

## **STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES ON BOOK PUBLISHING AND MARKETING IN NIGERIA**

Uche, Anthony Ogbonna

Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka  
Anambra State  
Email: [uche.anthony24@yahoo.com](mailto:uche.anthony24@yahoo.com)

---

Page | 1

**Abstract:** *The book industry is very important in any nation. And there can be no books without publishing. Book publishing therefore involves several stakeholders including writers, printers, academics, computer graphic artists, typesetters, educational institutions, publishers, copyright commission, students, government, financial institutions, lithographers, booksellers and book readers among others. Perhaps that is why White (1946, p. 58) pointed out that “an examination of the publishing industry in any country must inevitably concern itself, not merely with the economics of the production and distribution of books, but also with the educational and social implications of their supply and use.” The import of publishing is communication. However the industry has been bedeviled by several issues ranging from paucity of infrastructure to inadequate skilled manpower and violations of rights especially copyright. This article therefore identified the history of the publishing industry in Nigeria tracing it to the early colonial days; unveiled the challenges confronting it and the opportunities for growth and development.*

**Keywords:** Book publishing, Book industry, Publishing industry, Marketing, Publications

## INTRODUCTION

Book publishing and marketing are Siamese twins. It is so because no book is worth its name until it has been made available to readers. Books occupy a pride of place in human civilization. In fact, experts have pointed out that books are the oldest media before the advent of other forms of media (Sandman et al. 1976; Murphy, 1977; MacBride et al. 1981; Lee, 2008). Regrettably, several individuals are yet to know much about the book industry especially as it relates to book publishing in a developing economy. Most people, including daily book users are ignorant of the processes of producing books let alone the opportunities that exist for book publishing in spite of its importance as articulated by Valdehuesa (1985, P. 710) that book publishing promotes learning, advances knowledge, and connects divers sectors of the population: technocrats with lay persons, scholars with students, leaders with followers, storytellers with their publics. It also bridges the gap between academia and the market place, between school and community and nations, between past and present and present and future. Given this scenario, this article sought to obtain the position of stakeholders in the book publishing industry regarding the issues confronting it and the perhaps the opportunities for the industry.

## WHAT BOOK PUBLISHING ENTAILS

Microsoft Encarta (2009) defines Book Publishing as the manufacture, publication, and distribution of books. The process involves the selection of a manuscript, the editing of it, the designing of the book's final appearance, the actual manufacture into book form, the distribution of the book to booksellers, and the book's ultimate purchase by readers. Valdehuesa (1985, p. 709) posits that book publishing is the art and craft of cultivating the best minds in society so that what knowledge, wit, or charm they possess may be communicated and shared and thus bring about greater sophistication or intellectual development among people.

We speak of book publishing as an industry and as a profession. Both designations are most certainly appropriate. Book publishing is a business conducted, for the most part, for profit. But its practitioners — at least those who do it — have motivations that transcend their profit interest (Dessauer 1981, p.11).

Okwilagwe (2001) citing Grannis (1967) posits that when the term publishing is applied to book publishing, it is a formidable succession of activities no one of which can by itself be called publishing. It is only when a manuscript has been transformed into a book and then distributed to its intended market place, that the process of publishing is complete. To perform an editorial service alone whether as a risk or for a fee is not to publish. Book publishing is all of these things put together, an integrated process, whether carried out by a single firm or by several. It is the whole intellectual and business procedure of selecting and arranging to make a book and of promoting its ultimate use (Okwilagwe, 2001, p. 2).

## HISTORY OF PUBLISHING

Book publishing can be said to be a child of necessity. “When humans were content to leave their written records on rocks, communication technology was simple. The essential material was a smooth rock, the essential tools a chisel and a hammer. As a need to preserve longer manuscripts was recognized, new formats were needed (Murphy 1977, p. 52). The next stage was the scroll which consisted of a long sheet of papyrus equipped with a roller at each end. It was however cumbersome and hence, gave way for the codex which consisted of several sheets of parchment assembled into gatherings that were sewn together. Both the scroll and the codex were handwritten by monks, scribes and clerks—a herculean task indeed. As the Middle Ages gave way to the Enlightenment more and more people learned to read and the demand for books exceeded the capabilities of the monks and clerks who hand-copied each new volume. Clearly, better production methods, new technologies were needed (Murphy 1977, p. 52).

In a Keynote Address at the first Nigeria National Book Fair (Eastern Zone) Professor Richard Okafor posits: Although no one remembers any great publisher in ancient Egypt, perhaps King Hammurabi, a king of ancient Babylonia, who lived about 2000 B.C, struck the first blow for publishing when he carved his famous laws (*The Code of Hammurabi*) on a great stone pillar, eight feet high, and mounted it in the Temple of Marduk in Babylon so that any traveler, any citizen, and functionary of State, and every man in the street would know the provisions of the laws that could govern his life (Okafor, 2006, p.90).

According to Dominick (2002, p. 147) early books were inscribed by hand and lavishly decorated; many were valued as works of art. Until approximately the 12<sup>th</sup> century, most books in Europe were produced by monks in monasteries. However, modern publishing was ushered in by Johann Gutenberg who invented the movable type. In about 1455, Gutenberg printed his first book — the Bible.

## HISTORY OF PUBLISHING IN NIGERIA

Okafor (2006, p. 93) posits that it is reasonable to argue that publishing is one of the oldest professional activities in Nigeria. It was in 1859 that Rev. Henry Townsend published *Iwe Irohin*, the first newspaper devoted to the evangelizing activities of the Christian Mission in Abeokuta. However, book publishing in Nigeria began in the early twentieth century through the colonial experience (Okunna & Omenugha 2012). Book publishing in Nigeria was initiated in the 1920s when policies were formulated on the production and importation of English and Arithmetic text books from Britain (Jika 1990, p. 195) as cited in Okunna & Omenugha (2012, p. 74).

Obidiegwu (2006) asserts that prior to Independence; the first significant groups of publishers to operate in Nigeria were the Christian presses who played a key role in



the production and distribution of books. Understandably, the earliest publications were religious, philosophical and instructional in nature, and their circulation confined to a few centres of education i.e. mission colleges where missionary personnel and teachers were being trained. For a long time, mission presses were the only printing and publishing establishment in existence in Nigeria with the CMS Press in Lagos being perhaps the most active. The process of gradual indigenization of major publishing firms which were established in Nigeria from the UK quickened with independence in 1960 and by 1977, the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree made it mandatory for foreign publishing enterprises to become Nigerian companies through the equity participation of Nigerians. Closely following this era of shareholding and greater managerial responsibilities for an increasing number of Nigerians, was the Universal Free Primary Education (UPE) of 1976 which created enormous opportunities and challenges for the Nigerian Publishing Industry. Primary school enrolment for example, more than doubled overnight and this had a serious spill-over effect on secondary and tertiary education as well. The unprecedented demand for books caught publishers napping, though imports and the emergence of indigenous publishing houses helped cushion the effect of the drastic explosion in demand. By 1982, a new national policy on education known as the 6-3-3-4 System was introduced and this called for new books to meet the requirements of the new curriculum, creating further challenges and opportunities for new publishing, both indigenous and foreign (Obidiegwu 2006, p. 111).

## **PARTNERS IN PUBLISHING**

Producing a book calls for teamwork. Each one of the team members is very important. According to Smith (1989, p.6), teamwork is needed to produce a book and put it on the hands of readers. Each member of the team has a necessary part to play and none of them can be eliminated. While Behnke (1963, p. 41) identified three partners: the writer, publisher and consumer (reader). Smith (1989, p.6) however identified four principal partners excluding the reader(s), namely: author, printer, bookseller and the publisher.

### **The Writer**

This is the one who puts his ideas to paper. He or she is the person that is pregnant with ideas that if accepted would be “midwifed” by the publisher, and thus a book is born. The writer is also known as the author. Smith (1989, p. 7) describes the author as the creator or originator of the ideas to be given to the world through a book, the arranger of the words, pictures, charts, tables, and so forth, in which the ideas are to be presented. It should be noted that the author may or may not be an individual. An author can be an institution, agency, group or government.

The author is the first owner of the right to publish the work created, and will usually try to sell that right or lease it or assign it to a publisher to reproduce the manuscript in some way to distribute to the world. But until permission is given to someone else, the author is the sole proprietor of the right of publication; and there is nothing to prevent the author from hiding the manuscript or burning it up rather than sharing it with the rest of the world. But the author who does want to share it is entitled to some



reward from society. Without authors there could be no publishing for education and social enrichment (Smith, 1989, p. 9).

## The Publisher

According to Valdehuesa (1985, p. 710), one of the least understood roles is that of the publisher. Too often the role of the publisher is confused with that of the printer. Smith (1989, p. 23) explains that the book publisher is an investor in books. The publisher is the one who pays out money to the author, translator, artist, editor, printer, papermaker, and others for producing the books, and to the sales people, advertisers, and those who help in marketing them, and takes in money from the booksellers and others who buy the books or who buy the right to use the books' content in some way. Manuel Valdehuesa specifies the import of publishers when he made the following apt comparisons:

Publishers are to literary development as producers are to movie-making. They are to books as promoters are to sports, or as impresarios are to the performing arts...publishers are the chefs who determine the literary menu to be served up to a varied clientele (Valdehuesa 1985, p. 711).

Publishers have a strategic role. They are the organizers, the strategists, the financiers and quintessentially, the risk takers in the process of book development. It is the role of the publisher to determine the information that people need, search for qualified and competent authors to prepare the manuscripts (book commissioning). He is also in charge of negotiating and acquiring publishing rights, substantive editing and copy editing by deploying editors to refine the manuscripts, planning the production process, buying papers, inks and other materials, engaging designers, printers, organizing the promotional and marketing activities and ultimately ensuring that the finished good (published book) gets to the final consumer (reader) at the approved price. In the words of Hiebert et al (1991, p. 406), the publisher is the link among the author, the suppliers, and technicians who produce the book and the readers who buy it.

## The Printer

The printer is not a risk taker on any specific book project. Perhaps it is important at this juncture to stress the difference between a publisher and a printer. Okwilagwe (2001, p. 4) posits that it is difficult to distinguish the printer from the professional publisher in Nigeria. Printing activities had developed and overshadowed the professional publishing activities. Although printing is an aspect of the publishing industry, the Nigerian printers have maintained the old tradition of performing all the essential functions in the publishing of books. This is counterproductive as it is injurious to professionalism in the publishing industry in Nigeria. A printer's duty is to print. He is more often engaged by the publisher to run impression. In fact a printer is expected to have the necessary machinery to bring out the already computer-designed and typeset manuscript (typescript) to life.

In other words, after the typescript has been filmed and plated by a lithographer, the next point of call is the printer's shop. Thus, a printer is more concerned about hardware than software. Although it should be noted that a publisher can also have a printing press, however, it is not a sine qua non for becoming a publisher. Therefore printing can be said to be just a mere process of publishing.

Valdehuesa (1985, p. 711) identified three things that stand out about the publishers' role:

- (1) Their concern are different from those of printers
- (2) Their investment is entirely apart from the printers' costs
- (3) They are risk takers.

Moreover, their essential tools are a publishing programme, literary acumen, entrepreneurial sense and money.

White (1946, p. 58) posits that there is inter-dependence of all who inhabit the world of books — author, publisher, printer, book seller, librarian and the small but ever widening public which uses them.”

## **AUTHOR—PUBLISHER RELATIONSHIP**

Writing on the relationship between authors and publishers, Day (1993, p. 7) as cited by Okafor (2006, p. 88) posits: It is the author's part to call into being their cargoes and passengers—living thoughts and rich bales of study and jeweled ideas. And as for the publishers, it is they who build the fleet, plan the voyage and sail on, facing wreck till they find every possible harbor that will value their burden.

The maintenance of mutually satisfactory relations with his authors is one of the most difficult of the publisher's problems, for although the parties to a publishing venture would appear to have similar interests, their points of view are very different (Taylor, 1935, p. 71). It must be admitted that in the past authors were (and to some slight extent still are) unscrupulously exploited by publishers; but the day of such exploitation is, in general, past; and it is now nearer the truth to say that the publisher is exploited by the author — with the help of the literary agent, whose business it is to get the best price he can for his author client in the free and highly competitive publishing market (Taylor, 1935, p. 72).

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF BOOK PUBLISHING**

Publishing is a mass communication medium which is a principal – indeed, critical factor – in the educational process of a nation. Critical, because the development of any society is organically linked to the virility of its book publishing industry



(Adelekan, 2005, p. 185). And whenever the importance of book publishing is highlighted, the importance of book is invariably stressed.

Ayodele (2007, p. 13) specifies the importance of books, “Over the years, I have come to regard the book in whatever form it comes as the most effective means of liberating man from the shackles of ignorance, and therefore the ultimate weapon for mass development.” Quoting Daniel Coit Gilman, the first president of John Hopkins University, Ofori-Mensah (2008, p. 32) postulates that without books history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, and speculation at a standstill. Without books, the development of civilization would have been impossible. They are the engineers of change, windows on the world and light houses erected in the sea of time. They are companions, teachers, magicians, bankers of treasuries of the mind. Books are humanity in print.

Three importance of publishing are succinctly presented by Lippincott (1906, p. 1) to include: preserving and disseminating knowledge and entertainment. To feel that an imprint on an important book will pass under the eyes of generations, after monuments have become neglected, is a satisfaction which the publisher of a good book may properly enjoy in perspective. In his contribution, Valdehuesa (1985) posits that publishing is a serious business. Its direct contribution to economic growth is difficult to quantify, but its role in vitalizing economic forces is decisive. It is essential, first of all, for the literacy movement, which requires reading materials of all kinds. And it is a basic requirement of science, technology, and all other disciplines, which together constitute the dynamo of socioeconomic growth. In short it is a basic infrastructure for national progress and modernization.

At its best, the task of book publishing is to generate and communicate the best thoughts, the most useful ideas, and the common aspirations of a given people. Through the workings of the publishing industry, knowledge or information is recorded, synthesized, organized, and imparted (Valdehuesa, 1985, p. 709).

Book publishing helps in identifying budding talents (writers) and projecting them to the world. This was the way most African writers came to national and international limelight. Bankole (2005, p. 229) opines that it could be said that this early set of publishers ( University Press, Longman, Macmillan etc) was instrumental to the discovery of the early geniuses of Nigerian literature—Amos Tutuola, John Pepper Clark, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka.

Book publishing promotes learning, advances knowledge, and connects divers sectors of the population: technocrats with lay persons, scholars with students, leaders with followers, storytellers with their publics. It also bridges the gap between academia and the market place, between school and community and nations, between past and present and present and future (Valdehuesa, 1985, p. 710).

Publishing helps a country to raise its head at the comity of nations. Adding credence to this, Datus Smith comments: “Quite aside from questions of national pride, and the national wish of most countries to have book industries of their own, a local book industry is needed, no matter how great the availability of books from abroad. This is



necessary for cultural enrichment; for opportunities for self-expression by nation's thinkers, writers and artists, for developing a sense of national unity as well as a sense of historic tradition" (Smith, 1989, pp. 3-4).

## **THE PUBLISHING PROCESS**

The publishing process can be viewed as a chain from authors to editors to printers, booksellers and the end users. A newly arriving manuscript whether unsolicited or commissioned, is first read to ascertain its suitability or otherwise for publication. Some publishing firms employ full-time readers; some have all their reading done outside by unattached specialists of literary and technical experience while others have both in-house readers as well as outside specialists who do the proofreading. The reports of these readers usually form the chief influence resulting in the acceptance or rejection of a manuscript, though the publisher himself or his principal editor makes the final decision. It should be noted, however, that the degree of care needed in reading a manuscript varies considerably. New works from unknown writers usually require a very careful examination whereas those from already published or established authors are not usually subjected to thorough scrutiny.

If a manuscript is accepted, the next is to reach an agreement with the author, stating precisely the condition upon which publication is undertaken (Taylor, 1935, p. 54). It may be stated here that some sharp publishers may go for acquisition of an author's copyright by way of outright payment. However, the standard practice is to pay royalty.

## **CATEGORIES/BRANCHES OF BOOK PUBLISHING**

The publishing business is divided into special branches, distinguished broadly by the nature of the books which they individually include. Thus we have medical publishers, technical or scientific publishers, publishers of Belles Letters and fiction, and publishers of periodicals. The firm or individual issuing books belonging to all or several of these various classes is known as a general publisher (Lippincott, 1906, p. 1). The publishing trend in Nigeria according to Okwilagwe (2001) does not indicate any form of specialization. Rather, most publishers spread their energy on publishing all categories of books. The size of an audience for a particular book determines the viability of its project. Educational books have thus received the attention of the Nigerian publishers more than any other category of books. Within this category of books, primary and secondary schools are the main areas of interest to a majority of Nigerian publishers. They are "bread and butter" to the Nigerian publishers



(Okwilagwe, 2001, p. 6). He however presents two models used in book classification, namely:

- (a). Michael Lane's (1970) five categories of books are: General, Fiction, Literature and Belles Letters; Education and Technical; Academic.
- (b). Mann's (1970) sociological model for book classification has three sub-divisions:
  - (i) Work or Utilitarian Books- workbooks made up of texts, manuals, and reference books, home manuals and reference books such as cookery, car manuals, guides and hobbies.
  - (ii) Social reading consists of self improvement books, non-fiction books and fiction. Non-fiction consists of history, biography, memoirs and travel books. Fiction consists of good novels; and
  - (iii) Personal reading books such as romance, mystery and detective books (novels).

Dominick (2002, p. 154) posits that publishers have developed a classification system for the industry based upon the market that is served. 12 major divisions were highlighted as specified by the Association of American Publishers:

1. *Trade Books* are aimed at the general consumer and sold primarily through bookstores. They can be hardbound or softbound and include works for juvenile and adults. Trade books include hardcover fiction, nonfiction, biography, cookbooks, art books, and several other types.
2. *Religious Books* include Bibles, hymnals, prayer books, theology and other literature of a devotional nature.
3. *Professional Books* are aimed at doctors, lawyers, scientists, accountants, business managers, architects, engineers, and all others who need a personal reference library in their work.
4. *Book clubs* at first may sound more like a distribution channel than a division of the publishing segment but some book club publish their own books and almost all prepare special editions for their members. Thus, it makes sense to include them here.
5. *Mail-order publications* consist of books created for the general public and marketed by direct mail. These are different from book clubs because the books are marketed by the publisher, and customers do not incur any membership obligations in an organization.
6. *Mass-market paperbacks* are softbound volumes on all subjects that have their major sale in places other than bookstores. Typically, these are the books sold in wire racks in supermarkets, newsstands, drugstores, airports, chain stores, and so on.
7. *University presses* publish mostly scholarly titles or books that have cultural or artistic merit. University presses typically are run on a nonprofit basis, and most of their customers are libraries and scholars.

8. *Elementary and secondary textbooks* are hard and soft cover books, workbooks, manuals and other printed materials, all intended for use in the classroom. Logically enough, schools are the primary market for these publishers. (This division is also known as “elhi” publishers—from elementary and *high school*.)
9. *College textbook* publishers produce texts and workbooks for the college market.
10. *Standardized tests* make up a relatively small segment of the industry. These publishers put together tests of ability, aptitude, interest, personality, and other traits.
11. *Subscription reference books* consist of encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases, and the like. They are usually marketed in packages to schools, libraries, and individual consumers.
12. *Audiovisual and other media* supply tapes, films, slides, transparencies, games, and other educational materials to schools and training companies.

## **MAJOR DEPARTMENTS IN A PUBLISHING COMPANY**

Dominick (2002, p. 159) identified four major departments in a publishing company: editorial, production, marketing and general administration.

### **The Editorial Department**

This department is in charge of dealing with authors. The tasks include selecting manuscripts and preparing them for publication. Some editors specialize in procurement and visit potential authors to solicit their work. Other editors read manuscripts, write a report on them, and recommend acceptance, rejection or revision. Once an accepted manuscript is completed, copyeditors sift through it, checking grammar, punctuation, language, internal consistency, and accuracy.

### **The Production Department**

The layout, design and illustrations are better handled by the production department. It is their responsibility to ensure that the book comes out in the approved form. The printing, collation, binding and trimming are all handled by the production department. It is in charge of planning and design of the book; determining typeface, type size, composition, type of paper and the grammage.

### **Marketing Department**

This is the department in charge of all marketing activities such as promotion and advertizing. It is headed by a marketing manager whose responsibility it is to ensure that the necessary publicity for the company and its products is created and



enhanced. Marketing department usually works closely with the sales department. In fact some companies designate the department as sales/marketing.

### **The Administration Department**

This is the department that oversees the recruitment of staff, their training/re-training, staff evaluation, discipline, promotion and sometimes vehicles procurement and maintenance. The administration department ensures that the administrative polices are implemented with maximum efficiency. This is done through careful and skillful planning, organizing, staffing, directing and leading and controlling the activities of other departments. Page | 11

### **Factors Militating against Book Publishing**

There are several factors militating against book publishing in Nigeria. Experts have on several occasions and fora highlighted some of these challenges including:

#### **Poor Readership/Book Buying Culture**

Adegbola (2009, p. 41) cries out that in spite of the fact that we have been exposed to western education and learning for close to two centuries and we have a large population of literate people, the reading culture is still poor in our society.

Tiamiyu (2005, p. 146) observes that “the problem of poor reading culture is pervasive among all classes of Nigerians, from primary school to university undergraduates.” This is in tandem with Adegoke (2001, p.171) who posits that the majority of people who are literate hardly read for pleasure...students for example; tend to read just to pass their examinations, many hardly read books outside their discipline except when they are compelled. These observations found a kindred spirit with Alele-Williams (2007, p. 9), “...we have become a non-reading society...reading books for enjoyment is not of interest or concern to the generality of Nigerians.

Today most educated persons spend money mainly on those books needed to pass examinations...this is in contrast with the past where the mark of an educated person in colonial times was that such a person however lowly in the civil service had a glass-showcase or just a shelf of books in his house.” She laments the fact that “it is easier to sit watching television in every spare moment at one’s disposal than devote one hour every evening reading” (Alele-Williams, 2007, p. 10). Without readers, publishers can no longer remain in business. Publishers publish because there are readers or would-be readers, and there are readers because there are publishers who publish the books to be read.

Adegbola (2009, p.41) also observes that there is rather low book buying culture in our society. Even the attitude to buying routine educational texts is poor. A rough computation of the total national volumes sold of core subjects titles reveals this. Poor readership in turn leads to poor patronage. Perhaps as a result of poverty—poverty of



the mind and the pocket, several individuals prefer to spend their money on feeding the body rather than feeding the mind; hence, the cry of Stanley Unwin over 75 years ago:

On the day when expenditure upon food for the mind is regarded as no more of a luxury than expenditure upon food for the body, book-selling will come into its own; but alas! Books are the last thing most people have any intention of buying, or can ever be persuaded to buy (Unwin, 1935, p. 10).

If the above statement could be made concerning the developed world, the United Kingdom, what would be the case of a nation such as ours that is still undeveloped! Indeed it is a pitiable and pathetic situation. Little wonder Dan Obidiegwu, the former MD of Longman Nigeria Plc mourns:

It is sad that after nearly 60 years of existence, the turnover of the publishing industry has remained at a very low level despite the huge potential market, in comparisons to other sectors of the economy. The highest turnover of perhaps the largest and perhaps the oldest publishing company in Nigeria may not have attained the ₦5.0 billion a year mark (Obidiegwu, 2009, p 14).

## **COST OF PUBLISHING**

Cost of publishing has been identified by experts as one of the major challenges facing the industry in Nigeria. In the words of Alele-Williams (2007, p. 10), “Books are expensive to publish and therefore to buy.” Okoro (1990) could not agree less when he wrote:

The unit cost of book production in Nigeria is very high. By the time the publisher pays royalty to the author, gives discount to the bookseller, pays all his bills and overheads, he is left with little or no profit. For some booksellers, after getting their discounts from publishers, still mark up their prices before selling the books to the public. There is no doubt that books are expensive in Nigeria. It is not easy to buy even exercise books for some parents and students (Okoro, 1990, p. 207).

A lot of input is involved before a book is published. Apart from human resources which have been developed over time through training, the necessary infrastructures in the publishing industry are paper mills, printing machinery with good bindery for finishing operations and a petrochemical industry for the manufacture of intermediate materials necessary for digital production, film making, colour separation, plate making, ink, etc. in the views of Obidiegwu (2009), of all these, the most critical appears to be paper.

At the moment, paper for the manufacture of books is not produced anywhere in Nigeria. The Jebba Paper Mills, the Newsprint Paper Mills at Oku Ibokun and the Iwopin Paper Mill are all comatose. Most books used in our schools today are printed on wood-free paper which is wholly imported. It needs to be stated here that the effect of high rates of import duty on inputs such as paper/boards, machines and spares and the net effect of the various taxes and levies imposed on these categories of goods



on availability and affordability of books have been negative (Obidiegwu, 2009, p. 14). This view is corroborated by Hiebert et al (1991, p. 406) who had earlier written concerning book publishing that "...profit margins are small because of fixed costs and the expenses of paper and printing."

## PIRACY

Book piracy is perhaps the most controversial issue in the Nigerian book industry today (Okoro, 1990, p. 207). All creative artists in Nigeria are victims of pirates who rob them of the products of their ingenuity; this acts as a great disincentive to creativity and the society is worse for it (Uzochukwu, 2005, p. 25). Adegbola (2009, p. 42) identified the major hotbeds of piracy to include Ajegunle, Aba and Onitsha.

According to Smith (1989, p. 8) the main argument against piracy—frequently ignored in developing countries—is that piracy prevents the growth of the indigenous book industry." In his paper presentation in Enugu on Indigenous publishing and national development, Dan Obidiegwu asserts that indigenous publishing business in Nigeria today is fast crumbling under the weight of organized book piracy, which is the infringement of copyright (Obidiegwu, 2006, p. 112).

The piracy cankerworm which reared its ugly head somewhat in the 1980s has become a full blown monster to the book industry in Nigeria. Up till the early 90s, pirates were considered to be responsible for stealing between 40% and 60% of the publishers' legitimate income and market. Today, as a result of the failure of the combined might of the (very effeminate and slow) judicial system and copyright owners to secure conviction and appropriate punishment for offenders, we are talking of up to 80% or more criminal market encroachment by book pirates. This menace is indeed a major disincentive to the mental and physical vigours of creative thought and expression demanded of the writer, as well as the professional processing and financial risk-taking expected of the publisher (Obidiegwu, 2009, 17).

Commenting on this monster called book piracy and the complicity of the printer, Ayodele (2007, p. 16) writes: "...it is clear that the printer does only a minute aspect of the work in the publishing process. It is thus the height of criminality for a printer to merely take hold of a published work and reprint it without recourse to the publisher. That precisely is what the book pirate does. All that the printer invests is the tip of the iceberg, and so he can offer his so called product at a ridiculously low price. So, it would not be too far off the mark to claim that the book pirate is the greatest robber in our world today.

Without the protection of copyright, it is fair to say, the world would never have had the explosion of knowledge that has come through books (Smith, 1989, p. 9). One of the conditions for the infringement of copyright is that a substantial part of the work must have been copied. In the Nigerian context, we are not talking about copying a



part of a book, but about the pirate copying the whole book to be sold at reduced price. Why should there be so much talk about book piracy today? It could be that there is a connecting factor between book piracy and the general trend of events in the Nigerian society. Book piracy is, in itself, a sad manifestation of the way the Nigerian society has changed (Okoro, 1990, p. 207).

The effect of this monster: economic and intellectual, emotional and socio-political, is, to say the least, colossal! Page | 14

...many people are stressed and worried by the rate at which whole books are photocopied and sometimes sold and re-sold in some of our educational institutions. I would regard that as a direct assault on the author and the publisher. It is also reported that in every area of copyright breach –mimeographing, piracy, bootlegging, dubbing, photocopying, scanning etc., Nigeria has the highest number of units in Black Africa (Okafor, 2006, p. 94).

Nigeria seems to lack effective legislative measure to curb this ugly trend. This perhaps informed the comments of Fenby (1983, p. 75) that pirates are exceptionally in a creamy position as a result of the widespread lack of effective legislation against piracy. The rightful strategy is to ensure that culprits are apprehended and prosecuted. A situation where arrests are made and the suspects are granted bail at the police stations is a very bad development. Those arrested must be charged to court and if convicted, should be made to serve the necessary terms or pay the fines as stipulated. What usually happens is that when police or Nigeria Copyright commission (NCC) raids the traders, books confiscated usually resurface at the different bookshops after money must have exchanged hands.

In fact, the ease at which piracy is embarked on today can be attributed to “two modern elements, the computer and the photocopying machine.” Although these have contributed to the growth of modern publishing, it is however regrettable that “the computer and the photocopier threaten to destroy copyright-the essential basis for successful publishing” (Russak: 1975:106).

Decrying the effect of piracy, Iroh (2005) asks: why has the book trade gone into decline in recent times, undermining the quest for intellectual growth? I think this is because the author no longer benefits from his intellectual effort; they have been robbed of their intellectual properties and rights through book piracy. The nefarious activities of both pirates have damaged the noble art of writing and publishing in Nigeria.

## **WEAK DISTRIBUTION FRAMEWORK**

There is the challenge of good distribution network. It is one thing to publish and another thing is to get the books published to the end users. Adegbenro (2009, p. 41) posits that the present distribution arrangement in Nigeria has as its base subsistence traders. The distribution chain is weak, fragmented, undercapitalized, unsupportive and unorganized and as a result has failed the publishing industry in its quest to



achieve real growth. Nothing seems to discourage a publisher much more than seeing his publications piled up in his warehouse unsold. Capital become locked up in stock and envisaged profits continue to dwindle as the publisher has to pay for the cost of warehousing, and with time such published works may need a review or else become obsolete thus driving the publisher into bankruptcy.

## PROSPECTS IN BOOK PUBLISHING

“Publishing in Asia and Africa has a bright future, due to a number of factors, ironically including the present state of underdevelopment” (Smith, 1975, p. 130). It is indeed a general view (at least among publishers) that there exist lots of opportunities for the Nigerian publishing industry to grow beyond its present status. According to Obidiegwu (2006, p. 112), it is therefore evident that there are immense opportunities in publishing in Nigeria with lots of room for more. Over the last three decades, Nigerian publishers have been making a modest start with pre-school, primary and secondary school levels as the main areas of emphasis in a bold attempt to reverse the trend in which almost all books used in our schools were published abroad. At the same time, spirited effort are being made in the provision of creative, literary works in English and Nigerian languages as necessary ingredients in the nation’s cultural revival and identity.

Ogunleye (2005, p. 81) posits that the Nigerian book market is made up of the *supply market* and the *demand market*. The supply market comprises motley of publishers which include among others: author-publishers, contract-publishers, mission publishers, research institute publishers, university publishers, indigenous publishers and the multinational publishers. On the demand side of the Nigerian book market are large number of potential book users who include nursery school pupils, primary school and secondary school pupils, thousands of private candidates for West African School Certificate Examinations, the students of polytechnics and colleges of education, the universities and general interest readers.

“Book publishing will constitute a wasted effort if worthy books are not placed in the hands of readers. The signs are that Nigeria is under-served and the potential book market largely untapped. Book publishing in Nigeria resembles that in other countries in some respects, but must need advance in many others in order to serve a nation grappling with illiteracy and low-level advancement in socio-economic variables, politics, science, technology and general well-being of the people (Christopher, 2010, p. 206).

Olajide (2005, p. 40) identifies major classes of growth opportunities available for a publishing company. The classes include:

**Class 1 – Intensive Growth:** this consists of market penetration, market development and publication of new titles.

**Class 11 – Integrated Growth:** the following issues are involved:

- (i) Backward integration



- (ii) Forward integration
- (iii) Horizontal integration

**Class 111 – Diversification Growth**

This relates to

- (i) Concentric diversification, and
- (ii) Horizontal diversification.

On the side of educational publishing, there seems to be an ever increasing market for school books in Nigeria. Echebiri (2005, p. 205) put the estimated book needs of Nigeria as at 2001 as follows:

1. Pre-primary	10,000,000
2. Primary	
(a) Public	100,000,000
(b) Private	6,000,000
3. Secondary	43,200,000
4. Tertiary	6,840,000
5. Research institutions	25,000
 Total	 166,572,000

The above figures are clearly conservative, but they show that the book needs of Nigeria have recorded remarkable growth, from very modest figures earlier in the twentieth century to the estimated annual book requirements of about 166,600,000 volumes at the dawn of the new millennium (Echebiri, 2005, p. 205).

In 2009, estimated enrolment figures as presented by former Managing Director of Longman Plc, Dan Obidiegwu indicate the following:

Pre-school	5 million
Primary	25 million
Junior Secondary	10 million
Senior Secondary	8 million
Intermediate	3 million
Universities/tertiary	5 million

In all we have about 60 million persons currently engaged in one form of education or the other in Nigeria today, who require at least 5-10 books per person per annum, which puts our national book needs for the educational sector at about 600 million



books in any one year! These figures exclude books for leisure and general reading (Obidiegwu, 2009, pp. 13-14). The figures must have increased exponentially due to our ever increasing human population.

## **BOOK MARKETING IN NIGERIA**

The marketing of books is a very essential aspect of book publishing. It is often assumed and rightly so that the book publishing process is not complete until the printed book gets to the hand of the consumer — reader. Quoting Arboledan, Orimalade (2009, p. 45) writes that a book does not fulfill its purpose until it is read, and to be read it must reach a reader. Kirpatric (1982, p. 57) could not agree less when he wrote: any book is dead until read, when it becomes alive. Usually it is only read when bought; it is only bought if distributed from author through publisher to reader. Nwankwor (2005, p. 176) points out that books published and not distributed are not sold. Low sales turnover results in diminished capacity to publish. It is now accepted that the pace of production has far outstripped that of distribution.

While it is much easier to promote and distribute African-published books in Europe and America, the reverse is the case here in Nigeria. Factors responsible for this scenario include poor postal system which could have been very useful in Direct mail promotion of book titles. Ogunleye (2005, p. 105) writes that there is near absence of information on the books published in this part of the world. If booksellers and buyers are not aware of the existence of a particular book, how then can such a book be stocked and bought? Promotion and distribution are the weakest links in the publishing chain and as such calls for concerted efforts of the National Library, the Publishers Association, and the Booksellers Association. Ogunleye (2005, p. 106) suggests that the National Library of Nigeria could compile a comprehensive and reliable National Bibliography through its Legal Deposit collections and in collaboration with Nigerian Publishers Association. This will be a dependable source of information on Nigerian books.

### **Distributor/Wholesaler**

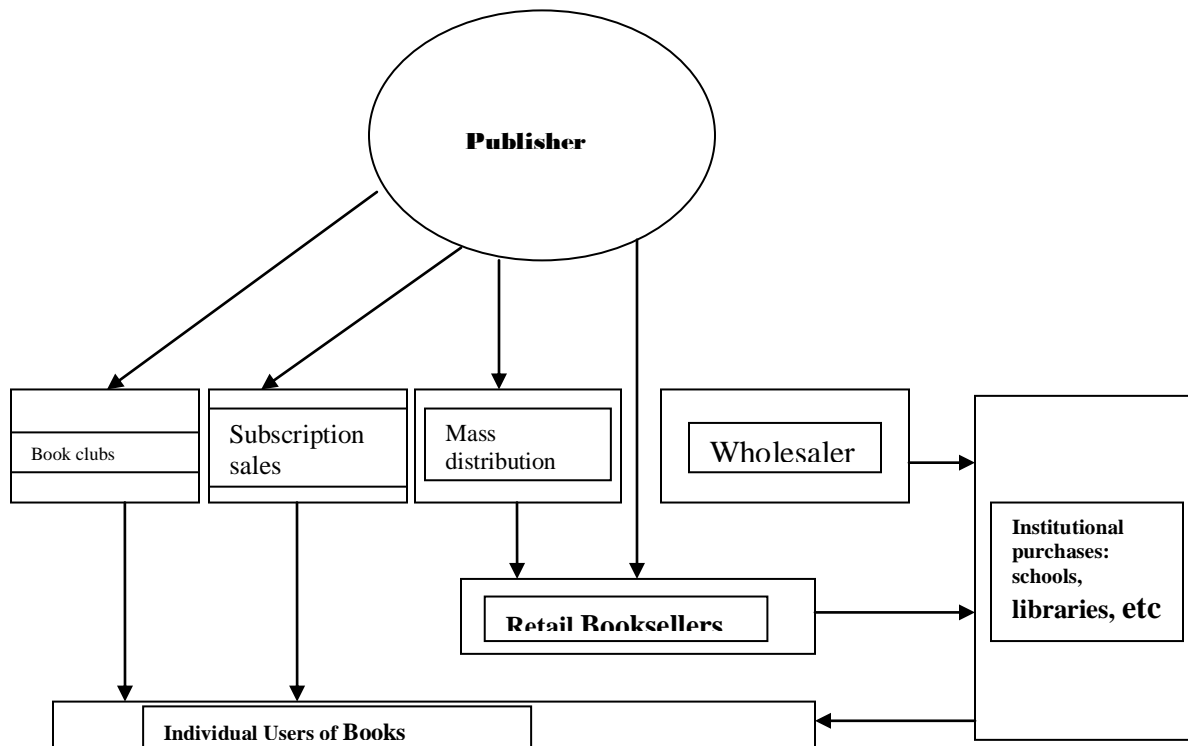
Publishers usually market their titles through appointed distributors or wholesalers who lift books from the publishers and stock them in their warehouses at a discounted rate. These distributors then supply the retail outlets.

### **Bookshops**

Bookshops are the most important retail outlets for all categories of books – from general to educational books and specialist publications. Ogunleye (2005, p. 106) laments that attempts to bypass the bookshops in the distribution of books have most of the time resulted in increased overhead costs and heavy uncollectables for Nigerian publishers. Booksellers interact more with customers. They know readers/customers' needs and demands. They know the subject areas where books are needed. They know

the titles which are fast or slow moving (Orimalade, 2009, p. 47). Late Victor Nwankwo describes the bookshop in this wise: the market book stalls and the street bookshops are without doubt one of the most important links in the publishing chain, being the main point of contact between publishers' books and the reader. Among their proprietors are many years of profound understanding of the retail trade. In this position, they can provide guidance to the reader on choice of titles, to the publisher on the reader needs and demand and to publishing developers a vital asset to channel book-buying psychology of the society (Nwankwor, 1994, p. 3).

Other retail outlets for Nigerian publishers as identified by Orimalade (2009, p. 47) are book clubs, market stalls, street bookshops, book hawkers, bend down bookshops, mobile book racks and itinerary book merchants. Those operating these outlets either buy from publishers or from bookshops.



**Book Marketing:** adapted from Datus Smith's *The Book Industry* (Smith 1989, p. 17)

Figure 1: A Diagrammatic Representation of Book Marketing Channel by a Publishing Firm

## DISTRIBUTION BY DIRECT SALE

Page | 19

Book distribution by direct sale has become a common practice in Nigeria. Publishers supply books directly to libraries and institutions when there is government or donor book procurement intervention. Orimalade (2009, p. 48) writes that a publisher using this channel operates a book sale outlet in his premises. He sometimes erects a canopy in front of his premises during book season and sells to passers-by. He sells books during book launches. He encourages private schools to buy directly from his warehouse – by giving them attractive discounts. He “dumps” books with school teachers and principals for sale to pupils. He encourages faculty staff in institutions of higher learning, through his representatives (Reps), to set up mini bookshops in the faculty where books are sold to students.

**Presentation:** There is still an option of book launch or public presentation (Uche 2013, p. 50). This is a situation whereby newly published titles are presented to the public. It is usually a very grand occasion for creating the needed publicity for such books.

**On-line stores:** On-line stores are becoming very popular. Most entrepreneurs are taking advantage of this virtual market place. Daily, millions of customers hook on to place their orders, make purchases and sell their goods. Such on-line market place and distribution platforms as identified by Uche (2013, p. 51) include: [www.eBay.com](http://www.eBay.com), [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com), [www.BarnesandNoble.com](http://www.BarnesandNoble.com), [www.BooksaMillion.com](http://www.BooksaMillion.com), [www.Borders.com](http://www.Borders.com), [www.Target.com](http://www.Target.com), [www.Walmart.com](http://www.Walmart.com), [www.unibooks.com](http://www.unibooks.com), [www.pubgraphics.com](http://www.pubgraphics.com).

## CONCLUSION

Book publishing is an essential enterprise in every nation. Okoro (1990, p. 199) agrees that the place of books in national and educational development cannot be over-emphasized. Books have a special position in the history of mankind. The literature, history, music, human achievements and cultural heritage of a nation are all recorded and preserved in books. Without books, the education of the people and the communication of ideas from one generation to the other would be difficult. Therefore any nation that toys with book publishing is a nation that is bound to backwardness and obscurity because such a nation does not recognize the importance of books.

## REFERENCES



- Adegbola, A. (2009, May). *The Impact of Book Production on National Development*. Paper presented at the eight Nigerian Book Fair Trust International Conference, Lagos.
- Adegoke, L. A (2001). Indigenous Publishing in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. In B. Folarin (Ed.), *Topical Issues in Communication Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 1, Ibadan: Bakinfo Publications.
- Adelekan, A. I. (2005). Government Policies and the Development of the Book Publishing Industry in Nigeria. In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Allele-Williams, G. (2006, May). *National Book Policy for Nigeria and Tomorrow the Pandemic and Spread of the Dreaded HIV/AIDS Disease* being an Opening Remarks at the fifth Nigeria International Book Fair, Lagos.
- Asein, S. O. (2005). The State of the Book and Literature in the Nigerian Society Today. In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Ayodele, S. O. (2006, May). *The Book as the Ultimate Weapon of Mass Development*. A Keynote Address presented at the fifth Nigeria International Book Fair, Lagos.
- Bankole, S. B. (2005). The Book Trade in Nigeria: What Role for the Nigerian Publishers Association and Other International Book Organizations? In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Behnke, J. A. (1963). The Role of Biology in the Publishing Industry. *The American Institute of biological Sciences*. Volume 13, No. 4, pp. 41-43. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1293097>
- Christopher, N. M. (2010). Applying Marketing concept to Book Publishing in Nigeria. *The Journal of International Social Research*. Volume 3/11, pp. 206-212. Retrieved from <http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt3/sayi11pdf/christopher.pdf>
- Day, C. S. (1993). The Story of Yale University Press. In S. Platt (Ed.), *Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Dessauer, J. P. (1981). *Book Publishing: What it Is, What it Does*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: R. R. Bowker Company.
- Dominic, J. R. (2002). *The Dynamics of Mass Communication: Media in the Digital Age*. (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.



- Echebiri, A. (2005). Book Production in Nigeria in the New Millennium: What Prospects? In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Fenby, J. (1983). *Piracy and the Public*. London: Frederick Muller Limited.
- Grannis, C. B. (1967). *What Happens in Book Publishing*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hiebert, R. E., Ungurait, D. F., & Bohn, T. W. (1991). *Mass Media IV: An Introduction to Modern Communication*. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Ike, C. (2004). Book Publishing in Nigeria. An article retrieved online from <https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:AhmAEdwOUOgJ:www.sabre.org/publications/publishing-in-nigeria.pdf+book+publishing+in+nigeria>
- Iroh, E. (2005, February 23). Publishing for Social and Economic Development. *The Guardian*.
- Kirpatric, R. (1982). Distribution-General. In P. Oakeshott & C. Bradlery (Eds.) *The Future of the Book*. UNESCO.
- Lane, M. (1970). *Books and their Readers*. Media Sociology. Jeremy Turnstall (Ed.), London: Constable
- Lee, L. T. (2008). History and development of mass communications. *Journalism and mass communication*. Vol. I Retrieved from [Http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c04/e6-33-02-01.pdf](http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c04/e6-33-02-01.pdf)
- Lippincott, J. B. (1906). Book Publishing. *American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 28, pp. 1-15. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1010659>
- MacBride, S. (1981). *Many Voices, One World* (Nigerian Edition). Ibadan: Ibadan University Press
- Mann, P. H. (1970). Books, Readers and Bookshops. *Media Sociology*. Jeremy Turnstall (Ed.). London: Constable
- Murphy, R. D. (1977). *Mass Communication and Human Interaction*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Nwankwor, V. (1994, November). *The Market Sale of Books in Nigeria: Lessons that Can Be Learnt*. Paper presented at a meeting of Bellagio Publishing Network, Dares Salaam, Tanzania.
- Nwankwor, V. (2005). Print-on-Demand: An African Publisher's Experience. In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.



- Nwosu, I. E. (1990). An Overview of the Relationship Between Communication and Rural/National Development. In I. E. Nwosu (Ed.), *Mass Communication and National Development*. Aba: Frontier Publishers Limited.
- Obidiegwu, D. (2005, September). *Indigenous Publishing and National Development*. Presented at the Nigerian Book Fair Trust National Conference, Enugu.
- Obidiegwu, D. (2009, May). *The Book Chain and National Development*. A Keynote address presented at the eight Nigerian Book Fair Trust International Conference, Lagos.
- Ofori-Mensah, A. (2007, May). *Developing African Publishing for the World Market: A Publisher's Perspective*. Paper presented at the sixth Nigerian Book Fair Trust International Conference, Lagos.
- Ogunleye, B. (2005). Marketing the Nigerian Book: Beyond the Local to the African and the World. In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Okafor, R. C. (2005, September). *Books: A Veritable Tool for National Development*. Being a Keynote Address presented at the Nigerian Book Fair Trust National Conference, Enugu.
- Okonkwo, C. R. (1978). The Press and Cultural Development: A Historical Perspective. In O. U Kalu (Ed.), *Reading in African Humanities: African Cultural Development*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Okoro, I. O. (1990). The Role of Government in Book Development in Nigeria. In I. E. Nwosu (Ed.), *Mass Communication and National Development*. Aba: Frontier Publishers Limited.
- Okwilagwe, O. A. (2001). *Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden
- Olajide, W. A. (2005). The Economics of Publishing. In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Oluikpe, B. O. (2004). *Thesis Writing: Its Form and Style*. Onitsha: Africana First Publishers.
- Orimalade O. O (2009:). *Effective Book Distribution and National Development*. Paper presented at the eight Nigerian Book Fair Trust International Conference, Lagos.
- Sandman, P., Rubin, D. & Sachsman, D. (1976). *Media: An Introductory Analysis of American Mass Communications*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.



- Smith, Jr. D. (1975). The Bright Promise of Publishing in Developing Countries. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 421, pp. 130-139. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1040875>
- Smith, D. (1989). *A Guide to book Publishing*. Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Taylor, W. G. (1935). Publishing. In J. Hampden (Ed.), *The Book World*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.
- Tiamiyu, M. (2005). Prospects of Nigerian Book Publishing in the Electronic Age. In F.A Adesanoye & A. Ojeniyi (Eds.), *Issues in Book Publishing in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Plc.
- Tebbel, J. (1980). *Opportunities in Book Publishing*. Illinois: VGM Career Horison Publication.
- Uche, A. O. (2013). *How to Become a Global Author*. Lagos: Kings Publishing House
- Unwin, S. (1935). Introduction. In J. Hampden (Ed.), *The Book World*. London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.
- Uzochukwu, S. (2005, May). *The Challenge of Writing Books in Indigenous Languages: the Igbo Experience*. Paper presented at the Nigeria Book Fair Trust International Conference, Lagos
- Valdehuesa, M. E. (1985). Book Publishing: An Underrated Industry. *Journal of Reading*. Vol. 28, No. 8, pp. 709-711. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40029591>
- White, H. L. (1946). The Future of Australian Publishing. *The Australian Quarterly*. Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 58-69. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20631336>