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**NIGERIAN PUBLISHERS' PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS OF THE ISBD
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON QUALITY BOOK PUBLISHING**

BY

DR. FELICIA E. ETIM AND DR. UDUAK ENANG
Department of Educational Technology & Library Science
Faculty of Education,
University of Uyo, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study set out to investigate Nigerian publishers' perception of quality book publishing and awareness of the use of the ISBD. It also tested the influence of their awareness of the ISBD on quality book publishing. Findings reveal that Nigerian publishers have a positive perception of quality book publishing but claimed ignorance of the provision of the ISBD. The tested hypothesis shows that awareness of the ISBD does not significantly influence quality book publishing by Nigerians.

INTRODUCTION

Publishing represents a vital and indispensable function in the knowledge industry. There is no gainsaying the fact that without publishing knowledge cannot be effectively disseminated. It can also be proven that publishing has escalated the pace of development in the world. It is a task that requires not only courage but a tinge of fanaticism. Publishing has become a highly technological process that must not lose its professionalism. This is inherent in the essential philosophy that dissemination, constitutes the vitamin, which sustains the growth of knowledge (Aje, 1978). Publishing according to Fanoiki (1984) is the process whereby the words of an author are transformed into printed bound and jacketed volume and later actively promoted to

the general public. The publishing function is essentially that of facilitation, that is, making possible the production and distribution of the authors work by providing both the capital investment and technical skills that are needed to enable it reach its intended market and audience (Feathers, 1999). Publishing is presently between two ages (print and electronics). Many publishers are striving to cross this line by embarking on ambitious electronic publication plans (Ubogu, 2000). Electronic publishing is the process not merely of changing the production of print products (through the submission, editing and printing of books from disc), but also of vastly extending the range of 'non-print' publishing to include hypermedia and database publishing on CD-ROM and disc, and online and network publishing. But this does not mean that book publishing is fast disappearing. Even in the developed countries much emphasis is still laid on book publishing. One of the differences is that these books now come with the CD-ROM. Another is that new technologies such as the computer have replaced the expensive and time-consuming hot metal process. This does not change the publishing process but reduces the amount of time used for composition. This is not so in Nigeria, even when it is available there is frequently the problem with maintenance of equipments. It is evident that the maintenance culture is a serious problem in Nigeria. In 1977 a study of the economics of publishing by Smith (1997) revealed that production costs do not necessarily go down with the use of typewriter composition and off set printing but that letterpress method is still cheaper. Nigeria has the most prolific and best-developed book-publishing industry in black Africa, according to Mitchell (1972) and Onibonoje (1975). But it is yet to reach the stage that could be termed as fully developed. Aside from the efforts of a strong and long established representation of multinational publishers, there are also a number of active indigenous general publishers such as Onibonoje and Nwamife who have done much to make book publishing a legitimate and respectable industry. Due to the presence of computers, the traditional publishing techniques have suffered some set back, although these new trends have come to lessen the tasking job involved with the traditional publishing. In any given industry, there exists laws that must be obeyed so that the set goals can be achieved, not just the achievement of goals but also the satisfaction of the clients. These laws like in all other organizations are also applicable to the publishing industry. With the preliminary survey of books published in Nigeria, it was observed that there is a set of standards for publishing books. These publishing standards according to Bryson (1999) provide for consistency in the use of resources. Publishing standards provide rules about choice of pattern, and management of information and its supporting technologies. Standards also may be

set at the international, national and organizational levels. They include protocols; data capture and transfer standards, bibliographic descriptions and standards for record keeping. Standards may also determine accommodation requirements and service levels particularly important in identifying customer service levels or in instances where services are contracted out to third parties. With the recent information explosion, a lot of people rush into different kinds of businesses for gains rather than display their professional techniques. One of such businesses is publishing. Most of these people lack the technical know-how of publishing but just venture into the business for income. Many authors ignore the professional publishers to patronise half-baked publishers to publish their books, which do not meet the International Standards. This study examines Nigerian Publishers' perception of and awareness of the ISBD and how it influences quality book publishing. Specifically it tests the hypothesis that "Nigerian Publishers' awareness of the provision of the International Standard Bibliographic Description does not significantly influence quality book publishing".

LITERATURE REVIEW

The provision of the ISBD was developed and published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). This provision, covering most media and bibliographic conditions have been incorporated in the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules of 1988. A description will record the physical and identifying characteristics of a publication, including title, imprint and pagination, size, binding information etc (Gredley & Hopkinson, 1990).

At the international level, considerable efforts are being made to achieve a common approach in the recording of all kinds of information resources, especially in the area of descriptive cataloguing, illustrated by the creation of the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) for monographs and serials by the establishment of the list of uniform headings in specialist fields. Also standards are laid by the introduction of unique identification codes, such as ISBN and ISSN; and by agreement on the principles for the establishment of the choice of entry word and heading in catalogue entries (Statement of Principles of the International Conference on Cataloguing Principles, 1961).

The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR) are a set for the standard description of all materials which a library may hold or to which it may have access, and for the formulation of standard forms of names and titles to provide access to and grouping of those descriptions. The AACR is the dominant bibliographic standard

regulating descriptive cataloguing. (Feathers & Sturges, 1997). The first AACR was published in 1967, eleven years later a second edition appeared with modifications. The rules are able to produce neutral cataloguing which is not dependent on either the physical form of the item being catalogued by using a set of principles derived from the ISBD and by explicitly covering all library materials (German, 1978).

The National Library of Nigeria, in collaboration with the Departments of Library Studies and IFLA International office for Universal Bibliography (UBC) in London, organized a workshop to introduce ISBD to Nigerian librarians. This was devoted to the fundamentals and principles of UBC and ISBD. The workshop was attended by fifty-five participants from Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia and Tanzania. Nigeria began to apply this principle to its national bibliography in 1975. The universal application of ISBD to bibliographical work was meant to seriously mitigate the problems of bibliographic incompatibilities that hinder cross-national exchange of bibliographic records.

Description of library materials is to facilitate retrieval, as specified, for instance, in the AACR. A description will typically include areas such as: title and statement of responsibility, edition, physical description, series, standard number, etc. Each of these areas is likely to be further divided into a number of elements, which vary according to the type of material. In a specialist sense, the term 'bibliographic description' is applied to the very detailed description of the physical and bibliographical characteristics, printing and publishing history and visual manifestation of early printed books (Chan 1994; Feathers & Sturges, 1997). International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) assures accurate recording of data relating to the publication for easy exchange. ISBD recognizes specific areas such as author, title, publisher, price, etc, which must be clearly provided on any given publication and be identified easily. Title and statement of authorship are important for the identification of a book. Therefore, a standard book must have a distinctive title, and clear information about the intellectual responsibility for the work. These must be printed on the title page of the book. From the title leaves of a book, imprint, information is important from the point of view of the book trade and retrieval purposes. Imprint is made up of (i) the place of publication; (ii) name of publisher, and (iii) date of publication. The place of publication helps to know the particular location of the publisher concerned (Aje, 1978).

Notes qualify and amplify the formal description of a publication. The publisher can include any information in the preliminaries of a book, which can bring out background information or help to understand the content of the book. A publication according to Aje (1978) is grouped into parts termed prime sources of information. Different areas of bibliographic description are found from one or other of the prime sources of information. Publishers are therefore required to include adequate information on their publications in order to facilitate such detailed description, which unfortunately, Nigerian publishers seem to omit. Although the Nigerian publishers are doing their best to publish according to the standard but majority still need to be made aware of these rules.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was used to study a population of about 1,980 Nigerian publishers located in different parts of Nigeria. (Publishers' Directory 2003). The Directory showed that Oyo, Lagos and Edo states of Nigeria had the highest cluster of publishing houses and other states had only branches. These three states along with the three states in which the Universities of Uyo, Calabar and Port Harcourt are located were used to randomly select a sample size of 320 publishers.

The instrument, a four point likert scale questionnaire tagged "Bibliographic Variables and Quality of Books Published by Nigerians" (BVAQBPIN) was served to the 320 selected publishers from the six states under study. (Edo, Lagos, Oyo, Akwa Ibom, Cross River and River States). The questionnaire was divided into two sections 'A' and 'B.' Section 'A' sought for the demographic information of each respondent. It contained items on the respondents publishing firms, areas of specialization, years of experience and gender. This section also tested the perception of publishers on the availability of bibliographic variables in Nigerian published books. Section 'B' surveyed the awareness of Nigerian publishers of the provision of the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD).

Out of 320 publishers served questionnaires, 273 returned but 250 questionnaires were found usable.

FINDINGS /DISCUSSION

Publishers Background

Table I: Publishers' Personal Data

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	246	98.4%
Female	4	1.6%
Work Experience		
1-10 years	127	51%
11-29 years	58	23%
21-30	40	16%
30-40	25	10%
Area of specialization		
Marketing	180	72.0%
Editing	10	4.0%
Computer Science	8	3.2%
Librarianship	10	4.0%
Sciences	30	12.0%
Mass communication	6	2.4%
Health Education	5	2.0%
Publishing	1	0.4%

The data in Table 1 shows the respondents' personal data as observed by the researcher. From the returned questionnaires, it was observed that out of 250 respondents, only 4 (1.6%) were females, while 246 (98.4%) were males. The table also shows that from their work experience 127 (50.8%) of the respondents have been working for between 1-10 years, 58 (23.2%) 11-20 years, 40 (16.0%) have been working for a period of between 21-30 years and 25 (10%) for a period of between 31-40 years. From their qualification it was amazing to realize that non-professionals dominated the field of publishing. 180 (72%) of them specialized in marketing which has little or nothing to do with the world of publishing. 30 (12%) were science inclined, 10 (4.0%) Editors, 6 (2.4%) were in the field of Mass Communications, 5 (2.0%) were Health Educators and 8 (3.2%) Computer Scientists. Only 1 (0.4%) had a Diploma in Publishing and 10 (4.0%) of the respondents studied publishing as a course in the Department of Library and Information Science. The observation confirms Adesanoye (1988) findings in which he stated that each person in Nigeria can be said to be responsible for admitting himself into the business of publishing because there is no apprenticeship requirement like in accounting, no internship like in medicine, and there is no special publishing school to go, before induction into the trade. Okwilagwe (2001) also attested to this with his statement that very few Nigerian publishers have had the opportunity of being trained as publishers. So it is not surprising to find people from different academic backgrounds managing publishing houses in Nigeria. According to Nwankwo (1992) the constraints of the growth of indigenous publishing is the lack of trained personnel. Priestly (1993) expresses his utmost feelings that not only have there been a lack of expertise but there has been no recognition that the expertise is necessary.

Table 2: Nigerian Publishers' Perception of the Quality of Books Published

S/N	Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
1.	Authors name is given in full together with academic qualifications and official position in the title page	49	19.6	88	35.2	37	14.8	76	30.4
2.	Authors name is significant in Nigerian published books	59	23.6	191	76.4	0	0	0	0
3.	Title information is relevant to quality book publishing	0	0	250	100	0	0	0	0
4.	A standard book is published with a title.	250	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
5.	Year of publication helps to identify the number of publications produced within a particular period.	73	29.2	118	47.2	43	17.2	16	6.4
6.	Year of publication helps to ascertain the currency of the book.	79	31.6	88	35.2	51	20.4	32	12.8
7.	Place of publication does not help to identify the city or town in which the publishing industry is located.	15	6	98	39.6	49	19.6	88	35.2
8.	Publisher's name is not important as far as book publishing is concerned.	63	25.2	89	35.6	57	22.8	41	16.4
9.	Only reputable publishers contribute To quality book publishing in Nigeria.	23	9.2	140	56	64	25.6	69	27.6
10	Books can be easily pirated if copyright information is absent in published books.	51	20.4	85	34	61	24.4	53	21.2
11.	Copyright is the exclusive right to publish, reproduce and sell a documentary property.	13	5.2	64	26.4	87	34.8	86	34.4
12.	International Standard Book Number (ISBN) evades mistakes about the exact book and edition required.	56	22.4	87	34.8	86	34.4	17	6.8
13.	ISBN registration is not a necessary element in quality book publishing.	23	9.2	51	20.4	83	33.2	93	37.2
14.	Greater number of books published In Nigeria has ISBN.	47	18.8	69	27.6	84	33.6	50	20
15.	Books published without bibliography At the end is termed as incomplete.	59	23.6	138	55.2	14	5.6	39	15.6

16.	All books published in Nigeria have good physical appearance	13	5.2	38	15.2	151	60.4	48	19.2
17.	Attractiveness of a book makes for a good physical appearance.	53	21.2	87	34.8	65	26	45	18
18.	Good font size makes for clear and high quality book publishing.	42	16.8	82	32.8	70	28	57	22.8
19.	Good binding enhances quality book publishing and longevity of the book.	87	34.8	119	47.6	44	17.6	0	0
20.	Good printing work subscribes to high quality publishing	73	29.2	123	49.2	54	21.6	0	0
21.	A qualitative book is published with an index at the end of the book	48	19.2	85	34	78	31.2	39	15.6

The data in Table 2 shows the opinions of Nigerian publishers on the availability of bibliographic variables as a correlate of quality book publishing. The figures and percentages show that most of the respondents know that bibliographic variables, physical appearance, printing format and binding help in the production of quality book publishing. This contradicts Okwilagwe (2001) statement that some of the managers do not have adequate perspective, technical and public relations skills in publishing.

The researcher sought the opinions of Nigerian publishers on all the variables under study which is represented in Table III. The table showed that 150 (60%) of the respondents agreed that author's name is written in full together with academic qualifications and official position in the title page, while 100 (40%) disagreed. On the statement author's name is significant in Nigeria published books, all the respondents 250 (100%) agreed with the statement. 250 (100%) respondents agreed that title information is relevant to quality book publishing and all of them 250 (100%) also agreed that a standard book is published with a title.

On the statement year of publication helps to identify the number of publication produced within a particular period 210(84%) agreed with the statement and 40 (16%) disagreed with the statement. This implied that many publishers are aware of the importance of the year of publication in published books. 191 (76.4%) agreed that year of publication helps to ascertain the currency of the book and 59 (23.6%) disagreed. According to Aje (1978) date of publication is very useful in published books. 197 (78.8%) agreed that place of publication does not help in identifying the city or town in which the publishing industry is located while 38(12.2%) disagreed. On the statement publisher's name is not important as far as

book publishing is concerned 74(29.6%) agreed and 176(70.4%) disagreed. 133 (53.2%) respondents agreed that only reputable publishers contribute to quality publishing in Nigeria and 117 (46.8%) disagreed. The same Aje (1978) stated that imprint information is not complete without date of publication, place of publication and publisher's name. On the statement books can be easily pirated if information is absent in books published by Nigerians 196 (78.4%) agreed and 54 (21.6%) disagreed. 152 (60.8%) agreed that copyright is the exclusive right to publish, reproduce and sell a documentary property while 98 (39.2%) disagreed. ISBN evades mistake about the exact book and edition required 167 (66.8%) agreed and 83 (41.2%) disagreed. 117 (46.8%) respondents agreed that greater number of books published in Nigeria have ISBN while 133 (53.2%) disagreed. 123(49.2%) of the respondents agreed that published books without bibliography is termed as incomplete and 127 (50.8%) disagreed. On the statement ISBN registration is not a necessary element in quality book publishing 140 (56%) agreed and 110 (44%) disagreed. 51 (20.4%) agreed that a qualitative book should have an index at the end of the book and 199 (79.6%) disagreed. On good printing work subscribes to high quality publishing 126 (50.4%) agreed and 124 (49.6%) disagreed. 118(47.2%) agreed that good font size makes for a clear and high quality book finishing and longevity of the book, 132 (52.8%) disagreed. 208 (83.2%) agreed that Nigerian books have good physical appearance and 42 (16.8%) disagreed. 95 (38%) of the respondents agreed that attractiveness of a book makes for a good physical appearance and 155(62%) disagreed. The findings are very significant and corroborate with the findings of Fanoiki (1984) that to maximize profit some of the high standards for authorship and publishing have been sacrificed. One is tempted to say that most publishers go ahead to publish manuscripts, which are only fit for the shredding machine. He urge according to her to make money by these publishers has led to over production and consequently poor physical appearance of the books. According to her the shortage and high cost of printing paper is not helping the situation. Pages of books rather than being sewn together to hard wearing are merely stuck together with gum. Thus the turning of a few pages, the leaves begin to disintegrate. Illustrations in books are of poor quality, the colour is either too dull or too bright and those in black and white are far-fetched and larger than life. Okoro (1992) is in consonance with Fanoiki's statement that there are very few specialist printers and quality of finished books has not attained maturity level. He stressed that Nigerian books still remain poorly designed. He also noted that the few binderies that are available lack the necessary equipment and durable binding materials to cope with the demand of publishers. Nwankwo (1986) opined that the quality of book production

that matters not necessarily the availability of any kind of book material. Nyariki (1997) pinpoints that lack of publishing management skills often result in the production of low quality books, which cannot adequately compete at the international level. Okwilagwe on the same subject matter opined that using an adjective to qualify a profession would not in any way affect the status of the profession, rather it will give insight into the quality of practice.

THE AWARENESS OF ISBD BY NIGERIAN PUBLISHERS

Table 3: The awareness of International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) by Nigerian Publishers

S/N	Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
22.	Nigerian publishers are aware of the provision of ISBD	0	0	89	35.6	72	28.8	89	35.6
23.	The awareness of the provision of ISBD has helped in the production of quality books in Nigeria.	0	0	70	28	64	25.6	116	46.4
24.	The awareness of ISBD specifies the directives of book arrangement before publication.	7	2.8	67	26.8	93	37.3	83	33.2
25.	Publishers' awareness of ISBD has in no way contributed to quality book publishing.	13	5.2	100	40	87	34.8	50	20

- SA - Strongly agreed
- A - Agreed
- D - Disagreed
- SD - Strongly Disagreed

Table 3 above represents the opinions of the respondents on the awareness of Nigerian publishers of the ISBD. From the Table it could be seen that most of the respondents claimed ignorant of the provision of ISBD. This is in line with Godden (1991) that most Nigerian publishers are unaware of the provision of ISBD. Publishing standards are a set of instructions regarding fonts, pagination, spellings, justification, level of headings, margins, quotations, title, place and date of publication, etc to which both the author and editor must conform. Joint work on standardization as opined by Kartasov (1982) is of great help in coordinating the activities of publishing houses and libraries. This has acquired a purposeful and independent character, particularly of late with the development of an integrated programme of standardization for information, publishing and librarianship. This involves laying down specific and general standards, which augurs well for the further development of mutual links between librarianship and publishing in the field of standard setting. Standards specifications exist for structured documents such as structured general mark-up language (SGML) used in electronic publishing. It actually concentrates on describing document content rather than appearance. It is a standard for the preparation for publication of text in machine-readable form (Spring, 1991).

Trade associations and professional societies, government agencies, national standardization bodies can equally produce standards. In Nigeria, the Nigerian Standards Organization (NSO) based in Lagos produces standards. In addition, other bodies produce specifications, which are significant because of the extent of their use and status. The bulk of standard making is carried out by only a few of the organization involved.

INFLUENCE OF ISBD AWARENESS ON QUALITY BOOK PUBLISHING

Table 4: The awareness of ISBD by Nigerian publishers

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F cal	F cri	Decision
Between groups	212.429	1	212.429	.240	6.39	Not Significant
Within groups	2654.371	3	884.790			
Total	2866.800	4				

Table 4 revealed that the calculated value of .240 is lesser than the critical value of 6.39; therefore the null hypothesis is retained. The result shows that Nigerian publishers' awareness of the provision of ISBD does not significantly influence quality book publishing by Nigerians.

The study further revealed that the awareness of ISBD by Nigerian publishers does not significantly influence quality book publishing, therefore the null hypothesis is retained. Table 3 revealed publishers' responses on the awareness of ISBD. Most of the respondents responded that Nigerian publishers are unaware of the provision of ISBD. The responses showed that 89 (35.6%) agreed and 161 (64.6%) disagreed that the awareness of ISBD has helped in the production of quality books in Nigeria. On the statement that the awareness of ISBD specifies the directive of book arrangement before publication 74 (29.6%) gave their agreement and 176 (71.4%) disagreed. 113 (45.2%) agreed that awareness of ISBD has in no way contributed to quality book publishing and 137 (54.8%) disagreed. The responses confirm Aje (1974)'s views that many Nigerian publishers do not observe the basic requirement of the ISBD. He stressed that awareness of ISBD brings about global standardization because a person from India can benefit from a pamphlet published in Nigeria. Godden (1991) stressed that most African publishers (Nigeria inclusive) are unaware that the place and date of publication are always part of publications and that the titles page has a special way of arrangement. Okwilagwe (2001) views on Nigerian publishers awareness of ISBD agrees with the findings. He opined that in Nigeria awareness is being developed.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that most Nigerian publishers are not aware of the provision of the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD), although the study retained the hypothesis that the awareness of Nigerian publishers does not significantly influence the quality of books published by them. A programme leading to the award of a degree in publishing should be integrated into the curriculum so as to produce professional publishers, also the universities with library schools should introduce some form of training in the area of publishing. Workshops that will improve general technical competence should be frequently organized by the Nigerian Publishers' Association (NPA) and attendance should be made mandatory to all

publishers, also the importance of quality book publishing should be emphasized. Proper arrangement of ISBD in published books should be made so as to ease the problem of cataloguing by librarians

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