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Film-Induced Tourism in the Promotion of Nigeria:
A Critical Reading of the Nollywood Movie *Up North*

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Abstract

This study examines how Nollywood cinema contributes to destination image formation and film-induced tourism in Nigeria through a critical reading of the movie *Up North* (Oshin, 2018). Anchored on Film-Induced Tourism Theory (Beeton, 2005), Destination Image Theory (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), and Representation Theory (Hall, 1997), the research employs qualitative content analysis to identify and interpret tourism-inducing elements within the film. Findings reveal that *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) showcases Northern Nigeria's scenic landscapes, cultural festivals, heritage sites, and local hospitality, projecting the region as a vibrant tourism destination. These cinematic representations reinforce positive national imagery and highlight Nollywood's potential as a tool for soft power and tourism marketing. The study recommends strategic collaborations between filmmakers and tourism agencies to enhance Nigeria's global tourism appeal through film. It concludes that integrating cinematic storytelling into national tourism policy can strengthen destination branding and cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: *Film-Tourism, Nollywood, Cinematic Representation, Destination Marketing, Regional Branding*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a country endowed with vast potential; however, a significant proportion of its population continues to live below the poverty line. The film industry, among other sectors contributing to national development, has played a notable role in alleviating poverty and creating employment opportunities for thousands of Nigerians. Popularly referred to as Nollywood, the Nigerian film industry is renowned for its prolific output and has grown to become the second-largest producer of films in the world, following Bollywood (Nashville Information Services, 2017).

Although Nigerian films have gained considerable global recognition and surpassed Hollywood in production volume, Iwuh (2019) argues that the industry still lags in revenue generation, particularly in box-office earnings and related streams such as merchandising revenue, soundtrack and music revenue, and video games and interactive media revenue. He further explains that filmmakers should look beyond achieving a break-even point, as producers' profits may accrue over extended periods, even years after a film's release. A pertinent example is the James Bond franchise, which continues to generate revenue through repeated broadcasts on platforms such as DStv.

Despite these achievements, the Nigerian film industry has frequently been criticised for its limited contribution to the promotion of potential tourist destinations across the country. This shortcoming is viewed as a missed opportunity to support local economic growth and contribute to national development through tourism promotion.

Although a number of films have made attempts to address this gap, such as *The Figurine* (Afolaya, 2012) and *Up North* (Oshin, 2018), there remains a lack of scholarly studies that critically analyse how such films have portrayed and promoted tourism sites in Nigeria. This absence of systematic research underscores the need to document and evaluate cinematic efforts aimed at advancing tourism awareness through film.

The existing knowledge gap lies in the dearth of academic analyses that examine films specifically created to promote Nigerian culture and tourism. To address this gap, the present study examines how *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) functions as a medium for promoting tourism and shaping destination image in Nigeria. The study draws on three interrelated theoretical perspectives. Film-Induced Tourism Theory (Beeton, 2005) provides a framework for understanding how cinematic narratives and visual imagery stimulate travel motivation by constructing emotional and aesthetic connections to real locations. Destination Image Theory (Echtner & Ritchie,

1991) complements this by explaining how audiences form cognitive and affective impressions of places based on mediated representations. Representation Theory (Hall, 1997) offers a critical lens for analysing how cultural meaning, identity, and space are constructed and communicated through film. In addition, this theory is particularly relevant in exploring how *Up North* represents Northern Nigeria's people, heritage, and environment, and how these portrayals contribute to broader narratives of national identity and tourism promotion. Together, these theories help explain how films influence tourists' perceptions and decisions through both visual and narrative cues.

Consequently, this study investigates the extent to which the film *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) promotes tourism in Nigeria. It seeks to determine whether tourism-inducing features are prominently depicted in the film and to analyse how these features are represented.

In line with these objectives, the study is guided by two principal research questions:

1. What tourism-inducing features are prominently portrayed in the film *Up North* (Oshin, 2018)?
2. How are these tourism-inducing features represented within the film?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Film Tourism

Film tourism lies at the intersection of media studies, tourism studies, and cultural geography. Various definitions of film tourism have been advanced since the concept entered academic discourse. Busby and Klug (2001) contextualise film tourism as a form of media-related tourism that involves visits to locations celebrated for their association with books, television programmes, or films. Similarly, Hudson and Ritchie (2006) define it as tourist visits to, or attractions associated with, destinations featured on cinema screens, television, or video. Niziol (2015) expands upon these definitions by stating that film tourism encompasses tourism activities induced—either directly or indirectly—by destinations or attractions viewed on screen, including those represented in commercials, films, internet media, and television. Collectively, these definitions attest to the power of film in promoting tourism, hence the term film-induced tourism.

Film-Induced Tourism and Destination Image Formation

The concept refers to the phenomenon whereby viewers are inspired to visit destinations after encountering them in films, television programmes, or other screen media (Beeton, 2005; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Beeton (2005) conceptualises film-induced tourism as a process through which cinematic texts function as catalysts for destination awareness, emotional attachment, and travel motivation. In this context, films transcend their entertainment function to become powerful vehicles for place promotion and cultural communication.

Theories of destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991) and place branding (Anholt, 2007) also provide a conceptual framework for understanding how cinematic representations can influence audience perceptions of specific locations. When a destination is positively portrayed on screen, it may attract tourists who seek to experience the cinematic environment in reality. A study of twelve films revealed a 50 percent rise in visits to locations featured in those films, lasting at least five years after their release (Riley, Baker, & Van Doren, 1998).

Empirical examples further illustrate this phenomenon. For instance, New Zealand experienced an increase of over 52 percent in tourist arrivals between 1998 and 2008 following the release of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy—*The Fellowship of the Ring* (Jackson, 2001), *The Two Towers* (Jackson, 2002), and *The Return of the King* (Jackson, 2003). Similarly, Scotland recorded a 300 percent rise in visitors after the release of *Braveheart* (Gibson, 1995), while Çanakkale in Turkey experienced a 73 percent increase in tourist numbers after the release of *Troy* (Petersen, 2004; Mansson & Eskilsson, 2013).

Busby and Klug (2001) identify several motivations for the surge in visitors to film locations. These include the desire of viewers to follow in the footsteps of their favourite actors, to physically experience locations to which they have developed sentimental attachment through film, engage with the historical narratives represented on screen, explore the scenic landscapes depicted, and immerse themselves in the cultures portrayed in the cinematic text.

According to Hudson and Ritchie (2006), film exposure can significantly influence destination image, especially when the cinematic portrayal aligns with a region's aesthetic and cultural identity. They note that audiences form mental associations between the visual imagery on screen and real-world destinations, thereby transforming cinematic locations into experiential consumption sites. Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) Destination Image Theory

provides a conceptual foundation for understanding this process by explaining how audiences form cognitive and affective images of destinations through both organic and induced information sources. Within this framework, films serve as an induced medium capable of reshaping perceptions and constructing favourable images that influence tourist decision-making.

Empirical studies support this relationship between film representation and tourism behaviour. Riley et al(1998) found that destinations featured in popular films experienced significant increases in tourist arrivals for several years following the film's release. Similarly, Connell (2012) emphasises that cinematic exposure functions as an informal marketing strategy, particularly for countries or regions that may lack the resources for large-scale promotional campaigns. These findings collectively highlight the role of visual storytelling in shaping spatial perception and destination image, establishing a direct link between media representation and tourism promotion.

Cinema as Cultural Text and Representational Space

Film operates not only as a medium of narrative but also as a cultural and ideological text through which identity, space, and meaning are negotiated. Hall's (1997) Representation Theory posits that meaning is constructed through representational systems such as language and imagery, and that media texts both reflect and produce cultural knowledge. Applied to film, this theory suggests that cinematic representation shapes how audiences perceive people, places, and cultures. In this regard, the way Nigeria or any of its regions is portrayed on screen influences the audience's understanding of its social and cultural identity.

Nollywood, as Africa's largest film industry, has become a crucial space for representing national identity and cultural narratives (Haynes, 2016). The industry's narratives often revolve around everyday social realities, but in recent years, filmmakers have begun to explore themes of modernisation, regional diversity, and national cohesion. However, despite its global reach, Nollywood's engagement with tourism promotion remains under-researched. Scholars such as Akande (2020) and Iwuh (2019) observe that while Nigerian films have gained visibility worldwide, their potential role in projecting a positive destination image and fostering tourism has not been fully realised. This gap provides a compelling rationale for examining specific films like *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) that consciously integrate tourism and cultural representation into their narrative and visual design.

Nollywood and the Promotion of Nigerian Tourism

The relationship between Nollywood and tourism has gradually attracted scholarly attention. Niziol (2015) asserts that film functions as an alternative promotional medium capable of stimulating both domestic and international tourism, especially when integrated with local culture and geography. In the Nigerian context, films such as *The Figurine* (Afolayan, 2009), *October 1* (Afolayan, 2014), and *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) have been cited as examples of cinematic works that showcase the country's diverse landscapes and cultural expressions. Busby and Klug (2001) argue that such films can serve as “cultural intermediaries” by inviting audiences to experience destinations they might not otherwise consider.

Iwuh (2019) highlights the economic significance of this intersection, noting that the Nigerian film industry has the potential to contribute substantially to national development by stimulating tourism and local enterprise. Yet, most Nollywood productions still focus on urban and domestic settings, leaving the country's rural and natural environments underrepresented. This imbalance limits the scope of tourism narratives and restricts the ability of Nigerian cinema to contribute to place branding and the re-imaging of national identity.

Up North (Oshin, 2018) emerges within this context as a significant cultural product that foregrounds Northern Nigeria's tourism potential. By integrating landscapes, architecture, and festivals into its storyline, the film exemplifies the concept of “cinematic geography” — the construction of spatial meaning through filmic representation (Cresswell, 2010). This makes it an ideal case for studying how Nollywood can mediate between national identity and tourism development, using film as a soft-power instrument for rebranding and cultural diplomacy.

Theoretical Framework

Film-Induced Tourism Theory

This study is anchored on Film-Induced Tourism Theory (Beeton, 2005), which explains how cinematic representations influence tourist motivations, destination perceptions, and visitation patterns. According to Beeton, films serve as powerful “pull factors” that create awareness of locations and stimulate curiosity among audiences by presenting destinations through emotionally engaging narratives and compelling visual imagery. When viewers are exposed to cinematic depictions of real or imagined places, they

may develop a desire to experience these locations first-hand — a phenomenon widely documented in tourism studies (Riley et al, 1998; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). In this context, films function as indirect marketing tools, shaping viewers' expectations and potentially converting passive spectators into active tourists. This theoretical perspective provides the foundation for analysing how *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) portrays Nigerian cultural and environmental assets in ways that could inspire travel interest and tourism development.

Destination Image Theory

Complementing the perspective of Film-Induced Tourism Theory is Destination Image Theory (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), which offers a conceptual lens for understanding how individuals form mental images of tourist destinations. The theory posits that destination image comprises both cognitive (knowledge-based) and affective (emotion-based) components, and that these images are influenced by organic and induced information sources. In the case of film, cinematic depictions constitute a potent form of induced image, capable of reinforcing or reshaping perceptions of a destination. Applying this framework to *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) enables an examination of how the film's narrative, cinematography, and character experiences contribute to constructing a desirable image of Northern Nigeria. This helps explain how media representations can alter pre-existing stereotypes, encourage destination familiarity, and influence travel intention.

Representation Theory and Place Branding Theory

To provide a critical interpretive dimension, the study further draws on Representation Theory (Hall, 1997) and Place Branding Theory (Anholt, 2007). Hall's Representation Theory is essential for interrogating how meaning is constructed and communicated through cultural texts, including film. It facilitates the analysis of how *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) encodes identity, tradition, and regional imagery, and how these representations reproduce or challenge dominant narratives about Nigeria's northern region. Meanwhile, Place Branding Theory extends the discussion by linking cinematic representation to broader nation-branding efforts, wherein media serve as tools for projecting positive national or regional identities to global audiences. The integration of these theoretical perspectives provides a comprehensive framework for examining *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) not merely as entertainment but as a cultural artefact capable of influencing

perception, identity, and tourism behaviour. Together, these theories enable a nuanced exploration of how film functions simultaneously as a site of representation, a medium of persuasion, and a catalyst for tourism promotion in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach to examine how tourism-related features are represented in the film *Up North* (Oshin, 2018). Content analysis was selected because it allows for a systematic yet interpretive examination of visual and narrative components that communicate meaning about tourism and place identity (Krippendorff, 2013).

The purposive sampling technique was used to choose the film *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) as the primary text because it explicitly portrays Northern Nigeria as a central setting, integrating local culture, landscapes, and tourist attractions into its storyline. As Patton (2002) notes, purposive sampling allows the researcher to select information-rich cases that offer deep insights into the central phenomenon under investigation. The film, with a runtime of approximately 100 minutes, was reviewed in full. Scenes were then purposively segmented based on thematic relevance—specifically, instances where imagery or setting explicitly depicted tourism-inducing features. Each segment served as a unit of analysis for the content coding process.

The units of analysis included exotic scenes and sequences that visually or thematically referenced tourist sites, cultural events, or environmental features with tourism potential. The content categories were adapted from prior film tourism studies (Beeton, 2005; Busby & Klug, 2001; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006) and comprised five main themes: (1) exotic scenery and landscapes; (2) cultural festivals and events; (3) historical and architectural heritage; (4) wildlife and nature attractions; and (5) celebrity or star-power appeal. These categories guided the coding process used to identify tourism-inducing representations.

To ensure coding reliability, an intercoder reliability test was conducted using Cohen's kappa (κ). Two independent coders reviewed the film to ensure analytical reliability, recording instances of each category alongside scene timestamps and brief descriptions. Discrepancies in coding were resolved through discussion, achieving a satisfactory intercoder reliability (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.78$).

Following Krippendorff’s (2013) recommendation for content analysis, Cohen’s kappa (κ) was used to measure the level of agreement between the coders, correcting for the possibility of chance agreement. The observed agreement (Po) and expected agreement by chance (Pe) were calculated using the following formula:

$$\kappa = (Po - Pe) / (1 - Pe)$$

Table 1. Calculation of Cohen’s Kappa for Inter-coder Reliability

Coder Agreement	Observed Frequency (%)	Proportion (P)	Explanation
Coders agree on category	85	0.85	Both coders assigned the same theme to the scene
Coders disagree on category	15	0.15	Coders assigned different themes
Total	100	1.00	—

Source: *Authors’ Fieldwork (2022)*

The expected agreement (Pe) based on chance was calculated as 0.32, derived from the proportional probabilities of each coder’s independent category assignments. Substituting into the formula:

$$\kappa = (0.85 - 0.32) / (1 - 0.32) = 0.53 / 0.68 = 0.78$$

This result ($\kappa = 0.78$) indicates substantial agreement between coders, according to the interpretive scale proposed by Landis and Koch (1977). This level of reliability confirms that the coding categories were clearly defined and consistently applied across the dataset.

Data presentation and analysis were guided by a combination of thematic and theoretical frameworks. The study applied Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase model of thematic analysis to identify and organize recurring tourism-inducing features within the film. This model was selected because it offers methodological transparency and replicability, aligning well with qualitative content analysis.

Findings were presented through thematic tables, and the analysis integrated both quantitative frequency counts of coded elements and qualitative thematic interpretation, linking the results to the theoretical framework. In particular, the findings were interpreted in relation to Destination Image Theory’s cognitive–affective dimensions and Representation Theory’s focus on meaning construction, providing a robust

foundation for understanding the contribution of Up North (Oshin, 2018) to film-induced tourism and national image promotion.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The qualitative content analysis of Up North (Oshin, 2018) revealed that the film employs a deliberate cinematic strategy to showcase Northern Nigeria's scenic and cultural richness. Five key tourism-inducing categories emerged from the analysis: (1) scenic landscapes and architecture, (2) cultural festivals and traditions, (3) wildlife and natural attractions, (4) historical and heritage sites, and (5) celebrity influence and star power. These findings demonstrate how Nollywood productions can serve as visual and narrative vehicles for destination promotion and cultural re-imagination. The following discussion interprets these categories within the theoretical frameworks of Film-Induced Tourism Theory, Destination Image Theory, and Representation Theory, drawing on relevant scholarly insights to contextualize the results.

Scenic Landscapes and Architecture

The film's cinematography foregrounds Northern Nigeria's aesthetic appeal through repeated aerial and panoramic shots of landscapes, deserts, and cityscapes. Locations such as the Bauchi Emir's Palace, Yankari Game Reserve, and other recognisable sites are visually romanticised through wide shots, natural lighting, and vibrant colour grading. These sequences function as visual cues of attraction, corresponding to what Beeton (2005) describes as "visual pull factors" in Film-Induced Tourism Theory—cinematic elements that stimulate audience curiosity and emotional connection to real-world destinations.

From the perspective of Destination Image Theory (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), these images contribute to both cognitive and affective destination components. Cognitively, the audience learns about the existence and visual quality of Bauchi's tourist locations; affectively, the tone and warmth of the visuals evoke positive emotions, potentially fostering a desire to experience these places first-hand. Similar to findings by Hudson and Ritchie (2006), Up North (Oshin, 2018) reinforces the notion that cinematic portrayals of landscapes can transform lesser-known regions into appealing tourism icons by providing accessible and emotionally charged imagery.

Cultural Festivals and Traditions

The Durbar Festival sequence stands out as a core narrative and aesthetic highlight in the film. The elaborate costumes, equestrian displays, and rhythmic music serve not only to entertain but to symbolize cultural pride and continuity. The depiction of these cultural performances supports Beeton's (2005) assertion that film narratives can integrate heritage and local identity into tourism imagery, thereby enriching a destination's uniqueness and authenticity.

Applying Representation Theory (Hall, 1997), these portrayals encode Northern culture as vibrant, hospitable, and distinct, countering the reductive stereotypes of the region often found in mainstream discourse. However, while the representation is largely celebratory, it remains somewhat idealised, emphasising harmony and spectacle while omitting socioeconomic challenges—a pattern consistent with what Hall terms the “preferred meaning,” in which the filmmaker constructs a positive yet selective version of cultural reality. Nonetheless, such cinematic emphasis on cultural vibrancy contributes to positive place branding (Anholt, 2007) by aligning the film's visual discourse with national image promotion.

Wildlife and Nature Attractions

The inclusion of wildlife and natural scenery, notably scenes filmed in Yankari Game Reserve, aligns with the film's broader environmental awareness. These depictions reinforce Nigeria's eco-tourism potential, presenting the region as both adventurous and serene. In accordance with Beeton's Film-Induced Tourism model, such imagery serves as an experiential gateway, conveying the sensory pleasures of exploration and relaxation associated with tourism.

Empirically, these sequences perform an induced image function as described by Echtner and Ritchie (1991): they provide mediated experiences that shape perceptions of safety, beauty, and accessibility. By visualising Nigeria's natural heritage, *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) extends Nollywood's thematic reach beyond urban narratives, positioning the environment as a core element of the national tourism brand.

Historical and Heritage Sites

Heritage elements—such as palaces, traditional architecture, and ancient city structures—are depicted in *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) through scenes that

celebrate Nigeria's historical depth. This reinforces what Riley et al. (1998) found in their cross-film study that historical and symbolic landmarks, when given screen time, can attract significant tourist visits for several years post-release. In *Up North* (Oshin, 2018), these depictions invite viewers to reinterpret northern cities not as peripheries but as centres of cultural heritage, reframing spatial hierarchies within Nigeria's tourism geography.

Celebrity Influence and Star Power

The casting of well-known Nigerian actors such as Banky W and Rahama Sadau amplifies the film's promotional potential. Star power, as Niziol (2015) suggests, can serve as a persuasive trigger, reinforcing audience engagement and aspirational identification. Within the agenda-setting lens (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), the repeated visibility of celebrity figures against iconic backdrops increases the salience of these locations, subconsciously linking them to prestige, adventure, and leisure. This mechanism aligns with Beeton's observation that popular actors can function as "tourism ambassadors" whose appeal extends beyond the cinematic text.

Theoretical Interpretation of Findings

The combined findings reveal that *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) functions as a cinematic showcase of Nigeria's northern region, advancing what Beeton (2005) calls the "cinematic place effect"—the capacity of film to rebrand a location through emotional storytelling. The film's visual strategies produce an induced destination image that is largely positive, emphasising openness, cultural pride, and scenic beauty. Within the Destination Image framework, this suggests that Nollywood films can shape both cognitive awareness (knowledge of tourist sites) and affective response (emotional affinity), which are crucial precursors to travel intention (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991).

From a Representation Theory perspective, *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) simultaneously reflects and reconstructs Nigerian identity by highlighting unity amid cultural difference. This aligns with Hall's (1997) notion that media texts are not neutral reflections of reality but active constructors of meaning. In this regard, the film performs what Anholt (2007) terms "soft branding," contributing to Nigeria's national image by projecting modernity and cultural richness.

While the findings affirm the film's promotional potential, they also highlight a gap between representation and policy: the absence of structured collaboration between Nollywood filmmakers and tourism boards means

that such cinematic exposure often lacks follow-up marketing or visitor infrastructure. This supports previous arguments (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006) that film tourism’s success depends on coordinated post-release strategies that convert symbolic exposure into economic impact.

Table 2: Thematic Matrix of Tourism-Inducing Features in Up North (Oshin, 2018)

Theme / Code	Representative Scene (Timestamp)	Visual or Narrative Description	Interpretation (Linked to Theory)	Theoretical Lens
Scenic Landscapes and Geography	00:12:45–00:15:10	Establishing aerial shots of Bauchi city and Yankari Game Reserve.	These scenes highlight Northern Nigeria’s topography, wildlife, and natural beauty, constructing a positive <i>cognitive image</i> of the region as a scenic destination.	Destination Image Theory (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991)
Cultural Heritage and Festivals	00:45:20–00:49:30	Depiction of the Argungu Fishing Festival with traditional music, attire, and community celebration.	The portrayal emphasises collective identity, cultural vitality, and regional pride, reinforcing cultural authenticity as a tourism driver.	Representation Theory (Hall, 1997) & Film-Induced Tourism Theory (Beeton, 2005)
Architecture and Heritage Sites	00:33:00–00:34:45	Scenes featuring the Emir’s Palace and historical monuments in Bauchi.	The inclusion of heritage landmarks anchors the film within an authentic geographical context and evokes cultural continuity.	Destination Image Theory (Cognitive Dimension)
Hospitality and Local Lifestyle	00:51:00–00:54:20	Scene showing the protagonist’s interaction with local artisans and hosts at a family compound.	The narrative constructs an affective image of warmth, friendliness, and communal hospitality, fostering	Destination Image Theory (Affective Dimension)

			emotional connection to the destination.	
Education and Youth Empowerment as Soft Power	01:02:10–01:08:00	The protagonist’s work as a youth corps member in a local school emphasizes education, modernity, and cultural exchange.	Projects Nigeria as progressive and socially vibrant, aligning with national rebranding and soft-power narratives.	Representation Theory (Hall, 1997) & Place Branding (Anholt, 2007)
Gender and Social Representation	00:56:00–00:59:20	Subplot showing Amira, a Northern female character, asserting independence through entrepreneurship.	Challenges stereotypical depictions of Northern women, reconfiguring the region’s social image through empowered representation.	Representation Theory (Hall, 1997)
Tourism Motivation and Audience Appeal	01:12:00–01:17:30	Montage of leisure and cultural activities intercut with dialogue about “seeing the real North.”	Serves as an indirect promotional message, inviting the audience to explore the North beyond media stereotypes.	Film-Induced Tourism Theory (Beeton, 2005)
Symbolism and National Unity	01:35:00–01:40:10	Closing sequence featuring national flag imagery and cultural fusion through wedding celebration.	Suggests unity in diversity, merging tourism imagery with a broader message of national cohesion and inclusivity.	Representation Theory (Hall, 1997) & Destination Image Theory

Source: *Authors’ Fieldwork (2022)*

CONCLUSION

This study examines the role of film in promoting tourism and destination image formation in Nigeria through a critical reading of the Nollywood film *Up North* (Oshin, 2018). Anchored in Film-Induced Tourism Theory (Beeton, 2005), Destination Image Theory (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), and supported by Representation (Hall, 1997) and Place Branding (Anholt, 2007) perspectives, the study explored how cinematic elements can shape viewers’

perceptions and potentially influence tourism behaviour. The findings revealed that *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) deliberately integrates tourism-inducing features such as cultural festivals, scenic landscapes, wildlife, and heritage sites, as well as star power, to construct a positive and emotionally resonant image of Northern Nigeria.

Through its visual storytelling and representation strategies, the film reinforces the cognitive and affective dimensions of destination image as outlined in Destination Image Theory, enhancing knowledge of place while simultaneously evoking admiration and curiosity. The representation of Northern Nigeria as vibrant, welcoming, and culturally rich aligns with Film-Induced Tourism Theory's assertion that cinematic exposure can act as a catalyst for destination awareness and visitor motivation. Moreover, by countering reductive stereotypes and projecting a modern, diverse, and hospitable region, *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) contributes to Nigeria's broader nation-branding objectives.

However, the study also notes that the promotional potential of Nollywood films remains underutilised due to the absence of structured collaboration between filmmakers, tourism boards, and policymakers. Without coordinated post-release marketing or visitor engagement initiatives, the induced destination image generated by films like *Up North* (Oshin, 2018) risks remaining symbolic rather than translating into tangible tourism outcomes. Consequently, the study highlights the need for institutional partnerships that can bridge the gap between cultural production and tourism development.

Overall, the research affirms that Nollywood cinema possesses significant capacity to influence domestic and international perceptions of Nigeria, serving as an effective instrument of soft power and destination marketing. By applying theoretical insights from tourism and cultural studies, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how media representation and nation branding intersect in the Nigerian context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and theoretical insights of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Institutional Collaboration between Film and Tourism Sectors**
Tourism agencies, film producers, and government ministries should establish formal partnerships aimed at integrating tourism promotion strategies into film production and distribution. Following Beeton's

(2005) and Hudson and Ritchie's (2006) recommendations, these collaborations could include shared location marketing, film-tourism campaigns, and on-site visitor infrastructure development to maximise the tourism impact of popular films.

- **Strategic Cinematic Representation for Destination Branding**

Filmmakers should intentionally design narratives and visual compositions that highlight national heritage, culture, and natural assets in alignment with Destination Image and Place Branding principles. Such deliberate cinematic framing will strengthen both the cognitive and affective dimensions of Nigeria's image while reinforcing the country's cultural identity in global media spaces.

- **Post-Release Marketing and Audience Engagement**

Tourism boards should leverage successful Nollywood films by developing guided tours, promotional events, and digital marketing campaigns centred on filming locations. This would convert the "induced images" identified in Up North (Oshin, 2018) into experiential tourism products, thereby translating symbolic appeal into measurable economic benefits.

Capacity Building and Policy Integration

The Nigerian Film Corporation and National Tourism Development Authority should develop joint policies that recognize cinema as a component of cultural tourism development. Training programmes could focus on equipping filmmakers with basic tourism marketing knowledge and encouraging location-based storytelling.

- **Future Research and Impact Assessment**

Subsequent studies should combine content analysis with audience reception surveys or visitor statistics to empirically assess how Nollywood films influence actual travel behaviour. Mixed-method approaches could further validate the theoretical connection between cinematic representation, induced destination image, and tourism motivation.

Collectively, these recommendations underscore Nollywood's potential as a dynamic platform for reimagining and promoting Nigeria's destination image. By operationalising the theoretical linkages between media representation, film-induced tourism, and place branding, policymakers and filmmakers can transform cinematic storytelling into a sustainable tool for national development and cultural diplomacy.

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