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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PUBLISHING AND BOOK TRADE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the political economy of publishing and book trade in Nigeria, focusing on ownership structures, profit motives, market dominance, pricing dynamics, and access to books. A correlational research design was adopted, guided by four research questions and hypotheses. Data were collected from a sample of 532 respondents using a structured questionnaire, with 484 valid responses analyzed after data screening. The instrument was validated by experts and tested for reliability using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 significance level with SPSS version 29. Findings revealed significant relationships among all variables, indicating that publishing operates within a concentrated economic structure where ownership and profit motives strongly shape market outcomes, competition, and access to books. The study concluded that structural market concentration limits affordability and access to educational materials. Recommendations were made to strengthen regulation, improve subsidy systems, and support indigenous publishing development.

Keywords: Publishing Industry, Political Economy, Book Trade, Market Concentration, Nigeria, Access To Education.

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INTRODUCTION

The global publishing industry underwent significant transformation, evolving into a complex system in which economic power, cultural production, and knowledge governance intersected. Publishing no longer functioned as a neutral mechanism for disseminating ideas; rather, it operated as a structured industry shaped by ownership concentration, capital accumulation, and market driven imperatives. Contemporary scholarship demonstrated that the commodification of knowledge had repositioned books and educational materials as economic goods subject to pricing strategies, distribution inequalities, and corporate control. Thompson (2021) explained that modern publishing systems were deeply embedded within market logics that prioritized profitability and competitive advantage. Schiffrin (2019) similarly argued that the consolidation of publishing firms had reshaped intellectual production, often privileging commercial interests over the broader public good.

These structural dynamics were particularly pronounced in developing economies such as Nigeria, where institutional constraints and historical legacies shaped the organization of the book trade. The Nigerian publishing sector reflected a trajectory influenced by colonial educational systems and post-independence expansion in formal schooling. Okwilagwe (2020) observed that the industry had increasingly become concentrated, with a limited number of dominant firms exerting significant control over textbook production and distribution channels. Amadi (2019) further noted that these firms maintained influence over pricing structures and market access, thereby shaping both the supply and affordability of books. Such concentration raised critical concerns regarding equity, particularly in relation to access to educational materials within public institutions.

The political economy perspective provided a rigorous analytical framework for interrogating these developments. This approach conceptualized publishing not merely as a cultural enterprise but as a domain structured by economic interests and power relations. Decisions regarding what was published, how it was distributed and at what cost were frequently determined within the context of profit maximization and institutional dominance. Thompson (2021) emphasized that large publishing corporations functioned as gatekeepers of knowledge, influencing intellectual discourse through control of content and distribution systems. This gatekeeping role underscored the extent to which economic power translated into epistemic authority within the knowledge economy.

Ownership concentration remained a defining characteristic of the contemporary publishing landscape. Global trends indicated the emergence of oligopolistic structures in which a small number of multinational firms dominated academic and educational publishing markets. Schiffrin (2019) highlighted that such concentration enabled firms to exercise significant control over pricing mechanisms and access conditions, often limiting competition and marginalizing smaller publishers. Comparable patterns were evident within the Nigerian context, where dominant publishing houses leveraged established distribution networks and economies of scale to consolidate their market positions. Okwilagwe (2020) explained that this concentration not only restricted market entry for indigenous publishers but also reinforced structural inequalities within the industry.

Pricing practices within the book trade further illustrated the implications of these power dynamics. The cost of textbooks and academic materials in Nigeria remained a persistent barrier to educational access, particularly for students in public universities and colleges. Amadi (2019) linked these high prices to monopolistic tendencies, import dependence, and weak regulatory oversight. These factors collectively contributed to a system in which access to knowledge was unevenly distributed, thereby exacerbating existing educational disparities. The consequences extended beyond individual learners, affecting national literacy levels and the broader development of human capital.

The dominance of large publishing houses also intersected with questions of cultural representation and epistemic inclusion. Indigenous authors and local publishers often encountered structural barriers related to financing, distribution, and market visibility. This imbalance resulted in a publishing landscape that prioritized commercially viable narratives while marginalizing locally relevant perspectives. Schiffrin (2019) underscored that such dynamics reflected broader patterns of cultural hegemony within global knowledge systems, where economic power shaped not only access to information but also the content of intellectual production.

This study examined the political economy of publishing and the book trade in Nigeria with a focus on the structural forces that defined the industry. The study pursued four specific objectives. It examined publishing as an economic and power driven industry. It analyzed ownership structures, profit motives, and mechanisms of market control. It assessed the extent to which large publishing houses dominated the Nigerian book market. It explained critical issues related to monopolistic tendencies, pricing dynamics, and access to books. These objectives provided a comprehensive understanding of how economic power and institutional arrangements influenced knowledge production and distribution.

Statement of the Problem

The publishing and book trade sector in Nigeria has increasingly reflected structural imbalances characterized by ownership concentration, weak regulatory oversight, and limited institutional support for indigenous publishers. A small number of dominant publishing houses have exercised substantial control over production, distribution, and pricing, thereby constraining competition and limiting market entry for smaller firms. These conditions have contributed to high book prices, restricted availability of educational materials, and unequal access to knowledge, particularly within public educational institutions. The persistence of monopolistic tendencies and profit driven practices has further undermined the inclusiveness and efficiency of the publishing ecosystem. A clear gap remains in comprehensive empirical analysis that integrates economic power, market control, and access to books, thereby necessitating systematic investigation.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the political economy of publishing and the book trade in Nigeria, with emphasis on ownership structures, market control, and access to books. The study pursued the following specific objectives:

- To examine the extent publishing function as an economic and power driven industry in Nigeria.
- To analyze the extent ownership structures, profit motives, and mechanisms of market control in the Nigerian publishing sector.
- To assess the extent to which large publishing houses dominate the Nigerian book market.
- To explain the effects of monopolistic practices, pricing dynamics, and access to books in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

- To what extent publishing function as an economic and power driven industry in Nigeria?

- To what extent ownership structures and profit motives influence market control in the Nigerian publishing sector?
- To what extent did large publishing houses dominate the Nigerian book market?
- How did monopolistic practices and pricing dynamics affect access to books in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

- There is no significant relationship between publishing as an economic and power driven industry and market outcomes in the Nigerian book trade.
- There is no significant relationship between ownership structures and profit motives and market control in the Nigerian publishing sector.
- There is no significant relationship between the dominance of large publishing houses and competition in the Nigerian book market.
- There is no significant relationship between monopolistic practices and pricing dynamics and access to books in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Classical Political Economy Theory

Karl Marx (1867) developed classical political economy theory through his critique of capitalism, emphasizing the role of capital accumulation and control over the means of production in shaping economic relations. This theory posited that those who owned productive assets exercised dominance over production processes and distribution outcomes. Within the publishing industry, ownership of printing facilities, intellectual property rights, and distribution networks constituted critical means of production, thereby positioning dominant firms as central actors in the control of knowledge dissemination. Marx's analysis of capital concentration provided a strong explanatory basis for understanding the consolidation of publishing firms. Thompson (2021) explained that modern publishing industries operated within capitalist structures that encouraged expansion and accumulation, leading to the emergence of large publishing conglomerates.

Neo Marxist interpretations extended this perspective by emphasizing the relationship between economic power and ideological control. The publishing industry functioned as a site of cultural and intellectual production, where control over publishing processes translated into control over the dissemination of knowledge. Schiffrin (2019) further observed that this consolidation reflected broader tendencies toward monopolization, where a few firms controlled significant portions of the market. Such ownership concentration enabled dominant publishers to influence production decisions, control distribution channels, and shape pricing strategies. This dynamic created power asymmetry, as dominant firms determined which materials were produced and circulated. In the Nigerian context, this asymmetry limited the participation of smaller publishers and constrained the development of locally relevant knowledge systems, thereby reinforcing structural inequalities within the industry.

Market Structure Theory (Monopoly and Oligopoly)

Edward Chamberlin (1933) and Joan Robinson (1933) developed market structure theory through their analyses of imperfect competition, introducing the concepts of monopoly and oligopoly to explain how market organization influenced firm behavior and outcomes. This theory emphasized that markets dominated by a few firms were characterized by reduced competition, coordinated pricing behavior, and significant barriers to entry for new participants. Market structure theory provided a critical framework for understanding the dominance of large publishing houses and their ability to maximize profits. Schiffrin (2019) argued that the global publishing industry exhibited oligopolistic characteristics, where a limited number of firms controlled substantial market shares and influenced pricing mechanisms.

These firms leveraged economies of scale, established distribution systems, and strong institutional relationships to maintain their competitive advantage. In the Nigerian publishing sector, similar structural patterns were evident. Such concentration created conditions that allowed firms to set prices above competitive levels, contributing to high costs of books and limited access to educational materials. Amadi (2019) linked these pricing dynamics to broader issues of affordability and inequality, particularly within public educational institutions.

The interaction between market structure and profit maximization further reinforced power asymmetry within the publishing industry. Firms operating within oligopolistic or monopoly like conditions possessed the capacity to influence supply, control distribution channels, and determine access to markets. Okwilagwe (2020) explained that dominant publishing firms maintained control over key segments of the book trade, thereby limiting competition and restricting market entry for smaller publishers. This concentration of economic power not only affected competition but also shaped the accessibility and distribution of knowledge resources. Market structure theory therefore provided a clear explanation of how ownership concentration translated into economic dominance and unequal access within the publishing ecosystem.

Classical political economy explained the concentration of ownership and control over the means of production, while market structure theory clarified how such concentration influenced competition, pricing, and access to books. Together, these theories demonstrated that ownership concentration enabled profit maximization and reinforced power asymmetry within the publishing industry. This combined framework guided the analysis of the Nigerian book trade by linking structural economic forces to observed patterns of dominance, pricing, and access to knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Economy of Publishing Books in Nigeria

The political economy of publishing in Nigeria is increasingly understood as a structurally embedded system where knowledge production is mediated by economic power, institutional arrangements, and global publishing hierarchies. Contemporary scholarship positions publishing as part of the cultural and creative industries in which symbolic goods are produced under capitalist conditions that prioritize exchange value over use value. Hesmondhalgh (2019), Flew (2021), and Couldry and Mejias (2019) collectively emphasize that cultural production systems are increasingly governed by platform capitalism and corporate consolidation, which shape how knowledge is produced, distributed, and consumed across global South contexts.

Within African publishing ecosystems, structural dependency on imported materials, foreign publishing standards, and multinational distribution networks continues to influence local knowledge economies. Ololube (2021) observed that Nigerian leadership management remains heavily influenced by global supply chains social sin characters, often aligned with systems cross examination teamed a nation programmed to fail. These structural dependencies limit epistemic autonomy and reinforce asymmetries between local knowledge production and global publishing capital, thereby constraining the development of indigenous publishing ecosystems.

Further analysis indicates that publishing firms in Nigeria operate within a dual economy in which formal publishing houses coexist with informal and self-publishing systems. While digital platforms have expanded authorial access, Adeyemi et al. (2023) argued that institutional adoption still privileges established publishers due to credibility, scale, and distribution capacity. Similarly, Arowolo and Aluko (2020) emphasize that educational publishing remains concentrated within a few dominant firms, thereby reinforcing gatekeeping mechanisms that determine what constitutes legitimate academic knowledge. These conditions collectively illustrate that publishing in Nigeria is not merely a content production system but a structured political economy of knowledge control.

Publishing as an Economic and Power Driven Industry

Publishing functions as both an economic enterprise and a mechanism of symbolic power, operating within a capitalist logic that transforms intellectual output into commodified goods. Contemporary theoretical developments in cultural industries research, particularly those advancements demonstrating needs for Rivers State restructuring curriculums to meet the manpower needs of industries in creative industries are increasingly governed by market rationality, algorithmic distribution systems, and corporate consolidation. Within this framework, publishing is positioned as a site where economic capital directly determines cultural visibility and intellectual legitimacy (Bunting, 2020).

In Nigeria, the economic logic of publishing is intensified by structural constraints such as high production costs, weak public subsidies, and limited access to financing. Eze and Okafor (2022) argued that publishing firms prioritize commercially viable manuscripts, particularly textbooks and exam oriented materials, due to predictable institutional demand. Similarly, Nwafor and Uche (2021) noted that editorial decisions are increasingly driven by market forecasting models that privilege profitability over intellectual diversity. These conditions reflect broader global trends identified by Thompson (2021), who highlights that publishing industries are increasingly structured around revenue optimization rather than knowledge plurality.

The power dimension of publishing is reflected in its role as a gatekeeping institution that regulates access to knowledge systems. Ololube et al. (2018) related reported that fostering innovation through effective higher education management to infrastructure policy formulation and implementation on promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization in Nigeria. No wonder handbook of research on educational planning and policy analysis by Ololube (2021) exposed quality leadership character nation programmed to fail exhibit in entrusted resources distribution, policy implementations focus, planning effectiveness towards strategic institutional leadership target completely abstinence from the Donaldson termed most deadly social evil. In knowledge collegiality economy where control over natural resources governing agencies in the

Niger Delta region on Nigeria economies demands punisher epistemic authority in government (Ananyi & Ogona, 2025). Their empirical reports connects politics in Nigeria, evident in the States benefiting from the light-up Niger Delta initiative largely bridging gaps firms equal chance bidden that aligned recommended materials quality and other condition of project delivery. Akinyemi and Fagbemi (2023) emphasized that such firms shape educational content selection processes, thereby influencing national knowledge formation. This reinforces the argument that publishing is a power driven industry where economic control translates into intellectual authority.

Digital transformation has introduced new dynamics into the publishing ecosystem, but its impact remains uneven. While open access and self-publishing platforms have increased entry points, Ojo and Adeniran (2022) argued that institutional credibility still favors traditional publishers. Similarly, Flew (2021) observed that platformization has not eliminated corporate dominance but has instead restructured it through digital gatekeeping mechanisms. In Nigeria, this results in a hybrid publishing system where traditional and digital models coexist but remain hierarchically structured, with dominant firms maintaining control over mainstream educational publishing channels.

Ownership Structures, Profit Motives, and Market Control

Ownership structures in publishing significantly determine market behavior, competitive dynamics, and knowledge accessibility. Market structure theory, particularly the oligopoly framework developed in modern industrial organization literature, explains how concentrated ownership leads to reduced competition and increased market control. Carlton and Perloff (2020) and Cabral (2019) demonstrated that oligopolistic markets are characterized by interdependent pricing, high entry barriers, and strategic control of supply chains, all of which are evident in publishing industries globally.

In Nigeria, ownership concentration is particularly evident in the textbook and academic publishing segment, where a limited number of firms dominate institutional procurement systems. Okechukwu and Ezeani (2023) noted that these firms maintain long standing relationships with educational institutions, enabling them to secure repeated adoption of their materials. Similarly, Okoye and Nwosu (2022) observed that such dominance reduces competitive entry opportunities for smaller publishers who lack capital, distribution capacity, and institutional networks. This reinforces structural inequalities within the publishing ecosystem.

Profit motives further reinforce ownership concentration by shaping production priorities and market strategies. Thompson (2021) argued that publishing firms increasingly operate under shareholder driven models that prioritize financial returns, leading to selective content production. In Nigeria, Eze and Okafor (2022) highlighted that publishers often focus on high demand educational materials that guarantee institutional adoption cycles, thereby excluding niche or locally grounded intellectual outputs. This reflects global cultural industries trends identified by Hesmondhalgh (2019), where cultural production is subordinated to market imperatives.

Market control emerges as a structural outcome of ownership concentration and profit maximization strategies. Akinyemi and Fagbemi (2023) emphasized that dominant publishing firms influence pricing systems, distribution logistics, and textbook approval processes within educational institutions. This control is further reinforced by economies of scale and access to capital, which smaller firms cannot match. Consequently, the Nigerian publishing industry reflects a classic oligopolistic structure where a few firms exercise disproportionate control over market outcomes, limiting diversity, competition, and equitable access to knowledge resources.

Dominance of Large Publishing Houses

The dominance of large publishing houses represents a central feature of the contemporary political economy of publishing, where a small number of corporate actors exert disproportionate control over global and national knowledge production systems. Within the broader cultural industries framework, Hesmondhalgh (2019) and Flew (2021) argued that media and knowledge industries are increasingly structured around consolidation, where scale advantages enable a limited number of firms to dominate production, distribution, and consumption networks. This pattern is especially visible in publishing, where ownership concentration has intensified over the past two decades, producing oligopolistic market structures that limit competition and reinforce hierarchical control over knowledge dissemination systems.

Empirical studies on global scholarly publishing demonstrate that a handful of multinational corporations control a significant proportion of academic outputs, particularly in science, technology, and education sectors. Larivière and Mongeon (2020) provided evidence that major publishing firms such as Elsevier, Springer Nature, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, and Sage collectively control more than half of indexed scholarly publications. More recent analyses by van Bellen et al. (2024) confirmed that this dominance persists despite the expansion of digital publishing platforms and the emergence of smaller independent publishers. These findings suggest that digitization has not reduced concentration but has instead reinforced the scalability of dominant firms.

In developing country contexts such as Nigeria, the dominance of large publishing houses is further reinforced by structural dependency on imported textbooks, curriculum aligned publishing systems, and institutional procurement frameworks. Okeke and Odo (2022) observed that African publishing systems remain heavily dependent on foreign owned publishing infrastructures, which shape both content availability and academic standards. Similarly, Udeze and Nwosu (2021) argued that curriculum driven publishing in Nigeria is largely influenced by examination bodies and institutional accreditation systems, thereby consolidating the power of established publishers who are able to meet regulatory and market requirements at scale.

The persistence of dominance is also explained through market structure theory, particularly oligopoly dynamics, where a few firms control pricing, distribution, and entry barriers. Cabral (2019) and Carlton and Perloff (2020) explained that in oligopolistic industries, firms benefit from economies of scale and network effects that make market entry difficult for smaller competitors. In Nigeria's publishing industry, Okechukwu and Ezeani (2023) demonstrated that large publishing houses maintain competitive advantage through long term institutional contracts, distribution networks, and capital intensive production systems. These conditions create a self-reinforcing cycle of dominance, where established firms continue to consolidate market share while limiting the growth of emerging publishers.

Digital transformation has introduced new competitive pressures, yet it has not significantly disrupted dominance structures. Flew (2021) and Cunningham and Craig (2019) note that platformization in cultural industries often reproduces existing inequalities by privileging actors with stronger financial and technological capacities. In Nigeria, Ojo and Adeniran (2022) observed that while digital publishing has expanded access pathways, institutional adoption systems still favor established publishers due to perceived credibility and infrastructural capacity. As a result, dominance in publishing is not merely a market outcome but a structurally embedded feature of the political economy of knowledge production.

Monopoly, Pricing, and Access to Books

Monopoly power and pricing structures constitute critical determinants of access to books within the publishing industry, particularly in education dependent economies. Within industrial organization theory, monopoly and oligopoly structures are associated with price setting power, restricted competition, and barriers to entry that distort market efficiency. Cabral (2019) and Carlton and Perloff (2020) emphasized that concentrated markets enable firms to influence prices above competitive levels, often resulting in reduced consumer welfare. In the context of publishing, this dynamic directly affects the affordability and accessibility of educational materials.

Recent global evidence indicates that monopolistic tendencies in publishing are closely linked to rising costs of academic and educational materials. Thompson (2021) highlighted that commercial publishing models increasingly rely on revenue maximization strategies, particularly through subscription systems and institutional licensing agreements. Similarly, open access studies by Björk and Korkeamäki (2020) showed that while digital transformation has expanded access in some domains, commercial publishers continue to maintain pricing control through article processing charges and bundled licensing systems. These pricing mechanisms reinforce structural inequalities in access to knowledge.

In Nigeria, monopolistic pricing dynamics are particularly visible in the textbook market, where a limited number of dominant publishers control production and distribution channels. Amadi (2019) identified textbook pricing as a major barrier to educational access, particularly for students in public institutions with limited financial capacity. Eze and Okafor (2022) further explain that publishing firms in developing economies often adopt pricing models driven by imported cost structures, currency fluctuations, and profit maximization goals, which increase the final cost of educational materials.

Access to books is therefore structurally constrained by both market concentration and pricing strategies. Schiffrin (2019) argued that monopolistic control in publishing reduces affordability and reinforces inequalities in knowledge access, particularly in education systems reliant on privately produced textbooks. In Nigeria, this is compounded by weak regulatory enforcement and limited government intervention in textbook pricing. Okwilagwe (2020) noted that dominant publishers are able to influence institutional adoption processes, thereby indirectly controlling demand and reinforcing their pricing power.

The emergence of digital publishing and open access models has introduced alternative access pathways, yet their impact remains uneven. Couldry and Mejias (2019) argued that digital infrastructures often reproduce existing power asymmetries, particularly when platform ownership is concentrated. In Nigeria, Ojo and Adeniran (2022) observed that while digital textbooks and online learning platforms have expanded availability, affordability remains a critical challenge due to subscription based pricing models. Consequently, access to books is not solely a function of availability but is fundamentally shaped by the political economy of pricing, ownership, and market control within the publishing industry.

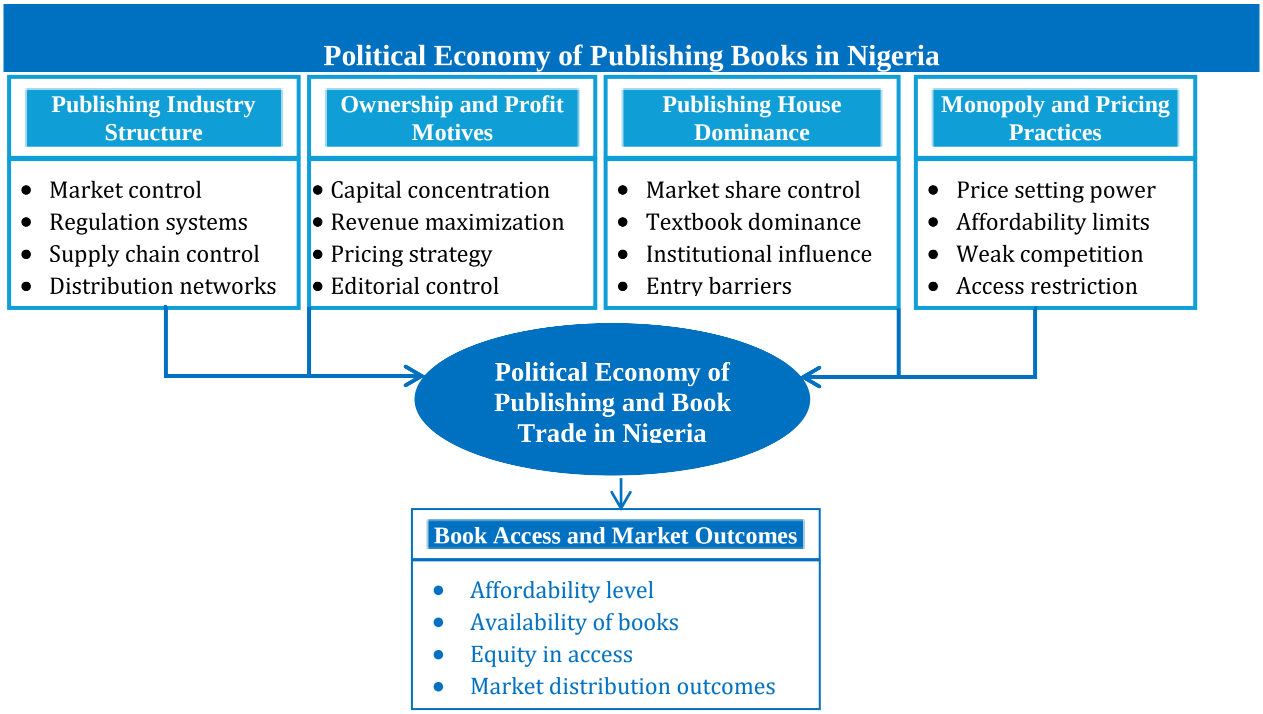

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Political Economy of Publishing and Book Trade in
Source: 1Source: Researcher's conceptualization (2026).

Figure 1 illustrates how publishing industry structure, ownership and profit motives, publishing house dominance, and monopoly pricing practices interact to shape book access and market outcomes in Nigeria. The framework shows that these structural forces jointly determine affordability, availability, and equity in book distribution, highlighting how institutional power and market concentration influence access to published materials within the Nigerian publishing system.

METHODS

The study adopted a correlational research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the examination of the relationship between ownership structures, market control, pricing dynamics, and access to books within the publishing and book trade industry in Nigeria. The population of the study comprised stakeholders in the Nigerian publishing ecosystem, including publishers, distributors, booksellers, authors, and academic staff in tertiary institutions. A sample size of 532 respondents was determined using a multistage sampling technique was employed. At the first stage, states were selected across the geopolitical zones. At the second stage, publishing firms, bookshops, and tertiary institutions were purposively selected based on relevance to the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire" developed and validated by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation to ensure clarity, relevance, and adequacy. The reliability of the instrument was obtained through a pilot test conducted outside the study area using the Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of .875 that was considered adequate for social science research standards. Out of the 532 administered questionnaires, 498 were retrieved, while 14 were found to be non-useful due to incomplete or inconsistent responses and 484 valid questionnaires were therefore used for data analysis showing a high response sufficiently reliable for statistical interpretation. Data analysis was conducted using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A criterion mean was used as the decision rule for agreement or disagreement of respondents on each item. The null hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at .05 level of significance with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Decisions on hypotheses were based on the comparison between calculated significance values and the alpha level, leading to acceptance or rejection of the stated hypotheses.

Research Question 1: To what extent does publishing function as an economic and power driven industry in Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses on publishing as an economic and power driven industry in Nigeria

S/N	Description	Mean	SD.	Remarks
1.	Publishing operates primarily as a profit driven industry rather than a purely educational service	3.2145	1.08432	High Extent
2.	Ownership concentration in publishing determines editorial control and content direction	3.3412	1.02341	High Extent
3.	Large publishing firms influence what knowledge is produced and circulated in Nigeria	3.2976	1.11654	High Extent
4.	Economic power in publishing affects access to educational materials in institutions	3.1823	1.05763	High Extent
5.	Publishing houses prioritize commercial viability over academic relevance in book production	3.2768	1.09345	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.2625**	**1.07587**	**High Extent**

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses on the extent to which publishing function as an economic and power driven industry in Nigeria. The data provides insight into participants' perceptions of publishing as a system shaped by profit orientation, ownership concentration, and control over knowledge production. The item mean scores, ranging from 3.1823 to 3.3412, indicate a consistently high level of agreement across all measured indicators. The grand mean of 3.2625 (S.D. = 1.07587) confirms a collective response that reflects a "High Extent" agreement. The findings suggest that respondents widely recognize publishing as an industry driven by economic interests and structural power relations that influence knowledge dissemination and access within the sector.

Research Question 2: To what extent do ownership structures and profit motives influence market control in the Nigerian publishing sector?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses on ownership structures and profit motives influence market control in the nigerian publishing sector

S/N	Description	Mean	SD.	Decision
6.	Ownership concentration allows publishing firms to dominate distribution channels	3.4178	1.00234	High Extent
7.	Profit maximization strongly influences pricing strategies of publishing firms	3.3612	1.04567	High Extent
8.	Large publishing firms control textbook selection in educational institutions	3.2256	1.07123	High Extent
9.	Market control in publishing is influenced by financial strength of firms	3.3045	1.06543	High Extent
10.	Smaller publishers face barriers due to dominance of established publishing houses	3.3891	1.03456	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.3396**	**1.04305**	**High Extent**

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses on the extent to which ownership structures and profit motives influence market control in the Nigerian publishing sector. The item mean scores, which range from 3.2256 to 3.4178, indicate a strong level of agreement among respondents that ownership concentration and profit orientation significantly shape market control mechanisms. The grand mean of 3.3396 (S.D. = 1.04305) further confirms a "High Extent" overall perception. The results indicate that respondents generally acknowledge that dominance in ownership structures and the pursuit of profit strongly determine competitive dynamics, pricing behavior, and market accessibility within the Nigerian publishing industry.

Research Question 3: To what extent did large publishing houses dominate the Nigerian book market?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation responses on the extent did large publishing houses dominate the Nigerian book market

S/N	Description	Mean	SD.	Decision
11.	Large publishing houses control a significant share of textbook production	3.4512	.98765	High Extent
12.	Dominant publishers influence book distribution networks in Nigeria	3.3921	1.01432	High Extent
13.	Major publishing firms set pricing standards for educational materials	3.3154	1.05678	High Extent
14.	Independent publishers have limited market visibility compared to large firms	3.4289	1.02876	High Extent
15.	Educational institutions rely heavily on major publishing companies for textbooks	3.3745	1.03654	High Extent
Grand Mean		**3.3924**	**1.02401**	**High Extent**

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses on the extent to which large publishing houses dominate the Nigerian book market. The item mean scores, ranging from 3.3154 to 3.4512, demonstrate a consistent pattern of agreement that large publishing firms maintain significant control over textbook production, distribution networks, and pricing systems. The grand mean of 3.3924 (S.D. = 1.02401) indicates an overall "High Extent" response across all items. The findings suggest that respondents strongly perceive the

Nigerian book market as being highly concentrated, with dominant publishing houses exercising considerable influence over market structure and access to educational materials.

Research Question 4: How did monopolistic practices and pricing dynamics affect access to books in Nigeria?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation responses **on** how monopolistic practices and pricing dynamics affect access to books in Nigeria

S/N	Description	Mean	SD.	Decision
16.	High textbook prices reduce access to learning materials for students	3.4821	.97543	High Extent
17.	Monopolistic practices in publishing influence book affordability	3.4067	1.01345	High Extent
18.	Limited competition in the book market affects access to educational resources	3.3689	1.04231	High Extent
19.	Pricing strategies of major publishers restrict access to books in Nigeria	3.4476	1.00654	High Extent
20.	Students in public institutions experience difficulty accessing recommended textbooks	3.5213	.95876	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.4453**	**.99930**	**High Extent**

Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' responses on how monopolistic practices and pricing dynamics affect access to books in Nigeria. The item mean scores, ranging from 3.3689 to 3.5213, reflect a strong consensus among respondents that pricing structures and monopolistic tendencies significantly influence book accessibility. The grand mean of 3.4453 (S.D. = .99930) confirms a "High Extent" agreement across all indicators. The results indicate that respondents widely perceive high textbook costs, limited competition, and dominant pricing strategies as major constraints to equitable access to educational materials, particularly within public academic institutions.

Test of Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between publishing as an economic and power driven industry and market outcomes in the Nigerian book trade.

Table 5: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) on the relationship between publishing as an economic and power driven industry and market outcomes in the Nigerian book trade

		Economic and Power Driven	**Market Outcomes in the Book Trade**
Economic and Power Driven	Pearson Correlation	1	.084
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	484	484
Market Outcomes in the Nigerian Book Trade	Pearson Correlation	.084	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	484	484

Table 5 presents the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis conducted to examine the relationship between publishing as an economic and power driven industry and market outcomes in the Nigerian book trade. The analysis reveals a positive correlation coefficient of r = .084 at a significance level of p = .000, indicating a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level. This result implies that the economic and power driven nature of publishing is associated with observable variations in market outcomes within the Nigerian book trade. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between publishing as an economic and power driven industry and market outcomes is rejected.

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between ownership structures and profit motives and market control in the Nigerian publishing sector.

Table 6: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) on the relationship between ownership structures, profit motives and market control in the Nigerian publishing sector

		Ownership Structures and Profit Motives	**Market Control in the Nigerian Publishing Sector**
Ownership Structures and Profit Motives	Pearson Correlation	1	.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	484	484
Market Control in the Nigerian Publishing Sector	Pearson Correlation	.091	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	484	484

Table 6 presents the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis conducted to examine the relationship between ownership structures, profit motives and market control in the Nigerian publishing sector. The analysis reveals a positive correlation coefficient of r = .091 at a significance level of p = .000, indicating a statistically significant at the .05 level. This result implies that ownership concentration and profit oriented strategies are significantly associated with the level of market control exercised within the Nigerian publishing sector. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between ownership structures, profit motives and market control is rejected.

$H0_3$: There is no significant relationship between the dominance of large publishing houses and competition in the Nigerian book market.

Table 7: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) on the relationship between dominance of large publishing houses and competition in the Nigerian book market

		Dominance of Large Publishing Houses	Competition in the Nigerian Book Market
Dominance of Large Publishing Houses	Pearson Correlation	1	.087
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	484	484
Competition in the Nigerian Book Market	Pearson Correlation	.087	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	484	484

Table 7 presents the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis conducted to examine the relationship between dominance of large publishing houses and competition in the Nigerian book market. The analysis reveals a positive correlation coefficient of r = .087 at a significance level of p = .000, indicating a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level. This result implies that the dominance of large publishing firms is associated with reduced competitive dynamics within the Nigerian book market. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between dominance of large publishing houses and competition is rejected.

$H0_4$: There is no significant relationship between monopolistic practices, pricing dynamics and access to books in Nigeria.

Table 8: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) on the relationship between monopolistic practices, pricing dynamics and access to books in Nigeria

		Monopolistic Practices and Pricing Dynamics	Access to Books in Nigeria
Monopolistic Practices and Pricing Dynamics	Pearson Correlation	1	.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	484	484
Access to Books in Nigeria	Pearson Correlation	.093	.093
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	484	484

Table 8 presents the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis conducted to examine the relationship between monopolistic practices, pricing dynamics and access to books in Nigeria. The analysis reveals a positive correlation coefficient of r = .093 at a significance level of p = .000, indicating a statistically significant relationship at the .05 level. This result implies that monopolistic practices and pricing strategies are significantly associated with the level of access to books within Nigeria. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between monopolistic practices, pricing dynamics and access to books is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Publishing as an Economic and Power Driven Industry and Market Outcomes

The analysis of the first hypothesis as presented in Table 5 revealed a significant positive relationship between publishing as an economic and power driven industry and market outcomes in the Nigerian book trade, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = .084$ and a p-value of .000. This finding indicates that publishing operates within a structured economic environment where ownership concentration, profit orientation, and institutional control significantly shape observable market outcomes. The implication is that market patterns within the book trade are not randomly distributed but are influenced by the strategic positioning and dominance of key publishing actors who control production, distribution, and access to knowledge resources.

This result aligns with Thompson (2021), who emphasized that contemporary publishing systems function within capitalist frameworks where commercial imperatives largely determine production and dissemination processes. Schiffrin (2019) similarly argued that consolidation within global publishing industries has strengthened the capacity of dominant firms to influence market outcomes through control over distribution systems and intellectual property regimes. This suggests that publishing outcomes are structurally embedded in economic power relations rather than purely driven by educational demand or content necessity. The implication of this finding is that publishing in Nigeria operates as a hybrid system where educational objectives are continuously shaped and constrained by economic imperatives. This dual structure reinforces inequalities in access to books, shapes pricing behavior, and determines the visibility of knowledge products within the national educational ecosystem.

Ownership Structures, Profit Motives, and Market Control

The analysis of the second hypothesis as presented in Table 6 revealed a significant positive relationship between ownership structures, profit motives, and market control in the Nigerian publishing sector, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = .091$ and a p-value of .000. This finding indicates that concentration of ownership and profit driven strategies significantly determine how control is exercised within the publishing market. Firms with stronger financial capacity and established institutional networks are more capable of influencing distribution systems, pricing frameworks, and textbook adoption processes across educational institutions. This outcome is consistent with Schiffrin (2019), who observed that corporate consolidation in publishing industries enhances the ability of dominant firms to regulate market entry and maintain sustained control over key segments of the book trade. From institutional perspectives,

Thompson (2021) further noted that profit maximization remains a central operational logic within publishing systems, shaping editorial decisions and privileging commercially viable outputs over educationally essential but less profitable content. In Nigeria, Okwilagwe (2020) highlighted that established publishing houses maintain structural dominance through distribution networks and institutional relationships, thereby limiting the competitive capacity of emerging publishers. The implication of this finding is that market control within the Nigerian publishing sector is structurally conditioned by ownership concentration and profit orientation. This condition reinforces unequal participation in the book trade, restricts competitive diversity, and sustains the dominance of established publishing firms over smaller actors within the industry.

Dominance of Large Publishing Houses and Competition

The analysis of the third hypothesis as presented in Table 7 revealed a significant positive relationship between the dominance of large publishing houses and competition in the Nigerian book market, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = .087$ and a p-value of .000. This finding indicates that the structure of the Nigerian book market is heavily influenced by the presence of dominant publishing firms whose control over production and distribution systems shapes competitive dynamics. The implication is that market concentration significantly limits the level of competition that can exist within the publishing sector.

This result supports Schiffrin (2019), who argued that global publishing industries exhibit oligopolistic characteristics where a small number of firms dominate market structures and restrict competitive entry. Thompson (2021) similarly explained that economies of scale, digital infrastructure control, and institutional partnerships enable large publishing houses to maintain market dominance. And, Okwilagwe (2020) observed that major publishing firms control textbook supply chains and exert strong influence over institutional procurement decisions, thereby reducing competitive opportunities for smaller publishers. The implication of this finding is that competition in the Nigerian book market is structurally constrained by dominance patterns that favor large publishing firms. This finding aligns with entrepreneurship education as the last opinion to solving the problem of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria (Ananyi, John & Chika, 2022). The empirically proven gaps based finds revealed these variables reduces market diversity, limits innovation, and reinforces dependency on established firms for educational publishing outputs.

Monopolistic Practices, Pricing Dynamics, and Access to Books

The analysis of the fourth hypothesis as presented in Table 8 revealed a significant positive relationship between monopolistic practices, pricing dynamics, and access to books in Nigeria, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = .093$ and a p-value of .000. This finding indicates that pricing structures and market concentration significantly influence the accessibility of books, particularly within the educational sector. The implication is that access to educational materials is closely tied to how pricing systems are structured within a concentrated market environment. This result aligns with Amadi (2019), who identified high textbook prices as a persistent barrier to educational access in Nigeria. Thompson (2021) also noted that publishing firms operating within profit driven systems tend to adopt pricing strategies that prioritize revenue generation over affordability and access.

The implication of this finding is that access to books in Nigeria is significantly shaped by monopolistic pricing structures that limit affordability. Schiffrin (2019) further emphasized that monopolistic tendencies in publishing markets often lead to reduced affordability and widened inequality in access to knowledge resources. This condition disproportionately affects students in public educational institutions and reinforces broader inequalities in educational access and learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the political economy of publishing and book trade in Nigeria with emphasis on ownership structures, profit motives, market dominance, pricing dynamics, and access to books. Findings revealed significant relationships among all study variables, indicating that publishing operates within a concentrated market system where economic power strongly influences knowledge production, distribution, and accessibility. The dominance of large publishing houses, coupled with monopolistic tendencies and profit driven strategies, was found to significantly shape market outcomes and restrict access to books, particularly within educational settings. The study therefore concluded that the Nigerian publishing industry is structurally characterized by unequal power relations that limit competition and contribute to high book prices and restricted access to learning materials.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to address the key findings of the study.

- Government education authorities and relevant stakeholders should strengthen and enforce robust competition and antitrust regulations within the publishing and book trade industry to reduce excessive market concentration and prevent monopolistic control over textbook production, distribution, and pricing.
- Federal and state ministries of education should design and implement targeted textbook subsidy programmes and institutional support mechanisms to enhance affordability and improve equitable access to learning materials in public educational institutions.
- Regulatory agencies and competition commissions should closely monitor pricing structures within the publishing sector to ensure that publishing firms adopt fair, transparent, and socially responsible pricing models that balance profitability with accessibility.
- Educational institutions and relevant academic bodies should establish transparent and diversified textbook selection frameworks that reduce overdependence on dominant publishing houses and encourage wider participation of indigenous and emerging publishers in the book supply chain.

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