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Managing Collaboration between the Author and Publisher for Career Growth in Africa

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Abstract

Collaboration between the author and publisher has a direct impact on their career growth. The content of the authors' work can either increase or decrease the publisher's reputation and earnings. This chapter is based on theoretical review and authors' research experience. It discusses the obligation of authors and publishers, the critical success factors for authors and publishers, and provides a conclusion. Accordingly, managing collaboration with publishers can improve the authors' career of writing and marketing skills because of the value added by a publisher and in turn the publisher's business network and revenue will increase hence long term survival in business. The paper recognises a need for a collaborative empowerment capacity building programme motivated by the publisher to enable authors effectively go through the production process.

Key Words: Authors, Publishers, Collaboration, Career Growth

1.0 Introduction

Authors and publishers are like two sides of the coin in that one cannot succeed without the other. The work of the publisher depends entirely on the author. The author develops critical thought and expression which contribute new insights to society while the publisher ensures high quality production of the authors' work. The ultimate goal is to get both tangible and intangible benefit from their work. For instance, the author will gain popularity and exposure when the work is used for teaching in schools, training and

recommendations used for policy change in government and cultural institutions. Furthermore, the Chairperson of Uganda Textbook, Academic and Non-Fiction Authors Association (UTANA) in an interview with Observer (May 1, 2017) argued that writing helps in fighting poverty and unemployment which is one of the tools for economic growth. In this case, the publishers would find jobs that will earn them money to feed their families, while bookshops would multiply and create jobs to booksellers as authors will equally find money to put food on the table for their families.

The author and the publisher have one shared goal in mind - that is to make a book succeed hence their career growth. Jane Palfreyman (2015), one of the editors and publishers in Australian publishing industry argued that a publisher finds or commissions books that people will want to read; turn ideas into books in an imaginative, sensitive, efficient and profitable way, and is committed at all times to support and nurture the author. Publishers are representatives of the author's book in the publishing house and they are inspired to sell the book outside of the company (Palfreyman, 2015; Altbach, 1997). Christensen, et al., (1998), adds that the success of the publisher depends on the ability of the author to market the published work. Although the author and publisher work collaboratively in order to create a great book for its readers; the readers are so critical on their reputation. As a result, the author will seek out publishers with high credibility, prestige, reputation and able to give support to the author at all times.

Despite the author and publisher efforts in marketing their published work, many Africans have limited access to written material, because of poverty and illiteracy, the absence of written material in languages they know and poor distribution systems (Christensen, et al., 1998). In Uganda today, there is limited size of book market because of poor reading culture in the country coupled with lack of funding by private and public organisations for writers to invest in authorship. This, therefore, limits the primary role of books, which include: communicating knowledge, providing information, entertainment, analysis and education to millions throughout the world (Christensen, et al., 1998). Countries like the United States, United Kingdom, France, Spain, China, Germany and India are developed because they are responsible for a large proportion of the world's book production. The countries in point have a good reading culture, for instance, each adult has reading plan of five (5) books annually as minimum. Christensen, et al., (1998), echoed that the development and dissemination of knowledge products is a matter of the utmost importance

for any civilization. The demand for educational and learning materials as well as scientific and professional publications from these counties (Wisichenbart, 2016), prompted government support for small-scale publishers, libraries and reading.

Wisichenbart, (2016), reveals that France and Germany are one of the top performers in terms of book releases, primarily due to the strength of their respective domestic markets. Therefore, since the majority of the major multinational publishers are based in these countries; they publish in languages used internationally leaving the disadvantaged African population begging. That is the reason why African authors seek out renowned overseas publishers like Pan Macmillan, Random House, Pearson, Harper Collins, McGraw Hill, Tyndale House, and John Wiley leaving out major African publishers like Random House Struik Ltd, NB Publishers and Cape Media Cooperation in South Africa; Oxford University Press Tanzania and Mture Educational Publishers from Tanzania; MK Publishers, Moran Publishers and Fountain Publishers in Uganda; Edition Mohamed Ali in Tunisia; Maktaba El Khadra, Roa Iktissadia Review, University Kasdi Merbah Ouargla in Algeria; Azza Publishing House in Sudan; Hindu Publishing Cooperation and Al-Dar Al-Masriah Al-Lubnaniah in Egypt; and Image We Rwanda and Bakame Editions in Rwanda.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) (2012) report emphasised that the value of a publishing company is not calculated according to the land, property or equipment it owns, or even the books stacked in the warehouse but its ability to generate income continually. The report highlighted that the heart of the book publishing industry lies in the ability of a publisher to select content that the reading public will be ready to purchase and will satisfy their interests. This is why large commercial publishers are growing their lists and providing substantial returns to their investors while smaller publishers are facing growing challenges in form of declining subscription from the print or electronic published books (Hahn, 2008). Although large commercial publishers are expanding their revenues, 39.8%, authors are quitting publishers to self-publishing while 5.1% authors are changing from self-publishing to using traditional publishers (Hviid, et al., 2017) because of effectiveness in which books are distributed, quality editing, and working relationship with the publisher despite low income earnings from work. This chapter defines the obligation of authors and publishers, analyses critical success factors for the authors and publishers and draws conclusions with practical workable recommendations.

1.1 Obligation of the Authors and Publishers

Before authors enter into collaboration with the publisher, each party should be aware of its obligation. Failure to meet the obligation will strain the relationship of the author and publisher because of the rights entrusted to the publisher. The key to these obligations and rights are:

Firstly, the agreement between the author and publisher is a cornerstone of their relationship, and its legal foundation is copyright. The Copyright Law, (Taylor, 2012), gives authors legal rights to control the use of their work and a publisher's obligation is to acknowledge, recognise and adhere to authors' copyrights for the success of their business relationship. However, the existence of a law on copyright is poorly enforced in Uganda due to weak regulations, poor infrastructure, absence of an active piracy monitoring body, weak institutions, and ignorance about the ill effects of piracy (Magara, 2016). In essence, authors own copyright that is, economic, moral and neighbouring rights for their published work such as books, journal articles, magazine articles, blog posts, and other literary formats to control their usage by publisher. Thus, the agreement will indicate the boundary in which each party should act.

Secondly, the author has a right to receive payment for thoughts and ideas and a publisher's obligation is to effect payment as agreed in the contract. Therefore, a publishing agreement will provide for an author to be remunerated either by the payment of an agreed fee or by the payment of a royalty. In this case, agreements featuring assignments of copyright tend to work better with fee-based payments, while agreements featuring licenses of copyright tend to work better with royalty-based payments, but in practice, many agreements combine assignments and royalties or licenses and fees (Taylor, 2012).

Guaranteeing originality of the work and indemnifying the publisher is a third pillar of an author's obligation and a publisher's right (Palfreyman, 2015). A publisher will usually ask an author to affirm the truth of the work to be published for example, a publisher might ask an author to warrant that the work is the original creation of the author and it has never been previously published or submitted for publication in any form and it won't infringe the copyright of any third party. According to Taylor (2012), all the warrants in a publishing contract are directed at the issue of content liability because the publisher and sometimes

others involved in the publication and distribution of a work may be liable in the event that the work contains legally problematic material.

In Uganda, the Uganda Reproductive Rights Organisation (URRO) is mandated by the government to license works, including photocopying, scanning and other digital uses. For example, a lot of pirated books are sold in the streets of Kampala city and major towns in Uganda at a minimal price while lecturers and librarians in higher institutions of learning consistently allow students to freely reproduce authors' works. The Aladesuyi (2014), report in Nigeria indicates that illegal book sales in the market go up to 75%.The author adds that pirates are printing the works overseas, particularly in the Far East and shipping to Nigeria for sale while other books have been pirated through; translations without the copyright owner's permission, illegal e-book versions, unauthorised photocopying of academic materials and the abuse of publication rights.

1.2 Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for Authors and Publishers

Worldwide, critical success factors are primary requirements for the growth of authors and publishers in the publishing industry. Where career growth is positive, it means both parties have the same desired goals. Critical to this are the following success factors:

1.2.1 Contract

For any author's work to be published means acceptance and agreement has been reached. Thus, the most material factor in a publishing contract is acceptability and agreement (Simensky, 1985). However, completing the contract signing does not mean the work will be ready in a forthright. It needs patience because making a final printed book will take a long process such as editing, cover design, finalising for photo-galley, printing, distributing and then marketing. Although the publisher requires the author to deliver a satisfactory manuscript, some authors fail to comply and this makes their work being shelved in the publishing house. According to The Observer (May 1, 2017), Magara reported that in Uganda, many authors have manuscripts but cannot be published by the commercial publishers as a result, some authors get frustrated and end up throwing away manuscripts while others opt to sell their rights at a giveaway price.

1.2.2 Reputation

Reputation is a key success factor to be considered when choosing an author and a publisher for publication of the books, journals and magazine articles, among others. Globally, readers are always very critical on author and publisher's reputation and credibility. Knight & Steinbach, (2008), argued that the greater the credibility and prestige of the publishers, the greater the publishers' reputation and acceptability by the authors. The key reputation factors as suggested by Klinger, et al., (2005) and Robey, et al., (1998) as cited by Knight & Steinbach, (2008) are: wider circulation; affiliation with a prestigious organisation; rigorous review process with low acceptance rate; well-known editor and editorial board members; institutional affiliations of editor and board members; and high impact factor. Contributing to the same debate, Witt, (2003), confirms that authors want their work to reach the widest possible readership and their work should be available in Canada and the United States of America where the reading culture is high compared to other countries like Uganda, Burundi, Kenya and Rwanda. Although publisher reputation is critical, the quality of work and title also drives readers to buy the book. In Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports through National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) regulates the textbooks to be used in schools. For example, primary schools in Uganda mostly use text books published by MK Publishers.

1.2.3 Training

Training brings the end users and other stakeholders whose ideas are critical for the author and publisher success, for example the government, sponsors and consultants working in the areas of policy must be involved in the book or publication project. In Uganda, UTANA for the last five years has organised various capacity building workshops among the prospective authors, authors, and publishers in various higher institutions of learning as away to address the needs, competences and skills required by the authors and publishers in the Uganda publishing industry (Magara, 2016). According to The Elsevier Publishing, the publisher emphasised the need of training to boost essential publishing skills, such as writing, reviewing and grant writing, as well as need for plenty of tips and tricks in the publishing industry.

1.2.4 Marketing

The goal of publishers and authors is to see that the books are in the major bookshops in the world, hence the need to streamline the underdeveloped marketing and distribution systems. Governments should thus focus on the book development policies to avoid fake publishers and authors. Christensen, et al., (1998), notes that the dominance of northern publishers, inadequate attention on the part of most African governments to book development policies, and difficulties in export, in particular in intra-African trade, are challenges facing the African publishing industry. Since the number of authors and publishers are rising; it's very important for the parties to collaborate maximally for their work to stand out. Elsevier publisher echoed that authors need to promote their work jointly and track the performance of their activities to establish whether they have driven improved results. Altbach, (1997) adds that marketing and sales are an essential part of the publishing chain which according to (Chin-Chao, et al., 2013; Alonso, et al., 2003) needs several members to work together (teamwork) including authors, publishers, online book stores, book distributors, and reading device manufactures.

2.0 Conclusion

In any publishing process, managing collaboration can improve the author's career of writing and marketing skills because of the value added by a publisher and in turn the publisher's business network and revenue will increase hence long term survival in business. Furthermore, publisher collaboration with author(s) is essential for the sustainability of the publishing industry. For example, without the author, the publisher has no work and yet authors can earn through self-publishing, hence leaving out the publishing services. Although of today, many authors have acquired a number of skills through workshops, conferences and personal readings on how to write and market their work. There is still inadequate African published manuscripts in major libraries, bookshops and universities in the region. Today, many research findings are not in the public arena because of limited market, lack of funding opportunities for writers to invest in authorship and high expectations of authors from publishers in terms of revenue. In particular, plan a publication in terms of purpose, the nature of publishing (use a publisher or use self-publication), and the possible cost of paying the reviewers, editors and book designers. Consequently, a publisher-author collaborative partnership will increase service excellence, profit, markets, and long term contract. This

approach shall ensure effective collaboration between the author and publisher, and will bring flexibility in their service, royalty payment and have better communication between the parties. The core to this model is the acceptance of the contract/ agreement, remuneration (payment) model and ownership of works.

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