

**THE STRATEGIC USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON
BOOK MARKETING PERFORMANCE AMONG
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME)
PUBLISHERS IN NIGERIA FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF TOE FRAMEWORK**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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by

AFOLABI ABDULRASHEED ADEBOLA

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
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LIST OF SYMBOLS

α	Cronbach's alphas
β	Beta
f^2	Effect size
p-value	Probability statistics
q^2	Effect size Cohen
Q^2	Predictive relevance
R^2	Coefficient of determination
ρ	Reliability coefficient
r_s	Spearman's rank (ρ) in correlation
t-value	Test statistics

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Agricultural Development Programmes
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ARCON	Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria
AVE	Average variance extracted
B2B	Business-to-business
B2C	Business-to-consumer
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CIPPON	Chartered Institute of Professional Printers of Nigeria
CMV	Common Method Variance
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CVI	Content Validity Index
DPI	Digital publishing innovations
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ERP	Enterprise resource planning
FA	Factor analysis
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IT	Information Technology
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
MMT	Mobile Marketing Technology
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NDEPS	National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy

NITDA	National Information Technology Development Agency
NPA	Nigerian Publishers' Association
NPC	National Population Commission
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLS	Partial Least Squares
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMEDAN	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria
TOE	Technological, organizational and environment
UN	United Nations
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

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**PENGUNAAN STRATEGIK MEDIA SOSIAL TERHADAP PRESTASI
PEMASARAN BUKU DALAM KALANGAN PENERBIT INDUSTRI KECIL
DAN SEDERHANA DI NIGERIA DARIPADA PERSPEKTIF KERANGKA**

TOE

ABSTRAK

Impak penerbitan buku ke atas masyarakat boleh dipertingkatkan melalui keputusan penerimgunaan inovasi oleh penerbit Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS). Walaupun PKS menerima inovasi untuk mempertingkatkan prestasi pemasaran mereka, kesusasteraan mencadangkan bahawa PKS dalam ekonomi membangun terhad dalam penggunaan media sosial sebagai alat pemasaran. Trend menunjukkan wujudnya jurang pengetahuan tentang bagaimana PKS di negara membangun mempromosikan perniagaan mereka menggunakan teknologi media sosial, dengan pengetahuan yang terhad tentang bagaimana penerbit PKS menggunakan media sosial untuk pemasaran buku. Kajian lepas mendedahkan bahawa syarikat penerbitan buku di Nigeria tidak menggunakan media sosial secara optimum bagi tujuan pemasaran. Berdasarkan jurang pengetahuan yang dikenalpasti, kajian ini menggunakan kerangka teknologi, organisasi, dan persekitaran (TOE) untuk meneroka bagaimana penerbit buku PKS menggunakan media sosial secara berkesan bagi mencapai matlamat pemasaran mereka. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kaedah campuran. Dalam fasa kualitatif, soal selidik terbuka digunakan untuk menjana data bagi analisis kualitatif. Soal selidik ini digunakan untuk mengumpul respons terbuka mengenai perancangan dan pelaksanaan media sosial. Dalam fasa kuantitatif, tinjauan dalam talian digunakan untuk mengumpul data daripada responden yang dipilih secara bertujuan dari kalangan syarikat penerbitan PKS di Nigeria. Sebanyak 215 respons

dikumpul dan dianalisis menggunakan SPSS dan SmartPLS. Secara keseluruhan, triangulasi data kualitatif dan kuantitatif dimanfaatkan untuk menghasilkan pandangan yang kukuh mengenai subjek penyelidikan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa penerbit PKS di Nigeria mengamalkan amalan terbaik dalam pemasaran media sosial dengan menetapkan matlamat secara strategik, memahami audiens mereka, dan mencipta kandungan yang menarik. Mereka melaporkan cabaran dalam memantau dan melaporkan prestasi di media sosial. Kerangka TOE sebahagiannya disahkan, dengan menekankan kepentingan manfaat relatif, kesesuaian, sokongan pengurusan tertinggi, dan sokongan kerajaan dalam mempengaruhi penerimgunaan media sosial. Didapati bahawa kebolehmerhatian, kesediaan organisasi, tekanan pesaing, dan tekanan pelanggan tidak memberi kesan signifikan terhadap keputusan penerbit untuk menggunakan platform media sosial. Selain itu, kajian ini mendedahkan bahawa penggunaan media sosial secara strategik memberi kesan positif kepada prestasi media sosial dan prestasi pemasaran buku. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan media sosial secara strategik menjadi pengantara yang signifikan dalam hubungan antara pelbagai faktor TOE dan prestasi pemasaran buku. Kajian ini memberikan sumbangan dari sudut teori, metodologi, dan praktikal. Kajian lanjutan dicadangkan, termasuk menganalisis segmen penerbitan tertentu, menjalankan kajian perbandingan penerimgunaan, dan menggabungkan jualan langsung dengan pemasaran media sosial. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan penggunaan penyelidikan kualitatif untuk memberikan pemahaman yang mendalam dan terperinci tentang kebolehpayaan media sosial serta impaknya terhadap prestasi pemasaran buku.

**THE STRATEGIC USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON BOOK MARKETING
PERFORMANCE AMONG SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME)
PUBLISHERS IN NIGERIA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TOE
FRAMEWORK**

ABSTRACT

Books' impact on society can be enhanced by Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) publishers' innovation adoption decisions. As SMEs adopt innovations to enhance their marketing performance, the literature suggests that SMEs in developing economies are limited in the extent they use social media as a marketing tool. Trends reveal knowledge gap on how SMEs in developing countries promote their businesses using social media technologies, with limited knowledge existing on how SME publishers use social media for book marketing. Past studies reveal that Nigerian book publishing companies do not use social media for marketing purposes optimally. Based on the identified knowledge gap, this study adopted the technological, organizational and environment (TOE) framework to explore how SME book publishers make effective use of social media to achieve marketing goals. The study adopted a mixed methods design. In the qualitative phase, open-ended questionnaire was used to generate data for qualitative analysis. The questionnaire was used to collect open-ended responses on social media planning and execution. In the quantitative phase, an online survey was adopted to collect data from purposively sampled respondents in SME publishing houses in Nigeria. A total of 215 responses were collected and analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS. Overall, triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data was leveraged to produce robust insights on the research subject. Findings reveal that SME publishers in Nigeria employ best practices

in social media marketing by strategically setting goals, understanding their audience, and creating engaging content. They reported having challenges with monitoring and reporting performance on social media. The TOE framework is partly validated, highlighting the significance of relative advantage, compatibility, top management support and government support in influencing social media adoption. It emerged that observability, organizational readiness, competitor pressure and customer pressure do not significantly impact publishers' decision to use social media platforms. It was also revealed that strategic social media usage positively impacts both social media performance and book marketing performance. Moreover, the study demonstrates that strategic social media usage significantly mediates the relationship between various TOE factors and book marketing performance. The study provided theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions. Further research was suggested, including analyzing specific publishing segments, undertaking comparative adoption studies, and combining personal selling with social media marketing. The study also recommends using qualitative research to provide detailed insights into the capabilities of social media and its impact on book marketing performance.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Sustainable development, which refers to development that satisfies the immediate needs of individuals without endangering the next generations' capacity to meet their own needs (Alamu, 2017), has acquired a prominent position in the development dialogue, particularly in relation to developing nations like Nigeria. An eminent feature of this dialogue is the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in January 2016. The SDG goals are expected to be accomplished by all member nations of the United Nations (UN) by 2030. The summary of the SDGs, according to (Alamu, 2017), encompasses the following: i) a universal strategy to confront some of the pressing challenges facing the world such as poverty, climate change, and conflict, with poverty situated at the core of all these goals; ii) the provision of know-how to drive development to assist nations striving for sustainable development; iii) building on the rapid advancement already made under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Kroll et al. (2019) describe the SDGs as a universal framework that all 193 United Nations (UN) member states have committed to achieving to positively impact societies across the world. The media and communication sector plays a crucial role in this regard, helping to raise awareness, educate the public, and hold stakeholders accountable. In the Nigerian context, the discourse on the implementation of the SDG framework has assumed varying dimensions, one of which is the role of media and communication in achieving sustainable development (Elizabeth & Aransi, 2020; Igudia & Ogunsina, 2023). Christopher and Ifeduba (2014) posit that by using digital

publishing innovations in their role as change agents in society, publishers are empowered to contribute to sustainable development in Nigeria.

It is important to note that from the early period of human civilization, printers (who later turned into publishers) played a pivotal role in the transformation of societies (Dittmar, 2011; Eisenstein, 1980). Since the beginning of book publishing practice in Nigeria in 1846 by early missionaries, publishers in Nigeria have been faced with the challenge of living up to double roles as societal change agents as well as business investors (Okwilagwe 2001) by adopting technological innovations to enhance their publishing performance. As indicated in Figure 1.1, Nigerian printers and publishers, convinced that newer printing technology helps to gain performance (defined as performance expectancy in the literature, Calderón et al., 2017), have over the years adopted advanced printing technologies to meet changing market demands for print media. The efforts of these printers and publishers in embracing various aspects of digital publishing innovations have been documented by Abulude (2014), Adegbite-Badmus and Folayan (2020), Egbunu (2020), Ifeduba (2010), Ifeduba and Christopher (2014), Ifeduba (2020), Ifeduba and Christopher (2018) and Ubogu (2018). Also, Afolabi and Zolkepli (2023c) analyzed the impact of publishing innovation adoption on literary expression in Nigeria, just as Ifeduba (2022) reports the efforts made at building e-publishing capacity through collaborations by publishers in the country. These adoption trends do not just catalogue the adoption of technological innovations but are pointers to a rising culture of placing value on boosting business performance by investors in the printing and publishing sector.

However, there have been limited approaches to boosting publishing business performance in Nigeria. As Christopher (2010) noted, even with the uptake of technological innovations, book publishing practices in Nigeria have largely been

driven by a production rather than a marketing orientation. According to the scholar, while production orientation is focused on making books efficiently and cost-effectively, marketing orientation is about creating and promoting books that people want to read. Christopher argues that adopting a marketing orientation in book publishing necessitates ensuring customer satisfaction while also generating profits for shareholders, as against the production orientation that prioritizes producing high-quality books that publishers presume consumers will buy. As posited by the scholar, Nigerian publishers can access new book markets by adopting a new orientation that positions publishing as a business and cultural responsibility.

In other words, Christopher (2010) advocates for the development of innovative book products through expanded publishing programs, improved book marketing expertise, and aggressive book promotion. Based on the scholar's submissions, it could be averred that the development of new markets and products is an inevitable path for publishers to tread, and research in this respect should be given attention in the field of media and communications.

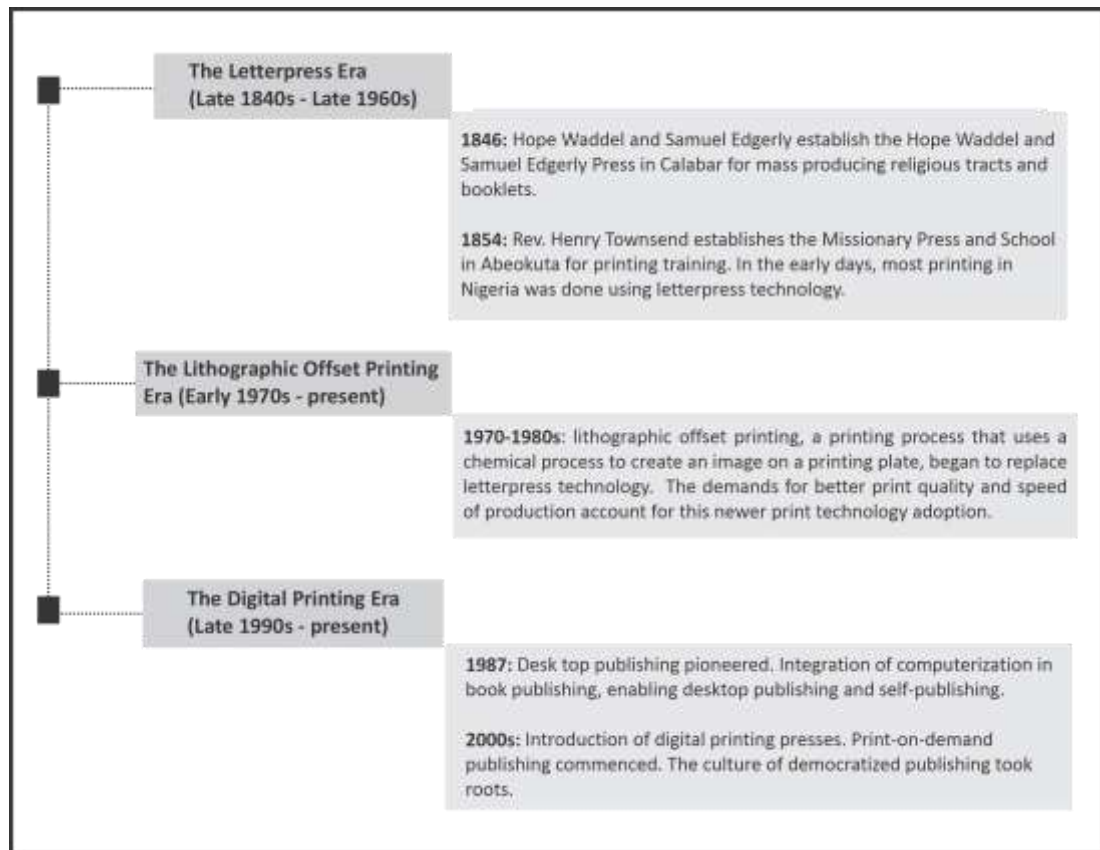


Figure 1.1 Innovation Adoption Trends in the Nigerian Print Publishing Industries

Given the multidisciplinary nature of book publishing, there have been debates on the approach to research in this area of study (Noël, 2015). Besides, claims exist that book publishing is a marginalized field in media and communication research (Kovač, 2004, Murray, 2006). Going by Kovac's (2004) view, the methodology of publishing and book market research remained largely outside the scope of academic approaches because the bulk of formal education institutions that are focused on the discipline were founded in the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, it is claimed by the scholar that books as part of contemporary media culture, as well as all concerns relating to publishing methodology and book market research, have largely remained outside the ambit of academic media research approaches. Several publishing scholars do not agree with Kovac in this regard, as the subsequent views show.

While emphasizing that publishing is a vital component of academia and agreeing that publishing studies took a long time to emerge as an area of academic inquiry, Murray (2006) avers that lamentations on the marginalization of book publishing are counterproductive. Rather than lamenting the exclusion of book publishing from the rapidly emerging fields of media and cultural studies in academia, Murray (2006) believes that the importance of cross-pollination across these research traditions should be emphasized as a point for inclusion in media research. This argument is based on the idea that an approach to understand the book as a mass medium within global media systems entails integrating publishing studies, media studies, and cultural studies together. This claim finds support from the literature, as stated subsequently.

One, in their examination of book publishing research in the twenty-first century, Noorda and Marsden (2019) emphasize the significance of the economics of the book industry (which encompasses consumer behaviour, marketing, branding, and management models) as a pivotal component of book publishing research. Two, a bibliographic review of scholarly journal articles, books, projects, and reports on book publishing research in Nigeria from 1960 to 2022 by Dare et al. (2022) reveals that media and communication researchers showed significant interest in book publishing and new media, with 25% of the reviewed articles dedicated to subjects such as digital publishing, web publishing, and e-publications. These two examples show book publishing research as relevant and integral to societal development, as well as having a vital spot in media research.

Interestingly, book marketing, a vital aspect of book publishing research, has been identified as a communication process (Adams, 2002). Citing Diaz Bordenave's definition of communication as "the process by which information, decision, and

directives pass through a social system, and ways by which knowledge, opinion and attitude are formed and modified”, Adams (2002:47) describes book publishing as a process that transforms the author’s message into a book, which is then conveyed through a marketing channel from the publisher to the reader who represents the ultimate end user. In this context, Adams characterizes book marketing as a communication activity that seeks to disseminate messages about the book to the end reader. Hence, ineffective book marketing can be considered a hindrance to the communication chain between the author and the reader. This is because until the message is received by the reader, the communication process remains incomplete. In essence, a failure to effectively market books truncates the communication chain. Put in another form, a disruption in the transmission of information between authors and their audience poses a significant challenge to the book publishing sector's capacity to facilitate the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria, as per the SDG framework. As affirmed by McLeod and Marshall (2023), while it is vital for realizing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations, communication is also a fundamental human right.

Based on the earlier cited literature sources, a need for book publishing research built on traditions in media, communications and related fields is established. While book publishing may come across as multifaceted in practice, providing an understanding of this domain from the purview of the media and communication field is not only crucial to the growth of the sector in modern digital society but also instrumental to the inclusivity and diversity of scholarship in media systems.

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Economic Issues in the Book Publishing Ecosystem

As enterprises that must be run profitably, book publishing businesses must be guided by economic considerations driven by demand and supply. As noted by Osadci-Baciu and Zbucnea (2024), with fast-paced technological advancement, digital transformation, and evolving market dynamics in publishing industries, publishers are now faced with navigating a complex landscape characterized by fierce competition and shifting consumer behaviours. The scholars highlight the role of digital technologies in helping publishers gain a better grasp of consumer preferences and trends, ultimately enabling more targeted content creation, distribution, and marketing strategies in the book publishing ecosystem. However, this approach to book publishing practice, rooted in the marketing orientation concept, has not been widely embraced in publishing industries in developing countries (Afolabi & Zolkepli, 2023b; Christopher, 2010). This problem, described as the “marketing myopia” in book publishing (Greco, 2024), can lead to missed market opportunities that ensure sustained growth in the industry. Thus, the multifaceted challenging issues in the economics of book marketing need to be put under the beam light.

The first issue relates to book market demand in the digital landscape. The book market is a dynamic and complex environment influenced by technological advancements, market structure, and economic factors (Ifeduba, 2022). To start with, the extent and range of a book market are critical factors that influence a country's publishing performance (Christopher, 2004). For example, Nigeria, with an estimated population of 206 million people as of 2020, as reported by the National Population Commission (NPC), presents a vast audience for books. Okwilagwe (2001) contends

that such a huge population size provides a fertile ground for a thriving book publishing industry, especially since a huge portion of the population comprises school children and tertiary education students who require textbooks.

Moreover, a significant number of Nigerians are likely to purchase books for their informational, spiritual, and entertainment needs. For example, as shown in Table 1.1, Nigeria's e-book market promises modest revenue growth to \$2.24 million by 2029, with an expanding user base projected to reach 45.4 million, signalling a positive book market growth, the low individual spending notwithstanding (www.statista.com). As Table 1.2 also shows, as of 2021, around 370,343 pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools spread across Nigeria assures a substantial book demand with enrolment figures around 50,967,325. At the tertiary education level, the huge number of not less than 485 institutions in the country indicates the level of high book needs for publishers to explore.

Table 1.1 e-Book Market Growth Prospect in Nigeria

Category	Details
Revenue Projection (2024)	\$2.14 million
Projected Market Volume (2029)	\$2.24 million
Annual Growth Rate (CAGR 2024-2029)	0.92%
Expected Number of Readers (2029)	45.4 million
User Penetration (2024)	16.0%

Source: <https://statista.com/outlook/amo/media/books/ebooks/nigeria>

Table 1.2 Summary of primary and secondary schools in Nigeria (as of 2021)

School Level	Public Schools	Private Schools	Total	Enrollment
Pre-Primary	26,723	10,467	78,288	6,242,848
Primary	69,636	63,638	133,274	30,318,534
Junior Secondary	13,634	17,817	133,274	8,361,948
Senior Secondary	10,467	15,041	25,507	6,043,995

Source: https://nemiserp.com/Education_data_Summary_NEMIS.pdf

Table 1.3 Number of Tertiary Education Institutions in Nigeria (as of 2023)

Type of Tertiary Institution	Total Count	Subcategories
Universities	170	Federal: 43, State: 48, Private: 79
Polytechnics	152	Federal: 37, State: 51, Private: 64
Colleges of Education	163	Federal: 27, State: 54, Private: 82

Notwithstanding the prospects for growth as suggested by the above-mentioned indicators, the book industry in Nigeria is beset with challenges that limit the extent to which the identified markets can be explored optimally. For example, Adesina (1990, cited in Okwilagwe, 2001) identifies a shortage of published books in professional fields such as medicine, engineering, and technology, highlighting the problems of limited book availability. Also, there are issues related to underdeveloped publishing infrastructure that limit book development in academic/higher education publishing (Madichie, 2010; Eddy-Ugoji, 2020). Besides, the illegal activities of book pirates negatively impact on book publishers' sales performance by reducing their

chances of leveraging the identified book market prospects in Tables 1.1-1.3 (Ifeduba, 2022). Capping these fault lines is a prevalent poor book marketing practices (Christopher, 2010; Owolabi, 2024) that limit growth in the book publishing sector. Invariably, with these challenges, the book market in Nigeria presents a complex mix of promising opportunities and significant challenges, underscoring a landscape marked by a book marketing crisis.

The book marketing crisis in Nigeria may have improved considerably in the past years (Afolabi & Zolkepli, 2023b), however, the emergence of digital technologies has led to a new challenge: a surge of competition in consumer media markets. Now, in the face of increase in social media use, book publishers are finding it difficult to use digital technologies to gain a competitive edge (Nyambane, 2021). According to Remi Akano, an industry practitioner in Nigeria, social media competition has dwindled publishers' revenue (cited in Mpamugoh, 2017), just as Owolabi (2024) highlights the continual decline in power that limits book buying. Richard Ali, a Nigerian publisher, expressed his concerns regarding the difficulty of remaining competitive and profitable in the publishing industry (cited in Braide, 2017).

1.2.2 Techno-Economic Issues in the Book Supply Ecosystem

The economic factors notwithstanding, Olajide (2005) and Christopher (2004) aver that publishers' survival in emerging competitive markets is an imperative that is closely tied to their ability to generate profits by producing valuable books through exploring new markets and applying novel approaches to book marketing. These views find support in reports that the adoption of digital publishing innovations is a strategic

approach to repositioning the Nigerian book publishing industry for growth and development (Ifeduba, 2010; Ifeduba, 2020).

However, digital publishing innovations have proven to be double-edged swords. On one side, new media technologies present varying opportunities for publishers to expand their market reach. On the other side, the resultant democratized publishing process has made it possible for almost everyone, with sparse technical know-how, to be a published author in Nigeria (Afolabi & Zolkepli, 2023c). This phenomenon has a global pattern, as analyzed by Carolan and Evain (2013) and Phillips (2014). According to these scholars, with the ease of book production and reduced cost of distribution because of digitalization, there has been a deluge of books in the marketplace, especially as the online buying culture increases. By Phillip's (2014) estimation, the staggering number of books and other publications available online leaves consumers with the problem of coping with an over-crowded market space filled with all manners of book products that often leave them in disarray and dissatisfied, because the hyper-abundance of choices often clogs the decision-making of consumers. Equally, Beditz (2018) focuses on the highly competitive worldwide book market, noting that as the means of publishing increases through digitalization, so does the number of publishers. The rising phenomenon of democratized publishing thus increases the difficulty for publishers and authors to get their works in front of their intended audience.

The recent proliferation of artificial intelligence has further made it possible for self-publishers to flood the media landscape with books. Experts, such as Connock (2022) and McIlory (2023), have expressed views that AI technologies have not only gained a foothold in book publishing but are poised to disrupt the very foundations of the practice. The resultant effect, as analyzed by Lebrun and Audet (2020), is a massive

rise in published books (due to improved access to the tools of publishing) which leads to the “sea of books” situation, captured by Carolan and Evain (2013). To move ahead in the overcrowded media market, Phillips (2014) advocates that book publishers need to embrace new business approaches that are built around value creation and direct relationships with consumers through innovation adoption.

While the humungous rise in the number of books in the market could easily be attributed to the ease of publishing, it could be argued that the issue is not about digital publishing innovations being the cause of the glut in the contemporary book market. Rather, the underlying issue, as highlighted by Burn and Tredinnick (1994), is not being able to use digital publishing innovations to understand who buy and read what books. The scholars argue that informed publishing decisions based on consumer behaviour could lead to a higher success rate in book marketing. They posit that by gaining insights into the habits and preferences of existing readers and buyers, publishers can make better choices regarding what to publish and how to package, price, promote, and distribute books. Recent studies, like Wang et al. (2019), bear attestations that book sales can be improved by leveraging reader data through analytics. Other studies, like Kaur and Singh (2021) and Li et al., (2021) demonstrate that publishers can make well-informed product development and pricing decisions by harnessing data analytics to understand reader behaviour and preferences which ultimately leads to improved marketing performance.

1.2.3 Book Publishing and Marketing Challenges in Nigeria

The works of Burn and Tredinnick (1994), Wang et al. (2019), and others cited earlier offer valuable insights that can be utilized to reconcile the opportunities

presented by the large population in Nigeria, the untapped market prospects, and the issue of the "glut of books" stated earlier. It is a reason for concern that despite having a huge population that should translate into a profitable book market, there exists an overabundance of books waiting to be bought. To reiterate, there is no doubt about the impact of a declining audience due to competing media, such as cable television and the Internet (Albarran, 2010), and the effect of reduced economic power for buying books in developing countries (Oyeyinka et al., 2016; Uche, 2015), and a declining reading culture (Oyeyinka et al., 2016). A more worrisome source of concern is limited strategic marketing by publishers due to limited expertise (Oyeyinka et al., 2016) which leads to poor book sales, compared to other media products.

An analysis by Christopher (2010) delves into the reasons why books from Nigerian publishers are not as popular as other information products in terms of attracting customers. She emphasizes that modern book marketing entails engaging with customers and providing products that fit seamlessly into their current lifestyles. As other media become more sophisticated and alluring, they may draw potential customers away from traditional media, meaning that Nigerian book publishers must leverage the advancements in information technology to promote their products to consumers and attract attention from other media. Christopher's (2010) viewpoint aligns with the marketing orientation concept advocated in previous research by Bearden et al. (2001), Berkowitz et al. (2000), as well as Kotler and Keller (2006). These scholars suggest that companies should prioritize a culture of customer growth by constantly gathering information about their needs and utilizing this information to create customer value. Nigerian book publishers, going by Czinkota et al.'s (2021) advisory, must focus on gaining insights about customers in an informed manner to implement a marketing-orientation approach. In essence, marketing-oriented

publishing businesses should differentiate themselves by prioritizing market share, market research, market segmentation, and the adoption of marketing innovations.

The implementation of marketing orientation in the book publishing industry has taken various shades and forms, including niche publishing. In his analysis of the changing trends in global book publishing, McDermott (2021) hinted that small publishers must prioritize deepening their niche, with their marketing embracing more valued content to their target audience. This explains the business growth strategy of Nigerian book publishers along the lines of publishing to a specific, tightly defined and focused audience. The following niches have been affirmed in the literature to be features of the country's book sector; educational publishing Oyeyinka et al. (2016), literary publishing (Alabi, 2021); Christopher, 2014; Currey (2013); Currey, 2022; Davis, 2013; Falola 2022; Olofinlua, 2021, Nwankwo, 2017), scholarly/academic publishing (Apeji & Obe, 2011; Darko-Ampem, 2005; Omobowale et al., 2019; Ondari-Okemwa, 2007; Ngoben, 2012; Zell, 2022), children publishing (Apeji, 1996; Bello & Okpiliya, 2017; Emmanuel, 2022; Ngwuchukwu & Nwachi, 2020), religious publishing (Bakrin & Bakrin, 2022; Ifeduba, 2020; Philips, 2013), and motivational/self-help publishing (Ramone & Ramone, 2020). Given that the fundamental essence of niche publishing is centered around the notion of engagement through relationship marketing with customers (Shani & Chalasani, 1992), it is not uncommon for niche publishers to utilize digital and social media communications owing to the vast opportunities for disseminating messages that are both timely and relevant (Afolabi & Zolkepli, 2023f).

However, the marketing practices in the book publishing sector in Nigeria, according Akpena (2007), is heavily reliant on personal selling and limited distribution channels like schools and bookshops. Recent reports by Oluwatuyi (2023) affirms that

the subsisting marketing channels in the country is tailored along the lines of business-to-business marketing (B2B) and business-to-consumers (B2C) marketing. Saha et al. (2014) explain that in the book publishing ecosystem, publishers engage in a B2B relationship with booksellers, including online and retail stores. Also, booksellers—and increasingly publishers—connect directly with final customers through online channels, forming a B2C relationship.

In the B2B context, the high cost of personal selling and underutilization of other promotional tools indicate the need for more strategic and diversified marketing practices to improve performance and affordability in the Nigerian book market (Biobaku, 2008). Similarly, there are prevailing significant challenges in effectively adopting business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing strategies by book publishers (Biobaku, 2008). Drawing up the issues plaguing marketing in the Nigeria book publishing sector, Biobaku (2008) highlights extensive reliance on personal selling by publishers (raising book costs) while underutilized digital tools and untapped B2C strategies hinder publishers' ability to meet consumer needs. These identified issues bring to light a critical need for innovative, cost-effective, and consumer-focused marketing approaches to enhance engagement, affordability, and accessibility in the Nigerian book publishing sector.

1.2.4 Leveraging Digital Innovation for Marketing by SME Book Publishers

As part of efforts to implement innovative business models built on the foundations of contemporary marketing principles, book publishers across the world are adopting digital innovations like social media (SM) as a marketing tool for customer-focused marketing (Thoring, 2011; Nolan & Dane, 2018; Wang et al., 2021a;

Wang & Zuccala, 2021). Several examples support this assessment. According to Nolan and Dane (2018), Australian book publishers have adopted social media to gain extensive insights into the characteristics and preferences of their readers through social media marketing. In the United States, Beditz (2018: 162) highlights the use of digital marketing in children's publishing as part of "a cohesive marketing plan for most publishers today". Adoptions of social media in book publishing have also been reported in various countries like Australia (Tian et al., 2008); Norway (Colbjørnsen, 2015); China (Ting & Hua, 2014); Portugal (Faustino, 2012); Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Germany (DeFillippi & Wikström, 2013; Gallego-Cuiñas et al., 2020). These adoption trends demonstrate a steady reliance on marketing innovations by publishers, regardless of size.

However, there is evidence of a growing divide between small and large publishers in terms of their investment in and implementation of social media marketing and data analytics (Nolan & Dane, 2018). Trends also reveal insufficient information on how SMEs in developing countries position and promote their operations using social media technologies (Ahmad et al., 2019; Qalati et al., 2021). In particular, there is a drought of data on how small independent publishers, as part of the SME sector in developing African countries use social media for book marketing and branding. Even though it has been demonstrated that social media is quickly becoming indispensable for SMEs, there is indication that SMEs must appropriately adopt technology developments in order to receive the most value (Ahmad et al., 2019; AlSharji et al., 2018; Abu Bakar et al., 2019). What this means is that firms' innovation adoption is more productive or likely to boost performance when tied to specific purposes, goals and objectives.

Nevertheless, evidence suggests innovation adoption by some SMEs without a clear-cut purpose and strategy (Ahmad et al., 2019). For example, AlSharji et al. (2018) discovered that the pressure of the business environment is the reason why SMEs adopt social media technology. This suggests that adoption may not always align with the company's strategy or account for the expected effects of the technology on business outcomes. A related study by Ahmad et al. (2019) aver that social media adoption choices and resource commitments might be made by small businesses without rigorous evaluation of the business's strategy or the impact of technology on corporate performance. Similarly, Abu Bakar et al. (2019) highlight the lack of strategy-driven social media marketing among SMEs in developing countries. Thus, inference could be made that adopting technology by SMEs, in certain cases, may just be to follow the bandwagon. This is a risky move to make for small businesses. As a result of these observations, the need to explore the effects of the strategic usage of social media on marketing performance in publishing firms in developing countries is underscored.

In the developing country of Nigeria, several attempts have been made to explore social media adoption by SMEs, including (Eze et al., 2021) which focused on IT consultancy firms, IT and software developers, and security firms. Another example is Oyewobi et al. (2021) which investigated social media adoption in the construction industry. Other relevant studies are Ladokun (2019) (social media usage in manufacturing, education, construction and agro-allied SMEs); Omotosho, (2020) (crafts workers social media adoption), and Alamai et al. (2020) (social media usage in tourism and hospitality SMEs). Nonetheless, the usage of social media in the context of book publishing in Nigeria is not well understood. The only available study being Igudia and Ogunsina (2023), which claims that Nigerian book publishing companies

do not make the best use of social media for marketing. The researchers established that effort expectancy (the ease with which any innovation technology can be used) is a predictor of the use of social media for marketing among book publishers in Nigeria. Overall, this study made contributions to knowledge on issues of perceived ease of use, complexity and purpose of use of social media among the staff of the studied publishing firms.

However, Nigerian book publishers' strategic usage of social media to meet organizational goals was not addressed in Igudia and Ogunsinna's study. Thus, there exists a critical theoretical gap in understanding how SME book publishers in developing countries, particularly in Nigeria, strategically use social media to achieve marketing performance goals. As well, theoretical models of technology adoption (e.g., TAM, TOE) have been applied to general SME contexts but have not been tailored to the specific operational realities of book publishers in Nigeria. Lastly, most theoretical models and studies on SM adoption are derived from developed economies, which may not fully capture the constraints and opportunities in developing countries like Nigeria. Factors such as limited resources, digital divides, and local market dynamics require a contextual adaptation of existing theories.

Based on the aforementioned gaps, this current study explores the usage of social media by SME publishers that engage in business-to-consumer (B2C) book marketing practices. Attention is equally given to educational publishers who use the business-to-business (B2B) approach in their book marketing, with a view to understanding how they integrate social media into their book marketing. In sum, the focus of the study is on strategic social media usage for marketing performance by book publishers. This is a research necessity as there is a clear need for more

knowledge regarding the adoption and use of social media by small and medium-sized book publishers in emerging African nations.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions are relevant to this research.

- i. How do SME publishers in Nigeria plan and implement their social media marketing strategies in line with best practices in social media marketing?
- ii. What is the impact of technological, organizational and environment (TOE) factors on social media usage in SME book publishing houses in Nigeria?
- iii. What is the impact of social media usage on social media performance among Nigerian SME book publishers?
- iv. What is the impact of social media performance on the book marketing performance of SME book publishers?
- v. To what extent does social media usage mediate the relationship between TOE factors and social media performance among Nigerian SME book publishers?

1.4 Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to better understand how SME book publishers in Nigeria's digital economy can improve their marketing communication performance by using social media strategically. The specific objectives are:

- i. To examine how SME publishers in Nigeria plan and implement their social media marketing strategies in alignment with best practices in social media marketing.
- ii. To investigate how social media usage in SME book publishing houses in Nigeria is influenced by technological, organizational and environment (TOE) factors.
- iii. To investigate the impact of strategic social media usage on social media performance among Nigerian SME book publishers.
- iv. To investigate the impact of social media performance on book marketing performance of SME publishers.
- v. To investigate the role of strategic social media usage in mediating the relationship between TOE factors and social media performance among Nigerian SME publishers.

1.5 Research Significance

This study seeks to fill a research gap in social media marketing in Nigeria's SME book publishing sector. As emphasized by scholars, (Benghozi & Salvador, 2015; Criswell & Canty, 2014; Li, 2018; Megawati & Bernardus, 2014; Nolan & Dane, 2018; Rønning & Slaatta, 2011; Throsby et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2021; Wang and Zuccala, 2021; Wardaya, 2016; Throsby et al., 2018), the relevance of social media-led marketing in the publishing industry is attested to by book publishers' use of social media as a tool to influence marketing outcomes. The concerns of this study are focused on enhancing marketing performance amongst SME book publishers in Nigeria through effective social media marketing strategies. Large book publishers

have embraced internet technologies significantly because they have huge marketing resources, especially in making optimal use of Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr using different strategies, as reported by Macmanus (2012). Given that small book publishers who lack the luxury of significant marketing expenditures find it expensive to use the conventional advertising and promotion strategies commonly used in business (Zell, 2001), the rising prevalence and significance of social media platforms in contemporary culture makes it necessary to investigate novel approaches for marketing and promotion.

This study offers contributions in theoretical, methodological, and practical ways. In terms of theoretical contribution, the study develops a framework (based on the Technology, Organization and Environment (TOE) framework, and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory) it offers insights into the adoption of social media innovations within the context of the book publishing business in developing economies. Besides, the adoption of a mixed method approach for the study allows addressing the varying dimensions to the prospects and challenges of using social media by book publishers in Nigeria. Also, the study solves a practical problem for SME publishers on how to boost their market growth and profitability through effectively utilizing social media as a means for communications in marketing.

Adoption and usage of social media in a strategic manner by Nigerian book publishers offers growth opportunities through publishing brand development and diversification. Scholars like Henningsgaard (2020) and Parnell (2021) have noted that building publishing brands can help extend publishers' source of revenue beyond book sales. They highlight other auxiliary revenue streams such as licensing rights to international editions, translations, film and television adaptation of books, and development communications services. In addition, the study's findings contribute to

transiting Nigeria's publishing industry to service-oriented multi-media firms, as espoused by Davidson (2010); Stănciulescu et al., (2020); Veglis et al., (2016), Villi and Picard (2019), and Ziv, (2002).

Indeed, the issue of diversification in the book publishing industry has assumed significant importance in the wake of the emerging dwindling fortunes of Nigerian publishers. A report by Nwakunor (2023) paints the ailing state of the nation's book industry, due to the rising cost of production and declining earning power of the average consumer. The report, citing the National Bureau of Statistics, showed that the importation of paper and other allied raw materials has grown by 25 percent, compared to previous years, resulting in as much as N412 billion (about \$908,556,796) as of 2022. The resultant high production costs reduce the profit margin of publishers in an economy where the average earning power is low. This is reflected in the declining performance of frontline book publishers such as Academy Press, University Press, and Learn Africa. According to Nwakunor (2023), these leading firms reported declines in their profit during the first quarter of 2023. As the analyst submits, in terms of performance, companies in the printing/publishing sector have not had a successful run in the last half a decade. The concern for this study is that if large publishing firms are going through such a rough patch, what then becomes the fate of small publishing businesses?

While stakeholders in the book ecosystem are convinced that a National Book Policy, implemented by the federal government, will turn things around, the reality is that publishers in other climes that are faced with similar situations have looked more inward by adopting diversification as a leeway. Diversification strategies, as advocated by scholars such as Spjeldnæs (2022) and Suarez (1994), place great value on

marketing orientation. Largely social media is a critical component of publishers' marketing programmes, thus requiring significant research attention.

1.6 Research Scope

The book segment of Nigeria's publishing industry is the main focus of this study. The specific focus is on the SME book publishing segment in the nation's emerging digital economy. Based on the assessment of Zell (2020), digital production in the literary publishing category may be said to be on the rise in Nigeria but issues of marketing and distribution are still germane. In the academic publishing segment, Umukoro and Ogwezi (2021) highlight perceived limitations to academic publishing in the 21st-century Nigerian research space. Thus, focusing on SME publishers who are involved in book publishing is considered necessary. In terms of coverage of social media use, the study is limited to social media networking sites.

1.7 Conceptualizations

According to Sequeira (2014), conceptualization is an essential process aimed at precisely defining the intended meanings and excluding any unintended connotations associated with the terminology employed in research.

1.7.1 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

The SME sector is widely acknowledged as critical to employment generation and economic growth in both emerging and industrialized countries (Eniola, 2014). Different organizations and nations define SMEs according to different standards, so there are no widely agreed definitions of SMEs. This study uses SMEDAN's (2007) classification, which classifies micro-enterprises as those with fewer than 10

employees and less than 5 million Naira (around 12,000 US dollars) in assets. A small business has between 10 and 49 workers and assets valued between 5 and 50 million Naira (around 12,000-120,000 US dollars), whereas a medium business has between 50 and 199 employees and assets worth between 50 and 500 million Naira (around 120,000 -1.2M US dollars). Recently, SMEs are also referred to as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

1.7.2 Firm performance

Firm performance is used in this study in the context of SMEs. Citing Garengo et al. (2005), Eniola (2014:34) defines performance as “a process or the manner by which the business owner or manager of SMEs executes their functions and crucial element to improving business performance in organizations”. As Eniola (2014) avers, performance in the SME sector is a primary driver and barometer for industrialization, modernization, and urbanization, just as it serves as a catalyst for meaningful and profitable employment for everyone who is able and willing to work. Therefore, this study defines firm performance in terms of the organizational performance of SMEs, which is “the capability and ability of an organization to efficiently exploit the available resources to achieve accomplishments consistent with the set objectives of the company, as well as considering their relevance to its users” (Peterson et al., 2003, cited in Taouab & Issor, 2019:95).

In this study, firm performance is used to evaluate the impact of strategic social media usage and marketing practices on the business outcomes of SME book publishers in Nigeria. Since performance encompasses profitability, market reach, and