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**PROBLEM AND PROSPECTS OF AUTHORSHIP IN THE ACADEMIA:
A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN EXAMPLE.**

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Abstract

This study examined the trends in authorship by the academic staffing selected Nigerian universities. Efforts are being made to investigate the too common belief that the academic staffs do not write enough manuscript for publication at all levels of education. The survey method was adopted for the study; questionnaires and interview were used as research tools in gathering data.

The research findings indicate that fundamental to authorship in Nigerian universities is the unflinching belief in and the general recognition of the importance of Authorship as part and parcel of academic duties. However the researcher was also able to find out that some of the academic are discouraged due to what they call the exploitative tendencies of the publishers and the lack of sponsorship from the government, corporate bodies, and poor market for their works.

Background

The use of publication as one of the major criteria for appointments and the promotions among academic staff in the universities have been accepted all over the world. This position is informed by the terms of appointment, which apart from teaching also include research. The academic staff as it were is expected to contribute to knowledge and the surest way to measure such contribution is the output of the staff in terms of research. Publishing therefore is a pre-requisite for survival in the academic world.

History of authorship in Nigeria

Formal writing could be said to have begun in Nigeria with the arrival of the Muslim religion in the Western Sudan in the latter half of the eleventh century during the Almoravids movement. This writing which was in Arabic was mainly produced by "pious scholars" royal chroniclers, travelers, merchants and the likes (Hunwich, 1964), it later spread to Hausa country with the advancement of Islam and along the Niger and beyond to the Oyo empire. The coastal tribe however did not appear to have encountered formal writing until the advent of the Portuguese explore the centre of Portuguese contact with Nigeria being the kingdom of Benin. The contact was based mainly on trade and religion. On one of such visits the returning envoys took with them to Benin "all the necessary vestment, alter furnishing and Books" (Ryder, 1961).

However, it is pertinent to note that the impact of writing and book on the people of Nigeria remained minimal until the second half of the nineteenth century when mis-

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sionary activities in the south of the country reached its peak, exposing an over-growing number of the inhabitant of Books, mainly the Bible. Tamuno (1973) argued that the advent of book publishing in Nigeria could be traced to the arrival in Calabar in 1864 of Reverend Hope Waddle of the United Presbyterian Church and his printer friend Samuel Edgerly. In that year they set out to transcribe and print out local and theological texts, which resulted in the production of Hope Waddle's First Book of Spelling and Reading lesson for the Old Calabar Mission and Samuel Edgerly's Miqua Esup Nwed (School closing songs). The two books thus remained the first two titles to be produced in Nigeria.

Literature Review

As a concept, publishing is all embracing, it can be defined as the trade of publishing books, which include the process of negotiating with authors or agents, design of books in conjunction with printers, book production, publicity and the sales through books wholesalers, and retailers (Harrod, 1971). Publishing also can be defined as the whole process of producing for periodicals, discs, bulletins, magazines, and other for distribution or sale (Nyeko, 1999).

Ochai and Nwafor (1990) have argued conclusively that academics all over the world place emphasis on research and publication because of their strong belief that research enriches teaching and the learning process as well as contributing to the body of knowledge. They also maintain that it is a major determinant of institutional prestige. Authorship therefore helps the academic staff in not only enhancing their position but also in that of the prestige of the institution they represent.

Writing and indeed the book has been described by (Machean, 1972) as the: The unparalleled instrument for setting down man's wisdom and knowledge - promote individual fulfillment and social progress; it gives all persons a chance to appreciate the best the human mind has to offer the world over, and it serves to create a better understanding between peoples as a necessary step towards a true and lasting peace.

According to Oyesiku (2004) publishing is defined as the whole process of producing for dissemination, books, films, computer programmes, records, newspaper, periodicals, discs, bulletins, magazines and other literacy materials. Publishing is defined in the New Encyclopedia Britannica (1974) as "the activity that involves selection, preparation, and marketing of printed matter". Okwilagwe (2001) summed publishing up as the "planning, selecting, cutting, designing, producing marketing (promotion and sale and distribution of printed materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and many others, including electronic product.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to investigate the too common belief that the academic staffs in Nigerian Universities do not write enough manuscript for publication at all levels of education. Essentially the study seeks to:

- a) Determine the types of papers published by the academic staff.
- b) Determine their reason for publishing
- c) Determine the mode of publication by the academic staff
- d) Determine their preference of place of publication
- e) Determine the factors that militate against publishing in Nigerian Universities.

Statement of the problem

Since the primary objective of any academic staff in any Nigerian University in addition to teaching is to acquire, organize and disseminate information, to provide bibliographic aid and to guide for further reading, to prepare and supplement lectures and research, authorship becomes a very important pre-requisite for the achievement and sustenance of his academic status.

In view of the above therefore and the belief that the academic staff do not write enough manuscripts for publication in various fields and to provide levels of educational system, it is necessary to investigate to determine the true situation especially as it affects the problems and prospects of authorship by determining the extent of their intellectual creativity. This is the central focus of attention of this research as it outlines a case study of some selected Universities in Nigeria.

Methodology

The survey method was adopted for the study. Specifically questionnaire and interview were used as research tools for data collection from correspondents which cut across the various levels of academic staff in selected Nigerian Universities (Reader/Professor, Senior Lecturers, Lecturer Grade I, Lecturer II, and Assistant Lecturer) that are supposed to write books, articles and other research works in order to sustain their academic status.

There was a complete and accurate list or collection of people to be sampled, the total number of academic staff was determined. This was used to generate data on the intellectual works of the academic staff of the Faculty of Education. The questionnaire was carefully formulated to ensure that all respondents answered the same questions. Furthermore, the questionnaire consisted of a series of which solicited questions response on post, university, teaching experience, number and nature of publications, reasons for writing and problems encountered by the respondents.

Total number of 12 Universities (below) were selected for this study thus:

- i. University of Ibadan
- ii. University of Maiduguri
- iii. Federal University of technology, Owerri
- iv. Federal University of Agriculture, Markurdi
- v. Bayero University Kano
- vi. Lagos State University

- vii. Kogi State University
- viii. Delta State University Abraka
- ix. Rivers State University of Science and Technology
- x. Nasarawa State University
- xi. Babcock University
- xii. Madonna University

The twelve Universities were selected from the seventy five universities in Nigeria to ensure geographical spread, and deliberate efforts were made to cover the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Also the universities selected fall into federal, state and private universities. The selection also covered the specialized University like the Universities of Agriculture and Technology and the conventional University. The generation of the establishment of the Universities was also taken into consideration.

TABLE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY UNIVERSITIES

University	Frequency	Percentage(%)
University of Ibadan	20	
University of Maiduguri	16	
Federal University of technology Owerri	10	
Federal University of Agriculture Markudi	10	
Bayero University Kano	16	
Lagos State University	10	
Kogi State University	10	
Delta State University Abraka	10	
Rivers State University of Science and Technology	10	
Nasarawa State University	10	
Babcock University	4	
Madonna University	4	
Total	130	

In this distribution year of establishment of the university was the major criterion in determining the number of respondents, hence University of Ibadan got the highest number of respondents with 20, and she is closely followed by the Universities of Maiduguri and Bayero who got 16 each. The State Universities got 10 respondents each the same with as Federal University of technology (Owerri) and Agriculture (makurdi) had 10 respondents each. The private Universities Babcock and Madonna got 4 respondents each. This was informed by the fact that they are young universities and some of their lecturers come from the most established universities as part-time lecturers.

Table 2 Distributions of Respondents by Academic Status

UNIVERSITY	PROF/READER	SNR LECT.	LECT.1	LECT. 2	ASS. LECT.
Uni. Of Ibadan	6	9	5	—	—
Uni. Of Maiduguri	3	7	6	—	—
Fed. Uni. Of Tech., Owerri	2	5	3	—	—
Fed. Uni. Of Agric. Markudi	2	5	3	—	—
Bayero Uni. Kano	3	7	6	—	—
Lagos State Uni.	1	5	4	—	—
Kogi State Uni.	—	4	6	—	—
Delta State Uni.	2	5	3	—	—
Rivers State Uni. of sc. & Tech.	1	6	3	—	—
Nasarrawa State University	—	6	4	—	—
Babcock University	—	1	3	—	—
Madonna University	—	1	3	—	—
Total	20	61	49	0	0

In the distribution of the respondents by the academic status as shown in table 2, senior lecturers constituted the highest group of respondents, closely followed by lecturer 1, with professors/ readers constituting the least of the group of respondents.

In the above distribution which was purposely done, two groups- lecturer 1 and assistant lecturers were deliberately excluded in view of the fact that new entrants into the academia and could not have had sufficient experience in authorship.

The Production of Intellectual Works at Nigeria Universities

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on the relevance of intellectual creativity especially as it affects their jobs. The entire 130 respondents acknowledged the relevance of intellectual creativity and see its necessity if they must develop intellectually and contended that it is the only activity that sustains University communities, which has to be conscious of research.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution

Types	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Essays	4	10
Dramas	1	2
Novels	-- /	--
Short stories	3	6
Articles in Journals	20	40
Conference Papers	22	44
Total	50	100

Majority of the respondents (44%) indicated that they usually publish conference papers, which is closely followed by 0articles in learned journals. Their argument is that is very easy to put their works out especially in the case of articles, because they are readily available. In the case of those who usually publish conference papers, they argue that they don't even need publishers. Drama ranks least with one respondent (2%) with no response on novels.

As regards the regularity of publications, it was revealed from the respondents that the frequency of the publication id dependent upon the nature of the publication, need and urgency of such publication especially in the case of conference papers. Majority of the respondents however indicated that six month are enough to produce a journal article while the number of months could be used to produce more than three conference papers.

On how to make their research work public, or known to larger society, majority of the respondents (38%) go to the publishers (of learned journals).

Very few get assistance from the government in form of research grants and hono- rarium for participating in joint research project(s).

Table 4: Reasons for Publishing

Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage%
Promotion	20	40
Self-satisfaction	16	32
Posterity	4	8
All the above	10	20
Total	50	20

The reason for the choice of "promotion" by majority of the respondents (40%) as their reason for publishing is obvious. During the oral interview, which followed the question-

naire, it was revealed that they operate in a system that has as its "famous dictum" "publish or perish". The implication of this is that promotion is dependent upon their publications. This syndrome has no doubt promoted publication thereby stimulating and enhancing intellectual creativity. However, the respondents who indicated "self-satisfaction" as their reason for publication argued that "promotion" was not their reason for writing because of the satisfaction they derive from going to their job which includes publishing. The third group with 20% of the respondents gave the three reasons listed (promotion, self-satisfaction and posterity) as their reasons for writing.

Table 5: Mode of Publication

Mode	No. of Respondents	%
Alone	32	64
Joint Author	10	20
Both	8	16
Total	50	100

Majority of the lecturers (64%) at the College of Education, University of Ibadan, publish their works alone, which is closely followed by those who publish jointly (20%). The reason for joint publication is that some areas are interdisciplinary thus the need the knowledge of his contemporary in the other discipline if they must produce something that can stand the test of time. Eight respondents (16%) publish both alone and jointly.

Table 6: Preference of Place of Publication

Place	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Nigeria	11	22
Overseas	39	78
Others	---	---

In the interview that followed the administration of the questionnaire, the entire respondents expressed their preference for foreign publishers in the publication of their works. They reasoned that it provides more "market" for their products. They also argued that foreign publishers offer them the opportunity for recognition in the international market, hence the assumed international standard of their work, the implication of which to them is more prestige and bigger royalties.

However, the few that preferred the local publishers attribute their choice to the nature of their work. Those that write on local languages for instance complain of rejection of their work by foreign publishers, who also consider the profitability of their venture before accepting manuscripts.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of this study clearly highlights some striking trends in authorship by the academic staff in selected Nigerian Universities. The survey serves as a welcome correction for the too common belief that teachers do not write or that they do not write as they should. The teachers in the survey generally recognized the importance of authorship as part and parcel of their academic duties. Apart from writing to enhance their promotion, the teachers also write for self-satisfaction and posterity as they appreciate the demand on their job.

The lectures involved in this survey have produced one book or the other in form of Conference papers, Journal articles, drama and essays. Basically the writings have been more in journal articles and conference papers. This explained the need to have their works produced very fast instead of undergoing the tedious process of getting a book published which could take many years. In their work, the teachers have depended mostly on their meager resources to produce their work. Only very few enjoyed the financial assistance of the government. Foreign grants have also helped the production of these books.

From every indication the author prefers their works to be published by foreign publishers. This stems from the very fact that the lecturers want international recognition, prestige and more royalties in their work, which they cannot get from local publishers. Many of the respondent in the survey prefer to go it alone when it comes to publishing. While recognizing the multidisciplinary nature of their work; the teacher expressed preference for publishing alone hence according to them; it increases their scores in promotion exercise.

Virtually respondents frowned at the way the publishers treat them when it comes to the issue of publishing royalties. They see it as a demoralizing factor, which they argue also, affect their choice of publishing their works in journals and conference papers. This, coupled with the long period it takes to get a book out, it can be argued that the teachers try to publish where their stake is clear and their chances of immediate profit is assured as in the case of promotion.

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