

Experimental Film as a Business: Why Don't Art Students Care about Technology, and Engineering Students Are Not Aware about It?

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Abstract: *A century-old already, traditional cinema performance is nowadays facing fierce competition: not only the novel e-arts but also the emergence of the youngest brother in the film family: the experimental film. For the younger generation, the competition is rather different: the traditional art film is watched in cinema theatres less and less because of the new technology of streaming. As the influence of technology is overwhelming on the “techies” (i.e. technology-addicted generation) – and many award-winning movies are produced by using technology more and more extensively – it is somehow surprising to witness a divide among the educated young generation: while art students do not pay much attention to technology, the engineering students do not share the same art passion. Authors agree to call it an anti-symmetrical divide. To a certain extent, this divide is normal, considering the students’ future careers. However, in the specific case of technology-based experimental films, is the same anti-symmetrical divide maintained? This less investigated area is the focus of this study. Based both on secondary and primary research (pilot-surveys on engineering and art students from Bucharest/Romania universities), this research was conducted during 2023-2024 academic year. Despite its limitations, the study findings have multiple implications for the main stakeholders in all sectors (education, art and business), respectively: educators and students in both areas; film-makers, producers and actors in the film industry; technology companies.*

Keywords: experimental film, technology-based experimental film, younger generation, student career, art versus engineering students, anti-symmetrical divide.

Introduction

This article explores a contemporary paradox in higher education—the paradox of experimental films. While these films represent a significant form of artistic expression in cinema, there is a noticeable disparity between art students and those in engineering fields.

The study investigates why art students might not be interested in technological advancements that could enhance experimental film production, while engineering students remain unaware of their creative potential. A survey conducted at the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest examines students’ perceptions of experimental films, the role of technology, and the importance of the budget in producing such films. In its second phase, the research extends to the National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale”. The goal is

to identify reasons for the separation between these two groups in resource utilization and approaches, proposing solutions to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration. This project marks a phase in a broader research initiative exploring the intersection of art, technology, and film.

Experimental films offer a unique form of artistic expression, blending innovative techniques and unconventional narratives. They transcend traditional boundaries of storytelling, visuals, and sound. Despite having a rich history dating back to the early 20th century, experimental films remain underappreciated by the general public. Their niche audience limits their reach, although the genre holds immense potential to provoke critical thinking and explore new visual methods.

This research aims to understand why experimental films fail to resonate with two specific groups: art students, who may overlook the technological aspects needed for production, and engineering students, who may undervalue the artistic merit and potential of such films. It addresses the following questions: Why are art students uninterested in innovative technologies that could enhance experimental films? Why are engineering students unaware of their artistic potential? What perceived barriers exist, and how can they be overcome to foster effective interdisciplinary collaboration?

Literature review

Specialized literature emphasizes that experimental films are an essential form of artistic exploration, positioned at the intersection of creativity, technology, and innovation. Historically, experimental films have been associated with 20th-century avant-garde movements such as Dadaism, Surrealism, and Constructivism. In his work “Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde”, P. Adams Sitney highlights these characteristics and examines how experimental films have developed around themes such as the transformation of perception, the exploration of film materiality, and the use of innovative editing techniques and special effects (Sitney, 2002).

On one hand, regarding the impact of technology, numerous authors have noted that technological advancements in recent decades have allowed filmmakers to redefine the boundaries of perception and cinematic form. Lev Manovich, in his book “The Language of New Media”, emphasizes that digitization has eliminated many traditional barriers to film production, giving artists access to tools previously available only to major studios (Manovich, 2002). David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, in their work “Minding Movies - Observations on the Art, Craft, and Business of Filmmaking”, discuss how digital technologies have transformed both the production and distribution of films, enabling the creation of complex visual effects and opening new possibilities for innovative narratives (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019). Janet Harbord, in “The Evolution of Film: Rethinking Film Studies”, explores the implications of technology on film theory, arguing that digital developments alter not only production but also the way audiences perceive and interpret films (Harbord, 2007). Mark J.P. Wolf, in “Abstracting Reality: Art, Communication, and Cognition in the Digital Age”, examines the transition from analog to digital film, highlighting how this shift has influenced not only the aesthetics but also the economic structure of the film industry (Wolf, 2000). Anne Friedberg, in “The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft”, analyzes how digital technology fundamentally changes the visual framework of cinema, contributing to the creation of new virtual spaces that challenge the boundaries of traditional perception (Friedberg, 2009). This democratization has enabled the exploration of new dimensions in visual art, encouraging experiments that blend technology with aesthetics. However,

the adoption of these technologies by artists varies considerably, influenced by artistic education and perceptions of creative authenticity.

On the other hand, studies reveal a notable divide between the artistic and technological domains. The phenomenon of “creative clustering”, introduced by Richard Florida in his work “The Rise of the Creative Class”, highlights a significant challenge at the intersection of arts and technology: while the two fields have immense potential for complementarity, collaborations remain fragmented or limited (Florida, 2019). Professionals in artistic and technological sectors rarely collaborate, even though they have access to complementary resources and ideas. In the context of experimental film, this divide is reflected in a tendency among artists to reject advanced technology as too “cold” or soulless, and among engineers to view art as too subjective to be considered a practical application.

Similarly, students in the arts and engineering fields tend to exhibit the same divergent attitudes. The distinctions between approaches in art and engineering are described by Howard S. Becker in “Art Worlds”, highlighting the tension between creative spontaneity and methodological structure, generating what could be termed an “anti-symmetrical paradox” (Becker, 2023). This concept reflects the difficulty of integrating two opposing paradigms: one based on improvisation and freedom, the other on rigor and predictability.

Nevertheless, recent research suggests that the field of experimental film offers fertile ground for interdisciplinary collaboration. Works such as those by Sefton-Green and Sinker indicate that projects combining technical and artistic skills can yield innovative results and contribute to the development of transversal competencies, such as critical thinking and creative problem-solving (Sefton-Green & Sinker, 2000).

In conclusion, the specialized literature supports the idea that experimental films are a promising domain for blending art with technology. However, their success depends on proper interdisciplinary education and a cultural shift that fosters collaboration between the two fields.

In the remainder of this article, these perspectives will serve as the basis for interpreting research findings and formulating relevant recommendations.

Methodology

Experimental films represent a unique form of artistic expression, where narrative, visual, and technical boundaries are constantly redefined. This cinematic genre, less known to the general public, presents challenges in both production and reception. This study examines how two distinct groups of students, with different academic profiles, perceive and engage with experimental films.

The research employed a structured survey administered to students from two higher education institutions: the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest (POLITEHNICA Bucharest) and the National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale” (UNATC). These universities provide complementary perspectives: POLITEHNICA Bucharest focuses on technical training, while UNATC emphasizes an artistic approach. The study involved a structured survey with 222 respondents, including 182 POLITEHNICA Bucharest students and 40 UNATC students. This sample facilitated a comparison of perceptions and interests related to experimental films between students with different academic foundations. The data was collected anonymously and statistically processed to ensure confidentiality.

Survey Objectives:

- O1 Determining the level of interest students have in films.
- O2 Identifying the level of awareness and familiarity with experimental films.
- O3 Investigating opinions on the role of budgets involved in the production of experimental films.
- O4 The importance given to technology by art students versus students from POLITEHNICA University of Bucharest.
- O5 Determining the typology of the target market segment.

The questionnaire was structured into 5 sections to address the survey objectives as follows:

- **Section 1: General Interest in Films** - Including questions about the level of interest in films (on a scale from 1 to 10), viewing frequency, and preferred types of films (commercial or art films).
- **Section 2: Awareness of Experimental Films** - Questions about familiarity with this genre and experiences of watching experimental films.
- **Section 3: Knowledge and Opinions on Experimental Films** - Analyzing perceptions of defining characteristics, examples of films watched, and perceived obstacles in their production.
- **Section 4: Opinions on Technology and Budget** - Investigating the importance of technology and financial resources in the production of experimental films.
- **Section 5: Perception of the Audience** - Questions about the typology of interested viewers and opinions on the potential audience for this genre.

The responses were statistically processed to ensure confidentiality and enable comparative analysis between the two groups. The sample was analyzed separately, highlighting differences and similarities between students with technical and artistic training. This methodological design provided a deeper understanding of the interest, knowledge, and opinions about experimental films, as well as the identification of potential barriers and opportunities for promoting this genre.

Structured Survey

The survey incorporated the following types of questions:

1. Likert Scale Questions – for measuring attitudes and opinions (“Rate your level of interest in films on a scale from 1 to 10”).
2. Multiple Choice Questions – to assess familiarity and exposure to experimental films (“Have you heard of experimental films?” with options: Yes, No, Not Sure).
3. Open-Ended Questions – to explore qualitative insights (“Describe what you think an experimental film is?”).
4. Demographic Questions – to capture respondent profiles (“What year are you in? What is your specialization?”).
5. Comparative Questions – to investigate perceptions related to technology, budget, and artistic priorities (“What is more important: budget, technology, or the artistic act?”).
- 6.

Data Analysis

The responses were statistically processed using descriptive and comparative methods to ensure confidentiality and allow for a comparative analysis between the two groups. The sample was analyzed separately, highlighting differences and similarities between students with technical and artistic backgrounds.

The analysis included:

- **Descriptive statistics** – to summarize general trends, such as the average level of interest in films or the percentage of students familiar with experimental films.
- **Comparative analysis** – identifying differences between groups regarding familiarity and interest in experimental films.
- **Frequency analysis** – to evaluate viewing patterns, familiarity levels, and preferences for film types.
- **Content analysis** – for qualitative responses to open-ended questions, thematic coding techniques were used to identify recurring ideas.

Specific statistical tools were used for data analysis, including specialized software for processing and interpreting responses. SPSS was employed for quantitative analysis, including statistical description and comparative analysis, while NVivo facilitated the processing of qualitative responses. These tools provided superior accuracy and enabled the extraction of detailed and relevant insights into students' perceptions.

The methodology employed, supported by these advanced analytical techniques, provided a solid foundation for exploring interest, knowledge, and opinions about experimental films. It also contributed to identifying barriers and opportunities that can support the promotion of this unique and innovative cinematic genre. This methodological design offered a deeper understanding of interest, knowledge, and opinions about experimental films, as well as identifying potential obstacles and opportunities for promoting this genre.

Results and discussions

Films represent a form of art and entertainment that gathers significant interest among young people, as revealed by an analysis conducted among students from two higher education institutions in Romania: the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest (POLITEHNICA Bucharest) and the National University of Theatre and Film "I.L. Caragiale" (UNATC). This study highlights notable differences between the two academic environments, as well as the challenges and opportunities related to promoting experimental films.

One of the first dimensions analyzed was the general interest of students in films. Respondents rated their level of interest on a scale from 1 to 10, supplemented with information about watching frequency and preferred film types. The results showed that although both groups exhibit a high interest in cinematography, their preferences differ. POLITEHNICA Bucharest students tend to choose commercial films, drawn to clear narratives and impressive special effects. In contrast, UNATC students prefer art films, reflecting an inclination toward narrative complexity and aesthetics.

An important aspect of the survey was the analysis of awareness regarding the experimental genre. A significant difference was observed between the two groups. UNATC students are predictably more familiar with this genre, having exposure to experimental films and courses in film theory as part of their curriculum. On the other hand, POLITEHNICA Bucharest students, with limited exposure to such productions, demonstrated reduced awareness but also a latent curiosity for experimental films.

A point of interest was the role of technology and financial resources in the production of experimental films. Both technical and artistic students acknowledged the importance of technology but from different perspectives. POLITEHNICA Bucharest students emphasized the potential of technological innovation to reduce costs and diversify visual expressions. UNATC

students highlighted technology's role in enriching artistic expression but noted significant financial barriers that limit the production of this genre.

Another central aspect was the perception of the audience for experimental films. UNATC students believe these films target a niche of advanced viewers familiar with cinematic language. In contrast, POLITEHNICA Bucharest students noted that the lack of a clear message and unconventional approach makes it difficult to attract a broader audience. Both groups identified film education as essential to increasing public interest.

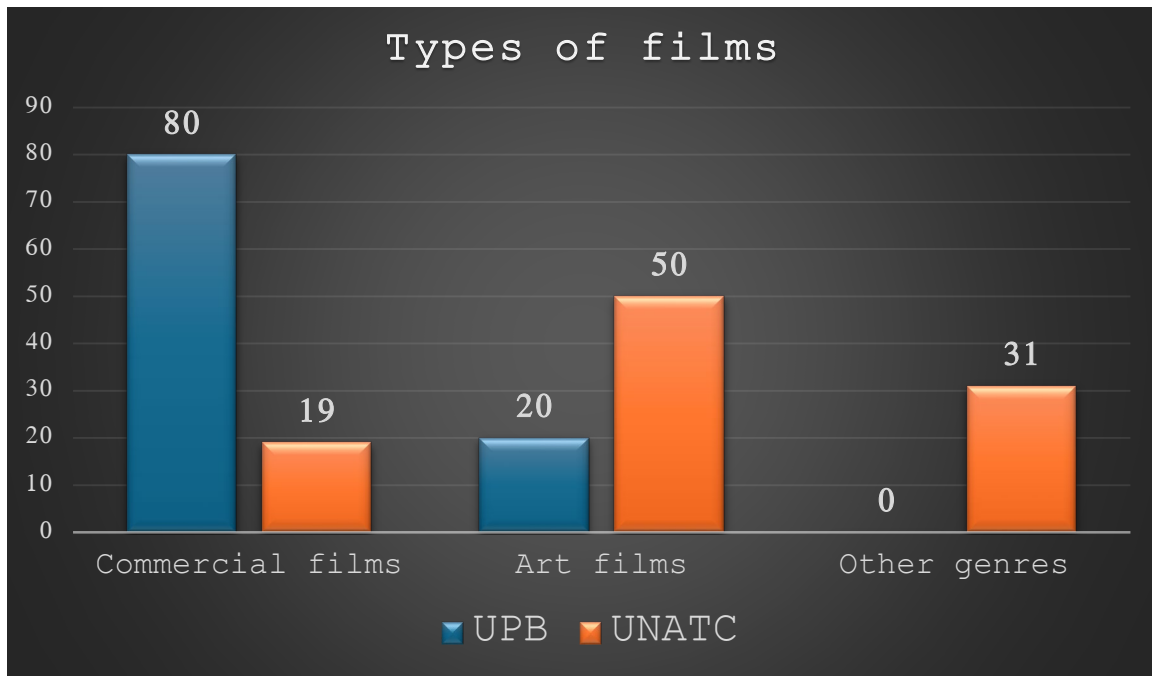


Figure 1. Preferences for Movie Genres - compares preferences for commercial films, art films, and other genres between UPB and UNATC students

Source: Authors' own research.

A primary indicator of general interest in cinematography was the scores given by respondents on a scale from 1 to 10. The study shows that the majority of students exhibit a high level of interest, with 57 respondents rating their interest at the maximum score of 10. At POLITEHNICA Bucharest, 90% of respondents gave high scores (between 8 and 10), while at UNATC, the interest in films is both more intense and uniform, likely due to the artistic orientation of its students. This distribution underscores a shared attraction to films, with nuanced differences depending on academic context.

At POLITEHNICA Bucharest, response diversity was greater, yet 90% of students indicated a high interest (scores between 8 and 10). Conversely, UNATC students demonstrated a more homogeneous and intense interest, reflecting their artistic inclination and professional focus on cinematography. Preferences for types of films watched mirror the differences in profile between the two universities. Commercial films dominate at UPB, where 140 respondents chose them, compared to only 35 who prefer art films. At UNATC, however, art films are appreciated by 50% of students, highlighting their interest in more complex and creative productions, compared

to just 19% indicating such preferences at UPB. This divergence suggests that academic training influences cinematic preferences, with students in artistic fields being more open to art films.

Viewing habits are similar between the two universities, with most respondents (91.8%) watching between 3 and 5 films per month. However, UNATC students display greater diversity, with some watching more than 10 films per month. This aspect reflects both their passion for cinema and their more frequent access to relevant resources, such as screening rooms and film events.

The differences between the two academic environments become even more evident regarding experimental films. At POLITEHNICA Bucharest, only 12.6% of students are familiar with this genre, and just 5.5% have watched such a film. In contrast, all UNATC respondents are aware of the genre, and 72.5% have experienced viewing such productions.

A very especially interesting aspect of the analysis is the perception of experimental films. This genre is nearly unknown at POLITEHNICA Bucharest, where only 12.6% of students are familiar with the concept, and 5.5% have watched such a film. By contrast, all UNATC students know the genre, and 72.5% have watched experimental films. Examples mentioned include “Touch Me Not” by Adina Pintilie, an exploration of intimacy and acceptance; “Meshes of the Afternoon” by Maya Deren, an avant-garde film; and “La Jetée” by Chris Marker, a story told exclusively through still photographs. These preferences demonstrate the deep familiarity and appreciation for this genre among UNATC students, in contrast to the low awareness level at UPB.

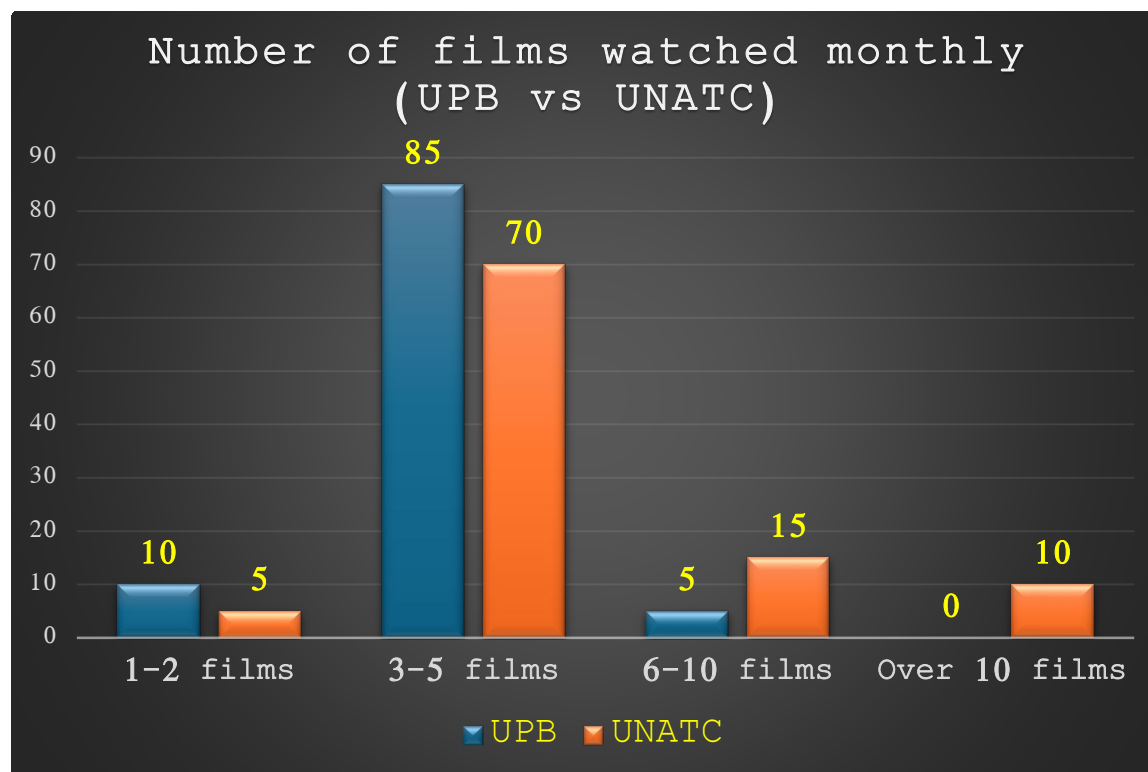


Figure 2. Number of Movies Watched Monthly - presents the movie-watching habits for the two universitie

Source: Authors' own research.

Students from both universities recognize the importance of technology in making experimental films, seeing it as essential for materializing artistic visions. However, the budget, while significant, is perceived as secondary to creativity, mainly relevant for the access to equipment and resources. This view reflects the emphasis on innovation and ingenuity in filmmaking. The audience for experimental films is perceived as comprising creative individuals with extensive cinematic culture and an interest in unconventional approaches. However, the lack of a broad audience is a major obstacle to the development of this genre. This perception highlights a significant challenge for filmmakers: how to attract a more diverse audience without compromising the innovative nature of experimental films.

The study highlights the significant contrast between the two universities regarding interest, preferences, and familiarity with experimental films. While UNATC students are open and actively engaged in exploring avant-garde cinematography, POLITEHNICA Bucharest students could benefit from initiatives that introduce them to this genre. Organizing themed screenings, workshops, or collaborations between the two academic environments could open new perspectives for promoting experimental films and diversifying cinematic tastes.

Quantitative Analysis – a glimpse through the lens of numbers

The "Results and Discussions" chapter reveals a numerical universe that delves into students' interest in cinematography, highlighting contrasts between two universities with distinct identities. At UPB, an overwhelming majority of students, 90%, rate films between 8 and 10, with 57 of them giving the maximum score. At UNATC, the percentage is similar but more balanced, reflecting a consistent passion. UPB students gravitate towards commercial films, with 140 declaring them as favorites compared to only 35 who prefer art films. In contrast, at UNATC, half of the respondents opt for art films, showcasing their affinity for complexity and artistic subtlety. The numbers underscore a significant difference in the perception of the experimental genre. Only 12.6% of UPB students are aware of this genre, and a modest 5.5% have watched such productions. Conversely, at UNATC, 100% of the students are familiar with the genre, and 72.5% have experienced it. In terms of frequency, 91.8% of students from both universities watch between 3 and 5 films per month. However, UNATC stands out for its diversity, with 10% of students watching over 10 films monthly, suggesting a deeper connection to cinematic art.

Qualitative Analysis – reflections between context and culture

Beyond the wealth of numerical data, the qualitative analysis uncovers the cultural and academic context shaping perspectives on cinematography. UNATC students are immersed in an artistic environment that inspires them to explore art films and experimental productions. In contrast, at UPB, the focus is on accessible narratives and commercial spectacles driven by special effects and technological innovation. At UNATC, experimental films are seen as a sophisticated artistic expression aimed at connoisseurs. At UPB, however, this genre is viewed as challenging to understand, with the main barrier being the lack of a clear message. UNATC perceives technology as a tool for artistic expression, enriching visual messages. For UPB, technological innovation is a driver of progress, used to reduce costs and diversify production. Experimental films face several obstacles: limited budgets and a lack of a wide audience restrict the genre's impact. However, collaborations between the two universities could shift this dynamic, paving the way for a more diverse audience and broader appreciation.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses together paint a detailed picture of students' interests and perceptions. The numbers provide clarity, while qualitative interpretations add depth, revealing a dynamic dialogue between two perspectives: the pragmatic, technological outlook of UPB and the artistic, sensitive vision of UNATC. Together, these perspectives underscore the fascinating complexity of contemporary cinematography.

Table 1. Perceptions and Collaborations between Art and Engineering Students in the Field of Experimental Film

Survey	National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest	National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale” (UNATC)
Do you like movies? (scale: 1 = minimum, 10 = maximum)	Most respondents gave high scores (49 chose 8, 38 chose 9, and 57 chose 10). At POLITEHNICA, although interest in movies is also high, the responses show more diversity due to a larger sample size. Scores are generally high (8-10) and more concentrated.	Out of 40 respondents, 90% selected 8, 9, or 10, indicating an almost universal interest in movies but with a smaller sample. Students at UNATC show a more concentrated passion for movies, likely due to their specific educational background.
The last movie you watched (commercial/art/unspecified)?	Most watched commercial films (140 out of 182). Only 35 watched art films, and 7 did not respond. At POLITEHNICA, commercial movies dominate preferences.	The number of respondents who watched commercial films (17) is almost equal to those who watched art films (20). Proportionally, 50% of UNATC respondents prefer art films compared to only 19% at POLITEHNICA Bucharest. At UNATC, art films are significantly more popular, reflecting the artistic orientation of its students.
How many movies do you watch (on average) per month?	91.8% watch between 3 and 5 movies per month. Only a minority (8.2%) watch more than 5 movies per month. Students are consistent in their movie-watching habits, though not excessive.	The distribution is more varied at UNATC: 10 watch at least one. 14 respondents (40%) watch between 3 and 5 movies. 16 watch between 5 and 10 movies, and 4 watch more than 10. There is greater polarization at UNATC, with some consuming few movies but a higher percentage watching intensively.
Have you heard of experimental films?	Only 23 out of 182 (12.6%) have heard of experimental films. For POLITEHNICA students, this genre is largely unknown.	All 40 respondents at UNATC are familiar with the term. Familiarity with experimental films is universal at UNATC, reflecting their specialized education.
Have you ever watched an experimental film?	Only 10 respondents (5.5%) have watched an experimental film. This genre remains marginal.	At UNATC, 29 out of 40 (72.5%) have watched experimental films. Viewing experimental films is much more common at UNATC, due to better access and higher interest.

Survey	National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest	National University of Theatre and Film "I.L. Caragiale" (UNATC)
What experimental films have you seen?	"Touch Me Not" by Adina Pintilie: A Romanian experimental film exploring intimacy, sexuality, and body acceptance. Using a semi-documentary format and provocative visual style, Pintilie addresses taboo themes and blurs the line between fiction and reality. The film won the Golden Bear at Berlinale. "Reservoir Dogs" by Quentin Tarantino: A neo-noir thriller redefining the heist genre by omitting the actual heist. Known for its sharp dialogue, non-linear narrative, and stylized violence, it marked Tarantino's directorial debut. "The Lighthouse" by Robert Eggers: A psychological horror film set in a late 19th-century isolated lighthouse. Featuring standout performances by Robert Pattinson and Willem Dafoe, the film's black-and-white visuals and restricted aspect ratio create a claustrophobic atmosphere and rich symbolism.	"Meshes of the Afternoon" by Maya Deren: A classic of experimental cinema, this short film is filled with dreamlike imagery, symbolism, and a fragmented narrative. It explores themes of the subconscious, identity, and perception, deeply influencing avant-garde filmmaking. "La Jetée" by Chris Marker: A masterpiece of experimental cinema composed almost entirely of still photographs, it tells a gripping story about memory, time, and love. This film inspired works like 12 Monkeys (1995). "Wavelength" by Michael Snow: An iconic experiment featuring a 45-minute progressive zoom through an interior space. A meditation on perception, time, and space, it is a cornerstone of structuralist film history.
What do you think defines an experimental film (name a few defining characteristics)?	What do you think defines an experimental film (name a few defining characteristics)? It is a filmmaking style that rigorously reevaluates cinematic conventions and explains non-linear forms. The ones I've been exposed to are art-related. I enjoy the power that can be expressed in scenes lacking narrative or linear temporal direction. It's a type of film that offers us the opportunity to feel part of it through the plot, the behavior of the characters, and lets us decide how the story unfolds. I believe that an experimental film represents something significant happening in the future, using artificial intelligence. I think it challenges artistic expression, creativity, unconventional techniques, abstract concepts, and pushes boundaries.	Experimental films are characterized by the absence of traditional narratives and the use of unconventional techniques. The emphasis is placed on visual and auditory exploration rather than on story. They often include symbolism and free interpretation, being created to provoke and intellectually stimulate.
What do you think about the role of technology in producing Experimental Films?	I like films that use old production equipment, like the kind from the 1950s, but I believe new technology can surpass it. I think artificial intelligence has evolved a lot in recent years and is sometimes necessary for scenes with special effects. I consider technology plays a crucial role, giving directors (or producers) the power to bring their vision to life.	Technology acts as a support system, enabling the realization of complex artistic visions. The accessibility of new technologies democratizes the creative process, facilitating the production of experimental films.

Survey	National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest	National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale” (UNATC)
What do you think about the role of budget in producing Experimental Films?	I wouldn't say it's a relevant factor, but it would be good to have the necessary budget to bring a vision to life without compromises. I believe it's mandatory to have incredible people helping with special effects to make the film good and profitable, so investment is necessary.	Budget is secondary compared to creativity but is needed to access essential equipment and resources. Experimental film production can also be achieved with limited resources when the artistic idea is strong enough.
What is more important – budget, technology, or the artistic act? Why?	Personally, hiring experts is key because it's useless to have money and technology if you don't know how to manage them. Artistic vision and creativity, because this type of film is meant to break traditional barriers.	The artistic act is more important, as it's the creative core of the film, without which technology or budget cannot compensate. Without artistic intent, a film becomes just a technical recording. Technology is a tool, but without artistic vision, it doesn't add creative value. The artistic act provides the freedom to convey emotions and messages, making it more important than technology or budget.
What could be the main obstacles in producing Experimental Films?	A smaller audience compared to mainstream successful films. Probably money; actors need to be paid.	The main obstacles include a lack of budget and difficulty in securing funding. The lack of a well-defined audience for this type of film represents another challenge.
What kind of audience might be interested in watching Experimental Films?	Open-minded and creative people. Artists, intellectuals, students.	The target audience includes cinephiles with a broad cinematic culture or those interested in unconventional artistic approaches. Also, people passionate about visual arts and films that transcend commercial conventions might be drawn to them. Viewers who appreciate unconventional visual arts and creative experiments are the primary audience. Individuals with a developed cinematic culture, seeking experiences different from commercial films, are also interested.

Source: Authors' own research.

Limitations and Further Research

The present study, focused on students' perceptions of experimental films, aims to contribute new insights to the field of cinematic research. However, a detailed analysis of the methodology and results highlights several limitations that may influence the general conclusions and provide starting points for future research directions.

Limitations

One critical aspect of the study is the imbalance in the distribution of respondents. Out of the total of 222 participants, only 40 are from the *National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale”*, while the majority (182) are students at *POLITEHNICA Bucharest*. This imbalance may reduce the representativeness of the results, particularly regarding the specific opinions of students from the arts domain. Consequently, the perceptions of the dominant group could distort the study’s general conclusions.

The sample distribution does not fully reflect the diversity of the student population, especially within the engineering domain. This lack of diversity limits the understanding of potentially relevant perspectives, affecting the study’s ability to provide a comprehensive view of how varied groups perceive experimental films.

The exclusive focus on students from two academic institutions in Romania represents another significant limitation.

The findings cannot be generalized to other cultural or educational contexts, especially considering the strong influence of cultural context on the reception of art and experimental films. While the survey explores students’ opinions and interests, it does not address the practical and economic barriers faced by experimental filmmakers. The lack of direct analysis of these aspects reduces the study’s usefulness for understanding the concrete challenges of the industry.

Directions for Future Research

To address the identified limitations and advance the understanding of the perception and production of experimental films, future studies could include students from other universities in Romania and abroad to compare perspectives on experimental films across varied cultural and educational contexts. Such an approach would enable a more detailed analysis of the factors influencing the reception of experimental films.

It is important to investigate concrete projects that involve collaboration between students from artistic and technological domains.

Evaluating the impact of these collaborations on the quality and reception of experimental films could provide valuable insights for improving interdisciplinary education. An important research direction would be identifying the costs and resources involved in producing experimental films, as well as exploring ways to democratize access to technology. This investigation could offer solutions to reduce practical obstacles in the industry.

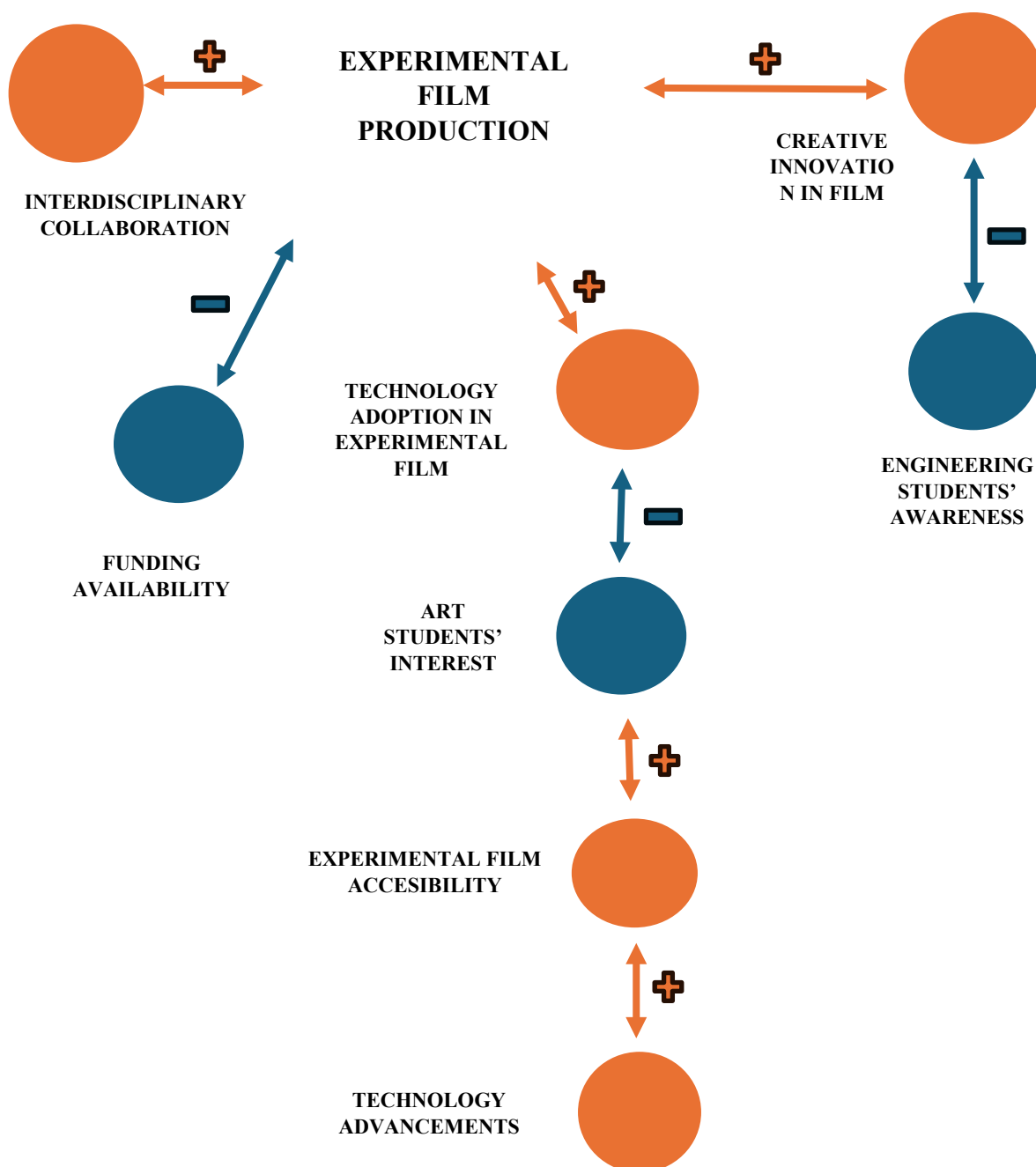


Figure 3. Causal loop diagram representing the ecosystem of experimental film, showing the interactions between art students, engineering students, technology adoption, and production.

Source: Authors' own research.

Extending the research to audiences outside the academic environment could provide relevant insights into the general interest in experimental films and their potential for commercial viability. This approach would contribute to a deeper understanding of the future of this cinematic genre.

Experimental filmmaking is shaped by the interplay between art and engineering students, technology, funding, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Art students often view technology as limiting creativity, leading to its reduced use in experimental films. Similarly, engineering students, despite their technical expertise, lack exposure to this artistic medium, hindering creative innovation. Both factors negatively affect production.

Suggested Causal Loop Diagram Elements (Figure 1.):

1. Art Students' Interest (-) → Technology Adoption in Experimental Film (-)
2. Engineering Students' Awareness (-) → Creative Innovation in Film (-)
3. Interdisciplinary Collaboration (+) → Experimental Film Production (+)
4. Technology Advancements (+) → Experimental Film Accessibility (+)
5. Funding Availability (-) → Production of Experimental Films (-)

However, interdisciplinary collaboration fosters mutual learning: art students gain technical skills, while engineering students explore creative applications, boosting film production. Technological advancements, such as affordable equipment and intuitive software, have also lowered barriers, making experimental filmmaking more accessible and sparking greater interest among art students.

Despite these positives, limited funding remains a significant obstacle, restricting both the number and quality of productions. Increased funding and technology adoption could drive innovation, attract audiences, and expand this niche domain.

In summary, experimental filmmaking thrives on collaboration, technological progress, and accessible resources. Addressing challenges like funding gaps and limited interest in technology can unlock its full creative potential, exemplifying the complexity of interconnected influences in this artistic field.

Conclusion

Experimental film is a powerful yet underutilized medium that could benefit from integrating artistic vision and technological expertise. The survey results underscore a significant disconnect between arts and engineering students.

Why Don't Arts Students Focus on Technology? In conclusion, arts students tend to prioritize creative expression over technology, believing it may limit artistic authenticity. The survey suggests that although they are aware of experimental films, they do not fully utilize available technological tools due to a perceived divide between creativity and technology. However, in the digital age, using technology is essential to reaching a wider audience and creating more innovative works.

Why Aren't Engineering Students Aware of Experimental Films? In conclusion, engineering students, despite their advanced knowledge of technology, are not sufficiently exposed to the creative potential of experimental films. They do not view experimental films as a relevant or interesting field for applying their technical skills. This lack of awareness could lead to missed opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Both POLITEHNICA Bucharest and UNATC students demonstrated a high interest in films but with different importance. At POLITEHNICA Bucharest, interest is diverse, dominated by commercial films, while the experimental genre is almost unknown-only 12.6% of students have heard of experimental films, and just 5.5% have watched one. In contrast, UNATC students have a deep familiarity with this genre, with 72.5% of respondents having seen experimental films. This

difference reflects the distinct profiles of the two universities—one technical and the other artistic—but also a significant divide in perception and access to such works.

Experimental films, through their innovative nature, often exploit technology to create unique visual and auditory experiences. Respondents recognized the crucial role of technology, emphasizing that it enables the realization of complex artistic visions. While budget is considered a secondary factor, it remains important for accessing necessary resources. Nevertheless, the artistic act is seen as central, without which neither technology nor budget can compensate the lack of originality or deepness. One of the main challenges for experimental films is their limited audience. The perceived audience interested in this genre includes artists, intellectuals, and cinephiles with extensive cinematic culture, which restricts the commercial expansion of these films. Moreover, the lack of funding and the difficulty of obtaining financial support are other major obstacles for experimental filmmakers.

The results of the survey reveal a deep disconnection between arts and engineering students. This separation limits the potential for collaboration between artistic creativity and technological innovation. Promoting interdisciplinary education through joint courses, collaborative projects, and events that bring together students from both fields could build bridges between these communities. Thus, experimental films could benefit from advanced technological resources, while technical students could discover new opportunities for creative expression.

Experimental film has the potential to redefine the boundaries of cinematography, but its development requires a concerted effort to integrate artistic visions and technological expertise. To promote this genre, better integration of film education into the curriculum is needed, both in technical and artistic fields. Additionally, democratizing access to technology and financial resources could reduce production barriers and stimulate interest in experimental films.

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