Lighting Design and Film Management as Pathways for Film Noir Aesthetics in Nollywood: A Study of *King Of Boys* (2018)

By

Emeka Ofora, PhD
Department of Film and Multimedia
Faculty of Communication and Media Studies
University of Port Harcourt
Email: Patrick.ofora@uniport.edu.ng
&
Anyanwu, Remigius Anayochi, PhD
Department of Theatre and Film Studies
Faculty of Humanities
University of Port Harcourt
Email: Remigius.anyanwu@uniport.edu.ng
Phone: +2348034908961

Abstract

Lighting is an important part of filmmaking. It is not only used to make images visible, but also to help tell the story and create mood. Different film styles use lighting in different ways. For example, film noir is known for its use of low-key lighting, strong shadows, and dark visual tones, which reflect mystery and moral tension. Over time, Nollywood has grown from simple video production to more advanced digital filmmaking, with improved lighting techniques. However, many studies have focused only on lighting as a visual or technical element, without showing how it is supported by film management practices such as planning, budgeting, and coordination. This creates a gap in understanding how visual quality is actually achieved. This study examines how lighting design and film management work together to produce film noir aesthetics in *King of Boys*. The study is guided by Creative Economy Theory and Production Culture Theory. A qualitative approach is used, involving close analysis of selected scenes from the film to understand how lighting creates meaning. In addition, an interview with a Nollywood production manager provides practical insight into how lighting decisions are planned and executed. Findings show that lighting plays a key role in creating noir mood through the use of shadows, contrast, and controlled darkness. These effects are made possible through proper film management, including budgeting, planning, equipment provision, and team coordination. The study concludes that lighting design and film management must work together to achieve strong visual storytelling.

Introduction

The Nigerian film industry, widely known as Nollywood, emerged in the early 1990s following the collapse of celluloid filmmaking in Nigeria. Scholars such as Haynes (2016) have observed that economic instability, structural adjustment policies, and the high cost of importing production materials made celluloid filmmaking nearly impossible at the time. As a result, Nigerian filmmakers turned to more accessible video technology, which gave birth to the home-video movement. The release of *Living in Bondage* is widely acknowledged as a defining moment in this transition (Okome, 2007). This shift marked the beginning of a new production culture driven by affordability, speed, and local distribution. Early Nollywood

productions were largely low-budget and technically constrained. Limited access to professional lighting equipment and high-quality cameras meant that many films depended heavily on natural sunlight or basic artificial lighting. As noted by Ukadike (1994) in his discussions on African cinema's production realities that financial and infrastructural challenges often shape aesthetic outcomes. In the case of Nollywood, lighting was primarily functional. That is to say, it was designed to ensure visibility rather than to create mood, atmosphere, or psychological depth. Visual storytelling was therefore secondary to narrative delivery. However, constant practice, exposure to global cinema, and the introduction of digital technology gradually transformed Nollywood's visual language. The shift from VHS to digital cinematography improved image quality and expanded creative possibilities. Okome (2013) informs that Nollywood's evolution reflects an industry learning to refine its techniques while maintaining its cultural identity. With better cameras, portable LED lighting systems, and digital colour grading tools, filmmakers began to use lighting not merely as illumination but as a storytelling device capable of shaping emotion, tension, and meaning. The influence of global film exchange and streaming platforms further heightened expectations for cinematic sophistication.

Within this evolving visual culture, contemporary Nigerian cinema has increasingly experimented with film noir aesthetics. Traditionally associated with classic American films such as *Double Indemnity*, film noir is marked by low-key lighting, strong contrasts between light and shadow (chiaroscuro), urban night settings, and morally ambiguous characters (Schrader, 1972). In recent Nigerian crime and political dramas, similar stylistic tendencies have also emerged, such as controlled shadow patterns, dim interior spaces, tension-filled compositions, and psychologically expressive lighting. A significant example is *King of Boys*, directed by Kemi Adetiba, which demonstrates deliberate use of shadows, contrast, and visual tension to reinforce its crime-political narrative. Despite these advancements, much of the existing scholarship focuses either on Nollywood's technological growth or on descriptive analysis of its aesthetics. Limited attention has been given to the structural and managerial systems that make such visual outcome possible. Film aesthetics do not emerge in isolation, rather, they are shaped by budgeting decisions, production scheduling, equipment procurement, crew coordination, and overall project management. As Caldwell (2008) argues in his study of production culture that industrial organization significantly influences creative outcomes. In other words, lighting design is not only an artistic decision but also managerial possibilities.

This gap forms the central concern of this study. While Nollywood continues to adopt noir-influenced lighting techniques, there is insufficient academic studies on how lighting design and film management operate together to enable and sustain such stylistic development. Therefore, this article examines lighting design and film management as interconnected pathways for constructing film noir aesthetics in *King of Boys* (2018). By positioning artistic creativity alongside industrial structure, the study demonstrates that visual style in Nollywood is not merely a product of talent or technology, but also of coordinated planning and strategic management. Through this approach, the research tends to contribute to the ongoing discourse on aesthetic innovation and professional consolidation within contemporary Nigerian cinema.

Film Noir Aesthetics and Visual Characteristics

Film noir has been widely discussed in film scholarship as both a historical cycle and a visual style. Rather than being a rigid genre with fixed rules, many scholars describe noir as a mood-driven cinematic tradition structured by visual atmosphere and moral complexity. Schrader (1972) famously argued that film noir is defined less by story structure and more by tone and visual style. Emerging primarily in the 1940s and 1950s in American cinema, noir developed during a period of social anxiety following the Great Depression and World War II. Films such as *Double Indemnity* and *The Maltese Falcon* became key reference points for what later scholars would describe as classical noir. At the center of film noir aesthetics is lighting. Low-key lighting is one of its most recognizable features. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) inform that low-key lighting creates strong contrasts between light and shadow, producing dramatic visual tension within the frame. This technique often results in dark backgrounds, deep shadows, and selective illumination of characters' faces or objects. The heavy use of shadow is not merely decorative. It is used to express psychological instability, secrecy, or moral ambiguity. In other words, light in noir does not just show what is happening but suggests what is hidden. Closely related to low-key lighting is the use of chiaroscuro, a technique borrowed from Renaissance painting. Chiaroscuro involves placing bright light against deep shadow to create dramatic contrast. Place and Peterson (1974) explain that this technique often divides a character's face into light and darkness, visually symbolizing inner conflict. In many noir films, half of the actor's face may be concealed in shadow. This suggests dual identity, guilt, or moral uncertainty. In this way, lighting becomes a storytelling language.

Camera work, also contributes significantly to noir aesthetics. Oblique or tilted camera angles are frequently used to create visual imbalance. Spicer (2002) informs that these unusual angles make scenes appear unstable and heighten tension. Instead of presenting the world as orderly and predictable, noir cinematography visually reflects confusion and threat. The frame itself feels unsettled and this reinforces the emotional state of the characters. Urban settings further define noir's visual world. Classical noir films are often set in cities, with scenes unfolding in streets, alleys, offices and apartments, frequently at night. Night shooting allows for stronger shadow effects and controlled artificial lighting. Schrader (1972) notes that darkness in noir is both physical and symbolic, representing corruption, fear, and existential anxiety. The city therefore, becomes a space of danger and moral complexity. Beyond technical features, film noir is also defined by mood and theme. Suspense, betrayal, greed, psychological tension, and moral confusion are recurring elements. Characters are rarely purely heroic. Instead, they are flawed, vulnerable, or morally compromised. As Naremore (1998) argues that noir stories explore the darker sides of human ambition and desire. This emotional tone works hand in hand with visual style, that is, dim lighting, shadow, and confined spaces intensify the psychological weight of the narrative.

Lighting Design in Film Studies

Lighting design occupies a central position in film studies because it is not only what the audience sees, but how they feel about what they see. In other words, lighting in cinema involves the intentional manipulation of light and shadow to organize the image on screen. It goes beyond making actors visible, but include structuring emotion, meaning and attention. As Bordwell and Thompson (2019) explain that lighting works together with framing, camera

movement and composition to guide the viewer's perception and interpretative response. This is to say that light in film is not passive but expressive.

Scholars in film form argue that cinema becomes art not by copying reality, but by deliberately shaping it. Arnheim (1957) maintains that film gains artistic value through the creative manipulation of visual elements such as light, space, and perspective. In the same way, Eisenstein (1949) emphasizes that meaning in cinema emerges from the arrangement of visual components rather than from raw recording. Applying this to lighting, illumination alone does not create meaning. Meaning arises how illumination is controlled, positioned, intensified, softened, or restricted. Thus, lighting is not simply brightness, but design. From this standpoint, lighting can practically collaborate closely with camera angles and shot composition. For instance, a low-angle shot combined with strong top lighting can make a character appear dominant, powerful, or even threatening. Conversely, a high-angle shot paired with soft, flat lighting may present a character as weak, exposed, or vulnerable. Brown (2020) notes that such combinations influence how audience emotionally interpret characters before they even speak. The viewer subconsciously reads power relations through visual cues created by light and camera positioning.

To further demonstrate that lighting is meaning-making rather than decorative, it is important to examine how it directs attention. Viewers naturally look toward the brightest area of the frame. By intentionally brightening one section and darkening another, filmmakers control focus. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) describe this as visual hierarchy, that is, where light establishes importance within the frame. In this sense, lighting becomes a narrative guide that leads the audience to specific gestures, expressions, or objects that carry dramatic weight. Lighting also shapes emotional tone. Soft lighting (often diffused and evenly spread) can create warmth, romance, or intimacy. Hard lighting, characterized by sharp shadows and strong contrast, can suggest tension, anger, or seriousness. Extremely low-lighting or shadow-dominated scenes are frequently associated with secrecy, fear, or moral uncertainty. As Millerson (2019) explains that variations in brightness, contrast, and direction influence the psychological atmosphere of a scene. In noir cinema in particular, such emotional control through lighting becomes central to storytelling. Okome (2013) observes that contemporary Nigerian cinema shows growing awareness of visual symbolism, including the strategic use of shadow and contrast in crime and political dramas. This development suggests that lighting in Nollywood is gradually moving from functional necessity to aesthetic intention.

Consequently, lighting assumes a more deliberate role as a visual instrument for articulating power relationships in film. Power on screen is not communicated only through dialogue or acting. It is also shaped by how a character is visually presented. When a character is shot from a low angle and illuminated with strong top lighting against a dark background, the figure appears taller, larger, and more imposing. This visual construction can make the character seem superior or intimidating. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) inform that camera angle combined with lighting direction can influence how audiences perceive authority and control within a scene. The brighter and more dominant the visual presence, the stronger the perceived power. Film scholars also explain that lighting helps organize screen space in ways that reinforce hierarchy. Brown (2020) notes that concentrated lighting placed on a single character while others remain partially obscured creates visual dominance. The viewer's eye

is naturally drawn toward the most illuminated subject, thereby assigning importance and control. In other words, whoever receives the brighter light, often appears to possess the power. Lighting is equally important in constructing tension. In scenes driven by suspense or psychological discomfort, filmmakers frequently reduce fill light and increase contrast. Minimal fill light produces sharper shadows and darker spaces within the frame. This imbalance creates visual tension. Millerson (2019) explains that high-contrast lighting can produce emotional instability because the eye struggles to process extreme dark and bright areas simultaneously. In noir traditions in particular, such contrast mirrors internal conflict and moral uncertainty (Schrader, 1972). The discomfort generated by heavy shadowy imagery supports the narrative need for tension.

Beyond power and tension, lighting is also a tool for establishing dominance and secrecy. Dominance may be suggested when one character is brightly illuminated while another is left in partial shadow. In group scenes, strategic lighting placement can signal leadership without a single word being spoken. As Arnheim (1957) argues that visual emphasis guides psychological interpretation whereby what is emphasized appears significant, and what is hidden appears subordinated. Secrecy, on the other hand, often relies on concealment. Backlighting, silhouette effects, and dark backgrounds are commonly used to obscure parts of a character's face or body. When half of a face is hidden in shadow, the image suggests hidden motives or internal conflict. Place and Peterson (1974) observed that partial facial illumination in noir cinema visually represents divided identity or concealed intention. Haynes (2016) notes that as Nollywood continues to professionalize, filmmakers increasingly use shadow and contrast deliberately in political and crime narratives to symbolize corruption, secrecy, and unstable power structure. Okome (2013) similarly argues that contemporary Nigerian films are developing a stronger visual awareness, where lighting contributes meaning rather than merely improving clarity.

Film Management and Production Planning in Nollywood

Film production is both an artistic and managerial process. While audiences often focus on what appears on screen, the quality of that visual outcome depends heavily on planning, coordination, and resources management behind the scenes. Lighting design, especially when attempting a noir-inspired aesthetic, may hardly succeed without effective production management. Film management refers to the organized process of budgeting, scheduling, sourcing equipment, coordinating crew members, supervising technical departments, and overseeing post-production to ensure that a film achieves both artistic and commercial goals. In other words, film management is the system that makes creative ideas practically possible. Scholars in film production studies emphasize that artistic quality is closely tied to industrial structure. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) explain that filmmaking is a collaborative enterprise where artistic choices depend on available resources and organized teamwork. This means lighting decisions are not made in isolation. They are shaped by budget, time, technology, and management efficiency. In Nollywood, production management becomes even more crucial because the industry has, historically operated under limited budgets, tight schedules, and rapid production cycles. Haynes (2016) notes that early Nollywood films were often produced quickly due to market demands, leaving little time for elaborate lighting setups. As a result, visual sophistication was sometimes secondary to speed and distribution. Presently however, Nollywood productions have begun to adopt more structured

management models. Okome (2013) observes that the industry's gradual professionalization has led to improved technical planning, better equipment sourcing, and strong coordination between departments. This change allows for more deliberate aesthetic choices, including controlled lighting design associated with noir style. This is because to design light for film noir is beyond the act of placing lights on set. It requires planning at different levels:

- **Budgeting**: The type and quality of lighting equipment available depends on financial planning. High-end cameras and lighting tools can allow for controlled low-key lighting, sharp contrasts, and detailed shadow effects, necessary for noir aesthetics.
- **Scheduling**: Time management is essential. Complex lighting setups require careful positioning, testing, and adjustments. When production schedules are rushed, lighting often becomes basic and functional rather than expressive. Millerson (2019) explains that effective lighting requires preparation time, especially when creating high-contrast or heavy shadowy imagery.
- **Equipment Sourcing**: Access to advanced lighting tools, diffusers, reflectors, and controlled light modifiers directly influences visual outcome. Brown (2020) argues that lighting equipment determines the range of visual possibility available to the cinematographer.
- **Crew Coordination**: Lighting involves teamwork between the director of Photography, gaffer, camera crew, and production designer. Skilled crew members must understand both technical setup and narrative intention. Poor coordination can result in inconsistent lighting across scenes.
- **Post-Production Supervision**: Image quality is also refined during colour grading and post-production. Controlled contrast, shadow depth, and tonal balance can be enhanced digitally, but only when properly planned during shooting.

Most early studies in film lighting focused on visual style, technological evolution, or camera usage. Fewer studies examine how production management directly affects artistic outcomes. Scholars have increasingly argued that industrial conditions can shape aesthetic expression. Haynes (2016) stresses that the economic structure of Nollywood influences how stories are visually told. In other words, management decisions determine whether a filmmaker can realistically execute a sophisticated noir lighting scheme. Noir aesthetics rely heavily on controlled low-key lighting, strong contrast, shadow placement, and precise composition. These effects demand technical precision and adequate preparation time. If time is poorly managed or equipment is limited, achieving consistent noir lighting becomes difficult. In the production of *King of Boys*, management planning appears to have played a significant role in enabling sophisticated visual outcomes. Given the scale of the project, planning was necessary to map out budget allocation, lighting setup time, and technical logistics. Unlike earlier low-budget productions, the film reflects deliberate investment in lighting tools and technical coordination.

From the review of existing studies, it has shown clearly that much attention has been given to the growth of Nollywood and to lighting as a technical or visual tool used to improve the look of film but there is limited focus on how lighting design works together with film management processes such as budgeting, scheduling, and crew coordination. Yet, these factors are important for achieving complex styles such as film noir. This study therefore

examines how lighting design and film management work together to create noir aesthetics in King of Boys, thereby helping to deepen understanding of visual style in Nollywood.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Creative Economy Theory and Production Culture Theory. These theories are relevant because they explain both the value of creative work and the processes that make such work possible, especially in relation to lighting design and film management in Nollywood.

Creative Economy Theory

Creative Economy Theory views creativity, ideas and artistic skills as important economic resources. It explains that creative industries, such as film, music, and media, do not only produce cultural value but also generate income, employment, and economic growth. In other words, what people imagine and create can be turned into products that have both artistic and financial value. The theory was popularized by John Howkins in his 2001 book *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*. He argues that imagination, innovation, and intellectual property are powerful tools for economic development in modern societies. Relating this to filmmaking, this means that films are not only creative expressions but also commercial products that can attract audiences and generate revenue.

Production Culture Theory

Production Culture Theory explains that films are shaped by the people, systems, and working conditions involved in their production. It means that what viewers see on screen is influenced by what happens behind the scenes. The theory posits that a film's style, story, and visual design depend on industry practices, available technology, work routines, and the skills of the production team. This theory was developed by John Thornton Caldwell in his 2008 book, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*. Caldwell argues that media production is not just about creativity but also about organized industrial processes that include budgeting, scheduling, teamwork, and institutional practices, which help to shape the final output of a film. In the case of *King of Boys*, the theory helps to explain how its noir-inspired visual style is not only a result of artistic intention but also of effective production organization. The film's use of shadow, contrast, and visual tension reflects decisions made in budgeting, scheduling, equipment sourcing, and crew coordination. This shows that lighting design is closely linked to film management.

Creative Economy Theory and Production Culture Theory are important to this study because they provide a strong foundation for the research. While Creative Economy Theory explains how lighting design contributes to the artistic and commercial value of the film, Production Culture Theory explains how production processes make such visual outcomes possible. Using these two theories, the study shows that lighting design and film management are interconnected. Lighting is not only a creative tool but also a managed process that depends on planning, resources and coordination.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach, which focuses on observing and explaining what is seen rather than using numbers. The research carefully watches selected scenes from

King of Boys because the film has strong lighting and shadow, suitable for this study. Data is gathered through visual analysis, by repeatedly viewing key scenes and paying attention to lighting, shadows, and composition. The aim is to understand how these elements help to show power, mood and story in the film. In addition, the study also uses an interview approach. A Nollywood production manager was interviewed to provide practical insight into how films are planned and executed. The interview focused on areas such as planning, time management, equipment and coordination. This helps to explain how lighting design is supported behind the scenes.

Lighting Design and Noir Aesthetics in *King of Boys*

King of Boys is a Nigerian political crime drama directed by Kemi Adetiba. The film tells the story of Alhaja Eniola Salami, a talented businesswoman and political figure who is deeply involved in the world of crime and power struggles. As she tries to move fully into politics, she faces betrayal, rivalry, and violent challenges from those around her. The film is distinguished by its strong storytelling, complex characters, and high production quality. It presents a dark and tense atmosphere filled with themes of power, loyalty, corruption and revenge. The film's visual style, especially its use of lighting, shadows, and dark scenes makes it suitable for analyzing film noir aesthetics. This is why it is selected for this study, as it provides clear examples of how lighting design and film management can work together to create a serious and intense mood.

The analysis in this study focuses on selected key scenes of the film, with particular attention to shadows, contrast, and darkness, and how these elements function as narrative tools. The film opens with a tense atmosphere, showing the dangerous political and criminal environment, introducing the story within a dark Lagos street setting involving early narrative tension. The scene is lit with low-key lighting and dim street illumination. Many areas of the scene remain in shadow. This is to reflect a world of uncertainty and hidden danger, common in noir films. The darkness reflects the unstable environment in which the characters operate.



Pix 1: Illustrative image of dark street environment.

This supports Haynes' (2016) view that urban spaces in Nollywood films are often visually constructed to mirror social tension and unpredictability.

In her first appearance in sequence two, Eniola Salami is introduced as a powerful woman who controls many activities in the political and criminal world. The dim lighting used in the scene focuses mainly on her face, leaving some areas in shadow. This lighting choice is driven by the narrative fact that while her authority is visible, her deeper intensions are still concealed. The shadow suggests that there is more to her character than what is immediately seen. This is in line with Okome's (2013) explanations that Nollywood filmmakers often use visual contrast to represent complex identities and hidden motives.



Pix 2: Illustrative image of Eniola Salami's dimly lit face.

The political meeting scene involves Eniola Salami and several other political figures, who gather to discuss strategies and power struggles. The room is dimly lit, and shadows appear around the characters. The lighting gives the scene a secretive atmosphere, suggesting that the discussions taking place are hidden and dangerous. Also, the lighting selectively illuminates dominant figures while others remain less visible. This lighting pattern suggests power hierarchy among the characters. Those who speak with authority or control the discussion are more brightly lit, while others remain less visible. This suggests that not all characters have equal influence. Haynes (2016) explains that visual hierarchy in Nigerian films is often used to reinforce social and political structures. The lighting helps the viewer understand who holds power without the need for explicit explanation.



Pix 3: Illustrative image of political meeting lighting setup.

Similarly, in the scene that showcases private conversation between politicians, lighting is soft but dark, with shadows falling on parts of the characters' faces. This kind of lighting suggests uncertainty and distrust between the characters. The characters are more careful in their speech, and the lighting reflects this by not fully exposing them. This lighting style supports the narrative idea of secrecy and mistrust.



Pix 4: Illustrative image of private conversation lighting.

Okome (2013) notes that such controlled lighting helps communicate hidden intentions without explicit dialogue. The characters are not fully open to each other, and the lighting reflects this partial disclosure.

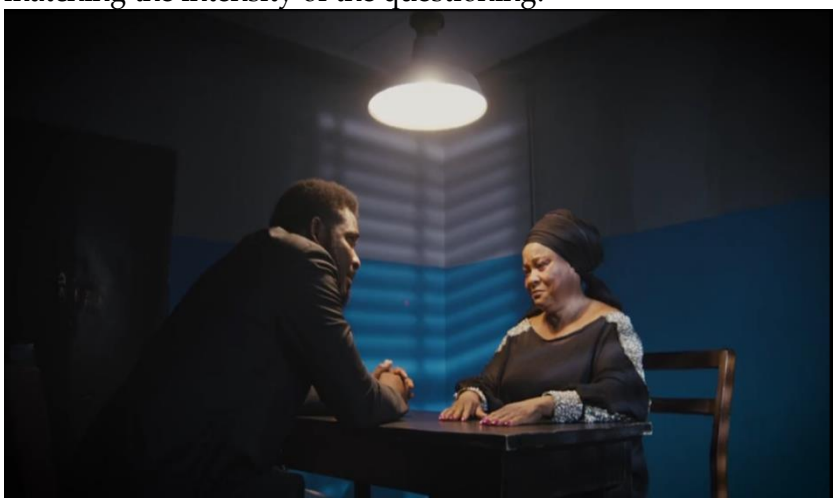
The criminal planning scene focuses on members of Eniola Salami's group discussing plans for their illegal operations. The lighting in this scene becomes more intense in contrast, with dark backgrounds and focused light on characters. This lighting pattern is suitable because it reflects the action in the scene. Since the characters are involved in hidden and unlawful activities, the lighting reinforces this by concealing parts of the environment and isolating individuals within the frame.



Pix 5: Illustrative image of criminal planning scene.

Haynes (2016) observes that shadow-heavy visuals are often used in Nollywood crime narratives to represent secrecy and danger. Thus, the darkness here visually represents the secrecy of the characters' actions.

In the interrogation scene, Eniola Salami is questioned by the NCCC, about certain activities connected to crime and politics. The lighting is focused mainly on Eniola, who is being questioned. This lighting is used to increase emotional tension. The light source creates sharp highlights on the faces of Eniola, reflecting the narrative situation that she is under pressure and cannot escape scrutiny. The lighting places the character in a form of visual exposure, matching the intensity of the questioning.



Pix 6: Illustrative image of interrogation lighting.

Okome (2013) informs that these types of lighting techniques are used to heighten emotional stress in dramatic scenes.

A different lighting approach is seen in the scene where Eniola Salami reflects alone, thinking about her situation and the power struggles around her. Here, a single light source isolates her in a dark space. This is motivated by the narrative shift from public authority to private reflection. At this moment, she is no longer surrounded by influence or control but is alone with her thoughts. The lighting is very low, with only partial light on her face. Half of the face appears brighter while the other half remains in shadow, emphasizing her isolation, emotional tension and inner conflict.



Pix 7: Illustrative image of reflective scene lighting.

This may have account for the reason why Okome (2013) observes that isolation lighting is often used to represent psychological depth in character-driven scenes.

The night-time criminal activity scene depicts secret operations carried out at night by members of Eniola's group. In this scene, minimal night lighting is used, with darkness covering most of the frame, helping to create suspense and fear. This is directly linked to the narrative action, as the characters are carrying out secret operations that are meant to remain hidden. Haynes (2016) supports this by noting that darkness is often used to sustain suspense in crime-related narratives. The limited visibility supports the idea of concealment and increases suspense for the viewers.



Pix 8: Illustrative image of night-time activity lighting.

Film Management and the Control of Visual Style

The visual strength of *King of Boys* is not only the result of creative lighting design but also of effective film management. Film management involves how resources, time, and personnel are organized to achieve both artistic and commercial goals. The interview with a Nollywood production manager, Friday Nwafor, clearly shows that lighting quality depends on how well the production is planned, funded, and coordinated. In other words, what appears on screen is strongly influenced by what happens behind the scenes.

- **Budgeting and Resource Allocation**: One of the key findings from the interview is that budget plays a major role in determining lighting quality. The Production Manager explains that part of his responsibility is to plan the budget, arrange equipment, and ensure that every department has what it needs to function properly. This means that the type and quality of lighting equipment used in a film depends largely on how much money is available. He further notes that when the budget is limited, lighting equipment is also limited, which can affect the visual outcome. This confirms that achieving strong noir lighting, such as deep shadows and high contrast, requires adequate financial support. As earlier discussed, Haynes (2016) points out that improvements in Nollywood's visual quality are closely linked to increased investment in film production. The interview also highlights challenges such as limited budget and unstable power supply, which can affect lighting setup. To manage this, filmmakers sometimes reduce the number of lighting setups or use natural light where possible. This shows that resource allocation is not only about availability but also about how resources are managed creatively.
- **Production Planning and Lighting Logistics**: The interview reveals that lighting decisions begin at the pre-production stage. According to the production manager, the

team first reads the script and discusses with the director and cinematographer to decide the type of lighting needed. After this, they identify the equipment required, hire the lighting crew, and inspect locations to determine suitable lighting setups. This process shows that lighting is not accidental but carefully planned based on the needs of the story. Time is also an important factor. The production manager explains that enough time must be allocated for setting up lights, testing positions, and adjusting for the desired effect. He, however noted that due to the fast nature of Nollywood production, time pressure can sometimes limit how much can be achieved. In addition, lighting logistics involve arranging equipment, ensuring power supply, and coordinating with the camera team. The production manager emphasizes that smooth coordination between departments is necessary for achieving consistent visual style. This supports Okome's (2013) argument that improved organization and teamwork are vital to the advancement of Nollywood filmmaking.

- **Managerial Support for aesthetic Ambition**: Another important insight from the interview is the role of managerial support in achieving visual quality. The production manager explains that the production team provides lighting equipment, ensures safe working conditions, and allows enough time for the lighting crew to do their work properly. Without this support, it would be difficult to achieve complex lighting effects. He also notes that lighting is important for creating mood. That is, bright lighting for normal scenes and darker lighting for serious or dangerous scenes. What this means is that management does not only provide resources but also supports the creative vision of the director and cinematographer. Furthermore, the interview confirms that Nollywood filmmakers are now more interested in producing films with high visual standards. According to the production manager, many directors now pay closer attention to lighting and overall visual style because they want their films to compete internationally. These factors make it possible to achieve the kind of controlled lighting and noir aesthetics seen in this film, *King of Boys*. This supports the earlier argument of Haynes (2016) and Okome (2013) that Nollywood's visual improvement is a result of both creative effort and better production systems.

Discussion

Findings from this study show that in *King of Boys*, lighting design and film management work closely together to determine the final visual outcome of the film. These two elements do not operate separately, rather, they function in a symbiotic relationship, where each one supports and depends on the other. The shadows, darkness, contrast, and mood seen across the film are therefore not accidental. They are the result of deliberate planning, technical decisions, and organized production processes. Evidence from the interview with a Nollywood production manager, Friday Nwafor, strongly supports this view. The interview reveals that film production begins with careful planning at the pre – production stage, where the script is studied and discussions are held between the director and cinematographer to decide the kind of lighting needed. This shows that lighting design is guided by the story from the beginning, not added randomly during filming. The process also involves listing equipment, hiring skilled crew members, and examining locations to determine suitable lighting setups. This confirms that achieving noir style lighting, such as shadows and contrast, requires early preparation and coordination. From the interview also, we noted that budget, time, and location are major factors that influence lighting decisions. When the budget is limited, the

quality and quantity of lighting equipment may also be restricted. Time pressure, which is common in Nollywood, can reduce the opportunity for proper lighting setup. Despite these challenges, filmmakers try to adjust by planning carefully, reducing unnecessary setups, and focusing more attention on important scenes. This indicates that lighting outcomes are shaped not only by creative intention but also by practical production conditions.

Friday Nwafor further made us understand that effective film management involves providing equipment, power supply, time, and a safe working environment for the lighting crew. Without this support, as he noted, it would be difficult to achieve complex lighting effects. This reinforces the idea that lighting design depends heavily on organizational structure and managerial support. As earlier discussed, Okome (2013) notes that Nollywood's growth is closely linked to improved coordination and professional practices within the industry. The interview also highlights that lighting is important because it helps to create mood, which can be bright light for normal situation or dark light for serious or dangerous moments. This supports the earlier analysis of *King of Boys*, where lighting was shown to reflect power, secrecy, and tension in different scenes. In this sense, lighting becomes a visual language that communicates meaning, not just a tool for visibility. Haynes (2016) similarly argues that contemporary Nigerian films increasingly use visual techniques to represent social realities and emotional depth. The Nollywood production manager also notes that Nollywood filmmakers are now paying more attention to lighting and overall visual quality because they want their films to compete internationally. This suggests that the industry is moving beyond basic production toward more intentional and visually sophisticated filmmaking. What then does this mean for Nollywood film production? In simple terms, this suggests that better films come from better planning. When filmmakers take time to plan their production, invest in lighting equipment, and organize their crew effectively, the visual quality of their films improves. Lighting design, therefore, cannot be separated from film management. Both must work together if filmmakers want to achieve strong storytelling and professional results.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the dark, noir-style mood seen in *King of Boys* is not accidental but carefully created through lighting design. The use of shadows, contrast, and controlled darkness helps to express power, secrecy, and tension in the film. These lighting choices are guided by the story and the actions of the characters, showing that lighting is an important tool for storytelling, not just for visibility. However, the study also shows that good lighting does not happen on its own. It depends on film management, which includes planning, budgeting, organizing equipment, selecting suitable locations, and allowing enough time for proper lighting setup. These management activities make it possible for the lighting team to achieve the desired visual effects. In other words, film management provides the support system that allows lighting design to succeed. The implication of this finding for Nollywood filmmakers is that improving visual quality requires attention to both creative and practical aspects of filmmaking. Lighting and management must work together if films are to achieve strong visual storytelling and compete at a higher level. This study therefore, contributes to Nollywood studies by showing that lighting design and film management should not be treated separately. Instead, they should be understood as connected elements that jointly shape the visual and narrative quality of films.

References

Arnheim, R. (1957). *Film as art*. University of California Press.

Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. (2019). *Film art*: *An introduction* (12th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Brown, B. (2020). *Cinematography*: *Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Cardwell, J. T. (2008). *Production culture*: *Industrial reflexivity and critical practice in film and television*. Duke University Press.

Eisenstein, S. (1949). *Film form*. Harcourt.

Haynes, J. (2016). *Nollywood*: *The creation of Nigerian film genres*. University of Chicago Press.

Millerson, G. (2019). *Lighting for television and film* (4th ed.). Routledge.

Naremore, J. (1998). *More than a night*: *Film noir in its contexts*. University of California Press.

Okome, O. (2007). Nollywood: Spector-ship, audience, and the sites of consumption. *Postcolonial Text*, 3(2), 1 – 21.

Okome, O. (2013). Nollywood and its critics. *African Studies Review,* 56(2), 1 – 21.

Place, J. & Peterson, L. (1974). Some visual motifs of film noir. *Film Comment*, 10(1), 30 – 35.

Schrader, P. (1972). Notes on film noir. *Film Comment*, 8(1), 8 – 13.

Spicer, A. (2002). *Film noir*. Pearson Education.

Ukadike, N. F. (1994). *Black African cinema*. University of California Press.

Appendix

Interview Guide for Nollywood Production Manager

1. As a production manager, what are your main responsibilities during a film production?
2. How do you plan and organize lighting equipment and crew for a film project?
3. What factors usually affect decisions about lighting during production?
4. How does the production management team support the cinematographer and lighting crew during filming?
5. How important is lighting in achieving the mood or visual style of a film?
6. What challenges do Nollywood productions face when trying to achieve complex lighting style?
7. How do production managers balance lighting needs with budget and time limitations?
8. In some films, directors use darker lighting and strong shadows to create tension or mystery. How is this kind of lighting planned during production?
9. From your experience, what role does production management play in helping the lighting crew achieve this kind of visual style?
10. Do you think Nollywood films are now paying more attention to lighting style compared to the past? Why?