

Organisational Environment of Nigerian Faith-based Publishing Houses and the Quest for Sustainability

Samuel Okere, ^(Ph.D)

Department of Mass Communication, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria. samokere1@gmail.com; +234 703 785 2028

ABSTRACT: *This paper evaluated how the demographic structure and the translation of organisational philosophy of publishing houses in Nigeria that are established primarily for the communication of Christian values impact on their ability to operate as sustainable ventures. Indications from available data in the study reveal that the quest for sustainability of faith-based publishing houses in Nigeria should begin with a repositioning of their internal environment. A socially responsible industry takes into consideration such issues as gender balance in the enlistment of the workforce, a fairly geographical distribution in the location of the operational base, and the need to provide solutions to prevalent social problems through the content of the published books. These essential ingredients are lacking within the organisational environment of the publishing houses that were studied. It is only when such vital constituents of organisational environment are factored into the daily operations of faith-based publishing houses in Nigeria that their quest for sustainability could be realistic.*

Keywords: *Organisational environment; Internal environment; Faith-based publishing; Sustainability*

I. INTRODUCTION

The environment of publishing in Nigeria is ‘the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence’ publishing activities. This, then, is the totality of the forces of society – social, economic, political, etc, on the publishing industry. Okwilagwe (2001) classifies the Nigerian publishing environment into internal and external. Within the internal environmental factors are included all the factors arising from government policies and actions which have impact on publishing, while external environmental factors include such extraneous factors arising beyond the geo-polity. For the purpose of this paper, however, internal environment of publishing which is the thrust of this paper is used in the context of factors emanating from within the industry. Technically therefore, internal environment by our definition should be called organisational environment. In that case, external environmental factors though outside the scope of this paper would refer to all the forces of society that impinge on publishing activities, be they government policies, literacy level of the society, general attitude towards publishing and its products or even some global issues outside the country.

Although both the environment within the organisation (internal environment) and that outside of the organisation (external environment) in publishing seem intertwined, effort is made however in this paper to limit discussions to the factors of organisational environment (that is, internal environment). This is with the aim of locating a nexus between the internal dynamics of faith-based publishing houses in Nigeria and their efforts to attain sustainability. The idea of sustainability in faith-based publishing in relation to organisational environment is a search for the ability of such publishing houses to maintain continued productive existence in the business of developing and distributing faith-based books consequent upon the interplay of forces within the publishing houses without recourse to extraneous factors.

In an attempt to evaluate performance in the Nigerian publishing industry, publishers are wont to first consider extraneous factors of external environment. Such extraneous factors range from political and government fiscal measures (Nwankwo, 1995) to copyright violation by pirates (Oyediran, 1995; Lawan-Solarin, 2001; Bankole, 2002; Iloje, 2005) and even poor reading culture with its attendant factor of low patronage of books (Adelekan, 2002). Adesanoye (1995), however, brought in a balanced argument by maintaining that performance evaluation should also include the organisational environment. In a novel critique of the organisational environment of Nigerian publishing, he focused on the performance of the editors themselves. The essence of the exercise was to measure the level of literacy and communication competence of the editors since, by virtue of the role of the editor in the publishing process, he or she stands in the gap of communication fidelity between the author and the reader or the audience. In this exercise, he submits that ‘the average Nigerian editor is simply not equipped with the linguistic skills to perform his copy-editing duties satisfactorily’ (Adesanoye, 1995, p. 42).

This paper shares the position of Adesanoye which we understand to imply that a study of the organisational environment of Nigerian publishing houses is a key factor in evaluating their performance. Consequently, this paper extends the search to faith-based publishing, a genre of publishing that though blazed the trail in Nigerian media history, yet, it has remained a fledgling enterprise. Using the extended format of organisational environment which includes demographic structure, organisational philosophy and investment patterns, the paper affirms that a search for the performance of faith-based publishers and indeed any genre of publishing ought to start from within the industry itself.

II. BACKGROUND TO FAITH-BASED PUBLISHING IN NIGERIA

Book publishing in Nigeria began as a religious endeavour through two external contacts, namely, Arabic Islamic and English-Christian. Each of the two groups used the book medium to spread and preserve its religion.

Arabic books (manually produced) were brought into the north of Nigeria through the Trans-Saharan trade route. The books which were probably brought from Timbuktu, Morocco, and Egypt were introduced into designated Arabic centres in Sokoto, Borno, and Kano (Segun, 1989, Tamuno, 1973). To make them available to more readers, it was necessary to recopy them. This form of book publishing (i.e. hand-copying process) had many limitations. It had low copy run as it took a very long time to complete the copying of a single book. It also gave rise to the distortion of facts as an error in the copying process would be replicated if such a manuscript were to be recopied for another reader or buyer. Indeed, it was quite a cumbersome exercise and so did not encourage the growth of a vibrant publishing enterprise.

Besides, Arabic education did not encourage mass literacy. Reading and writing which engendered the need for the mass production and circulation of books (publishing) were limited to the Islamic learning centres which were exclusively meant for the training of Islamic scholars. It was these scholars that had the duty of interpreting the Koran and other Islamic literature to the rest of the people.

The abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade which gave a strong boost to Christian missionary activities, however, changed the tempo of book publishing in Nigeria. The English missionaries who had the goal of converting the indigenes to the Christian religion chose to facilitate their assignment through the introduction of reading and writing. The resource materials for this were the Bible and other Christian literature (Lawal, 2003).

Unlike Islam, Christianity encouraged literacy for the membership. The missionaries considered that a rapid way of evangelising the people was to make provision for reading and writing, since the acquisition of these skills would help the converts to access the message from the Bible and other Christian literature. Compared to importation, it was cheaper to reproduce these materials locally for the converts who had begun to constitute a large reading audience. The reproduction and circulation of these materials incidentally laid the foundation for the book publishing enterprise in Nigeria.

Two British missionaries, Reverend Hope Masterton Waddell, and his printer friend, Samuel Edgerly, both of the United Presbyterian Church, pioneered the publishing enterprise in Nigeria. Arriving in Calabar in 1846, they embarked on the following publishing projects: the transcription into the local languages of some materials that they brought along with them; the development of some simple texts; and the reprinting of some scriptural/biblical texts. According to Apeji (1991), the result of this initial effort was the publication of a book entitled *First Book of Spelling and Reading Lesson for the Old Calabar Mission Schools*, which was written by Reverend Hope Waddell himself. His friend, Samuel Edgerly, also wrote his own book, *Miqua Usuna Esup Nwed* (School Closing Songs). The latter book was actually a transcription of the songs collected from the folklore repertoire of the Efik people.

Ajayi (1965) notes the publishing achievement of Hope Waddell within the first decade of his arrival in Calabar, thus:

By August 1849, the Calabar mission had produced 800 copies of the primer, 560 copies of Bible lessons, 150 arithmetical examples, 200 multiplication tables, 500 almanacs with the Ten Commandments in Efik, 300 copies of elementary arithmetic, and 400 of the catechism in Efik and English (cited in Tamuno,1973, p. 3).

According to Tamuno (1973), Hope Waddell was able to achieve this feat through the cooperation he received from his friend, Samuel Edgerly, and two other missionaries, Hugh Goldie and William Anderson. The success of the mission press at Calabar probably informed the establishment of yet another mission press, this time in Bonny, in the present Rivers State, by the Niger Delta Mission which produced simple primers and religious tracts in the Izon (Ijaw) language (Tamuno, 1973, p. 3).

The success of the publishing efforts in Calabar and Bonny must have given so much encouragement to yet another mission group. Perhaps having heard of the achievements of the United Presbyterian Church in Calabar and Bonny, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) dispatched one of their own, the Reverend Henry

Townsend, to yet another coastal region of Nigeria. His first entry was at Badagry, from where he relocated to Abeokuta.

Taking a cue from his Presbyterian counterparts, Townsend took with him an old printing press, which is believed to have been obtained from his brother who was a printer (Duyile, 2005). Through a do-it-yourself approach, he acquired some basic printing skills; in turn he began teaching the same skills to the young men who attended to him at the station.

In time, there was a sizeable number of printers to warrant the establishment of a printing press at Abeokuta. With the success they attained, the group launched into commercial service. The press under the management of Townsend recorded tremendous achievement in printing and publishing. Among the materials published at this period included song books (hymnals) and materials for catechism and prayers.

According to Tamuno (1973, p. 4), one of the first three pamphlets published at this time was a Yoruba translation of the Children's hymns, 'There is a happy land far-far away', which was believed to have been translated by a Nigerian young school master (probably, a Yoruba, called David William). This book publishing endeavour was not sustained. Henry Townsend rather shifted emphasis from book publishing to newspaper publishing. With the birth of *Iwe Irohin*, and its attendant success, the experiment in book publishing was jettisoned. This no doubt has affected the growth of organised book publishing, especially among the churches and their affiliated groups.

In 1913, the CMS established another press, this time in Lagos. The various CMS presses located in many cities of Nigeria today are offshoots of the 1913 establishment. Until recently, the CMS press was the sole printer (publisher) of school registers in the country. This is in addition to numerous school texts widely used across the country.

In spite of heavy Islamic influence, the Christian Church was able to pioneer book publishing effort in northern Nigeria. In what may be termed an ecumenical attempt, there was a pooling of resources by the various Christian missions operating in the north (Segun, 1989). This 'press pool' resulted in the establishment of the Niger Mission Press at Shonga which published Bible story books in Nupe, including the Nupe Dictionary.

From the foregoing account, faith-based publishing in Nigeria had a very strong Christian input. It is as a tribute to this fact that the present paper is oriented towards faith-based publishing of Christian extraction. Thus, the faith-based publishing houses that are studied in this paper are those that are established for the Christian mission and goal.

III. FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING

Christian publishing, a form of faith-based publishing refers to the generation of manuscript, the processing through editorial activities, its physical manufacture and the eventual distribution and sales of literature that are influenced by the Christian world view. It is publishing with a sense of mission for the benefit of both Christians and non-Christians alike. Traber (1996) summarises the idea of Christian publishing thus:

Christian publishing is thus seen as an extension of the central mystery of our faith, the Incarnation, Words, which are an actualization of the words of God or a preparation for them or a concrete application thereof, ...Christian publishing is furthermore, a work of Christian witness: an act of witness which is

- (a) public, because publishing means to send forth words to the public at large;
- (b) lasting at least to a certain extent, because books outlive people
- (c) a witness, which comprises total Christian living, i.e., the whole person with all his or her needs (p. 132).

Books by Christian publishers include the Holy Bible; devotional books (hymnals/song books, catechisms, study guides); reference books (i.e. manuals/hand books on Church administration and policy); treatises (i.e. commentaries, exegeses, encyclopaedias); Bible biographies and narrative theologies (i.e. books on Bible characters and model Christians such as missionaries, saints and pioneers respectively); socio-religious books (i.e. books on aspects of social life written with Christian undertone). Such books include those on health, education, life-style, nutrition, marriage, dating, courtship, social and family relationships and books on nature: flowers, gardening, heavenly bodies, among others.

Christian publishing is concerned with the sharing of religious views and values through books, and other forms of literature as an evangelistic duty. These books communicate values that are considered as spiritual and transcendental. Whether as a strictly religious discourse or a discourse on nature or lifestyle, there is the deliberate effort to overtly or subtly communicate Christian principles through these books. Such books are authored by Christians for Christian or non-Christian audiences, as tools for the nurturing of the adherents in the basic tenets of the faith, and evangelising and proselytising of non-adherents. This view is informed by the command of Jesus to His disciples shortly before He ascended to heaven:

Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always even unto the end of the earth.(Mathew 28:19-20), KJV

Christian publishers recognize the great potentials of the various media of mass communication, including books and other literatures in reaching the human mind. For this reason, they use their books maximally in accomplishing their evangelistic goals According to Baker (1949, p. 37), "Christianity has always depended heavily upon the written word for the dissemination of its principles". Even in medieval times, the book served as a medium for documenting and disseminating the various Christian liturgies (Bittner 1989, p. 17).

Among the Seventh-day Adventists, publishing work is an essential element in the pillars of their evangelistic work. They believe that "The publishing work was established by the direction of God and under His special supervision"(White, 1990, p. 53). It is for them a very crucial method for the fulfilment of God's plan for saving mankind. They acknowledge the publishing work as a means of strengthening the gospel ministry by reaching places where pastors cannot through the published books.

The common understanding among Christian publishers is that they are fulfilling a divine mandate; and this they are doing by being of service to the church in its evangelistic assignment. They (Christian publishers) are foot soldiers in the communication of the *mission of the church which "is to go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering these disciples into churches, that they might worship and obey Jesus Christ now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father (DeYoung & Gilbert, 2011, p. 241).*

The mark of Christian publishers is that they provide succour to humanity in a world of frustration and turmoil. Through their books, they advocate order and orderliness in the society. Obiora (1996) captures this point when he states that a Christian publisher is:

One who gives hope and courage,...promotes society's good morals...defends human rights and is open to truly human values...who by liberal or conservative attitude (whichever is appropriate), helps to promote and find the truth about this world, about God, about society, about life and its meaning, about nature and about humankind in general, and about the human person who is to be explored more deeply and become better understood as the image of God (p. 93).

In Christian publishing, sustainability is considered not in terms of fiscal gain but in terms of the ability to maintain a productive existence. Thus our search for sustainability in this paper derives from the fact of the need to evaluate how the Christian publishers in Nigeria are able to cope or otherwise within the context of their organisational environment. It is in this light that the ensuing discussion is made using available data from field work.

IV. FINDINGS

In keeping with the concept of organisational environment as both human and material factors which together form the prevailing atmosphere of such an organisation and which also determine the direction of the operation of such an organisation, two research questions revolving around the demographics and the publishing philosophy of the affected publishing houses guided this study which was a national survey. Ninety seven faith-based publishing house from five out of the six geo-political zones of the Nigerian nation participated in the study with a response rate of eighty eight which forms the basis for the analysis. These were purposively sampled from a population of one hundred and eight faith-based publishing houses in the country. Major criterion for eligibility is that such houses are listed in the current edition of *National Bibliography of Nigeria*. The research questions are stated below:

RQ1: What implications if any, does the demographic nature of the publishing houses have on their quest for sustainability?

RQ2: How does the philosophy of the publishing houses position them for sustainable publishing effort?

The demographic characteristics of the publishing houses provide the answer to the first research question which seeks to determine the implications of the nature of the demographic characteristics of the publishing houses on their quest for sustainability. The questionnaire, being the instrument with which the researcher gathered data for the research itemised six areas of demographic emphasis. Considering that the demographics of concern in this research include those of the publishing houses and those of the heads of the editorial management of the publishing houses, the six areas of demographic emphasis had to be allotted to the two demographic subjects. Thus from the heads of the publishing houses who responded to the questionnaire on behalf of their publishing houses, demographic data was gathered regarding their gender, age and

designation/rank. On the other hand, demographic data from the publishing houses had to do with nature of proprietorship of the houses, geographical distribution and their length of existence, and the major areas designed for publishing programme.

On gender distribution of heads of the editorial management of each of the publishing houses, shown in Figure 1, data generated reveal a gender imbalance. The implication of the gender distribution of 89.8% males to 10.2% females is that there is a male domination of the editorial management of Christian publishing houses in Nigeria. Since the editor is indeed the publisher, this male domination confirms the observation of Ofori-Mensah (2002, p. 19) that 'there are very few women who own or head African publishing houses.' This is not a positive structure because lack of gender balance in an industry as publishing, especially, faith-based publishing, would be costing the organisation the ability to reach out to the society in terms of author soliciting, author-publisher relations among others. The feminine touch which brings about a balance in negotiations and cordial day-to-day work activities in the publishing houses would be lacking. Any publishing house that considers a sustainable experience should of necessity consider a fair gender ratio in its workforce.

The age distribution of heads of editorial management of the houses surveyed has great implication for the editorial management of the houses under study. The data revealed that 42.0% of the houses are managed by persons within the age bracket of 30-39 years. This is almost a mid point of the retirement age in the Nigerian public service. It shows that a majority of the Christian publishing houses in Nigeria are managed by very young staff. This is a favourable age bracket in terms of vitality, innovation and creativity. Their age bracket of 30-39 indicates that all things being equal, these members of staff have the capacity to plough vigour into their job thereby bringing positive results to their houses.

Even a summation of this age group with the next highest age group which is 35.2% of those within the age bracket of 40-49 is still a productive advantage. This summation indicates that 77.2% of the publishing houses have heads of the editorial management within the age bracket of 30-49 years. Christian publishers in Nigeria are a very active and vibrant generation. Their age advantage places them in a vantage position of having the physical stamina to meet the challenges of sustainability and goal attainment.

Figure 1: Gender distribution

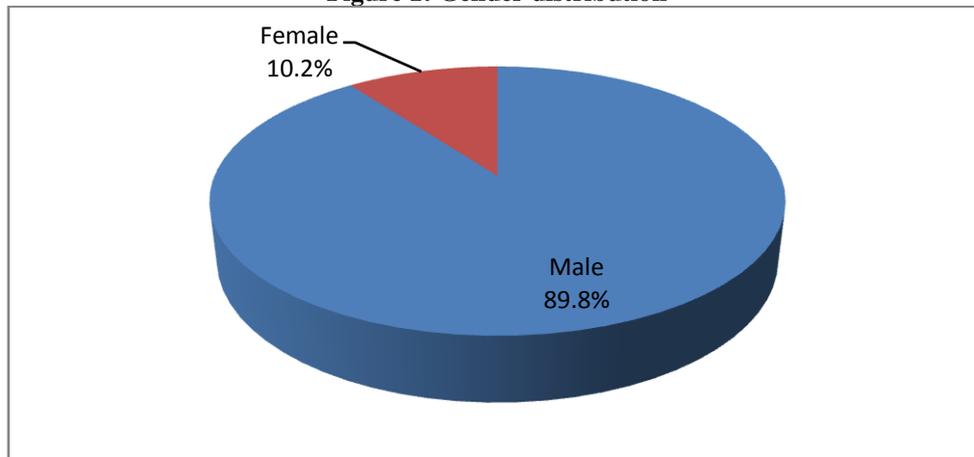
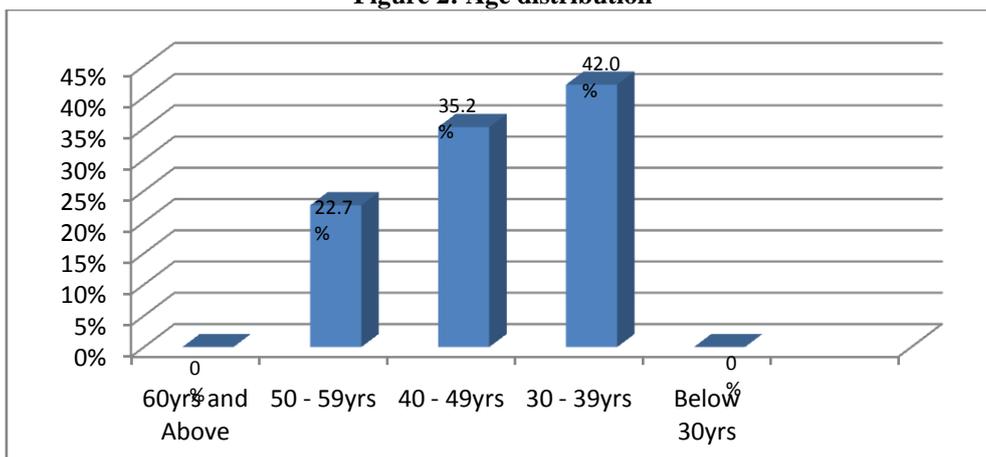
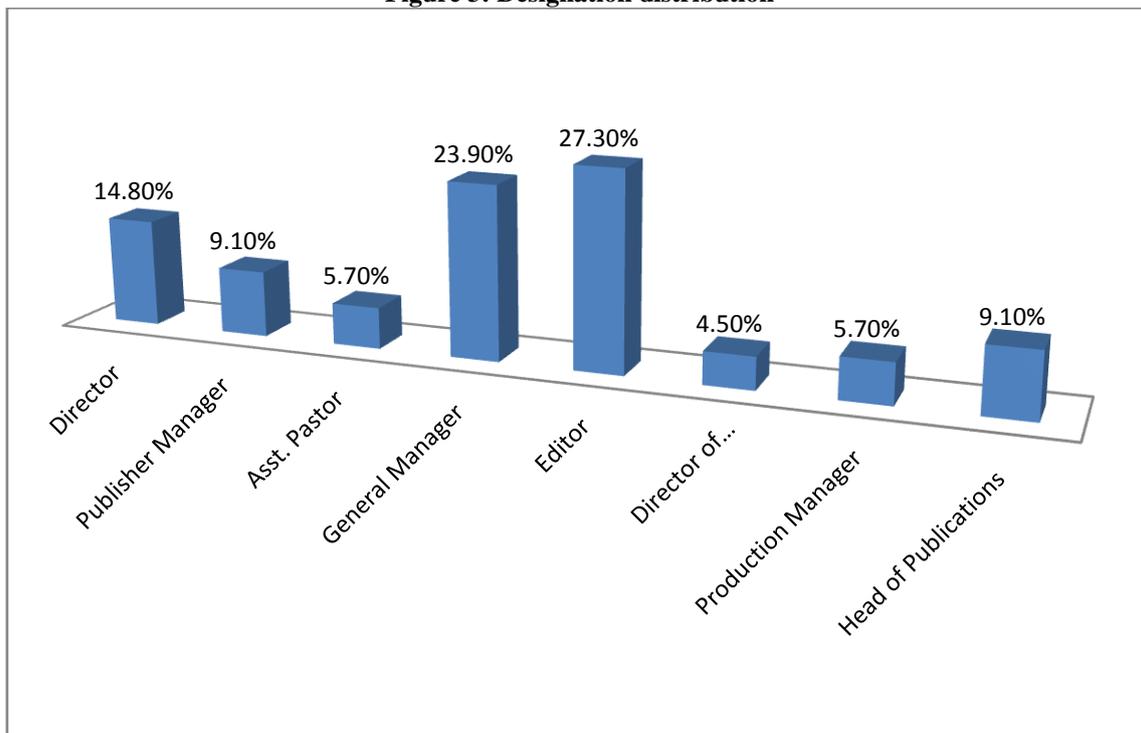


Figure 2: Age distribution



Data were also gathered regarding designation/rank distribution of the respondents. The two most common designations for heads of these publishing houses are Editor and General Manager. While Editor has frequency value of 27.3%, that of General Manager has the frequency value of 23.9% of the respondents. The third in that order is Director though with a fairly wide gap as 14.8% of the respondents fall within that designation. Based on the data supplied in Figure 3, the inference is drawn that Christian publishing houses in Nigeria prefer the designations of Editor and General Manager for the heads of their publishing houses. This has some implications on the efforts of the publishing houses to hold sway as publishers. In an industry that is poised for sustainability, it is only natural that designations of chief operating officers be in consonance with what the society can easily recognise and identify with. Titles such as Editor or General Manager are familiar nomenclatures in the publishing industry. The choice of such for the heads of the publishing houses creates a positive image for the faith-based publishing houses. It gives them some measure of credibility in the comity of publishers.

Figure 3: Designation distribution



The proprietorship distribution in Figure 4 shows that 43.2% of the publishing houses that are corporately owned belong to church organisations. It is possible that churches may have some share also in the 19.3% sole proprietorship, especially churches that are commonly referred to as independent ministries. In contemporary Nigerian parlance, these are called ‘One Man Church’.

This does not give churches any advantage over proprietorship of publishing houses. Based on the proactive way with which churches in Nigeria are diversifying into complementary service delivery either as soul winning or fund raising devices, it would have been expected that publishing should hold a strong attraction to them. Churches are rapidly buying into private initiative in Nigerian tertiary education; they need to consider other areas of investment for soul winning such as publishing. Churches in Nigeria setting up independent corporate publishing houses and not just an appendage of a church can make positive contributions in Christian publishing if they bring their collective will into the investment. Corporate identity has far-reaching ability to garner support and patronage for a publishing house. Faith-based publishers in Nigeria therefore, must rise above the current status of being an appendage of the church to corporate professional publishers. This will impact both in their daily transactions with their clients as well as in the quality of their products. They cannot be seen to be determined for sustainability in the current status. This is an age when media conglomeration is fast becoming the trend (Croteau & Hoynes, 2006). Faith-based publishers in Nigeria therefore, cannot afford not to at least put up a corporate status. Even in credit transactions with banks and other financial institutions, it is more result oriented when such a publishing house is a corporate body. Collateral requirement which forms a major condition for credit accessing from banks is better managed when the publishing house is a corporate body. For the attainment of sustainability, faith-based publishing houses in Nigeria need to consider this line of growth.

Figure 4: Nature of proprietorship

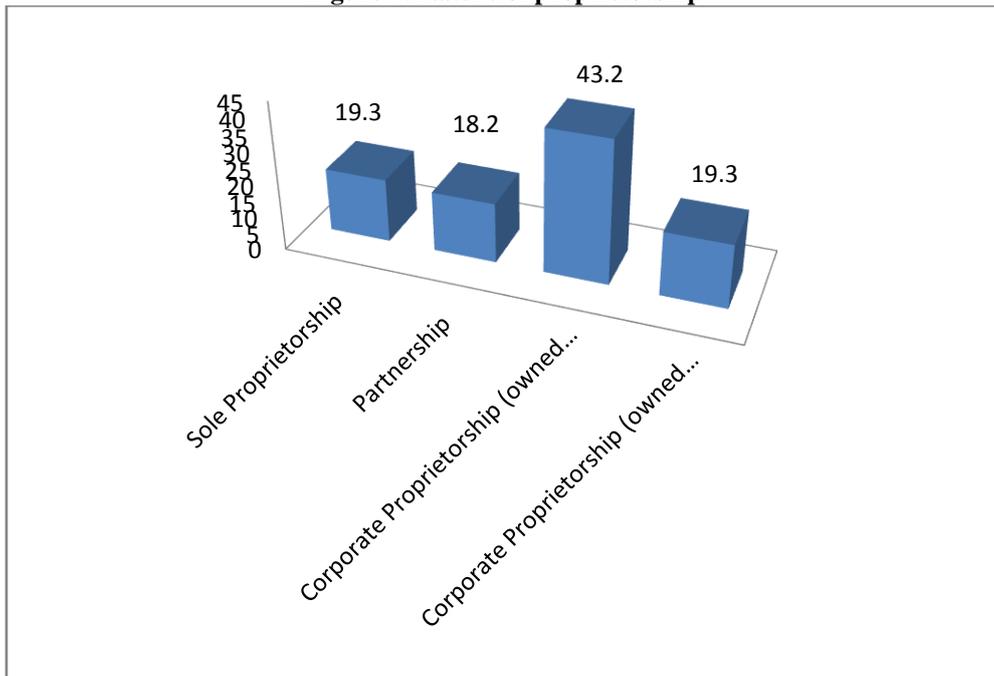
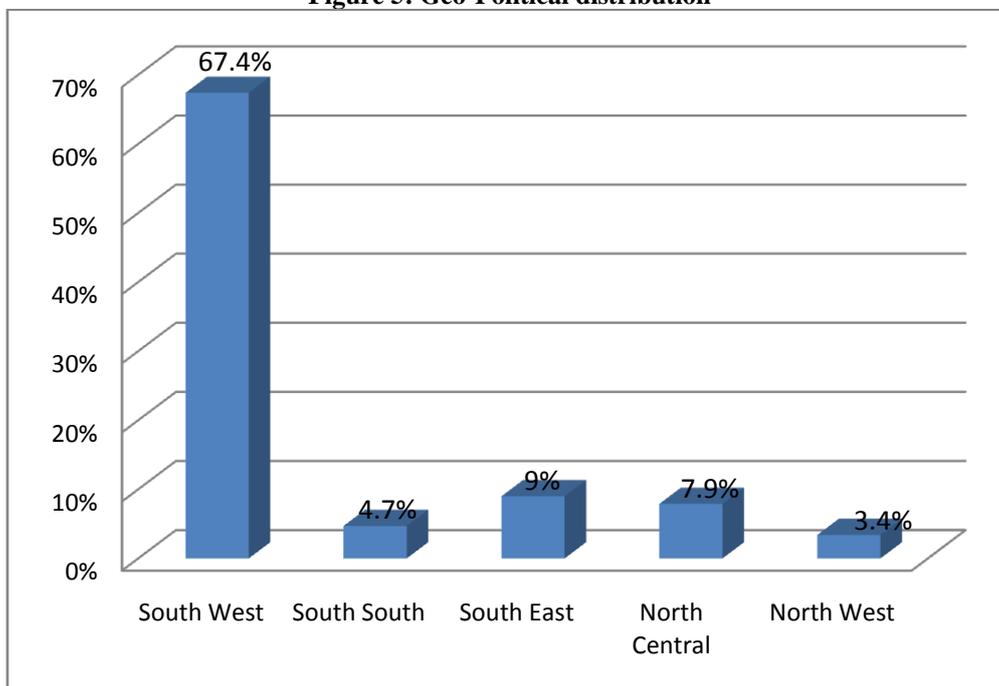


Figure 5: Geo-Political distribution



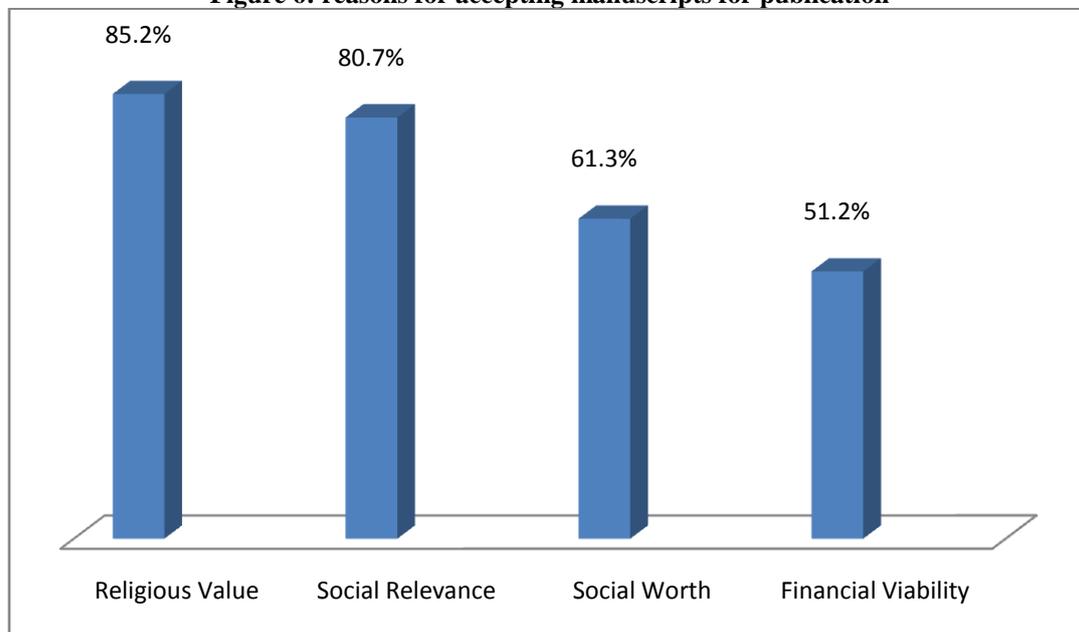
The geographical distribution as indicated in Figure 5 shows that 64.7% of the Christian publishing houses in Nigeria are located in the South-West Geo-Political zone. This is in tandem with the distribution of even the non-religious publishing houses. Ifeduba (2010) confirms that this zone ‘accounts for over 70% of all the registered publishing firms in the country’. The South-West Geo-Political zone has always played host to most publishing houses in Nigeria thus earning it the accolade of the home of publishing in Nigeria. The implication of this on sustainability is that faith-based publishers in Nigeria are limited in national spread. The national spread of an organisation determines to a great extent the level of patronage such an organisation will receive from the prospective publics. There is a great advantage when an organisation maintains appreciable proximity with a widespread public. In its present geographical distribution, faith-based publishers in Nigeria cannot command a national market in terms of author soliciting and enlistment as well as volume of end users. This has obvious implications on sustainability. There is the need for geographical-reach expansion in order for

the presence of faith-based publishing houses to be felt across the nation. For only the southwest geo-political zone to accommodate 64.7% of the faith-based publishers in Nigeria shows that in its present structure, there is an imbalance in geographical distribution.

On the age distribution of the houses, a cumulative of 68.6% which is the time frame of the publishing houses that have been in existence for a period of five to fifteen years reveals that Christian participation in the publishing environment of contemporary Nigeria is a very recent activity. Although 5% of the publishing houses shows a longevity of over twenty years, this is quite insignificant to a total of 68.6% of the publishing houses that indicated that they had been established and have been in publishing business for a period of just five to fifteen years. The implication of this is that Christian organisations and denominations did not sustain the tempo set by the early Christian missionaries regarding publishing, especially the pioneering efforts of Reverend Masterton Hope Waddell and Reverend Henry Townsend in 1846 at Calabar and in 1859 at Abeokuta respectively.

In continuation of our search for how the internal environment of Nigerian faith-based publishing houses impact on their quest for sustainability, we shall address the second research question which states thus: How does the philosophy of the publishing houses position them for sustainable publishing effort? Data for addressing this research question are derived from an evaluation of the interpretation of the philosophy of the publishing houses through their publishing programme. Emenanjo, Ndimele and Okere (2012) in a related work assert that Christian publishers in Nigeria are equipped with the basic philosophical instruments of operation. Our position in this paper however, is that, the true test of a publishing house's equipment with the basic philosophical instruments of operation lies in how the house translates the philosophical instruments into day to day management of the house. For this reason, the following discussion is based on the reasons for accepting manuscripts for publication as well as the preferred contents of the books that the houses publish.

Figure 6: reasons for accepting manuscripts for publication



The data in Figure 6 show that religious value of the manuscript tops the list with a ranking of 85.2% consideration. This is in line with the recommendation of Wemter (1996, p. 81) that 'support for the Biblical Ministry certainly must rank very highly in the work plan of any Catholic publishing house. Although he was addressing Catholic publishing houses, his recommendation applies to other Christian publishing houses and this is reflected in the findings in this study.

The next most important factor that the houses adjudge to be of importance for accepting manuscripts for publication is the social relevance of the manuscript. This has 80.7% ranking. It is quite expected because Christian publishers define their sphere of influence beyond doctrinal and theological publications. In this regard, Kairo (1996) is of the view that Christian publishers can only fulfil their mission of evangelisation when their books equally address the social realities of the time.

Social worth of the author and financial viability of the manuscript placed third and fourth with 61.3 % and 51.2% ranking. Although social worth has a third placement, the summation score is quite significant. This seems to be at variance with the ideals of Christian publishing. It is expected that these publishing houses should have given it a very low consideration of below 50% since as co-workers with the priests and pastors

who use the pulpit, Christian publishers are more concerned with generating and developing good manuscripts that will meet the goal of winning souls for Christ. For as long as these manuscripts contain the theological and moral values of Christianity, social worth of the author is of no significance. The only credible explanation by these publishing houses for considering social worth of authors so high is if only it refers to the spiritual standing of the authors within the church circle. Another reason could be the extent of theological training the author has received.

The rating given to financial viability is quite appropriate. With 51.2% rating, the publishing houses are making a bold statement that their primary goal is not pecuniary benefits. However, it is necessary to be guided by the fact that even as not for profit publishers, they need to recoup the money invested in the books to be able to sustain their mission. Financial viability therefore should be understood in the light of its marketability. A book without a market is not a viable project no matter how good the intention may be. Trabber (1996) is definite on this even when he is writing with Christian publishers in view:

Sale ability is one of the main criteria of book publishing. If the market for a book is so small that the normal rules of publishing do not apply, the title just should not be printed unless the most extraordinary circumstances prevail (137).

Financial viability however, need not be understood as profiteering. It simply means the ability of the books to break even in the market place to allow for more print runs of the same title or revised editions when they are due as well as having the potentials to give the publishing house the leverage to be able to recycle finances from sales as to be able to issue further titles. While this is the guiding principle, the observation by Wemter (1996, p. 85) that among Christian publishers financial viability has in some cases become an end in itself should not be glossed over.

Figure 7: Subject matter spread of the books

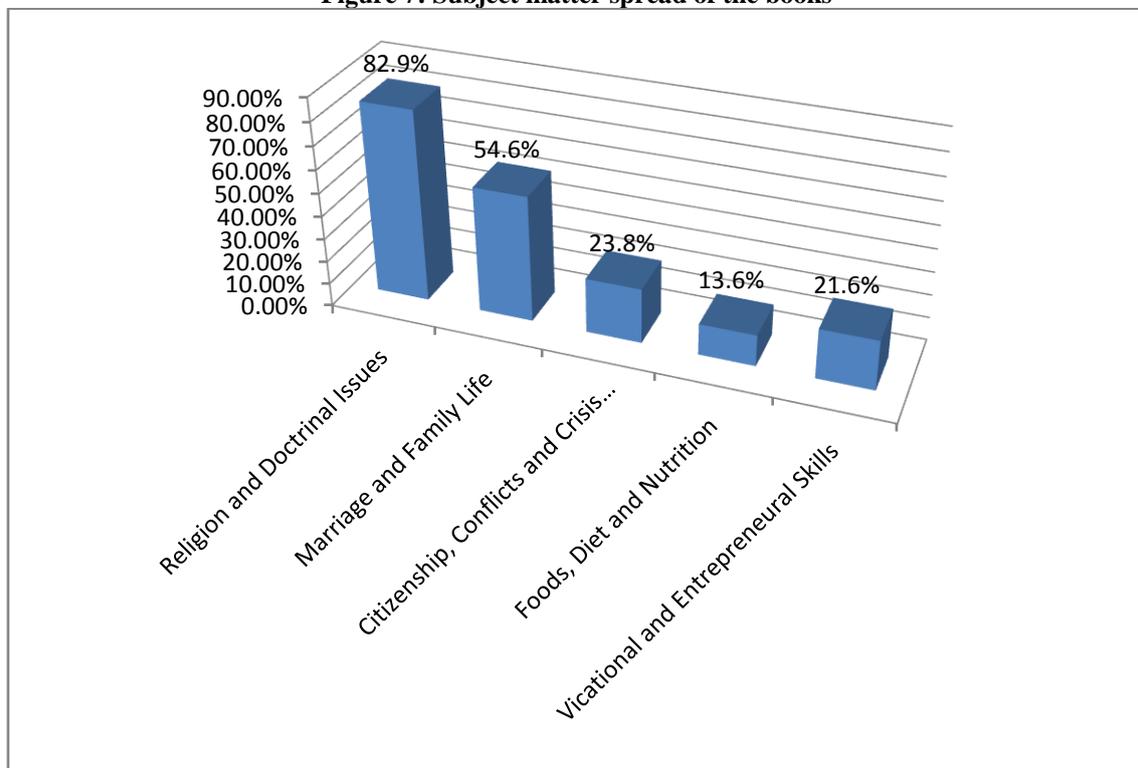


Figure 7 reveals that the subject matter of the books published by Christian publishers in Nigeria tilts heavily on religion and doctrinal issues which has 82.9% ranking. The next in ranking is the group of books that have to do with the subject matter of marriage and family life. This group scores 54.6%, barely above average in conventional grading. The other three groups namely, citizenship, conflicts and crises management; foods, diet and nutrition; and vocational and entrepreneurial skills lag behind with 23.8%; 13.6%; and 21.6% ranking.

Concentrating on the publication of books that have direct religious appeal, while ignoring those on social issues, implies that the publishing houses have not adequately lived up to their social responsibility. They need to reconsider the implication of the principles of Christian communication which emphasises, among other

factors, that while humanity should be reached with the good news of a kingdom that is to come, there is the need to occupy meaningfully until that kingdom comes (Okere, 2006). Nigerian Christian publishers need to expand their role definition as the felt need of the society need to be met in order to make the gospel meaningful. This is one major way through which the church can realise the goal of the social gospel (Ehusani, 1992; Flannery, 1975)

V. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion, it is revealed that the organisational environment of Nigerian faith-based publishing houses needs an enhancement. As special publishers with a special message for a generation that is inundated with all sorts of information appeal, it behoves the faith-based publishers therefore to seek more aggressive ways of reaching their audience. Aggression here is not a matter of coercion; it is rather a matter of innovation and out of the ordinary. It calls for gender balance in editorial staff structure and geo-political balance in terms of location of industry. Much more, it calls for a social responsibility appeal in the choice of the subject matter of the books that the houses publish. This is the sure way for creating a nexus between organisational environment and the quest for sustainability in faith-based publishing in Nigeria.

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