

## Relationship between Exposure to Chinese Movies and Nigerians' Willingness to Associate Face-to-Face with Chinese Nationals

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### **Abstract**

*Nigeria has become a home for many Chinese nationals, however, not much attention has been given in communication literature to the relationship between Nigerians and Chinese. Understanding the predictors of effective and non-prejudicial communication between nationals of different countries is vital to an effective relationship between nations - this is the main concern of this study that seeks to contribute to literature on mediated intergroup communication between Nigerians and Chinese nationals. Specifically, the study assesses the direct and indirect predictive relationships between Nigerians' exposure to (contact with) Chinese movies and their willingness to associate face-to-face with Chinese nationals. The cross-sectional study adopted survey method and used a questionnaire as the instrument. The population was Nigerian adults (age 16 years and above) out of which 480 were drawn as a sample for the study, using purposive and convenient sampling techniques. The data were collected in Osun State, Southwest Nigeria and analysed with SPSS and AMOS statistical packages. Findings of the study revealed that there is an indirect positive predictive relationship (through exposure to Korean movies) between Nigerians' exposure to Chinese movies and their willingness to associate with Chinese nationals. The study concluded that the more Nigerians watch Chinese movies, the more they will watch Korean movies, and the more they will be willing to associate with Chinese nationals. Findings of this study is a contribution to intergroup communication literature, and they will be helpful in formulation of government policies to deepen the relationship between Nigeria and China. The study recommended that Nigerian government should promote policies that will increase Nigerians' exposure to Chinese and Korean movies so that Nigerians' have a more favourable disposition towards Chinese nationals to deepen Nigeria-China relations.*

**Keywords:** Chinese movies, Relationship, Exposure, Face-to-Face. willingness

## Introduction

Effective and non-prejudicial communication between nationals of different countries is vital to an effective relationship between nations. Even when two nations, such as Nigeria and China, are working hard at deepening their relationships, the hostile relationship between the nationals of the two countries can hinder the success of their governments' efforts. This is why in advanced nations, great importance is attached to the study of intergroup communication/contact and the promotion of positive intergroup communication/contact (Alport, 1954). However, as Adesokan (2014) submits, studies in intergroup contact, though needful, are rare in Nigeria.

Nigeria has become a home for many Asian nationals, especially the Chinese. The relationship between China-Nigeria is growing at a fast rate. Many Chinese nationals now live and do business in Nigeria and with Nigerians. The two countries, China and Nigeria, are committed to deepening their relationship both on commercial and political grounds (Taylor, 2007). Undoubtedly, efforts at deepening China-Nigeria relations will require a good number of empirical evidence to shed light on how the two countries' nationals view each other and how willing they are to associate. Such studies will also promote a positive view of and willingness to associate with each other. It seems no documented research examined the relationship between Nigerians' exposure to Chinese movies and their willingness to associate with Chinese nationals.

A study conducted by Pew Research Center (2013) in 38 countries posits that Nigeria ranked 5th among the 38 nations that were surveyed for favorable attitudes of their nationals towards China. Specifically, 76% of the Nigerian sample have a favorable view of China, 71% saw China as a national partner (being the fourth leading trade partner with Nigeria), and 85% respected China's advancement in science and technology. The Pew report also posits that many Nigerians (58%) are not favorably disposed to the spread of Chinese ideas and customs in Nigeria as they do not appreciate Chinese music, movies, and television programs. To what extent are these assertions of Pew Center true about Nigerians dispositions towards Chinese movies, and to what extent does Nigerians' exposure to Chinese movies contribute to their reported favourable disposition towards Chinese nationals, are questions that deserve scholarly attention.

Also, news of the outbreak of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in Wuhan, China, and other China-related negative Covid-19 news/reports have affected the way many Nigerians view Chinese nationals during the pandemic, as this researcher observes. Like many people in the United States (US) blamed China for the virus and the consequent pandemic, many Nigerian adults also accused China. Also, just as many people in the US freely used the term "China virus" as a synonym for coronavirus on different traditional and online media (Budhwani & Sun, 2020), so did many Nigerians. However, whether or not Nigerians stigmatized or are stigmatizing Chinese nationals like many people in the US did (Cho et al., 2021) is not yet established in the literature. In the US, the Federal Bureau of Investigation predicted that the Covid-19 pandemic

might cause a sharp rise in crime against Asian Americans due to hatred towards them (Margolin, 2020). However, in Nigeria, such predictions on the likely intergroup eventualities between Nigerians and Chinese nationals due to coronavirus pandemic do not exist in the literature, to the best of the knowledge of these researchers.

Nigeria is a fast-growing nation with a large and growing number of immigrants, especially from Asia. There is a need for communication researchers in Nigeria to give more attention to intergroup communication in face-to-face, mediated, and interpersonal-mediated contexts, in order to advance knowledge. Such studies will be veritable means to assess the suitability or otherwise of Western-based intergroup theories with a view of propounding Afro-centric theories that will address African-based intergroup communication realities which may not be evident to Western communication scholars. This study is an effort in that direction. It contributes to intergroup mediated contact literature which currently largely focuses on intergroup relations in the global West (Adesokan, 2014). Furthermore, the findings of this study will advance research on Chinese-Nigerians international relations from a communication perspective, and aid formulation of government policies to deepen the relations (Taylor, 2007; Umejei, 2015).

This cross-sectional study is situated in Osun State, Nigeria. It does not cover the entire nation due to the researcher's limited resources and the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country. Osun state is one of the States in southwestern Nigeria. Osun state has 30 local governments in three federal senatorial districts. Its state capital is Osogbo. On 27 August 1991, the state was created by the then Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. The 1991 census put the state population at 2.2 million, with the majority being from major sub-ethnic groups of the Yoruba race, such as Ife, Ijesa, Oyo, Ibolo, and Igbomina. The name Osun state was derived from the River Osun, and annually a major traditional festival in honour of the goddess of the River Osun is held in Osogbo, the State capital (<https://osun.gov.ng/about/history/>; <https://www.cometonigeria.com/region/south-west-nigeria/osun-state/>)

### **The Hypotheses**

The central goal of this study is to assess both direct and indirect predictive relationships between Nigerians' exposure to Chinese movies and their willingness to associate with Chinese nationals. As established in the extant literature, exposure to movies has a positive relationship with the development of interest in actors. Also, this researcher observes that people interested in watching Chinese movies also have an interest in watching Korean movies. Thus, the study proposes that there will be an indirect effect of exposure to Chinese movies on willingness to associate with Chinese nationals, through the quantity of Nigerians' favourite Chinese actors and their exposure to Korean movies. The study hypotheses are stated below:

Hypothesis 1: Frequency of exposure to Chinese movies will directly and positively predict Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals.

Hypothesis 2: Frequency of exposure to Chinese movies will indirectly (through the quantity of favourite Chinese actors) positively predict Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals.

Hypothesis 3: Frequency of exposure to Chinese movies will indirectly (through an interest in and exposure to Korean movies) positively predict Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Intergroup Contact Hypothesis**

This study is framed with the intergroup contact hypothesis proposed by Allport (1954). The theory is considered suitable because the communicative context of the two groups being considered, Nigerians and Chinese nationals in Nigeria, represent what contact hypothesis described as ingroup (majority) and outgroup (minority) intergroup communication context. The central thesis of the contact hypothesis is that positive contact between ingroup and outgroup members will promote positive outcomes in ingroup-outgroup relationships. These positive outcomes include reducing ingroups' prejudice and bias towards members of outgroup, and consequently favourable dispositions and willingness to associate with them (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). There are four conditions under which the contact hypothesis will be considered positive: one, the ingroup and outgroup must have equal status; two, the two groups must have common goals; three, the two groups must be mutually dependent on each other to achieve their common goal (as every member of a relay race depend on each other); and lastly, authorities (such as government) must support the positive equal-status relationship.

While Allport (1954) initially construed contact between ingroup and outgroup as only feasible in face-to-face contexts, the theory has been expanded to accommodate mediated contact (where ingroup has contact with media contents (like movies and news) of, from or about outgroups), parasocial contact, imaginary contact, computer-mediated contacts among others. Many studies conducted in different contact contexts to test the validity of the Allport hypothesis supported the theory. These contexts include face-to-face contact (Armstrong et al., 2016)), mediated contact (Ahmed, 2017; Bresnahan et al., 2019; Figueroa-Caballero et al., 2019; Kim & Harwood, 2019; Pelts & Galambos, 2017; Ramasubramanian, 2013; Wojcieszak et al., 2020), imagined contact (Wojcieszak et al., 2020), computer-mediated contact (Chib & Shi, 2018; Lissitsa & Kushnirovich, 2019), and parasocial contact (Schemer & Meltzer, 2020; Schiappa et al., 2005).

Mediated intergroup contact is construed as ingroups interaction with members of outgroup via the media. Extant studies framed with mediated contact hypothesis have explored how reading stories about members of outgroups (Bresnahan et al., 2019;

Pelts & Galambos, 2017; Wojcieszak et al., 2020), viewing news/programs about members of outgroup, and watching ingroups/outgroups movies (Abrams et al., 2018; Ahmed, 2017; Figueroa-Caballero et al., 2019; Sink & Mastro, 2018) influence ingroups view of and attitude towards members of outgroups. Based on the extant literature on mediated contact studies, this study seeks to find out whether exposure to Chinese movies (which is a form of positive intergroup contact) will both directly and indirectly positively predict Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals (which is a form of ingroup's non-prejudicial dispositions towards members of the outgroup). Exposure to Chinese movies was purposively selected for this study because of the prevalence of Nigerians exposure to them, as observed by the researchers.

### **Review of some Communication Studies that Adopted Contact Hypothesis**

One of the cardinal ways mediated contact occurs between ingroups and outgroups is through exposure to outgroup actors in movies. Other forms of mediated contact include exposure to stories and news/reports about outgroups or meeting a member of an outgroup on the Internet or social media (Shim et al., 2012). Three communication studies framed with the intergroup contact hypothesis are discussed below.

Ahmed (2017) investigated how the contact of Indian adolescents with Muslims and their consumption of Indian and Western-based media content differed as predictors of prejudice against Muslims who are resident in India. The study was conducted in a private school with 598 students, out of which 231 (57% male) volunteers participated in the study. The study had a purely quantitative design. The method was a survey, and the instrument was a questionnaire. The study considered participants' demographical characteristics such as gender, age, household income, education, and parent's education. It also assessed religiosity; perceived threat; knowledge about Muslims and Islam, news media use (Western and Indian); movie exposure (Hollywood and Bollywood); social contact with Muslims (quantity and quality of contact); and prejudice towards Muslims. No mention was made of how the data was collected or how the validity and reliability of the instrument were ascertained. The data were analyzed with regression analysis. The study concluded that mediated contact with Western media (news and movies) predicted prejudicial attitudes towards Muslims, while interpersonal contact with Muslims mitigated it.

Bresnahan et al. (2019) conducted an experiment to assess how exposure to stories predicts attitudes towards Muslim immigrants in America. The study population was members of a college subject pool, out of which 479 students (158 males, 321 females) were drawn as a sample, and received marks for their participation. The sampling technique was a combination of volunteer and random sampling methods. The study was a pre-test and post-test experimental design using the online survey method and questionnaire as an instrument. Validity of the instrument was ensured by conducting confirmatory factor analysis. There were four experimental groups and one

control group. All of the five groups had almost the same number of participants and male-female ratio. The treatments were four different stories of experiences of a non-American Muslim family and their American neighbours. Besides the substance of the story and the nativity of the storyteller, all the four stories used as treatment were similar in context, extent of words, and gender of the storyteller. The first was a story of rejection of the Muslim family by the American neighbours, which was told by a member of the Muslim family. The second was a story of rejection of the Muslim family by the American neighbours, which was told by an American neighbour. The third was a story of acceptance of the Muslim family by the American neighbours, which was told by a member of the Muslim family. And the last story was a story of acceptance of the Muslim family by the American neighbours, which was told by an American neighbour. The researchers did not state how the control group was handled. Wilful permission of the participants was obtained before they were involved in the study. The study concluded that narratives and the identity of the narrators had an effect on advancing attitudes towards Muslim migrants.

Figueroa-Caballero et al. (2019) designed a post-test-only experiment to compare the influence of non-Latinas' exposure to media content showcasing sexualized Latinas in both intragroup and intergroup contexts on their evaluation of Latina character. Population for the study was public university undergraduates, out of which 259 were drawn as sample for the study. Volunteer and simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. Among the non-Latinos that took part in the study, 81.1% were females. The experiment consisted four groups: three treated groups and one control group. The treatment was a 3-minute-long video clip showcasing sexualized and non-sexualized Latino. A pilot study was conducted to assess the validity of the video before it was used. A group watched a sexualized Latina interacting with a Latino male; a group watched sexualized Latina interacting with a white male while a group watched non-sexualized Latina interacting with a Latino male. The control group watched a non-sexualized non-Latina and non-Latino male interacting. Questionnaire was used as the instrument to collect post-test data from the four groups. Measured variables include emotion, character evaluation, and identity. The data were analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study concluded that sexualized Latinas in intragroup context are more disliked than sexualized Latinas in intergroup context.

Kim & Harwood (2019) assessed the relationship between white Americans' mediated contact (vicarious and parasocial), imagined contact, and face-to-face contact with black Americans. They adopted a post-test-only experimental design. The study population was US university students, out of which 553 were drawn as sample size but 226 responses were analysed. Participants were assigned to four experimental groups by simple random technique. The study had no control group. The treatment was a self-read positive relationship narrative from the novel *Blame it on the Mistletoe* that explicate parasocial contact; vicarious contact was in media-rich context (pictures added) and media-poor context (pictures not added). After reading the story, the four

groups responded to a questionnaire that measured their imagined contact and willingness for face-to-face contact with black people. The data collected were analysed with ANOVA and PROCESS macro (Model 4).

Ramasubramanian (2013) compared how face-to-face contact and media, as sources of information about black Americans, differ in their capacity to influence stereotypical beliefs, perceived internal causal attributions for failures, and prejudicial feelings of white Americans towards black Americans. The population for the study was white university students in the US, among whom 431 undergraduates, who were taking communication courses, were recruited for the study through convenience sampling technique. The design was a mono-method quantitative design that adopted online survey as method and self-administered questionnaire as the instrument. The questionnaire took about 20–30 minutes to fill. Variables measured include primary sources of information, prejudice, internal causal attribution, and stereotypes. Bivariate correlational analysis and multivariate analysis of variance were conducted on the data, while AMOS was used to do the path analysis. The study found that face-to-face contact as source of information about outgroups is more effective in reducing prejudice than the media.

Schemer & Meltzer (2019) conducted two experiments (laboratory and online) to determine the effect of intergroup contact in a negative parasocial and vicarious context. For the laboratory experiment, the study population was German university students, out of which 134 first- and second-year undergraduates (communication students) were drawn as sample for the study. The research had a post-test-only experimental design that used survey as method and questionnaire as instrument. There were two experimental groups and one control group of almost equal sizes. The treatment was two real-life media reports on refugees in negative parasocial and vicarious contexts. Each of the two experimental groups watched the report on a computer in the laboratory while the control group watched a report on the distribution of refugees in Europe and Germany. Afterwards the subjects responded to items on a questionnaire that measured attitudes towards refugees and prior contact with refugees. For the online experimental study, German populace was the population. Using volunteer sampling technique, 835 respondents were recruited for the study from a German online access panel. They were also sorted to three groups, treated as those in the laboratory, and asked to respond to a set of questionnaire items. Statistical correlational analyses were conducted on the data. The study concluded that negative attitudes towards refugees increase with negative parasocial and vicarious contact, and they are not influenced by prior face-to-face contact.

Shim, Zhang and Harwood (2012) conducted a survey to assess how Koreans' mediated and face-to-face contact with Americans predict their attitudes towards them. The study population was university students from six universities in Korea, out of which 300 students were drawn as samples for the study through volunteer sampling technique. They were divided into two groups (those who have only watched American

drama and those who have watched American drama and have had face-to-face contact with one or more American nationals). The study was a mono-method quantitative study that adopted a survey as the method and a self-administered written questionnaire as an instrument. Variables measured include contact frequency, contact quality, number of American friends, intergroup anxiety, frequency of American drama viewing, American drama viewing diversity, parasocial interactions, affective attitudes, and behavioural attitudes. The data were analysed using regression models. The study concluded that mediated contact and face-to-face contact are negatively associated with prejudice. However, the frequency of face-to-face contact is positively associated with prejudice.

Sink & Mastro (2018) investigated whether American heterosexuals' consumption of gay programmes and their parasocial contact with gay male characters predicate their homonegativity. The study population was US adults out of which 120 adults were recruited on Amazon's Mechanical Turk website by volunteer sampling technique. The study used a mono-method quantitative design that adopted survey method using an online questionnaire as the instrument. Participants were fielded with questions on age, race, sex, viewership of TV shows featuring gay male characters and recall of gay male television characters, homonegativity, cross-group friendship, close interpersonal contact with gay men as friends religiosity. The data were analysed by hierarchical regression analyses. The study concluded that viewership of gay programmes and recall of gay male characters reduce prejudice.

This researcher observed certain methodological trends in the reviewed studies. All the studies were conducted in the advanced nations of the global West, none was conducted in Africa. The design was mono method quantitative design using the cross-sectional survey in most of the cases, none adopted qualitative design or mixed-method design. The population was literate, majorly university students, illiterates were excluded from the studies. The sample size vary widely with many less than 500 respondents. The questionnaire, especially online questionnaire, was the preferred instrument for most studies, though some used a pen on a paper questionnaire. The validity and reliability were statistically ascertained before being used, in studies that reported them. Not much was said about method of data collection in most of the studies. However, majority of the researchers compensated participants in the study. Those recruited online were paid money and students got extra credit for participating. Some of the studies were subjected to institutional review boards, but many were not. All these observations influenced this study in one way or the other.

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a quantitative design, using the survey method. The population for this study was residents of Osun state, southwest Nigeria, who are above 16 years of age. The sample size was 480 adults. Convenience sampling and purposive sampling methods were adopted for the study. Only adults who identified themselves as viewers of Chinese movies and Korean movies were purposively selected for the study among the people who volunteered to participate in the study. All these above-

mentioned methodological decisions are consistent with choices made in extant intergroup communication studies reviewed by the researcher.

The research instrument was a pen on a paper questionnaire. It has three sections. The first section contained questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second part contained questions about the frequency of exposure to Chinese movies, exposure to Korean movies, and the respondent's quantity of favourite Chinese actors. The last section of the questionnaire contained questions that measured the willingness of the respondents to associate with Chinese nationals: their willingness to live in the same neighbourhood with Chinese nationals in Nigeria, their willingness to work in a Chinese organization in Nigeria, and their willingness to travel to China.

The validity and reliability of the instrument were ensured before it was used for the study. First, a pilot study was conducted to assess the instrument, and it was found suitable for the population. Persons that were involved in the pilot study were excluded from the main study. Principal components analysis was done to ensure the validity of the scale to measure Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals. With an eigenvalue set at greater than one, all the three items loaded on one factor (willingness to associate with Chinese nationals) that accounts for 80.21% of the total variance (as shown in the table below).

**Table A1: Willingness to associate with Chinese nationals: Primary factor loadings**

Items	Factor loadings
(1) Willing to travel to visit/work/school in China	.895
(2) Willing to live on the same street or same neighbourhood with Chinese people in Nigeria?	.908
(3) Willing to work in a Chinese company in Nigeria?	.884

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 component extracted.

The Cronbach's Alpha value for the scale was also computed for the three items and for "if item is deleted". The scale has Chronbach's Alpha value of .87 ( $M = 3.81$ ), confirming its strong internal consistency (Chen et al., 2017).

The data were collected between June and August 2020. The researcher engaged and trained five research assistants who distributed the questionnaires to adults that are resident in their respective neighbourhoods. Respondents' participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. The research assistants first explained what the study was all about to the prospective respondents and served the questionnaire to only those who

were willing to participate. The participants were literate in the English language; thus, they filled the questionnaire by themselves without the assistance of the research assistants.

Data analysis was done with two sets of statistical packages. The first set of analyses was done with SPSS, version 23. Therein, the mean value of the three items that measured willingness to associate with Chinese nationals was computed for each participant and, thereafter, a bivariate correlation of the mean with the independent variables was assessed. The second set of analyses was done with AMOS, version 20.

### Findings

The demographic characteristics of the respondents included in the study are gender, level of education, age, religion and tribe. The tables below show the findings.

**Table A2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

#### Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	257	53.5	53.5	53.5
Female	223	46.5	46.5	100.0
Total	480	100.0	100.0	

#### Age bracket

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 16-24 years	242	50.4	50.4	50.4
25-34 years	137	28.5	28.5	79.0
35-44 years	58	12.1	12.1	91.0
45-54 years	21	4.4	4.4	95.4
Above 55 years	22	4.6	4.6	100.0
Total	480	100.0	100.0	

**Education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Secondary/Technical College/Vocational	171	35.6	35.6	35.6
Tertiary (Less than 1st degree/HND)	127	26.5	26.5	62.1
Tertiary(1st Degree/HND)	138	28.8	28.8	90.8
Tertiary(Masters/PhD)	40	8.3	8.3	99.2
Others	4	.8	.8	100.0
Total	480	100.0	100.0	

**Religion**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Christianity	326	67.9	67.9	67.9
Islam	154	32.1	32.1	100.0
Total	480	100.0	100.0	

**Tribe**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yoruba	403	84.0	84.0	84.0
Ibo	37	7.7	7.7	91.7
Hausa	37	7.7	7.7	99.4
Others	3	.6	.6	100.0
Total	480	100.0	100.0	

The tables above, showing the demographic characteristics of the respondents, revealed that 257 (53.5%) were male while 223 (46.5%) were female. 171 (35.6%) had secondary/technical college/vocational education, 127 (26.5%) had less than first degree/higher national diploma education, 138 (28.8%) had first degree/higher national diploma, while 40 (8.3%) had master's/doctoral degrees. 326 (67.9%) identified as Christians while 154 (32.1%) identified as Muslims. Majority of the participants (403; 84%) were Yorubas, 37 (7.7%) were Ibos and 37 (7.7%) were Hausas. Three participants (0.6%) were from other unspecified tribes. Majority of the participants (n = 242; 50.4%) were between 16-24 years, 137 (28.5%) were between 25-34 years, 58

(12.1%) were between 35-44 years, 21 (4.4%) were between 45-54 years, and 22 (4.6%) were above 55 years of age.

Findings that are presented on the correlation matrix table below show that all the assessed independent variables have positive associations with willingness to associate with Chinese nationals. Specifically, results of two-tailed Pearson correlations showed that there is a significant positive relationship (1) between willingness to associate face-to-face with Chinese nationals and frequency of exposure to Chinese movies ( $r = .25, p < .001$ ); (2) between willingness to associate face-to-face with Chinese nationals and quantity of favorite Chinese actors ( $r = .19, p < .001$ ); and (3) between willingness to associate face-to-face with Chinese nationals and frequency of exposure to Korean movies ( $r = .37, p < .001$ ).

**Table A3: Correlation matrix table**

Variables		1	2	3	4
(1) Willingness to associate with Chinese nationals	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	480			
(2) Exposure to Chinese movies	Pearson Correlation	.247**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	480	480		
(3) Quantity of favorite Chinese actors	Pearson Correlation	.186**	.585**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	480	480	480	
(4) Exposure to Korean movies	Pearson Correlation	.365**	.532**	.407**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	480	480	480	480

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The structural equation modeling (SEM) for this study has a good fit. It has ( $\chi^2(7) = 18.624$ ; CFI = .990; RMSEA = 0.059; SRMR = .0286). It met the joint criteria for good fit posited by Hu and Bentler's (1999) which were CFI  $\geq .95$  and SRMR  $\leq .8$ , or RMSEA  $\leq .06$  and SRMR  $\leq .8$ . The SEM analysis yielded the following results as shown in Figure 1: One, exposure to Chinese movies directly positively predict willingness to associate with Chinese nationals, but the relationship is not statistically significant ( $\beta = .07, p = .228, n.s$ ); two, exposure to Chinese movies directly and positively predict quantity of favourite Chinese actors ( $\beta = .59, p < .001$ ); three, quantity of favorite Chinese actors directly and positively predict willingness to associate with Chinese national, but the relationship is not statistically significant ( $\beta = .01, p = .803, n.s$ ); three, exposure to Chinese movies directly and positively predicts exposure to

Korean movies ( $\beta = .53, p < .001$ ); and lastly, exposure to Korean movies directly and positively predicts willingness to associate with Chinese nationals ( $\beta = .34, p < .001$ );

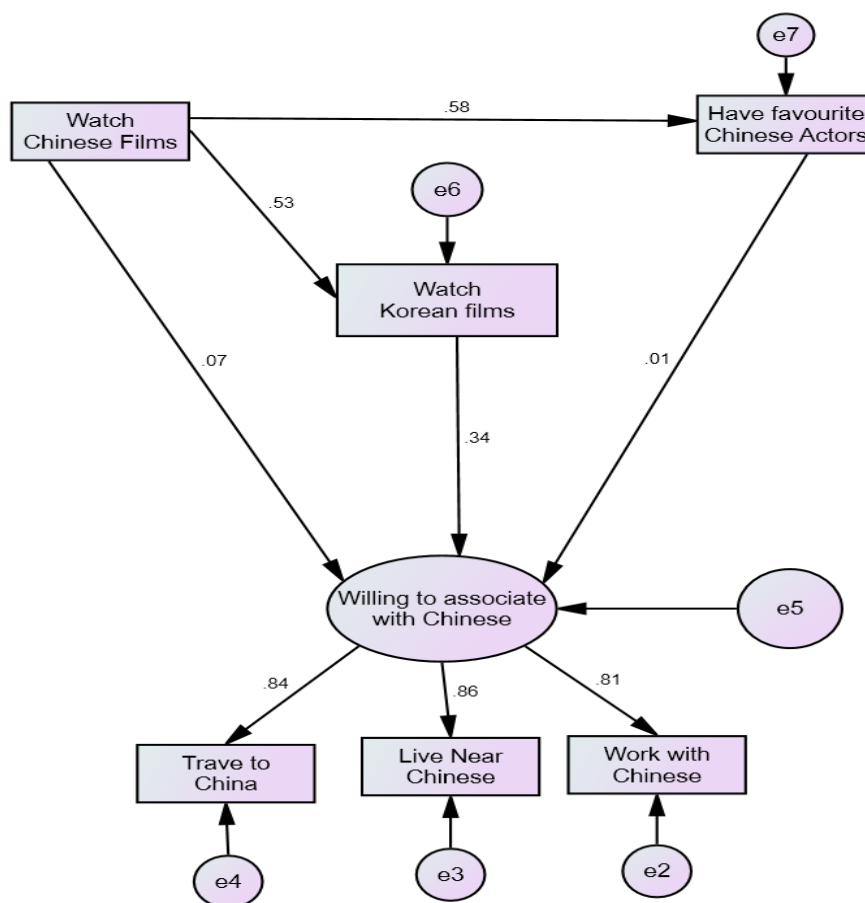


Figure 1: Final structural model result

### Discussion

The central goal of this study is to assess both direct and indirect predictive relationships between Nigerians' exposure to Chinese movies and their willingness to associate with Chinese nationals. The study evaluated three hypotheses: one, frequency of exposure to Chinese movies will directly and positively predict Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals; two, frequency of exposure to Chinese movies will indirectly (through the quantity of favourite Chinese actors) positively predict Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals; and three, frequency of exposure to Chinese movies will indirectly (through an interest in and exposure to

Korean movies) positively predict Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals.

The structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis results for the first hypothesis of this study showed that exposure to Chinese movies directly and positively predicted willingness to associate with Chinese nationals. However, the predictive relationship is not statistically significant. The second hypothesis showed that exposure to Chinese movies directly and positively predicted the quantity of favourite Chinese actors. However, the quantity of favourite Chinese actors does not have a statistically significant predictive positive relationship with willingness to associate with Chinese nationals in Nigeria. Consequently, we conclude that exposure to Chinese movies does not have an indirect positive predictive relationship (through the quantity of favourite Chinese actors) on Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals. The third hypothesis revealed that exposure to Chinese movies has a direct positive predictive relationship on exposure to Korean movies, and exposure to Korean movies has a positive predictive relationship with willingness to associate with Chinese nationals in Nigeria. Consequently, the findings suggest that the frequency of exposure to Chinese movies has an indirect positive predictive relationship with Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals, through exposure to Korean movies.

The result of this study supports the previous conclusion that positive mediated contact is positively associated with positive attitudes towards members of outgroups (Ramasubramanian, 2013; Pelts & Galambos, 2017; Kim & Harwood, 2019; Ahmed, 2017; Bresnahan, Yan, Zhu & Hussain, 2019; Wojcieszak, Kim & Igartua, 2019; Figueroa-Caballero, Mastro & Stamps, 2019). However, it does not support the conclusion that positive mediated contact directly predicts positive attitudes towards outgroup members (Ahmed, 2017; Sink & Mastro, 2017). Instead, the study found that positive mediated communication has an indirect effect on positive attitudes through a positive mediated contact with members of "near outgroups" (i.e. people who share similar socio-demographic characteristics with members of an outgroup). As the findings of this study revealed, exposure to Chinese movies only exerts a statistically significant predictive indirect effect on Nigerians' willingness to associate with Chinese nationals through Nigerians' exposure to Korean movies.

### **Practical Implications**

China's relationship with Nigeria is deepening every day, both on commercial and political grounds (Taylor, 2007). An increasing number of Chinese nationals are relocating to Nigeria for business and non-business purposes. As such, both nations deserve to deepen their understanding of their nationals' attitudes towards each other to promote peaceful co-existence and mutually beneficial development. This study is a worthwhile effort in that direction. The study showed that exposure to Chinese movies, through the mediating effect of exposure to Korean movies, predicts Nigerians' willingness to live in the same neighbourhood with Chinese nationals in Nigeria, work

in a Chinese company, and travel to visit/work/study in China. The results of this study can be beneficial in forming government policies to deepen the relationship between China and Nigeria. As the research suggests, promotion of government policies to increase Nigerians' exposure to Chinese and Korean movies will increase Nigerians' favourable disposition towards Chinese nationals.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the more Nigerians movie viewers are exposed to Chinese movies, the more they will be interested in viewing Korean movies, and the more willing they will be to associate with Chinese nationals. This conclusion is based on the empirical findings of this study. The study contributes to the literature on mediated intergroup communication, which seems not to have been given much attention among Nigerian communication scholars. The conclusion also has practical implications for formulating government policies to strengthen the relationship between China and Nigeria.

### **Limitations and future directions**

This study is a cross-sectional study. The sample was drawn from a small segment of the Nigerian widely diverse population. Therefore, causal inference cannot be drawn from it, and the results might not be generalisable to all Nigerians. Future studies should engage experimental design to be able to draw causal inferences. Also, the study should be repeated among different segments of the population. Lastly, a longitudinal study can be conducted to assess how the relationship among the variables studied changes over time among the Nigerian populace.

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