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*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Perceived performance in creative and cultural entrepreneurship: A lecture of music industry entrepreneurs in Cameroon**

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**The aim of this study is to shed light on the performance criteria used by cultural entrepreneurs, specifically those in the music industry in the Cameroonian context. Adopting a qualitative multiple-case study approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 14 music industry entrepreneurs selected using the reasoned choice method. Analysis of these entrepreneurs' discourse using Nvivo 10 software revealed that they perceived their performance in terms of several indicators grouped into three dimensions, namely: the financial dimension (ability to satisfy personal economic needs and those of family and friends, ability to carry out investment projects unrelated to the business), the commercial dimension (sales volume through NICTs, ability to mobilize the masses at shows, recurrence of invitations to perform at events), the competitive dimension (winning various awards and distinctions, quality of audience at shows, performances in cultural circles of reference and notoriety).**

**Key words:** Cultural entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, music industry, performance, Cameroon, Africa.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For several decades, studies on organizational performance have been limited to financial performance as a measure of performance (Bourguignon, 2000), ignoring many other aspects encompassed by this concept. However, the economic crisis of the 1980s enabled various authors to realize that corporate performance could not be reduced to the financial dimension alone, leading to the abandonment of the one-dimensional approach and the embracing of a multidimensional approach to this notion (Barillot, 2001).

Moreover, despite the recognition of this

multidimensional approach to performance, there is still no real consensus on its definition, as the measurement criteria overlap (Sogbossi, 2010), with some authors favouring quantitative criteria and others qualitative ones (Tsapi, 1999; Slywotzky and Wise, 2003). In addition to the debate on the choice of criteria for measuring performance, it should be noted that their meaning varies depending on the sector of activity. This leads Menzies et al. (2004) as well as Moore and Buttner (1997) to the consensus that the need to account for sectoral specificities when assessing the performance of

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organizations is becoming an urgent necessity. The vast majority of work on performance is confined to small structures in general (Sogbossi, 2010; Ndangwa et al., 2007; St-Pierre and Cadieux, 2011), without taking into account sectors of activity. Yet, sectoral particularities are likely to provide an explanation for the perception that actors involved in a sector of activity have of the notion of performance and the measurement criteria they retain (Nkakleu and Djika, 2017). Indeed, the analysis of performance by field of activity is of interest to several stakeholders, such as those in the financial sector, who have long taken the sectoral dimension into account when analysing investment opportunities and assessing risk levels (Moati, 2000).

As far as the creative and cultural sector is concerned, the perception of the notion of performance by cultural players is not yet addressed in the scientific literature, yet this is a strategic sector for the global economy in general and the African economy in particular. Indeed, the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) argued in 2017 that 2.4 million jobs are created in Africa by creative and cultural entrepreneurs. Moreover, 24% of people of working age engage in cultural entrepreneurship on the dark continent (Bioulac and Lalhou, 2019), a figure that far exceeds those in other parts of the world such as Asia and the Pacific, making the cultural industry a real job creator in Africa, according to the FDA (French Development Agency) in 2018. In Cameroon, the cultural industry contributes about 3.2% to GDP (gross domestic product) and has an international reputation thanks to the artistic works of musical celebrities such as Manu Dibango, Charlotte Dipanda, Talla André Marie, Pierre Tchana, and many others. And yet, the cultural industry, and specifically the musical arts, remains the weak link in the development strategies put in place by public authorities (Madiba and Tchinda, 2021) and faces a major need for support from both public and private stakeholders. However, the support of these players can only be achieved by taking into account sectoral characteristics and performance (Moati, 2000). The aim of this article is therefore to shed light on the performance criteria adopted by cultural and creative entrepreneurs, and specifically those of the music industry in the Cameroonian context. Research on entrepreneurship in the music industry and particularly on performance criteria in this field is extremely rare in our context. Thus, this study through its results will enrich the existing literature on this issue, and contribute to laying the groundwork for performance assessment, taking into account the specificities of the business sector.

In order to achieve this objective, this work is structured as follows: The first part deals with the literature review, both on the notion of performance and on the specificities of cultural enterprises. The second part describes the methodology adopted for this study. The third part presents the results, and the last part discusses them before concluding the study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The first step is to revisit the various definitions of performance. Secondly, we will look at the different dimensions of this notion. Finally, dwell on the particularities of cultural enterprises and the evolution of the notion of cultural entrepreneur, which makes performance assessment a complex task.

### The notion of performance

The notion of performance remains a difficult concept to define, despite the existence of several writings on the subject. In the management sciences in particular, it is understood in terms of effectiveness (Cameron, 1986), efficiency (Dewarrat, 1984), and productivity or output (Katzell, 1975). Bourguignon (1998) has established three levels of performance: action-oriented performance, success-oriented performance, and results-oriented performance. Based on these different levels, various authors have developed different definitions of performance, such as Carrière (1990), who defines it as the evolution or expansion of a company. This definition boils down to successful performance, while Lorino (1997) focuses on action performance, defining it as "everything that contributes to achieving the company's strategic objectives". Bourguignon (2000) also accounts for the three levels of performance, defining it as the achievement of organizational objectives, whatever their nature and variety. This achievement can be understood in the sense of result or success, or in the broader sense of the process used to achieve success.

### Performance: A multidimensional character

A summary of the literature on performance reveals several dimensions. Among these dimensions, the most important are commercial and competitive, social and organizational, financial, and strategic. We briefly present each of these dimensions in the following lines.

#### *The financial and strategic dimension*

The financial and strategic dimension refers to two types of performance: strategic performance and financial performance. Economic or financial performance can be defined as the company's ability to achieve its financial objectives (Calori et al., 1989). It is generally apprehended through the company's economic or financial indicators, such as profitability, gross operating surplus, and many others. However, even if it reflects the quality of a company's management, over time it has become insufficient to assess the competitiveness of organizations (Sogbossi, 2010). On the other hand,

strategic performance is concerned with the entity's long-term growth and is measured by indicators such as the company's ability to create new activities, the quality of its management, and its capacity to create value-added for itself and its partners (Barette and Berard, 2000; Saulquin and Schier, 2007).

### ***The social and organizational dimension***

The social and organizational dimension of performance is used to analyse corporate performance and encompasses two types of performance: social performance and organizational performance. Organizational performance relates to the company's internal organization and the way in which it goes about achieving its objectives (Kalika, 1988). Its main indicators are the quality of relations between the various departments, the quality of information management, the flexibility of the organizational structure, and the influence of the manager's power (Kombou and Ngokevina, 2006).

Social performance is linked to the quality of human relations within the company. It is generally measured by indicators such as staff turnover, the presence and effective operation of staff representation bodies (unions and employee representatives), the existence and durability of conflicts (number, duration, and severity), and employee participation in decision-making (Marmuse, 1997).

### ***The commercial and competitive dimension***

The commercial and competitive dimension of performance refers to the company's commercial and competitive performance. As far as competitive performance is concerned, it embodies the success that stems not only from the company's actions but also from its ability to adapt and appropriate the rules of the competitive game in its sector of activity (Guéret-Talon and Lebraty, 2006). In other words, it's the ability to cope with the constraints of its external environment. It is therefore based on the logic that a company's success is highly dependent on the way it competes and the intensity of competition between the forces at play (Sogbossi, 2010). Finally, commercial performance, which is customer satisfaction, appears to be the most important and indissociable from the other types of performance. In fact, it encompasses all the others and represents the main reason for a company's existence: customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is the main concern of business leaders and is a key factor in the company's long-term financial performance and sustainability (Ngobo and Ramarosan, 2005; Sin and Tse, 2000). It is measured both by quantitative indicators such as sales and market share, and qualitative factors such as consumer satisfaction, corporate reputation, and

customer loyalty (Furrer and Sudharshan, 2003), the marketing of quality products that meet demand, after-sales service, competitive pricing, and demand stimulation (Tsapi, 1999). All these indicators enable companies not only to create value for their customers but also to pay particular attention to their customers' expectations, which is the key to their success. Table 1 summarizes these performance studies and their various indicators.

Examining these different approaches of organizational performance enabled us to realise that it is an ambiguous notion, especially in the management sciences. Its definition and measurement are still a work in progress due to changes in the environment and the specific characteristics of each business sector. In this sense, an analysis of performance by sector of activity is becoming a necessity for an objective apprehension of this notion.

### **Cultural entrepreneurship and performance**

Cultural entrepreneurship can be defined today as an activity that consists in the creation of a cultural good by a "creative" entrepreneur and having it recognized by society (Chapain et al., 2018). Because of the particularities of this type of activity, the entrepreneur has to combine his cognitive knowledge with a set of ideas from his immediate environment. For this reason, the entrepreneur becomes part of a network formed by his or her immediate environment, which will help his or her creativity evolve and support him or her in acquiring the necessary entrepreneurial skills (De Klerk, 2015). It is important to clarify a few specific features of cultural entrepreneurship before dwelling on the relationship between this activity and performance.

#### ***Cultural entrepreneurship: An activity characterized by a mix of proximity and innovation***

Compared to other types (digital, industrial and others), cultural entrepreneurship is a local entrepreneurial activity. It is a unit whose management mechanisms are less specialized, with an information system that favors intuitive, less formal strategies. The entrepreneurial process of the cultural and creative entrepreneur takes the form of "bricolage" (De Klerk, 2015). For Levi-Strauss (1955), bricolage consists in making what presents itself. As a result, the creative and cultural entrepreneur begins his activity with very few resources, generally coming from the local network he has built up. Torrès (2009) describes this type of enterprise as a proximity structure. With this in mind, he identifies several types of proximity that characterize entrepreneurship and the cultural entrepreneur.

This is precisely the economic or financial proximity that constitutes the entrepreneur's ability to finance his



**Table 1.** Summary of performance studies.

Dimensions	Performance	Indicators	Authors
Strategic and financial	Strategic	Ability to create new activities and value-added, quality of management	Barette and Berard (2000), Saulquin and Schier (2007).
	Financial	Profitability, gross operating surplus, etc...	Calori et al. (1989)
Social and organizational	Social	Turnover, employee participation in decision-making, existence, and functioning of staff representation bodies, presence and durability of conflicts.	Marmuse (1997)
	Organizational	The flexibility of the organizational structure, the quality of relations between different departments, the quality of information management, the influence of the manager's power	Kalika (1988), Kombou and Ngokevina (2006)
Commercial and competitive	Competitive	The ability to adapt to the rules of the competitive game	Guéret-Talon and Lebraty (2006)
	Commercial	Consumer satisfaction and loyalty, stimulating demand, and after-sales service.	Furrer and Sudharshan (2003), Tsapi (1999)

Source: Author.

activity, either through self-financing or through meager funding from his immediate entourage. Hierarchical proximity consists in the low level of task specialization within the cultural enterprise, with the entrepreneur being responsible for all tasks and functions within his structure. For Moura (2011), he is the main project worker, team leader, agent of his own commercial success, and many others. Furthermore, the communication system between the entrepreneur and his partners (collaborators, suppliers, and customers) is also proxemic, characterized by verbal and oral communication.

There is also proximity in the strategic planning of activities. In fact, the management of creative and cultural activity is marked by an intuitive management style that forces the entrepreneur to be flexible, and in this sense, short-term management is favoured for greater efficiency in reactivity. Finally, since cultural entrepreneurs develop their activities with those around them, local partners who are relatively close to the company are favoured, hence the geographic proximity in the choice of key collaborators.

### ***The notion of performance in creative and cultural entrepreneurship***

Recent decades have seen the evolution of the cultural economy and the emergence of several types of creative and cultural entrepreneurs. This diversity of entrepreneurs explains the presence in the literature of several definitions of performance in the field of cultural entrepreneurship. In the 1990s, creative and cultural work was originally seen as a process aimed at renewing the economy's manufacturing and industrial offerings. In this sense, it relies more on the value of ideas and knowledge, to the detriment of the symbolic and expressive character of the cultural product. Consistent with this logic, Caves

(2000) and Howkins (2001) support the idea that artistic work is the fruit of multiple distinct combinations, the varieties of which are infinite. These authors take the field of technology and communication as their reference, demonstrating that the production of goods requires a combination of the expertise of several people with different skills. This evolution of the cultural economy towards the creative economy gives rise to a first category of cultural entrepreneurs that Chapain et al. (2018) describe as "financial artists". According to these authors, these artists represent entrepreneurs for whom cultural entrepreneurship inevitably refers to the creation of a business whose performance measurement is linked to its growth and profitability (Greffé, 2012). At this level, the company's performance is reduced to its financial dimension alone because, for Chapain et al. (2018), artistic creation is closely linked to economic and financial returns.

With the development of the creative economy, we are witnessing the emergence of a second type of cultural entrepreneur, the "project-based entrepreneur", defined as someone who occupies a middle ground between entrepreneurship and employees. Heusch and Dujardin (2011) define them as entrepreneurs who manage their own contracts, move regularly from one project to another, and forge collaborative partnerships throughout their careers. In this context, to ensure their survival, they must alternate their sources of income between different projects. In this sense, it becomes imperative for this entrepreneur to seek financial income from time to time through secondary employment in other sectors of activity (De klerk, 2015). Following this logic, the performance of entrepreneurs in this category is limited to their ability to seize new opportunities both in the cultural and creative sectors and in other sectors. Accordingly, it boils down to its strategic dimension, with its priority being to seize opportunities in order to maintain its

economic survival over the long term.

Finally, the third face of the cultural entrepreneur is the "artist-entrepreneur", defined by Swedberg (2006) as someone who implements new combinations that are intended to be appreciated in the cultural and creative industries but that are not necessarily financially profitable. In this logic, the entrepreneur's priority boils down to the need to build his or her career, to give credibility to his or her creation, and to seek recognition for his or her work from players in the cultural milieu and society in general. From then, their performance is not measured by financial gain but rather by the recognition of their art by social actors. This definition of the artist-entrepreneur puts the nature of cultural entrepreneurship into perspective by highlighting a posture that differentiates it from other types of entrepreneurship, notably through its objective, which is not the pursuit of profitability. This work is in line with that of Torrès (2009), who points out that most cultural enterprises prioritize the qualitative growth of their activities to the detriment of quantitative growth linked to profitability and consequently evaluate their performance through qualitative criteria.

## METHODOLOGY

This section begins with a presentation of the study area. This is followed by a presentation of the methodology adopted and the sample selected. Finally, it concludes with a description of the data collection and processing procedures.

### The choice of Cameroon and the music industry

Cameroon occupies a highly prized position in Central Africa, making it the sub-region's main economic powerhouse (FDA, 2018). It is also a country of unparalleled ethnic and cultural diversity (with over 250 ethnic groups recognized by public institutions). The population is made up of the main ethnic groups of Central Africa: The Soudano-Sahelians, who live in the northern part of the country (the North, Far North, and Adamawa regions), the Fang-Bétis, who live in the Central, Eastern, and Southern regions, and a large proportion of whom live in neighbouring countries such as Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, and the Grasfiels, who live mainly in the West, North-West, and South-West regions. Cultural entrepreneurship takes the form of crafts, cinema, theatre, cultural and heritage dances, music, and much more. Moreover, Cameroon remains the leading country in the sub-region in terms of cultural influence (OECD, 2017).

It is indisputably the leading exporter of cultural products, with internationally renowned artists such as Eboa Lotin, Elvis Kemayo, Manu Dibango, Sanfan Thoma, and many others (Madiba and Tchinda, 2021). In view of these factors, an analysis of the Cameroonian context, and more specifically of the musical arts sub-sector, is of interest to Cameroon and to Central Africa in general.

### Methodological approach: A multi-case qualitative study

To carry out this study, a qualitative approach based on multiple case studies of music industry players was required. The choice of a multiple-case study was justified on the one hand, by the fact that there are several musical rhythms in Cameroon, and it was

imperative to have one or more cases representing each musical rhythm in the study sample. On the other hand, as the aim of this study is to understand the perception that these players have of the notion of performance in their sector of activity, the multiple case study approach seems appropriate to us, as its mission is to describe social phenomena, improve understanding, and generate new propositions (Eisenhardt, 1989). This choice is further supported by Wacheux's (1996) statement that "*the implementation of a qualitative research process is also about understanding the whys and wherefores of events in situations...*". Thus, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of entrepreneurs in the musical arts sector. These interviews were conducted using an interview guide developed on the basis of existing literature and around the following themes: the context of entry into entrepreneurship, the choice of the cultural sector and music, the notion of performance in entrepreneurship, and the question of performance in the musical arts.

### Sampling and sample characteristics

The study sample is of a non-probabilistic type, selected by the reasoned choice method. This is a sampling method by which the representativeness of the sample is ensured by motivated choices (Beau, 1984). Faced with the reluctance of certain artists to take part in the study, and for reasons of feasibility, we opted for this approach, using our relational network to constitute the sample. This is a purposive sample of 14 entrepreneurs drawn from the music industry in Cameroon. It is made up of young, innovative entrepreneurs as well as professionals in the musical arts who have already had a long career. There are 08 men and 06 women. In addition, 04 entrepreneurs are aged between 18 and 30, 03 between 30 and 40, and 07 between 40 and 65. All generations are represented in our study sample. All have at least 02 years of experience in the music industry in Cameroon. They are entrepreneurs employing a maximum of 03 people, which gives them the status of VSEs (Very Small Enterprises) under Cameroonian law. In addition, 28.57% of the entrepreneurs in the sample have received a higher education diploma, 35.71% have a secondary education, and the remainder have clearly had no schooling, hence the need to resort to entrepreneurship in order to support themselves and their families.

With regard to the breakdown of the sample according to music industry professions, it should be noted that there are 09 singers, 02 instrumentalists, 02 show dancers, and one producer. The majority of Cameroon's musical rhythms are also represented in the study sample, namely: 02 "Makossa" singers (the musical rhythm of the great coastline), 02 "Bitkussi" artists for the Centre, South, and East regions, 03 "Ben sikin and Mangabeu" singers for the West region and 02 artists of modern music known as "urban music". In addition, the dancers in the sample were people who had founded dance groups and teams and who were able to adapt to all musical rhythms, both local and from elsewhere.

### Data collection and analysis

The interviews were conducted between March 17, 2023 and May 18, 2023 and transcribed on a daily basis. The interviews were conducted at each interviewee's home, or in a space chosen by the interviewee (office, restaurant for some). The duration of each interview varied from 25 minutes and 40 seconds to 36 minutes, for a total duration of 02 hours and 06 minutes. A smartphone was used to record the conversations after receiving permission from each participant before the start of each conversation. In addition, codes ranging from M1 to M14 were assigned to each transcriber in order to preserve the anonymity of the interlocutors.

For data analysis, the thematic content analysis method was chosen and carried out using Nvivo 10 software. The technique of thematic content analysis consists in cutting, assembling, and structuring the corpus, enabling data to be systematized and reliable conclusions to be drawn from the analysis (Huberman and Miles, 2015). Once the verbatim had been transcribed, they were classified by code according to the interlocutors, followed by thematic coding. As the corpus was already structured by themes, questions, and answers, tag structuring (Cabr , 2007) was performed, and questions were separated from answers in each corpus. Next, open coding (Andreani and Conchon, 2005) was used to identify and order the discourse of each interviewee based on the questions in the interview guide and the research themes. In this way, the various ideas were selected with greater precision, leading to the results of this study.

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

An analysis of our interviewees' discourse reveals that cultural industry entrepreneurs define performance in terms of the success of their businesses. This success is based on several indicators that can be grouped into three main dimensions of performance: financial performance, commercial performance, and competitive performance.

### Financial performance in the music industry

This is the first dimension on which stakeholders in Cameroon's music industry base their performance. However, the indicators of this performance are not the same as those of other business sectors, namely: rate of return on investments, productivity, gross operating surplus, margin on sales, and others. In fact, according to 80% of the entrepreneurs in our sample, financial performance indicators in cultural entrepreneurship relate not only to the entrepreneur's ability to satisfy his or her own economic needs but also those of family members. This is what emerges in substance from the comments of our interviewees M2 and M8, who state respectively that : *"I was born from a very poor family, and life hasn't been easy on my side....but since I started exploiting my talent as an artist, I sing in cabernets and at major events...what I earn enables me to live amply and satisfy my needs", "it's thanks to my music that I send my children to school, that I look after them when they're sick....that I look after my parents...and on this basis, I can say that my business is performing well"*. Apart from satisfying financial needs, music industry entrepreneurs assess the performance of their business through the entrepreneur's ability to make investments unrelated to their artistic activities. This is reflected in the words of interviewee M1: *"Thanks to my music, I live decently; I recently opened a restaurant after my artistic tour in Europe... I'm not renting either, thanks to this activity I've built my house, which several colleagues haven't yet managed to do"*.

### Commercial performance in the music industry

Over 72% of the members of this study sample recognize the relevance of the commercial aspect in assessing performance in the music industry in Cameroon. This performance is assessed by sales figures, as in other sectors of activity, through the number of records sold. Interviewee M10 put it: *"the artist must make a living from his art, and to do that, he must sell records... if a singer does not succeed in setting up a strategy in collaboration with his producer to sell records of his music, he is not performing well..."*. Moreover, with the advent of NTIC (New Information and Communication Technologies) and social networks, commercial performance in the cultural sector is also measured by the volume of sales through social media. For music industry stakeholders, the number of downloads of an artist's product via digital platforms is becoming an indicator of the artist's performance, as shown by the interviewee M9, an artistic producer: *"To know if my artist is successful, I take into account the number of views on YouTube and other social media...for example, the last track I produced received over a million views"*. These words were corroborated by a participant (M6), owner of a dance band: *"I know we're successful, and people like what we do, because...all I have to do is post one of our videos on social networks like Facebook and twitter, and the next morning I see that thousands of people have downloaded it"*.

In addition, some entrepreneurs (50% of the sample) see their performance in terms of the physical mobilization of the masses around the various events they organize. The number of spectators at concerts and other events is an important indicator, as stated by interviewee M7: *"I'm doing a good job and my business is doing well...just look at the number of people at my various concerts"*. In addition to this indicator, the frequency with which the artist is solicited by individuals on various occasions is a determining factor in the definition of performance, as the same interviewee put it: *"when you work well, you're solicited...every weekend I'm invited to perform in at least one event, which shows that the public likes the fruit of my art"*.

### Competitive performance in the music industry

Several indicators were highlighted by our interviewees in order to assess the competitive performance of the music industry in Cameroon. Firstly, society's recognition of the work of the musical artist. This recognition is perceptible by at least 70% of the entrepreneurs in the sample through the various awards and distinctions obtained by the entrepreneur following competitions or awarded to them as a sign of recognition. This is essentially what emerges from the words of our interlocutors M1 and M7, respectively: *"my work has already been recognized by*

**Table 2.** Summary of study results.

Dimension	Indicators	% of cultural entrepreneurs in favour of the argument
Economic and financial	Ability to satisfy personal economic needs	78.57
	Ability to meet the family's economic needs	78.57
	Ability to make non-business-related investments	50
Commercial	Sales generated through NICTs	78.57
	The ability to physically mobilize the masses during shows	72
	Frequency of invitations to perform at events	50
Competitive	Recognition by the public and other stakeholders through various awards and distinctions	72
	Audience quality at shows	64.28
	The reputation of the places that have hosted or are hosting the artist's shows	64.28

Source: Author.

*the President of the Republic, he decorated me knight of the national order...a distinction that several artists don't yet have...it's a proof of performance compared to others", "I have already won several national and international prizes...compared to other colleagues..."*

In addition to these main indicators, some entrepreneurs perceive their performance in terms of the quality of the audience present at their various performances. This is what emerges in substance from the comments of the interviewee (M4) in these terms: *"I have already performed in front of several heads of state and government throughout the world, which makes me superior to other artists..., and generally I am invited to major events and I sing in front of VIPs"*. Finally, around 65% of the entrepreneurs in the sample look to the reputation of the environments that have hosted or are hosting their shows to gauge their competitive performance. On this subject, one entrepreneur asserts: *"I have already performed at the Olympia in France, whereas many artists will never enter this venue... because of this, I am respected in the Cameroonian artist community... this is proof of my performance"*. These results are summarized in

Table 2, which present each of the indicators for understanding performance in the cultural and artistic milieu as well as the percentage of interviewees in favor of each indicator.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that, contrary to the idea that companies in the cultural sector are akin to organizations whose performance can be equated solely to growth and profitability (Grefe, 2012) or the entrepreneur's reputation (Swedberg, 2006), performance in this sector of activity, and more specifically in the music industry, is a multidimensional concept,

encompassing financial, commercial, and competitive dimensions. However, the indicators for these dimensions vary according to the specific characteristics of the business sector.

Indeed, music industry entrepreneurs perceive their financial performance in terms of the ability of the business to generate the financial resources needed to satisfy the economic needs of the entrepreneur and his family. It is also perceived by the entrepreneur's ability to carry out investment projects unrelated to the music business. These indicators are non-quantitative, unlike those found in the literature. This is due to a number of factors, including the absence of accounting systems that can provide reliable financial information for calculating quantitative indicators (Sogbossi, 2010). Moreover, as some of these entrepreneurs are uneducated, they embark on their entrepreneurial activities at a very early age. Grefe and Simmonet (2010) also point out that low wages in this sector, coupled with increasing family burdens, force some entrepreneurs to give up and take up other businesses. It is therefore understandable that entrepreneurs in this sector assess business performance in terms of their ability to overcome this difficulty and satisfy their economic needs and those of their families through their businesses.

In the music industry, commercial performance is measured by the number of records sold on the market, sales generated through social networks and digital platforms, the ability to physically mobilize the masses at various shows, and so on. Grefe and Simmonet (2010) point out that cultural enterprise have relatively fewer customers at the start of their activity. In fact, as Torrès (2009) argues, the clientele at the start of the project is local. On the other hand, when the entrepreneur succeeds in mobilizing a good number of consumers other than the local clientele, whether through organized shows or through solicitations by people outside the entrepreneur's immediate circle, these factors are

indicators of the quality of the services offered by the artist and therefore testify to his level of performance. Furthermore, with the advent of piracy, entrepreneurs are developing new strategies to conquer the masses with their artistic products. In these new strategies, NICTs (New Information and Communication Technologies) are put to work, and, from then on, business performance is measured through sales made via digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and others.

Moreover, contrary to existing theories, it is quality supply that creates demand in cultural and creative entrepreneurship (Douyon, 2020). Consequently, there are no a priori market shares reserved for the company. Consequently, commercial performance cannot be assessed through market share, but the artist who mobilizes the maximum number of customers through digital platforms in order to sell his or her production is more successful, since the volume of sales is proof of the quality of the artistic product.

Furthermore, the results of our study show that, given companies in the cultural sector are mostly very small structures, competitive performance in this sector is not measured by the ability to face up to the competitive struggle (Sogbossi, 2010), but rather by the quality of the audience at cultural events, performances in high-profile, venues and, above all, by recognition by society through awards and other distinctions. This result can be explained by the fact that, as demand is absent in the cultural field (Douyon, 2020), there is no competition between entrepreneurs, and demand is created on the basis of the quality of the product offered on the market. To distinguish themselves from their counterparts in the sector, music industry entrepreneurs set themselves apart through the various distinctions they receive in recognition of their efforts. These distinctions and awards testify of their performance relative to others. This result also corroborates that of Greffe and Simmonet (2010), who point out that the receipt of various awards, prizes, labels, and inclusion in a top ten list and many others are indicators of the quality of the cultural projects implemented.

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Ultimately, the main aim of this article was to shed light on the performance criteria used by entrepreneurs in the cultural sector, particularly in the Cameroonian music industry. To achieve this objective, the qualitative multiple-case study method was chosen. Semi-directed interviews were conducted with a sample of 14 entrepreneurs from the musical arts industry with the aim of uncovering their perception of the notion of performance in their sector of activity. The Nvivo 10 software was used to analyse the artists' discourse. The results of this study show that contrary to the idea that companies in the cultural sector are similar to organizations whose performance is unidimensional

(Greffe, 2012; Swedberg, 2006), performance in this sector, and more specifically in the music industry, is a multidimensional notion in the sense of Sogbossi (2010), encompassing financial, commercial and competitive dimensions. However, the indicators for these dimensions differ significantly from those conventionally accepted in the literature. An analysis of the discourse of the artists interviewed shows that commercial performance is perceived in terms of the volume of sales achieved through NICTs, the ability to mobilize the masses during events, and the frequency of invitations to perform at cultural or other events. Competitive performance is measured by the number of prizes, distinctions, and awards won, the quality of audiences at events, and the organization of shows in well-known cultural venues. Lastly, financial performance is assessed by the entrepreneur's ability to satisfy his or her own economic needs and those of his or her family, and the realization of investments unrelated to the business. Our results corroborate the work of Sogbossi (2010), Greffe and Simmonet (2010) and Douyon (2020). Numerous studies have examined performance in relation to other forms of entrepreneurship, most of which are linked to developed sectors. The results of this study constitute a contribution to the existing body of knowledge on cultural entrepreneurship (music industry) which is still underdeveloped in the Cameroonian context. Over the past five years, this industry has seen a significant influx of cultural entrepreneurs. As implications of this work, this article may constitute a valuable tool for these entrepreneurs in defining indicators to measure their performance and elaborate sustainability strategies in their field of activity.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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