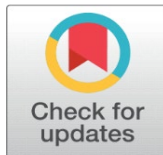
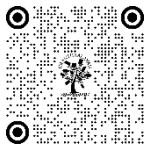


# NOLLYWOOD FILMS AS NIGERIA'S IMAGE MAKER IN CAMEROON: A STUDY OF CAMEROONIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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## ABSTRACT

Theories on Nollywood films' contribution to the Nigerian image crisis have not really followed from empirical studies. In effect, most commentators who support the thesis of Nollywood's negative effects on the Nigerian image hinge on the unproven premise that a good number of Nigerian video films represent Nigeria in a negative light. Thus, these commentators stand on mere assumptions to conclude that Nollywood films unarguably contribute immensely to the Nigeria's image problem on the international stage. In this paper, the claims made by the above mentioned commentators are tested through an empirical study of Cameroonian students' perception of Nigeria as informed by their Nollywood film experience. The paper specifically hinges on a quasi-experiment involving 50 Anglophone and Francophone students drawn from the University of Dschang (Cameroon). The students were exposed to two Nigerian films (*My Husband's Wealth* and *Oluture*) and asked to describe their perceptions of schools, law enforcement institutions, economic development, cultures and governance in Nigeria. The quasi-experiment revealed that the students under study perceived Nigeria mainly in a negative light. The paper suggests a number of imperatives for Nollywood to be reoriented and to serve better as Nigeria's image maker.

**Keywords:** Nigeria's Image Problem, Nollywood Films, Perception, Cultural Representation, Nation Branding

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Nollywood<sup>1</sup> films have become popular and avidly consumed cultural products in Africa as whole and Cameroon in particular. This positive development has made Nigerian films to be one of the principal factors shaping Cameroonian audiences' diverse perceptions of Nigerian cultures and identities. This is in line with popular axioms which stipulate that films have the potency of swaying both hearts and minds. As noted by Egere (2009), "good stories have energy within them that can propel and influence man's emotions" (p.199). They constitute an instrument that facilitates the reinvention and recreation of events in people's mind. As forms of popular culture, films subtly mirror, recreate and tell the stories of the society in which they subsist. Following this understanding, Nollywood films can be said to act as a virtual window through which various pockets of the international audiences – including Cameroonians – may view Nigeria or imagine Nigeria to be. They equally represent potential windows through which Cameroonians perceive the Nigerian (tangible and non-tangible) brands. Nollywood films actually have the potential to contribute in re-enforcing, endorsing or challenging the numerous stereotypes Cameroonians may have generated over the years about Nigeria. They also have the potential to accentuate, reduce or totally negate the various (negative) stereotypes Cameroonians have associated Nigeria with.

Although the potency mentioned above has long been suggested by a galaxy of studies (notably the research works of Akunyili (2010), Alawode & Uduakobong (2014), Alawode & Uduakobong. (2015), Akpabio (2007) among others), virtually no empirical study has attempted to investigate the impact of Nollywood films specifically, on Cameroonian students. Based on this premise, discussions on Nollywood films' effects on foreign audiences – notably on Cameroonian audiences – have mainly been anchored in hypotheses which are in great need of verification or confirmation. Most studies (notably Akunyili (2010), Akande (2013) and Alawode & Uduakobong. (2015) have hinged on the fact that films naturally have the potency to sway both the hearts and minds of foreign audiences to hastily theorise/conclude that, in respect of their negative portrayal of Nigeria, Nollywood films mainly influence Cameroonian audiences to negatively perceive Nigeria and her products. Of course, the above mentioned theories and conclusions are guilty of the fallacy of hasty generalisation, mainly because they do not emanate from empirical research but rather from speculative and intuitive approaches. There is therefore a serious need to empirically investigate the nuanced impact of Nollywood films on Cameroonian university students' perceptions of the Nigeria image and know the extent to which such impact re-enforces or contradicts popular beliefs which associate Nigeria with all manner of negativities.

This research seeks to fill the above mentioned gap in knowledge. It has, as objective, to investigate the impact of Nollywood films viewing on Cameroonian students' perception of Nigeria's image. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> "Nollywood" is the codename used to refer to the Nigerian video film industry. For a number of authors, it refers to the Nigerian film industry as a whole, while for others it is only valid for the video film movement. This movement emerged in the early 1990's with the release of the straight-to-video movie titled *Living in Bondage* (by Chris Obi Rapu). Having become a \$590-600 million commercial giant by the year 2014, the industry is rated second most prolific film industry in the world after Bollywood (from India). The industry produces an average of 2 films a week and generates \$US11 billion yearly and is believed to be the second employer in the country after the government.

- 1) Examine how cultural representations in Nollywood films affect Cameroonian students' perceptions of Nigerian cultures.
- 2) Examine how the portrayal of law enforcement institutions in Nollywood films informs Cameroonian students' perceptions of forces of law and order in Nigerian.
- 3) Examine how the depiction of governance in Nollywood films affects Cameroonian student's perceptions of governance in Nigeria.
- 4) Examine how the portrayal of infrastructures in Nollywood films informs Cameroonian students' perceptions of infrastructural development in Nigeria.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: NIGERIA IN THE EYES OF CAMEROONIANS

As a major African nation, Nigeria has, for different nations across the Black continent, continued to conjure up a variety of values, myths and ideas. According to [Idowu \(2015\)](#) and [Sydelle \(2009\)](#) African nations' perceptions of Nigeria have traditionally varied, depending on factors such as Nigerians' economic and cultural presence in these African nations and Nigeria's foreign policies towards them as well as the geo-political role played by Nigeria in the sub-regions in which these nations find themselves. In Cameroon more precisely where there is a strong Nigerian presence indicated by an estimated population of about 4 Million Nigerian expatriates out of total national population of 20 Million [BBC News. \(2010\)](#), this perception has, of course, been dominantly dictated by the political, social and economic weight of Nigerian communities in the country. In effect, The strong Nigerian presence – believed to be the heaviest pocket of expatriates and the politically and economically most active in the country [Nkene \(2001\)](#); [Weiss \(1996\)](#) – coupled with sad historical events such as the Bakassi (border) disputes involving Nigeria and Cameroon, Nigeria's multiple military coups, persistent inter-ethnic and religious violence (in the middle belt of Nigeria) and the Boko Haram insurgency, has motivated many Cameroonians to arguably perceive Nigeria – or rather Nigerian expatriates living in Cameroon – as a kind of silent and subtle threat. As noted by [Weiss \(1996\)](#),

Cameroonians' perceptions of the Nigerian presence in their country vary, of course, from viewing Nigerians as a threat to considering them as a community to tolerate. Such perceptions have been inspired by events occurring even beyond the microscopic scope of the South West Province [of Cameroon]. (My translation)<sup>2</sup>

You hardly find scientific studies carried out specifically to explore Cameroonians' perceptions of Nigeria(ns). However, the few newspaper/magazine articles, journal papers and opinions pieces published in online platforms reveal that Cameroonian sub-cultures dominantly tend to associate Nigerians with a variety of negativities, for reasons which remarkably vary between the growing Nigerian population in the country to Nigeria's perceived mismanagement of her internal socio-political crises to clearly trivial and apparently xenophobic reasons. Sa'ah (cited in [BBC News. \(2010\)](#)) notes for instance that:

Cameroon has long viewed her giant neighbour as an imperialist-in-the-making, especially given Nigerians' ballooning population. They began arriving

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<sup>2</sup> L'appréciation de la présence Nigérienne par les Camerounais bascule en effet entre menace et tolérance au gré des événements qui dépassent le seul cadre microscopique de la Province du Sud-Ouest.

Cameroon in the early colonial days as fishermen, traders and administrators. Their population is now estimated at more than 4 m [millions] out of a population of 19.5m. They own virtually all motor spare part shops and now Nigerian Pentecostal pastors are setting up everywhere and performing supposed miracle-healing services. (26-27)

If many Cameroonians shape their perceptions of Nigeria with respect to the growing Nigerian population on their soil, others rather consider historical events and current socio-political news events in Nigeria notably recent border skirmishes involving Nigeria and Cameroon (notably the Bakassi border dispute), the 1966-1970 Nigerian civil war and the recent escalation of Boko Haram's terrorist activities on Cameroonian soil among others. These historical and current events are actually windows through which many Cameroonian publics perceive Nigeria. They (the events) have fuelled specifically negative perceptions of Nigeria(ns) among Cameroonian sub-cultures. Boko Haram's expansion of the geographical scope of its terrorist activities to include Northern Cameroon has for instance, bred anti-Nigerian feelings among many Cameroonians. No doubt Cameroon online tabloid, *MaMediaTech* notes that: "[in the Cameroonian popular imaginary, the word 'Nigeria' rhymes with Boko Haram, Nollywood and the Bakassi conflict [My translation]<sup>3</sup>".

Saying that the word "Nigeria" rimes with Boko Haram does not just mean that Cameroonian popularly perceive the longevity of Boko Haram to be an index of insecurity in Nigeria but also the palpable sign of Nigeria's military weakness or declining military might in the eyes of Cameroonians. In other words, Nigeria is not the military giant mass cultures have for decades trumpeted. As noted by Cameroonian blogger Dubussi Tande, the Boko Haram persisting insurgency has seriously tarnished the image of Nigeria among Cameroonians, arguably serving as an elements which put to question the "big brother" and "giant of Africa" status enjoyed by Nigeria. The persistence of Boko Haram terrorist activities have also served as an undeniable proof of the decline of Nigeria's military might in West African sub-region in particular and the whole of the Black continent in general. In [Dubussi's \(2015\)](#) words,

Cameroon authorities and even the Cameroonian public are up in arms and complaining that Nigeria lacks the willingness or the capacity to take on Boko Haram. A Cameroonian defence ministry official quoted by AFP [*Agence France Press*] after the Achigachia attack was quite scathing: "Attacks on our territory come from a neighbouring country that calls itself sovereign and does nothing". (15)

Dubussi Tande (2015) adds that Although by December 2014 the Nigerian army had recaptures some towns previously under the control of Boko Haram such as Gombi, Hong, Uba, Makera, Mubi, Holma and Vimtim (then lost the town of Baga, home to the Multinational Joint Task Force where Boko Haram allegedly killed about 2,000 people), the million dollar question remains: How did the once esteemed Nigerian military which just two decades ago "was seen as a force for stability across West Africa" [Reuters \(2014\)](#); and which was "once described as the most effective fighting force in Africa" and "a source of pride and confidence to Nigerians worldwide" [Vacn \(2015\)](#) fail so woefully to quell an internal insurgency by a ragtag army of religious fanatics? (22)

*MaMediaTech* cited above also underlines the fact that in the Cameroonian popular imaginary, the term "Nigeria" rimes with Nollywood. This implies that popular representations of Nigeria in Nollywood films have, among other

<sup>3</sup> "Dans l'imaginaire populaire au Cameroun, Nigeria rime avec Boko Haram, Nollywood et le conflit de Bakassi

international or transnational media, fuelled Cameroonian audiences' perceptions of Nigeria. Critics such as Barbara and [Ezerbet \(2014\)](#), [Ndukwu \(2013\)](#) and [Adebayo \(2010\)](#) among a multitude of others have argued that Nollywood films tend to dominantly portray Nigeria in an abysmal way. They represent Nigeria as a corrupt, voodooist and too religious country. If that be true, Cameroonian audiences' perceptions of Nigeria as informed by Nollywood films will definitely be negative particularly if the latter are too passive in their consumption of these Nollywood films. However, as earlier pointed out, this is just an untested hypothesis. Virtually no scientific study has bordered to verify/establish this supposition.

In the light of the above cited sources, Cameroonians' perceptions of Nigeria are not really different from those of other African nations. One notes that issues like Nollywood and recent socio-political events in Nigeria, have, like in other African climes, continued to variously shape Cameroonian publics' perceptions of Nigeria as a culturally imperialistic force, a hotbed of radical Islamism and as a country seriously played by insecurity. Thus, the various incidences of violence and insecurity in Nigeria have contributed in tarnishing the image of Nigeria making many Cameroonians to perceive its giant neighbour as "a perpetually war-ridden country".

It should however be underscored that the above negative perceptions of Nigeria do not, in any way constitute the full picture of Cameroonians' perception of Nigeria and Nigerians. A number of unscientific investigations have revealed that many Cameroonian rather have a favourable perception of Nigeria. In a 2016 vox-pop conducted by Cameroon newspaper [Le Jour. \(2016\)](#) to elicit Cameroonians' perceptions of Nigeria ahead of President Paul Biya's visit to Nigeria, a good number of positive portrayals of Nigeria were formulated by some Cameroonian publics. Through this vox-pop *Le Jour* actually gathered that many Cameroonians viewed Nigeria as a country which share good relations with Cameroon. Many participants to the vox-pop claimed Nigeria is a good neighbour, a "big brother", a partner in the fight against terrorism and insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. *Le Jour* thus cited two of the interviewees (Njomo Rene and Nteme Claude Celestin cited in [Le Jour. \(2016\)](#) as saying:

We have always had good relations with our Nigerian neighbours; though for some time now, there have been little issues straining these relations to some extent. The Boko Haram insurgency has been one of such issues. [...] The Nigerians are our brothers. We have always chosen to amicably resolve our problems [...] We do not perceive our Nigerian neighbours in a negative light. [My translation]<sup>4</sup>

In the same line of argument, another interviewee (Ze cited in [Le Jour. \(2016\)](#) who took part in the vox-pop confided that:

Nigeria is a sister country to Cameroon. [...] We share common problems notably the Boko Haram insurgency and drought at the Lake Chad region. I cannot boast of knowing the socio-political reality in Nigeria but I know for sure that Nigerians living in Cameroon are treated as brothers. I come from the South Region [of Cameroon] and I can assure you that there, many Nigerians have long settled with their children and wives and they all live in peace [...] The automobile sector in Cameroon is dominated by Nigerians. There are free movements of people and goods between our two countries. We enjoy relations of good neighbourliness. We are one and the same people; historical facts have proven it. It is the coloniser who

<sup>4</sup> Nous avons toujours entretenu de bonnes relations avec nos voisins Nigériens. C'est vrai que depuis un certain temps, le climat est un peu tendu entre nos deux Etats. Le problème Boko Haram est à l'origine de cette zizanie. [...] Les Nigériens sont nos frères. Nous avons opté pour une résolution internes de nos conflits. [...] Nous n'avons pas une mauvaise perception du voisin Nigérien.



came and divided us. Repatriations of Cameroonians or Nigerians from one of the two countries to the other are generally rare compared to what obtains in other African countries. [My translation]<sup>5</sup>

It goes without saying that the views gathered by *Le Jour* cited above are seriously contrastable with the aforementioned positions of Weiss (105-106) and Sa'ah (cited in [BBC News. \(2010\)](#) which, unfortunately, are just personal – and likely subjective – perspectives. However, they (the views gathered by *Le Jour*) reveal some of the parameters and factors considered by Cameroonians to shape their perceptions of Nigeria. The views also reveal that there is ambivalence among Cameroonians about their perceptions of Nigeria(ns).

Another aspect of Nigeria which relatively is positively viewed in Cameroon is the made in Nigeria brand. Authors such as [Bahri-Domon \(2018\)](#) and *The Green Vision Newspaper* (2018) note that many Cameroonians tend to view Nigerian products as being cheap (compared to locally made ones) and affordable to the common. *The Green Vision Newspaper* (2018) for instance notes that this popular perception of the Nigerian-made brand in Cameroon has facilitated the proliferation of various Nigerian manufactured products (ranging from textile materials to food and beverage) in the Cameroonian market. The Cameroon tabloid explicates that:

Goods from Nigeria recently witnessed an exponential increase in Cameroon's market. Household beverages like milk, sugar, biscuits, and food supplements, canned drinks, among others, penetrated the local market faster than one could ever imagine. These goods, sold almost half their initial price, have been cherished by consumers in Cameroon than those produced in the country. For instance with just cfa 250 to 300, a Cameroonian can boast of a canned energy drink or food supplement unlike before when many went for locally made brewed products like *Folere*, or Foster Clarks. (p.8)

The fact that Cameroonian publics sometimes crave for selected Nigerian products does not however mean that the made-in Nigeria brand is universally viewed in a positive light in the Cameroonian market. In effect, many derogatory stereotypes continue to be associated with the Nigerian products. For instance, it is not uncommon to find large segments of Cameroonian consumers who always “scapegoat” Nigerian products and producers, associating them with counterfeit. This negative perception of Nigerian products is clearly illustrated by popular Cameroonian imaginations on Nigerian commercial centres or towns like Aba. In effect, to many Cameroonians, Aba-made products are mostly counterfeit and naturally of low quality. In line with this, colloquial linguistic coinages (in Camfranglais) such as “baba” (derived from the name of former Nigerian President Ibrahim Babaginda) and the Cameroon Pidgin word “Okrika” (coined after the Nigerian tribe Okrika) have been developed to refer to any fake product irrespective of its country of origin. Like “Baba”, the term “Okrika” mostly has a derogative sense. Furthermore, many Cameroonians tend to associate anything Nigerian to Aba-made products

<sup>5</sup> Le Nigeria est un pays frère.[...] Nous partageons le problème du terrorisme et celui de l'assèchement du Lac Tchad. Je ne connais pas la réalité au Nigéria, mais les nigériens qui vivent au Cameroun se sentent chez eux. Je suis originaire de la région du sud, je peux vous affirmer qu'au sud il y a des nigériens qui se sont installés et vivent avec femmes et enfants. [...] Le secteur automobile au Cameroun est dominé par le Nigeria. On note une libre circulation des personnes et des biens entre nos deux Etats. Nous entretenons des relations de bon voisinage. Nous sommes un même peuple, la réalité historique le démontre. C'est le colon qui est venu nous diviser. On voit difficilement le rapatriement des notre du coté du Nigeria comme c'est le cas dans d'autres pays d'Afrique. (10)

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This section describes the study area, the method of data collection the population, the sampling techniques, the sample, the instrument of data collection and the method of data analysis and presentation.

#### **3.1. STUDY AREA**

The study area for this study is the University of Dschang, one of Cameroon's 10 State universities. This university was created in 1993 by Presidential decree No. 93/026 of 19 January 1993. It is the sole government owned bilingual university of the country. It has five faculties namely Letters and Human Sciences, Economics and Management Sciences, Law and Political Sciences, Sciences, and Agronomy and Agricultural Sciences. The university also has two colleges namely the Fine Arts Academy (of Foumban) and the Fotso Victor Institute of Technology.

#### **3.2. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

The study principally relied on a quasi-experiment in which a group of Anglophone and francophone Cameroonian students drawn from the University of Dschang were observed subsequent to the viewing of two Nollywood films, namely David Ogbani's romantic comedy titled *My Husband's Wealth* and Kenneth Gyang's investigative thriller titled *Oluture*. The researcher specifically deployed a one-shot case study design, which involved the study of a single group of university students at a single point in time after the viewing of the two selected films. The films were selected based on their genre (romantic comedy and investigative thriller which are popularly consumed in Cameroon) and their thematic contents that include police brutality, voodoo and cultism, human right violations, political corruption, traditionalism, conservatism, prostitution, bad governance, religious fanaticism and moral decadence among others. The films were deemed by the researcher to be capable of influencing the selected students' perceptions of Nigeria's image. As a quasi-experiment, the study did not involve a control or comparison group. The experiment enabled the researcher to answer all the research questions and attain all the objectives enunciated in Chapter one.

#### **3.3. POPULATION**

Anglophone and Francophone students enrolled in the University of Dschang in the school year 2019-2020 constituted the population of this study. According to the University's gazette, these students number 12637 from undergraduate to post-graduate (University of Dschang 2021).

#### **3.4. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to select students for the experiment. Practically, the researcher considered students who admitted not to have had an experience with Nigerians and who had never travelled or been to Nigeria. This was done in a bid to engineer a group of students whose main source of information about Nigeria could or would be Nollywood films. The study equally considered Anglophone and francophone students from 18 years old from both sexes who were admitted into undergraduate and post graduate programs in the school year 2019-2020 at the University of Dschang.

The researcher also used a purposive sampling technique to choose the two films that were served as source of information about Nigeria. These films included David Ogbani's *My Husband's Wealth* and Kenneth Gyang's *Oloture*. The students were exposed to the two films during the quasi-experiment. The films were actually selected on the basis of genre (romantic comedy and thrillers) and their thematic contents included cultism and blood money, political corruption, traditionalism, voodoo and black magic and police brutality among others. Thus, the experimenter selected two films whose thematic contents and sceneries, reflect the four key features of Nigeria's image considered for the study namely (i) Nigerian cultures, (ii) the Nigerian police, (iii) governance and (iv) infrastructures. In other words, the experimenter selected Ogbani's *My Husband's Wealth* and Kenneth Gyang's *Oloture* on the basis that the films contain representations of the four key features of Nigeria's image considered for the study namely the Nigeria police, Nigerian cultures, governance and infrastructural development in Nigeria. The films were also sampled on the basis of their year of production (2019 and 2020). This was in a bid to use sources of stimulus (films) that are recent and which depict contemporary Nigeria.

### 3.5. SAMPLE

The experiment conducted in the context of this study involved 50 students evenly drawn from the francophone and Anglophone student communities of the University of Dschang. As earlier highlighted, the students had no experience with Nigerians and had never travelled or been to Nigeria. They were both male and female subjects and were from both undergraduate and post-graduate levels of studies. Also, the students were between 18 to 50 years of age.

### 3.6. INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected with the aid of a questionnaire structured into two main sections namely "Section A" containing the personal data of the subjects such as gender, age, department and level of education; and "Section B" having 20 items (see Appendix I). The questionnaire was designed to measure Cameroonian students' reception of the representations of (i) Nigerian cultures (ii) the Nigerian police, (iii) governance in Nigerian and (iv) infrastructural development in the two selected Nollywood films. The questionnaire was entirely designed taking into consideration the Likert scale of measurement. This scale included Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument of data collection was subjected to face validity by the experimenter's supervisors so as to ensure the appropriateness of the items. Unwanted items were expunged and some reframed to be consistent with the experimenter's research questions. The instrument was also exposed to some experts in the fields of research and statistical analysis and their suggestions enabled useful modifications of specific sections of the instrument.

### 3.7. PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher visited the University of Dschang on January 25, 2021, to make necessary contacts with relevant facilitators (mostly lecturers and non-academic staffs of the institution) capable of introducing him to potential subjects having the appropriate profile for the experiment (see sampling and sample for the study described above). Through the cooperation of a number of such facilitators, the



researcher could privately/unofficially network with a number of both francophone and Anglophone students of the tertiary institution first to know whether they have the appropriate profile to be subjects for the experiment and second, to invite appropriate persons to participate in the viewing of the selected Nollywood film and the experiment. The initial contacts with the potential subjects helped the researcher to recruit 50 Anglophone and francophone students for the experiment.

The researcher also made necessary arrangements with a Dschang-based secondary school called “Albert Camus”, for the use of the institution’s multimedia centre for the screening of the two selected Nollywood films and the observation of the 50 subjects taking part in the experiment. The viewing of the films and the subsequent observation of the 50 subjects took place on February 6, 2021. It started at 9:30 AM. The film viewing lasted for 4 hours, 30 minutes and was followed by the administration of copies of the questionnaire. Subjects were instructed to follow the instructions inscribed on the instrument while answering the questions. During the administration and the filling of the questionnaires, the students were made to sit apart to prevent them from copying from one another. The researcher waited patiently for the subjects to fill the questionnaires and then retrieved the instrument.

### **3.8. PROCEDURE FOR DATA PREPARATION**

The film contents susceptible to influence or inform the subject’s perceptions of Nigerian cultures, Nigerian police, governance and infrastructural development in Nigeria were administered to the subjects using the Likert rating scale namely “Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

### **3.9. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

To process and compute data collected through the questionnaires, the researcher resorted to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme. Simple statistical manipulations such as frequency distribution and cumulative frequency were utilised to organise data. The data collected and analysed was presented in simple frequency distribution tables [Table 1](#) to [Table 4](#) in section 4). Proportion or amount of variables was expressed in percentages.

The statistical analyses deployed per research questions were as follows:

- 1) How do cultural representations in Nollywood films affect Cameroonian students’ perception of the Nigerian cultures  
Independent variable: Cultural representations in Nollywood films  
Dependent variable: Cameroonian students’ perceptions of Nigerian cultures  
Statistical analysis technique: simple frequency distribution
- 2) How does the portrayal of law enforcement institutions in Nollywood films inform Cameroonian students’ perceptions of the Nigerian police?  
Independent variable: Portrayal of Law enforcement institution in Nollywood film  
Dependent variable: Cameroonian students’ perceptions of the Nigerian police  
Statistical analysis technique: simple frequency distribution
- 3) How does the depiction of governance in Nollywood films affect Cameroonian students’ perception of administration in Nigeria?

Independent variable: Depiction of governance in Nollywood films

Dependent variable: Cameroonian students' perceptions of administration in Nigeria

Statistical analysis technique: simple frequency distribution

- 4) How does the portrayal of infrastructures in Nollywood films inform Cameroonian students' perceptions of infrastructural development in Nigeria?

Independent variable: portrayal of infrastructures in Nollywood films

Dependent variable: Cameroonian students' perceptions of infrastructural development in Nigeria

Statistical analysis technique: simple frequency distribution

#### 4. DATA PRESENTATION

This section deals with the presentation of data on students' perception of (i) cultural representations, (ii) the portrayal of law enforcement institutions, (iii) the depiction of governance and (iv) the portrayal of infrastructures in Ogbani's *My Husband's Wealth* and Kenneth Gyang's *Oluture*. The analyses are presented using descriptive statistics, (frequency distribution (tabulation) and simple percentage formula as shown in [Table 1](#), [Table 4](#). The findings presented in [Table 1](#) indicate that cultural representations in the selected films were mainly negatively perceived by the subjects under study except in Items 1 and 3. In effect, 34% of the subjects under study strongly agreed with the contents of item 1 which states that actors' recurrent deployment of traditional proverbs in their speeches presents Nigerians' image as being conservative and traditionalist. Meanwhile, 22% of the subjects simply agreed that Item 1 in the table is true, making a total of 56% of the students who answered item 1 in the affirmative. The remaining 44% of the students responded to the item in the negative. Indeed, 26% disagreed while the remaining 18% strongly disagreed with the contents of the item.

Item 2 – which stipulates that actors' frequent use of black magic and voodoo in the films points to Nigerians' image as being deep in sorcery practices – elicited much negative reactions from the subjects. The table shows that 32% strongly agree with the contents of the Item while 30% simply agree making a total of 62% who responded in the positive. The table also shows that a minority (38% of the students) did not okay the statement. Concretely, 22% disagreed while 16% strongly disagreed. Item 3 states that actors' tendency of dressing mostly in traditional wears is an indication of the cultural pride of the people in their native attires. A majority (72%) of the students responded to this item in the affirmative. Actually, 40% strongly agreed while 32% simply agreed. Eighteen (18) percent of the remaining students disagreed while 10% strongly disagreed.

Item 4 states that the dominance of harsh widowhood rites in *My Husband's Wealth* presents adherence to a backward dehumanising burial rites' image. The majority (64%) okayed the statement. Indeed, 24% strongly agreed while 30% simply agreed. The Item also elicited negative responses from the subjects as 28% disagreed while 18% strongly disagreed. Item 5 stated that in the films, the many pockets of shrines and deities reflect religiosity in Nigeria. A big majority (namely 66%) of the subjects okayed the statement. Over 38% strongly agreed while 28% simply agreed. Contrary to the above subjects, 20% of the students disagreed while 14% strongly disagreed.

**Table 1**

<b>Table 1 Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Student's Perceptions of Cultural Representations in my Husband's Wealth</b>											
<b>N</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>D</b>		<b>SD</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	Effects of Cultural Representations on Students' Perception	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	Actors' recurrent deployment of traditional proverbs in their speeches presents Nigerians' image as being conservative and traditionalist.	17	34	11	22	13	26	9	18	50	100
2	Actors' frequent use of black magic and voodoo in the films points to Nigerians' image as being deep in sorcery practices.	16	32	15	30	11	22	8	16	50	100
3	Actors' tendency of dressing mostly in traditional wears is an indication of the cultural pride of the people in their native attires.	20	40	16	32	9	18	5	10	50	100
4	The dominance of harsh widowhood rites in <i>My Husband's Wealth</i> presents adherence to a backward dehumanising burial rites' image.	12	24	15	30	14	28	9	18	50	100
5	In the films, the many pockets of shrines and deities reflect religiosity in Nigeria.	19	38	14	28	10	20	7	14	50	100

**Source** Fieldwork, 2021

Analyses in [Table 2](#) indicate students' perceptions of the portrayal of law enforcement institutions in the two films under study. Like in the preceding table, students' responses varied remarkably according to the contents of the various items. Item 6 in the table – that is concerned with the protagonists and antagonists' control over police agents – elicited more affirmative than negative responses from the subjects. The Item states that the protagonists and the antagonist's frivolous and fraudulent engagement of the Nigerian police force plays out a serious state of corruption. Over 62% of the subjects responded in the affirmative. Actually, 32% of the students strongly agreed while 30% simply agreed. Of the 50 subjects considered in the experiment, 20% disagreed while 18% strongly disagreed to the contents of Item 6, hence making the percentage of respondents who answered in the negative to be 38. Item 7 states that Policemen's use of verbal abuse and physical brutality in the films paints a picture of the force being abusers of human rights. A large majority (76%) of the subjects found this statement true. Thus, 52% strongly agreed while 24% simply agreed. A minority (24%) of the subject did not okay Item 7. Over 14% disagreed while 10% strongly disagreed. Item 8 states that the police officers' use of double standard in the treatment of different categories of citizens is indicative of non-commitment to professional ethics. In responding to this item, 36% and 26% of the subject respectively strongly agreed and agreed; while 22% and 16% of the students respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Similarly, a big majority (64%) of the subjects responded by the affirmative to Item 8 which stated that: In the films, influential social actors indulge in various crimes with the complicity of the police, thus indicating corruption in the Nigerian police force. In effect, 34% of the students strongly agreed with the contents of this

Item while 30% simply agreed. Contrary to the above, 20% disagreed with the contents of the Item, while 16% strongly disagreed.

Item 9 states that: In the films, influential social actors indulge in various crimes with the complicity of the police, thus indicating corruption in the Nigerian police force. In responding to this Item, 34% and 30% of the subjects respectively strongly agreed or agreed with the contents of the Item. Meanwhile, 20% and 16% respectively disagreed or strongly disagreed with the contents of the Item.

The last Item under this subsection (Item 10) states that: In *Oloture* in particular, human trafficking and smuggling is enabled by corruption in the Nigerian Immigration and Custom services showing that Nigerian borders are porous. Subjects dominantly responded to this item in the affirmative. Indeed, 40% strongly agreed while 38 simply agreed. On the other hand, 16% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed with the contents of Item 10.

Table 3 presents students' perception of the representation of governance in *My Husband's Wealth* and *Oloture*. The table presents responses to 5 questions (Items 11 to 15). Item 11 states that political leaders in the films are involved in human trafficking showing that the governing elites in Nigeria live above the board. The majority (62%) of the subjects responded to this statement in the affirmative with 34% strongly agreeing and 28 simply agreeing. The Item also elicited some responses expressed in the negative: 16% of the students strongly disagreed while 22% agreed. Item 12 states that: In the films, political leaders use their privileged position to violate the human rights of the poor and disadvantaged in society, indicating that part of the Nigerian leadership is oppressive. Responses to this item show that 58% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, 10% disagreed while 14% strongly disagreed.

**Table 2**

**Table 2 Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Student's Perceptions of Law Enforcement Institutions**

N	STATEMENT	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
6	The protagonists and the antagonist's frivolous and fraudulent engagement of the Nigerian police force plays out a serious state of corruption.	16	32	15	30	10	20	9	18	50	100
7	Policemen's use of verbal abuse and physical brutality in the films paints a picture of the force being abusers of human rights.	26	52	12	24	7	14	5	10	50	100
8	The police officers' use of double standard in the treatment of different categories of citizens is indicative of non-commitment to professional ethics.	18	36	13	26	11	22	8	16	50	100
9	In the films, influential social actors indulge in various crimes with the complicity of the police, thus indicating corruption in the Nigerian police force.	17	34	15	30	10	20	8	16	50	100
10	In <i>Oloture</i> in particular, human trafficking and smuggling is enabled by corruption in the Nigerian Immigration and Custom	20	40	19	38	8	16	3	6	50	100

services showing that Nigerian borders are porous.

Source Fieldwork 2021

Item 13 states that: In *Oloture* in particular, some members of the Nigerian Parliament push for people-centred policies suggesting that some Nigerian politicians are patriotic. Responses to this Item are as follows: 42% strongly agreed, 32% agreed, 10% disagreed while 16% strongly disagreed. Similar responses were observed for Item 14 which states that “In the films, politicians use occultism and cults to ensure success in politics. This suggests that some Nigerian politicians are diabolic”. Findings pertaining to this item reveal that 26% of the students strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 20% disagreed while the remaining 18% of the students strongly disagreed. Item 15 states that: traditional leaders’ ability to strongly influence politics in the films shows that traditional political institutions in Nigeria are still very influential in the political life of the country. The majority of subjects responded in the affirmative thus: 48% strongly agreed, 16% agreed. A weak minority (36%) rejected the statement. In effect, 22% disagreed while 14% strongly disagreed.

Table 4 presents students’ perception of the representation of infrastructures in the films under study. Item 16 in the table states that “ultra-modern buildings projected in the films indicate that Nigeria is well developed”. This statement elicited more responses in the negative than responses in the positive. Concretely 70% of the subject disagreed while 30% agreed – that the ultra-modern buildings shown in the film show that Nigeria is well developed. The findings related to Item 16 explicitly show that 18% strongly agreed, 12% agreed, 52% disagreed while 18% strongly disagreed. The same scenario is observed with Item 17 where responses in the affirmative are low compared to responses in the negative.

Table 3

Table 3 Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Students’ Perceptions of the Portrayal of governance

N	STATEMENT	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	The depiction of governance in the film										
11	Political leaders in the film are involved in human trafficking showing that the governing elites in Nigeria live above the board.	17	34	14	28	11	22	8	16	50	100
12	In the films political leaders use their privileged position to violate the human rights of the poor and disadvantaged in society, indicating that part of the Nigerian leadership is oppressive.	29	58	9	18	5	10	7	14	50	100
13	In <i>Oloture</i> in particular, some members of the Nigerian Parliament push for people-centered policies suggesting that some Nigerian politicians are patriotic.	21	42	16	32	5	10	8	16	50	100
14	In the films, politicians use occultism and cults to ensure success in politics. This suggests that some Nigerian politicians are diabolic.	13	26	18	36	10	20	9	18	50	100



15	In the film traditional leaders are strongly involved in politics. This shows that traditional political institutions in Nigeria are still very influential in the political life of the country.	24	48	8	16	11	22	7	14	50	100
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Source Fieldwork 2021

In Item 17, subjects were asked to say whether the modern hospital facilities depicted in the film suggest that Nigerian urban towns have good health facilities. Majority (68%) of the subjects answered in the negative while a clear minority (32% of the students) answered in the positive. Concretely, findings show that 14% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, 54% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed.

Item 18 – that had to do with students' perceptions of the depiction of supermarkets in the film – elicited another lot of negative responses. Overall, 72% of the subjects perceived such depiction as not a true representation of Nigeria's level of economic development; while the remaining 28%, found it an accurate representation of economic development in the country. Findings show that 18% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 62% disagreed while 10% strongly disagreed.

Item 19 states that "In village scenes, roads are not tarred and this is suggestive of grassroots underdevelopment". Findings show that 64% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, 14% disagreed while 4% strongly disagreed. Finally, Item 20 states that "The ultra-modern educational institutions in the films, are indicative of development in the educational sector". Findings reveal that 54% of the students strongly agreed, 22% agreed, 18% disagreed while 6% strongly disagreed. In essence, 76% responded to the item in the affirmative while the remaining 24% responded in the negative.

**Table 4**

**Table 4 Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Students' Perceptions of the Portrayal of Infrastructures**

N	STATEMENT	SA		A		D		SD		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
	The portrayal of infrastructures in the film										
16	The ultra-modern buildings projected in the films indicate that Nigeria is well developed	9	18	6	12	26	52	9	18	50	100
17	The modern hospital facilities depicted in the films suggest that Nigerian urban towns have good health facilities.	7	14	9	18	27	54	7	14	50	100
18	The supermarkets used by actors in the films show the level of economic development in Nigerian urban cities.	9	18	5	10	31	62	5	10	50	100
19	In village scenes, roads are not tarred and this is suggestive of grassroots underdevelopment.	32	64	9	18	7	14	2	4	50	100
20	The ultra-modern educational institutions in the films, is indicative of development in the educational sector.	27	54	11	22	9	18	3	6	50	100

Source Fieldwork 2021

## 5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Discussions will once again be guided by the four main objectives of the research work, as enunciated in the foregoing. Based on these objectives, the present section will be organised into four principal parts including (i) students' perceptions of cultural representations in Nollywood films, (ii) Students' perceptions of law enforcement institutions in Nigeria, (iii) Students' perceptions of governance in Nigeria and (iv) Students' perceptions of infrastructures in Nigeria

### 5.1. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS IN NOLLYWOOD FILMS

The first objective of the study was to examine Cameroonian students' perceptions of cultural representations in Nollywood films, using Ogbani's *My Husbands Wealth* and Kenneth Gyang's *Oluture* as case studies. It is helpful to highlight, from the outset that, these cultural representations were mainly negative, judging from the contents of the items considered for this study. As has been shown in the previous sections of this thesis, three out of the five items considered under cultural representations in the two films selected for the study indicated negative portrayals of various aspects of Nigerian cultures notably language habits, voodoo, burial rites religious fanaticism and misguided religion and the blood money phenomenon among others. The three items focusing mainly on negative depictions of Nigerian cultures include:

- 1) Item 2 which focused on actors' frequent use of black magic and voodoo in the films pointing to Nigerians' image as being deep in sorcery,
- 2) Item 4 which focused on the dominance of harsh widowhood rites in *My Husband's Wealth* which suggest adherence to backward de-humanising burial rites' image
- 3) Item 5 which states that "In the films, the many pockets of shrines and deities reflect religiosity in Nigeria".

The results of the study indicate that the three negative cultural representations mentioned above elicited negative perceptions of Nigerian cultures from the subjects. Majority of the students under study agreed with these gloomy representations, suggesting that the students' Nollywood film experiences pushed many among them (generally 54 to 74% of them, [Table 1](#), [Table 4](#) to perceive the Nigerian society as being decadent, religious and plagued by black magic and voodoo as well as by dehumanising widowhood rites. Students' responses to the three Items mentioned above confirms or rather justifies the fears of [Omojuwa \(2013\)](#) who claimed that in African countries, Nollywood films have pushed multitudes of audiences to believe that witchcraft and voodoo are an integral part of everyday reality in Nigeria. The result equally justifies [Sydelle's \(2009\)](#) observation that Nollywood films have over the years motivated foreign audiences to perceive Nigerians and their cultures in a very negative light, associating the Nigerian nationality with cultism, voodoo and corruption. Such a perception is not really accurate as it considers only a minute aspect of life in Nigeria. Although it is clearly possible to find Nigerians who believe in voodoo, cultism and witchcraft or who indulge in some very primitive and inhuman kinds of practices, Nigerian cultures and identities cannot be summarised in few negative practices, as suggested by students' perceptions. It is, in effect, also possible to find many other Nigerians who do not believe or practice the "vices" mentioned above.

The results of the study indicate that only a minority of the students or subjects considered for the study tended to view the negative cultural representations of Nigerian and their cultures either as a myopic representation of reality or a gross deformation of the social reality in Nigeria.

The students/subjects however exhibited a positive perception of some few aspects of Nigerian cultures. This is particularly true to students' responses to Items 1 and 3. Actually, the two items mentioned above dwelled on positive representations of specific Nigerian cultures in the film. Item 1 for instance drew the attention of the students to actors' recurrent deployment of traditional proverbs in their speeches which shows that many Nigerians are conservative and traditionalist. Item 3 was similarly concerned with actors' sustained tendency of dressing mostly in traditional wears, showing that many Nigerians have a pride for their cultures. These two positive depictions of Nigerians' cultures elicited positive perceptions of Nigeria among the subjects under study. Results indicate that 56% of the subjects viewed Item 1 as accurate. The results of the study also show that 72% of the subjects agreed with the depiction of Nigerian cultures given in Item 3. Thus, the viewing of the film caused a majority of the subjects to view Nigerians as people who are predominantly conservative and attached to their cultures – which to this author is arguably positive. The viewing of the two films caused majority of these subjects to see Nigerian as people who have a pride for their cultures.

Students' perceptions of Nigerian cultures were always highly dictated by the nature of cultural representation observed in the films under study. In other words, positive representations most often attracted positive perceptions while negative portrayals attracted negative perceptions. The results of the study therefore suggest that the way Nollywood film directors depict Nigerian cultures in their filmic productions strongly affects the way foreign audiences perceive Nigeria. These results also give credence to Gibson's version of the perception theory which stipulates that the information collected by the sense organs directly shape perception. This is so as what the subjects saw in the film directly determined their perceptions of the social reality in Nigeria. Majority of the subjects saw the actors' use of black magic as well as the prevalence of voodoo and dehumanizing burial and widowhood rites in the films as indicators of the prevalence of moral decadence and de-humanising cultures in Nigeria. The films' contents thus directly influenced students' perceptions of the Nigerian social reality. In view of this finding, it could be said that Nollywood films have a great potential to influence Cameroonian audiences' perceptions of Nigerian cultures.

## 5.2. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

The second objective of the study had to do with examining Cameroonian students' perception of the representation of law enforcement institutions in *My Husband's Wealth* and *Oluture*. All the five questionnaire items related to this objective (that is Items 6 to 10) drew the attention of students to negative depictions of the Nigerian police, immigration service and custom services in the films, as shown below:

- 1) Item 6 highlighted the protagonist and antagonist's frivolous and fraudulent engagement of the police force in the film, showing the Nigerian police's state of corruption.

- 2) Item 7 drew subjects' attention to policemen's use of verbal abuse and physical brutality in the film, which hints that the Nigerian police are abuser of human rights.
- 3) Item 8 drew students' attention to police officers' use of double standard in the treatment of different categories of citizens. The item stressed that such depiction point to some Nigerian police officers' non-commitment to professional ethics.
- 4) Item 9 highlighted that many actors' in the films under study indulge in various criminal acts with the help of the police force, giving the impression the Nigerian police force is corrupt.
- 5) Item 10 undermined the corruption in the Nigerian immigration and custom services which enables human trafficking and contributes to the porous nature of Nigerian borders.

The five items mentioned above elicited mostly negative reactions and negative perceptions of the Nigerian police and other law enforcement services, from the students. The findings of the study reveal that 62% of the subjects responded to Item 6 in the affirmative [Table 2](#). So too, 76% of these subjects agreed that the contents of Item 7 is true. Thus, most of the subjects responded to these items in the affirmative indicating that the film's negative representation of the Nigerian police and other law enforcement institutions had influenced the students to mostly have a negative perception of these Nigerian institutions.

Students' responses to Items 6 to 10 once more give credence to Gibson's version of the perception theory which, as earlier mentioned, stipulates that the information available in the environment is sufficient and rich enough to directly trigger perception in man. Such information is sufficient enough to enable man make sense of the world. Thus, perception can solely be explained in terms of the environment. In other words, what one sees is what he/she gets. There is no need for interpretation in a process of perception as the information the perceiver receives about size, shape and distances etc. is sufficient and detailed enough to interact directly with the environment. This tenet of Gibson's theory is revealed in the fact that the film's representation of the Nigerian police and sister institutions seem to have, to the majority of the subjects, served as the source of perception of the Nigerian police and other law enforcement institutions. The films (*My Husband's Wealth* and *Oluture*) represented the Nigerian police force, the Immigration and Custom services as being corrupt institutions, abuser of human rights, and services that are plagued by unprofessionalism and moral decadence. These negative representations directly motivated majority of the subjects to perceive the Nigerian police force and some other law enforcement institutions in the negative light. This majority of subjects seemed not to have combined the information they gathered with the aid of their senses with prior information/knowledge about the Nigerian police.

### 5.3. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

The third objective of the study sought to examine Cameroonian students' perception of the representation of governance in Nollywood films using *My Husband's Wealth* and *Oluture* as case study. Four of the five questionnaire items related to these objective highlighted negative representations of governance in the two films under study. The first item (Item 11) stated that "political leaders in the film are involved in human trafficking showing that the governing elites in Nigeria live above the board". Similarly, the second item (Item 12) stressed the fact that, in

the films, political leaders use their privileged position to violate the human rights of the poor and disadvantaged in society, indicating that part of the Nigerian leadership is oppressive. Item 13 underscored the fact that in *Oluture* in particular, some members of the Nigerian Parliament push for people-centred policies suggesting that some Nigerian politicians are patriotic. Similarly, Item 14 focussed on the fact that, in the films, politicians use occultism and cults to ensure success in politics. This suggests that some Nigerian politicians are diabolic.

Finally, Item 15 stressed that traditional leaders in the films are strongly involved in politics showing that traditional institutions in Nigeria are still very influential in the political life of the country. A part from Item 13, the items explored under the representation of governance in the two films elicited mostly negative perceptions of the governing apparatuses of Nigeria. In effect, 62% of the subjects agreed with the contents of Item 11, over 76% similarly agreed and strongly agreed with the contents of Item 12 while 64% of these subjects also responded to Item 15 in the affirmative [Table 3](#). The results of the study indicate that the representations of governance in the films under study generally motivated majority of the students to see governance in Nigeria in a negative light. The films motivated them to view the Nigerian political leaders as people who live above the board that is, people who transgress the very law and institutions they are supposed to defend.

Based on student's responses to Items 11, 12, 14 and 15, one may rightly believe that Nollywood films have strong potential to negatively affect foreign (notably other Cameroonian) audiences' perceptions of governance in Nigeria. These responses also give some credence to Gibson's version of the perception theory.

#### 5.4. STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INFRASTRUCTURES IN NIGERIA

The fourth objective of the study was to examine students' perception of the portrayal of infrastructures in the two films under study. This portrayal of infrastructure in the film was mainly positive. As shown in Items 16, 17, 18 and 20 of the questionnaire, the films chosen for the study mainly represented the Nigerian urban space as a place which is "beautified" and well developed. The films actually depict Nigeria as a country whose urban space is characterised by good road networks, ultra-modern buildings and architecture, modern hospital facilities and ultra-modern commercial institutions such as big supermarkets. The only negative representation of infrastructures in Nigeria is highlighted in Item 19 which stated that "in village scenes, roads are not tarred and this is suggestive of grassroots underdevelopment".

In spite of the dominantly positive depiction of infrastructures in the film, the students were influenced to perceived infrastructures in Nigeria mainly in a negative light. In responding to Item 15 for instance, majority (70%) of the students under study denied that the ultra-modern buildings projected in the film indicate that Nigeria is well developed [Table 4](#). In other words, majority of the students were not positively influenced by the films to view Nigeria as a well developed country. One observes the same scenario in students' response to Item 16 which stipulated that "the modern hospital facilities depicted in the films suggest that Nigerian urban towns have good health facilities". Majority (68%) of the subjects responded to this statement in the negative showing that they do not perceive health facilities in Nigeria as being good. Students' negative perceptions of infrastructures in Nigeria are made more manifest in their responses to Item 19 which stipulated that "in village scenes, roads are not tarred and this is suggestive of grassroots underdevelopment". Majority (82%) of the subjects answered this question in the



affirmative indicating that they negatively perceived levels of development in the Nigerian grassroots.

The students' responses to the items related to the four objectives strongly give credence to Gregory's version of the perception theory as well as to Stuart Hall's Encoding and Decoding theory. The responses actually prove Gregory right in the sense that they indicate that a number of the subjects tended to depend on pre-knowledge, pre-conceptions or other sources of information about state of infrastructures in Nigeria, for their perceptions. The films they were exposed to mainly represented infrastructures notably road networks, architectures prevailing in the urban space, hospital facilities and commercial establishments in Nigerian urban towns as being well developed. However, the students did not, in their majority, agree with such a representation, showing that their perceptions were (apparently) informed by pre-knowledge of, or preconceptions about some social and economic institutions in Nigeria.

The students' responses also give credence to Stuart Hall's Encoding-Decoding theory in that, the codes used by the film directors (the encoder) were in some instances, not deployed by the students (the decoders) in their reading of the two films (*My Husband's Wealth* and *Oloture*). This "aberrant" reading of the films seems to have caused the students to perceive infrastructural development in Nigeria contrary to the ways the film directors represented it. According to Hall's theory, a communicator (in this case a cineaste) always chooses to encode a message for ideological purposes and manipulates language and media for those ends (media messages are given a preferred reading or what is now called 'spin'). But the receivers are not obliged to accept or decode messages as sent but can/and do resist ideological influence by applying variant or oppositional readings according to their own experience and outlook. This tenet was validated by the way the majority reacted to Items 16 to 20 devoted to students' perceptions of infrastructural development in Nigeria through their Nollywood film experience.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The Nollywood film industry has, these last decades, phenomenally grown to become a transnational cinematic culture received predominantly in black African countries including Cameroon. In tandem with this, Nollywood films have been one of Nigeria's major cultural exports to Cameroon and a potential window or peephole into Nigeria. The films have, to Cameroonian audiences, been a source of information about Nigeria, Nigerians and Nigerian cultures. The strong, ubiquitous and informative nature of these films coupled with the avidness with which foreign audiences utilise them has inspired various assumptions, one of which is that the largely negative portrayal of Nigeria in Nollywood films could only negatively shape Cameroonian university students' perception of Nigeria.

Although sensational and relatively logical, this assumption has not been verified through empirical investigation. This study has addressed this lacuna through an investigation of Cameroonian university students' perception of the Nigerian image through Nollywood video films. Using a quasi experimental design, this study specifically examined the place of Nollywood films among other factors that influence Cameroonian university students' perception of key Nigerian institutions such as schools, hospitals, security agencies and infrastructural development. Findings from the study suggest that Nollywood films remain dominant among factors influencing Cameroonian student's perception of Nigeria's image, a perception which is mainly negative. The study also confirms the negative perception of Nigeria's image; concluding that at present, Nollywood films spread

Nigeria's soft power in Cameroon only to a small extent and the films do not have the kind of effects that justify the development theory; and that, the films need thematic and aesthetic redefinition to produce the kind of effects that will support Nigeria's efforts towards nation branding.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

None.

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