

Marketing Strategies as Predictors of Book Sales Performance of Educational Publishers in Southwestern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Marketing strategies are crucial to the sales performance of educational publishers. The study examined the extent to which marketing strategies affect book sales performance among educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria. The survey method was adopted. The population of the study comprised the 54 educational publishing firms in southwestern Nigeria. Two states – Oyo and Lagos – were purposively selected because of their high concentration of publishing firms while the 36 publishing firms located in Lagos and Oyo states were randomly selected. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. Three hundred and sixty-one sales representatives were sampled for the study, and 219 (60.6%) were returned. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, and multiple regression analysis. It was discovered that market penetration ($r = 0.17$; $p < 0.05$) and market development ($r = 0.18$; $p < 0.05$) were the most significant predictors of book sales performance, while product development ($r = 0.32$; $p > 0.05$) was not significant. The study recommended that publishers should adopt multi-channel marketing, leverage digital platforms, and enhance promotional efforts to remain competitive in the evolving educational publishing industry.

KEYWORDS

- Marketing strategies
- Book sales performance
- Educational publishing
- Market penetration
- Product development

Introduction

In Nigeria, educational publishers play a significant role in supporting learning through the provision of high-quality textbooks and instructional materials. However, despite the increasing demand for educational books, publishers in the country face significant challenges in ensuring optimal sales performance. The ability of publishers to remain competitive in the evolving marketplace depends on the effectiveness of their marketing strategies. Marketing strategies refer to a combination of planned activities designed to increase product awareness, attract customers, and maximise sales. For this study, market penetration, market development, and product development serve as indicators of marketing strategies based on Ansoff matrix component (Mungai, 2010).

Market penetration is a crucial factor for the success and performance of a publishing firm's marketing strategies. As Richardson and Evans (2017) explained, market penetration is a publishing firm's ability to sell its books or other publications in a highly competitive market. Market penetration is when an organisation enters a market where a similar product already exists. This usually involves attracting customers from competitors or rival publishing companies, often through intensive promotion. For instance, if a new publishing firm develops and introduces a new title on primary English, it will naturally seek to enter an already saturated and competitive market with several existing titles from different publishers. To do this successfully, the publisher has to embark on market development.

Market development is another factor that shows the effectiveness of an organisation's marketing strategy. Its primary aim is to expand a publishing firm's customer base, increase its revenue and enhance its market presence. This strategy helps publishing firms expand their reach and grow their business by bringing their existing and new books to new markets so they can attract new readers and increase their sales (Karthick, 2024). Publishing companies that wish to remain competitive and adapt to their consumers' ever-changing demands must also prioritise product development. Creating a new book genre or format, improving current books through revision, rebranding and repackaging, and building a new digital platform or service based on consumer feedback or behaviour are all examples of product development approaches for publishing firms. Overall, market penetration, market development, and product development are potent indicators of marketing strategies, which are predictors of sales performance.

Sales performance determines a publishing firm's financial standing and its ability to achieve its organisational objectives. However, many publishing firms in southwestern Nigeria struggle to stay afloat financially due to low volume of sales (Obiyinka, 2024). Good sales performance depends on several factors, including marketing strategies such as market penetration, market development and product development. It is against this background that this study investigated marketing strategies as predictors of book sales performance of educational publishers in Southwestern Nigeria. There are three specific objectives of the study. These are to:

- i. determine the book marketing strategies of educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria;
- ii. find out the relationship between marketing strategies and book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria; and
- iii. determine the significant joint influence of marketing strategies (market penetration, market development and product development) on book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria.

One research question and two null hypotheses which were derived from the objectives guided the study.

Research question: What are the book marketing strategies adopted by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria?

Hypotheses: The following null hypotheses in the study were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between marketing strategies and book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria.
2. There is no significant joint influence of marketing strategies (market penetration, market development, and product development) on book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria.

Literature Review

Book sales performance is the bedrock of a publishing company's survival. Through sales performance, the publishing industry can identify trends, understand readers' preferences, and provide readers with the books they want to read (Green, 2021). Publishers use sales performance data to identify profitable book genres, target readership demographics, and inform future acquisitions and marketing strategies. Authors use sales performance data to assess popularity,

track royalties, and negotiate better book deals, while booksellers use sales performance data to manage inventory, identify top-selling titles, and optimise promotions and discounts (Jenkins, 2018). Sales performance may be positive or negative (Akangbe, 2021). Several factors that may likely influence book sales performance have been identified in literature (Adamu, 2020; Carter and Hall, 2021); these include production quality, professional commitment, and marketing strategies.

Marketing is simply the promotion, distribution and selling of a product or service. It can also be viewed as the business activity of presenting products or services in such a way as to make them desirable to consumers. According to American Marketing Association (AMA, 2017), marketing is the performance of business activities that directs the flow of goods and services from the producers to the consumers through exchange. From the definition, it could be inferred that marketing is an organisational function which entails a series of activities for generating, communicating and delivering value to customers, and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organisation and its stakeholders. Every organisation employs different marketing strategies for effective sale performance.

According to Kotler and Keller (2015), marketing strategy mainly comprises product, price, place and promotion, which are techniques that organisations use to react to external and internal forces that will enable them achieve their objectives. It is a conceptual framework that marketing personnel use to devise necessary techniques that can be used to target their market and meet consumer's needs. Marketing strategy is often used to develop short term and long-term goals for business performance. As affirmed by Owomoyela, Oyeniyi and Ola (2013), marketing strategies are techniques that organisations use to provide their target customer with quality products, at affordable price, offer effective promotional strategy and interact with their distribution outlets thus creating demand for their products and increasing sales performance.

Marketing strategy is integral to a book marketing process as it helps to put in place suitable plans to facilitate sales. Marketing strategy facilitates a publishing firm's sales growth in the increasingly competitive market in Southwestern Nigeria (Obiyinka, 2024). Market penetration, market development and product development are the indicators adopted for marketing strategies. Market penetration is one of the strategies used to determine the percentage of the market that an organisation's product is able to capture (O'Regan, 2012). Market penetration strategy is adopted by organisations that want to achieve exponential growth with their existing products in the market

for an increased market share. According to Richardson and Evans (2017), market penetration is a key business growth strategy that ensures the availability and popularity of a product in a market. It is deployed to increase the market share of an organisation's product in a market. Luo and Zhao (2014) opined that many organisations strive for market penetration as soon as they enter a market. The focus of the market penetration strategy is to launch a product that can capture a sizeable market share as soon as the product enters the market. According to Ansoff, Kipley, Lewis, Helm-Stevens and Ansoff (2019), market penetration occurs when a company enters a market where similar products already exist and gains a considerable share of the market. This is often achieved by gaining competitors' customers or by attracting non-users of a product to the product or service, usually by advertising. The components of market penetration strategy include price strategy, distribution strategy, diversification strategy, and promotional strategy.

Market development strategy implies selling an already-existing product into a market that had not previously purchased it (Ansoff, *et. al.*, 2019). It is a growth strategy that involves identifying new markets or segments with existing products or services. The goal is to expand the customer base, increase revenue, and enhance market presence. The strategy may involve selling the product to a different customer segment, in a new area or region where it had not previously been sold, or even in markets outside the region or country. In other words, market development strategy is a business growth strategy that focuses on introducing existing products to new markets. It identifies and develops new market segments for current products. Organisations often use market development strategies to identify and develop new opportunities to sell their products in previously unexplored markets. As opined by Obiyinka (2024), market development strategy helps organisations to improve the quality of a product, acquire new customers for a product, upsell current customers, develop a new product, increase revenue margins, build organisational resilience, support long-term organisation growth, generate more leads and sales, provide more value to customers, increase brand awareness and decrease the production cost per unit. In publishing, the importance of market development strategy cannot be overemphasised, as it helps to improve the quality of book titles; acquire new customers for books; increase revenue and profit margin for the publishers; provide more value for customers through production; improve brand awareness for marketing titles, amongst others.

Product development strategy is part of Ansoff Matrix. The matrix framework, which was created in 1957 by Igor Ansoff is a guide that helps companies to plan their future growth. It is

very useful for a company seeking entrance a new or existing market, with either existing or newly developed products. Product development is, therefore, a strategy whereby a company plans and develops new products, or upgrades current products, and introduces them to an existing market to maintain a competitive edge. A successful product development strategy places emphasis on market and consumer research, conceptualising, building, testing, launching, and marketing.

In the publishing sector, product development can take various approaches such as: developing a new title similar to an existing book, revising an existing title, developing a new title entirely, creating a new title based on users' interests or purchasing behaviours. A good understanding of customers' needs and wants, the competitive environment and continuous practices, and strategies to better satisfy the customer requirements, help to increase an organisation's market share, as well as regulate the development of new products by the organisation. The steps involved in the development of a new product are idea generation, idea screening, testing, product analysis, test marketing and commercialisation. All these help publishers produce well-written, high-quality books that are acceptable in the market at a high profit margin.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design of the correlational type. The population of the study were the sales representatives of educational publishing firms in Southwestern Nigeria. Based on the data published by the Nigerian Publishers Association in 2025, 54 registered publishing firms specialised in publishing educational books in the six states in Southwestern Nigeria, namely: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. Lagos and Oyo states were purposively selected for the study because of the high concentration of publishers there. In the two states, 36 of the 54 publishing firms in Southwestern Nigeria (i.e. 67%) are located. The total number of sales representatives in the 36 publishing firms was 723 from which 50% was selected using accidental sampling technique. The 50% was to permit more precision in statistical analysis. Data was collected with a questionnaire and analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Sample size of sales representatives in educational publishing firms

S/N	Publishing Firm	Location	No. of Sales Representatives	Sample Size of 50%
Publishing Firms in Oyo State				
1.	African University Press Limited	Oluyole, Ibadan	12	6
2.	Associated Book Makers Ltd.	Ring Road, Ibadan	3	2
3.	Bookcraft Limited	New Bodija, Ibadan	9	5
4.	Bounty Press Limited	Orita Challenge, Ibadan	16	8
5.	Cosmopolitan Book Service	Dugbe, Ibadan	18	9
6.	Evans Brothers Nig. Publishers Ltd.	Jericho, Ibadan	84	42
7.	Extension Publications Limited	Molete, Ibadan	59	29
8.	Gbabeks Publishers Limited	Ring Road, Ibadan	5	3
9.	Holland Publishers	Sango/Eleyele Rd, Ibadan	2	1
10.	Ibadan University Press Pub. House	University of Ibadan	2	1
11.	Joycefitround (JFR) Publishers	Ring Road, Ibadan	7	4
12.	Kings Publishers	Old Ife Road, Ibadan	6	3
13.	Lamlad Publications Limited	Old Ife Road, Ibadan	7	4
14.	Lasswell Enterprises	Imalefalafia, Ibadan	2	1
15.	Learning Solutions	Bodija, Ibadan	15	8
16.	Spectrum Books Limited	Ring Road, Ibadan	32	16
17.	Stirling-Horden Publishers Nig. Ltd.	Oyo Road, Ibadan	5	3
18.	Straight-Gate Publishers Limited	Water Area, U. I. Ibadan	19	10
19.	University Press Plc.	Jericho, Ibadan	102	51
20.	Lolyem Communications	Oke-Bola, Ibadan	1	1

21.	Safari Books Limited	Onireke, Ibadan	7	4
22.	Scholarship Books Limited	U.I. 2 nd Gate, Ibadan	5	3
23.	Shower Kiddies Publishers	Ikeja, Lagos State	12	6
24.	Penthouse Publications (Nig) Ltd.	Old Bodija, Ibadan	5	3
25.	Quantum Publishing Limited	Idi-Isin, Ibadan	5	3
Sub-total			440	223
Publishing Firms in Lagos State				
26.	Quramo Publishing Limited	Victoria Island, Lagos State	5	3
27.	Tonad Publishers Limited	Ikeja, Lagos State	10	5
28.	Peaceville Publishers	Epe, Lagos State	10	5
29.	Macmillan Nig. Publishers Limited	Ilupeju, Lagos State	15	8
30.	Metropolitan Publishers Limited	Palmgrove, Lagos State	33	16
31.	Model Educational Book Pub. Ltd.	Shomolu, Lagos State	10	5
32.	Learn Africa Plc.	Ikeja, Lagos State	97	49
33.	CSS Bookshop Limited	Broad Str., Lagos State	5	3
34.	Afem Publishers Limited	Oworonsoki, Lagos State	10	5
35.	Atlantic Publishers Limited	Palmgrove, Lagos State	10	5
36.	West African Book Publishers Ltd.	Ilupeju, Lagos State	68	34
Sub-total			273	138
Total			713	361

Results

Research question: What are the book marketing strategies adopted by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria?

Table 2: Marketing strategies adopted by educational publishers

S/N	Marketing Strategies	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	\bar{X}	std
Market penetration							
1.	My publishing firm has adopted new technology to keep operation costs below that of competitors, thereby offering lower prices for its products.	56 (25.6)	89 (40.6)	46 (21.0)	28 (12.8)	2.78	0.99
2.	My publishing firm offers free after-sales services to customers.	36 (16.4)	103 (47.0)	56 (25.6)	24 (11.0)	2.68	0.89
3.	Products from my publishing firm are always readily available to customers in the market.	132 (60.3)	67 (30.6)	18 (8.2)	2 (0.9)	3.49	0.65
4.	My publishing firm employs promotional strategies, such as advertisement and sales promotion, to attract customers.	87 (39.7)	102 (46.6)	29 (13.2)	1 (0.5)	3.25	0.71
5.	The uniqueness of my firm's brand enhances the convenience of customers' product choices.	69 (31.5)	129 (58.9)	16 (7.3)	5 (2.3)	3.19	0.67
Weighted Mean = 3.07							
Market Development							
6.	My publishing firm produces books with a broad market appeal.	65 (29.7)	133 (60.7)	14 (6.4)	7 (3.2)	3.17	0.68
7.	My publishing firm produces books with more valued and desirable features to cope with market demand.	76 (34.7)	126 (57.5)	11 (5.0)	6 (2.7)	3.24	0.64
8.	The variety offered by my publishing firm has increased the reliability of our books in the competitive market.	67 (30.7)	131 (59.8)	15 (6.8)	6 (2.7)	3.18	0.66
9.	My publishing firm identifies and develops new market segments for existing books.	59 (26.9)	118 (53.8)	30 (13.5)	13 (5.8)	3.02	0.82

10.	My publishing firm reaches out to new consumers/customers in new markets.	69 (31.5)	121 (55.3)	19 (8.7)	10 (4.6)	3.15	0.74
Weighted Mean = 3.15; Benchmark = 2.5							
<i>Product Development</i>							
11.	My publishing firm produces new versions of existing books to maintain a competitive edge in the market.	78 (35.8)	112 (51.1)	24 (10.9)	5 (2.2)	3.21	0.72
12.	My publishing firm offers improved procedures for its books and services.	74 (33.8)	106 (48.4)	35 (16.0)	4 (1.8)	3.15	0.79
13.	My publishing firm produces new categories of books to meet the demands of emerging consumers/markets.	91 (41.5)	101 (46.1)	17 (7.8)	10 (4.6)	3.24	0.80
14.	My publishing firm produces other related products such as magazines, journals, handbooks, etc.	33 (15.0)	66 (30.3)	100 (45.5)	20 (9.2)	2.51	0.87
15.	My publishing firm offers other products and services unrelated to its core product portfolio (e.g. banners, stickers, branding, business cards, invitation cards, invoices, receipts, etc.)	42 (19.1)	76 (34.7)	52 (23.9)	49 (22.3)	2.51	1.06
Weighted Mean = 2.92; Benchmark = 2.5							

The book marketing strategies employed by educational publishers are market penetration, market development, and product development, as shown in Table 2. Market penetration includes adopting new technology to keep operating costs below those of competitors (2.78), offering free after-sales services to customers (2.68), and ensuring the product is always available in the market (3.49), among others. For market development, most of the respondents indicated producing books with broad market appeal (3.17), producing more valued books with desirable features (3.24), offering variety to increase reliability in a competitive market (3.18), among others, as the strategies employed.

On product development, most sales representatives stated that producing new versions of existing books to maintain a competitive edge (3.20), offering improved procedures for books to meet the demands of emerging markets and consumers (3.10), and producing new categories of books to meet the demands of emerging markets and consumers (3.20) are dominant approaches

of product development. Overall, educational publishers are behind in product development (2.92) comparison to with market development (3.08) and market penetration (3.15).

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between marketing strategies and book sales performance by publishers in southwestern Nigeria.

Table 3: Correlation between marketing strategies and book sales performance

Variables	SP	MS	MS-MP	MS-MD	MS-PD
Sales Performance	1				
Marketing Strategies (MS)	0.159*	1			
MS – Market Penetration	0.172*	0.536**	1		
MS – Market Development	0.176*	0.852**	0.313**	1	
MS – Product Development	0.315	0.800**	0.209**	0.557**	1

Key: Single asterisk connotes that relationship is significant at 0.01 and double asterisk means that relationship is significant at 0.05.

The result in Table 3 reveals that the relationship between sales representatives' marketing strategies ($r = 0.159$; $p < 0.05$) and book sales performance is positive, weak, and significant. This connotes that market penetration, market development and product development, which are the three indicators of marketing strategies, all positively correlate with book sales performance and thus have a significant relationship with book sales performance. The implication is that book sales performance will increase by improving marketing strategies. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it implies that the relationship between marketing strategies and book sales performance is significant.

3. There is no significant joint influence of marketing strategies (market penetration, market development, and product development) on book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria.

Table 4: The joint influence of marketing strategies on book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	1332.370	3	444.123	8.467	0.000
Residual	10438.051	199	52.453		
Total	11770.421	202			

R = 0.336; R² = 0.113; AdjR² = 0.10; Std Error = 7.24

Table 4 indicates that market development, market penetration, and product development significantly contributed to sales performance ($F_{(3,199)}=8.467$; $p<0.05$; $adjR^2=0.10$). Market development, market penetration, and product development made a significant joint contribution to sales performance.

Discussion of the Findings

This section presents discussion on the findings of the study.

On book marketing strategies adopted by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria, findings from the study show that educational publishers prioritise cost-effective operations through the adoption of new technology. This is in line with the findings of a study by Osazefua (2019) which emphasised the role of enhancing operational efficiency and reducing costs in the manufacturing companies. The findings also reveal that there is provision of free after-sales services and consistent product availability which are indicative of the publishers' commitment to customer satisfaction. These strategies are supported by Tegene (2019) which found that after-sales service quality, i.e. provision of information, installation, billing service, customer complaint handling, and enhanced service quality dimensions are positively and significantly affected by customer satisfaction.

Promotional strategies like advertisements, sales promotions and a unique brand identity, highlight publishers' efforts to differentiate themselves in a competitive market. A study by

Akanbi and Obafemi (2024) corroborates these findings, indicating that effective branding and promotional activities are crucial for attracting and retaining customers in the publishing industry. The focus on producing books with broad market appeal and offering valued books with desirable features reflects publishers' efforts to cater for diverse customer preferences. This approach emphasised the importance of understanding customer needs and preferences to develop products that resonate with the target audience.

Findings also reveal that identifying new market segments and reaching out to new customers highlight the publishers' proactive approach to market expansion. However, a study by Weinstein (2013) suggested that while market expansion is important, publishers should also focus on strengthening relationships with existing customers to ensure long-term success. These findings indicate a conservative approach to product development, focusing on producing new versions of existing books and offering improved procedures to meet market demands. This cautious approach to innovation may be influenced by the risks associated with introducing new products. Furthermore, the lower emphasis on producing unrelated products, such as magazines and banners, suggests that publishers prefer to focus on their core offerings. This finding contrasts with the recommendations of a study by Krapež (2023), which advocates for diversifying product offerings to adapt to changing market dynamics and consumer preferences.

On marketing strategies and book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria, the findings from the study suggest that the relationship between sales representatives' marketing strategies and book sales performance is positive, weak, and significant. This implies that market penetration, market development and product development, which are the three indicators of marketing strategies, all have positive correlations with book sales performance and thus have a significant relationship with book sales performance. The results implied that applying the right marketing strategies is essential for book marketing, as it tends to facilitate improved sales performance.

This finding aligns with Igbinovia and Egbodofu (2015) who argued that marketing is vital for any business enterprise and should not be overlooked. The purpose of publishing books is to reach the readers, which can only be achieved through promotion and marketing. The study also found that book sales and profits increased when book marketing and publicity strategies were effective. The study recommended that marketers should receive more training and that the Internet should be used as a tool for book marketing. Similarly, in a study carried out by Adu-

Darko and Bruce-Twum (2014) on how marketing strategies influenced the performance of organisational sales, findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between marketing strategies and sales performance. Therefore, it can be inferred from the foregoing that marketing strategies can influence book sales performance in publishing firms when effectively implemented.

On joint influence of marketing strategies (market penetration, market development, and product development) on book sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria, Gituma (2017) posited that marketing strategies have significant joint influence on the company's sales performance. Ike (2019) showed that marketing strategies have a positive impact on organisational sales volume and profitability. Chiliya, Herbst and Roberts-Lombard (2009) also revealed that marketing strategies enhance sales volume, profitability, and patronage of supermarkets. Bulle (2020) on the influence of market penetration strategies on sales performance established that market penetration had a positive significant influence on organisational sales performance. The study concluded that a competitive pricing strategy positions the organisational product in relation to other available options in the market.

In line with that, Ferrell (2015) affirmed that product development is a marketing strategy wherein organisations offer consumers symbolic and experiential attributes to differentiate products from competitors. Gbolagade, Adesola and Oyewale (2013) showed that product quality significantly influences customer loyalty, hence increasing sales performance. On the same note, Muola (2017) showed that product development as a marketing strategy helped Small and Medium Enterprises achieve their business goals, including entering new markets, selling more to existing customers, and winning over businesses from competitors.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of marketing strategies as predictors of book sales performance among educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria. The findings revealed that marketing strategies (market penetration, market development, and product development) play a significant role in determining book sales performance. The findings from the study also showed that market penetration and market development are the most influential marketing strategies that boost book sales performance. This implies that publishers that actively expand their market share through aggressive sales promotions, branding, and customer engagement tend to experience improved sales outcomes. Also, publishers that adopt product development strategies such as

revising existing books, enhancing book design, and integrating new learning materials have a competitive advantage in the market.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Going by the finding that educational publishers have profited from the three book marketing strategies adopted, particularly market development and market penetration, it is recommended that premium should be laid on these two beneficial marketing strategies, while also striving to improve on product development strategy to make it equally rewarding.
2. As revealed by the finding that there is a significant relationship between sales representatives' marketing strategies and book sales performance, signifying that market penetration, market development and product development all positively correlate with book sales performance, publishers in southwestern Nigeria should improve on their marketing strategies so as to ensure improved book sales performance.
3. Since there is relative influence of marketing strategies (market penetration, market development and product development) on book sales performance thereby significantly contributing to sales performance by educational publishers in southwestern Nigeria, it is logically recommended that publishers should be cognisant that marketing strategies is a *sine qua non* to financial success and organisational goal attainment and as such, it should be a marketing focal point.

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