorised as budget management and time is categorised as schedule management. Stephens (2018: 18) observes that planning and prioritising activities through systems are basically what time management involves. Dobes (2016: 72) advises implementing a protective risk management plan during projects. The financial failure of a project, deaths and injuries during production, theft of expensive equipment, and lost days of filming are some of the risk factors for a film project. Blackman *et al.* (2015: 92) establish that performance management should be used as a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating progress against expected goals to obtain high performance from employees. Entrepreneurial creative leaders should assess their teams on a project-by-project basis to build a base of competent work-for-hire film employees. Joranli (2018: 196) considers talent acquisition to not be just a tool for task-specific competence demands, but to be related to organisational learning and performance. Innovative performance is supported by employees with high levels of creative potential. Acquiring and maintaining high levels of creative talent contributes to the sustaining of competitive film industries.

Rubenstein *et al.* (2018: 101) recognise the dynamic nature of creativity as an iterative process. The term iterative is borrowed from the information technology knowledge base and it basically means repeating something to make it better. Dush (2015: 176) indicates that content through structure and semantics should be adaptable. Content generation is the heartbeat of filmmaking. Without film content there is no film industry. Film content is produced for the audience market. Jakelja and Brugger (2019: 181) observe that markets are relatively stable, but then they

occasionally change. They attribute the change to radical innovators that succeed in overcoming the forces of conservatism and as such disrupt the conventions. An understanding and awareness of the changes in audience behaviours and preferences allow the entrepreneurial creative leader to become a change agent. Film content can then be produced according to the change demands. Hutson *et al.* (2017: 2) note that visual content influences the audience's viewing comprehension. Film, as an audio-visual medium, can, therefore, influence audience preference through iterative content generation.

Bondebjerg (2017: 5) explores how film genres interact with the audience's emotional and cognitive structures. Genres integrate human characters, actions, and emotions, which can be viewed as filmic representations of real life. Genres are narrations and emotions that interact with real-life experience and play on mind structures. Placing the mind in the context of the film viewer leads to the alignment between cognitive structures and emotions in reality and film. Film shots and frames are cognitive schemata used to structure mediated and real-life experiences. Although melodrama, romantic comedy, and action-adventure films are distinct from one another, their narratives and emotional structures are based on the cognitive meaning and experiences from the same viewer. Alexandri, Arifianti, and Auliana (2019: 248) consider film to be an economic commodity with two innate characteristics: culture and economy. The authors also add that film functions as a means of entertainment, education, and recreation. Mr. Sihle Zikalala, the then Head of Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs for Kwazulu-Natal considered the local film industry to be a catalyst for the strategic economic growth in the province (KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission, 2018: 4). A study by the National Film and Video Foundation also found that the local film industry has a positive impact on the South African economy (National Film and Video Foundation, 2017: 4).

The Key Competencies

The KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission (2018: 20) and the National Film and Video Foundation (2018: 2), both report a decrease in audience attendance for locally produced films. Although the National Film and Video Foundation attributes the decline to the sluggish economic climate. The same report shows that foreign films were better received by South African audiences and performed relatively well against the previous period. This notable increase in the local audience attending foreign films, however, suggests a high market and economic potential for locally produced South African films. The KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission (2019: 9) justifiably attributes the poor audience attendance to the quality of locally produced films. Other concerns mentioned in the same report are limited funding and poor support from stakeholders in the local film value chain. Local film content competes aggressively with high-budget foreign productions (KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission, 2018: 20). Hollywood and Bollywood are the two most notable foreign film industries dominating the South African markets. It is, therefore, a major challenge for entrepreneurs in the local film industry to compete in these markets with a lack of funding and limited resources.

Stojanova (2017: 131) points out that history has recorded certain charismatic leaders and governments exploiting film for their political agendas. Some filmmakers, in turn, use film to expose such agendas. Film influences people's behaviour, thinking, and ideologies and these can easily be manipulated for propaganda purposes. The audience naturally shifts themselves towards an accepted socio-cultural value system. Glaveanu *et al.* (2020: 742) considers creativity and culture to be intertwined. These authors argue that people create not as isolated minds but as participants in a socio-cultural world. All forms of human creativity, they believe, rely on social interaction or exchanges. Creativity, according to these writers, is a culturally mediated action that is fundamental for social interaction. In her study on Polish migrants, White (2018: 160) found that social change occurs when migrants and citizens transmit ideas, beliefs, norms, and values. Keamy (2016: 152) acknowledges that creativity stimulates students' cognitive development and their understanding of cultural diversity and social tolerance. Martinez *et al.* (2015: 331) observe that economists are beginning to assess the effects of culture on economic activities. Alesina and Giuliano (2015:900) view cultural beliefs as common ideals and values that are shared in social groups. An understanding of cultural effects and their influence on the audience in filmmaking will, therefore, enable the entrepreneurial creative filmmaker to produce film content that is socio-culturally relevant and appealing to the local audience.

When faced with potential danger, animals instinctively decide to escape, as observed by Evans *et al.* (2019: 334). The writers explain that escape behaviour is an instinctive defensive response to threats in the environment. Similarly, the audience is fascinated with the medium of film because it offers them an escape to an idealised world. They identify with the stories, characters, and actions on screen whilst projecting their feelings and values.

Apart from its emotional effects, film fulfils the need for social activities, such as recreation and leisure. The primary function of film is to entertain, as Geraghty (2018: 126) points out that audiences are currently searching for new forms of entertainment such as transmedia storytelling, media mix, and media franchising, as was successfully used by George Lucas in his *Star Wars* films.

Li, Clark, and Sillince (2018: 206) found that knowledge is the most intangible resource to any individual or organisation and is linked to core competencies and competitive advantage. Films, through their characteristic of moving images and sound, have the greatest potential to impart knowledge to the audience. Documentary films are made primarily for education and knowledge development purposes. It can be argued that documentaries also provide entertainment. Documentaries juxtapose real images and footage to form an educational narrative that makes the medium effective for teaching, skills development, and training. Thompson (2019: 267) notes that the United Nations used documentary films as a tool for public information. Chapin, Deans, and Fabris (2019: 15) observed that extra-curricular activities, such as watching films within a film club, led to improved school engagement in students. They attributed this relationship to young people's desire to have the freedom to be creative. Non-fiction films can also impart knowledge to the audience through the film's story, structure, characters, and locations.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship in the South African film industry requires creative and innovative leadership. The multi-context framework as proposed by Mainemelis, Kark, and Epitropaki (2015: 113) who conceptualise and distinguish creative leadership within three distinct collaborative contexts: facilitating, integrating, and directing. Building on the Extreme Leadership Theory by Mainemelis and Epitropaki (2013: 198), a functional relational equation, $ECL = f(V, C, A, EI)$ for entrepreneurial creative leadership characteristics is formulated as creative output 1. The equation extracts three characteristics from the Extreme Leadership Theory (Vision, Adaptability, and Collaboration) and further includes a fourth character (Emotional Intelligence). Creativity is a process of innovation. Combined with the divergent and convergent cognitive creative thinking processes of the innovation process, the functional equation can be applied to stimulate and boost effective entrepreneurial creative leadership in the South African film industry.

Littlejohn and Foss (2005: 22) consider observation to be an important stage in theory concept construction. According to the authors, the scholar searches for answers to the research questions by observing the phenomenon under study and classifying the answers into sets of perceived patterns to determine the concept. The observation of the key variables in the South African film industry results in the structure of the Entrepreneurial Conceptual Framework as creative output 2. The functional relationship equation (creative output 1) and the conceptual framework (creative output 2) can be practically applied by a film entrepreneur as a creative leadership assessment tool. It can be further developed into recruitment software or mobile device applications. The article explores the fundamental theoretic basis for the equation and framework within creativity and innovation. More intensive research is recommended to study the practical application of the dimensions in the local film industry to promote creative innovative film entrepreneurship in South Africa. Innovative entrepreneurship promotes on-the-job training for students and emerging filmmakers. The South African film industry currently balances both economic and cultural imperatives in the country. It shows potential for job creation, social cohesion, and economic growth. The KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission (2015: 4) reports that the growth of the South African film industry, although an emerging market, is competitive in international film landscapes. The equation and the framework set a foundational structured approach to entrepreneurial creative leadership in this growing industry.

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